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Bcc:

Subject: Live & Work Wise, from Kim Ratz, Speaker-Trainer-Troubadour-Author

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Live & Work Wise

Nothing fancy; just a fast, free, fun read to inspire hope & improve skills to cope.

From Kim Ratz – Speaker, Trainer, Troubadour, Author. www.kimratz.com.

In this Dec. 2016 issue: (sending it early due to travel :)

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A big **WELCOME** to my many new subscribers after a very busy fall all over the country. If this is your first issue, I hope you find something useful here ...

1. Thoughts to help you Live & Work Wise: Life After Elections

The sun rose again this morning, as it always has after an election; even this one. Yet even though life continues on, I think many people would agree that the differences that divide many people seemed to grow bigger, deeper and stronger during the campaign, and it will have an impact in the workplace. Just because the election is over doesn't mean the differences are done too. You already had ample challenges within your team and workplace because of the subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle "style differences" that people encounter daily when they communicate and interact with others. They're on the same team and looking at the same situation, yet they can see things so differently, and think of different responses and solutions. And because of the increased "political passions" of this past election, already there are reports of situations in which once someone learns that someone else voted for "the other candidate," this one thing is changing their view of that person. And it isn't helpful. So obviously there is a concern about how this could erode cohesion, trust and effectiveness within groups and work teams.

That's why my keynotes and workshops have always included the skill called "**Reframing**" – being able to look at a situation, a reality, a set of facts, in more than one way, that still fits the facts. It is perhaps more important than ever now, and when it comes to relationships, reframing is critical; it's the ability to give yourself more options in challenging situations. Like when you meet someone and your first impression is not a good one, and you're going to encounter that person again. Will

Rogers nailed it for situations like this when he said: *"I don't like that person very much – I ought to get to know them better."* So here's a very recent example of "Reframing & Relationships" -- a commercial about a social experiment conducted by Pedigree late in the campaign. There were 2 scenarios; a woman wears a:

- (1) "Hillary" t-shirt to a Trump rally, asking for help to find the owner of a lost dog;
 - (2) "Trump" t-shirt to a Hillary rally, asking for help to find the owner of a lost dog.
- (In both scenarios the owner was nearby, ready to be "reunited" with the dog.)

You would think wearing a t-shirt supporting the opposing candidate would prompt a less than helpful response from either group. But the hypothesis was that a widely-shared love of dogs would overcome political differences and prompt cooperation. The result? In almost every interaction, in both scenarios, people showed a concern for the lost dog and owner, asked for more information, and were happy when (on cue) the owner walks up and proclaims: "You found my dog!"

In general life, when you meet someone and the first impression is not good, try to get to know them better. Because the odds are that as you do you will learn things about them you DO have in common, or you like about them, and your impression about them can't help but change. Like dogs. You shift the balance from a negative impression to a positive one. Yet when it's a coworker you know and get along with, and then you discover some political differences, this additional knowledge about the other person could be counter-productive. You can't let it jeopardize a relationship that was working, until one key difference emerged.

Fortunately, it's widely agreed that a couple of topics are discouraged in the workplace because they tend to make people uncomfortable, challenge trust and cohesion, and have nothing to do with the job anyway; they are -- religion, politics, and sex. So if a political comment comes up in conversation and you're uncomfortable, just acknowledge their right to their opinion, agree to disagree, and remind them it has nothing to do with the job at hand and ask to get back to task. Keep the balance with more positive impressions about the other person than the negatives.

2. Another thought to help you Live & Work Wise: *An Attitude of Gratitude 365 Days a Year*

It seems appropriate as we have just concluded our November tradition of "Giving-Thanks" and continue into the holiday season ahead, to highlight another use of reframing which can help you feel grateful 365 days of the year, and all the other benefits associated with an "Attitude of Gratitude." I've shared previous examples from studies that show how our brains work when we are feeling both grateful and ungrateful, and the associated chemicals we release into our blood when we feel these emotions, and the impact these two different emotions can have on our health when experienced over an extended time. A consistent finding in all these studies is that by learning to recognize when we are feeling ungrateful, we can make a conscious choice to feel gratitude by doing specific things.

This is also an important seasonal reminder because there's a strong, historic correlation between the occurrence of winter, holidays and depression. A large reason why there are so many celebrations and festivals in the winter is to give people a lift to deal with the shorter days and colder temperatures. This is in addition to the many religious holidays and traditions. Yet

sometimes we put such a glorified and pressurized spin on how holidays "should be," and some people just don't feel the joy, or they feel that they're missing out, or it amplifies what they otherwise don't have ...

I recently read an article by Robert Emmons, a professor of psychology at UC-Davis who specializes in "gratitude." He began by writing: "It's easy to feel grateful when everything is good. But when disaster strikes, gratitude is worth the effort." Being grateful is a choice, and it can help us not feel overwhelmed by temporary situations. Instead of denying or minimizing the hard times we experience, he suggests we use them as a "springboard" to gratitude by using a technique he calls – "Remember the bad." Here's how it works:

When you realize you are feeling ungrateful, think about the worst thing that ever happened to you. Then think about where you are now, and how you made it through that bad situation, you're still here, and you're making progress in some way. When you can remember and compare how "bad" things were and that you "survived," you set up what Emmons calls "fertile ground for gratefulness." Otherwise, without discipline we tend to let our minds dwell between the way things are and how they might have been, or how we wish things would have gone. Choosing to compare your current reality with a real, past experience can help you feel relatively "better," and more likely to feel "grateful." And there is scientific evidence that grateful people are more resilient when "stuff happens," whether it's a minor bump in the road or a serious crisis. They aren't grateful the bad thing happened, yet they use it to help keep them centered. You are what you think. Even when there isn't a big "Giving-Thanks" or other holiday meal in front of you.

