



coach@successhandler.com

Ideas For Success | *April*

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High Probability

Coincidences amaze me. My son and I went to the NCAA Regionals last month – 40,000 people in Reliant Stadium. Seated a few rows in front of us were one of

Speaking engagements tend to come in bunches for me, and I hit the road on several occasions recently to deliver keynote and breakout sessions to business leaders. One of the messages I am presenting to audiences these days is confidence and conviction are essential attributes for challenging times.

Confidence is an internal emotion: how you feel about your ability to make good decisions that lead to better results for your organization. While you may have taken some recent hits – and most everyone has – you still have the knowledge, insight and skills to be successful. Be sure to remember your uniqueness every day. Positive attitude really does make a difference.

Conviction is an external perception: how strongly those you lead believe in your commitment to the position and actions you espouse. Your attitude and approach to key initiatives – the Rocks in your business – set the course for the depth others buy-in. Be sure to remain aware at all times of the words you're using. Negative communication undermines effectiveness.

Chance Meeting - An early riser, I like to take the first flight home the morning after my presentations. So there I was two Saturdays ago in Chicago getting into a private car at 5:00 a.m. for the ride to O'Hare. My driver was a young woman who spoke with an accent and diction that suggested she was born elsewhere. Over a half-hour, we had a discussion that has me wondering if my next entrepreneurial adventure should be producing a television program about America the Beautiful.

Magdalena arrived from Poland in 2005 after graduating from college and winning the Green Card Lottery. She leases her limo from a man who has 20 similar cars, and receives 40 percent of every fare plus tips, while the owner and transportation authority split the remainder. "Last year I make \$50,000, although this year starting better," she said. When I asked how much she works, she replied: "I don't want to think about it. Six days always, seven days sometime. I wake early like today."

Three years ago, Magdalena purchased a townhome with her boyfriend. He left and she lives alone now with a new puppy. "It takes everything I make to survive, but I am lucky one," she said. "Many friends not working in Poland." She was raised Catholic, but doesn't go to church: "I'm not atheist, just don't think about God. Maybe when older and things don't go so well."

As we pulled up to the airport terminal, I asked Magdalena if she intends to stay and become a citizen. "Yes, definitely, of course," she said. "People here always complaining. They not appreciate how great is United States." A few minutes later when I sat down

my closest friends and his son. Behind us were Kyle's basketball teammate and his dad. Walking up the aisle, I ran into a former coach who served as the commentator on games I produced 15 years ago.

Last weekend, on the way back from San Antonio, we stopped at Buc-ee's flagship location in Luling, Texas, and I heard someone yell: 'Hey Handlers.' It was my daughter's soccer coach, whose family was heading to San Antonio. What are the odds? Yet, as a believer in the Law of Attraction – you attract into your life a perfect reflection of the energy you project – I wonder if these meetings are indeed coincidental. Perhaps it's because you attract people who are so much like you that you end up at the same ballgames and same roadside stops.

Such positive thoughts just might give me the confidence and conviction to pursue that new TV show idea.

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at my gate, CNN Airport Network announced Poland's president had perished in a plane crash. It was a surreal feeling to realize the coincidences that occurred for me to have a connection with that country at that moment.

Words of Wisdom - Perhaps you found it ironic that as Phil Mickelson walked off the 18th green after winning The Masters he warmly embraced his wife – who is battling breast cancer – and tears flowed down their faces. Setting aside the apparent differences in the personal lives of Mickelson and Tiger Woods, it is interesting that Phil's swing guru worked with Tiger from his amateur days until 2004.

"People come to me to get better, and I have a proven track record of helping them do that." ~ Butch Harmon

Clearly, Butch Harmon has confidence in his abilities and projects conviction in his attitude. Those are two reasons the world's greatest golfers line up to seek his advice. The other is he's a terrific coach – and, as you might imagine, I'm a big believer that all big achievers need one of those to ensure they stay on course for victory.

Almost Heaven - For nearly 40 years beginning in 1925, one of the highlights of traveling the nation's roads was coming upon advertising for a leading maker of shaving cream. Featuring six signs spaced equal distances apart, this classic campaign helped make long family trips go faster:

Henry the Eighth / Sure had / Trouble / Short-term wives / Long-term stubble / Burma-Shave

I proposed / To Ida / Ida refused / Ida won my Ida / If Ida used / Burma-Shave

Along the highways of Texas today you'll see colorful billboards for a new 'fun store' concept that has expanded to 30 locations and appears destined for big success. Buc-ee's sells gasoline, tasty food and lots of branded merchandise including t-shirts that are becoming fashion statements. They tweaked the Burma-Shave approach with billboards promoting their cartoon mascot and sayings like:

OMG! / It's a Beaver! / LOL! / 49 miles

Only 262 miles to Buc-ee's / You can hold it

During an ABC News story late last year, Buc-ee's owner Arch 'Beaver' Aplin made a point all leaders should remember, saying he follows "a simple business model – it's all about the bathrooms." Think of the hundreds of gas station and fast-food stops you've made over the years. How many missed that simple lesson? Now look at your own business and consider what represents 'bathrooms' to your customers. If that essential piece needs some "cleaning" to be the best, you just defined your biggest Rock.

Until next time, continued success in all things.

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