

Being awe-inspired

By Grace Daly



Grace Daly is the founding host of ShopTalk360.com, the industry podcast show. With more than 20 years directing design, construction and facilities for national retail brands, Daly's current role as interviewer, author and business coach celebrates the leaders in our industry she fondly refers to as her family. Please feel free to reach out to her at Grace@GraceDaly.com

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Coming from our retail industry, I love the fourth quarter and the holiday season. Over the past few years, I've made it a tradition to watch one of my favorite movies: "Elf."

For those of you who may not be familiar with this whimsical comedy, basically it's a story about Buddy (played by Will Ferrell), who was raised by elves and lived in the North Pole with Santa Claus. When Buddy finds out he's a human and not an elf, he leaves the North Pole for the big city in search of his birth father.

I love this movie for many reasons. As a native New Yorker, the movie takes place in the heart of New York City. As a writer and author, the movie also runs along the sub storyline of a children's book publishing company. As a mom, it has great wholesome family humor for everyone. And, finally of course, as a retailer, it captures the ever awe-inspiring retail visual merchandising during the holiday season.

Big box retailers are known for their elaborate displays and storefront windows dressed to the hilt with silver glitter, snow, animated characters and music projected out onto the street. These scenes are reminiscent of my childhood years.

Pressed up against the storefront glass of the flagship Macy's on 34th Street, even at grade school age, I would study these detailed window scenes. I tried to figure out how they were constructed, how many people it took to build it and all the various materials, time and money involved. From a very young age, I think many of us industry folks can relate to that creative builder inside of us, examining something and deconstructing it in our minds.



Still, with all these reasons, what resonates with me the most in this movie is Will Ferrell's character. It is evident in Buddy's approach to everything. He's open to exploring and looking with fresh new eyes. He's open to learning and having fun. He's not afraid to look silly or make a mistake. He brings an amusing curiosity into the busy business world, and a child-like wonder into the hustle and bustle of big city life.

This poses the question to me: How many of you still have this fun curiosity and sense of wonder in your day to day life?

Many of the folks I coach have forgotten this energy or have chosen to tuck it away in fear corporate cultures frown on such an approach. Many also are consumed with the past or worried for things in the future that have not yet happened or may never happen.

This type of stress easily can be adjusted by remembering this one simple key: Everything is manifested and grows from creativity, trial and discovery. Even during the most aggressive store opening programs or remodel rollouts in my decades of corporate America, we made time to play. We made it a game, a competition and it was fun.

Whether I'm interviewing someone for a podcast for the very first time, crafting questions for an upcoming panel event or developing a team-building workshop for my client, I infuse creativity, learning and fun in everything I do. This approach helps me along my entrepreneurial journey, gently reminding me to be selective with the people I work with – people who exude this same energy and value relationships.

When we're enjoying ourselves, there is a sense of fulfillment. Like attracts like; and in this energy we are happier, we do better. Things just always seem to work out as people come to aid our purpose.

The exact opposite happens when we are tense, worried, feeling unfulfilled and unhappy. Like attracts like; and so when we are feeling down, more negative energies are immediately drawn to us.

As the holidays come and go, give yourself the gift of this awareness. In fact, consciously choose this awe-inspiring energy and see what other wonderful opportunities you will attract. The people, places and things you choose create the circumstances in your life. Ultimately, this creates your world, so choose to emanate and attract fulfillment and happiness. **CCR**