

The mentioned, you
of the few people with
name. enough sense of humor
appreciate this sense of humor
Hope they don't throw fruit
at anything.
Dean

DRAFT ②

"TRYING TOO HARD"

KEYNOTE SPEECH
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- DRAFT -

There's a scene in the movie "Apocalypse Now" in which an Army General is briefing a young officer on his secret mission to infiltrate from Vietnam into Laos and get Colonel Kurtz. The General had ordered lunch served during the briefing. He was describing the dishes in front of them. When he got to what looked like it might have been last Thursday's catch of the day from the local river, he pointed to it and said ". . . eat that and you won't have to prove your courage to me in any other way".

If the General were here tonight he probably would point at me, look at you, and say, "listen to someone from Batterymarch and you won't have to prove your sense of humor to me in any other way". Ever since Dean LeBaron began his address to the Boston Society of Security Analysts by saying, "Welcome, fans of index matching", audiences like you have listened good-naturedly to one unlikely idea after another from us. As you will soon find out, we have gathered here tonight to continue in that tradition.

In fact, that I'm even here is pretty unlikely. You probably know that Dave Broder, the fine columnist from the Washington Post, was supposed to speak to you tonight. When he said he couldn't be here, one of Marshall Ketchum's Board members said, "Call Dean at Batterymarch and see if he can do it". Well, you can guess what happened. Dean LeBaron happened to be out of the office and I took the phone call. When I showed up tonight, poor Marshall realized he'd invited the wrong Dean. So, if you noticed Marshall looking a little edgy, now you know why.

The title Marshall mentioned, "Trying Too Hard", comes from something that happened to me a few years ago. I had just completed what I thought was some fancy footwork involving buying and selling a long list of stocks. The oldest member of Morgan's trust committee looked down the list and said, "Do you think you might be trying too hard?" At the time I thought, "Who ever heard of trying too hard?" Well, over the years I've changed my mind about that. Tonight I'm going to ask you to entertain some ideas whose theme is this: We probably are trying too hard at what we do. More than that, no matter how hard we try, we may not be as important to the results as we'd like to think we are.

But I also hope to persuade you that that's not all bad. Sure, we get an uncomfortable feeling when we question the value of some of the things we've always thought we're supposed to do . . . but the rest is pure good news. Complete with more time to do the things we're well-suited for, greater efficiency in our own companies and, probably, better results for our customers.

Here are the ideas I'm going to talk about: The first is an analogy between physics and investing. With apologies to anyone who knows anything about physics - or about investing, for that matter - let me put it this way: The foundation of Newtonian physics was that physical events are governed by physical laws. Laws that we could understand rationally. And if we learned enough about those laws, we could extend our knowledge and influence over our environment. That was also the foundation of most of the security analysis, technical analysis,