



Short Stories to Make You *Laugh, Cry,* and *Think*

By Mark Matteson and Kevin Thomas

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Other Works by Mark Matteson and Kevin Thomas

- Freedom From Fear* (The Best Selling Book) by Mark Matteson - 2000 – Executive Books
- Freedom From Fear FOREVER* – by Mark Matteson and Kevin Thomas – 2006 Ugly Dog Publishing
- Presenting Like a Pro* – e-book by Mark Matteson and Kevin Thomas
- Customer Service Excellence* – e-book by Mark Matteson and Kevin Thomas
- Sales Success Stories* – e-book by Mark Matteson and Kevin Thomas
- Freedom From Fear* – CD by Mark Matteson (Read by the Author)
- Freedom From Fear* – Inspirational Window Card (30 per box)
- Dashboard Decree© - Achieve your goals with these special cards

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This e-book is dedicated to the first storyteller I ever met, my father, Robert D. Matteson, (1928-2005)



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About the authors

Mark Matteson is an internationally known Speaker, Author and Consultant. He is the founder and President of Pinnacle Service Group, Inc., Lynnwood, WA. Mark has been called *A Gifted Storyteller, Street Scholar, an Idea Reporter an insightful Business Humorist*. He is author of three books including the best seller, ***Freedom From Fear***,” and six e-books. He travels 200 days a year and is in great demand Internationally as a **Keynote Speaker, Seminar Leader and Management Consultant** on such topics as:

- *Raising the Bar – Industry Trends & Breakthroughs*
- *Keeping More Customers*
- *Increasing Your Sales and Close Ratios*
- *Attracting and Retaining Great People*
- *Presenting Like a Pro with Confidence and Influence*
- *Improving and Understanding Relationships*
- *Team and Trust Building*
- *E-Marketing Strategies*

He has written dozens of articles and has been written about for his unique and Profit Producing seminars. Mark inspires Organizations and Associations Internationally to “*Raise the Bar*” to achieve higher levels of personal and professional performance.

“I have been attending seminars for 20 years. You are the finest speaker I have ever heard.

David Rhea, Texas Restaurant Association

Kevin Thomas left the corporate world in 2004 and was immediately enlisted by Mark to create “Matteson Avenue”. When Kevin’s not developing web sites and publishing, he’s raising alpacas and building custom homes in the Seattle area. In his spare time he develops and builds his Christmas display that features over 100,000 lights synchronized to music.

Introduction

Stories are sticky. We remember them, sometimes, from a conversation, speech, or seminar that is the only thing we remember.

Like most families growing up in the 1950's and 1960's, we learned about storytelling around the dinner table. My father told the best yarn. Some of those stories I heard twenty-five times, and yet never tired of hearing the punchline; like singing along with your favorite song, it didn't matter that you knew what was coming. You loved it.

As a father, I have used to stories to make a point with my boys, to teach, to let them know DAD went through the same kinds of things they were struggling with. Funny how each new generation thinks their problems are unique. With my boys, I stuck to first person tales most of the time. Occasionally, however, I would insert a third person story to deliver the moral. And on that rare occasion, I would make one up.

In this compilation, you get to decide which kind of story this collection represents: third person or made up.

I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I did writing them. Some of them represent the kinds of stories I tell when I present a Keynote or Seminar. I have told them hundreds of times.

Welcome to my dinner table. Thanks for letting me spin a few yarns.

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Volume 1: "Short and Sweet"

What Are You Building?

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house-building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife enjoying his extended family.

He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. They could get by. The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the carpenter finished his work, the employer came to inspect the house. He handed the front door key to the carpenter.

"This is your house," he said, "My gift to you!" The carpenter was shocked! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

So it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building. Then, with a shock, we realize that we have to live in the house we have built. If we could do it over, we would do it much differently - but we cannot go back.

You are the carpenter. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. "Life is a do-it-yourself project," someone has said. Your attitudes and the choices you make today build the "house" you live in tomorrow. Build wisely!

The Eagles: Like Hell

Shortly after the Eagles split up in 1981, Glenn Frey was asked when the band might be expected to reunite. "When hell freezes over," he tartly replied.

Sure enough, the band reunited in 1994 and began performing again. The name of their reunion tour? *Hell Freezes Over!*

He Understands

One sunny Wisconsin afternoon a pastor was driving his family through the country. He came upon a most magnificent site. It was the most impressive farm he had ever seen. The flowers in the garden were spectacular. The crops were bigger and more abundant than he had ever seen. The farmhouse had a fresh coat of paint and was truly a sight to see. He wondered if the farmer appreciated all that God had given him. He stopped his car.

He waved the farmer over to ask him a question. "What can I do for you, pastor?" the farmer asked. "God has certainly blessed you with a beautiful farm," said the pastor.

The astute farmer, understanding the intent of the statement, replied, "Yes he has, and I am grateful." Pausing for effect, he continued, "But you should have seen this place when he had it all to himself!"

The Pastor smiled as he walked away, thinking: he understands.

Three Guys and One Question

After over ten years as patients, three inmates were sitting in chairs facing a panel of psychologists in an insane asylum. They were being tested to see to see if they were fit to leave. The panel asked the first patient, a nervous and hyper little guy, "What is 3 x 3?" He thought for a moment and said, "114!" They shook their heads and said, "Next." The second patient seemed a little more in control. He sat down in front of the panel and they asked him the same question. He replied, "Tuesday!" They shook their heads and simply said, "Next." The third patient was the calmest of the three. He smiled. They asked him the same question. Without hesitation he answered, "Nine." The panel was visibly excited. "How did you arrive at that figure?" they asked. "Oh, that's easy; I just subtracted 114 from Tuesday!"

Many thanks to Michael Angelo Caruso for the story. Go to his fabulous website: www.EdisonHouse.com

Curb Your Enthusiasm

Larry David is an American comedian, writer, actor and producer. He created the hit television show "Seinfeld" and later co-produced it with Jerry Seinfeld. At the 2003 Golden Globes, Larry David won an award for best comedy series for his HBO program "Curb Your Enthusiasm." "This is a sad day for the Golden Globes," David declared upon collecting his trophy. "This is, however, a good day for Larry David!" He went on to say, "This is all well and good, but I'm still bald."

"I suspect," he added, "the wife will be a little more forthcoming tonight. Thank you, Foreign Press, for what should be a rewarding evening."

Why?

It was Thanksgiving morning, early, 6:30 am. She always rose early to make the traditional holiday meal, just as her mother had done, and her mother before her.