***I wish you Happy "Giving-Thanks"** (and a **blessed** and **Merry Christmas**) during this holiday season, and every day in the **New Year** ahead ...*

(for Emmon's full article:

http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_can_help_you_through_hard_times)

What a pleasure it was to have Kim share "Playing Nice in the Sandbox;" it was greatly enjoyed by all 250 staff at our pre-service training. His music was a great introduction in shining the light on them, and the stories made most reflect on themselves and note what they might have done differently in the past and perhaps handle situations differently in the future. After Kim's training several staff shared some action steps they will take, and we are very pleased with what they took away from your program! We have not in all of the past pre-service trainings had such positive responses from our staff and I am certain staff morale will increase. I recommend Kim to any Head Start leader or anyone else looking for a trainer to promote teamwork and have their staff realize the value of the many different styles that all people have and how they can work together. His knowledge on the subject and delivery was very stimulating to our staff, and we look forward to have Kim return for future trainings. - Rebecca Heberle, Director, PEACE Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start, (Syracuse, NY)

3. Holiday special on gift books to help dads connect with daughters & sons

"To My Daughter (and "To My Son") -- Do You Believe? Thoughts from Your Father's

"Heart," are 2 gift books I wrote just for dads to connect with their daughters and sons (teen or older so they appreciate what is happening and what you are sharing). 54 affirmations help dad share thoughts from your heart, and there are two pages at the end to write your own thoughts. I originally wrote this book in 1999 to help me connect with our daughter and son as they "left the nest," and it was a really important moment in my evolving relationships with them as they became young adults. So I self-published these books so more dads could have moments like these with their daughters and sons too.

Normally they sell for \$12.61/book (\$10 plus \$2.61 s/h). **But for orders received by Dec. 10, so I can mail them out to you in time for holiday gifts, I will sell them for an all-inclusive price of \$10 (includes tax, shipping & handling).** This offer also extends to my 2 musical CDs; they're also available to you for \$10 all-inclusive. One ("Positively Yours") is a compilation of songs I've written over the years for presentations and some other personal songs, and the other is a collection of songs for parents and people who work with kids titled: "The Pits & Pleasures of Parenting." You can get more info by clicking here to go to my web site and complete the order form: www.kimratz.com/product.html. **Be sure to include the code: "e-newz" for this special \$10 price.**

4. Quotes related to Elections, Holidays & Gratitude for the days ahead ...

George Washington is the only president who didn't blame the previous administration for his troubles. - Author Unknown

If voting made any difference they wouldn't let us do it. - Mark Twain

We stand today at a crossroads: One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness. The other leads to total extinction. Let us hope we have the wisdom to make the right choice. - Woody Allen

The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter. - Winston Churchill

Anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that "my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge. - Isaac Asimov

As we struggle with shopping lists and invitations, compounded by December's bad weather, it is good to be reminded that there are people in our lives who are worth this aggravation, and people to whom we are worth the same. – Donald E Westlake

Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childhood days, recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth, and transport the traveler back to his own fireside and quiet home. – Charles Dickens

Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings, all the snow in Alaska won't make it 'white'. – Bing Crosby

I bought my brother some gift-wrap for Christmas. I took it to the Gift Wrap dept. and told them to wrap it, but in a different print so he would know when to stoop unwrapping. – Steven Wright

May peace be your gift at Christmas and your blessing all year through. – unknown

When we will our minds with blessings and gratitude, an inner shift in consciousness can occur. As we focus on the abundance in our lives rather than what we lack, a wonderful blueprint for the future begins to emerge. – Sir John Templeton

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. - Melody Beattie

Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received. Thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling. Thanksgiving is the following of that impulse. - Henry Van Dyke

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us. - Albert Schweitzer

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it. - William Arthur Ward

Our school district is embarking on a massive, multi-year building project that will test the patience and flexibility of our staff, students and parents. Kim Ratz gave a great "back-to-school" presentation focused on change and transitions, leading our staff through a multitude of activities that gave them tools on how to respond to change, and strategies people can use to manage our own morale, be more resilient and to facilitate change in a positive manner. This was a perfect time to have Kim come in at the beginning of the school year to give our staff an informative, engaging, and uplifting presentation to begin our construction journey. I received many positive remarks regarding Kim's presentation and I highly recommend Kim; his ability to customize his presentation was extremely valuable. – Matthew Schoen, Ed. S., Superintendent, Delano (MN) Public Schools

5. What I do, how to contact me, and how to unsubscribe.

I specialize in helping people create more harmony in their own life, and in their relationships with others, by making Congruent Choices - aligning your Attitudes, Aptitudes and Actions - so at days end you feel Content, not regret. I do this by sharing keynotes and workshops that inspire hope and help people improve skills to cope (Personal Excellence, Communication & Relationships, Teamwork, and Leadership), and original music, stories and humor to induce some fun along the way!

I send you these 4-5 e-Newz each year as a way of sharing skills and strategies I hope you'll find helpful, and to remind you about the kind of content I share with groups like yours so that when the timing and fit are right you remember me. **So if you need a presenter who shares content, energy and inspiration, call me so we can discuss what you need, and how I might be able**

to help!

Visit www.kimratz.com for more info.

To contact me: Click "Reply," or call me at (952) 938-4472.

To Un-subscribe: Click "Reply" & write "unsubscribe" in the Subject line and you will be removed from this list.

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Positively Yours,

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Successfully sharing skills, songs & stories since 1994