

So, let's talk about a little bit of backstory here. Just want to go a little bit deeper from where I'm coming from with this. Those of you who have been following me for at least a year know that a year ago I started this new blog called "The Morning Adam". The purpose of this was for, lack of a better word, just to sort of help me figure out what I wanted to be when I grew up. I didn't have any conversion goal. I didn't have an audience avatar. I didn't even have really a topic I wanted to get into. I just create the website, paid \$35 for that little cartoon picture of myself, and started writing. It was just a platform for me to rant about whatever was grinding my gears, and in doing so, allowing the question of "what's next?" to answer itself when I saw the trends of what I was writing.

So, by January of 2017 I had a pretty good idea, but I'd sort of burned myself out writing new stuff every morning, so I kind of drifted away from The Morning Adam project. The good news is I made an agreement with my audience last week that I would renew The Morning Adam and get back to writing it as long as I didn't have to do it every morning because that's what killed me. So, if you subscribed to The Morning Adam, I promise you there's going to be a lot more great stuff happening there. It just won't be every single morning because some mornings I just really don't have anything to say. I'm one of those people that needs my five glasses of iced tea before I'm ready to interact with humans such as me.

Also, in the meantime, as I said, I became a published author, contributing to the "Journeys to Success" Millennial Edition and my interview was featured in the "Interview Connections" book. And I've been having a lot of fun with some of our top clients who have been launching some great things, doing some things with their communities. So, 2016-2017 have been a really fun ride, and through this discovery process, I've kind of figured out now what I want to do and I've formed this whole groundhog curriculum that I'm going to get out over the next few weeks. I've been developing the new things with my discoveries. I've gotten some case studies with some newer clients and some newer projects and I've had the time to work on the method and the message.

So, that's pretty much where we are right now. Just even going back a little bit further, back in 2002, for those of you who are just getting to me, I had completed my MBA from Duquesne University. I had a concentration in human resource management and my goal back in 2002 was to be come a Fortune 100 training and development director. So, yeah, I did the networking, I did the interviews, I got two job offers and these were tantalizing opportunities from small companies that weren't even hiring, but they loved the cut of my jib, not to mention my large MBA portfolio, so they offered to create a position just for me. So, I turned them down.

Around the same time, I reconnected with an earlier business mentor of mine who, by that time, owned a training and development firm. So, in addition to holding down my day job and getting a promotion there, I did some contract work with my mentor. I did things like compiling and analyzing employee feedback data from his work with clients, reading and summarizing business books that he didn't have time to read, and doing research to help him create PowerPoints for his keynote speeches and background research for the book that he was writing which came out in 2003.

Through the process, I caught the entrepreneurial bug and on October 28, 2003, Assess Communicate LLC was born. Since then, I've owned three businesses. I had a web development firm called The Website Surgeon, which was closed in 2010. Then we moved to Help My Website Sell, which was a website conversion consulting company, which we ended in 2015. Now, we have The Business Creators Institute, which consulting coaches on a range of organizational, technology, and marketing topics.

As I said, we created The Morning Adam last year just to help me figure out what to do with the Business Creators Institute. Where did this all lead me? Groundhogs. Yes, groundhogs. I know. So, studying the behavior and lifestyle of groundhogs, it finally answered for me the question of how to get back into the training and development stuff I've always had a yen for, but I kind of set that aside for a while during this 14-year interlude of me falling into become a marketing guy. So, I want to keep the fun aspects of being in marketing, that whole process that started with a chance meeting at a seminar back in 2003.

So, here we are. You're on the Ground Principles website series and we're going to give you a lot of great stuff that you're going to be able to implement immediately. What's really good about the entire curriculum that you are going to join me in building is that it's the type of thing where you can pretty much jump in anywhere, find something that works for you, dive in, implement and get results from immediately. So, that's where we are right now.

Now, many of you have already been asking me, "Why groundhogs?" So, there are three reasons why. First of all, many of you may be familiar with a movie called Groundhog Day. This is a movie where the character basically had to keep reliving the same day over and over and over again. Now a lot of times you hear it just happens over and over again like Groundhog Day. To me, that's sort of an allegory for what many business creators go through. You see all these "best year ever" declarations like "2018 will be my best year ever" just like 2017 was the best year ever, 2016 was the best year ever, 2015 was the best year ever and on and on and on.

