

A summary by
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Mary Jane and Dan had moved their family to Seattle, do to Dan's new job which he loved and would come home every night and just talk about it. Mary Jane had taken a managerial position at First Guarantee. However, less than a year later tragedy struck. Dan died suddenly from a burst aneurysm.

Mary Jane was known for her great work ethic. She was a good manager who listened carefully to her staff. Her department at First Guarantee, a large financial institution where she worked, was known for its high quality of work. People could count on her department to get things done, and a atmosphere of camaraderie permeated through the air.

Another division on the Third Floor was thought about in the opposite terms. The people there were unpleasant and uncooperative. Staff in other departments seemed to revel in the details latest fiasco involving the Third Floor. It was said that life there ceased to exist. Unfortunately most of the work in the organization had to pass through the third floor at some stage and it was a major bottleneck for other departments.

Mary was offered a job as Operations Manager on the Third Floor. Although she was aware and anxious about the groups' reputation, she felt she had to take the promotion due to her financial situation as a single mother and recent widow.

Mary Jane was surprised that she actually liked the people on the Third Floor, while realizing that its reputation was deserved. They were the butt of all company jokes. Phones were left ringing and unanswered; if the staff felt hassled to work faster they would make deliberate mistakes and give lame excuses; and people could be counted on to rush to the elevators at 4: 30 every day. Mary Jane felt that the culture of the department was so

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overwhelmingly depressing that it would drag anyone down. Most of her time was spent fighting fires and dealing with continuing crises created by her staff.

One day, just as Mary Jane was heading out to lunch, her arrogant SOB boss, Bill, who would often cut her off mid sentence called. He had just come back from a meeting with the Management Group where the Third Floor was singled out as being the biggest problem of the organization. The President, who came back from one of those spirit workshops called it, " A toxic energy dump." Bill was grilled on the problem. " So, have you solved the problem of the Third Floor yet" he asked Mary Jane, it had only been five weeks since she started, " We need to fix it pronto".

Mary Jane rushed out to lunch her mind ablaze with the problems she was having. She normally went out to the Waterfront for lunch instead of using the cafeteria where her department was the butt of all jokes. Today, however she took an spontaneous turn as she headed out and ended up on First St at the Pikes Place Fish markets.

Mary Jane looked around her at a huge crowd that had gathered. There was a carnival atmosphere in the air. People were laughing and fish guys yelling out at the crowd. Even fish flying through the air. The guys would call out the orders to each other and then repeat the calls " One salmon flying away to Minnesota" one person called and the rest chorused. Then one of the fish guys noticed her and asked what was wrong? She didn't mean to tell him but the whole story about the third floor and her situation just came out. To her surprise Lonnie listened very attentively. He asked her how she liked the fish market. " I love it, so much energy and enthusiasm", she replied. Lonnie

explained that it hadn't always been like that, in fact, a few years ago they had their own toxic energy dump, but now he just loves working there and is spoiled for life. Lonnie asked if she would like to know how they turned things around. Mary Jane was unsure if a fishmonger could help her with her problem, but agreed to return the next day.

When Mary Jane returned Lonnie took her aside and explained some of the tedious tasks that a fishmonger does during the day. They discussed how any job can be boring to the person doing it, he said. Some of his customers travel all over the world for their job, which sounded exciting to Lonnie, but the customers say it gets pretty boring very fast. Just the same any job can be done with energy and enthusiasm. Here, Mary Jane learned her first lesson: There is always a choice about the way you do your work, even if there is no choice about the work itself. We can choose the attitude we bring to our work.

Mary Jane decided to ask Bill about the workshop his boss attended. Bill was argumentative but finally Mary Jane convinced him to help. As it turned out he had a tape of the workshop on his desk he could lend her. Mary Jane wondered where she found the courage to stand up to him.

On the way home as Mary Jane listened to the tape by David Whyte in the car, some of the phrases jumped out at her. "The needs of the organization and our needs as workers are the same. Creativity, passion, flexibility, wholeheartedness..."

As Mary Jane listened she realized that leading change at work will be risky for her, both personally and professionally. There was no guarantee of success. But then she thought about living her life in the toxic energy dump

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and how life was too precious to let it be sucked out of her by the culture of the Third Floor.

Mary Jane called a meeting of her staff and decided to speak from the heart. She told them how the Vice President had called the place a toxic energy dump and how most people in the company hate dealing with the department and how she was determined to clean it up because, she didn't want to spend her life waiting until retirement. Some of the staff were startled by what she had to say and even wondered how the Vice President would be if he had to do their job. Mary Jane went on to talk about choosing attitude.

Over the course of the week, some of the staff spoke to MJ saying they were behind her and were tired of being under attack by other departments. When she got to work on Friday someone had put up a large poster that read: "Choose Your Attitude" with a picture of a smiling face and a frowning face. It was then that she realized her staff finally got it. Mary Jane was so excited she called Lonnie and wanted to set up the next lesson before Monday. So they planned for Saturday at 8: 00 AM.

Early on Saturday morning MJ took her kids, Stacey and Brad, to the Fish markets to see Lonnie. Lonnie got Brad to help him pack the fish in the ice and both kids had an absolute ball. Lonnie then explained that having fun was the second ingredient to running a successful business. Although Pikes Place fish market was a serious business needing to make a profit, they can still do that while having fun, and it has other more practical benefits such as they sell more fish that way and have lower turnover.

Lonnie then asked MJ to remember what her most memorable experiences were at Pikes Place, and she mentioned a woman on the platform trying to catch fish. Lonnie explained that this was the third ingredient, called Make Their Day. It involves creating memorable experiences for others, finding ways to include them in the fun.

Finally Lonnie asked MJ to look at the way the fishmongers were interacting with the customers and see if she could come up with the final ingredient. MJ noticed that the fishmongers were very engaged with the customers and even when between activities were alert for new opportunities. Lonnie recalled how not long ago he was at the supermarket meat counter and the staff were having a good time joking around with each other but ignoring him and making him feel irritated and left out. At Pikes Place the staff are present and focused on the customer, not on themselves.