She cut the ends off the ham, put a pineapple on top and slid it into the oven. As she wiped her hands on her apron, she pondered the ends of the ham. Why? Why had she cut the ends off? As she pondered her own question, she realized she had no answer. Her mother had always done it that way. She picked up the phone. “Ma, why do you cut the ends off the Thanksgiving Ham?” There was a long pause, “You know, I don’t know. My mother always did that. Why don’t you call her?”

Grandma answered the phone. “Grandma, why do we cut the ends off the ham?” There was a long pause. Grandma burst out laughing. “You see,” she said after composing herself, “When your grandfather and I were young we didn’t have very much. A neighbor had given us an enormous ham as a gift. I went to put it in the only pan we had at the time and it didn’t fit. So I cut the ends off to make it fit. I have just been doing it that way ever since. Why do you ask?”

Challenge your assumptions at work and at home. WHY do you do the things you do in the way that you do them? Who decided that? Is it still okay?

Hasselblad I?

In July 1966, Michael Collins was selected to pilot NASA's three-day Gemini 10 mission. While the mission to rendezvous and dock with an orbiting Agena rocket was a success, Collins did make a minor blunder: during his historic space walk, he dropped a Swedish-made Hasselblad camera.

Back on earth, the astronaut was amused to learn that the Swedes had begun to refer to the camera as their country's first satellite.

Cool Customer

One day long before his incarnation as a railway mogul, James Cooley worked as a traveling salesman for the Baldwin Locomotive Company.

One day he visited Terence Jackson, sales and purchasing manager of the Delaware and Lackawanna Railroad - a difficult man to see under any circumstances, especially for an unknown salesman.

"I would like to see Mr. Jackson," Cooley boldly informed Jackson's secretary, handing her his card. She then rose and disappeared into Jackson's office, where, through the partly opened door, Cooley saw him tear his card in half and throw it in the garbage.

The secretary soon returned and told Cooley that Jackson was unavailable. "May I have my card back?" he innocently asked. Embarrassed, the secretary again disappeared into Jackson's office, returning a moment later with a nickel and a curt message: "Mr. Jackson says that your card was destroyed, but he hopes the five cents will repay the cost of printing it."

Cooley promptly drew another card from his pocket and handed it to the bemused secretary. "Take this back to him," he instructed her, "and tell him I sell cards two for a nickel."

Eager To Impress The Boss

A young executive was leaving the office late one evening when he found the CEO standing in front of a *shredder* with a piece of paper in his hand.

"Listen," said the CEO, "this is a very sensitive and important document here, and my secretary has gone for the night. Can you make this thing work?"

"Certainly," said the young executive. He turned the machine on, inserted the paper, and pressed the start button.

"Excellent, excellent!" said the CEO as his paper disappeared inside the machine. "I just need one copy."

Laundry Day

One day a "Housework-Challenged Husband" decided to wash his favorite pair of jeans and sweatshirt. Seconds after he stepped into the laundry room, he shouted to his newlywed wife and asked, "What setting do I use on the washing machine?"

"It depends," she replied "What does it say on your shirt?"

He yelled back, "University of Oklahoma."

She replied, "I'll be right down."

Irene

Everyone is in sales. Each of us sells 24/7/365. Each of makes a living “selling” something: our ideas, our selves, our products, or our services. Perhaps the best example of this principle is Irene Buckley. She began selling life insurance in the 1930’s. She was a pioneer. At age 95, she accidentally broke her arm. While she was visiting the doctor, she sold him a \$50,000 insurance policy!

How Big is Your Pumpkin?

A farmer won a ribbon at the state fair for the most unusual looking pumpkin. It was in the exact shape of a five gallon jug.

After the prizes were handed out, and most of the people had left the fair, one of the judges pulled the farmer aside and asked, “How were you able to create a pumpkin like that?” The farmer paused a moment, smiled, and told a story.

“It was late August, the pumpkin plants were just starting to show signs of life, and there were tiny pumpkins growing from the vines. Someone had thrown a five-gallon glass jug from the road and, miraculously, it had not broken. I saw that as a sign. Just for fun, I inserted a tiny pumpkin in the narrow mouth of the jug. It just fit. Then I forgot about it until harvest time. All the pumpkins grew to their normal size – some, much larger. The one in the pumpkin grew only to the shape of the five-gallon jug and no larger. I merely smashed the glass and brought the five-gallon pumpkin in. I never dreamed it would win a prize.”

The size of our thinking is just like that pumpkin. Some of only think in one, two or five gallon jugs. Some people, however, think in terms of 10-, 20-, even 100-gallon jugs.

How BIG is your thinking? I hope it’s bigger than five gallons!

The Superbowl

A father of a five-year-old boy sat down with big bowl of chips and dip to watch his favorite sporting event of the year: the Superbowl. Halfway through the second quarter, his young son was bored with his books and began asking the kinds of questions little boys ask: “Why do they wear helmets?” “Does anyone die in this game?” “When is this over?” “Can we go to the park?” The father soon realized that he would not get to watch the game in peace unless he could find something constructive and challenging for his precocious son to do.

He looked down to see a copy of the New York Times with a map of the world covering an entire page. He reached for some scissors and cut the large page into hundreds of pieces. He handed his son a roll of tape, the cut up newspaper, and said in a warm and empowering tone, “Show Daddy how smart you are. Put this puzzle of the world together. I will time you!” He smiled to himself, knowing full well his son loved a challenge and would not stop until he finished the project. He also knew he would get to enjoy the game with peace and quiet.

Before the fourth quarter began, his son came back into the room with a self-satisfied grin on his face. The map was all taped together, not particularly neat, but a fine job for one so young. A little surprised, he asked his son, “How did you put it together so fast?” The son, obviously proud of his accomplishment and sensing his father’s appreciation, stated, “Oh, it was easy Dad; there was a man on the other side. When I put the man together, the world was all together.”

The son was surprised by the big hug his dad gave him, followed by the declaration, “That’s right son; when the man is all together, his world is all together automatically.”

That is a good lesson for all of us to remember.

The Bridge-house

One bright, beautiful fall Saturday afternoon in New Hampshire, a seven-year old boy came across a sight he had never seen. A single-axle, 27' moving truck had wedged itself into an old New England Bridge-house that was over 100 years old and a historical landmark.

The Fire Department, the Police, the State Patrol, and the DOT were all there trying to figure out what to do. The finest minds in transportation were called upon to solve this dilemma. What to do?

