

Are you a Duck or an Eagle?

Are you a Duck or an Eagle? What's the difference you may ask? Well, ducks quack and complain, but eagles soar above the crowd. Author and speaker, Harvey MacKay, tells a great story about a cab driver who decided to soar like an eagle. And, if we will take the lessons provided in this story and apply them to our lives, we too, can soar like eagles.

As a speaker, I find myself in and out of airports, rental cars, and taxi cabs. Most of the time, my personal taxi cab experiences are not very pleasant. There are exceptions, but as a rule, here is what I find. If it is hot weather, the air conditioner isn't running. Some windows are down and the stifling hot air blows my hair all over my head, which is not the best scenario if I'm headed to a business meeting. The interior of the vehicles are dirty – I hate to touch anything. The drivers make only necessary conversation to find out my destination, and often times talk on their cell phones in languages foreign to me. It gives me an uneasy feeling and I find myself wondering if we are taking the most direct route to my destination. Other times the driving is fast and aggressive towards other drivers. Clearly in these situations, the emphasis is not on providing a high level of customer service!

But, Harvey shares a very different story, which is the foundation of today's show. His story goes something like this:

He was waiting in line for a ride at the airport. When a cab pulled up, the first thing Harvey noticed was that the taxi was polished to a bright shine. Smartly dressed in a white shirt, black tie, and freshly pressed black slacks, the cab driver jumped out and rounded the car to open the back passenger door for Harvey .

He handed him a laminated card and said, "I'm Wally, your driver. While I'm loading your bags in the trunk I'd like you to read my mission statement."

Taken aback, Harvey read the card. It said:

"Wally's Mission Statement:

To get my customers to their destination in the quickest, safest and cheapest way possible in a friendly environment."

This blew Harvey away. Especially when he noticed that the inside of the cab matched the outside. Spotlessly clean!

As he slid behind the wheel, Wally said, "Would you like a cup of coffee? I have a thermos of regular and one of decaf."

Harvey half-jokingly said, "No thanks. I prefer soft drinks."

Wally smiled and said, "No problem. I have a cooler up front with regular and Diet Coke, water and orange juice."

Almost stuttering, Harvey said, "I'll take a Diet Coke."

Handing him his drink, Wally said, "If you'd like something to read, I have The Wall Street Journal, Time, Sports Illustrated and USA Today."

As they were pulling away, Wally handed my friend another laminated card, "These are the stations I get and the kind of music they play. If you'd like to listen to the radio, just let me know which station you prefer."

And as if that weren't enough, Wally told Harvey that he had the air conditioning on and asked if the temperature was comfortable for him.

He then advised Harvey of the best route to his destination for that time of day. He also let him know that he'd be happy to chat with him and tell him about some of the sights or, if Harvey preferred, to leave him with his own thoughts.

Harvey was absolutely amazed and asked the driver, "Tell me, Wally, have you always served customers like this?"

Wally smiled into the rear view mirror. "No, not always. In fact, it's only been in the last two years. My first five years driving, I spent most of my time complaining like all the rest of the cabbies do. Then I heard the personal growth guru, Wayne Dyer, on the radio one day.

He had just written a book called *You'll See It When You Believe It*. Mr. Dyer said that if you get up in the morning expecting to have a bad day, you'll rarely disappoint yourself. He said, 'Stop complaining! Differentiate yourself from your competition. Don't be a duck. Be an eagle. Ducks quack and complain. Eagles soar above the crowd.'

"That hit me right between the eyes," said Wally. "Mr. Dyer was really talking about me. I was always quacking and complaining, so I decided to change my attitude and become an eagle. I looked around at the other cabs and their drivers. The cabs were dirty, the drivers were unfriendly, and the customers were unhappy. So I decided to make some changes. I put in a few at a time. When my customers responded well, I did more."

"I take it that has paid off for you," Harvey said.

"It sure has," Wally replied. "My first year as an eagle, I doubled my income from the previous year. This year I'll probably quadruple it.

You were lucky to get me today. I don't sit at cabstands anymore. My customers call me for appointments on my cell phone or leave a message on my answering machine. If I can't pick them up myself, I get a reliable cabbie friend to do it and I take a piece of the action."

Wally was phenomenal. He was running a limo service out of a Yellow Cab. I've probably told that story to more than fifty cab drivers over the years, and only two took the idea and ran with it.

Whenever I go to their cities, I give them a call. The rest of the drivers quacked like ducks and told me all the reasons they couldn't do any of what I was suggesting.

Wally the Cab Driver made a different choice. He decided to stop quacking like ducks and start soaring like eagles.

What a wonderful story! And, you might think that a perfect application of the story would be regarding providing outstanding customer service. In fact, that is one perfect application. But, in looking a little deeper we find life-success truths that lead to living a more meaningful and abundant life.

1. Success requires conscious, purposeful choice. He made a conscious choice to make changes. He took responsibility for himself and for his life. He DECIDED to change his attitude and become an eagle. He purposely shifted his mindset. Shifted away from a negative mindset and the action of complaining and shifted to a positive mindset with the expectation of receiving good things. It is true in life that we usually get what we expect.
2. To improve yourself or your life, do what you can in JMA (just manageable amounts) right where you are. To start his transformation, Wally made a few small changes. As he received good feedback and as his business began to grow, he made more changes. Sometimes we have to make baby steps, but the important thing is to begin! Do what you can where you are to begin your transformation.
3. Physical presentation matters! Many people today are of the opinion that how you look isn't important. They say, "You can't judge a book by its cover." That may be true in theory, but in reality people size you up within the first few minutes of meeting you. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise... First impressions count! I don't care who you are.
4. Differentiate Yourself through attitude and action. It is attitude PLUS action that determines altitude. Wally decided to act! - to move from the usual to the unusual, from being the same to being different, from ordinary to extraordinary. Why be ordinary when you can be extraordinary? It is usually just small things put into action that lead to big improvements. Wally decided to change his attitude! A positive attitude is magnetic. It draws people and positive things to you.
5. Sow carefully! You reap what you sow. If that statement is true, and I believe that it is, then we must sow what we want to reap. By using our talents and abilities to serve others in this life, we draw good things back to ourselves. We are rewarded many times over. It is true that you can do well by doing good. As it has been said, A man reaps what he sows. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up... let us do good to all people.

Wally transformed himself. Instead of taking the form of a quacking duck, he began to soar like an eagle.

What about you? Are you an Eagle, or a Duck?

I hope you choose to soar!

Rhonda Hamilton energizes people and organizations to shift their thinking and implement success strategies that build the bigger, more abundant life. As a

professional speaker specializing in life-success skills and people-smart communication skills, she offers motivational keynote speeches, seminars and training for those who want more personally and professionally. She champions others to build a better self, build a better business, and thereby build a bigger life and a better world. Rhonda can be reached through her website, www.RhondaHamilton.com

Word count: 1473