

The Paint Spot Newsletter

(December 2019)

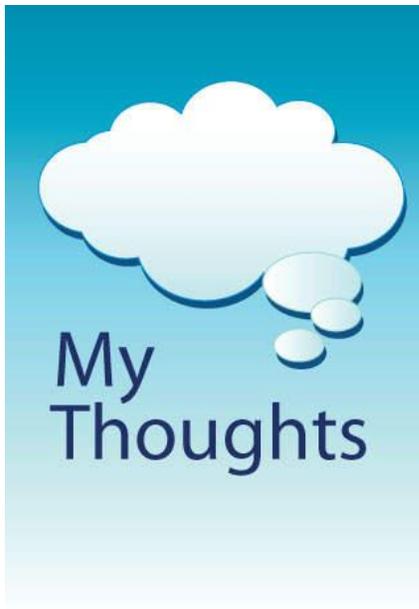


MERRY CHRISTMAS !

&

HAPPY NEW YEAR !

My thoughts:



I want to take a few moments to put into words what I've observed over the 63 years that I've been around. I don't think it comes as a shock to those who know me that I tend to "think things into the ground". For a good part of my life I've been ridiculed, called argumentative, a rebel, Mr. know it all, an asshole, etc. I've even been hated, mis trusted, and feared along the way. Some of these feelings were no doubt, shared by my own family. About the most positive thing that came from it as a kid was "God Damn it Rick, you should be a lawyer" (I obviously didn't listen). Some of the negatives even became a positive, like "you always think you're right".....that repeated statement is what finally helped me figure out what my purpose is.

Speak.

Growing up was no harder or easier for me than it was for anyone else, but because of my tendency to open my mouth when others wouldn't, I got into more trouble than most. Because some people's tolerance levels are less than others, I got my fair share of ass whippings, and because I got tired of getting whipped I learned how to fight.

Suddenly I started noticing that not so many were ridiculing me anymore, and looking back, I'm pretty sure it's because that's when the fear and hatred first kicked in. To condense a long story (I've been working on a book for anyone who cares to someday read the long version) let's just say that I was destined to die a very young man, or wind up serving a long sentence in prison.

All this started changing about age 19 while employed by a man who recognized some positive potential in me (God Bless you Walt Shears). To this day I don't know if he got more out of me, or I got more out of him. All I know is that's where and when I became the man I am today.

As the years went by I was very fortunate to have worked with or for some of the finest people on the planet (Bob Calnan, Bill Shears, William and Matt Popejoy are at the very top of that list). Because of my take charge attitude and the newly found way of knowing when to shut my mouth and open my ears, I was placed in positions of power. Because of "coming up through the ranks", and probably because of feeling so misunderstood for so many years, I made a promise to myself that I would never allow myself to either forget where I came from, or fail to propel those around me. To this very day I go out of my way to "teach", "educate", "promote", and "give back".

Fast forward to today and I'll try to explain how I think the above relates.....



President Trump won the election in 2016 because, in my opinion, he "thinks things into the ground". Coincidentally, in my opinion, Barack Obama won the 2008 election for the same reason!

Now, before ya'll go crazy and start talking shit, this is where I want you to do what I've always been guilty of.....THINK!

Don't allow yourself to think beyond the 08 election just yet, as 2012 has nothing to do with my point thus far.....we'll get to my main point later.

I purposely used those two people as examples to make a point that I "think" has relevance to everything that is going on today. I could have chosen from thousands of others, but chose them for two reasons: Number one, because of the possible age bracket of my readers. Number two, because although they're both lumped into one example, they are complete opposites.....or are they?

If you find yourself texting, laughing, or even thinking "I can't believe what Ciotti just wrote", then I'll remind you about the line that said "I learned to shut my mouth and open my ears" :)



Here's some tips:

(Think test)



- Do you think with your heart?
- Do you think with your head?
- Do you believe in God?
- Do you believe in America?
- Do you respect our / your heritage?
- Do you believe in "of the people, by the people, and for the people"?
- Do you believe that honesty is the best policy?
- Do you believe that we are all created equal?

Do you believe that we all become a product of our environment?
Do you believe "you are the company you keep"?
Do you believe what you hear?
Do you believe what you see?
Do you verify what you hear? If so, to what extent?
Example: If complete verification means taking you into an opposing point of view or an uncomfortable place, do you do it?
Do you believe you have a "choice"?
Do you believe people can change?
Do you believe (truly believe) in yourself?

How ironic that such an involved process (although I don't feel it's involved at all) is what it takes to answer a 3 letter question....."HOW" or "WHY"? And here's the greatest irony of it all, THEY'RE THE TWO GREATEST QUESTIONS IN LIFE !!!!!!!!!!!!!



The difference between Trump and Obama has to do with all the above basically, but if I had to choose just one it would have to be "a product of their environment". Now ya'll can feel free to choose another, or come up with something new. There's also something rolling around in my mind that could have been on the list, but I chose to leave it out. "Follower" or "Leader". I believe there are both in this world, and I believe it to be pre destined

I do not believe that one is less or more than the other, but that, there are definite adverse consequences for not knowing which one you are and attempting to portray yourself as the other. This often shows itself as a manager, foreman, supervisor, or even CEO being miserable at delegation, regulations, implementing systems, producing positive results, production, generating a profit, or generally not being able to get things done.