After assessing the situation for three minutes, the seven-year-old boy tugged on the policeman's coat. "What are they trying to do, mister?" the boy inquired. "Oh, the truck is stuck in the bridge-house. They are trying to figure out how to remove the truck without damaging the historical landmark." They looked at the situation again with a different point of view. After three more minutes, the little boy asked, "Why don't they just let the air out of the tires?"

That is, ultimately, what the experts did. They listened to a seven-year-old boy.

Sometimes the best ideas come from the most unexpected sources. We need to have an open mind.

It might just save our bridge-houses.

How Do You Know it's Bad?

200 years ago, there was a very wise man that lived in a small Chinese village in the North. He was considered wise because of the way he looked at things. One day, one of his horses ran away. His friends came by to console him. "We are sorry for your loss."

"How do you know it's bad?" the wise man asked them.

They shook their heads and walked away.

A few days later the horse returned. It had two wild mares with it. This brought the neighbors on the run, ecstatic. "Good, this is such good news," the neighbors exclaimed. The wise man smiled and replied, "How do you know it's good?" They could not answer, so they said no more.

While training the wild horses the eldest child and only son of the wise man was thrown from the horse and his leg was broken. Again the neighbors came to commiserate, but this time a little hesitant. "This must be bad; this is a most unfortunate event, is it not?" The wise man paused and then replied, "How do you know this is bad?" They walked away, shaking their heads and speaking in low tones.

The next day a War Lord and his army came through the village conscripting able-bodied young men for battle. But not the only son of the wise man... he was not able-bodied.

The moral? When events occur, suspend judgment and wait. Time will tell.

How do you know it's bad? Hidden within each challenge is a blessing in disguise.

MOM knows Best

His name is a household word now. He is paid millions of dollars to act in films that *he* chooses. He is very selective, and his roles are unique and always very different. Some would say his choice of roles is downright peculiar. In an interview he was asked by a young acting student how to “Make it in Hollywood.” He paused for a moment then recalled a story from his childhood.

“My mother is a very wise and courageous woman. She raised me by herself. I came home from school one day with my clothes torn, a black eye and bloody nose; the victim of a playground bully. My mother cleaned me up and gave me some advice. “If any kids at school invade your space in the future and make you do something you don’t want to do, grab the nearest large rock and lay them out. They’ll leave you alone after that.”

“So I did. It worked.”

“Years later in Hollywood, a corporation had their hands all over me. I didn’t like it, so I left the number one show on television halfway through a five-year contract. I followed my heart and walked my own path. People thought I was crazy. Maybe I was... and still am. But this much I do know: don’t let anyone tell you how to work or live. Be true to yourself.”

The television show was “21 Jump Street.” The actor? Johnny Depp.

Advice

All his life he wanted to parachute out of a plane. Finally the magic day came. He had made the commitment to go skydiving. Weeks of classes, a year of preparation. He was ready. He jumped out and yelled, "Geronimo!"

After a fantastic free fall, he pulled the rip cord to open his parachute - but nothing happened. He tried everything but couldn't get it open.

Just then another man flew by him, going UP. The skydiver yelled, "Hey - you know anything about parachutes?" The man replied, "No - you know anything about gas stoves?"

Experience Is Profitable

We get paid for our experience as well as our time. The 74-year-old plumber was called out to fix a problem no one else could solve. The building manager had a heating system that was installed just after Columbus landed.

The Town Hall meeting room was so noisy because of the ancient pipes that no one could hear the speakers. This guy was supposed to be the best. Suffering from arthritis, he hobbled in looking a bit like Columbo and as old as Columbus. The building manager had some doubts about his ability based on his first impression. With no hesitation, the veteran plumber painfully eased his way toward a joint in the pipes on the wall. He took out a big hammer hanging from the loop in his coveralls and sharply hit the pipe at the joint. Instantly, the clanging and knocking noises ceased. He submitted his bill...\$250.

The building manager hit the roof! "You only spent five minutes on the job!" The wise old plumber replied: "Yes and my bill is \$250. \$10 for the five minutes when I hit the pipe with my hammer and \$240 for the 50 years of learning when and where to hit the pipe!"

Some Cookie

New York City Mayor Ed Koch was hospitalized following a heart attack. As with most NYC Mayors, Ed was famous. He tended to be a bit more high profile than his predecessors and ran in some pretty influential circles. He had many famous friends.

One such friend was Mother Teresa. Touched that she made the time to visit him in the hospital, he offered her some of his favorite chocolate chip cookies. “No thank you,” she replied. Seeing the puzzled look on Mayor Koch’s face, she explained, “You see, in India, people offer you food just to be kind. However if you take it, it may mean THEY will starve to death!”

The Mayor smiled and said, “Well, there is no fear of that *here*. I could stand to lose a few pounds!” Mother Teresa nodded and smiled. “But these cookies are the finest chocolate chip cookies in the world, you HAVE to try them!” After a long silence, she simply said, “Wrap ‘em up.”

Sell the Benefits

Michael Farraday invented the first electric motor. He knew that in order to profit from his hard work, he would need to market it to the highest profile people he could find.

After some time, he was able to secure an appointment with the Prime Minister of England, the distinguished and influential William Gladstone. A single endorsement from him could make Farraday a rich man. After demonstrating the crude model, which was little more than a little wire revolving around a magnet; it was clear that Gladstone was not interested. “What good is it?” Farraday paused for a moment and said, “Some day you will be able to tax it!”

Contractors, Ya Gotta Love 'em!

A group of Contractors from Chicago spent a weekend gambling in Las Vegas. On that trip, one of the men won \$100,000. He didn't want anyone to know about it, so he decided not to return with the others. He took a later flight home, arriving back about 3:00 a.m. He immediately went out to the backyard, dug a hole, and planted the money in it.

The following morning he walked outside and found only an empty hole. He noticed footsteps leading away from the hole to the next door neighbor, which was owned by a man that only spoke Japanese. On the same street lived a college professor that taught Japanese Studies at the University of Chicago. The professor was kind enough to offer to interpret. "You tell that guy if he doesn't give me back my money, I am going to whack him!" The professor calmly conveyed the message to the Japanese neighbor. Bowing and apologizing, he said in Japanese to the professor, "I buried it in my backyard under the blossoming Cherry tree."

The professor turned to the Contractor with the gun in his hand and said, "He is not going to tell you. He said he'd rather die first!"

Why Do We Shoot the Messenger?

