

I've been **thinking**...



**The Importance of Sitting Near an Exit
March 2014**

I've been thinking about the Dodgers, Webinars, leadership, and the importance of sitting near an exit.

My late father-in-law habitually looked for the nearest exit before taking his seat at movies, banquets, or ball games, insisting, "Always be ready to escape a disaster."

My colleagues and I arrived a few minutes late for our last breakout session at a leadership conference. The chairs, maybe one hundred, were facing the entrance. The speaker in the front of the room paused long enough to watch the four of us awkwardly make our way to the empty back row.

Candidly, we were all conferenced out. Though I desperately wanted to blow it off, I felt I had to be a good team leader and stay the full nine innings.

Speaking of a disaster. The presenter displayed such subject matter ignorance that I had a change of heart. Did I mention the Cubs were visiting the Dodgers a few miles down the Pasadena freeway?

My father-in-law would have been proud. Thank God for the escape route to my right at the end of our row. On my left sat Al, a 50-year old who had barely abandoned his childhood dream of playing second base for the Cubs. I whispered, "We're out of here. Ball game. I'll go first. Wait a couple of minutes then join me. Wouldn't look good if we all left at once."

Before I could finish, the good news rapidly spread down the row, and I departed with a unanimous vote of confidence. What a leader.

It took a minute (which seemed more like ten) but I had to break denial. All I could find were stacked chairs and the door I'd entered. I was standing in a closet.

Having no choice, I returned to my colleagues who were visibly confused, disappointed, and demanding an explanation. Stuffing the laughter, I muttered, "It's a cl- cl- cl- closet." Al stuttered the same to the next guy, on so on, until four heads were bobbling like Dodger dolls.

Maybe in the seventh inning at Dodger Stadium I realized I had had a choice after all. I could have stayed in the closet. To this day, I deeply regret not waiting for my teammates to join me.

Takeaways: 1) Good leaders admit their mistakes. I did—but obviously too early. 2) Strategic leaders make the most of every opportunity. I didn't. Sometimes you gotta' keep quiet and not rob others of the joy of discovering life's great truths for themselves.

As with the seminar, we arrived at the ballpark late. But the game was too exciting for any of us to suggest we head for the parking lot early.

As for Webinars, I've been thinking about how easy it is to make a clean exit when presenters strike out. Or how, even when speakers are scoring plenty of runs, attendees, like ballpark spectators, may eat hot dogs without being rude.

On 26 March 2014, I will be presenting an unSUMMIT University Webinar with hospital pharmacist/technology expert, Jerry Fahrni, entitled: "[Help for Navigating the Sea of Bar-Code Medication Preparation Technologies \(BCMP\)](#)." Don't know if we can hit it out of the park, but we think there is a good chance we can keep you in your seat through the bottom of the ninth. BTW, if a MLB team's error rate matched that of many hospital clean rooms, they'd be in the cellar. The good news, BCMP is definitely avoiding errors, preventing harm, and saving lives, not to mention careers.

Just so you can prepare, the Cubs are playing the Diamondbacks during our Webinar. Tune in at WGN 720 AM. Unfortunately, the Dodgers will be flying back to LA from their opener in Australia. On our end, I promise to keep the volume down on the Mariners vs. Rangers game. Fahrni's in charge of bringing the hot dogs and mustard.

What do you think?



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