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***Not Just Talk!*, the GottaGettaCoach! newsletter – 2qtr2008 edition**

[To view on-line: www.ggci-quarterly.com.]

Hi All ~ I'm a big fan of patterns, contrasts, and ironies – especially ones that can be logically inferred from pieces of a greater, albeit missing, whole. Great territory for some interesting insights, discoveries, and connecting of dots. This quarter's newsletter evolved from that very space.

First up, then, is a review of Improv Wisdom, a great little book by Patricia Ryan Madson. According to Madson, improvisational theatre has 13 'maxims' that apply not only to improv, but to life itself. Good stuff! Next, my "Ask the Coach" section: Someone emailed me wanting to discuss some of what he inferred from an article of mine, recently republished by TheLadders.com called, "Help Them Say Yes: Provide a 90-Day Plan."

See the contrast? First is a piece about the benefits of *not* planning, and then one on the nuances of creating a *better* plan! So given the irony, what insights and discoveries might occur to you as a result of looking at the opposite sides of the same coin?

Indeed, to paraphrase the words of Thomas Alva Edison, "Good fortune is what happens when opportunity meets with planning" ... and/or good improv!

As per usual, "Notable Quotables: Great Things I Didn't Say (First)" follows, with some fascinating quotes on improv, planning, inference, and the choosing of which to do when. And to round things out, I've included some highlighted titles from last quarter's GottaGettaBlog! blog postings, GGC! news from last quarter, and a relevant little product offering of note.

As always, questions, comments – and suggestions – are welcomed. I'm just an email or phone call away. Enjoy ~

- bz

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NOT JUST TALK!

The quarterly newsletter designed to help you better 'walk the talk' - at [work](#), and in [life](#). Plus [news](#), [notes](#), and (admittedly some) nonsense from ICF-Certified Master Coach [Barry Zweibel](#) and [GottaGettaCoach!, Inc.](#)

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2008

2qtr2008 - Not Just Talk! Newsletter

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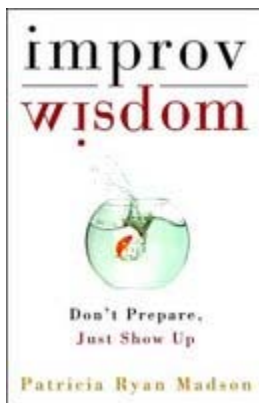
POSTED BY BARRY ZWEIBEL AT 8:29 AM [COMMENT\(S\)](#)

2qtr2008 - Book Review – Improv Wisdom

Title: [Improv Wisdom: Don't Prepare, Just Show Up](#)

Authors: Patricia Ryan Madson

ISBN-13: 9781400081882



They say you can't judge a book by its cover, but I did with *Improv Wisdom* – and I'm glad I did. Turns out, it was really clever, practical, insightful, and fun.

Patricia Ryan Madson, its author and an award-winning Senior Lecturer Emerita at Stanford University, has been teaching acting and improv for 40+ years. And it's clearly been a labor of love – and mastery – for her.

In Improv Wisdom, not only does Madson share her considerable expertise on the topic, but she endearingly shares a very engaging way of thinking with us, as well. “Life is an improvisation,” she says, “and if we are lucky a long one!”

I don't even know this woman, but I like her! I really do!

According to Madson, improv has 13 ‘maxims’ – and they apply not only to improv, but to life itself. They are as follows:

1. Say Yes!
2. Don't Prepare
3. Just Show Up
4. Start Anywhere
5. Be Average
6. Pay Attention
7. Face the Facts
8. Stay on Course
9. Wake Up to the Gifts
10. Make Mistakes, Please
11. Act Now
12. Take Care of Each Other
13. Enjoy the Ride

Life is an improv, indeed!

Some of my favorite snippets:

- “Saying yes is an act of courage and optimism: it allows you to share control. It is a way to make your partner happy. Yes expands your world.”
- “The spirit of improvising is embodied in the notion of ‘yes and.’ Agreement begins the process; what comes next is to add something or develop the offer in a positive direction. Avoiding this step is a form of blocking.”

- “The habit of excessive planning impedes our ability to see what is actually in front of us. The mind that is occupied is missing the present.”
- “Fear is not the problem; allowing your attention to be consumed by it is.”
- “Make a list of five places that are your ‘hot spots,’ places where the important things in life happen for you. Why not put the book down, pick one of the places on your list, and show up there?”
- “There’s no need to find the right starting place. With a big task or a confusing problem, when you don’t know where to start, begin with the most obvious thing, whatever is in front of you.”
- “The improviser focuses on making that idea into a good one, rather than searching for a ‘good idea’.”
- “When asked to uncover what is obvious to you, count on the fact that your view is already unique.”
- “Life is attention, and what we are attending to determines to a great extent how we experience the world.”

