

MICHAEL VIGNOLES

Contagious Energy

Most of my days started out at eight in the morning. Orange rays of light began to peak out of the clouds as the train whizzed by. New Yorkers were still yawning, lulled by the sounds of the train, their long tired faces adorned with bags under their eyes, and their dazes were always far away and out of focus. You could tell some were still in dire need of their morning coffee. Then there was me, in my own world. My shoulders were getting sturdy to every beat of lil Wayne. That's how I got hype for work, like I'm Tom Brady about to win another Super Bowl. The store was located in the heart of the city, right under the Empire State Building. It shone **it's light** above, like a beacon, leading me home. This first day at the flagship store was like no other. Customers and staff were looking at me like I was absolutely crazy on drugs. I was screaming at the top of my lungs welcoming everyone into my store, I didn't mind the stares though. Not one customer was going to pass me without being greeted. I screamed "She's a size 9 in women and the hubby here is a size 11 in men!", to a couple that came in. It was followed by a slight second of confusion in the customer's eyes, as she wondered how I knew their size but I didn't stick around to long to explain, I was already running downstairs **getting their shoes.** As I ran back back up the stairs, everyone could hear me yell, "We can't stop and won't stop!"- my signal to let customers and staff know that I'm giving 110% in everything I do. Both staff and customers constantly asked my manager, who I had been working with for a year by then, "Who is that and

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Comment: Look up rules for "it's" and "its" on the Purdue OWL.

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Comment: I can assume you have a good eye for shoe size, but how did you know what STYLE of shoes they wanted? (I mean, here you haven't even greeted them, so they haven't told you what they want.)

why is he so loud? Is he always like that?" Without batting an eyelash she would reply, "That's just who he is".

In my eyes, to be the best manager one could be, you have to be able to motivate every employee under your wing as well as anyone that walked into your store. I was able to get the opportunity to become a manager at the highest volume store, because of the energy I exuded and the relationships with customers I was able to make. Oddly enough, my motivation was knowing that the world we live in has gone to shit. For example, we have a buffoon of a president in office; we have concentration camps separating children from families, and people of color who still do not feel safe enough to buy a bag of skittles and an Arizona. At times it feels like we as individuals have no power and control to make a difference. With a set of rosy colored glasses on, it was then that I realized that I met hundreds of people around the world virtually everyday and that I could then have the power to impact every customers lives that I crossed paths with. Even with something as small as my famous greetings. In a world that makes you seem so small at times, I finally found a way to make a huge impact.

I once had a family who was visiting the city from Wales while working at the store. They were a couple, with their daughter and son. While spending time with them for the first time I didn't think anything out of the ordinary would come of our interaction. I made them laugh and they even bought a lot of items from me, though they didn't seem to intend to. It was when the family came back the next day, and the day after just to visit me that I felt that this was something different. Their hotel was right next to the store so they always ended up visiting at least once a day during their trip, just to say hello to me. On their last day in the city the family and I took a group selfie, and they said next time they come back to the city there going to come and find me. I was shocked that our small interactions had grown into a bond almost friend like,

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Comment: This is really interesting and important to the essay. As a reader, I kind of feel like you don't spend enough time with it. Let's talk about this.

with my confidence on the rise I let them know that the next time they would see me I would be running the store. This family only served as a reminder to my manager of how much my presence, kindness and energy meant to them, how it set me apart from all of my other coworkers. With everything seeming to fall apart out in the outside world, I was just happy to be able to bring a smile to this family everyday on their trip in the city, letting them into my own little world for a while.

One last experience I remember with a customer, started off seemings awful. It is not often to see a customer who's shopping and looks so unhappy at the same time, so when they came in they caught my attention almost immediately. This customer came in with her friend, both from Long Island and visiting the city. Without mentioning why she looked so miserable I proceeded to help her with shoes. My goal was to get her to try something on but it was also now to wipe the unhappiness from her face if even for just a second. I brought the shoes out she asked me for and some other ones that I thought she might like. One thing I learned was that customers who you are able to make laugh and connect with were the easiest to persuade to buy. I knew I wanted to make her laugh so I pitched some socks because I knew I would be able to make jokes with them. My favorite line to go in with was, "I have some socks. You get five pairs for only nine dollars. That's Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, you don't have to do laundry. That's also five days worth of warm-sie toes-ies". At first it was rough, she was still visibly upset but then she began laughing and suddenly it was like she forgot why she was so sad to begin with. Later that day I found out that the reason she was so sad was because her boyfriend broke up with her and her friend was trying to show her a nice day in the city. I had only managed to heighten the niceness of the day.

These were just some of the experiences that I believed were so small, and yet ended up leaving an impact with each and everyone of these people. What amazes me more is how many other lives I've impacted but just never really realized it. I've learned that regardless of whether you give out love and positivity or hatred to this world, it will always return tenfold later. My job was to persuade customers to buy products from my store, however, I was the best at it because it became much more to me than that. I truly cared and wanted to give a one of a kind shopping experience, leaving all customers with a smile at the end of the day regardless of what was happening in that awful outside world. I can't control that outside world, but in *my* world, *my* shoe store, I was able to make smiles for everyone.

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Comment: Let's talk about what you've learned. This doesn't really seem to be an essay about learning to me, exactly.

