

Starving the Monkeys: Fight Back Smarter

by Tom Baugh

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Monkey, Defined

In the context of this book, a monkey is defined as a creature who chooses to collectively seize, by unearned means, the property, material or intellectual, temporal or spiritual, of its rightful owner. The means employed may be fiat, guilt, force, theft, fraud, subterfuge, or anything other than a willing and negotiated exchange of value.

In our modern world, each person is given the opportunity to make a conscious choice whether to be monkeys or men. Conspicuously absent from this definition is race, birth, gender, heritage, cultural influences, or any factor other than that singular deliberate decision.

Men choose to live their lives upon their own merit. It is this very spirit of independence of thought and action which makes men the prey of the monkey collective.

As such, monkeys abandon their claim to the rights of men. But monkeys could just as easily choose not to, and become men themselves.

Chapter 2, Who Should Read This Book

Foremost, this book is written for those individuals who fear that they are losing their essential right to survival as individuals, along with their individual goals, faith, and aspirations. You are correct in this fear, because you *are* losing this right.

This book is written for those individuals who have tried to follow the rules, and who find after they had invested themselves in that path that the rules had been changed beneath them. And who had everything they have ever worked for destroyed as a result.

This book is written for the individuals who feel disenfranchised from success. And who feel that their own efforts to provide for themselves seem to only put them farther away from that goal.

This book is written for the individual who may have a successful business, at least from an outsider's perspective. But who are nonetheless lacking the fulfillment and sense of well-being which should accompany success. Or who had a successful business, only to see it now being destroyed by forces beyond their control.

This book is written for individuals who think agreements should be based on a handshake. But who are disappointed by partners, above, across, and below, who deliberately fail to satisfy the intent of agreements. These individuals feel that paper agreements only exist to refresh the memory of what each signer intends to actually perform, rather than a foundation from which to weasel out of their obligations. Viewed this way, these individuals believe that contracts are really just a reminder for yourself.

This book is written for those individuals who want to improve their personal financial circumstances, but are unsure where to start. And who have begun to feel like much of the advice they receive in the public domain just seems a little too pat to be believed, especially in the tumult of today.

This book is written for individuals who want to rely on themselves. And are weary of being the only player on their team while the benchwarmers around them get all the benefits of their efforts.

This book is written for the individuals who feel that they are at the end of their ropes, and are considering drastic options.

All of these individuals can benefit from the material in this book. Surprisingly, all of these groups of individuals, despite their seemingly disjoint natures, share common characteristics. For them, the material in this book will resonate deeply. As it turns out, most of the problems we face in our world today stem from a single root cause, the suppression of the individual mind. This book will show why this is true, and steps you can take to fix that.

I can also clearly indicate who should *most definitely not* read this book.

This book is not written for the person who feels that only the mass action of a large team is capable of success.

This book is not written for the person who thinks that someone who is self-taught, self-financed, or otherwise self-reliant has somehow cheated the system. And who feel that those self-reliant individualists have somehow deprived the team of value and, as such, generally should not be trusted by anyone.

This book is not written for the person who thinks that the value of a person or company or the quality of his or its output is determined by how many jobs he or it provides.

This book is not written for the person who feels that only the mass action of a large team is capable of success.

This book is not written for the person who values civility above liberty.

This book is not written for the person who thinks the Founding Fathers of The United States of America are to be discredited as being out of touch with our modern societal issues.

This book is not written for the person who feels that dogma or government should rule people's decisions.

This book is not written for the person who wishes to control the lives of his fellow man beyond protecting himself and his loved ones from direct physical or material harm at the hand of others.

This book is not written for the person who wishes to silence opposition to his opinions through the use of force, threat, legal action or the withdrawal of legitimate opportunity.

This book is not written for the person who feels that opportunity should be provided, not on the basis of merit, but through means which seek to correct historical injustices.

If you find yourself in these latter categories, put this book down right now. You will only be unsettled by the pages which follow. Retreat into your cocoon and await further instructions from your masters.

A third category of potential reader is the person who is fulfilled by being at the head of his small enterprise. This person knows that if his company were dismantled tomorrow he could arise anew and rebuild. If this is you, feel free to read on for entertainment purposes only. But, be forewarned, this book may probe you deeply enough for you to discover that you actually are in the first set of potential readers.

I have operated my own business for over a decade now, and in that time I have discovered some fundamental truths which have been helpful to me. I have also enjoyed a level of individual liberty which has been breathtaking in retrospect. I have avoided the vast majority of spirit-crushing debasement which has become the accepted mode of life for a people who have forgotten what liberty actually means. I have come to understand that the principles which make a small business successful are exactly the same principles which define a free man and which create a free nation. It is as if this pattern had been laid down by God Himself long, long ago.

