
"The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said." » Peter Drucker

New Day, New Game

It's hard to estimate how many folks over the years whom after learning I was born and raised in Louisiana have said, "So... you're an LSU guy!"

I always tell them that I am still required by Louisiana law to support the Tigers.

But I'm actually a Nicholls State University graduate. (And our baseball team beat LSU this season. Look it up.)

LSU's winning of the College World Series this year offered a great example of perseverance and resilience.

After dropping a game early in the double-elimination tournament, the Tigers had to come through the "losers bracket" to reach the finals.

I do get a kick out of the fact that it's still called the losers bracket even after waves of sensitivity training in recent times. But I digress.

Once two teams reach the finals, the tournament becomes a best two of three series. LSU won a very tight opening game and looked poised to win the championship the next day.

They had great momentum. And then... they didn't. In Game 2, Florida set a CWS scoring record, winning 24 to 4. It was a crushing

Nice Chatting With You

As we prepared to leave town for a week, I found myself in need of hired help to keep 200+ feet of flowerbeds and a dozen or so back patio potted plants alive.

The Houston area was in the grip of 100-degree days and heat indexes more commonly found on the planet Venus.

And sure enough, there was no rain and triple digit temps in the forecast for our time away.

My wife recommended that we hire one of our neighbor's sons for my plant saving project.

I have seen the young man a few times before and he doesn't seem to be a goofball.

And yes, over the years, I have developed a sixth sense for detecting neighborhood goofballs.

While I know I've spoken to him before, he seemed nervous as I walked around the yard explaining the things we needed.

After a few minutes of showing him around, I realized he had said almost nothing.

He had nodded a few times and maybe mumbled an "Okay," but was otherwise mute.

It struck me that even if he wasn't sure about an instruction, he wasn't likely going to say anything.

defeat.

Anyone who has played competitive athletics can attest to how demoralizing an absolute blowout can be.

There are bad days and then there are days that can make you question if you even belong on the field...or court... or sales call...or meeting room.

Now, good coaches will tell you that the results of one game are just that. It's one game. A new day is a new day. New opportunities await.

It was hard to keep that positive thought in mind when LSU went down 0 - 2 in the first inning of the next game. It seemed like déjà vu.

And then, it didn't.

While I'm not the baseball historian some of my friends pretend to be, I cannot recall such a complete reversal of fortune. From a 24 to 4 defeat one day to an 18 to 4 victory the next.

Now, it wasn't quite a Cinderella story. LSU had been the #1 ranked team for much of the season. They were an experienced crew with high expectations and confidence.

But confidence can take a hit when things don't go your way.

The mark of a winning team, however, is to believe in yourself, keep grinding, and give your best efforts as long as you're able.

A great day today doesn't guarantee a repeat tomorrow.

However, a terrible day yesterday doesn't portend another one today, either.

Each day is a new day. Stay in the game.

I then began asking him about how his summer was going and what kind of things he was doing to stay busy.

He gave one-word answers at first, but when I followed up, he began expounding.

Before long, he was pretty chatty... and then began asking clarifying questions of the things I had explained.

A couple of his questions made me realize how I may have been unclear in my requests.

It was a nice reminder to me that when you're the only one talking, you may not actually be communicating.

Oh, sure, you're transmitting information. But there's no guarantee that it's being received the way you hope it is.

There can be a natural tendency for some folks to hide their uncertainty when a manager, coach, (or old guy neighbor) is monologuing.

Getting folks who may be a bit anxious chatting just a little when you're explaining things can help close information gaps you'd otherwise be unaware of.

It's also very helpful in helping you gauge whether someone is paying attention.

This is equally true when interacting with customers.

Great bankers strive to know their customers.

But knowing them means far more than reviewing account data on a screen.

Start and encourage more chats and you'll both learn more.

"I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it."

» Maya Angelou

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