

## ***Session on Change***

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### **What is the Definition of Risk?**

**None of us like it but change has arrived! How do we handle it in our jobs? Some of our programs are in a hole/dip, or rapidly heading for one because of the California economy, lack of support from our institutions, or even our own decisions. What do we do?**

**With change comes risk. There are many ways to define risk, so the key for all of us is to define it in a way that motivates us. For me,**

### **RISK IS DASHING INTO HOPE**

**I'd like to share some thoughts today from my current favorite hero, Seth Godin to get us thinking and sharing with one another.**

Most of us want to believe that the choices we make will work out and that everything will be okay in the long run. We believe this because, how can we proceed knowing that there's a good chance that things might get worse, that everything won't end up okay? We lie to ourselves, because everything isn't going to be okay. Change is here and Change really does Change things. It makes some things better and some things worse. But it does not make everything okay.

I think we still hope someone will save us. That would mean keeping things just as they are. But we're really in a new world. Nothing will save us. Newspapers cannot be saved; the music industry as it was cannot be saved; printed books won't be with us for long. We need to get past the idea of hanging on to what was and learn to move forward. ***Status quo has left the building.*** ☺

I'd like to encourage us to muster up the bravery to shun false reassurance. Do we quit? Or do we stick/ship? **Yes**. We have to quit the wrong stuff. Stick with the right stuff. And definitely SHIP.

We can't do everything, so the key is deciding what to quit and what to SHIP. And the more we ship, the more the marketplace will love us and the more we'll win.

**SHIP** is my new favorite word. Let's define it by looking at Cadbury Chocolate Company. They make a product for consumers to buy, and they ship it to locations where we can have access to it. Easter is coming and I'm looking forward to buying Cadbury Eggs to fill all the little baskets I'm planning to make. In order to meet my basket-filling deadline, Cadbury must SHIP. And that's what we do in our jobs. We SHIP classes and we SHIP customer service. Both we and Cadbury better do it on time and meet expectations, because if we don't, our customers will buy their chocolate Easter eggs from See's ... even if they are more expensive.

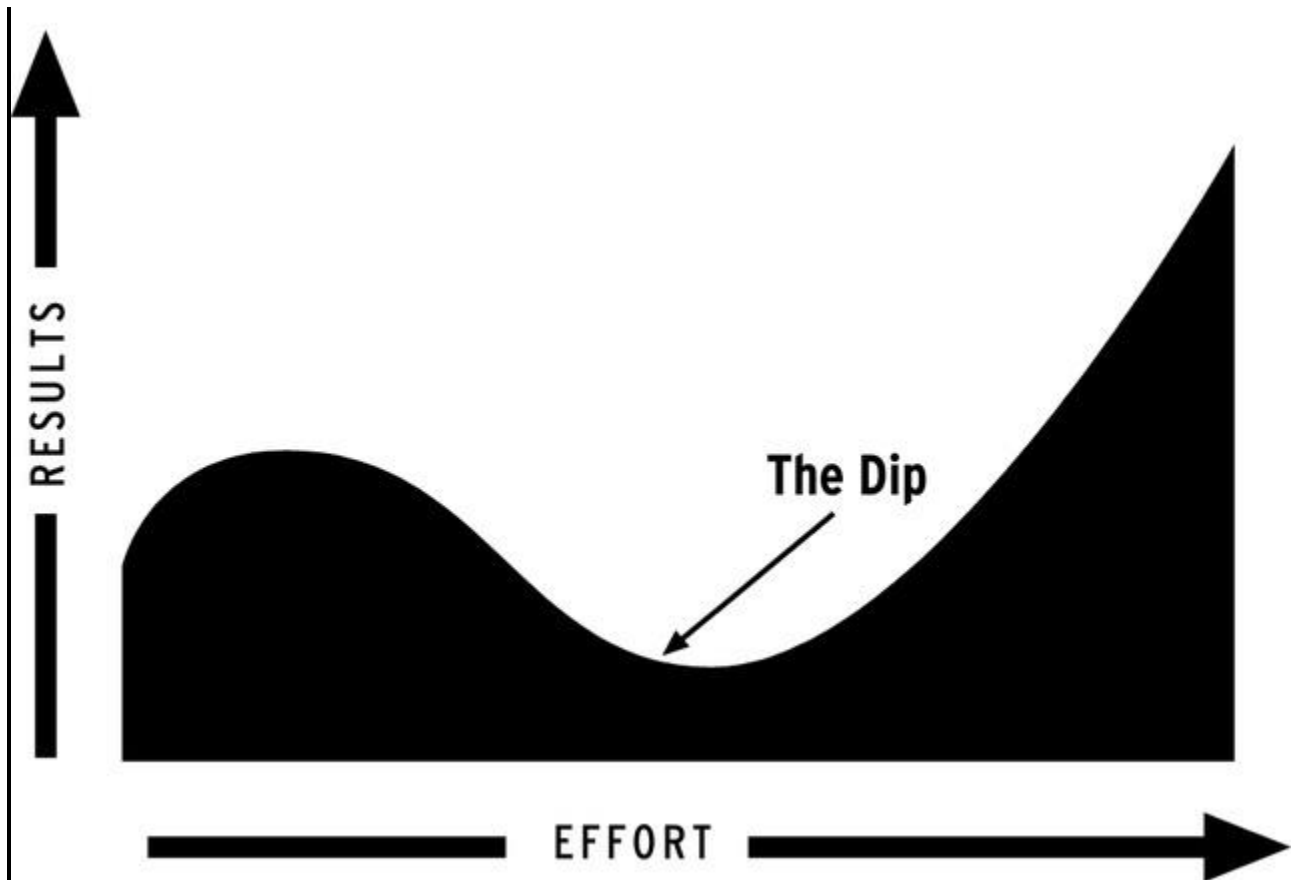
So ... what would keep us from **SHIPPING**? Being in a **DIP** could. **THRASHING** too late could.

