

You Cannot Spell Business without “B” and “U”

Lesson # 1 You matter more than you may know.

I can see them making that very tight turn into our driveway. Someone announced, *probably mom*, “Its Grandma and Grandpa Nuttall.” My sister and I exchanged looks of amazement. I remember watching that huge Pontiac Station Wagon, sporting those faux wood panels coming to a slow and steady stop, settling into a resting place like a large, fatigued Saint Bernard circling the throw carpet and finally laying down for a long, loud nap.

It seemed to take an eternity for my Grandparents to get out of their car and into our house. I remember running out to greet them and watching my grandfather open my grandma’s car door and gently support her as she made her way to her feet. Sitting in that Pontiac Station Wagon for a two-hour road trip had, obviously, taken its toll on Grandma’s frail body. Grandma Nuttall suffered with a bad case of Muscular Dystrophy and Scoliosis that resulted in a kind of “hunched back” physicality.

...he was employed at IBM and worked there until he retired thirty-three years later, the whole time working with his partner in business, his Brother-in Law, my great uncle, Bob Spencer at Spencer’s Plumbing.

James Nuttall, my Grandpa, was the product of a one-room schoolhouse in which his older sister, Edith, was the teacher. He used to joke about how difficult school was for him because his teacher taught him at home, on the way to school, at school, on the way home from school and at home again and to make matters worse, he’d say something like, “and she was my bossy, older sister.”

My Grandpa Nuttall, the “baby” of the family, grew up fast when his dairy farming dad suddenly passed away, forcing the fifteen-year-old, James Nuttall, to take on a greater share of responsibility for the family farm.

On April 21, 1944, in Syracuse, New York, at the age of eighteen, my Grandpa enlisted in the United States Army. Soon after his return from his military service in July 1946, he was employed at IBM and worked there until he retired thirty-three years later, the whole time working with his partner in business, his brother-in law, my great uncle, Bob Spencer at Spencer’s Plumbing.

This good man, my Grandpa, the proud stock of a dairy farming family, a child of the Great Depression of the 1930’s and a veteran of the Second World War,

was a fun-loving, hard-working, "love your neighbor" kind of guy who lived to provide the best life he possibly could for his wife and four daughters. His strength of character, witty sense of humor, respect for the institution of marriage and traditional family values, his love of country and his support of his local community are just a few things that those who knew him and loved him remember.

Despite all of his great qualities and those of my mom, some decisions that my mom had made as a young adult, had caused a bit of a strain on family relations between my mom and her parents. As a kid, unaware of that family history, I could sense that something was not right. I often wondered why it seemed that my sister and I we were not as welcomed as the other grandkids.

I nurtured feeling of awkwardness and rejection to the point of feeling unloved and unwanted until one day, I voiced these opinions and feelings. I was twelve. I was angry. I was hurt, and I was vocal. I remember telling my mom, "My grandparents don't even love me!"

Once we settled into our living room, things got real. It did not take long for me to understand why my grandparents were visiting. My mom had told on me. She had shared my feelings with my grandparents, provoking them to travel eighty-five miles.

Yikes! As if their trip that I had caused was not enough, my grandfather drove home his point by sternly handing me a three-foot-long rectangular box and with an equally stern, strong voice said, "Son, don't ever let me hear of you saying that we do not love you."

Inside that box was a gift that fit my life so perfectly. I had recently completed the Pennsylvania Game Commission's hunter safety course and passed the test, earning the right to purchase my first Pennsylvania Hunting License. Of course, the bearer of all secrets (*my mom*) must have told her parents because my grandparents bought and hand delivered a beautiful Harrington & Richardson, blue barrel, single-shot, twelve-gauge shotgun to me that day.

Many gifts have been given to this spoiled fifty-year-old man, but none have left such an indelible impression as that 12-gauge shot gun that my Grandparents gave to me on that day. You see, this is the first time that I can

Many gifts have been given to this spoiled fifty-year-old man, but none has left such an indelible impression as that 12-gauge shot gun that my Grandparents gave to me on that day.

recall my grandparents visiting our home, and, I believe, it was the last time, yet their message was crystal clear, “Andy, you matter! Most importantly, you matter to us!”

This foundational moment has led me to believe that I matter. As I have gone through my life, I continued to matter to multitudes of people that my life touched and intersected over these last 50 years.

Perhaps you are an incredibly talented, very capable, clever, creative, loving, caring, and, in your opinion, an all-around, amazing person. Perhaps, thanks to COVID, you've found yourself in some extremely difficult moments wondering, “Do I matter?” Maybe you've wondered, “Would it really matter if I were no longer here?”

There's one way to find out – take some time this week to reach out to 12 of your previous clients. Ask them how COVID has affected them. See what their next moves are. Listen for ways you can be of help. Do a little check in. Invite them to your next Chamber Mixer or Luncheon. Ask them how they are doing. Before you hang up, ask them, “Can you remember what you liked most about working with me?” If you do not hear this from anyone else - let me say this as sternly and as loudly as I can type, YES, YOU MATTER!!!

By the way, I still believe that I matter to these two, great people. **Thanks Grandma and Grandpa!**

As always, if I can help, please contact me by text at 707.953.6681 or by email at andy@andyspringerconsulting.com.

Andy Springer, Business Consultant & Coach
Andy Springer Consulting