

The Unbeaten Path to Personal and Business Success

I Moved Your Cheese



*For Those Who
Refuse to Live as Mice
in Someone Else's Maze*

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THE GOOD BOOK

They called it a revolution. The lesson—the insight—had spread throughout the maze. Scarcely a mouse remained who had not heard what was contained in the good book.

The insight was profound. More importantly, it did not rely too much on one's ability to reason. And any mouse will tell you that this attribute is the hallmark of all great truths. So it was accepted as perhaps the greatest, and certainly the most important, truth. And it was all so simple.

The book made it clear: Change happens. You can sit there and complain about it, or you can change with the times. Do not fear change. Accept change. What happens in the maze is

beyond your control. What you *can* control is your reaction.

Now, just because every mouse had come to understand this insight does not mean that every one of them was able to adopt it in practice. Some succeeded fully. They learned that change is inevitable and uncontrollable. They accepted that they were helpless to control the workings of the maze—fate, they called it—and they pledged to adapt.

Many others succeeded to a lesser degree. They still had moments of fear, immobility, depression, and despair. But such moments were less frequent than in the past. These mice improved their lot in the maze considerably.

To be sure, there were also mice who rarely thought about what the good book taught

them. They agreed with it in principle but did not have the time or energy to change their ways. After all, habits are hard to break. They would work on it later—maybe next week, maybe next year.

Overall, life in the maze was now quite different. In the past, when cheese moved from one location to another, all the mice were in despair. They could not understand what happened. They cursed their luck. They sat and waited in the cheese corner of the past and prayed for its return. They got agitated and lost their temper. They got angry and made an already difficult life even worse.

Now, after reading the good book, the mice reacted differently. The disappearance of the cheese was still traumatic, and it was still impossible to understand why the cheese had

moved. But now the mice began to go in search of new cheese depots. Those who had fully adopted the good book's philosophy were the first to set about in search of the new cheese.

Those who struggled with the philosophy, who found it difficult to break old habits, were slower to move. But they, too, understood that they had to change with changing times. They, too, eventually went to look for more cheese.

By learning to change with changing times, the mice succeeded in finding more cheese. They found it more quickly than they had ever done in the past. The good book was right! They had cheese . . . more cheese, and sooner than ever before. It does not get much better than that if you are a mouse.

And so the mice no longer questioned why

the cheese moved. Everyone agreed that such questions had no answers. They did not try to devise plans to try to stop the cheese from moving. Only a fool would think that fate could be controlled. Above all, they never again asked the unreasonable question, “Who moved my cheese?”

Life was simpler now. It all came down to a very simple equation:

$$\begin{array}{c} \textit{You want cheese} \\ + \\ \textit{The cheese is no longer here} \\ = \textit{Go elsewhere to find the cheese.} \end{array}$$

After all, for a mouse in a maze, cheese is really all that matters.

But then . . .

Well . . . then there was Max.

And Max was altogether different.



MAX

When Max was younger, he once asked his parents why there was a maze. His parents didn't understand the question. When he persisted, they told him that some questions have no answers and that the maze simply *is*. When he asked why the maze was designed the way it was, and why it had so many useless paths, they told him not to waste time wondering why. They told him to focus, instead, on learning how to navigate the maze. You don't get to the cheese by wondering why, they said; you get to it by running around the maze as fast as you can. The maze, they explained, was a *given*. You work with what you're given. It is pretty arrogant for a young mouse to think that he could do otherwise, they cautioned.

Max was not blessed with the virtue of blind obedience. Instead, he continued to annoy his parents, his friends, his teachers, and anyone else who made the mistake of discussing such matters with him. The more he questioned, the more he discovered how little the other mice understood. They *knew* a whole lot, but they *understood* very little.

One day Max came across the good book. It infuriated him. He could not figure out how such a book could be so widely read and so blindly accepted. Upon reading the book, all the other mice had resolved to accept change without question because change, it taught, was inevitable and uncontrollable.

But Max was different. And upon reading the book, Max resolved quite the opposite.

Max was determined to discover who had moved the cheese. He was determined to discover why they had moved it. He was determined to discover why the maze was the way it was. And he was determined to change what he did not like about the maze. And so he set about it.

And a long time passed.

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