

The Pike Place Fish Market: A True Fish Tale of Success and Happiness



If you find yourself in Seattle, Washington, strolling down Pike Place, you'll come across a fish market that draws in crowds of onlookers, gaping at fishmongers who love their job. If you stand on your tiptoes to catch a glimpse of the action, you'll witness fishmongers tossing a cod like a football, bellowing jovial chants and playing with their customers. They work at a world famous market and, as you probably guessed, it's not world famous just because they sell and ship some of the world's best seafood.

When Johnny Yokoyama purchased the fish market from his employer in 1965, it wasn't world famous. It was just like any other fish market filled with the typical fishy odors, long hours and the humdrum market chores. However, at a staff meeting, a young employee suggested that they strive to be world famous. It sounded like a silly idea at first, but the idea caught on. They put the title on their packaging labels and made a commitment to live up to it.

Johnny and his employees realized that success and happiness is all about making choices about who to be and how to live. Instead of dwelling on what they didn't like about selling fish, they concentrated on "being" who they said they wanted to be—which is world famous. Their shared vision became the lens through which they saw their work. It put their choices into sharper focus. It gave them a new awareness, from moment to moment, of whether their actions lined up with who they said they wanted to "be." When they were wearing their world famous lens, it was hard to stay impatient or upset. They could see clearly that those choices were not world famous.

When the fishmongers stayed focused on who they were "being," they saw opportunities they had never seen before. They started to listen more carefully to their customers and to each other. They looked for special ways to brighten the day of everyone who passed by the

market, even if they weren't buying fish. They worked with a playful outlook that made mundane tasks more enjoyable and made people happy to be around them.

More people came to experience the fun and energy of the fish market, and they told others. Soon the market truly was world famous! The actual work of selling fish never changed—they were still cutting and wrapping fish, handling ice and on their feet all day—but the fishmongers discovered they could transform the way they experienced their work simply by altering their perspective.

A model for a new philosophy

One day, while sightseeing in Seattle, a documentary filmmaker named John Christensen accidentally encountered the fish market. Fascinated by people who worked with passion no matter what the job, he saw the fishmongers as models to illustrate his belief that we can all bring enthusiasm and energy to any kind of work.

After filming at the fish market, John and his crew at ChartHouse Learning identified four simple behaviors anyone can apply to their own lives. These four practices, explored in the film FISH!, are the foundation of The FISH! Philosophy:

-  Be There
-  Play
-  Make their Day
-  Choose Your Attitude

Millions of people around the world—including students like you—use The FISH! Philosophy to help them focus on who they want to “be.” The four practices help them to be more aware of their choices and the impact they have on other people. The four practices help them see opportunities to make a positive difference they never recognized before.

Living The FISH! Philosophy doesn't guarantee that everything in your life will always go the way you want it to, but it does remind you that the way you choose to experience your life—as the fishmongers discovered—is entirely up to you.