My business is deliberately very small. I have dozens of products and thousands of customers worldwide, yet my employee footprint is absurdly tiny. The more I accepted these fundamental truths, the more success I found with less staff. Before I had learned these fundamental principles, which have been around since the dawn of man, I started my business in the traditional way:

☐ Conceive of a great product or service which can help others succeed.

- ☐ Plan how to implement the service or design and distribute the product.
- ☐ Determine which tasks can be delegated to employees and clearly define their responsibilities.
- ☐ Interview, hire, train and reward employees, including generous benefits packages.
- ☐ Market the product through channels which have access to the target market, rewarding the actors in that channel for their service.

I had no idea how wrong I was at first. My story of my business life helps illustrate some of the lessons found later in this book. So join me on this short history.

Sales started slow, and then began to accelerate. Before long, my company was the world leader in its little niche. I had employee problems here and there, but chalked these up to normal attrition and personnel issues. I also wasn't making any money. But, I was providing great jobs, my company had growing revenues, and my customers were thriving.

But still, I wasn't making any money. And I was working eighty-hour weeks, stuck in Atlanta traffic twice each day. Sometimes I made payroll by credit card offers despite our booking of large amounts of what turned out to be, in many cases, paper orders with no meat on the bones.

I was also taking on contract jobs through the business. Rather than just simply keeping this money for myself, I was leaving this income in the business. Essentially, I was paying for product development and payroll and 100% health coverage and monthly steak lunches and flex time. I paid all of these benefits to others from what would have otherwise been lucrative contract proceeds to me.

Sitting in traffic one spring morning three miles and forty minutes away from my office, I was listening to the more radical of many radio programs I enjoy. I realized that I was working myself to death to provide great jobs to other people, both inside my company and for my customers. And yet I was following the rules of what should have been the model for business success. But I was working for pay which I would have laughed at should anyone have offered me the job.

A few months after this epiphany a curious thing happened. Our receipts finally began overwhelming the checks we were writing. Suddenly, we were debt-free. I then made the mistake of paying myself more than pocket change, and then reinvesting this money back into the business in the form of loans.

Why was this a mistake?

It turns out that when I was the lowest-paid employee in the business, everyone was happy. But, when I first paid myself a reasonable amount, an employee doing system maintenance on our database discovered this fact. This amount was entirely reasonable given what I would charge a client for my direct services for the amount of time I was working. And it was reasonable given why I had started this company in the first place. Regardless, it was my money to do with what I chose. Even if I chose to pay it to myself.

Knowledge of this payment was then communicated to the entire staff. And soon I had what amounted to a passive-aggressive revolt on my hands.

Snide comments were whispered about my compensation from people who had a better job than they could find anywhere else. Wide-scale theft of office materials. Rudeness to customers. Endless interoffice drama. Absenteeism.

In the midst of a major product development, employees I had trained to do design tasks suddenly forgot how to do the simplest things. Then, just as I leapt in to do much of this work myself, the beneficiary client of this product development chose to renege on promised marketing.

At this point, I considered cancelling that whole project. But foolishly, out of a sense of misplaced honor, I chose to live up to my end of these obligations *despite every single other party ignoring theirs*. I eventually canceled this product line two years later, after six figures of investment plus more than a year of my time. After reflection, I should have paid attention to my gut and dropped the project on the spot.

You have to trust your gut.

This concept has now been popularized by that same radical radio talk show host. This means trusting yourself, despite the societal programming which the world uses to try to extract unearned value from your efforts. Later, I explain in detail why your gut is correct, and how this destructive programming is implemented. As a teaser, one such destructive program attempts to convince you that your gut is wrong.

I also noticed that I apparently wasn't alone. Many of my customers run small businesses themselves, and I began to discover that they were having many of the same issues. In addition, for some reason a small business magazine showed up in my mailbox every so often, and its pages are littered with tales like:

"We are doing so great thanks to the tips in your magazine. Things are going so well that our fifty employees spread rose petals beneath us each morning as we descend from our coach." Bob and Sue Sapmather operate a \$4 million San Jose business providing hand-glazed eco-friendly widgets.

Stories such as this are often accompanied by pasted-on smiles which don't hide the fear and panic in the eyes of the owner. Doing a little bit of math reveals why. First of all, the average gross revenues amount to about eighty-thousand dollars for each employee.

This seems OK, unless you live in San Jose. And have to buy the materials for all of those eco-friendly widgets and the hand glazing. The math reveals that while the Sapmather's are providing great jobs to those fifty glaze-caked mouths, they themselves are probably *pouring their own money into the company*. Just as I was.

At least when I had to jump in to salvage that project I had the presence of mind to fire the weakest of the team members. Amos smiled throughout the entire process. Until I pointed out the well-documented nature of the firing process. This documentation included his repeated failure to perform the assigned tasks for which he had been well-trained. And included his failure to perform them in the manner in which he had

been instructed. Because of this documented history, Georgia law prohibited granting him unemployment benefits.

