

Loss or gain—what drives you?

By [Robert Cornwall](#)

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As a church pastor I've been known to change things, but in contrast to some of my colleagues I'm pretty cautious. Yesterday at our Missional Learning Track (Disciples General Assembly), my friend Christian Piatt described his congregational setting as "divinely inspired anarchy."

I'm not sure I can say that for me or my church.

The question I want to pose today is a question of perspective on life.

Are you driven by an aversion to loss or a desire for gain? This question, which is related to the missional question in church life, is driven in part by a statement Brian McLaren made this past Monday at the first session of our Missional Track -- we're not so much afraid of change as of loss. This point fits well with the thesis of a book I'm reading (recommended by another friend) called [Scorecasting](#). In this book authors Tobias J. Moskowitz and L. Jon Wertheim speak of the principle of loss aversion, "the principle that we dislike losing a dollar more than earning a dollar." They continue:

As a result of loss aversion, we change our behavior -- sometimes irrationally -- paying too much attention to purchase price and avoiding short-term loss at the expense of long term gain. (Moskowitz and Wertheim, [Scorecasting](#), Kindle, 24%)

So, what is it--short term at the expense of long term? Or is the long term worth forgoing short-term gain?

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