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"Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary."

» **Stephen R. Covey**

A Stitch in Time

I was recently reminded of two truths. First, you're never too old to find new ways to get hurt.

On a recent Sunday afternoon, I walked through our garage during halftime of an NFL game to run a quick errand.

We have several propane tanks stored there for various purposes.

As I walked by one of the tanks, I took the turn a bit too sharply. Literally.

My leg rubbed against the tank handle. No biggie, right?

Well, suffice it to say that I missed the second half of the game. Within the hour, I was in an

Nice Works

Having my youngest son now working in banking has been somewhat of a research boon to me.

After spending one year working full-time at an in-store branch, he's back in college full-time (out of state) and working afternoons at a traditional branch.

I know he isn't always thrilled by my many questions (he might call interrogations) about work, but...I do still pay for lots of his stuff.

So, he's a sometimes-unwilling research subject.

The fact that he has gone into banking in the height of the oddest labor market most of us have ever seen has been especially useful.

Urgent Care center getting 13 sutures to my lower leg.

I initially wondered if it would keep me from a speaking engagement two days later.

Then, I remembered the John Wick trilogy. Stitches didn't slow him down, so I had a role model. But I digress.

The second thing I was reminded of is that professionals in demanding, high stress jobs need to know how to prioritize their actions.

Devin was the young man who stitched me up. He's currently in the military.

He's trained as a combat medic and will specialize in emergency medicine. (He's also a John Wick fan.)

As we chatted while he worked on my leg, I joked, "So, I'm guessing this isn't your first rodeo?"

He laughed and said, "Oh...no sir..." and began to tell me about the many things he's put back together and even offered to show me pictures of some of his previous work. (I politely passed on the offer.)

We began chatting about emergency medicine. I asked if he was the kind of person who had things seem to "slow down" in emergencies.

Devin told me that he is, but it's both an innate and learned trait. He said, "The more chaos around you, the more important it is to remember the priorities. Just because something is the most visible or people are shouting about it doesn't mean that's the most important thing."

I smiled and said that sounded like sound business advice, as well.

Before long we were talking about leading teams and the importance of helping people focus on the right priorities. (That helped keep my mind off the task he was working on while we chatted, as well.)

No, we may not often deal with the same levels of urgency as medics.

But having and adhering to our own checklist of priorities can help us ensure that – when faced with multiple demands competing for our

In his first year at his first bank, he saw about 75% turnover.

He went from total newbie to the branch's workhorse in about 9 months. He also had several opportunities to leave for more money.

Some banks have gotten uber-aggressive in their recruiting.

But I convinced him that a full year of experience in an in-store would give him a skillset that few other areas of banking provides.

His working in a branch has reminded me that while so much about branches has changed since the Mesozoic Era when I managed one, some things are as true today as ever.

The things that demotivated me at 22 are very similar to the things that get to him and his Gen Z peers.

Conversely, he and his peers are also motivated by many of the same things that motivated us older folks throughout our careers.

I've been reminded that we should never underestimate the incredible power of simply being nice. Seriously.

The word he's used most over the past 18 months when giving positive feedback about work, is when BMs and ABMs are "nice."

They could have very difficult and demanding days, but when managers and coworkers were nice to work with, there were no complaints.

Now, I know that his use of the word "nice" is also often a synonym for respectful, appreciative, and supportive.

It's reminded me of how often I've joked with managers that their parents likely gave them some of the best management advice possible: Be nice.

Being nice doesn't mean being soft or a pushover. Some of the leaders I've respected most over the years were tough as nails, but also...nice.

Secure and competent leaders are nice to those around them, even in challenging times. Inept ones seldom are.

Always strive to be the former.

attention – our time and efforts are focused on the right things at the right times.

"Being nice takes work. That's why I really like people who are nice." » Casey Neistat

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.

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