When I informed him of these facts his smile vanished.

For you see, most employers, to avoid a disgruntled shooting or other unpleasantness, tend to *layoff*, not *fire*. A layoff means "lack of work" in unemployment law terms, and is often misused to get rid of some useless deformed cog in their organizational wheel. Lack of work means that you ran out of stuff for this person to do. And further, that this lack of work is not his fault, and that you are entirely willing and eager to rehire him if new work materialized.

Listing lack of work as a reason on the unemployment documentation is both ethically and legally unemployment fraud. Especially when the actual reason is that the individual concerned has been a useless wart. Not all warts are useless, though. Some warts have purpose and motivation. If they had Social Security Numbers I probably would have rather hired a few of them over the years. Regardless, these employers are essentially bribing the former employee against violence or other drama by tapping the state's unemployment fund. Yet, these funds are paid into by all the other employers in the state. But, this fraud is so commonly done that employees have come to expect unemployment benefits even if they sit around all day.

It seemed to me that, given his tender age, Amos had been coached on these presumed benefits. This set of circumstances might also lead one to believe that he deliberately malingered in order to get fired in the first place. I think he needed a better coach.

I enjoy the lowest unemployment tax rate in Georgia, by the way. I wonder why? It could be because in all these years I have only had one unemployment payout. My first firing was from the naive perspective that an employer has a right to hire or fire whomever they please. I learned my lessons from that one well. After a time, I stopped even seeing the dispute forms. I suppose my reputation in the Department of Labor precedes me. In any event, there are precious few digits in my unemployment taxes, most of them to the right of the decimal.

Anywho (as my mother used to affect a Southern charm to indicate a change in conversational course).

Oddly, after this particular firing my paper theft problem essentially evaporated. I also found a reason for some of his reduced productivity when his phone started ringing. "Hello?" I answered, sitting at his desk banging away on the project Amos had just been fired from.

"Uhh, is Amos there?" the voice asked.

"Who is this?" I demanded.

"This is Felicia with Monkey Trends magazine, and I need to work through a survey with Amos," she said.

"He no longer works here," I replied. It is risky to simply say that you fired the worthless sack of monkey pus. This could be considered defamatory, even if it is well-documented that he does, indeed, contain a measurable amount of monkey pus, and that his primary life purpose is to contain said pus, as if a sack. I think that this is due to the possibility that

monkey pus has value to someone, and thus cannot be truthfully stated as being *worthless*, and so, by extension, the sack must have some measurable value as well. I kept this analysis to myself.

Felicia responded, "That's terrible. He was our contact person in your company to call with surveys. Are you the person who answers surveys for your company, then?" she inquired. "If so, I can list you in the system as the contact for all the other survey companies as well", she offered helpfully.

That conversation went nowhere good from there, as did dozens of similar calls from other affiliated market survey firms over the next month. I had assigned Amos as the support point for a major product of ours, that product aligning nicely with his development responsibilities. Our support policy was to update our online *Frequently Asked Questions* section of our product pages should even a single call come in about an issue.

Over the years I discovered that my own productivity was greatly enhanced by the solitude of an office, yet destroyed absolutely by cubicle life. Accordingly, I had spent a pretty penny to make sure that *everyone* had a private office. Not one employee sat in a cubicle. More on this later, but all those times I passed by his office, seeing him happily interacting on the phone, I thought he had been talking to customers about his product area. And in so doing improving our support data. But in fact, he had been answering meaningless surveys on my time. Beats working, I guess.

The flip side of this was that the product support was being neglected. This I discovered when I answered about forty support calls to his phone over that same month. Most of these calls came in the first week after his departure. Most were dealing with the same three issues, none of which had been updated on the web. After correcting that, support call volume for his product area dropped precipitously, as desired, these customers now finding the answers for themselves on our site.

Customers were now happier, I had more time, repeat sales of that product area improved, and I had more money in the bank. If I had listened to my gut and dropped the fledgling product which precipitated his firing in the first place things would have been far better. But then again, I might not have been sitting at his desk to take those calls, and I might have not learned that lesson.

Getting rid of Amos turned out to provide so many benefits I started looking around the office. And what I saw were the other neo-disgruntled campers wandering around like productivity zombies.

Looking back, I then saw a string of previous employees who, after having been trained in state-of-the-art techniques and technology, would quit for a cubicle job, many times at reduced pay. Almost universally, these people would say things such as "I need to get a real job" or "I appreciate all you taught me, I really learned a lot." I realized that I should have instead simply implemented their work in the time I took to train them. If I had done that rather than counting on them for future return on investment, I would have been much farther ahead. Or, if I simply sold the training materials I created to train them, I would have had an entire product line on its own.

Others, like Amos, refused to implement their knowledge once taught. So the free training, make that *highly paid training*, had come to an end. And then that decision undercut an entire class of employees currently drifting about. My axe grew sharper at the thought. So next on the list was Archie, who had the longest time in the saddle of the then-current staff. Archie was also the first employee I had ever hired who lacked a degree.