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Obama was not destined to lead, he was groomed to lead. Furthermore, he was groomed by two things "the company he kept", and "the product he became based on the environment in which he was raised". That "environment" includes many Americans who, through inner guilt, voted from the heart. Can't blame anyone for that, but many of those same Americans are responsible for providing a safety net, by way of holding him up when his dismal ideas and decisions would have let him fall.....hence, the "Deep State" (division) we are contending with to this day.

This brings to mind....."can you admit when you're wrong", which brings us to why I didn't want to include the 2012 election earlier. Knowing that it is not easy to admit making a mistake, shows itself in that election. Clearly, the percentage was less than the ones who would not admit to making a mistake. How do I know that? Because Trump won by a percentage that had to include those voters.....simple math.

Donald Trump, on the other hand, was definitely one destined to lead. He too, was groomed, but groomed by a traditional father and mother with traditional values. He is also a "product of his environment" and a mirror image of "the company he kept". Those two things are virtually as opposite as it gets between our two subjects, not to mention the born ability to lead.

Now, you could go much further with this by applying my outline to who's right and who's wrong. Who actually lied about what. Is there such a thing as brainwashing, and how can I figure out if I'm a victim, is global warming real, etc, etc, etc, etc.....

Whether you agree or disagree with me is up to your ability to "think" objectively, and hopefully I've made that a little easier with exposing my simplistic frame of mind.

Paint & Body Related stuff

The last thing that came out on this platform was a class that "Mercury Charlie" hosted. This particular class was taught by the legendary "Gene Winfield", who by the way, is 93 years old and more fit than any 35 year old I know!

The class took place at Charlie's shop in Austin Texas, and was a two day gig.....two FULL days! It was one of the greatest opportunities of my life, and I'm sure all the other students would say the same thing. In the class we covered a ton of metal shaping and working projects. Here are just a few: Shrinking, stretching, hammer and dolly techniques, filing, splicing, molding repair (stainless), sectioning and chopping

techniques, aluminum working, lead work, and welding. Welding was fascinating, in that, it was all done with a torch.....including aluminum!

Gene is the "real deal" folks, and chooses to use rudimentary objects for tools, instead of "store bought stuff". He said that wherever he goes he always asks "where's the local scrap yard". To fully understand what he means about that, google "Winfield anvil", and you'll get the idea. Virtually anything and just about everything can be used to make something.



My take away from working with Gene was especially gratifying because I got a chance to revisit many of the things I had been taught many years ago. It came at a much needed time in my life, as I had all but accepted the fact that I had become a "has been". My ways were becoming a thing of the past, and I was constantly reminded of that by many of the younger guys that I was around. Many of these, were the very same kids that I had taught body and paint work to. My world had become one that was barely recognizable due to after market parts, plastic cars, quick turn around times, the availability of parts, newer tools, etc. All of the sudden we had turned into a place that just ordered what we wanted, changed parts, and "fixed" NOTHING.....and it bothered the hell out of me!

Every time I went to use a slap file, vixen file, lead, or even a heat gun to repair a plastic bumper, I was met with "what are you doing, you know you can buy that part for almost nothing"? If I picked up a torch and bailing wire or brass people would laugh!

All that totally changed when I attended Genes class, and trust me.....nobody laughed or mocked Gene Winfield! I'm sure most, if not all of the old school guys that taught me are long since dead, but they all were very much alive within my mind that weekend!

One of the most memorable moments of the class came when Gene wanted each one of us to play with lead. After a demo by Gene, he told each one of us to come up one by one and get the feel of lead work. I purposely waited to the tail end. Not because I was afraid, but because I wanted to see if anyone was actually going to address the "dent" that was in the sample fender. When I finally got up there the lead was a familiar friend, which really blew my mind because I hadn't done any lead work in at least 10 - 15 years. I heated the fender, moved the lead back and forth a bit, then moved it over and filled the dent.....Gene said "I was wondering if anyone was going to do that". He had no idea, but when I left that class, and ever since, I no longer feel like yesterday's news :)

Many thanks to you Mr. Winfield for all that you have done, and continue to do!



Thank you "Mercury Charlie", "Will", "Tim", and the rest of the crew for making this event possible.

Speaking of Mercury Charlie, thank you for being such a loyal customer to The Paint Spot. We know you have choices, and you choose to do business with us, we are grateful, and as long as I'm around, I will never let you down.

Stay tuned for upcoming events at Charlie's which will include Gene Winfield (among others) that The Paint Spot will promote.....and this time I'll make sure to give plenty of advance notice.



