

# Are you a dweller or a DO-ER?

Do you dwell on things that have gone wrong so much that they halt your progress? Or do you just get on with it, get over it, get through it and focus on making things happen?



I am currently re-reading Viktor Frankl's, *Man's Search for Meaning* for the fourth time. In it, he describes his experiences in a Nazi concentration camp and his conclusions that no matter how tough life gets, it still has meaning and you can learn from your experiences. I recommend it to anyone who feels they are going through difficult times and wants to regain their perspective.

*"The last of human freedoms is the ability to choose one's attitude in a set of given circumstances"* Viktor Frankl

*"Successful entrepreneurs may miss the detail but they rarely miss a commercial opportunity"*

At the Entrepreneurs' Business Academy (EBA) has been interesting to see the different reactions of business owners to the recession. Some saw their fate as sealed as soon as the recession was announced and convinced themselves that business would be tough; whereas others refused to buy into the negativity and just worked harder and became more creative. Where some people saw obstacles, others saw opportunities; where some chose to focus on getting the details right before taking action, others chose to seize the opportunities that were there and ran with them – worrying about the detail later.

I don't think I have ever met a business owner with a mindset for success who gets bogged down in detail at the expense of taking commercial action.

Nor do I hear them use the word 'stress', though I have seen people lose millions, dust themselves off, and get on the making the next million. Those who are hard-wired for the entrepreneurial life tend to think of obstacles as challenges to be got over, round or through, rather than a dead-end or a reason to quit.

At the end of the day, when faced with a setback an entrepreneur needs to get over it and get on with it. In business today there's no time to dwell on problems or past mistakes – especially the ones that are insignificant in the big scheme of things. You need to find solutions and find them fast.

Businesses that trade through a recession are getting 'boot camp training' and will emerge stronger, faster, leaner and ultimately fit for business and success. Those that survive will be able to adapt to any financial climate going forward, which in turn will increase their chances of achieving long-term sustainability.

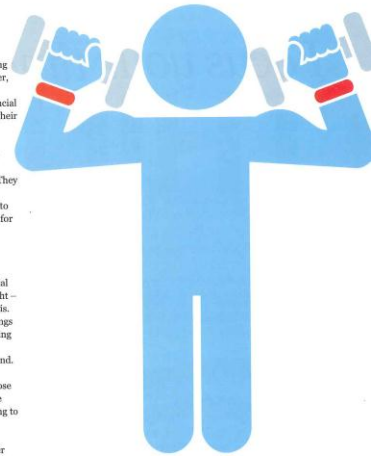
Success is as much about having the right mindset as the right skill set. Successful entrepreneurs are unlikely to be sales adverse, defeatist or pedantic. They rarely procrastinate. They have high energy and a tendency to make decisions fast. They are unlikely to waste time blaming circumstances or other people for their misfortunes.

People who are naturally entrepreneurial may also have a lower than average tolerance of discussions about detail – unless they are the details of a financial agreement or a contract. They want things to be right – but they want top line decisions, not detailed analysis. Time is precious and too much discussion slows things down. There is a wealth of difference between wanting to get things right – and being preoccupied with perfection. It's an important distinction to understand.

The devil lies not in the detail, but in how you choose to prioritise your time, and the decisions you make about what is important to get right before choosing to take action.

I recently met a woman who had been planning her business for three years. She had spent over £200,000 on product development and high quality marketing material. The thought and detail that had gone into the project was incredible. The trouble was she was so worried that someone would steal her idea she hadn't shown it to any prospective customers. Sadly, when she finally loosened her control for long enough to allow someone to test it, the product was found to have many flaws and the market had moved on to a point where it was already out of date. As a result her whole enterprise became a disastrous waste of time, effort and money before a single unit had been sold.

A prospective entrepreneur who is overly preoccupied with getting everything right before taking action may never be ready to get their business off the ground. Risks need to be assessed, and tough decisions taken – but at a fast pace. Delaying action through indecision or preoccupation with non-essentials can be catastrophic for survival. It is the equivalent of putting your head in the sand. In my experience, the entrepreneurs who survive in the long term focus on the big decisions first. They do what it takes to get their product to market and to ensure their business will



survive. The detail can be delegated or outsourced. Modifications are made on an ongoing basis as they adapt to market demands.