Weathermen take a lot of heat, pardon the pun, when the weather turns bad. Some even get hate mail. Tired of this strange phenomenon, a weatherman in Arizona contacted a Psychology professor at ASU to try to understand why. The professor told him a story:

“In 500 B.C., the regular army of the Persian Empire contained an elite corps involving a brilliant element of propaganda. These crack troops were known as the Immortals, for the simple and inspired reason that there are always 10,000 of them (in theory, as soon as one died, another soldier was ready to take his place). At the heart of this 10,000 were an even more special thousand: the royal bodyguard.

The army was precisely decimal. Divisions of 10,000 were divided into battalions of 1000, companies of 100 and squads of 10. The bow was the chief Persian weapon, and the armies' tactics were based on rapid movement and light armor.

Emporer Darius extended the network of roads across the Persian Empire to enable both troops and information to move with startling speed. At the center of the system was the royal road from Susa to Sardis, a distance of some 2000 miles (3200 km). At intervals of a day's ride there were posting stations, where new men and fresh horses would be available at any moment to carry a document on through the next day's journey. The Greek historian Herodotus marveled at these Persian couriers. By this method a message could travel the full distance of the road in ten days, at a speed of about 200 miles a day. A similar road went through Syria to the Mediterranean coast and Egypt. Another went east to India.

If the messenger had good news from the front, there would be a great celebration with much wine, women and song. If the message from the front was bad news, the messenger was killed.

Tough Job. High Turnover. Low Morale at that position. Still, being a weatherman is a piece of cake when you compare it to “Messenger in the Persian Army!”

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Another Tough Job

A US Air Force C-141 is scheduled to leave Thule Air Base, Greenland, at midnight. During the pilot's preflight check, he discovers that the latrine holding tank is still full from the last flight, so a message is sent to the base and an airman who was off duty is called out to take care of it.

The young man finally gets to the air base and makes his way to the aircraft, only to find that the latrine pump truck has been left outdoors and is frozen solid, so he must find another one in the hangar, which takes more time. He returns to the aircraft and is less than enthusiastic about what he has to do. Nevertheless, he goes about the pumping job deliberately and carefully (and slowly) so as to not risk criticism later.

As he's leaving the plane, the pilot stops him and says, "Son, your attitude and performance has caused this flight to be late and I'm going to personally see to it that you are not just reprimanded but punished."

Shivering in the cold, his task finished, he takes a deep breath, stands up tall and says, "Sir, with all due respect, I'm not your son; I'm an Airman in the United States Air Force. I've been in Thule, Greenland for 11 months without any leave. I have one stripe; it's two-thirty in the morning, the temperature is 40 degrees below zero and my job here is to pump waste out of aircraft. Now just exactly what form of punishment did you have in mind?"

Southern Grandma

Lawyers should never ask a Southern grandma a question if they aren't prepared for the answer. In a trial, a Southern, small-town prosecuting attorney called his first witness, a grandmotherly, elderly woman to the stand. He approached her and asked, "Mrs. Jones, do you know me?" She responded, "Why, yes, I do know you, Mr. Williams. I've known you since you were a young boy, and frankly, you've been a big disappointment to me.

You lie, you cheat on your wife, and you manipulate people and talk about them behind their backs. You think you're a big shot when you haven't the brains to realize you never will amount to anything more than a two-bit paper pusher. Yes, I know you."

The lawyer was stunned! Not knowing what else to do, he pointed across the room and asked, "Mrs. Jones, do you know the defense attorney?" She again replied, "Why, yes, I do. I've known Mr. Bradley since he was a youngster, too. He's lazy, bigoted, and he has a drinking problem. He can't build a normal relationship with anyone and his law practice is one of the worst in the entire state. Not to mention he cheated on his wife with three different women. One of them was your wife. Yes, I know him."

The defense attorney almost died. The judge asked both counselors to approach the bench and, in a very quiet voice, said, "If either of you idiots asks her if she knows me, I'll send you to the electric chair."

Willie Sutton

This famous Bank Robber was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1901. He robbed over 100 banks in his lifetime. He was a con man, escape artist, and reportedly stole over \$2,000,000 before 1952. Famous for dressing up as an Armored Truck Driver and having created flawless fake ID, he would knock on the door of the bank 20 minutes before the scheduled time and say, "Sorry - I am running a little ahead of schedule." Guess what? The banks just handed him the money! He almost never used a gun! Asked near the end of his life why he robbed banks, he simply said, *"That's where the most money is!"*



Willie Sutton 1901-1980

You Gotta Ask

Henry Ford was a pioneer. He didn't begin his amazing ascent as the father of the assembly line, mass-producing affordable automobiles, until he was 45 years of age. He was known as a loyal, hard-working man who was brutally honest. When, at the height of his success, a childhood friend asked why he had never bought any life insurance from him, Ford leaned forward and barked,

"You never asked me!"

Be Careful With That

A seaman met a pirate in a bar, and talk turned to their adventures on the sea. The seaman noted that the pirate has a peg-leg, a hook, and an eye patch.

The seaman asked, "So how did you end up with the peg-leg?" The pirate replied, "We were in a storm at sea, and I was swept overboard into a school of sharks. Just as my men were pulling me out, a shark bit my leg off."

"Wow!" said the seaman. "What about your hook"? "Well," replied the pirate, "We were boarding an enemy ship and were battling the other sailors with swords. An enemy cut my hand off."

"Incredible!" remarked the seaman. "How did you get the eye patch"? "A seagull dropping fell into my eye," replied the pirate.

"You lost your eye to a seagull dropping?" the sailor asked incredulously. "Well," said the pirate, "it was my first day with my hook."

Which One?

Here is one to make you think. You have one match. You enter a room and that contains a wood burning stove, a kerosene lamp and a fireplace.

Which should you light first?

Never Had a Chance

A mechanical contractor in Kentucky landed a plum job in a very large and prestigious distillery. The ductwork was at the top of a very high ceiling. It required an elaborate system of catwalks, which the contractor navigated with skill and grace. After weeks on the job, he slipped and fell into a vat of bourbon that was aging, 30' x 60' deep, and he drowned.

The next day at the shop the employees were talking about what a terrible tragedy it was that he had died in such an unusual way. One technician said, "It sounded like he never had a chance!" A long time employee and the contractor's best friend said, "What did you just say?" Feeling like he had to defend himself, he repeated it with a sense of doubt, "It sounded like he never had a chance?" A long pause, his friend replied, "Oh... I wouldn't say that. He got out twice to go to the bathroom!"

