

## THE LAST *LAST* WORD

### THE “BIG FIVE” OF MY OWN\*

Five wisdom bits have sustained and energized my journey through this book.

**1. If Aristotle Ran General Motors** It’s impossible to read Tom Morris’ interpretation of Aristotle and not feel rejuvenated about one’s work. In *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*, Morris answers the 64 million dollar question: What is the meaning of life? The meaning of life, says Morris, is CREATION—the thing or outcome we produce as we work. To make that outcome the very best one is capable of, that is the purpose and meaning of life. Writing this book, I have experienced the Aristotelian meaning first hand, finding both inspiration and fulfillment. For more than a decade (five years, more focused), this book has been my Karma.

**2. Great Minds Discuss Ideas** *Small minds discuss people. Average minds discuss events.* This quote, attributed to Eleanor Roosevelt, has reassured me a thousand times of the power of ideas. While people- and event discussions will continue to offer us comic relief, **the world moves**, ultimately, by the power of ideas. **By bodies of knowledge**. Knowledge that is created, recreated, shaped and disseminated. In this great enterprise of our times, *MY CB Book* is presented as a modest contribution. Because, ultimately, the inherent worth of ideas prevails—above people and over events.

**3. Kanter’s Law of Success** *“Every project in the middle seems a failure,”* says Harvard professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter, author of *Confidence: How Winning Streaks and Losing Streaks Begin and End*. Although I never quite encountered that specific middle moment, I came close, often. Kanter’s Law helped me glide over.

**4. Let’s At Least Be Interesting** During my graduate days, Jerry Zaltman (then at my Alma Mater, Pitt, retired recently from Harvard) penned and circulated a paper titled “Let’s At Least Be Interesting.” His paper, to the extent I recall, was a call to academics to not make scholarly papers boring. I, in total awe of the utterly fascinating writings of Belk, Holbrook, Holt, Pollay, and Sherry, among others (here counting only the academics), have tried to cultivate an “interesting” style myself, sometimes to the utter dismay of some reviewers, but, also to one most rewarding outcome, when, several years ago and out of the blue, Arch made contact to tell me (even if only to humor me, I am sure) that of my writings he was a fan.

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\*Maslow models humans by five core categories of needs (Chapter 2). Personality psychologists portray a person by five personality supra-traits (Chapter 5). There are five universal cultural value dimensions (Chapter 6). Academic marketing literature profiles brand personality also by five dimensions. And the famous P’s of marketing are (or should be) also five (for the fifth ‘P’, see Chapter 21, and also *Valuespace*, 2001, [www.myvaluespace.com](http://www.myvaluespace.com)).

## Contd....

The goal of writing to “be interesting” was particularly important to this book project. If you have come this far, you know of course that **the book is** more than mere interesting writing. It is also **a retelling of a body of knowledge**, and, in so doing, sometimes altering its original form as well as content, and not infrequently, creating some anew. “New Theory” in what is primarily a textbook? I have heard some ask, and then immediately respond with another rhetorical question: to the first-time reader, unfamiliar with the CB body of knowledge (or unfamiliar in this depth), aren’t ALL theories new?

The book has turned out to be a mix of the old and the new, the established and the venturing, the gravitas and the playful, the professorial and the usability-biased, and a mix of science and literature that the calm, curious, and innovation-embracing minds will find rewarding. From opposite mindsets, though, I fancy, and then fear, the sobriquet (borrowing from *Freakonomics* subtitle) of a rouge CB author.

**5. Find Your Voice** Find your voice. And then help someone else find his/hers. (**Stephen R. Covey, *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness.***)

“Finding” is what I had been doing for more than a decade; Covey helped me (like thousand others) put it in words. Making it a tangible goal.

It is worth asking, though, which is more fulfilling: finding your voice, or helping someone else find his/hers? Not all are blessed to find it—some never had this ‘voice’ wisdom dawn on them; others never knew what their voice was. And many lack one or more of the requisite five resources (money, time, physical energy, knowledge/skills, and social capital/network, see Chapter 1).

Some who have found their voice never graduate to the next level—thus, missing the joy of helping others find theirs. (**And the joy of morphing from a muffler to a booster is even more surreal.**) I have been fortunate to have as benefactors more than some six-dozen people, who have, during this book project and over my professional life as well, served to boost my voice. This book is one embodiment of my voice. **Dear voice finders and voice supporters—old friends and those who may now gather:** For making the book possible and now for reading it in (almost) its entirety, as well as for sharing your opinions, please accept my gratitude.

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