

The Parable Of The Pipeline

by Burke Hedges

Once upon a time long, long ago, two ambitious young cousins named Pablo and Bruno lived side by side in a small Italian village.

The young men were best buddies, and big dreamers.

They would talk endlessly about how someday, someday, they would become the richest men in the village. They were both bright and hard working. All they needed was an opportunity.

One day that opportunity arrived. The village decided to hire two men to carry water from a nearby river to a cistern in the town square. The job went to Pablo and Bruno.

Each man grabbed two buckets and headed to the river. By the end of the day, they had filled the town cistern to the brim. The village elder paid them one penny for each bucket of water.

"This is our dream come true!" shouted Bruno. "I can't believe our good fortune."

But Pablo wasn't so sure.

His back ached and his hands were blistered from carrying the heavy buckets. He dreaded getting up and going to work the next morning. He vowed to think of a better way to get the water from the river to the village.

Pablo The Pipeline Man:

"Bruno, I have a plan," Pablo said the next morning as they grabbed their buckets and headed for the river. "Instead of lugging buckets back and forth for pennies a day, let's build a pipeline from the village to the river."

Bruno stopped dead in his tracks.

"A pipeline! Whoever heard of such a thing?" Bruno shouted. "We've got a great job, Pablo. I can carry 100 buckets a day. At a penny a bucket that's a dollar a day! I'm rich!. By the end of the week, I can buy a new pair of shoes. By the end of the month a cow. By the end of six months I can buy a new hut. We have the best job in town. We have weekends off and two weeks paid vacation every year. We're set for life! Get out of here with your pipeline."

But Pablo was not easily discouraged. He patiently explained the pipeline plan to his best friend. Pablo would work part of the day carrying buckets, and part of the day and weekends building his pipeline.

He knew it would be hard work digging a ditch in the rocky soil. Because he was paid by the bucket he knew his income would drop. He also knew it might take a year or two before his pipeline would pay off. But Pablo believed in his dream and he went to work.

Bruno and the rest of the villagers began mocking Pablo, calling him "Pablo The Pipeline Man." Bruno, who was earning almost twice the money as Pablo, flaunted his new purchases. He bought a donkey outfitted with a new leather saddle, which he kept parked outside his new two-story hut. He bought flashy clothes and fancy meals at the inn. The villagers called him Mr. Bruno, and they cheered when he bought rounds at the tavern and laughed loudly at his jokes.

Small Actions Equal Big Results:

While Bruno lay in his hammock on evenings and weekends, Pablo kept digging his pipeline. The first few months Pablo didn't have much to show for his efforts. The work was hard, even harder than Bruno's because Pablo was working evenings and weekends too.

But Pablo kept reminding himself that tomorrow's dreams are built on today's sacrifices. Day by day he dug, inch by inch.

Inches turned into one foot..... then ten feet..... then 20..... then 100.

"Short-term pain equals long-term gain," he reminded himself as he stumbled into his hut after another exuasting day's work. "In time my reward will exceed my efforts," he thought.

"Keep your eyes on the prize," he kept thinking as he drifted off to sleep with the sounds of laughter from the village tavern in the background.

The Tables Are Turned:

Days turned into months. One day Pablo realized his pipeline was half-way finished, which meant he only had to walk half as far to fill his buckets! Pablo used the extra time to work on his pipeline.

Durring his rest breaks, Pablo watched his old friend Bruno lug buckets. Bruno's shoulders were more stooped than ever. He was hunched in pain, his steps slowed by the daily grind. Bruno was angry and sullen, resenting the fact that he was doomed to carry buckets, day in, day out, for the rest of his life.

He began to spend less time in his hammock and more time in the tavern. When the tavern's patrons saw Bruno coming they'd whisper, "Here comes Bruno the Bucket Man, " and they giggle when the town drunk mimicked Bruno's stooped posture and shuffling gait. Bruno didn't buy rounds or tell jokes anymore, preferring to sit alone in a dark corner surrounded by empty bottles.

Finally Pablo's big day arrived, his pipeline was complete! The villagers crowded around as the water gushed from the pipeline into the village cistern! Now that the village had a steady supply of fresh water, people from around the countryside moved into the village and the village prospered.

Once the pipeline was complete, Pablo didn't have to carry buckets anymore. The water flowed whether he worked or not. It flowed while he ate. It flowed while he

slept. It flowed on weekends while he played. The more the water flowed into the village, the more money flowed into Pablo's pockets!

Pablo the Pipeline Man became known as Pablo the Miracle Maker. But Pablo understood what he did wasn't a miracle. It was merely the first stage of a big, big dream. You see, Pablo had bigger plans. Pablo planned on building pipelines all over the world!.

Recruiting His Friend To Help:

The pipeline drove "Bruno The Bucket Man" out of business, and it pained Pablo to see his old friend begging for drinks at the tavern. So, Pablo arranged a meeting with his old friend.