Incredible

As incredible as it sounds, years ago men and women took baths only twice a year (May and October)! Women kept their hair covered while men shaved their heads (because of lice and bugs) and wore wigs. Wealthy men could afford good wigs made from wool. They couldn't wash the wigs, so to clean them they would carve out a loaf of bread, put the wig in the shell, and bake it for 30 minutes. The heat would make the wig big and fluffy, hence the term "big wig." Today we often use the term "here comes the Big Wig" because someone appears to be or is powerful and wealthy.

The Engineer

The year was 1936. An engineer dropped a product he had developed onto his bosses' desk and proclaimed, "We will sell thousands of these." At first it wasn't very well received. You see, it was the first product they started to develop. The idea was that it was supposed to be a record player for automobiles? At that time, the most well-known player on the market was the Victrola, so they eventually called the new division...

Motorola.

One More...

When Dan found out he was going to inherit a fortune when his sickly father died, he decided he needed a woman to enjoy it with.

One evening, he went to a singles bar where he spotted the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Her natural beauty took his breath away.

"I may look like just an ordinary man," he said as he walked up to her, "but in just a week or two, my father will die, and I'll inherit **20 million dollars.**"

Impressed, the woman went home with him that evening and, in less than a week, she became his stepmother. Women are so much smarter than men.

Who is Packing Your Parachute?

Charles Plum, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, was a jet fighter pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plum ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent six years in a Communist prison. He survived that terrible ordeal. Now he lectures about lessons learned from that experience.

One day, when Plum and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plum! You were shot down." Taken aback, he replied, "How in the world did you know that?" "I packed your parachute." Plum gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, "I guess it worked." Plum assured him, "It sure did—if your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."

Plum couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. "I kept wondering what he might have looked like in a Navy uniform; Dixie cup hat, a bib in the back, bell bottom trousers. I wondered how many times I must have passed him on the Kitty Hawk. I wondered how many times I might have seen him and not even said, 'Good morning, how are you?' or anything because, you see, I was *a fighter pilot* and he was *just a sailor*."

Plum thought of the many hours the sailor spent on a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands the fate of someone he didn't know.

Now Plum asks his audience, "Who is packing your parachute?" Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day. We all have parachutes: spiritual parachutes, mental parachutes, emotional parachutes, physical parachutes, financial parachutes.

Recognize and be gracious to the people who pack your parachute. You just never know when you will need it to open.

Chairman

In the late 1700s, many houses consisted of a large room with only one chair. Commonly, a long wide board folded down from the wall and was used for dining. The "head of the household" always sat in the chair while everyone else ate sitting on the floor.

Occasionally, a guest, who was usually a man, would be invited to sit in this chair during a meal. To sit in the chair meant that you were important and in charge. They called the one sitting in the chair the "chair man." Today in business, we use the expression or title "Chairman" or "Chairman of the Board."

Wax On, Wax Off

Personal hygiene left much room for improvement. As a result, many women and men had developed acne scars by adulthood. The women would spread bees' wax over their facial skin to smooth out their complexions. When they were speaking to each other, if a woman began to stare at another woman's face she was told, "mind your own bees' wax." Should the woman smile, the wax would crack, hence the term "crack a smile." In addition, when they sat too close to the fire, the wax would melt . . . therefore, the expression "losing face."

PS

Ladies wore corsets, which would lace up in the front. A proper and dignified woman, as in "straight laced" . . . wore a tightly-tied lace.

So That's Where That Came From

Common entertainment included playing cards. However, there was a tax levied when purchasing playing cards that was only applicable to the "Ace of Spades." To avoid paying the tax, people would purchase 51 cards instead. Yet, since most games require 52 cards, these people were thought to be stupid or dumb because they weren't "playing with a full deck."

Know When to Stop

Samuel once told of the time he listened to a missionary give a sermon. He was so impressed with the passion, the argument, and cause, that he decided to contribute \$5 when the plate came around. In the late 1800's that was a significant sum. Instead of stopping at the high point of his speech and passing the plate, the missionary kept talking and talking and talking. When he finally quit speaking two hours later, Samuel was so annoyed that instead of making a donation, he took out a dollar!

His famous quotes:

Reader, suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself.

Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please.

It is better to keep your mouth shut and appear stupid than to open it and remove all doubt.

Man is the only animal that blushes...and needs to.

The principle difference between a cat and a lie is the cat only has nine lives.

There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics.

Some say he was the greatest writer and humorist this country ever produced. His name? Mark Twain.

Should We Eat Here?

After 15 years on the road, eating in different cities across this great land, I have developed some simple rules for selecting an eating place in an unfamiliar environment:

1. Never eat in a place that has a theme (Pirates, Pixies or Pigs).
2. Never eat anyplace that offers an infinite amount of food for a fixed price.
3. Never eat in anything that moves (airplanes, trains, etc.).
4. Eat the local product. Beef in Kansas City and Chicago, Jewish Deli in New York, Seafood in Seattle. If you are in Salt Lake City, bring a sack lunch.
5. Never eat anyplace that has a name formatted “The (adjective) (noun)” i.e., “The Velvet Turtle” or “The Blue Walrus.”
6. Never eat in an ethnic restaurant in which *no* people of that ethnicity are eating.
7. Always eat in an ethnic restaurant in which *most* of the people in the place are of that ethnicity.
8. Never eat at any place called “Mom’s.”
9. If the bathroom is filthy, run out as fast as you can (the kitchen is the same way!).
10. The price of the meal is directly related to size of the pepper grinder.
11. The sign looks like it was hand-painted by a seven-year-old child.
12. Invest in a “Best Places” book for each region. It’s a solid investment, and you will be glad you did.

Who Lives in Your Town?

An old man was sitting on the edge of town as a stranger with a frown and furrowed brow approached him. 'Say, old man, what kind of people live in this town?' asked the stranger. 'What kind of people lived in the town you left?' the old man replied with a smile. 'Oh, they were mean, critical, negative and angry. I couldn't wait to leave!' said the stranger. 'That is exactly the kind of people you will find in this town. You might not be very happy here. I hear the next town is a little better.' The grumpy stranger moved on.

About an hour later another man walked up to the old man with a big smile on his face. 'Good afternoon, sir. Pardon me, but could you tell me what kind of people live in this town?' the enthusiastic young man asked. 'What kind of people lived in the last town you lived in?' the old man inquired. 'Oh, they were amazing, kind, generous, thoughtful - I hated to leave,' the young man replied warmly. 'You'll find the same kind of people in this town... welcome! I hope you will stay a long time.'

