

An outline of:

## ***Fish!***

### ***A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results***

By Stephen C. Lundin, Harry Paul, and John Christensen  
New York: Hyperion, 2000

#### **Seattle – Monday Morning**

- Mary Jane, a financial supervisor, is given the job of “fixing” the department on the third floor.
- The people on the third floor arrive late, do minimal work, and delay progress. They are unresponsive and never get excited about work. The department culture is a depressing force, even to new people. Customers are treated as interruptions, to be passed along to someone else.

#### **The World Famous Pike Place Fish Market**

- Noise, action, and energy pervade the outdoor fish market. People on lunch break come by for entertainment, even if they buy no fish. Mary stops to watch.
- Lonnie, one of the workers, explains to Mary, “We’ve created a lot of energy. Most of our work is smelly, mundane and repetitive. Any work can be boring if you do it every day. But any job can also be performed with energy and enthusiasm. We may not choose our work, but we *can* choose our attitude.”

#### **Choose Your Attitude**

- Mary starts making notes: There is always a choice about the way you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself. The fish market calls itself “world famous” to energize their workers. People act differently when they are world famous. Who do *you* want to be while you work?
- The needs of the organization and the needs of our people are the same: Creativity, passion, flexibility, wholeheartedness. Every action and decision at work is important. You create a work of art every day.
- People should never stop learning and growing. Most people are staler than they realize.
- Each of us has within us more resources of energy than have ever been tapped, more talent than has ever been exploited, more strength than has ever been tested, and more to give.

#### **Mary Jane’s Presentation**

- The first step, posted to the wall, is: **CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE.**
- Energy and enthusiasm are the keys to productivity, recruitment, retention, and great customer service.
- Life is too precious just to be passing through to retirement.

**PLAY:** We forget to play as we age. Be serious about work, but have fun doing it. Fun is creative. Fun is energizing. Fun is healthy. Happy people treat others well. Work becomes a reward.

**MAKE THEIR DAY:** Create great memories for everyone. This is good for business. Share play and energy with customers. Serving customers well will make your day. This is healthy and rewarding.

**BE PRESENT:** Engage fully in your work here and now. Don’t daydream.

- Mary assigned teams to generate ideas and action items for: **CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE**, **PLAY**, **MAKE THEIR DAY**, and **BE PRESENT**. The teams presented at an off-site meeting six weeks later.

## **Sunday, February 7: The Coffee Shop One Year Later**

- Mary reflects with Lonnie on winning the Chairwoman's Award for improving the third floor.

### **Our Workplace**

Please *choose* to make today a great day. Your colleagues and customers will be thankful.

Find ways to *play*. We can be serious about work without being serious about ourselves.

Stay focused and *be present* when your customers and team members need you.

Should you feel your energy lapse, find someone who needs help and *make their day*.

## **Reviewer's Comments**

*Fish! is a simple story with simple lessons. "Love what you do" is a timeless piece of advice. The fact that such a simple message is needed, and is devoured by business leaders – less than 100 pages for \$19.95 – says something sad about the state of our workforce and society. The authors have simply encouraged us to: choose your attitude, play, be present, and make their day. The motivational message of Fish! which takes maybe an hour to read, will resonate best with those who already believe in the power of enthusiasm and positive thinking.*

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