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"A good half of the art of living is resilience."

» **Alain de Botton**



Knocked Down, Not Out

There are times in which it is a bit harder than others to focus on writing columns. This week has been one of those times.

The destruction brought by Hurricane Ida to South Louisiana has been rattling. Yes, people from my old hometown(s) are accustomed to storms.

It comes with the territory and most folks with an authentic Cajun accent have at least a few hurricane stories to share. They're (mostly) all true.

Many have a way of telling harrowing stories, yet with a sense of humor.

Most of my family and lifelong friends are located in areas not often mentioned on national news. They bore the very worst of Hurricane Ida's 140 mph winds for hours.

One of my best friends rode the storm out on a large supply boat moored in Bayou Lafourche. Through spotty cellphone service, he texted me updates over a ten-hour period throughout the storm.

After a day of updates of truly frightening scenes, he texted late in the evening, "BTW,



Culture Before Money

There have been a handful of topics that have dominated what bank leaders have wanted to talk about in recent times.

Thankfully, the requests for "Keeping people engaged on a Zoom call," have finally slowed.

I'm not sure if we've figured it out...or just given up. (That's mostly a joke.)

Recruiting and retaining quality new hires has risen near the top of leaders' topics of interest.

I've made the point to several groups of late that when I see a local chicken wings restaurant offering busboys \$15 an hour and a \$500 signing bonus after three months, I know we're in strange territory.

Don't get me wrong. Busboys are vital.

In our market, however, these positions have never offered that hourly rate.

There is an almost unprecedented premium being paid now for people who are willing and able to reliably show up and competently perform any number of entry-level jobs.

The busboy position is one that I have paid a bit more attention to than usual this summer.

we saw a cow today swim across Bayou Lafourche. A cow.”

I heard his dry humor in that line and smiled. He didn't want to forget the cow story. His humor was intact.

Hurricanes of any size can be life-altering events. Major hurricanes always are.

Ida was that for hundreds of thousands of the most decent, salt-of-the-earth people you'd ever want to meet.

If your life depended on the next person you run into being a nice, generous person, you'd like your odds if you were standing in South Louisiana.

And if you were standing there now, you wouldn't find folks waiting for someone else to do the things that have to be done.

Cajuns aren't big on complaining about many things outside of NFL refs.

With the 2020-2021 pandemic, I've spent the better part of 18 months being asked to speak and write about resilience.

The people of Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes are in the process of teaching a master class that puts whatever I preach to shame.

You get knocked down. Get up as best you can.

Once you do, help others around you. Try not to complain. It saps your spirit.

Humor and goodwill have energy in them that complaints do not.

Take a minute, even in the middle of hardships and uncertainty, to be grateful for the ability to overcome them and emerge stronger and more resilient.

And in the end, nothing is more noble or spirit-lifting than helping others get up again as well.

With a couple months between semesters, my older son decided he wanted to find a short summer gig.

When a restaurant in town quickly contacted him, I figured he would start that day.

He ended up meeting with the manager the next day and the assistant manager the day after that.

Yes, two half-hour interviews for a busboy role.

I was intrigued.

When I asked my son what they talked about, he said, "Well, mostly our families...and soccer."

What then struck me was when he told me of how long some of the team had been there.

Many had been there for five years or more. That's amazing retention for a restaurant.

Hearing that, I suspected it wasn't because of money, which was less than the wings place.

Over the course of two months and some crazy 12-hour workdays, my son never once complained about the job.

Whenever I'd ask how it was going, he would say, "Everyone is really nice. I like this place."

Once, we ate there during one of his shifts. People came out of the woodwork to introduce themselves and tell us how happy they were that he was on their team.

When he had to return to school, the manager told him, "You'll always be welcome here." Not surprisingly, he hopes to "help them out" on breaks from school.

It's become his "work family."

Yes, money matters. Culture matters more.

What culture are you creating and supporting today?

"You can have all the right strategy in the world; if you don't have the right culture, you're dead."

» **Patrick Whitesell**

A promotional banner for the 2021 Virtual Retail Banking Conference. The background is a light teal color with a faint map pattern. On the right side, there is a circular inset image of a man and a woman wearing backpacks and sunglasses, looking at a large map outdoors. The text on the left side of the banner reads: "2021 Virtual Retail Banking Conference" in white, "NAVIGATING THE FUTURE" in large white letters with "THE" on a red ribbon, and "September 21-22, 2021" in white. The FSI logo, featuring a globe and the text "FSI \$ FINANCIAL SUPERMARKETS, INC.", is in the top right corner.

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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 or call 800-992-4978.

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