



Keep Moving

By:
Joe Tye

Chuck Hartikoff billed himself as “The Coach For Business Athletes.” He was a favorite instructor at The Courage Place, and now was on a regular schedule that took him to each center at least twice a year. And today he was keynote speaker for the dedication of Courage Place Convention Center, the joint venture Charlie McKeever and Bill Douglas had agreed upon almost two years earlier.

Chuck was the personal success coach for more than 250 Courage Place members around the country, and the feedback Charlie had received was tremendous. Out of simple curiosity, Charlie had sent each of them a questionnaire asking, among other things, to estimate by how much their income had increased as a result of Chuck’s coaching. The answer had astounded him; the total was over \$5,000,000 in the previous year. In fact, Charlie had been so impressed with the comments that he’d personally signed up to participate with Chuck’s system, and had not been disappointed. Today Chuck was in his element, up on the platform, holding court for more than 2,000 entrepreneurs and executives, eager to learn his secrets of success for business athletes.

“The first thing you have to do,” he shouted, leaping up onto a sturdy table that had been placed on the platform as one of his requested props, “is overcome the Terrible Too’s and the Big But’s! You’ve all heard them, haven’t you?” And then in a high pitched, whining voice, he repeated the excuses that almost everyone in the audience had, at one time or another, used to rationalize away their failure to get started on building their dreams;

I’d love to start my own business, but I’m too deep in debt.

I’d make more sales calls today, but I’m too far behind on my paperwork.

I’d go out for a run today, but I’m just too tired after all the hassles at work.

The audience roared as Hartikoff pantomimed each excuse, drawing them out into a long, whining complaint. Charlie smiled as he looked across the crowd, knowing full well that the people laughing loudest were most likely to be seeing their own excuses ridiculed up on the stage. Hartikoff continued:

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I'd love to think and grow rich, but I'm too busy to think.

I'd love to have more fun, but my wife is such a wet blanket!

I'd love to travel more, but my deadbeat husband won't earn enough money.

I'd love to live my dreams, but, but, but, ... I'm too, too, too...

People were laughing so hard that many were doubled over with tears running down their cheeks. By the time he was done, Hartikoff had zinged just about everybody, and most people more than once. “Until you conquer the Terrible Too’s and the Big But’s, your dreams and wishes will remain just that – dreams and wishes. You must change ‘I would, *but I’m too...*’ to ‘*I will, and I’ll start by...*’ Whatever it is that’s holding you back, the excuse that stands between you and the realization of your dreams, *that* is your starting point. No more excuses! No more procrastination! From now on, it’s excitement and pro-activation!”

Chuck jumped down from the table, and ran to the opposite end of the stage, then turned and ran back to the center. He turned and held both hands out to the audience. “You’ve got to be like a shark! You know what happens to a shark if it stops swimming, don’t you?” He waited until several people from the audience shouted out responses. “That’s right! It sinks and dies! And you will too, if you don’t keep moving.” Hartikoff again was moving across the stage. “You’ve got to move physically! You’ve got to move emotionally! You’ve got to move spiritually!”

He leaped back up onto the table. “I want you all to pull out your pens or pencils and start writing. The first step to getting you brain moving is getting your hand moving. One of the most exciting developments in all of science and medicine today is the field of psychoneuroimmunology. That is PSYCHO; your thinking mind; NEURO; your physical brain; IMMUNOLOGY; your body’s health. What researchers have learned is that there is an inextricable interconnection between your body, your mind, and your spirit. This body-mind-spirit nexus is as essential to your success in business as it is to your success in life. You have to exercise all three – body, mind, and spirit – every single day.”

Hartikoff pulled a jump rope from out of a box under the table, and began skipping rope right up there on the stage. “Being successful in business is hard work, isn’t it? “ When no one responded, he repeated the question more loudly, with emphasis on the last two words, and was rewarded with a resounding “YES!” As he continued jumping he shouted, “Leadership requires stamina – real physical stamina, doesn’t it?” Again, a resounding chorus of “YES!”

“You’ve got to be tough to be a winner, don’t you?” Another round of affirmations as kept on skipping rope. “But everyone else is exercising, so if you really want to be a

winner, you must do more than what everyone else is doing, right?” As the audience responded, Hartikoff kicked his jump rope into high speed, and started high-stepping through each rotation. “My competition does it fast, so I do it faster! They do it for ten minutes, so I go for eleven! They do it with two legs,” and Charlie let the sentence drift away as he increased the speed of the rope further still, and hopped through it on one leg. The audience roared their approval.

Charlie tossed the rope into the box, jumped back on the table, and roared like a lion at the top of his voice. He roared a second and a third time, getting the audience up on their feet, roaring along with him. The effect was so powerful that Charlie found himself hoping the architects had designed a building that would meet all earthquake standards. Hartikoff jumped back off the table and started shouting again. He was winded from exertion, so his sentences were clipped and fragmented, but this seemed to somehow add to the power of his message. “It’s the old samurai paradox. When your body is strong, it will bend to your commands. When your body is weak, you must give in to its demands. Today, we have scientific proof of the old adage that a strong body contributes to a strong mind. Physical exercise is also essential for your emotional health. Pick up any book on how to overcome anxiety, fear, and worry and you’ll find a prescription for physical exercise. If you’re moving fast enough, fear can’t catch you.”