My earlier hires all had degrees ranging from B.S. to Ph.D., but were effectively unteachable and chose to not implement designs the way I wanted them implemented. The fact that those episodes were in the Y2K boom era didn't help with their attitude toward instruction. Years later, after having realized what good jobs they had turned away when that bubble had popped, most of these came back asking for work. I declined each such request. In the meantime, my product concepts flourished when implemented my way, despite the pop of that particular bubble.

My rationale for hiring Archie was that he was to be my go-to guy for little tasks which got in my way. In exchange for this service I would not only pay him well, but also teach him the trade of software development. Sort of like an indentured servant, but without the benefits to me, and with all the benefits to him. Benjamin Franklin would have killed for that job when he left home as a tween.

When I hired Archie, he was working at a big box retailer selling TVs, or more accurately, ringing up TV sales. I'm not sure he ever actually *sold* anything. Archie's first job was to cut my grass. This left me time to work on my first book. Each subsequent hire, degreed or otherwise, was intended to further shed me of relatively simple tasks which kept me from writing that book. But, each new hire also introduced his own set of new tasks and needs, drawing me farther from the pen. So, that book never got finished before the underlying product line became obsolete.

Archie always seemed to have special needs. As a child, he suffered terribly from a medical condition which was genuinely tragic, which he survived heroically. I thought that this background would be a positive, he knowing what bad times were, rather than some of the prima donnas who preceded him. I based this concept on my own appreciation for my work as beating hauling a pack around in the snow or in the desert or in a tropical forest. While potentially getting shot at.

Instead, however, his background constantly became a shield for criticism. Any reprimand or correction was met with "no worries, I'm a childhood survivor." The last such reprimand came when I met Archie at the door as he was coming in the door with my postage meter in hand one morning. Questions about his rationale for taking the postage meter home led only to similar survival assurances. At lunch that day he hauled off his stuff and never came back. Two weeks later I dropped him from the rolls, seeing him only once subsequently as I was shopping for a widescreen TV at the same big box retailer. He referred my inquiry to another sales person.

Taking over his work I found numerous opportunities to implement our internal systems the way I had initially taught him. Yet, these opportunities to excel had somehow been ignored in the quest for free

postage. As part of his tutelage years before I had written a list of key style issues which I demand all of our software developers use. After ensuring that he understood each of these issues, and the productivity risks which accompany their violation, I began to inspect his work less as I turned to other dramas. Later, I found that pretty much each page of code he had written in the bulk of his time had violations of these rules. Sweeping away the dust of these errors, I managed to fix numerous issues which had plagued our internal systems for years. Again, I was rewarded by a smaller payroll and more efficient operation. And more available postage. And fewer excuses about childhood trauma.

About this time a target of opportunity arose. At my company, we ship a number of products in a variety of little white boxes. Those boxes arrive at our dock in flat, unfolded bundles. Those bundles have to be folded into boxes by somebody, and then packed with our little goodies prior to landing on the shelves as shippable inventory. For a time, we often only packed items in their little white boxes just prior to shipping. This meant that we kept our shippable inventory in bulk in their silvery cocoons in various cartons on the shelf. But, as business grew in those early days it became obvious that we needed to just go ahead and pack them in their little boxes. Sadly, a clever employee could milk this task for days.

One day, however, the fates smiled upon us in the person of Miss Meadow, who we had hired to help with odd jobs around the office. Goth girl by night, and unassuming office help by day, Meadow for a time seemed perfectly normal, all things considered, given her age and suburban cliques. Pleasant on the phone, charming in person, capable of learning just about anything non-technical, and some things that were, her career seemed on a skyrocket pointed straight up. This girl had the genuine potential to run the entire administrative side of our business.

But, as it turned out, Meadow had a tendency to cause ever increasing amounts of drama, which started out slowly enough. At first, I thought her odd behavioral quirks, which became more and more pronounced over time, were simply the result of lady things. But, the bit rate of these personality changes was far too high to admit any such simple explanation.

One evening, First Wife and I were watching an episode of *CSI*. That particular episode featured the typically cranky Sara Sidel, and I noticed that from time to time Meadow would act exactly like that character. I thought nothing of this until the next day. That afternoon, during a discussion with Archie, her hapless ex-beau who brought her into our fold in the first place, she unleashed a barrage of subtle venom at him. This barrage seemed almost straight out of the script of what I had seen the night before, down to the surly looks and bangs hanging down in front of her eyes. The light bulb went on in my head.

Once I became attuned to the concept, and Meadow noticed that I was noticing, more personalities became apparent as she created them to suit her own needs for attention. One personality which she manufactured was that of an eight-year-old autistic girl who was really into origami. Yet another was a thirty-two-year-old man-hating feminist. She then confided

in me how all the different sides of her could be summoned on command. I suppose she imagined that this detail would make her the permanent center of attention at the office.

