



*From the desk of David Simpson*

March 2021

**"I do not want people who will only go with me when the road is good. I want the ones who will make the journey when there is no road at all."** ★★★

- Dr. David Livingstone (March 19, 1813 – May 1, 1873) Scottish Explorer

In business, traveling where there is “no road at all” is frequently about risk. And as Nobel prize winning Dr. Daniel Kahneman (Princeton University) notes, the fear of losing \$100, for most people, is much more intense than the hope of gaining \$150. People who are risk-averse see their goals as opportunities to maintain the status quo and are, ultimately, prevention focused. Those who are more oriented to risk can be referred to as promotion focused. Individuals who are prevention-oriented work more slowly and deliberately. Statistically they are also more ethical and honest than those who are promotion driven. Interestingly, one might think that the prevention focused individual will be risk averse in all business settings. Not true according to the research. Prevention-oriented people do avoid risk when everything is going to plan. However, the data shows that these same individuals will take the most dangerous and damaging risks when she/he believes they are in real danger of a serious loss (prevention focus) and a risky approach is the only apparent way to avoid the loss. On the “other side of the coin,” promotion focused individuals will embrace risk in all circumstances, regardless of gain or loss. So it may likely be a good idea to keep an eye on those decision makers in your organization who are prevention based and faced with very risky decisions.

Born exactly 208 years ago this month, Livingstone knew something about “taking no road at all.” He was the first European, during the mid-1800’s, to cross the entire African continent and discover one of the seven wonders of the world, Victoria Falls. Livingstone went so far into the interior of Africa that he was not heard from for years and was thought to be missing. It was not until a search party set out, guided by Henry M. Stanley, that Livingstone was found in the town of Ujiji, in what is now known as Tanzania in Central Africa. It was there, on October 27, 1871, that Stanley apparently uttered those famous words, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume!”

Perform better!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David".

★★★This quote has been slightly modified in its wording to reflect modern times while ensuring the meaning and original intent have not been altered.