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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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Big Boy Pants

If you've been reading these newsletters for awhile, you know I'm a huge fan of the University of Texas. When Vince Young rallied the Horns to win the 2005 national championship in dramatic fashion over USC, he sat

Ideas For Success | September

[I wrote this story 96 hours ago. We're fine...just some short-term inconveniences. Many of our neighbors have damage to their homes; south of us – as you know – is a lot of disaster and sadness.]

Fluffy white clouds flow by outside my window, drifting in the breeze among brilliant blue skies. Two squirrels chase each other up and down pine trees in our front yard, playfully tossing bark onto the green lawn below. High-pitched screeching sounds emanate from their tiny mouths, the only noise from an otherwise silent cul de sac.

It's 9:00 a.m. CDT on Friday, a beautiful September morning.

A little more than 375 miles away, in the heated Gulf of Mexico the waters are surging, fueled by the swirling winds of a hurricane. In 15 hours, the center of Ike will make landfall on the Texas coast – most likely near Galveston – 80 miles from our home on the northwest side of Houston.

Residents of Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida deal with this uncertainty often, and you've seen the damage a hurricane can bring. In the decade we've lived here, only Rita three years ago this month caused as much anxiety as this storm. That time, the nation's fourth largest city evacuated. For us, it was an 18-hour journey to travel 275 miles to family in Fort Worth. Four days later, a four-hour drive returned us to our untouched home.

This time we're riding out the storm.

Over the past two days, Ike has taken a more northern path. What was projected on Wednesday to be a direct hit Cat 3 appears to be losing strength and tailing to the right. The majority of Houston may end up on the clean and less severe side. Nevertheless, 75 mph winds could throttle our home for eight hours. It will be a long night. Power will be lost. Many will suffer damage. I'll let you know next month how things turn out in our neighborhood.

The Art of No Is it just me, or have you noticed these days more and more people have trouble speaking one of the shortest words in the English language? Why is it so hard for someone to say "No"?

Many have difficulty with confrontation. I often help clients work through that subject. Having to deal with a challenging employee, explain a problem to a customer or approach a surly contractor about disappointing execution is one thing. Looking someone in the eye and saying, "That's just not going to work for me," or "We've decided to go in another direction," shouldn't be so difficult.

I'm on a mission to change that. In my personal dealings with people,

at the top of the sports world, and soon signed endorsement and NFL contracts worth tens of millions. Last week, Vince was booed off the field in Nashville, as Titans fans grow weary of his lack of success at the highest level. There are contradicting stories on how VY reacted; however, it appears he's not enjoying the game. Vince, it's time to grow up. You've had tremendous adulation since your youth, but life's not a straight line. This is your chance to overcome adversity – which means you have to get tough...and fast. Business leaders do it every day. Take a lesson.

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in my coaching clients and in my writing to you, I'm trying one person at a time to let everyone know it's ok to say no. So do me a favor at least one time in the next few weeks. When you find yourself hesitating to tell someone, "No," overcome that fear. Look them in the eye, and say, "Not this time." You'll be amazed how good that feels.

Walt's Wisdom This month's magical idea from my encounters with Disney cast members is about not allowing emotions to get in the way of how you deal with others. As a leader, it's important to be candid, open and not make things personal:

"Separate the issue from the tissue."

If there are a lot of emotions floating around your organization, you might want to share this lesson with your team.

Emergency Preparedness I provide executive coaching for several high-level leaders at the company that services electricity and gas transmission in our area. By coincidence, I had scheduled for Thursday a shadowing exercise – in which I observe the client interacting with others and provide immediate feedback.

Arriving on the 46th floor of their downtown office building, I knew it wouldn't be my typical experience. The first thing on the agenda was a conference call in which leaders throughout the organization – from the CEO to the person in charge of catering – discussed and fine-tuned plans for Ike. They will operate with an "all hands on deck" approach until the storm passes, then things really get intense as they restore power, which could take three weeks in some places.

The key to recovering from a situation like Ike is to establish procedures far in advance. Their 2008 Emergency Operations Plan was finalized in May, weeks before the beginning of the hurricane season. There was a dry run that month and a real test a few weeks ago that resulted in no damage when tropical storm Eduardo fizzled.

As my slow-reacting neighbors scampering around to find water, non-perishable food and gasoline are experiencing, you don't get ready for a hurricane when it's knocking on your door. The same goes for preparedness in your business. When it comes to planning for your future – whether strategically, emergency or exit strategy – don't wait until the moment arrives to start thinking, "What do we need to do?" The time for those thoughts is today.

I'm not sure how the next 24 hours will progress, but the sun will return soon. Residents will repair, rebuild and re-energize. Plus, I'll finally get around to visiting the local lumber yard to buy boards for our windows. No sense worrying about winds and flying objects when the next hurricane arrives.

Until next month, continued success in all things.

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