I immediately set to finding ways in which we could make use of her affected disorders. So, to my delight, Meadow's autistic origamist turned out to be a whiz at folding the little white boxes. Conversely, the man-eater was well suited to calling deadbeats. Fortunately, we had managed to convert her little dramas into useful productivity.

This all changed with Archie's departure, which left her deprived of her normal emotional punching bag. Archie had seemed, from all outward appearances, to enjoy the abuse commensurate with his affinity for playing the victim. Lacking her normal outlet, she turned her dramatic sights on me. But that didn't last for very long, she not finding a delighted victim, and so she decided to leave to plow other fields.

Drama aside, Meadow's departure left a genuine gap in functionality. So, First Wife volunteered to take over her collection and Archie's order-processing tasks, having previously served both roles working for others. Family necessities required that we modify our systems to keep First Wife at home tending to the children between calls and processing orders. This arrangement also helps to keep her barefoot, or at least hygienically slippered, as much as possible. So, we poked a hole in our LAN to allow remote access for her. Her remote access also allowed me to work at home, too, which I had done for years and had forgotten how much I enjoyed it.

The survivors at the office imagined that by conscripting First Wife I had already committed my reserve. They then began to incrementally imagine themselves more irreplaceable. Their calculation was made without knowing of the joy which my bloodlust was bringing as our organization grew more lean and efficient. And I had plenty of plans left, each such plan effectively reconstituted the reserve as I continued automating their jobs away. But, they tried their gambits anyway.

A former steakhouse waiter who had sought to learn HTML and marketing decided that he absolutely could not be taught further coding skills without a hefty increase. I asked that he put his demand in writing, and then restored him to his tip-laden tables. I filed his unconditional demand against any unemployment claims he might present.

His departure further encouraged a quality assurance technician, who became more sluggish with each passing day. A documented test against my pre-teen son, by a four-to-one productivity margin, restored him to the unemployment line, devoid of benefits.

Amos' counterpart on the ill-fated project should have learned the lesson better. After firing Amos, I re-assigned Sparta, a degreed engineer who also had the capacity to run the entire company, to implement firmware for quality assurance tests. This had been his assignment before the mondo project.

Despite his experience in this arena, he dawdled with various projects from day to day. He also took all his accrued leave, and one day beyond. Then, one morning Sparta handed me a letter announcing that he was

taking a position with a customer of ours. I, knowing the customer and the environment into which he would be hired, laughed until tears came to my eyes. This hid my relief that he had saved me the trouble of documenting his upcoming firing. He stood there, apparently waiting for a counter-offer. None came, and after regaining my composure, I wished him well.

During this period I hired and fired a couple of other Nintendo™-generation Archies, each as disappointing as the last. Archie II, a grocery bag-boy, had genuine potential, as does *everyone*. But, he tended to whine about anything remotely difficult, such as using a power drill to hang blinds in our new office condo. After a couple of months I thought I had finally virtua-slapped the little girl out of him. This transformation apparently pleased his live-in girlfriend's father, who was having justifiable growing concerns of his own. Promisingly, Archie II had recently snapped-in to converting pages of test instruction notes into hand-assembled test boards and writing the corresponding HTML instructions.

So, one evening I decided to give him a performance-based raise, to be awarded the next morning. This was to be accompanied by an increase in responsibilities, including managing the new guy hired to take over his previous work. I discussed the raise with First Wife during a jaunt to the video store, and there we ran into Archie II. He proudly announced that he would be supplementing his income by working evenings at that very store a few doors down from his old grocery job. Within a week, attributable to night-shift video inventories, his performance plummeted, his excuses mounted, and he began to show up for work later and later.

One of Archie II's few hard-and-fast tasks was to arrive early enough to open the public door of the office promptly at 9AM so that incoming deliveries could be dropped off. During that time, a contractor friend of ours was having trouble with a test board in India, and told me that he was shipping the board for me to take a look at. Day after day, no board, but notices of delivery failure popped up on the express service website. On the third day I arose early, and arriving at the office before Archie II, I found an express sticker on the door. This sticker noted the third delivery failure and that the package would be returned to the sender. Fortunately, First Wife was able to call the express service and have the package held at their depot for pickup, avoiding hideous return and reshipment expenses to ourselves and the contractor.

In the meantime, I rooted around Archie II's office, and found two previous stickers from that same episode, as well as others for shipments which had been eventually received. He had tucked these notices out of (my) sight on the top of his supply cabinet. Mistakes, I understand. I make plenty of them myself. But dishonesty, or equivalently, hiding of mistakes, can kill your business dead, especially when your reputation is based on unimpeachable quality. And please, don't think that the stubby penguin hasn't already run across all the tall-guy hiding places. I have steppie-stool technology at my flipper-tips, after all. I own several steppie-stools, tucked away at strategic locations. Taller ladies needn't despair, so go ahead and wear those adorable high heels you found at Wild Pair.

