



ARCH Support

The *Twins* Edition

Getting Over the Hump, Getting Through a Slump, Flattening the Curve

Wednesday's Tip Sheet: Steps pros took to get through a challenging time in life.

FEATURED PROS: *Walt Boyer, Music & Events Consultant – Music Teacher (ret.)*

AND

Martha (Boyer) Carrigan – CEO Big Shoes Network, Inc.

(Special Note: Martha and Walt are the SECOND set of twins in the Boyer family!)

TELL US ABOUT A CHALLENGING PROJECT OR DIFFICULT TIME IN YOUR LIFE (*Walt*):

Two years into my job as an elementary school music teacher, I had a secure income with benefits. But I had always wanted a career as a performer. Teaching was a fall back plan. On a whim, I auditioned at The Skylight Opera (now Skylight Music Theatre).

It was a fantastic, earth shattering success!

A fat legal contract for a lead position in the next season's productions arrived in the mail. I negotiated with the school to finish the year followed by an unprecedented 6-12 month leave of absence from teaching – all to pursue a dream. This began a frenetic schedule of teaching by day, rehearsing by night (in advance of the theatre's show season) and performing in the first show: The Mikado.

The challenge: I developed a serious sinus infection impacting my vocal performance. The Skylight was very kind, but my voice was not sounding like it had during auditions. I had to re-audition. I went to their specialist for a diagnosis to the problem.

Devastation – I was diagnosed with career-threatening polyps. In a snap, it was all gone.

The treatment was painful. At the first surgery follow-up, the physician inserted a probe in my nasal cavity and accidentally nicked the incisions resulting in a bloody mess. This just before a badly needed spring vacation.

HOW DID YOU GET THROUGH IT?

Immediate response: Furious anger and tears at the possibility I would never sing again. Then, humility in action...I had to go back to the district and ask NOT to have leave of absence!

Long term: Prayer, perseverance and a partner in life who walked with me through it in faith.

In hindsight: Continuing full-time in a performing career would have meant a life of working gig-to-gig, paying my own benefits and travel costs: NOT a glamorous life. I would have lost the entire economic underpinning of my life.

Yet I still “got glamour.” This includes solo performances in the Professional Corps of the MSO Chorus, working with Doc Severinsen, having an MSO conductor transfer his children from a top private school to my elementary school just so they could learn from me, being awarded Milwaukee’s Outstanding Elementary Music Teacher, and mentoring other award-winning teachers and performers (some now on Broadway and film).

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Getting through big life challenges takes GRIT: “The sustained application of effort towards a long term goal is the biggest predictor of lifelong achievement.”* The formula?

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Talent} + \text{Effort} &= \text{Skill} \\ \text{Skill} + \text{Effort} &= \text{Achievement} \end{aligned}$$

Effort is twice the power of Talent and Skill in the formula for GRIT.

*GRIT. The Power of Passion and Perseverance, Duckworth, Angela; Scribner 2016

FAVORITE QUOTE: *“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”*

[Jeremiah 33:3 NIV Bible Translation]

(Keep reading for Martha’s Tips)

TELL US ABOUT A BUSINESS CHALLENGE YOU HAD (*Martha*):

Throughout my career, I've had to make presentations to groups ranging from 3 – 1300. It is deflating when a presentation planned for 50 ends up with only 15 who show up. This happened one time for a sales event introducing a new product. It was guest-only event at a high-end formal restaurant where we invested a LOT of costly event promotion, spent days preparing the content and I was exhausted having taken a pre-dawn flight to get there. Ugh. How to stay motivated for 'only' 15 people?

It's not the numbers that count, it's the individual.

HOW DID YOU GET THROUGH IT?

It was hard working up the energy to be 'on' for a small group. The dynamic is entirely different. Some of the guests were clearly

our target audience of decision-makers that could commit the funds to purchase the product. (Read: expensive suits, power ties, coiffed hairstyles.) But a few were in flannel shirts and jeans. Maybe not as influential?

Well, we committed to a quality event, this good soldier was gonna' muscle through! (What a self-important martyr I was - and sometimes still am.) Our product was excellent. The local staff worked hard to make this happen. And the people in the room deserved the best. So on with the presentation.

The best – and humbling part - was afterward. The 'suits' had to leave quickly but a few of the 'flannels' stayed.

We sat at one table and talked about them, about their community. I learned a lot about their business and their cares and even their favorite restaurants that weren't as fancy but most definitely better than our host restaurant. (One they recommended had the BEST fried dill pickles EVER.)

One guest wrote an order on a napkin during that conversation. It was one of the most financially successful presentations we had.

KEY TAKEAWAY: Get over yourself. Care about other people. Ask questions. Learn from them. It's not the numbers that count...it's the individual person.

FAVORITE QUOTE: "...*man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.*" 1 Samuel 16:7