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Subject: Live & Work Wise, from Kim Ratz

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Live & Work Wise

From Kim Ratz – Speaker, Trainer, Troubadour, www.kimratz.com
Nothing fancy; just a free, fun read to inspire hope & improve skills to cope.
April 1, 2016, No Fooling.

Thoughts to help you *Live & Work Wise*:

Winter Storm "Selena," a Chinese Fortune, and Exit 90, I-76

I knew right away the warnings for winter storm "Selena" were no April Fools Day joke that morning (Mar. 23) as I started my drive back to MN from our son's home in Colorado Springs. Normally, it takes 70 minutes to drive to Denver; due to low visibility in the steady snow and 50 mph winds, it took more than 3 hours! Needing a break I took an exit, ordered Chinese to-go, and ate in the car so I could listen to the weather radio and decide if I was going to press on, or return to our son's for another night. My fortune cookie read: "*Be prepared to modify your plans.*" Hmmm.

I chose to press on (I know you're questioning my judgement right now), and four hours later I'd gone only 80 miles on Interstate 76, past dozens of jack-knifed semis and vehicles in the ditch; the two-lane freeway was reduced to one bumpy, icy path. It was 4:00pm, so I knew it was time to cancel my planned hotel reservation, and to come up with a new plan. Then at Exit 90 I saw it -- the flashing light above the sign that says: "*Exit Freeway when Flashing*" ...

"Life is what happens when you're making other plans."

Exit 90 takes you to Brush, CO, a small town on the high plains. At first all I could see was a closed gas station and next to that a McDonalds, so I went in to get something to eat. As the McDonalds quickly filled with other diverted travelers, I learned that there was an open gas station on the other side of the freeway, and the two local motels were full. Weather apps showed that winter storm "Selena" would continue to have her way with us through the evening; traffic apps showed all major roads in eastern CO were closed. Thinking I might be spending the night in an idling car in McDonalds' parking lot, I drove to the gas station to fill up; on the way a police officer who was now at the freeway ramps told me they were opening the Middle School as an emergency shelter, one-half mile back past the McDonalds. After topping off my gas tank, I drove to the school ...

"Expect good things to happen, and if they don't: be willing to wing it."

As I entered the gym, City Council member Heath Becker was right there to welcome me. He told me he didn't know much as they had just opened the school; he did know that the Red Cross was coming soon with cots and other supplies, and we could stay until the roads were open again. After offering me bottled water, a blanket, and directions to the rest rooms, he gestured to the gym and bleachers and invited me to "pick a spot." Incidentally, at this point there were about 15 of us, and people were sitting on the floor, spread out along the 3 walls of the gym, not the bleachers. The reason for that "spacing" was: (--- wait for it ---) yep, the outlets, so people could plug in their phones. However, unless your cell phone provider had service in that area (luckily I did), there was no internet because it was spring break and the school's servers were off; that got the only groans I think I heard that evening.

"Count your blessings, not your worries."

So within about 90 minutes of the road closing and finding myself stranded in a blizzard, with many uncertainties and few answers, other than I was planning to spend the night in the Brush Middle School gym with many strangers, a blanket and a bottle of water – I realized I was already thinking – *"This is going to be okay."* The local towns people responded fast and effectively. There was always a Brush Police Officer to answer questions, share updates from the State Patrol & Highway Dept., and reassure people we'd be taken care of. Mayor Chuck Schonberger and his wife showed up with a stack of pizzas and coolers with water, juice and soda. City Council Member Vicki Quinlin, who is also the school's cross country coach, was calling people to bring coffee pots, cups and condiments, as well as power strips and extension cords so more people could plug in their phones. City Administrator Monte Torres was there too to ensure the local response was going well, and then Brad Taylor, Northern CO Red Cross Chapter arrived with cots, blankets, and hygiene items people might need, plus stuffed animals for every child who was going to spend the night there. Other volunteers were walking around with books, board games, and decks of cards for anyone interested. Next, the Cross Country Coach announced they were opening the local library for a movie, and internet access was available; a lot of people got up to take advantage of the offer.

