Codus Operandi

How to Increase Your Luck Surface Area

"Luck Surface Area" is a turn of phrase that popped out my mouth during a discussion episode of TechZing a few months back and is something I've been meaning to write about ever since but never got around to actually doing. However, thanks to Lance Jones who referenced the concept in a recent blog post I have finally been spurred into action.

If there's one thing I've discovered in recent years it's this. The amount of serendipity that will occur in your life, your Luck Surface Area, is directly proportional to the degree to which you do something you're passionate about combined with the total number of people to whom this is effectively communicated. It's a simple concept, but an extremely powerful one because what it implies is that you can directly control the amount of luck you receive. In other words, you make your own luck.

Here's how it works. When you pour energy into a passion, you develop an expertise and an expertise of any kind is valuable. But quite often that value can actually be magnified by the number people who are made aware of it. The reason is that when people become aware of your expertise, some percentage of them will take action to capture that value, but quite often it will be in a way you would never have predicted. Maybe they'll want to hire you, or partner with you, or invest in you, or who knows what. But in whatever way it happens, it will be serendipitous.

But it's not just the expertise that's important, the very passion that created the expertise has value in its own right. This is because people want to be excited about things and passion is infectious. When you do something you're excited about you will naturally pull others into your orbit. And the more people with whom you share your passion, the more who will be pulled into your orbit.

To satisfy my mathematically oriented brain I've gone one step further and formalized the concept into the equation $L = D * T$, where L is luck, D is doing and T is telling. This demonstrates clearly that the more you do and the more people you tell about it, the larger your Luck Surface Area will become. And while I like equations, it's the graphical representation that really brings the concept home.

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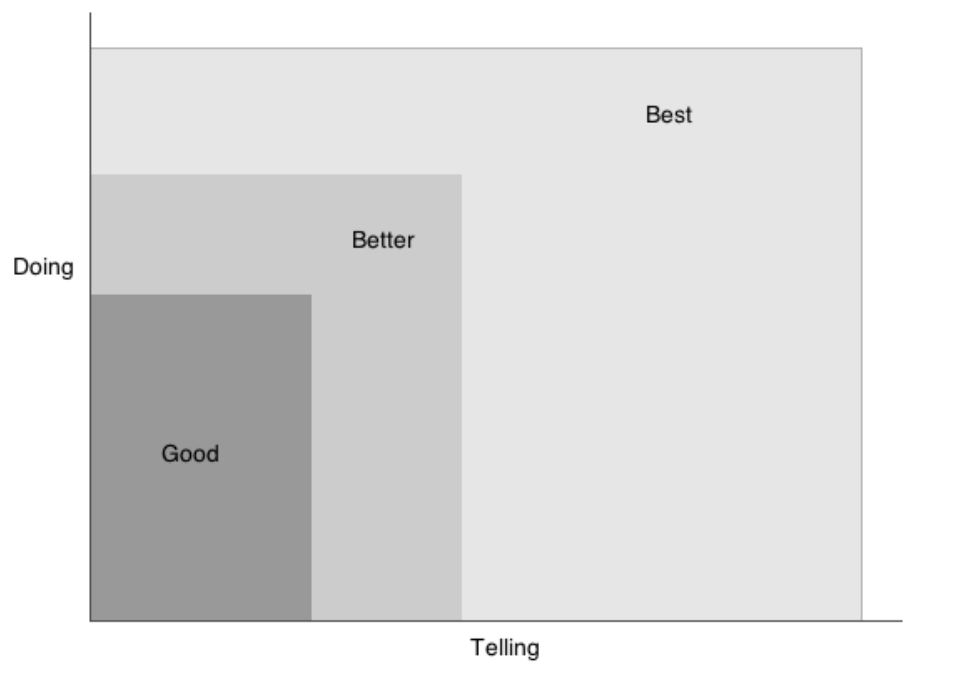
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