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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 Sept. 2016 issue:

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1. Thoughts to help you Live & Work Wise: A "Back-to-School Salute" to People who Work in Schools!

"Back-to-school" (B-T-S) was my favorite time of the year back when I worked in schools. It didn't matter what the past year was like; it's a clean slate, a fresh start, the future was full of potential, and you can feel the energy and anticipation! That's why I continue to enjoy this time of year as I share B-T-S keynotes and workshops with groups all over the country and feel their energy and resolve to do well in the year ahead. Because you're reading this, you too probably work directly or indirectly with children, whether through a pre-K, school, or community-based organization, or in a support role to others who work with children, and you too have high hopes for the year ahead ...

I salute each and every one of you who choose to do work that can help every child have the opportunity to succeed! Because when you do your best, your efforts have such a positive impact on today's children -- who will be tomorrow's moms and dads, neighbors, workers and leaders! You make a difference in so many ways that impact all of our collective futures!

"Thank You" for what you do for children, keep up the great work, & best

wishes for a great year!

One of the reminders I like to share at B-T-S time is that while most of the experiences and interactions that will happen will go well (and some might even be especially satisfying :), each new year will also bring situations that are new, different, and beyond your control. So one of the things that IS within your realm of control is your ability to focus on what does matter, like -- your attitude, and your actions/choices when the unexpected or unpredictable does happen. You know yourself – what are your “weak spots,” when you tend to let your emotions/impulses take over, and then later you regret what you say or do and want a “do-over?” What can you do to better manage your emotions and impulses when you are under pressure or stress, and before you act, so you can do the best you can?

If you'd like to see a great example of congruence under pressure, go see “Sully” which was recently released in theaters. I've been using his story as an example in my keynotes ever since his “Miracle on the Hudson” landing on 1/15/09, because he demonstrates the rare quality of being able to control his impulses/first reactions and think things through before he acted. I go on to add that while you're probably not flying a plane full of passengers in danger of crashing, there's a huge amount of trust from children, parents, and the community, that when the kids get to you they will have a safe, positive experience, that gets them to where they are trying to go – their potential, their future ... One of the techniques I share, and what I believe Sully was doing that fateful morning, is called, “Having an honest conversation with yourself.” It's fast and free, and it's effective and clarifying. Here's how it works:

1. You ask yourself a question, then – pay close attention to your first and immediate response. It's your “truth.” It might be an inconvenient truth, yet it's your truth. You do not lie to yourself. (For example: *“What are my options, and which one would be best?”*)
2. The trick is to not ask it again and again if you don't like your truth and then “shape” your response so it's more convenient (rationalizing), and especially avoid rationalizing to the point you're “B.S.-ing” yourself.

So as I do at the end of most of my programs, and regardless of the kind of job you have or work you do, I pose these four questions in hopes they help you have an awesome year, even when “stuff happens” and you are put to the test. Three of them are “gimmies”; I hope the 4th is helpful to you:

- * *Are you as good as you're ever going to be?*
- * *What kind of year do you want to have?*
- * *What is one “weak spot” you can strengthen that will improve your congruence & resilience for the next time “stuff happens?”*
- * *What are you waiting for?*

2. Another thought to help you work wise: **Work & Life, Stress & Wellness**

Even on one of your best days, you're doing what you love and having fun, and you've been taking real good care of yourself -- "stuff happens." It seems that in today's radically changing and "go faster!" world, the "stress factor" is higher than ever! And whether the cause of your pressure/stress is real or imagined (making' mountains out of molehills ...), it activates your "Fight or Flight" (FoF) response, which is hard-wired into our brains.

Fortunately, there's another auto-response hard-wired into our brains, and it's called the "Relaxation Response" (RR). But unlike "FoF", the "RR" is not automatically activated from the same conditions that trigger "FoF." It has to be a conscious choice, a disciplined trait of congruence. Like "Sully." He couldn't fight the situation or flee it. He had to get it together, think it through calmly and quickly, and then act decisively and intentionally. He wasn't trying to "relax;" he just knew he had to counter his "FoF" response and control his mind chatter so he could rise to this test. Obviously, experience and skill are extremely important. But in any given challenge, the best anyone can do is to do the best you can with what you have. Whether it's 40+ years experience like Sully, or 4 months into a new job, or relationship, or situation ...

