

"A real decision is measured by the fact that you've taken a new action. If there's no action, you haven't truly decided."

»Tony Robbins

Here Comes the Boom



I figured that my wife and son being stranded overnight at our church due to flood waters would be the most interesting thing that happened last week.

When she was interviewed on TV the next morning...well, no...that had to be it.

Nope. As we started our morning two days later, an explosion rocked our house.

It took a second to realize it was a lightning strike. While I couldn't tell what it hit, it was close enough to set off our home alarm and car alarms.

My son sitting at the breakfast table looked over with a startled face and said, "That was close!"

I assured him (wrongly) that lightning seems closer than it is. It was likely a hundred yards away.

Don't Play a Shell Game



My wife feels guilty when people spend money on her for things she can do without.

With this in mind, I set out this Mother's Day to get her a gift that is both practical and useful.

This year's gift was a life-size ornamental tortoise.

She texted a picture of the big thing a few weeks ago while she was in a home décor store.

I texted, "Oookaaay". That was code for, "Whatever. I'm not going to try to talk you out of the yard turtle."

As with most things, she decided it was too expensive and returned tortoise-less. I made a mental note to find it on the next gift-giving event.

So, I recently wandered into one of those stores with an overpowering potpourri smell that I tend to avoid like the plague.

Ears still ringing, I walked around assessing if any appliances were fried. As I walked by our utility room, I heard a rumble that didn't belong.

Not being able to find the source of the noise, I opened the back door to find water gushing from the bricks.

The lightning strike shook the ground enough to crack pipes.

I made an emergency call to our plumber, and the young man answering the call showed great customer service.

When I told him the bind I was in, he said, "Mr. Martin, I can get over there now. But, if I head over there now, it's an emergency call... and I have no control over that. It's a \$240 charge just for showing up. If y'all are not in danger, can you possibly wait until 8:00 AM? It will save you lots of money. Can you shut the water off for a while?"

That I hadn't immediately shut off the main line showed me I was amped up and not thinking straight.

I quickly ran to the mainline and shut it off.

They arrived, had the wall opened and pipe repaired by 10:00 AM - all for less than what the "emergency" call would have cost alone.

As they finished up, a neighbor texted me to make sure the palm tree I was standing near wasn't on fire anymore.

Huh?

I looked up to find that lightning had indeed struck that tree... 15 feet from

After about 5 minutes of looking for anything resembling an outdoor section, I found our turtle friend under a bench.

As I lugged the heavy thing toward the counter, three different women expressed how much they loved that tortoise.

(Who knew?)

When I arrived at the counter, the pleasant cashier said, "Oh...everyone loves that turtle." I smiled and said, "And yet... I'm the only fool buying it, aren't I?"

She said, "Oh no. That may be the last one we have. These sell out."

(Again, who knew?)

As I swiped my card for the \$119 purchase, I commented, "I can see why my wife passed on it. I'll likely get fussed for spending too much."

The cashier then said, "Well...we do have an in-store coupon. Would you like to use it?"

Figuring the only right answer was, "Uh...yes", that's what I said.

She cancelled my purchase, took out her phone and tapped it a few times, scanned a barcode, and had me reinsert my card.

Just like that, \$45 was knocked off the price.

I thanked her sincerely...but instantly began wondering why I had to comment about the price to get the better deal.

where my son was sitting at the breakfast table.

(On the bright side, he may have super powers now.)

That young plumber looking out for my best interest saved me money...and locked in a customer. I can't imagine calling anyone else again.

Customers in a bind can benefit from speaking to someone with a clear head and good intentions.

Will you be that person for yours?

If I didn't make a comment about how expensive my new cement and resin friend is... I pay 40% more. That just seems...wrong.

I had a momentary flashback to last summer when I found myself bartering the price of a chess set on a street in Progreso, Mexico. When you sense a seller is sizing you up before giving a price, any offer he or she makes feels suspicious.

"Specials" are nice. Being able to trust that you are being fairly treated every day is even nicer.

How fair and transparent will customers find you?

"It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching." »Francis of Assisi