

30 Business “No No’s” (10)

It is a “No No” to cheat!

*Don't ... cheat orphans out of their property, for they have a powerful Advocate who will go to bat for them. Solomon*¹

When I was younger my wife allowed me to purchase the first version of Play Station. I believe it was called PS1 later on after versions two and three came out. A neat thing about the games that came out for the PS was that you could actually buy books that had codes you could put in and they allowed you to have an advantage in the game. These codes are called “cheat” codes. There is no skill involved in winning some games other than discovering the cheat codes. Game providers understand that while making a game difficult and real is necessary it is also essential for kids to finish those games so they will buy new games. In their brainstorming they came up with “cheat” codes. “Cheat” codes not only allow the game companies to sell more games they also afford game companies an opportunity to sell magazines with “cheat” codes in them. The idea of cheat codes being found in a book is just one way in which our culture has found it acceptable to promote the idea of cheating. It really isn't cheating if I bought the book.

“The first and worst of all frauds is to cheat one's self. All sin is easy after that.” Pearl Bailey American Entertainer.²

Jackie was in line near the front for the start of the Boston Marathon. She had prepared for the race which was one of the most prominent in the United States. Jackie was in great shape. She had taken a flight from Canada to Boston just for the chance of winning the Boston Marathon. As the race unfolded Jackie found herself out in front of her competitors. They were slowly fading. She was in the lead with more than half the race behind her. The crowd began to recognize that her lead was overwhelming and they cheered her on. The last five miles were easy because she knew she was in front with a lead. 2 hours and 30 minutes into the race she appeared to realize her dream as the crowd cheered her on. She was going to win the Boston Marathon. She would be famous. As she came to the last ½ mile something was definitely wrong. Another runner had beaten her to the tape. The 23rd place finisher of the New York Marathon Rosie Ruiz had done it and became the third fastest marathoner in women's history.

Jackie Gareau had finished second. There was no camera to catch her finishing the race. There was no tape held across the road for her to run through. The crowds and the cameras were with Rosie. Exhausted she merely took her time and prepared to cool down. Jackie was later questioned by a reporter about the fact that Rosie had taken 30 minutes off her time from the New York marathon. When Gareau was asked, *“Can a woman improve from 2:56 to 2:31 in one race?” she raised her eyebrows doubtfully and replied, “She must have very good training.”*³ A controversy began to form as to whether or not Rosie actually ran and won the race. Many of the Media's cameras could not find her in the photos they took. Eventually a couple of spectators came forward who said that they had seen Rosie join the race a little over a mile from the finish. Rosie had taken the subway and rejoined the race.

The damage of cheating can never be repaired. Most of us don't remember Jackie Gareau who was declared the winner of the Boston Marathon later that week. She was cheated out of what she had worked so hard for by a woman who took the subway. The media did little work to recognize Jackie and today she remains in obscurity. She is a person loss to the lime light Rosie Ruiz has gotten for cheating. Jackie was later given her own ceremony but it paled to the lime light Rosie received for cheating. It was discovered during the investigation of Rosie Ruiz that she had also cheated in the New York Marathon which allowed her to qualify to run in the Boston Marathon. The damage to Jackie's career was done.

“He that will cheat at play, will cheat you any way”⁴ **Proverb**

Notice the musing of *Adrian Wojnarowski a sports columnist for The Record (N.J.) and a regular contributor to ESPN.com*. He believes that Rosie Ruiz is the best thing that ever happened to the Boston Marathon. (Sunday, April 17, 2005)

Despite the fact that she was witnessed running out of the crowd and onto the course with less than a mile left, that she was seen nowhere at checkpoints, Ruiz has never stopped insisting she ran the race. If you're Jacqueline Gareau, the Canadian who lost out on her championship after beating Heartbreak Hill, well, it isn't so funny that Ruiz fooled everyone.

As the Boston Herald reports, there were a few more misunderstandings for Ruiz after the Boston Marathon in 1980. Let's see, there was an arrest for grand larceny and forgery for allegedly stealing tens of thousands from the real estate firm where she had worked (she served only a week in jail,

¹ Proverbs 23:10-11, MSG

² <http://thinkexist.com/quotations/cheating/> May 7, 2009; 10:30 AM

³ <http://massmoments.org/moment.cfm?mid=120/> May 7, 2009; 11:00 AM

⁴ <http://thinkexist.com/quotations/cheating/> May 7, 2009; 11:20 AM

instead receiving five years' probation). Oh, and there was a bust for trying to sell cocaine to undercover agents at the Miami Airport Marriott. Apparently, she spent 23 days in jail on the charge and was put on two years' probation. Even there, she couldn't make it the full 26.2.

Anyway, all that left Rosie a little short on a credible case that the world had it all wrong about her in 1980. ... When we think of the greatest hoaxes in history, it's always that name that rolls off your tongue: Rosie Ruiz.⁵

Jackie is not the best thing to ever happen to the Boston Marathon, but Rosie Ruiz is. We live in a culture of cheaters and what should be our response as business people to this culture of cheating.

1. Trust but don't be ignorant of the fact that cheating is now an acceptable part of our culture. People are not into patience today. They expect to have quickly what often takes much longer to earn. You should not assume truth or integrity with clients or peers. You will need systems that protect your company from a lack of integrity.

"Don't measure your neighbor's honesty by your own."⁶ American Proverb

2. Protect Jimmy the Cricket. Nobody wants a conscious following them around that is always chirping "that is not right." There is nothing better than a clear conscience and the ability to sleep well at night. You control your actions. Do those things which keep Jimmy quiet.

"Let no pleasure tempt thee, no profit allure thee, no persuasion move thee, to do anything which thou knowest to be evil; so shalt thou always live jollity; for a good conscience is a continual Christmas." Ben Franklin⁷

3. Surround yourself with people who have integrity. Cheating is a pandemic of greater concern than "Swine flu." In a world that now accepts cheating as necessary to get ahead you can avoid building your empire on sand by ensuring that those around you have integrity. Industriousness and energy devoid of integrity will ruin your business.

**"In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if they don't have the first, the other two will kill you." Warren Buffet
CEO, Berkshire Hathaway⁸**

Round Table:

Describe a time in business as a customer or owner when you felt cheated.
What was your response to being cheated?
How do you work to build integrity in your business with clients and peers?
What advice would you give to Jackie Gareau?

⁵ <http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/print?id=2039568&type=story/> May 7, 2009; 11:25 AM

⁶ <http://www.leadershipnow.com/integrityquotes.html/> May 7, 2009; 11:35 AM

⁷ Ibid. 6.

⁸ Ibid. 6.

