

THE LAST INVESTOR

BY TOM SUDDER

The Last Investor: *The Metaphor*

WHAT IF you were down to your very **LAST INVESTOR?** (aka 'DONOR')

WHAT IF the FATE and FUTURE of your ORGANIZATION and CAUSE were entirely up to that one **LAST INVESTOR?**

Think about it:

IF you can communicate your IMPACT and MISSION. Convince them of your VISION. INVOLVE THEM in your LEADERSHIP PROCESS.

THEN they will **MAXIMIZE** their **INVESTMENT** and bring along OTHERS to COMMIT and INVEST.

HOWEVER, if they don't 'GET IT' – they're history. They're gone.

If you can't **communicate** your **MESSAGE** in a **clear, concise** and **compelling** fashion, then they will be polite, but still gone.

The proverbial BOTTOM LINE is simple:

If you are with **THE LAST INVESTOR** and
THEY DON'T INVEST
you are 'OUT OF BUSINESS.'

CHALLENGE: How can you use this metaphor of The Last Investor to CHANGE the way you apply the **IMPACT DRIVES INCOME** insight and how you approach your best prospects?

Would you send your Last Investor a direct mail piece addressed 'Dear Occupant?'

Would you call them (in the middle of dinner), ask for money, and then promise to follow-up with a form letter?

Would you ask them to buy a table at your (not) special event?

Would you ask them to be part of your Feasibility Study to find out if you need money?

Would you meet them at their office (or for lunch) rather than try to get them to see what you do and where you deliver your service? (Because it's easier.)

Would you send them a 60-minute DVD and ask them to watch it?
(And enclose a BRE)

You get the point.

THE LAST INVESTOR: *The Parable*

I am *THE LAST INVESTOR*.

I have **3** questions for you. If you can't answer these 3 (double) questions - I WILL NOT INVEST.

1. *WHERE is the money going? (And WHY?)*
2. *WHO decided that? (And HOW?)*
3. *WHAT do you want from me? (And WHEN?)*

I believe these are very FAIR QUESTIONS.

Note: PHILANTHROPY comes from the Greek words for 'FRIEND OF MANKIND'. My 'FRIENDS' and I cannot help if we don't understand the answers to these 3 double questions.

I've been asked to '**give money**' to hundreds of worthwhile CAUSES and thousands of 'CHARITIES.' I believe there was a lot of DUPLICATION OF EFFORT. It also seems like an unending list of people and organizations who are simply 'BEGGING FOR SURVIVAL.'

Sometimes I just wanted to shout,

"Survival?!! I'm not interested in SURVIVAL. I'm interested in IMPACT.

Do you have a VISION? A RAISON D'ETRE? A BATTLE CRY?"

Have you created something that will MOTIVATE and INSPIRE me and your other stakeholders to INVEST?

Do you run a GREAT ORGANIZATION or merely an outdated bureaucracy?

Are you into LEADERSHIP or merely managing mediocrity?

Are you big into RESULTS or just a lot of ACTIVITY?

Can you tell me what makes you truly UNIQUE or what DISTINGUISHES YOU from other organizations and causes?

Do you SAVE LIVES? CHANGE LIVES? TRANSFORM LIVES?™

(Note the common word: **LIVES!**)

I believe my role in this CHANGE PROCESS is to be a provocateur.

My first CHALLENGE to all 'NOT-FOR-PROFIT' leaders is this:

Why do you even call yourself a NOT-FOR-PROFIT???

This whole '501(c)3 tax-exempt' status may mean something to the IRS, but it doesn't mean squat to me! Maybe 100 years ago it was important to distinguish between 'real business' and a 'charity.' But, today, you **are** a REAL BUSINESS with million dollar budgets, dedicated staff, a physical plant/building/campus, Boards, customers, investors and more.

We have to stop defining ourselves in the NEGATIVE! We need to talk about what we are FOR not what we are AGAINST.

To me, it's all about your IMPACT!

One of my biggest epiphanies, a Road to Damascus, 'St. Paul knocked off his horse' revelation, was that our **IMPACT drives our INCOME - not the other way around.** If you get this, it should CHANGE everything.

It means it's not about 'Fundraising.' Not about 'Building Campaigns.' It's not even about 'Asking People for Money.'

It's ALL about your IMPACT!

I want to spend the rest of my days trying to convince socially conscious leaders in the Public, Private and Third Sectors of the VALUE of their work and the IMPACT of their VISION. If I were the Diogenes or Socrates of the Third Sector, I would ask a never-ending series of questions based on the 'Battle Cry' of two of the world's greatest philanthropists, Bill Hewlett and David Packard: WHAT IF...

WHAT IF we were about **FOR IMPACT** (vs. **NOT-FOR PROFIT**)?

WHAT IF we were about **INVESTORS/INVESTMENT** (vs. **DONORS and DONATIONS**)?

WHAT IF we were about **CAUSE** (vs. a **CHARITY**)?

WHAT IF we were about **A RETURN-ON-INVESTMENT** (vs. a **WARM FUZZY FEELING**)?

WHAT IF we were about **STAKEHOLDERS** (vs. **CONSTITUENTS**)?

WHAT IF we were about **COLLABORATION** (vs. **COMPETITION**)?

