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Professional Speaking & Corporate Training

Fall 2004

Theme: Encouragement

*"Flatter me and I may not believe you.
Criticize me and I may not like you.
Ignore me and I may not forgive you, but
Encourage me and I will never forget you."
--William Arthur Ward--*

The year was 2003. The place: The Clear Spring High School Cross Country Invitational. Hundreds of runners and avid race fans were in attendance expecting a true sports *extravaganza!*

If you have never been to a cross country meet, I can assure you that the *spectators* get as much exercise as the *participants*. As the gun sounded, we cheered by the starting line and then quickly ran to our first strategically planned location so that we could shout words of encouragement as the runners raced by. They passed.... we cheered....and then we raced to the next site only to repeat the same process over and over again.

Because our son's team had some exceptional runners, we quickly found ourselves at the finish line offering our team hearty congratulations.

As we made our way back to the starting line in preparation for the next race, we noticed some excitement ahead. A small crowd had gathered midway up a steep hill on the course. They were shouting and clapping in a frenzied manner. It was then that I realized that, although the race was over for some, it was still in progress. An overweight young man wearing an opposing team's uniform struggled up the hill. His position in the race: dead last! His face was flushed and his breathing labored. It was obvious by his size and physical condition that running did not come easily to him.

"You can do it!" screamed the crowd. *"Keep going."* *"Don't give up."* *"You're almost there."* They continued to cheer as if this young man was about to break a school record. He grimaced and stared ahead towards the top of the hill with a look of sheer determination. He kept going... and going....and going in spite of the fact that most had forgotten him.

I learned a valuable lesson that day about the condition of the human spirit. You see, the *true champion* of that event was not the fit, young man who crossed the finish line *first*. Rather, it was that young man who was forgotten by most.

The one who, although finishing last, had the tenacity and the courage to keep on going. Most importantly, I learned that when we truly feel encouraged and supported by those who believe in us, we are capable of accomplishing great things.

And so it is for each of us. As leaders in our organizations, how often do we feel frustration over the employees who just don't "get it?" We lament "why do the same mistakes occur repeatedly?" How we long for employees with work *ethic* instead of work *attitude*. Could it be that they, too, simply need to feel the strong presence of support and encouragement? Instead of focusing on what is wrong with our employee's performance, let's strive to focus on what is right! Let *encouragement* become an important part of your coaching and management style.

Art imitates life. This weekend check out one of these great movies. You'll surely be reminded of the role encouragement plays in inspiring greatness:

- Radio, starring Cuba Gooding, Jr.
- Cool Runnings, starring John Candy
- Pay it Forward, starring Kevin Spacey



Recommended Reading:

Whale Done! *The Power of Positive Relationships* by Ken Blanchard

A few key concepts from the book include:

- Build trust in your employees
- Accentuate the positive
- When mistakes occur, redirect the energy
- Catch people doing things right

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Check out my [new](#) website at
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Additional thoughts on becoming a better encourager:

- Be aware of non-verbal communication. Always maintain good eye contact with employee. It communicates respect and sincerity.
- Think www. Ask yourself “what went well?” Comment on that observation. Make comments specific, not general.
- Praise *anything* and *everything* the employee does that gets them closer to the desired result. Recognize *attempt*, not just success.
- Get to know your employees personally so that you know what motivates them.
- Be humble and share your “war stories.” Even the best managers have made mistakes. It can be encouraging to a new staff member to know that we are all human.
- Don't overlook scheduling annual employee performance reviews. Employees need feedback, formally and informally. Use this time to help employees set goals for future performance. This will give you a baseline for measuring progress and will present you with ample opportunities to coach and encourage. (See more on goal setting in future newsletters).

Does your sales or management team need encouragement? Contact Julie at (301) 293-4195 to schedule one of her inspiring messages for your next meeting, retreat, or special event.



Inspiring Quotes about Encouragement:

“Treat people as if they were what they *ought* to be, and you help them to become what they are *capable* of being.” *Goethe*

“A word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success.” *Unknown*

“We need to be aware of what others are doing, applaud their efforts, acknowledge their successes, and encourage them in their pursuits. When we all help one another, everyone wins.” *Jim Stovall*

Featured workshop by Julie Gaver:

Teaching your Employees to Fish

Based on the Chinese proverb, “*give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day, but teach a man to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime,*” this session addresses why coaching creates more lasting benefits than managing employees.

Specific topics include: the fundamentals of coaching which include behavior modification, rapport building, coaching employees through the goal setting process, delegating, and why we need “cheerleaders” at work. Each participant will create a plan for coaching an employee who has not yet reached his full potential.

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