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### The iPod

“Hey, take a look at my new iPod. It holds 5,000 songs.” My friend was driving to dinner and had it plugged into his car stereo. It was new and new-fangled. It came in a cool black case and felt smooth to the touch. The white surface was loaded with things to push. The screen showed the name of the song playing with additional information. And I quickly put it aside.

How curious that something that fascinated my friend, and clearly made him proud to be the owner of, had no draw for me. None whatsoever. I wasn't the least bit inclined to push any of the buttons, change any of the songs, or explore what this device could do. What did this say about me? Was I afraid of technology? Was I an illiterate in today's digital device driven society?

Hmmmm....it dawned on me that I put a premium on finding meaning. And “gadgets” seemed to fall in that category of things that make life easier, more convenient, even more efficient, but with little meaning. What's the deeper meaning of owning an iPod?

Okay, I was on to something here. For my friend, the deeper meaning had something to do with freshness and novelty and abundance. Want to hear a song on your car radio? How about ordering up via your own personal jukebox that song you heard at your friend's house last night? Want hear something soothing for the rush hour drive home or something more upbeat to get us ready for the night out? Magic on your doorstep (or at your car door as the case may be). I never asked my friend exactly why he likes his iPod so much or what the deeper meaning for owning one is. Probably something a marketing guy from Apple would love to hear.

Which brings me to another question: Is marketing really all about making meaning visible?

If so, I need to watch a few more commercials.....

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