

"Wherever you are - be all there."

»Jim Elliot

## Appreciate the Opportunity



Even when we aren't attentively watching TV, it is often on in our living room.

We tend to have a news channel on with the sound off.

Some folks use a fireplace for ambient light. We use a Samsung.

After the initial flurry of activity on Christmas morning, my wife referenced the fill-in anchors on one of the news programs and joked, "It's a day for the B-team today. I guess all of the regulars have contracts that give them holidays off."

I smiled and said, "Yeah, but none of the B-team are too upset. They're getting their time in front of the camera. Those chairs are not empty very often. I bet they jump at the chance."

## Neighborly Behavior



We've had most of our neighbors for the better part of 15 years. When we moved in years ago, my family was the "young one."

Looking around these days, things have definitely changed.

Younger families have moved in, and the noise levels on our street have skyrocketed.

I looked outside of our kitchen window recently to see nine kids playing in front of our home and joked, "Don't these kids have smartphones?"

Old-man "get off my lawn" syndrome aside, it is a pretty cool thing. It's like a neighborhood rebirth.

Not long after one my new neighbors moved in, I was reminded of just how insulated we have become as a society.

I thought back to long ago when I was a college kid working in radio.

Before getting my own slot, I'd take anything and everything they'd offer.

Thanksgiving afternoon? Done. Christmas Eve? Okay. Mardi Gras? Uh...tough one. But, done.

You'll often hear NFL pundits comment that the most important "ability" for players is availability. All the skill in the world doesn't help if you can't or won't take the field.

I recently recorded the final Ryen Russillo Show on ESPN Radio. He's been a favorite of mine for years, and I wanted to make sure I had a chance to hear his comments on his way out.

I suppose the radio background made his story resonate with me.

But his journey from a bartender with aspirations, to grueling minor league baseball gigs, to local talk shows, to last minute fill-in host at ESPN, to Scott Van Pelt's sidekick, to having his own national radio and TV show inspired me.

The comments that made me smile the most were about what happened after his first shot at the "bigtime."

He got his opportunity when ESPN had most of their talent out of town for a company event.

Russillo explained it didn't go well...at all. He was told he would hear something soon, but the phone didn't ring for weeks.

I noticed that new neighbor raking leaves on Thanksgiving morning.

I walked over to say hello, and we began a nice get-to-know-you chat.

A few minutes later, another neighbor from one house over walked over. We expanded the introductions.

I suppose my neighbor from two doors down saw a conclave and felt obliged to join in. The four of us continued the general debrief new neighbors give each other.

Not long after I told him what a close-knit neighborhood we had (I hold the keys to four houses), my neighbor from two doors down in the other direction came over.

(He's the "newbie" who moved in six years ago.)

He joked with the (now) new guy that he was already falling into bad company.

As we laughed, my neighbor from two doors down in one direction looked at my neighbor from two doors down in the other direction and said, "Hi, I'm Mike. I don't think we've ever met."

He wasn't joking. They have lived on the same street, have been able to see each other's driveways for six years, likely have seen each other's vehicles come and go thousands of times, and had never actually met.

Within minutes, they were sharing stories of their adventures deep-frying turkeys.

When he did get another call, he said, "It wasn't because I was good. It was because I was available."

And he jumped.

With time and a little success, many of us forget how incredibly fortunate we felt when someone first gave us the nod and a chance to take to the field, or the airwaves, or...hey... the branch.

Most people get better at their jobs over time.

It's the rare person who keeps his appreciation for the opportunity to do it.

Strive to be that person.

When they discovered that one owned a hardware store and the other a construction company, their 5-minute old friendship showed real signs of potential. Go figure.

Whether you are in a new facility or the oldest building in town, there are hundreds of "new" people to meet in our markets each week.

Some may have only recently moved in.

Many more are longtime neighbors you, for some reason, have not connected with.

Make this a year of connecting with neighbors.

---

**"There's only one growth strategy: work hard."**

**»William Hague**



*Dave Martin, author of [The In-Store Advantage](#), has become one of the most prolific writers in the banking industry. His keynote presentations, seminars, and podcasts have an authenticity and humor that brings teams of all sizes and seniority levels together.*

*For more info about having Dave or an FSI Consultant speak to your group, email Tina Coleman, [tcoleman@SupermarketBank.com](mailto:tcoleman@SupermarketBank.com) or call 800-992-4978.*