Hartikoff walked to the front of the stage – his toes actually extended out over the platform – and leaned forward as if to say that this was really important, and he wanted to impart it personally to each member of the audience. “Some twenty years ago, a British researcher completed a study on the psychology of military incompetence. He wanted to understand why commanders who seemed to have similar social and educational backgrounds could perform so differently on the battlefield. Why is it, he asked, that the same military academy can produce brilliant strategists and also bumbling idiots whose incompetence causes many unnecessary deaths?” Hartikoff paced back and forth, staying close to the edge like a tight-rope walker.

“Do you want to know what he found?” Hearing no response from the audience, he bellowed, “Incompetent military commanders were unable to manage their own anxiety!” He stared out at the audience, jaw dropped and eyes wide. “Did you hear what I just said? Anxiety makes you stupid!” Hartikoff pantomimed the village idiot to a huge round of laughter and applause, then he looked serious.

“When your mind is full of anxiety, several bad things happen at a psychological level. First, the enemy’s forces always seem larger than they really are, while yours seem smaller. If you would like to get a practical understanding of how this works for yourself, when we’re through this afternoon, run down to Target, and buy yourself a tent, and a flashlight...” and here Hartikoff paused for effect, “and a Stephen King novel.” There was slightly nervous laughter from the audience. “Go camp out in the woods tonight with your flashlight and your book, and stay up all night reading.

Then you tell me in the morning how big the squirrels were!” The nervous laughter crescendoed as audience members each thought of the giant “squirrels” holding them back from taking the actions necessary for the achievement of their goals.

“The second bad thing is you don’t see options that would be available to you if you had more courage. I remember seeing a cartoon once depicting a prisoner grabbing two bars of a prison cell as he peered through.” Hartikoff paused as he pantomimed a sad-faced prisoner hanging onto the bars, then said, “There were only two bars! The two right in front of him. He could’ve walked around on either side, but in his terror, his eyes were glued on the bars in front of him. That’s what happens when you’re full of anxiety. How many of you saw the article in the paper this morning about the local company that had a layoff in the wake of a merger?” Many hands went up. “It’s happening all over, isn’t it? And it’s not likely to stop happening, is it? Welcome to the future! Companies will continue re-organizing, and jobs will continue to be eliminated.”

“So let’s say we talked to two people after the lay-off today. The first person is scared to death – has visions of bankruptcy and homelessness dancing through his head, and wakes up every morning seeing the prison bars of fear all around his bed. The second person, on the other hand, reads the same newspaper we all read this morning, but instead of focusing on the article about the layoff, his attention is grabbed by the article saying that more jobs have been created by entrepreneurial businesses this year than in any previous year. He’s especially taken by the comment that almost nobody gets rich working for someone else, and that in the previous year more entrepreneurs became millionaires than any other year in our nation’s history.” Hartikoff crossed his arms and tapped his right foot, which elicited the desired response from the crowd.

“Now, imagine it’s two years from now. Where are those two men likely to be?” Hartikoff paused for a moment, then continued. “I’ll tell you where they are; person number one did *not* become bankrupt and homeless. As you might expect, he eventually found another job doing very much the same thing he was doing before. And he wakes up every day with the fear it could happen again, perhaps as soon as this very day. Every time he’s called into the boss’s office, he trembles at the prospect of another pink slip. And of course, it’s just a matter of time before his fear becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, isn’t it?”

“Now the second man had the same reasons to be afraid as the first guy, but had the courage to stand up to his fears with determination. He resolved to himself that it would never happen again, that never again would he place control of his destiny in someone else’s hands. He decided to start his own business. In the short run, he may or may not make more money than person number one, but at least he has set the stage for creating the kind of wealth that person number one can only imagine. Unlike person number one, person number two will never again be imprisoned in a jail that has only two bars.”

“Finally,” Hartikoff continued, “physical exercise is a spur to mental creativity. In a recent study, researchers gave a problem to two different groups of people and asked them to solve it. Those in the first group were placed in comfortable easy chairs to work on their problem; people from the second group were asked to ride an exercise bike while they cogitated. Guess who came up with better solutions? With more creative and more workable solutions? That’s right! The people in the second group, on their exercise bikes. Think about it; how many times have you gone out for a walk or a run or a bike ride, and experienced one of those brilliant flashes where you’ve come up with a creative solution to some problem that up until now has had you baffled.”

