

H. KEITH HUNT: MENTOR AND FRIEND

Jonathan C. Huefner

Boys Town National Research Institute for Child and Family Studies

I met Keith Hunt in 1988 while I was a psychology graduate student at Brigham Young University. Our mutual point of contact was Peter Robinson, who was working with Keith on an entrepreneurship manuscript based on Peter's dissertation. I was invited to review and revise the manuscript, and this was a great opportunity for me to potentially coauthor a published manuscript. This collaborative relationship went well, and Keith invited me to work with him on a couple of his other projects. Not content with simply allowing me to develop my research skills and build my professional resume (which alone was very beneficial), Keith obtained business school money and hired me as a research assistant. This allowed me early on to see Keith's altruistic and generous nature.

Our collaborative research on entrepreneurship and consumer behavior continued until 2000. It was an amazingly productive time for me as a Ph.D. student and then recent graduate. In total, Keith and I published 11 papers and 9 proceedings. Our research provided me opportunities and experience that I would not have otherwise known. Keith was always asking for and open to my perspective, and we had many long and deep discussions on the topics we were researching. In this he was also an excellent exemplar of the academic researcher who involves students in research and integrates that into what it means to be a professor. In all these ways Keith was ever the superlative mentor to those of us who were blessed to work with him.

Keith was always thinking outside the box, seeing new connections between different areas of research, and extrapolating new constructs. Two examples of this, entrepreneurial consumers and consumer retaliation, stand out to me. Entrepreneurial consumerism is simply that the perceptions and behaviors that drive many creators of small business ("traditional" entrepreneurs) are often applied in the way some people obtain, use, or dispose of goods and services [e.g., slow-flipping homes, hospitality exchanges, bartering.] Recognizing that these activities are a type of vital and creative entrepreneurship has important implications for the study of consumer behavior and may be increasingly more common as inflation puts pressure on consumers to creatively make the most of their limited resources. The second example is consumer retaliation, which proved to be such an interesting and eye-opening project. As we gathered consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction and complaining behavior stories we began to see examples of consumers not just using voice or exit to express dissatisfaction, but people were sharing examples of deliberate, intentional efforts to in some way get back at businesses for something that went wrong. To build on this we asked students in one of Keith's consumer behavior classes to collect stories from family and friends (a proof-of-concept effort). The stories we received were an amazingly varied, and sometimes shocking, collection of ways in which people who felt wronged intentionally tried to hurt a business. Clearly the dark side of consumer behavior, but one that deserves more attention. In these projects Keith modeled innovative thinking and an openness to what research participants were saying.

Keith has also been a consistent example of not taking oneself too seriously. One of my favorite Keith memories started with our having a particularly productive morning working on a manuscript, after which we decided to reward our hard work with a good Italian lunch. The food was delicious and the portions generous – what more could we ask for? In trying to get back to work after lunch, however, we realized that a big pasta meal had made us very lethargic and

virtually useless for work. The only thing we were fit for was taking a nap, which amused Keith to no end. Laughter and warm friendship have always been the tenor of our time together.

Some relationships fade as circumstances change. Keith has not allowed this to happen. He continues reaching out to me over the years asking about my working and my family. He is a dear and valued friend. Generous, innovative, mentor, friend, and so much more. Thank you, Keith, for all you have done and meant to me over so many years.