

Getting Out of the B^{ox}

Many people set low ceilings on their expectations and capabilities. In the process, they place themselves in a “box.”

Alexander Wortley took that a step farther and literally lived in a box.

A Royal Navy veteran, he served in the Battle of Jutland aboard *HMS Agincourt* as runner to Capt. Thynne. The Battle of Jutland was a naval battle fought by the British Royal Navy's Grand Fleet under Admiral Sir John Jellicoe against the Imperial German Navy's High Seas Fleet under Vice-Admiral Reinhard Scheer during World War I. It was the largest naval battle, lasting from May 31 to June 1, 1916, and the only full-scale clash of battleships in the war.

Wortley died at the age of 80, having lived his last 20 years in a green painted box in a garden in Rowley Cottage in Langley Park, Buckinghamshire, donated by his friend, David Moreau.



The box measured 5x4x3 feet, with an extension for his feet and small enough – he was quoted as saying – to keep women out. He paid no rent, rates or taxes, and did not believe in insurance, pensions or governments. It was listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the smallest residence in the world.

Wortley's box was made of wood, had a metal roof, and it housed him and all his meager belongings. Regardless of where he worked, Wortley chose to spend his life in that cramped space, even though larger, more comfortable quarters were available.

Strange behavior, indeed. We wonder why someone would subject himself to such a lifestyle.

Few of us live in a box. Too many of us, however, have a tendency to box ourselves in and continue to do things one way because we've “always done it this way.”

In many cases, time and experience have proven that “this way” is the best way. But we should challenge ourselves to periodically take a long walk or quietly sit and think about the way we do things.

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Ask yourself if there might not be a better way. Could your procedures be simplified? Are they necessary at all? Could they be done more cheaply or efficiently?

Sometimes you can come up with simple ideas that make a big difference. And by the way, one advantage of a way of life that includes continual personal growth and education – which should be the goal of each of us in Life Care and Century Park – is that the broader and deeper your knowledge base, the more creative your problem-solving approach to life.

Here is a simple example. For years, men's coats had an inside pocket only on the right where pens and other items were kept. One day, somebody thought: "Since most men are right-handed, why not put a pocket on the inside left so that they could reach in, extract the pen with their right hand, and begin writing?"

Now that's not a monumental suggestion, but it saves a second or two and it has sold lots of suits.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, the great Russian novelist, short-story writer, essayist and journalist, said: "It is not the brains that matter most, but that which guides them – the character, the heart, generous qualities, progressive ideas."

– Beecher Hunter