"Bruno, I've come here to ask you for your help." Bruno straightened his stooped shoulders, and his dark eyes narrowed to a squint. "Don't mock me," Bruno hissed.

"I haven't come here to gloat," said Pablo. "I've come here to offer you a great business opportunity. It took me more than two years before my first pipeline was complete. But I've learned a lot during those two years. I know what tools to use now, and where to dig. I know where to lay the pipe. I kept notes as I went along so now I have a system that will allow me to build another pipeline in less time..... then another..... then another.

I could build a pipeline a year by myself, but what I plan on doing is teach you how to build a pipeline, then have you teach others and have them teach others.

"Just think, we could make a small percentage of every gallon of water that goes through those pipelines."

Bruno finally saw the big picture. They shook hands and hugged like old friends.

Pipeline Dreams In A Bucket-Carrying World:

Years passed. Their world pipelines were pumping millions of dollars into their bank accounts. Sometimes on their trips through the countryside, Pablo and Bruno would pass villagers from other villages carrying buckets.

The friends would pull over and tell them their story and offer to help them build a pipeline. But sadly, most bucket carriers would hastily dismiss the notion.

"I don't have the time."

"My friend told me he knew a friend who's uncle's best friend tried to build a pipeline and failed."

"Only the ones who get in early make money on a pipeline."

"I've carried buckets my whole life, I'll stick to what I know."

"I know people who lost money in a pipeline scam."

Both men resigned themselves to the fact they lived in a world with a bucket-

carrying mentality..... and only a very small percentage of people would ever see the vision.

End Of Story

WE LIVE IN A BUCKET-CARRYING WORLD

Who are you? A bucket-carrier..... or a pipeline builder? Do you get paid only when you show up for work like Bruno the Bucket Carrier?

Or do you do the work once and get paid over and over again like Pablo the Pipeline Builder?

If you're like most people, you're working the bucket-carrying plan. It's the time-for-money-trap.

The problem with bucket carrying is that the money stops when the bucket-carrying stops. Which means the concept of a "secure job" or "dream job" is an illusion. The inherent danger of carrying buckets is that the income is temporary instead of ongoing.

If Bruno woke up one morning with a stiff back and couldn't get out of bed, how much money would he earn that day? ZERO! No Work-No Money!

The same goes for any bucket-carrying job. Once bucket-carriers stop carrying buckets for any reason, they won't continue to get a paycheck.

Real-Life True Story:

My previous dentist was the best dentist I ever had. A complete professional. Great personality. Great technician. Every visit was virtually pain-free. She loved what she did and set her own hours. She was only open three days a week so she could spend four-day weekends with her family.

She pulled down more than \$100,000 a year working three days a week at a job she loved. This was a bucket-carriers dream job if there ever was one!

One problem. Before the age of 40 she developed arthritis in her hands and couldn't work anymore. Today she teaches at a university earning one-third the income she earned as a dentist.

There's no such thing as a secure bucket-carrying job no matter how great it seems.

The problem with the time-for-money trap is that if you can no longer trade-the-time, you no longer get the money!

Most people mistake bucket-carrying for pipeline building. We observe 99% of the people in the world are carrying buckets, so we assume bucket carrying is the way to get what we want in life.

We grow up surrounded by bucket-carriers, so we figure that's the way-of-the-

world. It reminds me of a bumper sticker I saw recently: 100,000 lemmings can't be wrong!

People think the same way about bucket-carriers. 100 million bucket-carriers can't be wrong. Well yes they can!.

Let's face it. there are a lot more bucket-carriers in this world than pipeline builders.

Why?

Because bucket-carrying is the model that our parents followed and the one that they taught us to follow. The bucket-carrying model tells you here's what you do to get ahead:

Go to school and learn how to carry buckets.

Work really hard.

Earn the right to carry bigger buckets. (get promoted)

Resign from "Bucket Company A" to work for "Bucket Company B" which lets you carry even bigger buckets.

Work longer hours so you can carry more buckets.

Put the kids through bucket-carrying college.

Try to get promoted from carrying metal buckets..... to carrying plastic buckets..... to carrying digital buckets.

Dream of the day you can retire from bucket carrying after 30-40 years.

Until then, keep carrying those buckets..... or, the bucket-carriers dream comes true. You hit the big lottery! (the odds are 1 in about 14-15 million against them, but hey most all bucket carriers think it could happen to them, so..... until then, keep carrying those buckets)

What do all those bucket-carriers earn for their efforts?

Surprisingly little. According to Parade magazine's "What People Earn" survey, the average worker in America earns \$28,500 a year. Subtract almost 20% for taxes, and that leaves \$22,500 take-homepay.

Let's face it, that's not enough for most people to live on.

What do bucket-carriers do when they need more money?

Because they have a bucket-carrying mentality, they come up with a bucket-carrying solution..... if you need more money you've got to carry more buckets!

