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Potato Vine Flowers from the Mary Lou Heard Memorial Garden Tour 2022

For the weekend...

from Douglas E. Welch

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Join The Conversation On Discord.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, I have been running a Discord community for friends and family.

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Photo by [Glenn Carstens-Peters](#) on [Unsplash](#)

A Need To Take Action

Sometimes you have to take action without knowing if it is the right thing to do. You are not sure if it will succeed or fail, but something needs to be done. If it fails, you can always try something else - but action, movement, something will have been accomplished and you have gained information about what your next step might be.

Inaction is slow.

Inaction is impotent.

Inaction can be deadly.

While not every occasion requires immediate action, some call for it — even demand it outright. We all need to identify those moments and act.

Even for a worrier

I am an inveterate worrier. I feel anxious over often meaningless issues, but despite this, I have an inherent trait that has served me well when presented with the need for immediate action. I don't know where it comes from, but I recognize the deep need for it.

When in a crisis, I - for lack of a better word - disassociate. Gone is the worry, the fear, the horror in an instant. My wife has seen me do this on several occasions and she always expresses profound disbelief at the change that comes over me. While I am still myself, I am also someone quite different. Gone are the petty worries and awkwardness. I become all business - coordinating ambulance responses, stopping bleeding, relaying vital signs to dispatchers, or getting us quickly and safely to the hospital after our son's injurious traffic accident.

Afterward, though, I am my old self. My hands shake. Fatigue hits me. Fear, worry, and horror all come flooding back. It is only natural, but the difference is made all the more dramatic in comparison. I have done what NEEDS to be done WHEN it NEEDS to be done.

Finding your inner strength

I recount this so that perhaps you may find this "other person" inside yourself. Life presents us with new crises every day. How we react to them determines the next few minutes and hours but also the rest of our lives. It can be tremendously frightening to consider what crises might come your way, but considering them and preparing for them is deeply necessary.

In a crisis, I can call on all the tiny bits of training and information I have taken in over the years. I may be no expert on CPR but can perform the basics. I know the methods for stopping bleeding - and have had to employ them here in my own home. I know the signs of a concussion and when to seek treatment. Again, it might be far from perfect, but I can do it. That in itself is tremendously important.

You should cultivate your knowledge in these areas, too. You never know when you might be called on to intervene. I say this too due to the ways I have seen others react (or not react) in an emergency. There have been several times when I have had to intervene because no one else was stepping up to address the problem. This is so disheartening to see. We should all have the ability to do what needs to be done.

Psychology plays a large part in facing crises, too. Often we need to (controllably) be able to disassociate when necessary. Others often need what we would need in such a crisis. I think I focus so clearly on their needs that I can put aside my own, if only for a short time.

Responding to more than physical danger

Responding to crises other than the immediately life-threatening is important, too, of course. Here I am not nearly as adept, though. There are so many actions, so many protests, so many meetings, so much politics that is important but in those cases, my disassociation does not appear. I can't overcome the awkwardness, fear, and embarrassment needed to have more effect in those areas.

I must admit that I am often disappointed in myself. I wish to and want to take more action, but can't. Perhaps I can learn a way to surmount this psychological wall and perhaps you can too. It seems deeply important to try. We can all be frustrated and dismayed about what is happening around us, but we should also be able to take action against it.

Life has been difficult for everyone lately - and deeply more difficult for some. Perhaps over the next few months, we can look deeply inside ourselves and find ways to make life better for everyone. I will certainly be trying.

Video



Flower Slomo from Mary Music on TikTok



The Customers Who Repeatedly Buy Doomed Products

Via The Hustle

Are there customers that nearly ALWAYS make the wrong decisions about new products? There might be. In this article, The Hustle dives into and who they might be and what they might mean to companies. – Douglas

These consumers are precious gems in the corporate world. At a typical company, it's likely that:

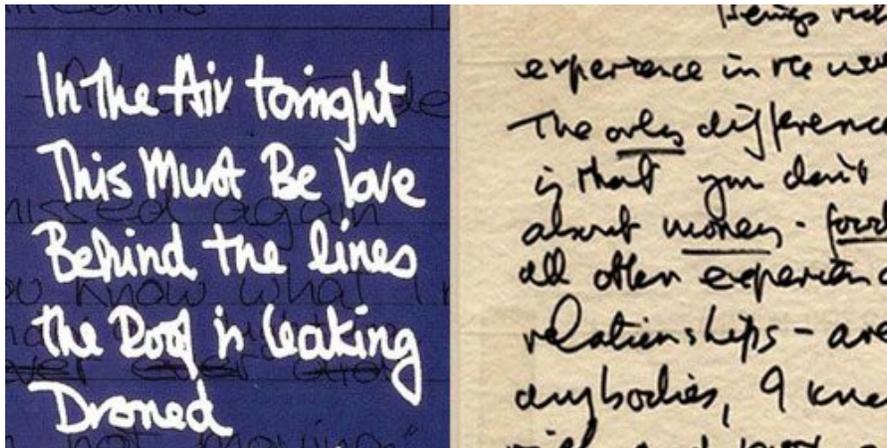
- 80% of revenue is generated by just 20% of customers
- The top 10% spend ~3x more than the average customer

