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Taking a Positive Tack

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The power of positive thinking is, in a word, powerful. It can cure disease. It can manifest good deeds. And for anyone who is familiar with Sue Heck on the TV show “The Middle,” positive thinking can even get a young and awkward girl through high school with little to no harm. There’s actually some “science” (pseudo or regular, I can’t be sure) behind the hows and whys of positive thinking, or really the power of any thought, whether good or evil. The science as I understand it is that thoughts are things and as such, have mass. The more of the same type of thought (and mass), the more that thought acts on other things around it. If I think about this too much the only thought I end up with is tightly wrapped in confusion.

Call it prayer, call it manifestation, call it dreaming, call it positive thinking—I think you’ll agree we all have anecdotes in life that prove thoughts can have an impact on reality. Of course, for most of us it is a case where there are thoughts quickly followed by actions that provide the positive results. One of the best cases of this I have recently heard of was exhibited by the folks at Nalls Produce. Coincidentally our 2015 Dümmen Orange/*Green Profit* Young Retailer Award winner Valerie Nalls, just happens to work there, and she related this anecdote to me.

Nalls Produce had a brand new Wegman’s open about a mile down the road from them around Father’s Day of this year. Have you been to a Wegman’s? They have it all. And when it comes to produce they have it all PLUS some. They even have black truffles on display (and under lock and key). Who does that? Wegman’s, that’s who. As a business with “produce” in your name, you have to be a little scared, no?

No, says Valerie. They weren’t scared at all. They were excited. The folks at Nalls Produce saw a giant and well-respected retailer moving in nearby as an opportunity, not a challenge. The opportunity, as Valerie noted, was the increase in consumers fitting their demographic driving by their place to get to Wegman’s. “We’ve got to work on making sure we look really sharp from the road,” is what Valerie was telling folks who questioned her about Wegman’s impact. Sure enough, new customers are stopping in on their way to or from Wegman’s. And they are buying stuff. Positive thought. Positive action. Positive outcome.

My conversation with Valerie (see page 26 for the whole YRA winner’s story) also revealed another positive

spin, and this one coming from her customers. I asked her if her customers are at all concerned about bees and other pollinators. “I have found they are asking questions in more of a positive way,” says Valerie, “such as ‘Do bees like this flower?’ ‘Do these flowers attract honeybees?’ I’m not getting much in the way of ‘Is this chemical harmful to bees?’ I’m getting more of a ‘How can I help the wildlife in my yard?’” This positive take can also be seen with other topics such as native and drought-tolerant plants, wildlife gardening and chemical use on edibles. It’s more of a “How can I help grow and nurture my own environment?” spin on things, Valerie explains, rather than a “What harm does this cause?” Grumpypants stance.

What difference does it make, really? Well, people who are positive are open to new things. Their attitude right from the start is “I’m looking to buy, I just want to buy the right thing.” They are willing to work with you to find the solution they need. On the other hand there’s Grumpypants, who is doing his best to keep his pennies in his pocket and will be dead set against any solutions you may offer, simply because for him there are no solutions.

You remember the saying about catching flies with honey instead of vinegar? That’s a clue on how to get these positive shoppers on your side. With all those positive vibes working together, you can move mountains. Or at least nudge your bottom line up a notch or two. **GP**