
**"Being positive in a negative situation is not naive.
It's leadership." »Ralph Maston**

Playing the Role of...



My family spent a week in New York City recently, and I returned to Houston feeling like my hometown is a quaint coastal village with moderately-priced commodities.

Burgers are under \$15! What?

It was a great trip and a particular incident reinforced my side of a debate my wife and I have had for years.

Whenever we attend a play, she is openly disappointed if she reads or hears, "The part of (some character) will be played by (a substitute performer)."

She wants to see the "A-Team".

Now, granted...if you are there to see a particular star, you definitely

Not the Droids You're Looking For



I finally succumbed to societal pressure and switched to an iPhone. Well, that and my wife bought me one and gave me no choice.

My resident experts were away for the weekend, but I figured I was bright enough to transfer my contacts and info from one phone to the next.

After beginning the process, it seemed I hadn't messed things up too badly.

I felt that way until I realized that neither phone could now make or receive a phone call.

Unlike my sons, I still sometimes use a phone to make phone calls. So...this wasn't ideal.

I'm not exactly sure what mix of turning phones on and off afterwards eventually got the new phone operational. But, I felt good about myself... for a second.

should feel disappointed if she is missing.

However, shy of that, and if you are not seeing the original cast of a play, I actually like whenever a back-up actor gets his or her shot.

My money is always on them giving the best performance in the show.

My wife argues that if they were better, they'd be in the starting line-up, so to speak. While there is logic to that, my argument has always been that they are all insanely talented.

The "back-ups" in these shows are the stars of tomorrow, waiting for their shot. I enjoy watching them get a chance to shine.

We had the opportunity to see the Broadway production of "Dear Evan Hansen."

The show was brilliant, and we walked out discussing who our favorite performers were. Lead character aside (he drives the show), our consensus was that the woman who played his mother was amazing.

On a stage filled with talent, she shined. During a quiet pause during one of her solos, I had to smile as I heard no less than four people around me sniffing.

(I would have likely heard more had I not been wiping my eyes and sniffing, as well.)

When the phone welcomed me by my younger son's name, that good feeling disappeared.

I had used the same cloud address I allowed him to begin using years ago, and now my new phone had his pictures, contacts, and I'm sure other things I didn't want to know about.

Worse, I think he now had mine, as well. That's ...just...great.

When the next morning rolled around, I was in full "I want my old phone back" mode.

Before agreeing, my wife asked if we could call our cellular provider and ask for help. I didn't want help.

I wanted my old phone back...now. So, of course ...I was soon on the phone with the helpline.

Within seconds of answering, the young man in customer support, Justin, had both of us smiling. My goal this week is to be as happy about anything as Justin seemed about helping us.

When we told him our problem, he started with, "Well...first...congratulations! Oh, you are so going to love the fact you went with this iPhone!"

Now, he may well have said that had I been switching to a Droid as well. No matter, it definitely diffused me a bit.

As he walked me through the stages of fixing my problem (which took a little doing), I apologized for creating a hassle.

Without missing a beat, he said, "Oh, no sir. I work for you. This is no trouble at all!"

When I looked for her name afterward, I found it on one of the slips of paper reading "Playing the role tonight of...."

Yup, she was a back-up.

While your position may not be quite as clear a waiting-in-the-wings situation, opportunities to step into expanded roles, even temporarily, will arise.

Whether you are looking for them, and more importantly, ready for them depends on you.

It's a fair bet that every understudy on Broadway goes to work each day mentally ready to step up and show what they can do if called upon.

They know it's not a matter of if, but when, they'll get their shot to expand their roles.

Are you putting in the work today to be ready for yours?

By the time we finished, I had an entirely different attitude about not just the phone, but Justin's company, as well.

He didn't just solve my problem. The attitude and respect he displayed improved my day, as well as my satisfaction with his company.

How many of your own customers' days can you improve today?

"A clever person solves a problem. A wise person avoids it."

»Albert Einstein

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