“Now, in addition to your physical health, you also have to take care of your emotional health.” Charlie noticed with satisfaction that most of the people in the audience were writing down the new heading on their tablets. “And the first step is to lighten up and have more fun. Far too many of us are too ‘dead serious,’ but I’ll tell you this; if you’re *dead serious* for long enough, you’ll end up *seriously dead*. And it happens in here first,” and at this point, Hartikoff pointed to his chest with both fingers. “You die emotionally before you die physically. We all know people who are deader than cut grass, they just haven’t stopped breathing so we can bury them without breaking the law.”

There was laughter from the audience, but Charlie also saw many nodding heads. It seemed that almost everybody knew someone else who was “seriously dead” but had not yet stopped breathing. Realizing how much his face hurt from laughing over the past hour, it occurred to Charlie that perhaps he himself had become much too serious, and could stand to lighten up a bit.

“The second thing you can do to promote your emotional health,” Hartikoff went on, “is to practice living in the present here and now. Right now, there are people in this audience who are having an out-of-body experience!” There was confused laughter from the audience. “That’s right! Your body is here in this beautiful new conference center with me, but your mind is who knows where, doing who knows what, and that’s what I call an out-of-body experience! Ladies and gentlemen, virtually all emotional pain is caused by time travel; it’s either regret, guilt, and anger from the past or anxiety, fear and worry about the future. Almost by definition, if you can keep your attention focused on what’s right in front of you at each moment, you’ll find the world such a beautiful place that there is no room for emotional pain. You’ll also find yourself a lot more productive.”

“Have you ever noticed, no matter what it is you’re doing, in the back of your mind you’re always thinking that there’s something else more important that you should be doing? It’s like the guy that’s working at the office, and feeling guilty that he’s not at home with the family. So what does he do? He packs all of his paperwork into a briefcase and hauls it home, to be with the family. Then all evening he feels guilty that

he's not working on what's on the briefcase. Psychologists call that a double-bind – a self-imposed lose-lose.” There were laughs of recognition, including from Charlie, who had caught himself thinking that he should be with his accountants working on the upcoming direct public offering rather than listening to Hartikoff.

“The third step to emotional health,” Hartikoff continued, “is learning to see the world as it really is. And for most of us, that requires learning how to forget. The world is changing so fast that what you knew yesterday may not be true anymore today. It's like the old saying goes; it's not what you don't know that will hurt you, it's what you think you know that's not so. This applies most absolutely to what you think you know about yourself. The single most powerful obstacle to your future success will be the inaccurate picture you have of yourself today. Forget what you think you can't do! Forget what you think you don't know! Forget what people have told you about your limitations! Forget all the Terrible Too's and the Big But's that are holding you back!”

“The fourth thing I'm going to tell you about emotional health may sound like it contradicts the whole theme of this program, but it really doesn't. Before I tell you what it is, let me ask you to imagine that in one hand you have a hammer,” Hartikoff held his right hand up over his head as though about to swing a hammer, “and in the other, you have a nail.” Hartikoff brought his imaginary hammer down hard upon his imaginary nail. “Now, rather than pounding your nail in the traditional way, I want you to imagine trying to just push that nail into the wood in by brute force, without bringing the hammer back over your head.” Hartikoff pantomimed trying to push a nail into a piece of wood with a hammer; he grunted and groaned and his face grew red from strain, but his imaginary nail did not move. “It can't be done, can it?” He huffed and puffed. “Your hammer needs to recoil before it can drive in the nail.” Hartikoff slammed his invisible hammer down upon his invisible nail.

“The same is true for you. You have to practice what I call strategic laziness. Your emotional health demands that you have times of rest, relaxation, and recuperation. Think of a lion; the king of beasts! What does a lion spend most of the day doing? Of course! Lyin' around in the sun. Now, I'm not recommending that you try to get ahead by spending your time lying around in the sun, because it won't work. But you do need to alternate times of stress with times of rest. And here are two suggestions for doing that. First, re-introduce into your life the ancient concept of a Sabbath – a day of rest. By that, I do *not* mean sitting like a boiled vegetable in front of the boob tube,” – laughs of embarrassed recognition from the audience – “but rather, giving yourself one day every week for reading, thinking, writing in your journal, dreaming – for bringing the hammer back over your head.”

“The final thing I want to talk about today is spiritual health. You've got to keep moving spiritually, growing in faith and letting your faith shine through in your actions. I'll give you two practical and specific suggestions. The first is to pray continuously, the

way Tevye does in the movie *Fiddler on the Roof*. Pray for guidance, strength, courage, compassion, wisdom, and all the other virtues you must have to become the person you want to be – the person you are destined to be. If you develop those characteristics, your success – success with a capital ‘S’, not just having money – in the world is all but guaranteed.”

Hartikoff was about to break the audience into small groups to work on their individual action plans. Charlie looked at his watch and smiled. He still had plenty of time to speak with the accountants. Hartikoff was right, he thought. You can get a lot more done if you limit yourself to doing one thing at a time, keeping your attention in the present here and now. He took one last look at Hartikoff, who was now signing books for a very long line of people, then headed out into the parking lot where his red Ferrari was proudly parked in the front rows that were reserved for the people who arrived earliest in the morning.