What kind of people live in your town?

George Washington's Painting

In George Washington's days, there were no cameras. One's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others showed both legs and both arms. Prices charged by painters were not based on how many people were to be painted, but by how many limbs were to be painted. Arms and legs are "limbs," therefore painting them would cost the buyer more.

Hence the expression, "Okay, but it'll cost you an arm and a leg."

Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody

This is the story of four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. Consequently, it wound up that Nobody told Anybody, so Everybody blamed Somebody and Nobody did what Anybody could have done!

The Best Home Run Hitter in Baseball?

He was arguably the best home run hitter in Major League Baseball. "I played with Willie Mays and Hank Aaron," said Hall-of-Famer Monte Irvin, "But they were nothing like him." He was 6'-1" and 215 pounds of solid muscle. His forearms were the size of most players' legs. He once hit a line drive over Satchel Paige's head and it kept going straight over the centerfield fence 520 feet away. In Comiskey Park, he knocked a speaker off the pole in right-center field. One season he hit 84 home runs. It's estimated he hit 962 home runs over a 17-year career starting at age 19. He was a catcher, which makes his accomplishments all the more amazing. He was brash, chatty, good-natured, and supremely confident. He walked, talked and acted like a big-time hitter. To add to his mythic feats, several seasons he hit well over .400 and he had a rifle arm.

So why haven't you heard of this amazing player? Well, for one, he died at age 35 of a stroke in 1947, 3-months before Jackie Robinson broke the color line of Major League Baseball. Many called him the Black Babe Ruth. His name? Josh Gibson. Here is the best part...he did it all without steroids. It's a shame the best home run hitter in baseball history never got his chance to prove to the world how great he was.

You just never know

One day a 20-year old college student left business school, frustrated and guilty. He stopped by his mother's salon to tell her the news: he was leaving school for good.

Afterward, as he was walking out of the hair salon, his mother's best friend handed him a note. It said simply:

'Someday, millions of people will pay to hear what you have to say! Hang in there. We are proud of you.'

The note brought a tear to his eye. He put it in his wallet. He immediately went back to the college and changed majors: Drama.

He went to work like never before, with passion, intensity, an extra-mile attitude and commitment.

He got his big break as a young doctor on the TV show, "St. Elsewhere." From there he was cast in supporting roles in major films. He kept working hard, learning as much as he could, reading everything he could find; then, one fine day, his first leading role! He was cast in Spike Lee's "Mo Better Blues."

He recently won an Academy Award for Best Actor in the film "Training Day".

The actor? Denzel Washington.

Never Give In

Harrow is one of the England's most prestigious private schools (they call them "Public" Schools). That institution heaped shame on his head as a young boy. It gave him a reason to succeed. It gave him an insatiable urge to rise up and make Harrow sorry. He failed English three times. He was quoted as saying, "It's not pleasant to feel oneself so completely outclassed and left behind at the very beginning of the race. I am all for private schools. I just never want to go there again." It gave him a powerful, emotional reason to succeed. His hot ambition, his doggedness, his restless search for command are perhaps, in good part, the result of Harrow slights.

Ironically, after he had become famous around the world, the same school that almost washed him out performed a great service to him. When he was in his 50's he returned to give a speech. It went like this:

"Never give in; Never, never, never, never!" he said smashing his cane against the floor. "Never yield in any way, great or small, large or petty, except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force and the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."

That was his speech. He sat down. They gave him a standing ovation. It was 1941. His name? Winston Churchill.

Her Name was Betty

Find a need and fill it. Perhaps the simplest and most profound bit of business advice ever offered. That is what Betty did. She was an executive secretary in 1951. The speed of the electric typewriter, new on the market, seemed to multiply typing errors. She concocted a mixture of water-based paint and a coloring agent that blended with bank's stationary. Soon other employees wanted to use her correction fluid. By 1956, she was making and selling the product full time. In 1979, Gillette bought her Liquid Paper Company for \$47.5 million dollars.

Find a need and fill it.

The Greatest Car Salesman in the World

His name was Joe Girard. He was born in the ghettos of Detroit. He started out as a shoeshine boy, then newspaper delivery boy, then assembled stoves. He eventually began building homes. That business failed. His father told him he would never amount to anything.

At 35 he was married, had two kids, and took a job selling Chevrolets on commission. For the first year he almost starved to death. He was about ready to quit the car business. He had failed. Then one day, he stumbled on these simple ideas:

- *Know what you want*
- *Write it down*
- *Commit yourself to accomplishing it!*

He used to give his business card to his customers with the customer's name on the back. Anytime a new customer came in with an old customer's name on his card, the old customer received \$25 as a thank you. In one year, he mailed out \$14,000 (that was in 1975)!

At football games, whenever his hometown team scored a touchdown, he would throw 100 business cards up in the air!

From that magic day that he committed himself to success, everything changed. From 1963 to 1978 he sold more cars one-to-one than anyone in the history of automobile retail sales. His best day? 18 cars sold in 24 hours. His best month? 174 cars sold. His best year? 1425! A Guinness World Record!

He retired in 1978 to write books and speak. His books and tapes have sold over 8 million copies. I guess his father was wrong.

Trouble Maker

Allen Stewart Konigsburg did little more than cause trouble at PS 99 in Midwood High School in New York City. His parents were always being asked to come to the principal's office. It wasn't any better at N.Y.U. or City College of New York.

So he quit school and began writing jokes for magazines and newspapers. He eventually began doing stand-up comedy. He kept getting more knowledge of the business and meeting key people; after all, this was New York City.

Eventually he made his first film. He kept learning. He kept asking himself and others what went well and what he could improve. He kept making movies. He was following his bliss. He stuck to his values. He became a serious student of comedy.

One day, one of his films won several Oscars. Then one magic day in 1977, his newest film won best picture. The movie? "Annie Hall."

The troublemaker?

Woody Allen.

A Mets' Fan

A man driving home from work decided to stop at a 7-11 for cigarettes. Since he would only be in the store for a few minutes, he decided there would be no harm in leaving the engine running. As the man entered the store he noticed that there were a few people in line, but thought nothing of the delay.

After buying his cigarettes, the man returned to the parking lot to find his car stolen. He had left his wallet in the glove box. Devastated, he notified the police, filed a report and eventually returned home to explain to his wife what happened.