This is good stuff, whether she’s talking about improv or not, don’t you think?
And there’s much, much, more:

- “Wishing things were different (or that I was different) simply wastes time. The improviser can’t afford unrealistic thinking. Instead, she builds bridges over rocky terrain and turns lemons into lemonade. She works with what is actually in front of her, setting aside the temptation to dwell on what it is not.”
 - “Life is all about balancing not about being balanced ... embrace the wobble.”
 - “Some gifts are not objects, but support and encouragement we give each other... make a point of thanking people for thankless jobs.”
 - “If you can’t get out of it, get into it.”
 - “When I see something that needs to be done, I usually do it without debate. The improviser in me is trained to take action rather than muse over whose job it may be.”
- “Learning how to work together moment by moment without a known formula is the essence of improvisation.”

- “The improv ‘talent,’ which involves listening carefully, observing the actions of others, contributing, supporting, leading, following, filling in the gaps, and looking for the appropriate ending, can be taught and learned.”

From my own experience, I am continually amazed by what good things tend to happen whenever I just let go and ... go! That’s not to say that planning doesn’t have its part to play. But Woody Allen was really on to something when he said, “Eighty percent of success is showing up.”

And so is Patricia Ryan Madson with what she’s written in *Improv Wisdom*.

Labels: [Book Reviews](#), [Feature Articles](#)

POSTED BY BARRY ZWEIBEL AT 8:19 AM [COMMENT\(S\)](#)

2qtr2008 - Ask the Coach: 90-Day Plan

Question: Barry, I have an account with The Ladders and read your piece on 90-day plans, which I liked very much. Two questions ...

Answer: Glad you liked the article. (For those who didn’t see it, it was a reprint of [Help Them Say Yes: Provide a 90-Day Plan](#), which was first published by <http://www.theladders.com/> in March 2006.) Now let’s see if I can answer your questions:

1. When would an applicant offer such a 90-day plan? Before the interview, after the first interview, after successive or final interviews?

I would think that to maximize its impact, you’d want to get the plan into the hands of the hiring manager either *after* you’ve talked directly with him/her the *second* time – you could even ask during that second conversation if it’d be all right if you put the plan together “just to clarify in my own mind how I’d best dig in” – or you could bring it with you to that second interview (but only if you have sufficient insight about the position to actually create an *insightful* plan).

In other words, I don't think a 90-day plan will automatically put you in the "final few" of candidates still being considered, but once you're on that short-list, it will definitely help distinguish you from the others.

2. It's very painful to consider the possibility that your proposed plan becomes another candidate-turned-employee's blueprint for a work plan you proposed. Is there a solution to this quandary (e.g., copyright marking, etc.)? Or better to just live with that risk?

Is it really 'very painful' or is just a pain?! Sure, they could steal your ideas and run with them, but frankly, if you don't offer up any ideas worth stealing during the interview process, why would they want to hire you to begin with, eh?! Less flippantly, yes, it is a risk you take, but it's a risk that helps:

- (a) Better position you vis-à-vis your competition;
- (b) Get you deeper into the mindset – good or bad – of what it'd be really like to work there; and
- (c) You learn to better articulate how you think, which is really what companies are trying to figure out through the interview process.

Too, I doubt very much you'll have actually garnered enough insight from your interviews to provide sea-changing details. Remember the goal of the 90 day plan is not to solve the problems – it's to show them you understand what the problems are and give them a taste for how you'd start to solve them.

And should they 'steal' your idea and not hire you? I suspect that you'd probably not want to work at a place like that, even if they did offer you the job.

Hope this helps. Good luck to you.

Labels: [Ask the Coach](#), [Feature Articles](#)

POSTED BY BARRY ZWEIBEL AT 8:06 AM [COMMENT\(S\)](#)

2qtr2008 - Notable Quotables: Great Things I Didn't Say (First)

- "Life is all about balancing not about being balanced...Embrace the wobble." - **Patricia Ryan Madson**
- "More of me comes out when I improvise." - **Edward Hopper**
- "Let our advance worrying become advance thinking and planning." - **Winston Churchill**
- "From a drop of water a logician could infer the possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagara without having seen or heard of one or the other." - **Arthur Conan Doyle**
- "It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities." - **J.K. Rowling**
- "It's taken me all my life to learn what not to play." - **Dizzy Gillespie**

Labels: [Notable Quotables](#)

POSTED BY BARRY ZWEIBEL AT 8:04 AM [COMMENT\(S\)](#)

2qtr2008 - GottaGettaBlog! Highlights

I've been using [GottaGettaBlog!](#) as a vehicle to capture news, notes, and musings about coaching, mentoring, and getting more from YOUR Untapped Potential – along with whatever other I happen to find amusing and/or thought-provoking – since June of 2003.

Highlighted blog postings from last quarter are, as per usual, listed below – just follow the links:

from [January 2008](#)

- [What conversations do you know you need to have?](#)
- [The Planet Mercury and Other Flybys](#)
- [FAQ Sheets - Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Write It Down; Bring It With You](#)

from February 2008

- Control, Challenge, Commitment
- Remembering to Remember (BEFORE you Forget)
- 30 Reasons to Work with a Coach
- Fear 101: A Model

from March 2008

- Office conditions leave room for improvement
- Creatively Sparking Creativity
- Fear 303: A Revised Model of Fear
- New Thinking; New Doing

As always, your on-line comments at [GottaGettaBlog!](#) and its 2003-2007 archives are both welcomed and encouraged. To receive weekly digests of new GottaGettaBlog! postings, [update your subscription here](#). Thanks.

POSTED BY BARRY ZWEIBEL AT 8:01 AM COMMENT(S)

2qtr2008 - Decision Matrix Tutorial



Welcome to all my new subscribers courtesy of TheLadders.com.

As you work through your job search opportunities, you may find that you need to be able to more objectively assess the pros and cons of what your prospective employers are offering. A great way to do that is by using a Decision Matrix.

But matrices can be cumbersome and unproductive if you're not exactly sure how to make them work for you. That's why I created a helpful little e-book called [Should I, or Shouldn't I? - a downloadable tutorial about mastering the Decision Matrix](#).

From it, you can learn (or refresh your learning) how to easily – and objectively – assess what's important to you, how important is it, and the choices available to

you, without having to rely so heavily on your gut feel.

The Decision Matrix is also an excellent tool to help identify what additional information you might need in order to make a true apples-to-apples-type comparison between options.

Increase your confidence in the decisions you make and your ability to explain them to others. Order your copy of [Should I, or Shouldn't I?](#) for immediate download at: <http://www.ggci.com/Store/career-resources/decisionmatrix/>.

Labels: [Make a Purchase](#)

POSTED BY BARRY ZWEIBEL AT 7:56 AM COMMENT(S)

2qtr2008 – Last Quarter's News from GottaGettaCoach!

- *Building Employee Trust: A New Equation* (ISBN: 81-314-0875-2), a book based on "relevant, authoritative, and thought-provoking articles written by experts," is published featuring an article by Barry Zweibel titled, "**The Dangerous Allure of Trust.**"
- GottaGettaCoach!, Inc. is commended by the Better Business Bureau of Chicago and Northern Illinois, Inc. with its *Complaint Free Award* for 2007.
- With the start of the New Year, [GottaGettaBlog!](#) moved to a new location: www.ggci-blog.com. The 400+ posts already made are now permanently archived at www.ggci.com/blog under the heading of [GottaGettaBlog! 2003-2007](#) and will remain accessible there, or through the GGCI search engine (www.ggci.com/search) along with newer blog posts, and newsletters, past and present.
- Happy New Year!

Labels: [GGCI News](#)

POSTED BY BARRY ZWEIBEL AT 7:52 AM COMMENT(S)



At some point, even the smartest, most capable, people you know will admit that they need to improve their leadership, management, and communications skills.

That'll be *your* cue to say something like, "Wow! Sounds like *you* GottaGettaCoach! Check out www.ggci.com. I'm sure glad *I* did!"

So thanks, in advance, for being at-the-ready for that!

LINKS

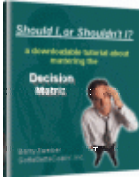
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FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Employee Performance Discussions - A Special Report by Barry Zweibel on *10 Important Things a Boss MUST Know How to Say*.



Napoleon Hill's Science of Personal Achievement - Barry Zweibel's *all-time* favorite Napoleon Hill audio program.



[Should I, or Shouldn't I? A Decision Matrix Tutorial](#) - Let Barry Zweibel teach you how to objectively assess your choices without having to rely so heavily on your gut feel.



[Fun Family Rituals](#) - A wonderfully-engaging compilation of how families celebrate birthdays, holidays, vacations, meal-times, and their love for each other.

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NotJustTalk! is published quarterly by Barry Zweibel, noted business and personal life coach, and president and founder, of GottaGettaCoach!, Inc.

*GGCI focuses on **leadership development** with **executives/managers** who want to:*

- 1. Think more strategically more of the time*
- 2. Communicate more effectively, up, down, and across the organization*
- 3. Better leverage their time, effort, and personnel resources*
- 4. Adopt a more coach-like attitude with staff and vendor personnel*
- 5. Be ready willing, and able to have difficult conversations, when needed*
- 6. Drive key business results without being a jerk!*

*GGCI also provides **life coach** and **life coaching-related** services to those looking to make good things happen sooner in their lives and careers.*

*For information on how GottaGettaCoach! can help you, or those in your organization, please **contact GGCI**.*



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