

Ancient
Passages:
How it
Works?

Story Number Three

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Ancient Passages – How it Works – Story Number Three

The richness of the timeless, ancient stories, the way they dig into you as you dig into them, will amaze you and challenge you to be more, so you can do more. This happens whether you are reading alone, with another person, or in community with others who are also seeking wisdom.

The process is simple. The tools are practical. The approach is proven. The passages are powerful.

You will be equipped and empowered to engage others in the dynamic impact of Discovery Studies.

Proven in millions of lives worldwide, the passages in this simple process with its practical tools change perspectives and lives. The topical books in the Ancient Passages series are bringing the Discovery Study Approach to individuals and groups who would otherwise never have known the wisdom and peace to be found in these studies.

Designed to invite individual discovery, and generate multiplication in groups this unique approach is not

just happening in Africa, but can happen for you and those you care about.

A Story of How it Works:

Samuel and Serg have been working together, mostly interfacing on joint projects for four years. Samuel has been attending a small discovery study group that is focused on the topic of work-life challenges, meeting weekly for the past three months. Each week the group has been asked two big questions. Samuel has been answering the first and ignoring the second. The first question is, "How will you apply what you have discovered? (Start your answer with "I will.") The second is, "Will you tell the story of this passage to someone this week?"

Each time each person in the group answered the same eight questions including the one Samuel was not answering. By the end of the second week everyone knew the guidelines for the group and the guidelines for the one running the group since there was to be no leader (not allowed), and each member would take turns facilitating the sessions.

The group had just completed the six subtopics under the topic of "Relationships" and the six subtopics

under the topic of “Stress.” The remaining topics in Passages: Work-life Wisdom were “Ethics”, “The Right Fit”, “Burnout”, and “Doing Your Own Thing.” Samuel was planning on continuing, but he was particularly interested in “The Right Fit” topic.

The ‘right fit’ had become a question mark for him. He was increasingly aware that he was comfortable dealing with the challenges of his own job, but not so much the work results of the increasing numbers of people he was managing. “Ethics” was coming up next in the group and hopefully it would shed more light on what he could pass along to his work group. Work was a high stress setting and what he had discovered already for himself and from the discoveries of others in the group had been a great help.

Samuel and Serg were meeting in the board room where it was quiet, filled with white boards, and guarded by a sign on the door that said, “Room Reserved until 12:30. Do not Disturb.” The time that morning was set aside for the two of them to initially brainstorm what appeared to be a complicated project. It was one that they realized going in would stress the resources their two design teams had to pull it off.

They worked amazingly well together, Samuel being somewhat the introvert, and Serg being very much the extrovert. Shortly after 12pm they were sending follow-up and next steps directives to their design and production groups, closing their laptops, and packing up.

Serg said, "I'd like to do a quick lunch with you before I head back to my office. There is something I want to ask you about. It has to stay between you and me for now."

Samuel said, "I'll just drop my stuff in my office on the way out."

The restaurant, advertised as the best burger joint in the city, was busy and loud. Samuel grabbed a table on the patio while Serg ordered for both of them.

When Serg sat down at the table he said, "First of all, as you know, we do not share a joint direct report, and I am not asking for advice, just making you aware of something, and maybe getting some seasoned input."

"The same as you do, our standard contracts are issued out of the production side of the house and legal is rarely involved in those agreements. It has

come to my attention, and I need to keep my source confidential, that two of the people executing those contracts are including unwritten stipulations that are not in the standard agreements. Basically it is “If you want this deal you have to use these subcontractors,” but nothing is ever in writing so I suspect some of our major clients may be complicit and all too willing to comply. Basically these two have been forcing subcontractors onto our clients and making deals we were not aware of. I don’t know if there is a kickback, but once the facts are in our two guys will be dealt with appropriately, and if money changed hands under the table they will be prosecuted.

This has to be handled discreetly for several reasons, but my concern goes beyond that. Some of our people, otherwise great employees, may have looked the other way.”

Samual spoke, “Sounds like you have, or will have, the situation under control.”

Serg added, “That’s just it. I’m not sure we will. I think we need to build or rebuild a culture of integrity, or a code of ethics in my division of the company.”

