

We The People
Program 6



Shrinking to Success

For many years the business world has told us that you 'cannot shrink to success'. By that they mean in a business sense you must grow and expand to be truly successful. In fact the mantra of growth has been the paradigm we have lived in for a long time. As a result we are all familiar with GDP growth and return on investment and risk management and capital gain and the like. The stock market has become our pulse as the crazy thing rattles down the tracks of unpredictability. The stock market is the antithesis of order and good measurement but it seems we have adopted it as the measure of wealth. So we look at life through this pseudo lens of money and power and continuing unchecked growth in all things.

So the voice that says 'you can't shrink to success' sits behind all we do and not just in business either. The same philosophy applies in our personal lives where we apparently need more of everything and of course the very latest technology and apparent wealth generation. There are about 7 billion people on the planet at various stages of life and many simply yearn for the basics while we in the first world see the need to grow our consumption and demand for new stuff which to a large degree we think establishes our worth and position in the community. The mantra extends to... 'If you can't measure it, you can't manage it' and while that is true it is also a little unnerving when its pinned to growth in production and excessive monetary wealth. Bill Gates of Microsoft has a personal fortune of about \$65 billion dollars and he will probably tell you that you can't shrink to success especially with IT and computers. He is also wrong. So this eternal expansion is all fuelled by rampant consumerism manufactured from the earth at a great cost. We all live in the same green house and it's getting pretty crowded and if we keep growing in terms of manufacturing something will fail. The failure is occurring right now in financial, environmental and in terms of true civilization.

I think it's time we started to teach our kids that when you have enough try to grow your quality of life and certainly don't attempt to adopt the various business models to establish real worth in your life. If you have a home and food on the table and a happy life then don't ask for more just be happy and balance your life without falling prostrate at the feet of consumerism. The King of Bhutan in 1972 coined the phrase 'Gross National Happiness' or GNH. This was to establish the principle that measure what you will by mathematics and analyses but in the end happiness is derived not from greed and power but from having the basics in life and a content family. The academics have tried to quantify this using their tired old rules and frankly have missed the point. For mankind to grow and enjoy this bountiful planet we must learn to live a sustainable life at all levels and to share the planet with all the magnificent wild life around us. We can indeed shrink to success in every way and we have to live a measured life where latch key kids are no more and where we only consume what we need.

On the Gold Coast we are trying to pack more and more people in at the expense of all of us because local and state governments are so far in debt they see the need to expand the tax base at the direct expense of our lifestyle. It's time to cap the population and stop the growth and make housing and happiness affordable to all. Unbridled growth is simply evil. We the People need to let local government know we don't want high density living in every street and we don't want any more mindless bureaucracy which stifles our lives and robs our wallets. When next you get the opportunity make it clear we can shrink to success and we are willing to do so for future generations.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley