

STAR ISLAND

YACHT CLUB & MARINA

December 2014

Dear Friends,

Believe it or not, it was TWENTY-NINE YEARS AGO that I acquired Star Island Yacht Club. It was FIFTY YEARS AGO that I started Gershow Recycling with a broken-down boom truck that should have been cut for scrap, let alone be used to start my business. Today, Gershow operates nine scrap yards and two construction and demolition transfer stations.

On Gershow's and Star Island's websites, www.gershow.com and www.starislandyc.com, you can view a short biography and some old photographs depicting how I started in the business.

At Star Island, I continue to work very closely with General Manager Ben Mahler, John Murray and the rest of the Star Island staff. At Gershow, lately, my children and long-term loyal employees operate the day-to-day business. My role is more professorial. I lecture, teach, advise and, when I want it done my way instead of their way, don't worry — I very clearly let them know who is still the boss!!!

In the past fifty years, of all the things I have learned, there are a few I constantly preach to my children and staff. Debt is a cancer on your business. If not treated and managed, it will kill you. Your word is your bond. Your actions speak louder than your words. In every deal, both sides must make money. You have to know your costs. Your business will not survive if you do not know your costs. Never wish bad things for your competition; wish them plenty of profits. The more money they make, the less they will think of you and your business.

Many of my thoughts and attitudes were instinctive. Maybe it was being raised by immigrant parents; maybe it was growing up dirt poor; maybe it was a different time for America. But above all, a few secrets of my success, then and now, are consistently hard work, never-ending perseverance, a positive can-do attitude, a healthy lifestyle, a high level of morals and ethics, and belief in myself.

Growing up, I knew I wasn't rich, but I did not know I was poor. We did not have a "poor old me" attitude. My parents, my brother, my four sisters and I lived within very meager means. If we wanted something, we went to work. As a kid, I delivered seltzer (soda water) to apartments carrying heavy cases of glass bottles up and down flights of steps. It was hard work, but it was money.

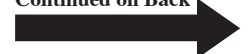
Whether I knew it then or not, I know it now! You cannot live very long without being damaged, scarred, hardened, knocked down, beaten and stepped on. A life is not a life without making a mistake, without having your heart broken, and without regretting a decision, a word or an action. Divorce, financial struggles, broken friendships, treachery, sickness and death create wounds, scabs and scars, both internal and external. This is life. We all get damaged. We all have scars.

Life happens to all of us.

Perseverance and consistency are important. Most outsiders look and think that we built this overnight. It took fifty years of risk, sweat, guts, hard work, more risk and more hard work. And we are still going. To some degree, its maintenance is harder than its construction.

The only thing that can stop you is you. There will always be plenty who will tell you, "you can't" or "you will fail." Don't listen to them. Listen to yourself and say, "yes I can." If you get knocked down, get back up. Failure does not make you a failure. A loss does not make you a loser. A divorce does not make you undesirable. Shake off the self-pity. Think positive. Move forward. Don't blame the past. This is life. It happens to all of us.

Continued on Back



It seems too many have the attitude of “they can’t.” With a million reasons, crutches, and excuses of why “they can’t,” they have no ability to think long-term. They can only think of their short-term (today’s) happiness with no regard for its long-term effects. It’s all about today. They want instant gratification. They are taught success is more about entitlement and luck and don’t realize that hard work and perseverance are the keys for success. They want “do-overs” and a trophy, even when they lose.

There are no do-overs in life.

I worked plenty. I still work. Just as I did with my children, I make time to spend with my grandchildren. We enjoy holidays, barbecues, fishing and board games. With my grandchildren, there is a rule: no smart phones, Game Boys or whatever are allowed when with Grandpa. We talk, we interact.

The game we played most, and still do, is a board game called Trouble. It’s a stupid but fun game. It teaches the basic principles of life. As quick as you are ahead, you will be behind. A winner becomes a loser very quickly and vice versa. It teaches the importance of taking ownership of bad decisions and teaches the philosophy of making strategic decisions (not necessarily gratifying decisions).

It teaches that good luck and bad luck happen equally to all of us. It teaches that, to expand upon good luck and to minimize the experience of bad luck, you must make smarter decisions about tomorrow, which are generally hard decisions for now and today.

I never, ever let them win. When they win, they win on their own accord. They learned at a young age how to deal with a loss and how to be gracious with a win. My grandchildren, all of them from three to twenty, without hesitation, always want to play a game of Trouble with Grandpa Sam.

That’s the best success I have.

Time passes so quickly that, in the rush of living our lives, we tend to overlook the important blessings of Our Children, Peace, Health, Happiness and Friends.

Take the time to exchange greetings with family and friends. In the spirit of Holiday Cheer, it is our pleasure to say “Thank You” for your continued patronage and business. We extend our sincere appreciation for your friendship, goodwill and the very pleasant associations we have enjoyed with you.

We wish you, your family and friends a New Year filled with Peace, Health, Goodwill and a sense of renewal that I hope brings you Happiness and Prosperity.

God Bless America and those who continue to defend it.

Happy Holidays!

STAR ISLAND YACHT CLUB AND MARINA



Sam Gershowitz