If you are constantly looking for problems, you will find them and you will keep finding them. Instead try looking for what is right and a reason to say 'yes' to action. In the big scheme of things, entrepreneurs may not have time to wait for the climate to be perfect before they set sail; they will often make a judgment and settle for 'good enough' to get things going – but prepared to adjust the sails as they go. The successful ones may overlook the non-essential details in the early business stages, but they will rarely miss a commercial opportunity.

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# Focus your time on the THINGS that matter

People often say, 'I wish I could manage time better' but the truth is, there is no such thing as time management. You've got the same 24 hours in your day as everybody else. Nothing you do will change that. Getting more done is not about managing time; it is about how you choose to focus your attention.



Imagine you are hard at work, when you get a call from your loved one to say, "You need to clear out the garage tonight." You arrive home feeling exhausted. You approach the house thinking, "I just don't have the energy to tackle the garage this evening." As you walk through the door, the phone rings. It is your best mate, asking, "Have you got time for nine holes of golf?" Suddenly you are re-energised, in the car and down to the golf course in no time.

Many of the business owners I know lead very busy lives – and many of them play golf. No matter how busy they are, they still manage to fit in a 2-hour game of golf each week. I live a busy life too, but I can't fit in a game of golf. Now why is that? Because I don't care about golf. It's not my passion. Very often, people who find the time to do things are focused on creating that time, because those are things they want to do.

Good decision-making and good time management is actually the same thing. Energy and motivation are closely connected. Many people have exactly the amount of time they need to do all of the things they really want to do. It is all about focusing attention 100 per cent where you most want or need to put it. If you can bring that laser-like focus and energy to everything you do, then I don't have time 'won't come into it.

Anyone who has set up a business will know how frantic the start-up phase can be. You are likely to make a lot of decisions very quickly. They may not always be the smartest decisions but you become decisive because you have such a lot to do. We can get a lot more done when motivated by both excitement and fear. Many people subconsciously create scenarios that generate that sense of urgency all the time, as a way of generating focus and action; the classic case being those who have all the time in the world to get something done, but who only focus on the task when it becomes urgent.

Imagine a circle with a bull's eye in the middle, and three outer circles. The central bull's eye includes areas of focus that should be our top priorities such as strategic business decisions; or health, family and relationships. They are important but Not Urgent.

Typically, most people will wait until something has gone wrong before focusing on this area, at which point the activity becomes Important and Urgent. This is the first circle of activity – and the area where we tend to focus our priorities on a day-to-day basis.

The next (second) circle out includes actions that are Urgent but Not Important, such as 'the phone's ringing.' How many times have you seen someone break their attention from something important to take a call. We've all done it – because we were trained to do so.

Before we know it we have wandered into the outer circle of Not Urgent and Not Important – like taking speculative calls or watching TV. Suddenly we are a long way away from the central bull's eye. This is also the area we head for when we are escaping from doing something that we would prefer not to do.

In order to ensure that I stay focused on the central bull's eye of important, long-term priorities, I have developed a colour-coded system for managing my diary. It ensures that I focus my time in a balanced way across all-important areas of activity in the days, weeks and months ahead including the awkward stuff that I would prefer to put off. For example:

- Red = Outsource. These are the tasks that others in my team will be better at doing and includes the things I would prefer not to do.
- Blue = Revenue generation. In my business that is anything that is client-related.
- Black = Strategic planning. This is time when I am thinking about the business, not working in the business.
- Green = Creative time – allocated for fixing, building, creating or designing something new.

*"Businesses that trade through a recession are getting 'boot camp training' and will emerge stronger, faster, leaner and ultimately fit for business and success"*

Every six months, my PA and I review the year ahead. There is no detailed content yet, just colour-coding. I now know what I am going to be focusing on and she can start booking appointments. If a client calls, she will look for a blue date and fill that day first, before releasing another blue day.

Fifty per cent of my time is allocated in advance according to these criteria. That builds up to 75 per cent very quickly; the other 25 per cent allows for some wriggle room.