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case sensitive

Life after Matrix

This next segment continues to be a sensitive issue for me, so I'll try to address it without pissing off a bunch of people. But, feel free to apply the "think test" we discussed above :)

Matrix, as we knew it is all but completely gone. That is not to say that we no longer sell some of their products. In all honesty, due to what "they" did (you know who you are), how they did it, and what "they" have done since, I would like nothing more than to tell "them" "go get F#*^"D". However, the remaining products are really hard to get away from. Those products are: MS-42, MS-15, MP-200, and MP-210. I would be lying if I told you that they are still the same as they used to be, but by in large, they're still good. We have had problems with the MP-210 (seeding), and most recently we have had issues with the MS-42 (solvent pop in hot weather only).

That's pretty much all we sell in the Matrix line anymore, other than MSB (occasionally), MCU (occasionally), and the FX series, which includes all House of Kolor formulas.

The MSB formulas are only being made as a lower level option to our number one base coat system (I'll get to that in a minute), and only until toners run out.

The MCU is hit and miss, and only done "if" we can't convert to Northstar

The MPB has already been run out, and the MPB-LV was discontinued by The Paint Spot nearly 2 years ago.

Recent Matrix release

I have checked out the new "EDGE" system from Matrix. Not a hands on check, but I have looked at it from a jobbers perspective. In doing so, the first "red flag" was the debut memo I got being an open admission that what they used to have (The Matrix System) was everything that I had always stated it was....."GREAT"!

So, after they completely blew that system to hell, lost their market share, suddenly realized that they "screwed the pooch", they made an ill fated attempt at bringing it back.....kind of.

Sorry to say guys, but what they say is a return to the Matrix glory days IS NOT! I'm not 100% sure, but I'm about 99% sure that what they are calling Matrix is actually Valspar. If that's the case then consider this.....both Valspar and Sherwin Williams have not had a decent automotive paint in MANY years. Furthermore, when I gave it a

look, there were just too many other options available for me to even consider warming back up to the people who destroyed such a great paint line.



Something New

The Paint Spot has gone through some changes in the past two years, and had it not been for the Sherwin Williams acquisition of Valspar, which had acquired Quest, which had acquired Matrix a few years earlier (did I lose you.....it's hard for me to keep track also), we would have never ended up where we are today. Since it appeared to be me alone who recognized the potential in "single stage", we decided to pump up our efforts in the "fleet" and "industrial" segments. For those of you who know what fleet and industrial are, you're probably thinking of 18 wheelers, trailers, and water tanks, but we have never stayed in that "box". Maybe it was because I was a printer, because I was a body & paint guy, because I had so many different kinds of materials around me, because I didn't know the rules and therefore didn't know I was breaking them, but we figured out there was a lot more we could do with fleet and industrial paint than most.

Simultaneously I was working on another segment of our industry that few have the where with all to deal with. This particular segment was not unknown to me, as I had been dealing with its idiosyncrasies for years. The problem was color matching, and although I had gotten quite good at matching color, it was always a major pain in the ass. Even the best matches always seemed like they were missing something.

Throughout the years I had heard much about spectrophotometers, but was not a fan. What I didn't realize was that they were totally dependant on the data base they were programmed to draw from. I had learned about that from the boys at BASF when I was invited to their training center to get up close and personal with their products. At that time I actually shot a few different levels and really liked the RM. I probably would have moved to RM right then, had I not been hung up on the versatility of Matrix (that was already pretty much gone), and wanting an equivalent replacement. The RM line is not as versatile as original Matrix was, and it's definitely NOT equivalent.....IT'S BETTER!

It was another year before the perfect opportunity presented itself. When it did, I called my BASF contact, told him I had a customer that did high end RV repair, and was absolutely anal about color match. He told me that they had a mobile unit that was completely stocked, and would schedule it out to the customers location as soon as I needed it, and here's how it went..... Five out of five colors were a dead on match! Furthermore, there were NO formulas available from paint code information.....they were ALL matches from the spectrophotometer!!!!!!! I was totally floored, and when I approached the shop owner I said "well, what do you think"? He said "I think we're done with PPG" (he was a big PPG guy, but used Matrix because it was the same). We put in an RM system with a camera, and he's been a happy camper ever since.



At that stage of the game I really only wanted to address the RV segment, and hadn't actually considered it to replace all the Matrix systems I was responsible for (and over the years, there was a shit load). I decided to put a system in our Buda location just to accommodate the RV business that ordered mixed paint, and because that location deals with a lot of walk in, people kept asking about it. I instructed the manager of that store to push only RM for awhile and see what happened. Everyone loved it, but most complained about the cost.....so I told him to raise the cost of Matrix! It was a bold move for sure, but it turned out to be the right move.

Meanwhile, at the Canyon Lake store we were moving away from Matrix but using GenRock to fill the gap. It is a good paint, that actually behaves better than Matrix MPB, but it's not as good as RM. Color documentation, data base, and camera with RM is unrivaled by anyone as far as I'm concerned! We ALL can match color now, where before it was only myself. The color match for OEM codes actually match. It takes less paint to cover compared to MPB. Metallics don't model like DBC and MPB. Their data base is the best I've ever used.....it's actually designed for what we do. Old car info, Harley Davidson, and anything you will ever come across is in their data base, and for The Paint Spot that's super important.

In short, I can't say enough about BASF, except.....We've decided to take on "LIMCO" after the first of the year :)



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"Whatever It Takes"

Rick Ciotti