When Archie II finally rolled in around 11:30 that morning, I asked if he still had the video store job. He answered in the affirmative, at which time I told him that was good as he would need it, and let him go in a swirl of Department of Labor paperwork.

In that same era we hired and fired Archie III within a week, he being too concerned with running what I perceived as homeowner insurance scams out of our shipping room. Allegedly, of course. He had helpfully offered to bring me in on his business, which offer I declined as I introduced him to the door. "No, please, after you." Click. His short tenure required far less paperwork.

Archie IV, hired from the same video chain but at a different branch, showed as much potential as Archie II, but with far less up-front slap time. One day, however, he showed up with painted fingernails. Figuring this was the side effect of a lost bet or prank common to young men his age, I ignored it. However, as the days wore on the fingernails became more gaily painted, and his attire more feminine and I thought I detected the slightest hint of makeup and eye shadow. Now, as you will discover from reading this book, I am nothing if not tolerant of others' lifestyles, but I do have a business to run. So, I asked him what was going on, and more importantly, whether this was a permanent transformation which he was undergoing. My intention was that we might make sure that his performance stayed high and our business reputation didn't suffer.

After a bit of evasiveness, Archie IV blurted out that his girlfriend was making him do these things. His revelation thus to me was apparently part of their fun. After I stopped laughing, I assured him that if he wanted to play his femdom games that was OK with me as long as it didn't interfere with his work performance. And, since his work responsibilities never intersected with visitors, I expected him to keep these style choices out of sight of customers and vendors alike.

I also counseled him that his right to whatever lifestyle he chooses didn't extend to making my business guests and other employees uncomfortable. That kind of intrusiveness would limit my economic opportunity, and thus my opportunity to pay his check. He agreed to the reasonableness of these limitations, as well as the right of the other employees to express themselves about his decisions he chose to flaunt before them. I notified the rest of the staff of my tolerance of his lifestyle choices, as well as their rights to express themselves in reasonable ways also. The wardrobe escalation seemed to cease at that point and held more or less constant. No incidents or confrontations arose, and all seemed at peace with things.

Within a couple of weeks, however, Archie IV's performance began to drop measurably. Upon further investigation, I discovered that he was spending an inordinate amount of time on social networking sites. Now, it has been my policy that social networking sites are the modern equivalent of personal phone calls. Just as it is reasonable to take or make a few personal calls per day, similarly it is reasonable to check personal networking sites a few times during the day. But, he had become a

networking junkie, and his cell phone was ringing off the hook. Apparently his new softer persona had become a very popular guy.

At this point, I counseled him on his measurably reduced performance, and told him that he was to limit his personal contact time at work to a reasonable level. Within a week he quit, these terms apparently eating into the dominatrix's plans for him.

In retrospect, I have come to wonder whether, given my status as a former Marine from Mississippi, that entire episode was laid specifically in preparation for a workplace discrimination lawsuit. I wonder if I was supposed to say something like "git outta my office you queer"? While imagining this phrase, supply the appropriate stereotypical accent as you find suitable. Be sure to inflect a nasal tonality. Roy Hollis' or Jackie Gleason's are good choices.

Fortunately, if this experience had been a setup, my *laissez-faire* approach sidestepped that one neatly. On the other hand, why doesn't a business owner have a right to express himself, too? We shall see why in later chapters.

Even temp help was problematic. One individual I hired on a temporary basis to help setup our network kept leaving windows open, in the wintertime, as he worked on the weekends. I found out later that he was considered by some as a habitual marijuana user. I shudder now at what might have happened to our business assets if he had been smoking pot in the office and had been caught. I spent a weekend after that pronouncement tearing the office apart looking for hidden stashes. I found none, which then made me begin to doubt the source of that rumor.

I wasn't alone in dealing with employee excess, of course. An express service driver couldn't understand our technology, and about two years after 9-11 he spread a rumor that we were "making bombs" throughout the business complex. I invited the sheriff to come check things out for himself.

I also demanded that the express service fire the driver. They refused, vaguely citing union contracts and muttering something about brown shirts. Between that episode and their propensity to lose many of my shipments, I steered thousands of packages away from that service for years afterward.

All of these little anecdotes contrast with the reason I started my business in the first place. I originally started my business so that *I might better provide for myself and family, and do so in a way which maximized my personal freedom.*

If I wanted to catch up on missed episodes of *CSI*, I would record them or rent the series. I certainly wouldn't have hired and trained a Meat TiVo™ to re-enact the dramatic portions the next day.

If I wanted to manage the day to day activities of others, I would have stayed an officer in the Marine Corps. Alternatively, I would earn an MBA, take a desk job somewhere, and get paid for it.

