

Monthly Musings



courtesy of Fletcher Consulting

500 Grapevine Hwy. • Suite 362
Hurst, TX 76054
(817) 205-2334 • Fax (817) 796-2087
Email: john@thefetch.org

Get **Linked in** with John at:
www.linkedin.com/in/johnfletcherpr
Read John's blog on
www.thefetch.org

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SMART EXPERIENCE:

Promposal in Natalia

Perhaps you read the story in *USA Today*, *Huffington Post*, *Cosmopolitan*, the *Ithaca (New York) Journal*, *Army Times*, or *Military Times*, or you saw it on ABC, NBC, CBS, or YouTube.

Cosmo wrote, "This is Easily the Most Tear-Inducing Promposal of All Time." The family's Facebook page had over 3.2 million hits.



[Click here for the story](#), as Natalia High School football player

and cool guy Luis Velasquez did the most amazing and selfless thing – he invited the girl who nobody had invited to the prom. In doing so, he treated the girl, Tiffany Gay, like a princess as he assembled students from his high school for a fake fire drill he had coordinated with the school administration.

"This is easily the Most Tear-Inducing Proposal of All Time."

Tiffany, a special needs 16-year-old who had never gone on a date, would be going to the prom, the result of a truly amazing promposal.

Have you ever read about a story like this and wished you could somehow become involved? That happened to me as I wondered if I could find some way to touch this situation. Then I realized I could through a gift from God above.

Natalia High School football player Luis Velasquez did the most amazing and selfless thing...

I have a client with a location in Natalia, as my Wendy's franchisee, Emerald Foods, owns a restaurant inside the Love's Travel Center in Natalia.

I called him with great enthusiasm and related the story about Luis and Tiffany, and he asked the reason for my call. Then I said, "You're going to pay for the limo to...drive them to pick them up from home, take them to dinner...at ANOTHER

"You're going to pay for the limo to...drive them to the prom!"



restaurant...and then drive them to the prom!"

My client understands the value of community partnerships and he also recognizes when he is in the presence of lightning in a bottle (Tiffany and Luis,

not me). Without hesitation he said to move forward and do whatever it took to make this a special occasion for the two high school juniors, whether or not it involved his Wendy's franchise in the story.

I spoke with the Natalia High School Athletic Director to make sure this would be legal and not compromise Luis' future athletic eligibility, and then spoke with Luis' mother and Tiffany's grandmother. The plan was moving forward.

Please notice a young lady experiencing the time of her life and a young man with the character and perspective to make a difference.

Just as I was blessed to have a small part in this past Saturday evening's Promposal-brought-to-life, we all have opportunities to participate in special moments. We just need to seek them out and step in.

SMART FOCUS:

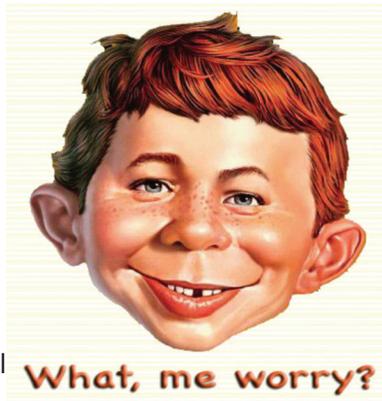
Alfred Neuman had it right

"What, me worry?" That was the signature phrase for Alfred E. Neuman, the fictional kid who graced the cover of *Mad Magazine* for the first time in 1956. He looked lovable and intelligent, but also had this devilish attitude and a sense of humor while

the world may have been collapsing around him.

Worry, or stress, was the last thing on his mind. And recent research from the Harvard Business School suggests that stress can actually **increase** your productivity.

Professor Alison Wood Brooks [conducted a study](#) featuring students in a stressful situation. Her environment



was before students delivered a major speech for class credit. Knowing the students were anxious, she told half the class to calm their nerves by saying, "I am calm" and she told the other half to embrace their anxiety by saying to themselves, "I am excited."

Interestingly enough, observers rating the talks described the excited speakers as more persuasive, confident and proficient than those who tried to calm themselves down.

Prof. Brooks and her team concluded that the students turned their worry into positive energy that allowed them to perform better under pressure.

The study held true on final exams at the University of Rochester in New York. Dividing the class in half, with each portion having similar SAT scores or college GPAs, one group was given a motivational message.

"Recent research suggests that stress doesn't hurt performance on these tests and can even help performance. People who feel anxious during a test might actually do better. If you find yourself feeling anxious, simply remind yourself that your stress could be helping you do well."

The other students did not have any sort of pre-exam comments and served as the control group.

Students who received the positive mindset pep talk outperformed the control group. Post-exam research showed the higher performers continued on their upward trajectory beyond just that exam, and experienced positive progress on future exams because of their perspective.

Learn this lesson in your business: **Appropriate stress** can be **POSITIVE**. When you train and motivate your team to use their anxiety as a powerful tool, you can raise the morale and performance of your company.

SMART LEADERSHIP:

Lead, follow or get out of the way

I always admired how automotive legend Lee Iacocca described his management style in a TV commercial: Lead, follow or get out of the way.

His statement was bold and promised that something amazing was going to occur. I feel the same way about leadership classes, most of which operate through your local chamber of commerce.

To me, the sign of a vibrant chamber is the quality of its

leadership program. I have been honored to be the volunteer advisor of Leadership Colleyville for the past three years, and we are completing recruitment for our new class that starts in September. We have only five positions remaining for our class of 25.

If you or one of your co-workers or employees aspires to grow your influence within your community and business setting, contact your local chamber of commerce and ask about their leadership program.

You will be impressed at the results. If you are interested in Leadership Colleyville, please email me at john@thefetch.org.



THE Tiebreaker

Complaints are opportunities

How do you take your customer complaints? As a gift, or as something to make you mad? My friend Greg Kalina, Regional Manager of Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steak House, has the right idea: "We are people of servitude. Every bad review is a punch in the gut... and an opportunity."

Bravo, Greg! He reflects the theme of one of my favorite books ever: *A Complaint Is a Gift*. Smart business operators and owners know that every complaint offers a neutral moment that you can either confirm is bad news or you can turn into a positive relationship.

Guess what the true champions do?

Whenever a customer complains about the asparagus being too crisp, the steak too rare, or the Crème Brûlée is over caramelized, the champions leap into action. They move into a heightened level of supreme service – at the speed of light with a smile – making sure the remainder of the meal is absolutely flawless.



The best of the best even bring additional sides to the table, perhaps another vegetable or samplings of other entrees. They overwhelm the customers with such a positive experience that they barely remember what went wrong in the first place.

Ask veteran servers to describe their most generous tips. Without fail, they will mention when they created a "save the evening" moment, turning a disaster into a victory and a positively delighted customer departing and looking forward to the next visit.

Unexpected customer delight means going beyond what is expected and hoped for, and builds lifelong customers. The same holds true in all types of industries, from insurance agencies and car dealerships to jewelry stores and law offices.

Remember, a complaint is a gift!