A day or so later, the man came home from work (in a rented car) only to find his car sitting in the driveway! He quickly assessed that there was no visible damage, and there was an envelope sitting on the driver's seat. He opened the envelope and read a note that was inside: "Sir, I apologize from the bottom of my heart for stealing your car, but I had a medical emergency and had no choice. To make up for any inconvenience to you, I've left you four tickets to this weekend's Double Header at Shea Stadium. These are excellent seats and I hope that it can make up for any trouble I may have caused you or your family."

Being a big Mets fan, the man was very excited and ran into the house to tell his wife and two sons that they all have tickets to the big game.

The day arrived, and the man packed up his family and headed to the ball game. After the game ended (several hours later) the man and his family returned home to find that they had been robbed. The entire house was virtually empty!

As it turned out, this was the car thief's plan all along — to get the man's home address, keys, and to get him out of the house for a few hours. The thief got his address from the registration in the glove box and had assumed he was a baseball fan from the Mets bumper sticker on his car. Pictures in the man's wallet gave away the fact that he had two sons and would need four tickets in order for the house to be empty.

A Brave Pilot

During the course of World War II, many people gained fame in one way or another. One man was Butch O'Hare. He was a fighter pilot assigned to an aircraft carrier in the Pacific. One time his entire squadron was assigned to fly a particular mission. After he was airborne, he looked at his fuel gauge and realized that someone had forgotten to top off his fuel tank. Because of this, he would not have enough fuel to complete his mission and get back to his ship. His flight leader told him to leave formation and return.

As he was returning to the mother ship, he could see a squadron of Japanese Zeroes heading toward the fleet to attack. With all the fighter planes gone, the fleet was almost defenseless. His was the only opportunity to distract and divert them. Single-handedly, he dove into the formation of Japanese planes and attacked them. The American fighter planes were rigged with cameras, so as they flew and fought, pictures were taken so pilots could learn more about the terrain, enemy maneuvers, etc. Butch dove at them and shot until all his ammunition was gone, then he would dive and try to clip off a wing or tail or anything that would make the enemy planes unfit to fly. He did anything he could to keep them from reaching the American ships. Finally, the Japanese squadron took off in another direction, and Butch O'Hare and his fighter, both badly shot up, limped back to the carrier.

He told his story, but not until the film from the camera on his plane was developed did they realize the extent he really went to in protecting his fleet. He was recognized as a hero and given one of the nation's highest military honors. Chicago's O'Hare Airport was named after him.

Easy Eddie

Prior to this time in Chicago, there was a man named Easy Eddie. He was working for a man you've all heard about, Al Capone. Al Capone wasn't famous for anything heroic, but he was notorious for the murders he'd committed and the illegal things he'd done. Easy Eddie was Al Capone's lawyer, and he was very good. In fact, because of his skill, he was able to keep Al Capone out of jail.

To show his appreciation, Al Capone paid him very well. He not only earned big money, but he would get extra things: like a residence that filled an entire Chicago city block. The house was fenced, and he had live-in help and all of the conveniences of the day.

Easy Eddie had a son. He loved his son and gave him all the best things while he was growing up: clothes, cars, and a good education. And because he loved his son he tried to teach him right from wrong. But one thing he couldn't give his son was a good name, and a good example.

Easy Eddie decided that this was much more important than all the riches he had been given. So he went to the authorities in order to rectify the wrong he had done. In order to tell the truth, it meant he must testify against Al Capone, and he knew that Al Capone would do his best to have him killed.

But he wanted most of all to try to be an example and to do the best he could to give back to his son, a good name. So he testified. Within the year, he was shot and killed on a lonely street in Chicago. This sounds like two unrelated stories. But Butch O'Hare was Easy Eddie's son.

The Talking Dog

A guy is driving around and he sees a sign in front of a house: "Talking Dog for Sale." He rings the bell, and the owner tells him the dog is in the backyard. The guy goes into the backyard and sees a Labrador retriever sitting there. "You talk?" he asks. "Yep," the Lab replies. "So, what's your story?"

The Lab looks up and says, "Well, I discovered that I could talk when I was pretty young, and I wanted to help the government; so I told the CIA about my gift, and in no time at all they had me jetting from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders. Since no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping, I was one of their most valuable spies for eight years running."

"But the jetting around really tired me out, and I knew I wasn't getting any younger so I wanted to settle down. I signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security work, mostly wandering near suspicious characters and listening in. I uncovered some incredible dealings and was awarded a batch of medals. I got married, had a mess of puppies, and now I'm just retired." The guy is amazed. He goes back in and asks the owner what he wants for the dog.

"Ten dollars."

The guy says, "This dog is amazing. Why on earth are you selling him so cheaply?"

"Oh he's such a liar. He didn't do any of that stuff!"

It's Hot As Hell Down There

A number of years ago, the president of a large manufacturing plant asked Ken Blanchard to help him deal with a major turnover problem they were having in their most important hourly position. That position involved over 1000 people. The annual turnover was more than 200%. They were losing people, and it was costing them a fortune. They were hiring them, training them, and then those people were leaving. He agreed to help them. He flew down to the plant, which was in the Southeast, and met with the president and his key staff for a strategic breakfast. "How do you want to start to deal with this?" the president inquired.

"Well, first thing I want to do is talk to some of the people in the positions that you are losing," Ken replied.

"What do you want to talk with them for? They are all leaving!"

"I don't know," he replied, not wanting to push the issue too hard. "But I have a hunch they know a few things."

Finally, reluctantly, he let him go talk to them.

He went downstairs and began talking to some of the hourly workers in an unassuming way. "Why is everybody leaving? A 200% turnover is pretty high, don't you think?"

They said, "It's hot as hell down here!"

Ken said, "How do you mean?"

"It's like I've been telling the foreman for years. The air conditioning system is undersized. Six months out of the year, during the hot season, it must be 115-120 degrees down here. We are so exhausted by the end of the day we can't do anything else. So if we can find a job anywhere else, we do."

He went back upstairs at lunchtime and the president asked, "Why are they leaving?" Ken said, "It's hot as hell down there."

They retrofitted about \$300,000 worth of new air conditioning equipment that was engineered about 20% more than they needed. The next year the turnover rate was less than 10%!

They thought Ken was a genius. Ken's mother asked him upon hearing the story, "You get paid for this kind of thing?"

Remember The Fifth Sale First!

In the fall of 1986, a very large and successful Mining Equipment Distributor implemented a Customer Satisfaction Program that the CEO really believed in. He rolled it out with seminars and fanfare. He even gave everyone a big button that stated their commitment to Service.

