

If I Knew Then What I Know Now...

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

We all have said, “If I had it to do over...,” followed by a litany of what we would do differently if we could somehow jump in the illusive time machine and REDO, RELIVE, and REINVENT some aspects of our professional pathways. It seems like a pointless exercise, but perhaps not. Maybe some young educator will read this article and one of the ten “IF I KNEW THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW” mantras will resonate and offer some positive road signs for his/her successful future.

TIM’S TOP TEN:

1. I WOULD BE MORE JUDICIOUS ABOUT THE USE OF TIME.

Time is the one commodity we cannot bank; we can’t save it...we either spend it or lose it. It is the one factor that “evens the game board of life.” We all have 24 hours a day; the burning introspective question is, “Do we spend it devoting ourselves to our art, our mission, our passion, our contribution to this world so our lives MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE?”

“Success has nothing to do with what you gain in life; it’s measured by what you do for others.” - Danny Thomas

2. I WOULD BE MORE ACCEPTING OF “WHAT IS.”

Being frustrated or upset by WHAT IS demonstrates our unwillingness to accept what life brings our way. “Happiness is not getting what we want; happiness is wanting what we get.”

It’s always interesting when people say, “That shouldn’t have happened!” Well...in truth, it must have SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED because it *did* happen. Rather than waste time-effort-and-energy being at odds with it, it would be more advantageous to accept WHAT IS and move forward accordingly.

“The pessimist sees the challenge in every opportunity; the optimist sees the opportunity in every challenge.”
- Winston Churchill

3. I WOULD BE MORE CONSCIOUS OF MY ATTITUDE AND HOW IT IMPACTS OTHERS; MOREOVER, TO REALIZE I HAVE CONTROL OVER IT.

At every moment we are either appreciating or depreciating our environment; there is no neutral stance. Knowing this we always have the opportunity to make things better, contribute more, share with others, and advance the cause by presenting a positive attitude to all within our reach. We can *always* upgrade our attitude and see every situation in a more worthy light.

“When we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change.”
- Wayne Dyer

4. I WOULD BE MORE PRO-ACTIVE AND LESS REACTIVE.

If we take the time to, “Choose to understand before being understood,”

(thank you, Stephen Covey), we could gain so much. The master teachers have the talent to “get behind the eyes of others.” Before jumping to conclusions, they always look for the answer that will bring consensus and calm to the environment. While it is certainly not 100% true, pro-action tends to be POSITIVE and reaction tends to be NEGATIVE.

“The proactive approach to a mistake is to acknowledge it instantly, correct and learn from it.” - Stephen Covey

5. I WOULD GET OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL IT IS WORTH.

Instead of always playing safe, choosing the pathway of least resistance, avoiding the opportunity to breakthrough self-doubt, we know the best learning, growing, becoming is always a result of pushing oneself beyond the known comfort zone...embracing new challenges, not being held back by fear, but tapping into the endless imagination of taking action on the inquiry of, “What if?”

“The garden of the world has no limits, except in your mind.” - Rumi

6. I WOULD INSTITUTE A PROGRAM OF KAIZEN - ONGOING CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT.

Instead of being satisfied with “how it’s always been,” there is the

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opportunity to improve on “even the best.” If we settle for less than excellence, we will get less than we are willing to settle for in the first place. The quest for improvement is a learned habit: The way we do anything is the way we do everything; the key is to improve ALL THINGS.

“Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch EXCELLENCE.” - Vince Lombardi

7. I WOULD GIVE MORE AND TAKE LESS.

The ultimate self-gift is to give to others. After we attain all those benchmarks we have worked diligently to achieve, we come to the realization the true value was in the journey not the destination. As educators, shepherding our flock (students) to the immeasurable pleasure of connecting with great music makes us the wealthiest of all.

“The things you do for yourself are gone when you are gone, but the things you do for others remain as your legacy.” - Kalu Kalu

8. I WOULD TEACH WITH MORE ENTHUSIASM, BOTH CONTENT AND CONTEXT.

To be driven by ENTHUSIASM is to demonstrate a strong excitement about our love of music. It's more than information-sharing, but rather a commitment and dedication to connecting with a part of the mind-heart-and-soul unknown by any other study—loving what we do, and doing what we love. THE GIFT OF MUSIC...priceless!

“Nothing right can be accomplished in art without enthusiasm.” - Robert Schumann

9. I WOULD ALWAYS DO MORE THAN IS REQUIRED...GO ABOVE AND BEYOND.

Meeting the standards is a worthy accomplishment. Setting the standards is the mark of the master. We are part

of the most potent natural resource on the planet: HUMAN POTENTIAL. For those who make the most of life, “GOOD ENOUGH” is NEVER GOOD ENOUGH. We must be inspired to be all we can be, and more.

“Doing what's expected of you can make you good, but it's the time you spend going above and beyond what is required that makes you great!” - Josh S. Hinds

10. I WOULD EXPRESS MORE THANKS AND OFFER MORE APPRECIATION FOR ANYTHING -and- EVERYTHING.

In the hurriedness to get to the next this-or-that, it is so easy to make the self-promise of “I'll thank them later,” but LATER never comes, and the opportunity to acknowledge another is lost in the sea of best-intentions.

Recognizing/acknowledging others for their contributions is the greatest of all gifts—to be genuinely THANKFUL for what they brought to life's table.

“Gratitude turns what we have into more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity...it makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.” - M. Beattie

As we know, hindsight is always 20/20. It is an easy exercise to “look back,” and bet on the winning horse “after the race is completed.” Likewise, one can peer into the rearview mirror of life and speak of wishes-of-grandeur knowing there is no way one could be held accountable to make-good on these bold claims. However why be remiss of what we didn't do; but instead, institute these grand wishes starting RIGHT NOW.

The world is out there waiting...anytime you are ready.

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser is a trusted friend to anyone interested in working with young people in developing a desire for excellence and a passion for high level achievement.

You can hear more from Dr. Tim at the TBA Convention/Clinic this summer. He will present Tapping the Power Within on Thursday, July 21 at 3:00 p.m.