You go back and you look at those best year ever declarations and you notice that in many cases, it's the same thing over and over again. They keep declaring substantially the same goals over and over again. Sometimes the dollar amounts are adjusted for inflation, but otherwise it's the same thing over and over again. Meanwhile, the struggle they go through through the rest of the year, it feels like they hit a certain plateau of revenues and profits in their business. Sure, they might get a great new client or they may featured on a wildly popular podcast that results in a spoke in book sales and product sales, maybe gets them a new coaching client, something like that, or they may come to market with new widget if they're selling physical products. But, once all said and done, they end up finding themselves at that same plateau, the same level of revenues, the same level of profits, like Groundhog Day over and over and over again.

That was the inspiration that led me to start thinking about groundhogs. Then, as I'm about to show you – where is that pointer at? Come back here. I'm going to show you a few surprising facts about groundhogs and then I'm going to tell you a little family history, kind of a funny thing about a relative of mine, that also has me thinking about the importance of looking at this through the groundhog's perspective.

Those of you who live in the parts of the United States and Canada where you find groundhogs or are familiar with groundhog boroughs. They happen in your yard, they happen on your farm, or they happen to somebody you know. And these groundhog boroughs, they look like little holes in the ground with little mounds next to them, but the fact is they run deep and they run long. Think like 45 feet of tunnels. Most people's houses aren't 45 feet wide. And they're five feet or more underground and many of them go deeper because they go underneath building foundations. The hibernation boroughs, in fact, run very deep because the hibernation boroughs they use in the winter need to be below the frost line and in colder climates that can be eight feet deep.

So, think about some of these issues in your business that are burrowed so deep that you can't even see them. You don't even have the slightest clue on the surface that they even exist, if you know what you're looking for.

These burrows have multiple entrances and numerous chambers. Think of rooms. In doing my research on groundhogs, I found that some of these burrows, they'll have basically what amounts to a bathroom. They'll have what basically amounts to the – how do I put this? The bow-chicka-wow-wow room, the mating room. They'll have one for giving birth to the baby groundhogs. They'll have the one where they'll eat. It's sort of like your house or your apartment where it's divided into different areas and those different areas and different rooms have specific purposes. These are sophisticated animals.

In a study of 11 burrows that was conducted, one of the burrows that they investigated was 24 foot long and it included two side galleries. Again, this isn't even the longest one out there, but it's just one that they studied. And this burrow, which was actually about an average size burrow, displaced 640 pounds of dirt. Do you know how big of a pile of dirt 640 pounds of dirt is? Let me just put it this way. You could climb on it and get a good view of your entire community. That is a big pile of dirt.

Now let's look at their behaviors. Despite the groundhog's very odd shape, they're great swimmers and tree climbers, so they can go anywhere. Displacing 640 pounds of dirt also means they're muscular, strong, tenacious little animals. They're known for their aggressive personalities. Just ask yourself right now as you're listening to this who do you know has a pet groundhog? Just think about that. Do you know anybody who has a pet groundhog? Have you ever thought about getting a pet groundhog? I rest my case.

Groundhogs are diurnal. They're mostly active in the early morning and late afternoon. I want you to pause and just think about this. What are things that sometimes happen in your business, in your market, in the early market and late afternoon which are times where you may not be able to pay the most amount of attention because it might be too early in the morning or you might be kind of worn down by the late afternoon and not exactly firing on all your cylinders? What else is going on during those times? Just think about that.

Groundhogs can be helpful. Because they displace all that dirt, they are, in that sense at least, an ally of the farmer aiding in soil improvement by bringing subsoil to the surface, just like surfacing issues helps your company. They eat beetles, grasshoppers, field mice, and other creatures that prey on crops. So just think of the silver lining, and we're going to talk about silver linings. Rabbits, foxes, and skunks sometimes set up housekeeping in the groundhog burrows, which then keeps those animals out of the way. However, the groundhogs and the issues must be surfaced because these burrows beneath your business weaken your foundation. If they're going under your house, if they're going after your building, they're weakening the foundation. When they do their burrows in the middle of a farm, the burrow can be so deep that when the farmer drives his tractor over it or drives her tractor over it, they can tumble and fall right into the burrow. We've seen many cases of that happening.

You've also heard the phrase "before the breakthrough comes the breakdown" or "the breakdown leads to the breakthrough". So, think of what the groundhog does with soil. They break down soil. They displace it. And by doing so, they help to till the farmland, which leads to better crops. So, by surfacing the groundhog issues, you go through a breakdown but it causes a breakthrough which can be very rich and very nutritious for.

Confronting the groundhog head on gives you the opportunity to prove your strength because I don't know if you've ever confronted a groundhog. I personally have. They stand up and they shriek. For those little odd-shaped animals, they are pretty fearsome. You do not want to catch a groundhog on a bad day. Again, who do you know has a pet groundhog?