



coach@successhandler.com

Ideas For Success | August

With David as your coach, you'll explore the business and personal dreams you desire. Much like sports coaches unleash potential in athletes, he will show you how to soar to new heights as a franchisor, franchisee, business owner or senior executive.



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The Olympics are in full swing in Beijing. This is China's opportunity to impress the world and prove itself capable of delivering on the largest stage over a 16-day run that began with a lavish Opening Ceremony on Friday.

From the American perspective, swimmer Michael Phelps attempts to surpass Mark Spitz's legendary seven gold medal performance of 1972. Men's basketball – led by LeBron James and Kobe Bryant – sets out to erase memories of the three-loss debacle of 2004...after having suffered only two defeats in their previous 14 Olympics. Hoping to follow in the footsteps of Mary Lou Retton and Carly Patterson, world all-around champion Shawn Johnson takes her shot at becoming Olympic Champion in women's gymnastics.

You have plenty of opportunities to watch the world compete. NBC Universal is offering 3,600 hours of televised and online events spread over seven networks. That's 1,000 hours more programming than the aggregate total of every Summer Olympics since 1960. So whether you're rooting for Taiwan's Hsieh Yu-Hsing to pull an upset in men's badminton or Canada's men's eight to take gold in rowing, you have access. Welcome to the connected world.

Conventional Times Over the next three weeks, first the Democrats in Denver, then the Republicans in Minneapolis, convene to coronate Barack Obama and John McCain as their presidential candidates. The only drama appears to be who will emerge as the VP nominees.

That's a far cry from the turmoil that surrounded the Democratic convention in 1968. In a year that earlier saw Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy taken by assassins' bullets, and continuing unrest over the Vietnam War, the Chicago Eight – including Abbie Hoffman, Tom Hayden and Black Panther co-founder Bobby Seale – were arrested and charged with conspiring to incite a riot. Four decades later, we typically protest more peacefully.

It will be interesting to see if the conventions reveal details about the candidates' policies. The summer has been relatively quiet, and with the election 85 days away, now is the time to start understanding exactly what McCain and Obama intend to do if they inherit the White House.

Visionary Ideal Instead of a magical idea from my experiences with Disney cast members this month, I decided to share a quote from Greek philosopher Epictetus, who was born a slave in present-day Turkey during the first century:

"So you wish to conquer in the Olympic games, my friend? You will

Evolution

Two months after the arrests of the Chicago Eight, the Games of the XIX Olympiad in Mexico City produced one of the most controversial incidents in sports history, when 200 meters first and third place finishers Tommie Smith and John Carlos bowed their heads and raised black-gloved fists during the national anthem. IOC president Avery Brundage – who ruled with an iron-first – ordered the pair immediately suspended from the U.S. team and banned from the Olympic Village. Eventually, Smith became a college professor and Carlos a high school coach. "I don't like the idea of people looking at it as negative," said Smith in a 1999 HBO special. "There was nothing but a raised fist in the air and a bowed head, acknowledging the American flag – not symbolizing a hatred for it." Last month, Tommie Smith and John Carlos received the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage at the ESPYs. Here's to courage...and progress.

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have to put yourself under discipline: to eat by rule, to avoid cakes and sweetmeats; to take exercise at the appointed hour whether you like it or no, in cold and heat; to abstain from cold drinks and from wine at your will; in a word, to give yourself over to the trainer as to a physician. Then in the conflict itself you are likely enough to dislocate your wrist or twist your ankle, to swallow a great deal of dust, or to be severely thrashed, and after all these things, to be defeated."

No one achieves Olympic glory as an overnight success. The athlete sacrifices years to dedication and hard work. It's the same in business. You get up every day, commit to giving your best, and hope the gods shine upon you during moments of truth.

Olympic Experience It's amazing to see how many former Olympic athletes transition into motivational speaking careers. Bruce Jenner, Mike Eruzione and Picabo Street head a lengthy list of medal winners who command fees up to \$50,000.

In 2002, I was in charge of the early morning general sessions at a franchisor convention. You know: big audience, big screens, big-name speakers. Capitalizing on my television background, I produced and directed quite a show, with awards, entertainment and speeches – always beginning and ending right on time, so the day's schedule remained on pace.

At the opening session, we had two keynote speakers: one a well-known professional sports team owner, the other an Olympic gymnastics gold medalist. The plan was for each to speak for 25 minutes. However, 10 minutes into his speech, the sports team owner said, "So to conclude my thoughts today..." – and I immediately had our stage manager ask the gymnast if he could expand his presentation to 35 minutes. "No problem," came the reply. Great...except the owner kept talking and talking and talking. Fifteen minutes later I told the stage manager to let the gymnast know we were back on schedule. "That's fine," was his response.

Finally, 15 minutes before the end of the session – and with the first speaker continuing to "conclude his thoughts" – I again asked the stage manager to communicate with the gymnast. At that point, Bart Conner, Olympic Champion in 1984, took the headset and said, "David, when he's finished, just tell me how long I have and I'll hit it." With eight minutes left before the break, Bart finally took the stage, and on-the-fly condensed his 25-minute speech to seven minutes and 58 seconds. It was a perfect 10.

Backstory: At a reception the previous evening, I met Bart Conner for the first time. He was one of the kindest and most engaging athletes I've encountered. I mentioned to him that as a 16-year-old I had a crush on the teenager who would become his wife. He smiled and said, "I hear that from a lot of guys your age." A week after the convention, a package arrived at my office from Oklahoma City. It was a framed autographed picture of Mr. and Mrs. Bart Conner. You know her as Nadia Comaneci.

Until next month, continued success in all things.

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