But it turns out that not every customer who voraciously buys new products is good for business.

In recent years, research has suggested that a certain fraction of consumers are particularly skilled at picking out products that are destined to fail, or get discontinued.

They're called harbingers of failure, or harbinger customers.

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How to improve your handwriting

by Austin Kleon

My handwriting has never been the greatest – and I reverted to printing decades ago – but I have taken pains to improve my handwriting for special purposes and Austin provides as few more methods to finding your own way back to handwriting again – Douglas

I love, love, love signing books. I'm used to people saying, "I wish I could draw," but there have been a surprising number of folks on this tour who remark on my handwriting. Sometimes people just like it, and sometimes people are really surprised that it's the same handwriting that's in the book. (A lot of people think that the writing in the book is a font.)

The underlying notion here is that handwriting is somehow magical, that you're just naturally gifted with lovely penmanship. But as I explain to folks on tour, just as I learned to draw by copying Garfield cartoons, I learned to write by copying other people's handwriting.

My first two handwriting heroes were Phil Collins and John Lennon: (See above)

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Cattle panel trellis: How to build a DIY vegetable garden arch

via Savvy Gardening

Another great project to expand the growing space in your garden. I have thought about adding these to my recently added raised beds. – Douglas

Growing vegetables vertically has many benefits. It allows you to grow more food in a given area and makes harvesting so simple. Vertical gardening increases the air circulation around your plants, making them less susceptible to fungal diseases. It also keeps the plants off the ground, distancing them from soil-dwelling pests. And in many cases, growing vertically is also really beautiful. In this article, I share one of my favorite ways to grow food vertically: by using a cattle panel trellis.

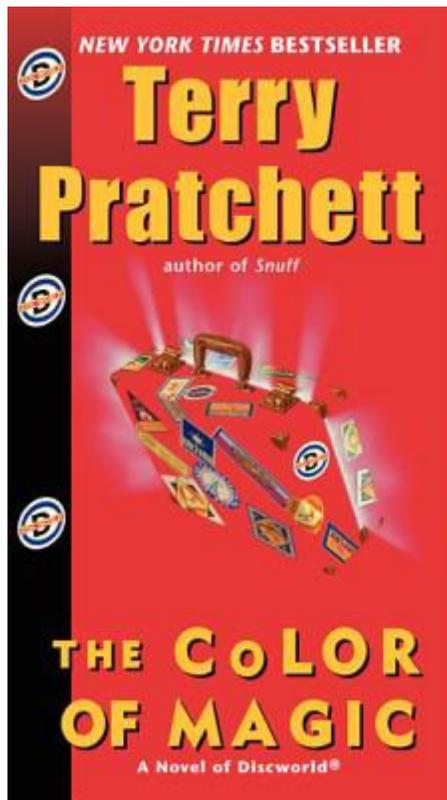


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The Color of Magic

by Terry Pratchett

My friend, Paul, has been extolling the virtues of Terry Pratchett for



years and I have finally begun my own journey. I figured I might as well start at the beginning and so I picked up The Color of Magic. Along the way, I also discovered this recommended reading order of Pratchett's oeuvre and might investigate it for my next Pratchett read. – Douglas

Imagine, if you will . . . a flat world sitting on the backs of four elephants who hurtle through space balanced on a giant turtle. In truth, the Discworld is not so different from our own. Yet, at the same time, very different . . . but not so much.

In this, the maiden voyage through Terry Pratchett's divinely and recognizably twisted alternate dimension, the well-meaning but remarkably inept wizard Rincewind encounters something hitherto unknown in the Discworld: a tourist! Twoflower has arrived, Luggage by his side, to take in the sights and, unfortunately, has cast his lot with a most inappropriate tour guide--a decision that could result in Twoflower's becoming not only Discworld's first visitor from elsewhere . . . but quite possibly, portentously, its very last. And, of course, he's brought Luggage along, which has a mind of its own. And teeth.

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