If I wanted to provide a space for people to potentially hang out and smoke pot I would move to Amsterdam, and get paid for it. If I wanted to listen to accusations about pot and spend my day looking for contraband, I would have joined the DEA.

If I wanted to train people for new jobs I would take a job as a professor and get paid for it. Of course, I write books which do exactly that, but I'm not *paying my students*.

If I wanted to spend hours each day examining the unemployment tax consequences of each hiring and firing decision, I would take a job in an HR department somewhere. And get paid for it. If I wanted to spend hours each day examining the legal consequences of each word out of my mouth, I would be a lawyer. And get paid for it.

I don't need to be rich, either. Why do most people want to be rich? Well, for many, riches are a way to demand the respect of other people. I don't care about that, because what they are getting isn't respect, at least not from people whose respect has any context for me.

The one, and only, reason I want money is to buy freedom. But, aren't we all guaranteed freedom by the Constitution and Declaration of Independence? Yeah, sure they are. Test this theory by flipping off a cop sometime, or even a government clerk, and then claim freedom of expression. Here in the land of freedom. The freedom I'm talking about here is real and far more important than some classroom theory.

There was a time when it was a truism that "people are a firm's most valuable resource." In those times, managing the drama which accompanies managing people was a necessary cost of doing business. Of course, in those days that statement rang true. Back then, employees didn't look behind them and see gigantic safety cushions to soften the blow if they were fired or the company went under.

Now, as did poor misguided Amos, many employees look forward with glee to practically unlimited unemployment benefits. This problem grows worse each year as many clever minds propose extending benefits *even if fired for cause or if the employee quits*. When that day arrives, my carefully documented processes will then have no value. Whatever shall I, and other employers like me, do? Bear the burden? Or figure out ways to do without employees? Hmmmm. Someone should write a book about that dilemma.

In addition, manufactured legal opportunities abound for those employees lucky enough to make a case for discrimination or harassment, both sexual and otherwise. Or demeaning treatment, emotional trauma, wrongful termination, *et cetera*. Add to that worker's compensation claims which convert a minor injury into a winning lottery ticket.

Workers also enjoy holding their employers hostage to work stoppages, whether unionized or not. In the middle years of my company's growth, we often did below-cost work on projects which were intended to increase our visibility. Some of these projects were quoted based on an understanding that the beneficiary, a major indexed company, would reciprocate with some simple marketing which somehow never seemed to materialize. We will discuss that aspect in more detail later, including the risks large companies pose to your financial well-being and what to do about it.

Regardless, these projects required receiving a large amount of material in a few containers. Upon receipt, we would run it through our quality assurance processes and repackaging it. Then, we often shipped it

back out the same day and the day after, in hundreds or thousands of parcels with worldwide destinations. These all-hands projects, planned months in advance, were one of the key justifications in my mind for having a significant staff.

Almost without fail, however, despite careful coordination and advance notice, absenteeism peaked on these days. This absenteeism often left First Wife and I, with our small children rooting around underfoot, working until late at night repackaging these ourselves. This after many of our staff had spent their day lounging around at home. One of these projects landed on or about my firing bloodlust, stoking it further.

I declined such projects after that particular exercise. And so evaporated much of the justification for a larger staff, who chose to avoid precisely that work which kept their pay flowing during the slower times. I also began to notice acts of outright sabotage which I had previously chalked up to inattention. For example, permanent markers were left in the whiteboard tray just before key vendor or customer design meetings. These produced bared-teeth smiles from the assembled as the boss looked silly to a customer trusting him, or not, with six figures of design work. Six figures which paid the pranksters' salaries.

Solder flux bottles were moved from the lab to underneath the break-room sink, requiring hours sunk into pointless searches. Staplers were left with only a few staples in them after having been loaded the previous day, and no staples to be found. A swarm of box cutters were nowhere to be found. Pens in the office supply cabinet had colored caps switched around.

Neglect also abounded. Sparta blew up a computer by not using the protective device *we made for sale to others* and for which *he provided product support*.

Key tasks were ignored, despite these being written in the little cardboard logbooks issued to everyone. And required for use as directed by the in-house time management course required of each new employee. As mentioned earlier, style guidelines for software and quality control procedures were ignored.

Until my employment bloodlust, I had applied unlimited reserves of patience and guidance. Why was I so blind for so long? Two reasons.

First, I had been spoiled by my experience at the Naval Academy and in the Marine Corps. There, I had been surrounded by the cream of the American crop. Even the few relative sluggards, by comparison with my employer experience, were hard-charging racehorses.

The worst of the absolute Marine Corps jackasses were still focused on the mission. Most arguments were about how to get the mission done. Even those solely focused on their careers were trying to accomplish at least that much self-advancement. Was it moonbeams and lollipops and slaps on the back all around? Of course not. There were rivalries and pettiness and ongoing feuds and turf wars all the time. But when it came time to focus on the enemy and the mission, almost all of which was laid aside as we stood shoulder to shoulder.

