DONâ€™T FORGET YOUR PLAN A

It's good to have a back-up plan, or a plan B, especially in uncertain times; but it's also important to remember that this is only for when your plan A is threatened. Often the best thing you can do is to fully commit to your primary vision; sometimes the best defense is a good offense.

It's excellent to have a plan that you can fall back on if things don't work out; but today I want to talk about some elements of committing to your plan A that can be easily neglected... because we take them for granted.

If you're thinking of moving away from your home, be it out of state or out of the country, before you do so, consider what you will be leaving behind.

If you have family and friends where you live, if you have neighbors whom you know, and who know you, those relationships can be a tremendous source of security and support. If you've always had these people in your life, you may not even think how much you depend on your connection with them. I don't just mean that you know you could ask them for help if you needed it; there is something extremely valuable, for you health and happiness and overall well being, to having regular human contact with people whom you know and trust.

Relationships are built on trust. You can enjoy any positive interaction with a fellow human being, even if it's a friendly hello at the grocery store, or a smile as you walk by on the street. But when you know and trust people over time, and see them in person, make eye contact, shake hands or hug, and can settle into a comfortable conversation, the positive benefits are huge.

If you intend to move away from these relationships, it's important to acknowledge and accept that you will be losing something valuable in doing so. Our relationships can be the most fundamental source of joy and satisfaction in life.

The positive contact we have with people improves our heart rate variability, our immune system, and reduces inflammation in our systems. It also just feels good.

Add to that, if you're looking at potential threats or trouble, that your long term, trust based relationships are also people who are more likely to be there for you - and you them - if trouble strikes.

When our kids were little, we talked about who they know in the neighborhood. If there was ever any trouble, which houses could the run to; which neighbors do we know well enough to trust? There were (and are) many to choose from, but a few at the top of the list. That's a great thing to have when there are kids involved, but it's still important if there's just one or two of you.

We have neighbors across the street who are well into their 80's. They are two of the people who

our kids knew they could trust and go to if there was ever trouble. They're our friends. We take time with them, and keep an eye on them, and if they need anything, they know they can ask us.

That's good for them, but it's also good for us. It's great to have people you trust, but it's also deeply satisfying to be somebody who is trustworthy. That's what true friendship is built on. It's that mutual sense of trust that takes time and experience to build.

If you're thinking of moving, of enacting a plan B, and doing so includes leaving town, be sure to factor in the loss of contact and support, and the loss of years and possibly decades of earned and established trust with people whose relationships you may have, to some degree, taken for granted.

Another element of your plan A that can be overlooked is familiarity. If you've lived somewhere for a long time, you know things about the area that you didn't when you first moved there. You know the roads, the stores, the restaurants. You know the terrain, the weather; you know the nearby towns. You probably know some "secret" driving routes to avoid traffic.

You also probably know who puts on a good roof, or can take care of a plumbing or electrical problem dependably.

Of course you can learn all of this over time in a new location. But you know them *now* right where you are.

Then there's the political aspect. If we are to have a country that values individual liberty and self-responsibility, and true win/win capitalism - as opposed to win/lose crony capitalism - it is *people* that need to advocate, argue, and fight for this, *right here at home*.

What the Tea Parties have been focused on over the past couple of years is mostly at the local, grass roots level. If you happen to be a high profile, politically active, charismatic person with high name recognition nationally or throughout your state, you may be able to have a big impact - as people like Senators Rand Paul, Ted Cruz, and others are having now.

But most of us do not have that big of a national presence. Where we can have a big impact, though, is locally, among the people and the community who know us and trust us.

Effective persuasion does not come through bullying, nagging, or threatening. Effective persuasion comes through building relationships of trust and respect. When people know you, trust you, and respect you, they are more likely to listen to what you have to say. You may have a greater sphere of influence than you recognize within your own community, because you may not think much about all of the daily contact you have with different folks.

A friend of mine once said, "If you want to have a successful business, don't move."

By living your life with benevolence and integrity, by settling in to a place over time and treating people well, you build for yourself a community of people with whom you share trust, respect, joy, and history. You build for yourself a home.

That is a successful plan A. And it's a much more valuable resource than you might think.

You can move somewhere else, and build it there, too, but it takes time, effort, and patience. If that's necessary, or if you weigh all the options and moving away is the best one, that's fine, just make sure that in pursuing your plan B, you're not casting aside a perfectly good plan A.

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