Using this method I pre-plan the shape of each year and the mindset I will need to be in each day – while ensuring that I never take my eye off the big picture priorities. I estimate that the system saves me ten hours a week and as I am twice as effective as I used to be. It makes my PA's job easier too.

Though even with the colour coding system, my diary has so many moving parts it takes patience and organisational skills to manage. Fortunately my PA Linda, has both.

One of the biggest challenges that CEOs have – especially entrepreneurs is knowing when to let go. They don't actually know when they have done the job of getting the business up and running. The smart ones put in place managing directors and let others focus on the detail. They are the ones who go on to build many more businesses. It is a matter of knowing what you are good at, and finding others who are good at what you are not. Having a system in place that enables you to prioritise effectively, will ensure you plan ahead and stay on track.

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# Lead from the FRONT and stay in TIME

Time management and planning play an absolutely crucial role in running a business...



"When you have built your business from scratch it can be difficult to relinquish areas of control, but over the years I have come to realise that I can't do it all; I need a good team around me"

As a business owner you need to be fairly brutal in deciding how you use the hours in your day. You will never get everything done unless you can prioritise. The answer lies in not trying to do everything yourself. Working with people whose strengths complement your own is the key to lightening the load.

Having a PA has made an enormous difference to my own workflow. I realised about a year ago that I needed to free up more of my time, and that meant hiring someone to help me to manage my diary, to take away some of the minutiae of day-to-day business, and become a gatekeeper - screening sales and other non-urgent calls.

I work a diary system and create a list of the things that I need to achieve and follow up each day. Obviously my aim is to finish that list - but if I don't, the previous day's least priorities become the next day's top priorities, in order to get them done.

When you have built your business from scratch it can be difficult to relinquish areas of control, but over the years I have come to realise that I can't do it all; I need a good team around me. Where I have rewarded people with responsibility, I delegate completely. I give my managers the tools they need to do their job properly and the autonomy to get on with it. Of course that doesn't mean letting go. A system of management and monitoring is important, whether via yourself, your second in command, or other management path - but it is very important not to interfere by constantly 'assisting'.

I meet with the majority of my operations team on a monthly basis, and speak daily to my right-hand man. He keeps me up to speed on any important issues, whether or not I am in the country. I don't interfere with the day-to-day operations. There are benchmarks in place for people to achieve things and they need to be allowed to get on with them; though I make sure I stay in touch. My team knows that I will follow up and am likely to ask questions about progress.

Time management, decision-making and effective delegation go hand in hand. I consider each problem or situation and ask, 'Should I be making that decision, or should it be one of my managers?' If someone I employ has the necessary skills to make the appropriate decision, what would be the point in me duplicating effort? Though I may want to know what the decision is, before it is finalised.

Being a business owner can be a very lonely place - and it is important to know when to take counsel from others. I have always taken advice from those who

know more than I do in certain areas, especially when it comes to the construction side of my business. Being too proud to listen or ask for help gets in the way of success and can be very costly. The dumbest question is always the one you don't ask. I am a great believer in the role of business mentors for that reason - whether on a formal or informal basis.

There is a pace of action that is characteristic of those at the top of their game in business. It goes back to the old cliché: 'If you want something done, ask a busy person.' The pace of decision-making drives not only the speed of the outcome, but also the pace of the action taken. Once I have made up my mind about something, I become 100% committed to that path. It may take me a couple of days consideration to review the pros and cons of more complex decisions, but taking decisive action after that is key. Unless you act, your decision is a waste of time.

As a business owner you've got to be decisive, committed to your course of action, and able to communicate your intentions clearly. People like to be led and it is vital that your team is clear about what they are meant to be doing, what they have to achieve, and by when. There should be no ambiguity. Their time is your time too - so when you manage your own priorities, you also manage and lead the overall momentum and productivity of the business.

### TONY BANKS' TIPS FOR DECISIVE LEADERSHIP

Customers are your main business asset. Without customers you have no business and you will not survive. Every business owner should be able to answer the following questions:

- Where you have rewarded ability with responsibility, don't interfere with the decision-making process. Manage the person rather than the task.
- Don't try to do everything yourself. Use your team wisely and delegate administrative detail to free up more of your working day.
- Stay in touch with your business on a daily basis, through your management team.
- Set up a system of benchmarking so that you can monitor and measure work in progress.
- Ensure that decisions are being made by the person who is best qualified to make them, at the most appropriate level in the business.
- Lead from the front and communicate clearly. Your team needs to know that you are 100% committed to the outcome of your plan.

