

"Don't be distracted by criticism. Remember--the only taste of success some people get is to take a bite out of you."

» Zig Ziglar

Quiche-ing it Real



I had a conversation with my younger son this week that got me climbing up on a familiar soapbox about the workplace.

He had returned late in the evening from his shift at his new restaurant job.

To be fair, he had worked on his feet from 4 PM until almost midnight two nights in a row. That can wear a guy down.

Well, it would wear me down. I'm old. He's a high school athlete.

I told him to consider his tired legs part of a conditioning program. That suggestion was less than compelling to him.

The restaurant where he is now working specializes in items that he never eats.

If he were working at a cheeseburger joint, taco truck, or pizza place, he'd be an aficionado.

This place isn't that.

Shooters Gotta Shoot



A recent misunderstanding by a young man (we'll call him Dee) on the basketball team I assist with turned into a hysterical teaching experience.

As our very long season winds down, one of our more enthusiastic coaches gave an impassioned talk to the boys.

The first of their two most important tournaments of the year was 11 days away. The coach stressed how important it was that the boys keep putting in hard work.

Honestly, I'm pretty sure he was just winging it when he told them, "There are 11 days left until the tournament. You guys should each make – not just shoot – but MAKE 200 shots each day. That's 22 hundred made shots before the tournament."

At scrimmages a few days later, I took notice of Dee.

He is an amazing athlete and one of the hardest working guys on the team.

Improving his knowledge of quiches is one of his current challenges.

Apparently, folks expect you to be familiar with the products you sell. Go figure.

I smiled listening to the annoyances he experienced that day. I don't think he understands how amused parents can be when listening to their kids complain (just a little) about their workdays.

He said, "And then... these customers came in right before closing time. We couldn't clean up until they left. I was so ready to go home."

I asked, "Did they buy food?" He said, "Yeah... a lot."

I laughed, "Well, the sign says you close at 11 PM. Is 10:45 before 11?" He smirked.

I asked, "Who do you work for?" He gave the name of the restaurant.

I replied, "Nope." He then gave the name of his manager. I said, "Well, you report to him, but... who do you work for?"

He said, "I guess you're trying to say I work for the customers."

I replied, "No, I'm not trying... I'm saying it. The folks in that place buying stuff pay your salary. Some are easy to help. Some are high maintenance. But they're the reason anyone in that place – including your manager - has a job."

I suggested, "The next time you buy something with 'your money', think about where it came from. It didn't come from your restaurant or your boss. It came from your customers."

He is also one of the most courteous and respectful young men I know.

All that said, Dee isn't what you'd call a shooter.

Everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and an outside shot is the latter for Dee.

But something was different that morning.

During a transition, Dee pulled up for a 3-pointer and before I could yell, "No!" he drained the shot.

I yelled, "Nice shot, Dee!"

Thirty seconds later, he hit another 3-pointer. Another coach and I looked at each other and shrugged.

When he hit another 3-pointer a minute later, a teammate called out, "Shooter!" That's something they'll sometimes yell to point out who on the other team needs to be guarded far away from the basket.

I doubt anyone ever shouted that at Dee in his life.

He made four 3-pointers during a five-minute stretch.

During a break, one teammate said, "Dee! What's up? You must be making your 200 shots a day."

Dee looked up and said, "Wait. 200? Coach said 22 hundred."

The rest of the team burst out laughing. One teammate asked, "Dude... seriously? You're making 22 hundred shots a day?"

Okay, that wasn't exactly a graduate level economics class, but it served its purpose.

He thought for a second and said, "Good point."

I almost think he meant it. A dad can hope.

Yes, our jobs can be harder than usual some days.

Always show thanks to customers for giving us the opportunity of having those hard days at work.

Dee sheepishly said, "I thought he said 22 hundred shots a day until the tournament."

We immediately stopped practice to highlight Dee's accidental discovery of the secret to success.

Even this late in the season, an already talented player was noticeably improving his game by putting in the kind of work most others wouldn't.

Improved results aren't an accident for any of us.

Is anyone going to outwork you today?

"If you fell down yesterday, stand up today."

» H.G. Wells



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