

VALUE IS CREATED when you successfully find a way to provide customers with services and solutions that solve their problems. We will be successful in business to the degree to which we render service that exceeds another's expectations. Value therefore is the ability to understand what's going on in the minds of our customers.

The Law of Icarus - Creating your Value Proposition

by Ben Benson

IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY Daedalus was a skilful architect and innovator who created the labyrinth where the Minotaur was kept. To prevent the secrets of the labyrinth from spreading to the public King Minos had Daedalus and his son Icarus imprisoned in a tower. Even if he managed to escape he couldn't leave Crete by sea because the king kept strict watch on all ships insisting they were thoroughly searched before departure. The land was watched by countless spies so Daedalus deduced that the only possible way to escape was by air so he constructed a set of wings to mimic the wings of a bird. The largest feathers were secured by thread and the smaller ones by wax.

When he was finished he was able to flap his new wings and found himself lifted off the ground. Excited he made a duplicate set for his son Icarus. Before they set off to freedom, Daedalus warned his son not to fly too high because the heat from the sun would melt the wax and he would fall into the sea and drown. He was also warned not to fly too close to the sea because the spray and foam of the waves would make the wings wet and they would be too heavy to work.

They successfully flew passed Samos, Delos and Lebynthos but then Icarus became over confident and began to fly upwards as if to reach heaven. As predicted by his father the blazing heat melted the wax in the wings and he fell into the sea and drowned.

The world is governed by natural laws that simply cannot be violated. These are cause and effect relationships that do not vary. Once you decide to take a specific action, do a certain thing or act in a certain way, then the outcome is assured. Icarus wasn't unlucky to fall to his death – *it was the inevitable consequence of his actions.*

In the same way your wealth is the inevitable consequence of your actions. You cannot make money without adhering to the fifth Law of Wealth. You can't make money without creating value and being of service.

Businesses planned for service are apt to succeed, businesses planned for profit are apt to fail

Your rewards in life will always match your service. If you have a religious background you may have heard this idea expressed as, "As ye sow so shall ye reap." Most people have come across this notion before in some form or another. Most people will even agree with it and tell you how it makes sense and yet very few people actually take it to heart and grasp the enormity of its application and implication. This law is not something you can pick up and put down when you feel like it. It doesn't

apply sometimes and not other times. It is an all-encompassing law of the world in which we live.

The vital force in business life is the honest desire to serve. Business, it is said, is the science of service

Think of the scales of justice. On one side of the balance is all that you are, think and do. On the other side is the reward you receive for that. If you do not feel that life is rewarding you well enough then you are not creating enough value. Your rewards are in direct correlation to the amount of value you create and the service you deliver to others.

Somewhere along the line too many of us have stopped appreciating the truth of this law and decided instead that we should *GET* before we *GIVE*. We want to reap without sowing a single seed. We want the heat from the fire *before* we have obtained the wood. We want the promotion before we make the effort. They don't see the point of working hard *unless* we get a pay-rise. We want rewards before adding the value. But a successful life just doesn't work that way.

And yet all too often people expect to make money without adding value and being of service to others. They don't realise that they have to work first, add value first before they reach a stage where they deserve that promotion. Why would someone give you a promotion for being lazy? Why would you get a pay-rise if you are doing the bare minimum? Why would your customers buy from you over the competition if you were always late and rude about it? Why would they come back to your business if their experience was not positive and you didn't make their life easier or better in some way?

But adding value and being of service is not just about making money it is about developing healthy self-esteem. There is something innately satisfying about doing a hard days work, of knowing that you've done the best you can and your contribution has made a difference.

To paraphrase John F Kennedy, "Ask not that others can do for you but what you can do for others." Whatever you seek in terms of rewards you must **FIRST** earn in the form of service to others. All efforts to reverse this law will meet with absolute failure. Icarus found out the hard way that you simply cannot violate natural laws and he paid the ultimate price.

If you truly want to create significant money in your business and life then you must add value and be of service. Adhere to the 5th Law of Wealth and learn to render exceptional value or like Icarus you may find yourself, or your business drowning in the sea.

Any efforts you exert to circumvent this law will be useless. You would be far better re-directing that effort to embracing the law and making it work for you. Icarus did not break the law, he only illustrated it.

In the high art of serving others, workers sustain their morale, management keeps it's customers and the nation prospers. One of the indisputable lessons of life is that we cannot get or keep anything for ourselves alone unless we also get it for others, too

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