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## So how can we use LinkedIn to WIN NEW BUSINESS and build new relationships?

After nearly 8 years, LinkedIn has reached 100 million users worldwide. With this user base, of which apparently over 50% are from outside of the USA, it surely has to be one of the premier places to network online.

LinkedIn was established in May 2003, and by the end of its first month had 4500 members. Since then, the users have grown by nearly 1 million members per month which makes about 1 new user every second!

So how can we use LinkedIn to win new business and build new relationships?

Have you noticed when you Google a person their LinkedIn profile often appears on the front page of the search results? If for no other reason than establishing your credibility and visibility on Google, your LinkedIn page should be complete and let's face it, sexy! Not because of the photo you use, although every profile should have a photo, but by talking about you, your achievements and a little bit about your personality.

Now back to your photo. Having a photo of yourself and not just your company logo is highly important when it comes to any sort of online networking. In order to build an online relationship, it's important for people to see what you look like. It may sound a little far-fetched but if you approach someone to connect with you, you are always going to get a better hit rate if they can see what you look like. Maybe it's primeval, but people like doing business with people they can see!

The first stage of LinkedIn success is to start adding your contacts. LinkedIn has tools that will help you by looking for any of your

contacts that are already online. However, to get the most out of it you will have to do some manual searching for contacts, and one good way of expanding your network is to look through the contacts of your contacts. This will often be an easy way of finding potential business contacts.

When on LinkedIn, size really does matter! The size of your network that is. If you only have say 50 contacts people will not see you as a center of influence as your network is only very small. Therefore it really is important to build your network before you start open networking.

Another good way of expanding your network is to join some LinkedIn groups. These are collections of people who talk about a set subject. Some groups are closed where you will have to ask permission to join, such as membership based companies, and some are open groups where anyone can join. My best advice with groups is to use a three stage process. The first is to simply join the group and listen. Don't rush in, see what is being said, see who is a key influencer within the group, look at the kind of language they use and see how much testosterone is flying about! The second stage is to join in with other people's conversations, remembering all the research you have done from stage one. Probably best not to be too contrary on your first outing, unless you really want to draw attention to yourself! Stage 3 is to start conversations

yourself. You could ask a question, post a point of view or reference a third party piece of content. One pointer however is not to get too self-promotional too soon.

LinkedIn also has a section called Answers. This is where people ask questions from other members on a whole range of subjects. This is a great place to build up your credibility and also grow your network as people will request a connection with them when they see you as a thought leader. It can be quite time consuming but is a really good way of making you visible to a wide range of people.

By now you should have built up a credible profile and network, and this is when the magic starts to happen. The whole reason for using LinkedIn is to be able to approach people who you would like to connect with. The first way of doing this is to hopefully find someone in your network who is connected to the person you are looking to contact. LinkedIn has functionality, which will allow bridging of the gap by allowing introductions. It's always best to ask the person who you hope will introduce you to your desired contact first, before you make the request. Sometimes you find out really great information like that contact never pays their bills! The second way of making connections is to become a paying member of LinkedIn. This will allow you to send InMails, which are direct messages to people who are not in your network and that you want to connect with.

When on LinkedIn, size really does matter! The size of your network that is...

From experience, these messages should not be pushy and if possible be customised according to the research you can do about that person. The receivers of InMails have a facility of being able to mark messages as Spam. If you are found out to be a Spammer by having lots of your mails marked as Spam, you can expect to be kicked of LinkedIn!

So to summarise, LinkedIn is a great place to network online, but in order to get the most out of it, you need to spend time building your profile and network so you look credible. It really is worth taking the time to do it, because if you know your ideal target market or even target customer, LinkedIn will give you a quick and easy way of contacting them.

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# Are you fit4business?

The hardest part of getting fit is getting started!



**M**y name is Toby Garbett and my background in the world of health and fitness originates in the cut-throat world of Olympic rowing where the time and effort you put in is precisely what you get back.