By 10:00pm there were an estimated 160 people who would shelter overnight in the school gym (I'm glad I travel with ear plugs :). This included families with babies and young children, and teens, and older couples, the two women in their 80s who were driving cross-country together and came in arm-in-arm and never let go, a couple of school groups who were travelling through on busses, other groupings and individuals like myself, and finally -- several dogs and a cat too as it would be cold that night. I saw skin colors and heard languages and accents from many different places in the world. Oh, and there was one old trucker who was grumbling because this delay was costing him time and money; but he got little support for his comment to "run the blockade," and eventually he too accepted his fate. We were a very diverse mini-

community for that one night ... And here's the cool thing: Everyone was figuring out how to go with the flow, even the trucker, because we all knew this was the smart thing to do, that our basic needs would be met, and we'd be safe there until the roads were open again. *Everyone knew that things were going to be okay.*

"This too shall pass."

Around 1:30am some lights came on as a Police Officer apologized for waking us up, adding that about half of us would be happy with what he was about to report: the highway to Denver was open again. He recommended that we stay until daylight as the road was still icy, yet we could drive south if we wanted. Many people got up and gathered their things to leave; some of us tried to go back to sleep, and some stayed up thinking maybe the northbound lanes would re-open soon too. I'm glad I slept more, because it didn't re-open until daylight; an accident had blocked the road ahead and they couldn't clear it until sunlight. Around 7:30am a police officer announced the northbound lanes were open, and then he pointed us to the hot coffee and breakfast sandwiches on the food tables. And as I safely resumed my drive the next morning, on clear roads and sunny skies, I was sincerely grateful I'd been a part of that experience; it was all good! So here's all I can say in closing:

Kudos & Thanks to Everyone who Volunteers Service to Others!

The Brush locals and the Red Cross - Northern CO Chapter were AWESOME!

I've written thank you letters to the editor of the Brush News-Tribune, Mayor, & City Council, and will continue to donate to the Red Cross! And I will continue to be grateful for the individuals and organizations who by spirit and mission are so willing and able to help when needed. ***Kudos & Thanks!*** to each of you who choose to volunteer in some capacity to serve others, each in your own way! Through whatever program or role you take on, you really do make a difference!

Another Thought to Help You Work Wise:

In-service topics available to your program, or your State Association's conference.

I shared the above story for the first time one week later, as a new way to introduce several skills and strategies to be more resilient, patient, congruent, and keep your stress down and morale up. You receive this e-Newz because you probably attended one of my presentations and subscribed, so I just wanted to share the most recent example of how I continue using real-life stories to encourage people to be more hopeful and skillful with how they handle those moments of change, challenge and conflicts; it's a more engaging method of presenting, and people are more likely to remember the details re: "Hows" and "Whys" for later, when it really counts!

Please keep me in mind for your Back-to-School or other in-services with your co-

workers, and also for your state association's conference; your conference planners might really appreciate the suggestion. I customize every program based on the audience, desired outcomes and timeframes, and like I was probably flexible on my fee with the group that hired me to speak at the event you attended, I'll be flexible with you too when it comes to your investment. I know your budgets can be tight, I love what I do and value the chance to share these programs with people doing the kind of work you do, and if we find a good fit I'll work with you to find a way to make it happen!

Visit www.kimratz.com for more info about these keynotes and workshops, review video and audio demos, and see a list of clients and their comments about my work. If you think one or more of these programs could be a good fit, let me know when we can talk so you can explain your goals, we can answer each other's questions, and then I can give you a better idea of how I might be able to help. My contact info is at the end of this email and on my web site.

A Few More Quotes for the days ahead related to: **"Self Motivation"**

Life is a shipwreck, but we must not forget to sing in the lifeboats. - Voltaire

All generalizations are false, including this one. - unknown

A computer once beat me at chess, but it was no match for me at kick boxing. - Emo Philips

You can't wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club. - Jack London

Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there. - Will Rogers

The road to success is always under construction. - Lily Tomlin

People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing - that's why we recommend it daily. - Zig Ziglar

Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds. - Albert Einstein

There are no traffic jams along the extra mile. - Roger Staubach

Almost every great thing that was accomplished was preceded by adversity.

If you hit the target every time - it's too near or too big. - Tom Hirshfield

You grow up the day you have your first real laugh - at yourself. - Ethyl Barrymore

I specialize in helping people create more harmony in their own life, and in their relationships with others. It's about being Congruent and making good Choices - by 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, help people improve skills to cope (Personal Excellence, Communication & Relationships, Teamwork, and Leadership skills), and original music, stories and humor to induce some fun along the way!

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!

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Positively Yours,

Kim Ratz

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