And, finally,

WHAT IF, instead of 'ASKING ME FOR MONEY', you came to **VISIT WITH ME** and **SHARED THE STORY**, in an **AUTHENTIC** way, and then, **PRESENTED ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP???**

How can I help totally RE-THINK the models and philosophies and processes and principles and attitudes about one of the **fastest growing sectors*** in the economy???

*If you don't believe me, look at these 3rd Sector **STARTLING STATISTICS**:

\$1 TRILLION in **GOODS & SERVICES** Purchased Annually

\$450 BILLION 'DONATED' by 50 Million People in the US

\$90+ BILLION SPENT to raise the \$450 Billion (20%)

\$100 BILLION OPPORTUNITY for Greater IMPACT (*McKinsey*)

\$25 BILLION 'Wasted' on FUNDRAISING COSTS (*McKinsey*)

\$100+ TRILLION TRANSFER of WEALTH in the Next 30 Years!

By the way, don't tell me you don't have any 'PROSPECTS' or 'RELATIONSHIPS.' There are plenty of CHAMPIONS who will help you with your CAUSE and your CASE. They want to help you FUND YOUR VISION... If you **JUST ASK!**

Gandhi says, *"If you don't ASK, you don't get."*

Gretzky says, *"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take."*

The Bible says, *"Ask and it shall be given.*

Seek and you shall find.

Knock and it shall be opened to you."

In Hebrew, it's *"Rak B'vakaysh!! ONLY ASK!"*

If I could share one really big thought around this whole idea of **JUST ASK**, it would be this straight forward:

YOU'RE IN SALES. GET OVER IT.

For some reason, 'NOT-FOR-PROFIT' leaders think 'SALES' is a four letter word. The fact is nothing happens unless you're SELLING.

We're all in SALES, every day. We're SELLING our idea, our vision, our impact, our story and more.

In case you missed it, my point here is:

JUST ASK. JUST ASK. JUST ASK.

If I had to share my MESSAGE, my proverbial ELEVATOR SPEECH with every leader in the FOR IMPACT WORLD, I would share an 'ACTION PLAN' that I heard from a wonderful pastor in Australia.

"There are only 3 THINGS that a leader needs to do:

CAST A VISION. STAFF A VISION. FUND A VISION."

I encourage, urge, beg, challenge you to do all 3, every day.

Sooooo, I know I cannot take it with me. (It's the old 'camel through the eye of the needle' thing.) My family is well taken care of. I want to make a difference. I want to make an impact. I want to move to significance.

If you can *CAST IT...* and *STAFF IT...* I will help you *FUND IT.*

We are all 'terminal'.

Yet, as I told my son every day as I drove him to school,

TODAY IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF MY LIFE.

I made **3 LISTS** today:

- 1. Things I WANT to do.**
- 2. Things I HAVE to do.**
- 3. Things I neither WANT nor HAVE to do.**

I threw away the third list. Simplified the second list.
And, now, I'm focused on the first list.

I love Bob Dylan's not-so-esoteric version of **SUCCESS**:
"Get up in the morning and doing what you WANT to do."

One of my virtual mentors, Earl Nightingale, says,
"SUCCESS is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal or goal."

Good old Ralph Waldo lauds in his treatise **TO LAUGH OFTEN** that
"SUCCESS (is) to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived."

Über business guru Peter Drucker cloned a terrific line about everyone moving from **SUCCESS** to **SIGNIFICANCE**. *"Many people have come to a point in their life when they want to move from SUCCESS to SIGNIFICANCE."*

Personally, it's been going from 'STRUGGLE' to 'SUCCESS' to 'SIGNIFICANCE'.

At this point in my life, the six "L's" take on significant meaning:

LIVE. LOVE. LEARN. LAUGH. LEAVE LEGACY.

I have tried to **Live, Love, Learn** and **Laugh**. Now I'm left with **Leaving Legacy**.

I need your help.

I know it's the winter of my life. The shadows are getting longer. I've always tried to **make a life**, not a living. I gave up navel gazing and pondering the meaning of life. I just try to **make life meaningful**.

I remember one of those old Greek guys said *"An unexamined life is not worth living."* My corollary is *"An un-lived life is not worth examining."*

In Victor Frankl's powerful book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, he suggests that our focus should be on FULFILLMENT, not just 'SUCCESS'. Maslov, in his eponymous 'pyramid' says our highest need is SELF-ACTUALIZATION.

SUCCESS. SIGNIFICANCE. REALIZATION. MEANING. FULFILLMENT. SELF-ACTUALIZATION. Whatever you call it, we're all trying to get there.

However, one of my biggest LESSONS in life, a clichéd aphorism, but no less true and powerful, is:

The more you GIVE, the more you GET.

I don't 'WHY' or 'HOW' this works. I just know that it does.

Cigar-chomping Churchill said, "*We make a living by what we GET. We make a LIFE by what we GIVE.*"

Closer to me is my Harley-Davidson tagline, motto and, many times, a tattoo, "*Live to ride. Ride to live.*"

My version is "*Live to Give. Give to Live.*"

I have founded companies, been an angel investor in many others, and served on a ton of 'FOR-PROFIT' and 'NOT-FOR-PROFIT' Boards.

I've always tried to invest in VISION and PEOPLE, not just in ideas or markets or new technologies. Now, I want to advise, counsel, lead and FUND Social Entrepreneurs and Visionary Leaders. I want to IMPACT THE WORLD.

I need your help.