The margins for success and failure in the world of sport come down to hundredths of a second. This can be likened to the width of an angle and in 2000 cost me a gold medal, this equated to just 0.02 of a second! I was a World Champion in the preceding years and went on to represent Great Britain at the Athens Olympics.

In business, you may or may not be accountable for business being won or lost by fractions of a second but being as fit as you can be, mentally and physically, could help you win, or stop you from losing that important contract!

I now thoroughly enjoy bringing my experience, understanding and motivation to assist others in the office or at home as a personal trainer.

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## Get in the zone to perform at your best!

Whether you are an athlete or a businessman or woman, if you are in 'the zone' you can't help but perform well. The phrase 'the zone' has been talked about for many years but, in essence, it is a physiological and psychological state between the brain, heart and nervous system. When all these are synchronised you will score a perfect goal, perform the perfect golf stroke, lift a heavier weight and in business, nail that perfect presentation, ace your exams, or seal the deal to become the top sales person!

None of the above is actually by accident, because by being aware of your thoughts and emotions and how they affect your body, you can increase your confidence and self control. I have practised this regularly over many years whilst a full time athlete and learnt through trial and error. The ability to oxygenate your body through deep breathing techniques together with a positive and confident mental attitude is possible for all of us, whilst all around you is the potential to be the most stressful and intense situation of your life.

Things you need to ask yourself to get in the zone to the ultimate performance –

**DO I HAVE THE SKILLS?**  
Knowledge to carry it out  
Functional skills

**AM I PREPARED MENTALLY?**  
Confidence  
Mental Rehearsal  
Good attitude  
Self Belief

**DO I HAVE A SUPPORT NETWORK?**  
Am I in the right environment to succeed?  
Who can help me succeed?  
Am I happy?

**DO I HAVE STRENGTH & ENERGY?**  
Rest & Recovery  
Time for Me?  
Exercise guidance  
Nutrition guidance

**DO I HAVE A GOAL?**  
Strategy  
Measurable Goals  
Process Goals  
Small Steps

# Simple exercises

POSTURE CONFIDENCE!

This is a great mobility exercise for gaining movement through the torso as well as stretching the shoulder and chest area.



Start on all fours, knees directly under the hips and hands directly under the shoulders. Then rotate the right hand and arm between your left hand and left leg as far as you can. Ideally do this on an exhale breath.



Then with a big inhale breath through your nose re-rotate your arm and turn your torso and head, letting your eyes follow the hand all the way round and look up to the sky.



The classic press up is not just a great exercise for toning your chest and arms, its also a confidence booster if done with the proper alignment, ie if a straight line from knee to shoulder is maintained whilst the arms are bent, lowering the chest and head to the ground.



If you can complete ten of these, move on to the straight legged version. When finished stand up proud and tall, as this will both help with your visual confident posture and effect the way you are perceived by others.

For more information on how to get in the Zone contact Toby on [tg@tobygarbett.com](mailto:tg@tobygarbett.com). [www.tobygarbett.com](http://www.tobygarbett.com)  
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# REAL BUSINESS

Each month we speak to the owners of startups and growing businesses. This month we talk to two innovative entrepreneurs about their strategy and vision.

## Legend Photography

**Describe your business and your target market**  
Legend Photography is based in the Old Town of Hastings, East Sussex. We specialise in photography that puts children of all ages into fairy tale scenes using props, backgrounds, costumes and a modicum of digital magic. Children are transformed into fairies, wizards, knights and pirates. The finished design is of a very high quality that is not often seen outside of film studios.

**What makes your business unique?**

I have a strong background in theatre design, so my studio and photographs reflect this. Customers have said that it is the experience of coming to Legend Photography, as well as the finished prints that make them come back again and also recommend it to their friends. The quality of the props and costumes, sourced from around the world and the detail in the designs make our work stand out from other family and fairy photographers.

**What has been your proudest day in business?**

Everyday I am proud to be running my business, if I wasn't, I would not do it. However, the best days are when we get feedback from parents and grandparents who have been moved to tears by one of my designs.

**What has been your hardest business day?**

Starting the business up was tricky with no capital – I had approximately £300, but finding out what worked and improving on it in every aspect has been my strategy for success. I was lucky that I had a very small mortgage. Living as a poor design student for five years trained me to live frugally. This enabled me to spend where needed on the business and it still does. I dislike wasting money, time and opportunities.