"i'll get a second job carrying buckets in the evenings and on weekends," Daddy Bucket Carrier decides.

"I can go back to the bucket-carrying job I had before the kids were born," Mommy Bucket Carrier says.

"The kids can get bucket-carrying jobs after school and in the summer," they both say.

The Results?

Today North Americans work the longest hours in the world. Yes, even more than the work-obsessed Japanese. Is the earn-more-money-by-carrying-more-buckets plan working?

No. Here are the facts.

Consumer debt is at a record high. The average household has 95 cents worth of debt for every dollar earned.

The proportion of women working to support their families more than doubled over the past 20 years.

More people are taking second and third mortgages on their single biggest asset..... their homes..... to pay the bills.

Hello! What's wrong with this picture?

It's the fallacy of carrying bigger buckets. Bucket carriers tell themselves everything would be okay if they could just carry bigger buckets.

Bucket carriers are forever wondering how much money other bucket carriers earn. True, the doctors bucket is a lot bigger than the cook's bucket..... about ten times bigger! But that doesn't mean the doctor is financially independent. He's just as dependent on his bucket carrying job as the cook.

Why?

They spend more! Truth is, the doctors and lawyers making six-figures are spending most of their income to support their lifestyles.

a. The average worker drive a \$5,000 used car. The doctor drives a \$45,000 Lexus.

b. The average worker sends his kids to free public school. The doctor sends his kids to private school..... and on and on and on.

The doctor spends just as much of a percentage of his income than all other bucket carriers. All are living paycheck-to paycheck. If you don't believe check the bankruptcy records. You'll see every kind of bucket carrier listed in there!

All Buckets Eventually Dry Up

All buckets dry up no matter how big they are. Pipelines, on the other hand, are self-sustaining. But pipelines require sacrifice. Pipelines don't build themselves. You have to be willing to put in the time and effort to build them.

A Bigger Bucket Won't Solve The Problem. Why?

Carry as big a bucket as you can but build a pipeline on the side, because as long as you carry buckets, you have to show-up to get paid, and no matter how big the bucket is... it will dry-up.

Many a person has gone from the "Millionaire Next Door" to the "Bankrupt Person Next Door".

This person had a HUGE bucket and now has nothing!

His name is Darryl Strawberry. Professional baseball player. The 38 year old outfielder broke into the majors as a teenager and was hailed as the next Ted Williams!

Strawberry has made a fortune in his career..... \$2-\$5 million every year. That was just from his baseball contract! Add a couple million from endorsements, speeches, autographs and more and he's earned \$50-\$100 million before his 40th birthday!

A guy like that has to be set for life right? WRONG!

According to a local newspaper report, "Strawberry has no income or savings to support his current wife and their three children."

What Happened?

Strawberry bought expensive everything..... including drugs and alcohol. Strawberry didn't build a pipeline..... because he thought he had enough money to last forever no matter what. He can't play baseball anymore because of his drug problem. He won't be allowed to play ever again. He's Broke!

It's Your Turn To Choose

What sounds like the best plan to you? Remember, most of your friends and neighbors won't understand! They've been taught to carry buckets.

Time Levels The Playing Field

It doesn't matter how much money you earn or how little money you earn..... we all have the same amount of time in each day. 24 hours. It doesn't matter if you're a doctor, lawyer, or cook. It only takes time to build a pipeline. Yes you'll need tools..... but those will cost relatively very little. So everyone has an equal opportunity when it comes to building a pipeline!

Timing

Some people put off building their pipelines because "right now isn't a good time for me." Guess what? Right now is a bad time for anybody! We're all stressed. We're all busy. We're all putting out fires and dealing with unexpected emergencies. There's a word for these bad times.

It's called life!

Some people waste their lives waiting for the "perfect time" to do x, y, or z. Well, they'll die waiting because there's no such thing as a perfect time. If someone told you they'd give you \$1 million dollars if you'd sit in a corner and knit for two hours every day for one year, you'd find the time right?

It wouldn't matter if your son broke his arm.....your car wouldn't start..... the cat got sick. Rather than forfeit \$1 million dollars, you'd find the time no matter what.

Waste Not Want Not

People often ask me why they should take the time and effort to build pipelines when things aren't going so bad for them right now. They say they deserve to relax in the recliner and watch TV after a hard days work. Got a few bucks in the bank.... kids are doing good in school..... no need to "rock the boat".

There's no better time to build your pipeline than when things are going good!

A Final Thought

A man was on the 30th floor of a fancy hotel overlooking Central Park in Manhattan. He pulled back the shades..... and threw open the window to enjoy the view. As he leaned out the window, he was startled to see a man falling past his window.

"How you doing?" he asked the falling man.

"Fine so far," came the reply.

The point is, there are lots of bucket carriers in the world that think they are "doing just fine". But they can't stay in the free-fall forever. Sooner or later they'll meet the ground.

For bucket carriers it's..... don't or can't show up for work..... no more paycheck!