Shortly thereafter, he received a letter from a good customer saying “We are never going to buy anything from you again and, by the way, we are suing you. Have a nice day.”

Turns out they had sold them some very expensive mining equipment to their specifications and the equipment had failed. He grabbed the Manufacturer’s Rep and they drove out to the customer’s location in Nevada. The Rep said to the CEO, “We built the machines to spec. It’s not our problem. We aren’t going to do anything about it.”

The CEO thought a moment then said, “Look, if you can’t back me up on this thing, then at least don’t say anything. Because if you do, I will throw you out of the car right now and leave you in the desert.” Reflecting back on the experience, he continued, “I am not sure if he thought I was joking or not, but he did keep quiet during the meeting.”

They got the meeting and the customer sat him down in a huge conference room, at the end of a very long conference table. You could just tell he was expecting a major confrontation.

The CEO pointed to the button he was wearing and said, “Look, if I can’t belly up to the bar when times get tough, I am going to take off the hokey button and toss it in the trash can. If we can’t fix this mess, we will buy back the equipment from you.” The Rep held his breath.

That was a major commitment at the time because they had just bought the dealership, had very little cash flow, and the machines cost \$200,000.

There was utter silence and then the customer said, “Oh, come on Joe, let’s just fix the machines.”

To contact Mark Matteson to Speak at your next Company Gathering, Association Keynote or to receive his FREE monthly e-zine, go to www.mattesonavenue.com Or call Toll Free 877.672.2001

So they “invested” about \$25,000 to fix the problem and did not charge the customer for it. That customer went on to buy a \$3,000,000 shovel. Over the next few years, they bought four more shovels. Today there is a full-time employee on site.

The CEO tells his employees at the annual meetings, “Remember the Fifth Sale First.” Smiling he continues, “I ask my employees, ‘Who among you would invest \$25,000 to receive \$20,000,000?’”

Great Service is an investment.

You Don't Have to Run Second to Anybody!

He was a young aspiring stock car driver. He was ambitious, driven, and hard working. His first race went very well. It was July 12, 1958, 10 days after his 21st birthday in Columbia, SC. He couldn't wait to give his mother the good news!

He shouted as he rushed into the house. "Mama, there were 35 cars that started, and I came in second in the race!" His mother replied, "You lost!"

"But Mama, don't you think it's pretty good to come in second in my first race—especially with so many starters?"

She said, "Son, you don't have to run second place to anybody!"

For the next twenty years her son dominated stock car racing. He won the NASCAR Championship seven times. He won 200 races in his career including a record 10 in a row and 27 in 1967 alone. His name was Richard Petty.

Food for thought

An interesting prayer was given in Kansas at the opening session of their Senate. It seems that prayer still upsets some people. When Minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual generalities, but this is what they heard:

"Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good,' but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values.

We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem. We have abused power and called it politics. We have coveted our neighbors' possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us, Oh, God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Amen!"

It certainly is food for thought.

How Much Do You Charge?

He started his now famous Tire Company in the 1960's. His commitment to his employees as an employee-owned company has made many of his employees wealthy. The level of service they provide is extraordinary.

They will fix your flat tires for free, and rotate them, too. When you ask how much you owe, they simply say, "No charge. When you need some new tires, remember us!"

He is originally from Central Oregon. His friends are mostly Cattle Ranchers.

One sunny Sunday afternoon, one of his millionaire friends had a wonderful sense of humor. He was mowing his 200-acre ranch with a state-of-the-art John Deere mower. A woman in her early forties, wearing her elegant church clothes and wide brimmed hat and driving a brand new Cadillac, pulled up along side the rancher. He was dressed in an old pair of overalls, a beat up straw hat and boots. She flagged him down. He turned off his mower.

"How much do you charge to mow lawns?" Unable to resist the temptation, he replied, "The woman that lives in this house lets me sleep with her!" The window on the Cadillac went up... and she drove away.

His name? Les Schwab. He now has over 300 stores on the West Coast and hundreds of millionaires working with him.

"IF you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you;

IF you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, but make allowances for their doubting too;

IF you can wait and not be tired by waiting, or be lied about and don't deal in lies, or being hated and don't give way to hating, and yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

IF you can dream—and make dreams your master;

IF you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;

IF you can meet with Triumph and Disaster and treat those two imposters just the same;

IF you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools; or watch the things you gave your life to broken, and stoop and build them up with worn out tools;

IF you can make one heap of all your winnings and risk it on one turn of pitch and toss, and lose, and start again at your beginnings and never breathe a word about your loss;

IF you can force your heart and nerve and sinew to serve long after they are gone, and so hold on when there is nothing in you except the Will that says to them: "Hold on!"

IF you can walk with crowds and keep your virtue, or walk with Kings— nor lose the common touch;

IF neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;

IF all men count with you, but none too much;

IF you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run, Yours is the earth and all that is in it, And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son."

Good Luck Mr. Gorsky

When Apollo Mission Astronaut Neil Armstrong first walked on the moon, he not only gave his famous "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" statement, but followed it by several remarks, usual com traffic between him, the other astronauts and Mission Control. Just before he re-entered the Lander, however, he made the enigmatic remark "Good luck, Mr. Gorsky."

Many people at NASA thought it was a casual remark concerning some rival Soviet Cosmonaut. However, upon checking, there was no Gorsky in either the Russian or American space programs. Over the years many people questioned Armstrong as to what the "Good luck, Mr. Gorsky" statement meant, but Armstrong always just smiled.

On July 5, 1995 (in Tampa Bay, FL) while answering questions following a speech, a reporter brought up the 26-year-old question to Armstrong. This time he finally responded. Mr. Gorsky had finally died and so Neil Armstrong felt he could answer the question.

When he was a kid, he was playing baseball with a friend in the backyard. His friend hit a fly ball that landed in the front of his neighbor's bedroom windows. His neighbors were Mr. & Mrs. Gorsky.

As he leaned down to pick up the ball, young Armstrong heard Mrs. Gorsky shouting at Mr. Gorsky, "Sex! You want Sex?! You'll get Sex when the kid next door walks on the moon!"



If YOU have a story for us, please send it along. It may end up in our next e-book or seminar.

Thank you for reading. As my friend and mentor Jeffrey Gitomer says, “Thanks for being my customer!!”

To contact Mark Matteson for your next speaking engagement, contact him at psgmarkm@msn.com or toll free 877.672.2001

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