No one gives out medals for fighting the stupid on one's own side. So

once the fighting was done, all of that crap popped back to the surface. But at least the boat anchors kept their mouths shut when the time was right. The only real risk was that some of the boat anchors might percolate up into positions of real authority when paper matters more. And some did. But fortunately, at least in my experience, none of these uber-anchors caused any real damage during the shooting war. They at least had the good grace to fade into the background when one got in their face. And if one was slippery enough and subtle enough about how one got in their face at crunch time, not even their court-martial pens held much ink afterward. Of course, one had to pick the right audience for these encounters.

But men had to have the courage to do so. When the time came, enough did. And this was also part of Al Gray's intent as Commandant. He educated everyone enough so that exercising even this courage was invigorating, knowing that it was saving lives on the battlefield. And he educated even the uber-anchors enough to know that they would find few sympathetic to their offended sensibilities.

In the Marine Corps, tasks did not get forgotten, sabotage was unheard of, and people were where they were supposed to be when required. And everyone knew what suck was, in the form of hard physical labor combined with unending motion and constant mental agility. The newest boot-camp graduate had skill and vigor and motivation which would overwhelm vice presidents my company has had. Or for that matter, Vice Presidents this country has had.

Plus, in the context of the Marine Corps, and the Navy at sea, being a slacker could get you and a lot of your friends killed. The major issues came from the bureaucracy, but the Marines and sailors with whom I had day-to-day contact were exceptional people. Not so much for the typical employee.

Second, I had, as have many, been programmed to believe in the innate goodness of people, and I had extended this belief unconditionally to my employees. Perhaps these same persons in the context of what they perceive as a "real company" may have comported themselves better. But the checks they received and cashed were real, and larger than they could expect elsewhere. Their benefits were real, and similarly larger. The flexibility of work hours were real. The explicit definition of responsibilities and tasks were real. Yet their positions in a small company left them acting as if they were in kindergarten. Perhaps this is why many small companies try to grow large enough to give the impression of "realness".

This lesson required over a million dollars of my own money to learn. And I want to teach it to you for the price of this book and a few hours of your time. The lesson I learned is not *knuckle under and grow large to provide many jobs so that your employees will take their assignments seriously*. This is the lesson the monkeys, in their mindless and uncoordinated way, hope to teach.

No, no, no. No.

The lesson I learned instead is *figure out how to avoid that collectivist extortion in the first place so that your company can stay small. This will allow you to care for your family while you and your family enjoy your ticks*

of the clock.

We each have so precious few ticks of the clock. And I am done with spending them trying to get someone else to make the barest effort to lift a finger in his own behalf. This lesson applies to our society as a whole, by the way. And it applies to you, whether you own a small business, are an employee, or unemployed. We shall explore the options each of these have in detail later, but each path leads to the same destination. Note for now, however, that your path to individual liberty, and even your ability to survive a civilization-killing crisis, such as that which will be precipitated by rampant world-wide socialism, is paved with the same stones which are trod by small business. If you do not run your own business, employed or not, you must quickly begin thinking in that direction for reasons I will later make clear.

So if you are a small business owner, or will soon become one, you still have a choice to make, but that choice is rapidly fading. Soon you will have no choice at all. You may choose to take the traditional path and grow to avoid the collectivist extortions which plague small businesses. If so, you will eventually be absorbed and spend your days dealing with the excesses which grow on a daily basis with each whim of legislature and executive alike. If you accept this option you will be eaten alive. Eaten as you imagine you are growing rich as measured solely in paper and numbers on a computer screen. You will spend your days chasing numbers which can shrink into meaninglessness by a stroke of a pen. And for many of you, already have.

The other option will soon be the only choice you have. And that is to shrink your business while maintaining the level and quality of service which your worthwhile customers and clients rightfully expect. This approach will insulate you from the excesses while there is still time. I have learned how to do this, and I can teach it to you.

You picked up this book because something resonated inside you when you first heard about it. If you are still reading, that resonance is growing stronger. If you continue to read it through, by the end you may throw this book aside in disgust. And I will try my hardest to get you to do just that. Or, you will be energized to take actions for the pure benefit of yourself and your family, and share this book with others.

And in time, the economy will change as the storm clouds gather. The course has already been set by the monkeys themselves, its progress is as sure and unstoppable as the rising of the sun in the East.

In the process, the monkeys may starve. That is not my problem anymore. And it shouldn't be yours, either. Because in reality, each monkey, each day and each moment, decides to starve himself.

You now stand in front of this decision, possibly for the first time. Think for a moment about which path you wish to take. Monkey or Man?

So, if you are still willing to proceed, I will introduce some preliminary concepts which are essential to the material in this book. Then, we'll talk about where money first came from.