**What is the most important lesson you have learned in business?**

That's easy: Keep things simple, for you and your clients. In every area of my studio, there is a maximum of four choices. If you over complicate the options, it gets confusing for my sales and the customer. I can now do my photography shoot and the sales within one hour and it doesn't seem rushed or stressed: two things that are essential to avoid when working with children and families.

**Who or what is your biggest influence?**

James Caa & Richard Branson have recently influenced me to "think big". I am currently scaling my business up and it has sturdier roots for the future development plans.

**Who or what is your biggest inspiration?**

I get most of my inspiration not from photography but from films and illustrations. I love the work of Brian Froud and Arthur Rackham.

**If you had a business slogan what would it be?**

"Everything IS possible."

**Where do you hope to be in five years time?**

My plans don't stop with the photography, I want to expand and open at least ten studios, a range of fairytale and legend clothing for children and a themed Legend Land eco wonderland. I am really excited about this vision.

**What advice would you give to a budding entrepreneur?**

In today's market, social media and the internet have to be a key part of your business strategy, but it's important not to just hand it over to someone to do it for you. Understanding how social media works and keeping on top of it is something every top Entrepreneur is doing, and with good reason. I do believe we are in the era of conversation marketing.



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## Emica Group

**Describe your business and your target market.**

We are a fast growing business process, outsourcing & professional services company. Our philosophy is simple: "Deliver high quality and cutting edge services on behalf of third sector, public, private and social housing organisations, saving them up to 50% in costs." We deliver win-win solutions for all our clients and their success is crucial to our existence. Organisations in the third, social housing and public sector are required to deliver quality, cost effective projects. Our origin as a company stems from delivering regeneration solutions to develop the social, cultural and economic potential of neighbourhoods, towns and cities. Presently, we provide outsourcing solutions in information technology, economic development, facilities management and graphic design/print solutions.

**What makes your business unique?**

We provide a one-stop shop for many of our clients, using experts in key disciplines. We often find that if a company needs to outsource their facilities management, they may also need IT solutions and a strategic development consultancy. Once we build relationships with our customers, we find that they want to use the other services offered through our one-stop shop. As an outsourcing company, we are growing at the right time, because of the recent cuts, many businesses and organisations want to make extra savings through effective outsourcing.

**What has been your proudest day in business?**

Sharing the same stage as James Caa at an EBA Seminar.

**What has been your hardest business day?**

Dealing with restructuring following the public sector cuts, which nearly crippled our company. It was one day when I thought we may not survive as a company – it was our make or break moment.

**What is the most important lesson you have learned in business?**

Never take your eye off the ball. As CEO, you need to know how each department is performing. Delegation is great – but you must have a clear overview and take swift action where needed.

**Who or what is your biggest influence?**

James Caa – he is a role model who has been there and done it. I always wanted to meet him and learn from him. Looking at his success gave me belief that I could do it too. He was a revelation. I cannot believe I am now mentored by him. Life is good!



**Who or what is your biggest inspiration?**

My father. He worked in the Lancashire cotton mills 7 days a week, sometimes up to 18 hours a day. Hard work was part of the fabric and culture of our family and this is a standard I grew up with. I was just 9 years of age when my father passed away following a long history of illness as a direct result of an accident whilst working at the local Cotton Mill for exceptionally long hours. Losing him at such a young age gave me real responsibility and perspective for my life. I grew up knowing that I just had to make a success of whatever I did. I saw it as my personal mission to take up where my father had left off, yet with my own journey, skills, talents and passion. My father's work ethic is ingrained within me. Work hard, be diligent, focused and disciplined.

**If you had a business slogan what would it be?**

"Outsourcing. Helping you breathe more easily."

**Where do you hope to be in five years time?**

I aim to be turning over in excess of £100 million in five years.

**What advice would you give to a budding entrepreneur?**

Business is exciting. It is also a challenge. You need to have the resolve and dedication to keep going that extra mile. This is why your attitude and mindset is so very important – you need to actually believe that you will succeed. Keep learning, keep trying and never, ever give up.



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