It's important to remember that each time you experience "FoF" you release the hormone cortisol into your blood. As long as you are able to release your stress afterwards, the cortisol is metabolized. However, unrelieved stress allows the cortisol to remain in the blood, and excessive levels of cortisol are related to signs of advanced aging. This is one reason why so many people I work with who work with kids appear to be younger than they really are. A big reason is: you interact with kids who laugh and sing more, compared to what other people your same age do in their work, and through fun activities you are relieving your stress! But just being with the kids doesn't trigger the "RR"; you need to DO certain kinds of things to activate your "RR"...

Below are some of the techniques I share in my presentations that can help you activate your "RR" so your body can start responding in ways that are calming, healing, centering. Some techniques work better for some people than for others, or depending on the situation. How many of these techniques can, **& DO** you use to release your pressure/stress before it starts getting the best of you?

- Change your external environment (your reality), like a retreat/vacation/change of pace, or even just move to another room, or conversation, or your view from the same place ...
- Change your perception of reality by "re-framing the situation".
- Physical exercise. (*You know what the best exercise is? The one you do.*)
- Monitor & control your mind chatter or "self-talk."
- Focus on a word or phrase that has meaning to you.
- Deep diaphragmatic breathing (Yoga).

- Progressive muscle relaxation.
- Prayer, or meditation.
- An "Attitude of Gratitude" - count your blessings, not your burdens ...
- Singing or laughing. (*My favorite technique: play with kids. :)*)
- Forgive, or ask for forgiveness.
- Affirm what you learned, and be resolved to do better and move on.
- Choose to "Let it go" ...

The Bottom line: The more of these tools you have in your toolbox, and use, the more likely it is you'll be able to choose one that will work and deal with the stress that comes your way, and take care of yourself. And here's the bonus: When you feel better, you do better, and the people you work with get a better you too!

3. Quotes related to **Wellness, and B-T-S**, for the days ahead ...

It's not so much what happens -- it's more what you do ...

A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in the doctors book. - Irish Proverb

A man too busy to take care of his health is like a mechanic too busy to take care of his tool. - Spanish proverb

The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit? - Proverbs 18:14.

He who has health has hope; and he who has hope has everything. - Arabian Proverb

Happiness is nothing more than good health and a bad memory. - Albert Schweitzer

Health is a state of complete harmony of the body, mind and spirit. When one is free of physical disabilities and mental distractions, the gates of the soul open. - BKS Iyengar

Health is better than wealth. - Spanish Proverb

You can't help anyone else unless you take care of yourself first.

I have experienced many terrible things in my life, a few of which actually happened. - Mark Twain

... and for B-T-S ...

Labor Day is a glorious holiday because your child will be going back to school the next

day. It would have been called Independence Day, but that name was already taken. - Bill Dodds

Being a child at home alone in the summer is a high-risk occupation. If you call your mother at work thirteen times an hour, she can hurt you. - Erma Bombeck

We all learn by experience, but some of us have to go to summer school. - Peter De Vries

Every act of conscious learning requires the willingness to suffer an injury to one's self-esteem. That is why young children, before they are aware of their own self-importance, learn so easily. - Thomas Szasz

Often, when I am reading a good book, I stop and thank my teacher. That is, I used to, until she got an unlisted number. - Anonymous

Education would be much more effective if its purpose was to ensure that by the time they leave school every boy and girl should know how much they do not know, and be imbued with a lifelong desire to know it. - William Haley

Home computers are being called upon to perform many new functions, including the consumption of homework formerly eaten by the dog. - Doug Larson

The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn. - Alvin Toffler

And from a recent client, related to B-T-S ...

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 several 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

4. 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!
Visit www.kimratz.com for more info.

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!

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.

Positively Yours,

Kim Ratz

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Successfully sharing skills, songs & stories since 1994