

Our bank publishes an employee newsletter every month. In the newsletter they highlight people who have a birthday that month and ask them a question about themselves. Since I have a September birthday it was my turn to answer the “question of the month”. The question is “what is your favorite quote?”

The first thing I did when I got the assignment was to go right to my quote of the day leadership calendar, a present given to me by a former employee during my first year in Ankeny. I narrowed down the 365 quotes to my favorite 16, the ones that make me smile every year when I read them. I even liked the one printed for my birthday! Then I remembered that the editors only asked for one quote.

It just so happens that my 11 year old son Ben was quoted in the September 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the Ankeny Register and Press Citizen. He participated in the Fight Against Hunger where students helped package meals for people in third world countries through Meals from the Heartland. ““We’re pretty young, but we can still make a difference.” said sixth-grade student Ben Friedman, 11, of Ankeny.

Then today I received an e-mail with a quote from Michael Jordan, a great basketball player. I thought it was appropriate to these turbulent economic times, so I thought I would share it with you. “I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”

When I shared my idea of writing an entire column full of great quotes with some of my staff, they said and I quote: “I think I would stop reading half way through”. And “Unless you put some funny ones in there, I would be bored”. That is one thing I like about my staff, when I ask for their opinion they can be brutally honest.

I guess that one of my favorite quotable characters is the famous former New York Yankee catcher Yogi Berra. As a matter of fact a lot of what Yogi said became known as “Yogiisms”. Here is one of my favorites: “You better cut the pizza in four pieces because I’m not hungry enough to eat six.”

As small business owners and managers we are often called upon to motivate those around us. We can do that in a variety of ways. Sometimes a simple, sincere “you are doing a great job, thank you” will do the trick. Sometimes a rousing speech at a company meeting will inspire, but you have to be a good public speaker and have the audience in the right frame of mind. A company called Successories has done very well taking motivational quotes and pairing them with great pictures. Putting one of those posters on the wall might provide motivation.

We should also remember to choose our words carefully, because believe it or not, people do listen. It is fine to be quotable, but we have to be quotable in a good way. There are many people who will tell you that they were misquoted. But in another famous Yogiism, you don’t want to have to say “I really didn’t say everything I said”.

In the end I couldn't just submit one quote for the newsletter, so I gave them two and decided to let them decide which one to use. Here they are: "You do not lead by hitting people over the head. That's assault, not leadership." Dwight D. Eisenhower. "When one door closes, another opens, but we often look so long and regretfully upon the closed door, we do not see the ones which open for us." Alexander Graham Bell.

*Small Business Today is a bi-weekly feature written by Tom Friedman, market president of First National Bank, Ankeny.*