For some reason Samuel had put his copy of Work-life Wisdom in his shoulder bag. He pulled it out and handed it to Serg. Serg looked at the front cover, then turned to the back cover and read, "*Ancient words, timely wisdom for today's working world.*" Then he asked, "What's this?"

Samuel explained, "It is six work-related topics, each with six subtopics." I am in a group where we have completed the first two topics, "Relationships" and "Stress." The next topic is "Ethics!"

Serg broke in, "So what would I do with this? Have my people read it?"

Samuel continued, "You could, but it's more powerful than that. Each of the sessions follows a proven model where individuals discover and own their takeaways for themselves. No teaching, introducing outside materials, giving advise, or telling anyone what to think, do, or believe is allowed. You could read and answer the discovery questions by yourself, with another person, or you could ask that person to invite a few others into a group."

Serg jumped in with "What do you suggest?"

Samuel responded. "I propose that you and I meet a couple of times so you can experience the format. We could do the first two subtopics in the "Ethics" section." Samuel took his book back from Serg, looked inside and said, "The first two topics are 'Living an Integrated Life', and 'Results of an Unintegrated Life.' While we are doing that you should be thinking about finding just one person, a person who is one of your people, respected, with influence, but not necessarily someone with authority over the others."

"You and that person will do what You and I will do for a couple of sessions, then you will ask her or him to invite 4-7 people to go through all six subtopics in the "Ethics" section. I recommend, for several reasons, that this be all voluntary based on your influence, not your authority. If you attend this group at all you must leave after a session or two and let the members facilitate the group. Each of those members can be challenged to meet with someone else and ask that person to invite others to a new group. You can invite people to a group and stay in that group. If someone else invites the members of a group you can encourage that person, but you must not continue to meet with the group beyond a couple of sessions."

"This appears to be slow, and it is at first." Samuel

pulls a notebook out of his shoulder bag and continues, "I ran some numbers for this in my division and if each group had three people initiate a new group and the average size of a new group was eight, in six weeks you would have eight people completing the "Ethics" topic, in 18 weeks 104, and in 36 weeks 2,808. The numbers will vary, but regardless you get the point. Even if each group had two people initiate a new group and the average size of a new group was five, nine months out you could have 315 people through the study."

Serg asked, "How is this different from a class or workshop where we bring everyone in and get there much quicker?"

Samuel paused for a moment and then said, "How many workshops have you attended? Don't answer, the better question is where is that notebook now, did you ever look at it again, or do you feel you own that content. Did it become a part of you, how you think, what you value, why you respond the way you do? Is it all about knowledge you gained, or did it change your responses, your behavior, your character, your performance, or even your life? Again you don't have to answer, my point is this."

“Reading from the back cover of his book, Samuel continues, “It says here that ‘It’s the purpose of these books to inspire transformation through ancient wisdom for today’s problems’ and I think the big word that really matters in our world is the word ‘inspire.’ I sit in the executive team leader meetings and I don’t know anyone who is bragging that they have a handle on that.”

“At first I raised an eyebrow at the word ‘wisdom’ in the title of this book. I don’t know if it is wisdom or not, but if wisdom is first building the capacity to make better choices and then acting to make those choices, in 12 weeks I own this stuff in “Relationships” and “Stress” and no-one taught me what I have discovered for myself.

A workshop happens mostly with people facing forward to a teacher, a trainer, a lecturer, an expert, much like in a church. This happens without a leader and with people looking each other in the eye, talking gut level without any fear of being put down, or suffering reprisal for what they think, and realizing that what they think matters. You can get what a workshop provides, and I still schedule plenty of them, but what you get will not be small groups

where people develop a close-knit sense of belonging and the multiplication of concepts moves forward rapidly. I believe I can sell this down through the ranks, and I'm going to give it a try."

Serg stood, and as he stood reached out to shake Samuel's hand. "You sold it down through one of the ranks. You sold me on giving it a try."

Samuel shook Serg's hand and said, "You'll have a book in a couple of days. Block a time on each of the next two weeks and let me know what works for you. I'll help you get started."

Serg smiled and asked, "How about I keep your book and you get another one?" Samuel grinned, put his book in his shoulder bag, and said very quietly, "I may need it more than you do for the next two days."