

June 14, 2010: Some Extremely Helpful Things to Know

Occasionally I stop talking long enough to listen, and/or stop talking long enough to pay attention to things around me. The following is a list of fairly amazing factoids that I learned by observing. These may change the way you think and live, or not.

The World is Upside Down – Bananas Too?

How did I live so long and not know that bananas are intended to be eaten from the bottom end? Just pinch the bottom of a banana and it opens immediately. Think how you currently eat a banana. I bet you start with the stem end. Is your worldview upside down as well?

Outside of the Pantheon

If you walk outside of the front entrance of the Pantheon in Rome, what is the first thing you see? Bet you didn't guess the Golden Arches! Aside from being a definite sign of the coming apocalypse, the non-deliciousness of this irony is inescapable.

Rising Real Estate in China

There is a real estate bubble in China mainly because men outnumber women by more than 100 million. And men will work hard and spend much to impress. The average apartment in Shanghai is selling for an astronomical 60 times the average urban wage (as compared to less than 5 times in the U.S.). Romance through real estate? Guys, flowers would be cheaper plus lead to a more sustainable economy.

What Time Is It

While in Istanbul recently I couldn't help but notice the following sign posted on a fair number of store fronts: "Genuine Fake Watches." Thank goodness for truth in retailing. I wouldn't want to buy a non-genuine fake watch by mistake.

Americans Are So Fat

That in any international airport I can spot one from a hundred yards away. I didn't realize how fat we had become until I traveled widely (no pun intended).

VCs and PEGs

Venture capitalists make investments with the hope of achieving 40-50% returns on their investments; whereas, private equity groups desire 25-35% returns. Yet in reality VCs realize returns of 10-20%, and PEGs achieve 0-10% on the average. Trillions of dollars invested and that's all the better they can do? It's enough to make one think that MBA's are not value-added.

Shifting Poles

The increased electricity used by modern appliance parts is causing a shift in the Earth's magnetic field. By the year 2327, the North Pole will be located in mid-Kansas, while the South Pole will be just off the coast of East Africa. I have no idea what the ramifications of this will be, but I plan to visit Kansas then to find out.

The Value of Investment

Most business owners over-value their businesses by a factor of two, but undervalue the amount invested in their businesses by a factor of four. This mainly explains why most owners are not creating more valuable businesses.

Scary Government Statistics

In 2010 the U.S. government is projected to issue about as much new debt as the rest of the governments of the world combined. More than 40% of those employed in the United States are now working in low-wage service jobs. U.S. commercial property values are down approximately 40% since 2007, and currently 18% of all office space in the United States is sitting vacant. It's a good thing Bernanke says the economy is recovering or I might be tempted to think the U.S. is caught in a wicked toilet swirl.

Perhaps I would be better-off not paying such strict attention to things around me, which of course, would be just like everybody else. Alas, my calling is to spread this virulent Midas gospel. Which leads to the following conclusion: If ignorance is bliss, non-Midas-ites must be the happiest people on earth.

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