## The DIP

The beginning of an undertaking is fun and exciting. Think of a graph with the line headed up. The "starting" of the project, or job or even the birth of a baby is exciting and keeps us energized and engaged. But then a **DIP** happens; first our rising line on the graph levels off; then it falls into a lower level. During this time, the excitement of the "new" has worn off, and we have entered the "mastery" stage.

The DIP is the long trek between starting and mastery. In the DIP lives bureaucracy, busywork, (potty training) and budget reviews. Think of the aspiring doctor who finishes her course work at the top of that upward climb on the graph and then enters the DIP of residency.

The DIP is a learning place, a testing place, and not a very exciting place. Successful people don't just ride out the DIP. They don't just keep their heads down, keep doing the same good or required work and wait for something to get better. They push harder, change the rules, refuse to listen to "you can't" and "it probably won't work". They lean into the DIP.



Visualize our graph. The line climbed up, then flattened and became a bowl. We're sitting in the bottom of the bowl. We can't climb out. We have to lean out – press against the side until it collapses and we can climb up onto another rising line. Just because you're in a DIP doesn't mean you have to stay there. You can, of course. There are a lot of DIP people at the DMV and probably at our colleges. ☺ The first step to get out of a DIP is to recognize it; then face it down by leaning into it. It's important to know that if something is really worth doing, like saving our programs in a time of crisis, saving our State or Nation or whatever you care about, raising our kids well, there will surely be a DIP.

The DIP could be the secret to your success because if you want out, you will invest the time and energy and effort to learn and lean. You will break down the wall of the DIP by not settling, but instead advancing into the challenge, refusing to abandon the quest and pushing through. We can all succeed if this process and here's why: •We're better at solving hard problems than anyone else at our Colleges. •We think it's the challenge that makes what we do interesting. So the next time an administrator or a nasty customer or

a cranky co-worker irritates you, stop and be thankful, because it's a DIP that will teach you something. Lean! (shoe lace demonstration)

Does this mean we never quit? YES & No. We quit the campaign/class offering/teacher/whatever that isn't working; but we stick with the program. The DIP makes what we're doing worthwhile, and the DIP is also what will make the weaker competitors quit. Plan for the DIP. Know it will be coming. Most of those who fail to get through a DIP let it catch them off guard as a result of poor planning. The DIP creates scarcity and narrows the playing field.

Realize the DIP is not all about me or you. We're not in it alone and we can't get out alone. Gather your team (staff/teachers) and lean into the DIP together, it will flatten sooner. And if we do all of this well, we will end up not only flattening our DIP, but we will construct a DIP for our competitors so deep and long that they'll be stuck in it for a good while. Think of the DIP Microsoft has created, then **EMBRACE THE DIP.** ☺

## THRASHING

Another thing that can keep us from SHIPPING is THRASHING. Thrashing is a rural term. It's the time during harvest when the farmer who cuts down the grain crop, bangs it around to make sure every last piece of grain falls off the stalks to be collected for food. To me, thrashing is sort of like making sure your young child eats every single bit of food on her plate and must sit at the table and be badgered until the plate is empty. Not always a good thing, depending on how late or early you serve dinner. ☺

How does THRASHING apply to us? We come up with a great new idea for marketing or for a new program or whatever it might be. We begin to make the plans and it looks better and better. We hire the teacher, book the room. We make a "coming attractions" announcements and begin the marketing.

Then ... in comes SOMEONE (an administrator, a risk manager, our staff, may even ourselves) and says *I'm not sure we're ready. We ought to tweak it this way. Maybe not on Wednesdays. Maybe a new class title. Let's check on our insurance coverage. I just want to re-design the ad one more time to get it perfect. It might make the credit faculty mad.* That's called **THRASHING**. Is it a bad thing? NO! Should it happen at the end of the project? NO! Thrashing happens during planning,

but somehow we often end up banging the project almost to death; and we delay the SHIP. The result of a delay to SHIP is never good. The customers we're trying to reach buy those chocolate eggs somewhere else. So my advice passed on from Seth Godin, is thrash at the very beginning and then be satisfied and go forth and **SHIP!**

Now ... let's talk about these ideas and see how they apply to our various programs. Ready, set, talk!

Here's a list of wonderful books by **Seth Godin**. You should also look him up online and sign up for his blog.

- Linchpin (my goal is to be one)
- Tribes
- The Dip
- Purple Cow
- Small is the New Big

Also take a look at **Borrowed Brilliance** by David Murray