

## What was your experience of unity?

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*Photo date and location unknown*

Once I was in the kitchen at Hearst Street house, three months in the church and struggling. Noah Ross was there. “So Sam, how's it going?” he asked. I had really been wanting to talk to somebody about what I was going through, and Noah was somebody I could probably talk to. But I was also seized by panic, and I made some excuse to leave the kitchen and took off. I don't remember if I hid in another room or went for a walk. Either way, he wanted to talk and I ran.

When I joined MFT, I could work hard. I ran most of the day, went to the bathroom in a minute or less, took 30 minutes or less for lunch. All of that, I could do, but opening up and talking to my captain or team mother – that was hard, much harder than all the running around and long hours. The prospect of talking with someone sometimes made me want to literally run away.

So, it wasn't easy for me to open up. And on MFT, I started out well – made good result, ran around a lot, huge effort. But over time, I got more and more worn out, and my result went down no matter how hard I worked at it.

We had started to sell 'laser photos'. I have no idea if they were actually made using a laser or not, they were 18 x 20 photos with pretty clear details, better than most blown up pictures. They came in semi-flimsy wood frames, with cardboard backing held in by a few staples.

Well, one morning my captain dropped me off to eat breakfast with Teruko, the team mother. I was a little anxious about one-on-one attention, but it went well. We just ate biscuits and gravy and she asked me questions about myself, how I joined, etc. It felt like we connected about some things.

Well, after that I headed out to sell laser photos. We were asking \$35 each or 3 for \$100. I enjoyed selling them, had developed a few techniques. Sometimes I wouldn't say anything, just walk in and start showing them pictures. We had these telescoping hand carts for them, and I'd make a production of coming in the door backwards with the cart just to make people wonder what I had.

But on this day, people just bought them without me doing too much. One office manager had me prop them around the walls of her conference room. She asked other workers' opinions and bought something like \$375 worth of them.

I wasn't doing anything different. If anything, I was doing less than usual. It seemed all I had to do was walk in and tell people I had pictures, they would start looking and then they'd buy. I just talked to them as they decided and they gave me money.

When I climbed back in the van that evening, I had made over \$1,000, an absolute personal record. My previous best was \$350 at an army base on payday, which took me running around all day like a deranged squirrel with a bucket of roses.

And it seems that what turned me into a magnet that day was simply unity. I connected with somebody who was connected, and people just wanted to get what I had. So rather than running to make a high spirit, jolting people with energy when I came in the door, or focusing intensely, coming up with the perfect line, making them laugh, pushing myself, sweating – all I had to do was make unity.

Which sounds easy, right? Ha! The rest of my life is testament enough that it is not easy to make unity with people. For me, it's easier to work 7 days a week until you're not sure how to spell your own name. But boy, unity sure makes things happen when you can pull it off.

Do you have an experience with unity? What happened?