

Monthly Musings



courtesy of Fletcher Consulting

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

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

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SMARTLY COMPETITIVE:

Learning from Kobe

The sports world was left almost aghast with the untimely death of retired Los Angeles Lakers NBA superstar Kobe Bryant, who was a helicopter crash victim at age 41.

While I have been a relatively casual NBA fan, I certainly recognized Kobe's greatness – how he accomplished so much for himself and how he made the players around him achieve at their own peak level.

It was THE FIRE. He burned so competitively hot. He brought it...

Kobe Bryant inspired me – along with tens of millions of others – in numerous ways. I will remember him for:

1. What his friend Tiger Woods called "THE FIRE." Tiger said, "He burned so competitively hot. He brought it each and every night on both ends of the floor. The hours that he spent in the gym in the offseason and during the summers to work on shots and do all the different things. It looked like it came natural to him on the court during game time, but he spent more hours looking at film and trying to figure out what's the best way to become better. In summary, Kobe never believed that he had peaked. He knew he could be better, and he challenged himself to achieve more."

I can't relate to lazy people. I don't understand you. I don't want to understand you.

2. Sports reporter Logan Ratnick wrote of Kobe's "[Tenacious Work Ethic](#)." He spoke THREE languages fluently at a time when most of us can barely master English. During games, he would communicate in Spanish with one of his teammates to set up plays in a way the opposing team would not understand. Teammates reported that he would occasionally watch first-half video of himself during halftime so he could learn and play better in the second half. I love Kobe's famous statement: *I can't relate to lazy people. We don't speak the same language. I don't understand you. I don't want to understand you.*

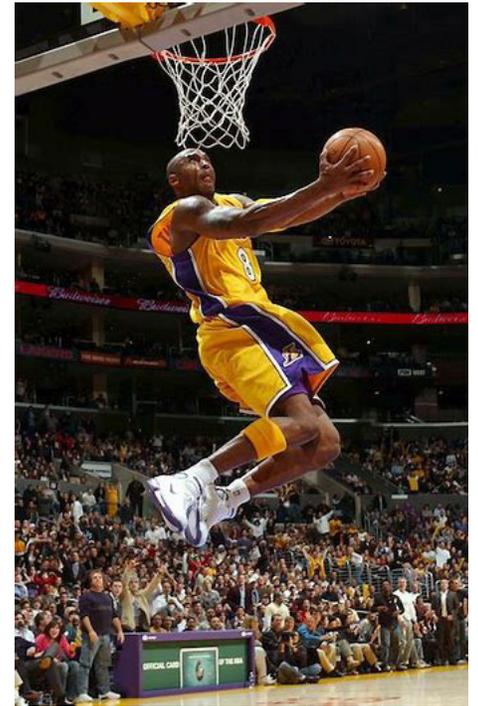
Focus on the mini milestones along the way, and you will find beauty in the struggle...

3. **Paying It Forward.** Kobe served as a mentor and inspiration to other athletes and non-athletes, complimenting and critiquing them to

improve how well they played. In that sense, he paid it forward, even to the benefit of athletes he knew he would later play against. Because Kobe demanded the best in himself, he never wanted to see anyone cheat themselves out of the very best they could be. He sent a message to NBA star Gordon Hayward following an injury. His note included:

Focus on the recovery process day by day by day. If you focus on the mini milestones along the way, you will find beauty in the struggle of doing simple things that prior to this injury were taken for granted. When you return, you will have a new perspective.

Kobe Bryant was a brilliant thinker. His intense flame will forever burn through all those he touched and inspired.



SMART YEAR PLANNING: Your 20/20 Vision for 2020

How did you respond to Friday, January 17 – **Ditch New Year's Resolutions Day**? I didn't have to worry because I never made any new year's resolutions. I DID, however, make five commitments that I hope you can make for the balance of this year and beyond:

1. **Be intentional.** Rather than hope things will happen, 2020 is the year that I am making things happen by being more prepared and disciplined:

- Read my Wall Street Journal, the Fort Worth Business Press online and the Star-Telegram online most mornings
- Be faithful to writing and sending out my morning devotional

- Run with Endurance
- to my 132 recipients, 365 days a year
- c. Post and respond on LinkedIn each time I complete Run with Endurance
- d. Pray for friends and family members openly because I love them - especially for Rebecca
- e. Develop my next day's plan the night before
- f. Get some exercise - no matter how little - to invest in myself (and now we even have a dedicated fitness room). **It's AMAZING how tall you can stack extra clothes on an unused treadmill!**



2. **Make and work my plan.** This involves budgeting my time more wisely.
 - a. Focus 75% of my time on existing clients while allocating the remaining 25% for administration, nonprofit involvement and researching prospective clients
 - b. Write an actual game plan for my clients for the year, preparing for known and unanticipated opportunities and being prepared to respond to challenges that may arise
 - c. Be genuinely kind and do thoughtful things for others
3. **Recognize the Godwinks all around me.** Godwinks are those seeming coincidences that happen in our lives, yet the odds of them occurring are so astronomical that they could never have occurred without divine intervention. In 2019, I made myself more aware of these blessings, and now I am constantly looking out so I may recognize and appreciate them.
4. **Improve my organizational skills.** This is a constant battle, but since I have reorganized my office and removed a large amount of clutter, this goal has potential.
5. **Recognize that so many of my successes are derived from learning what works for others.** Greatness is rarely self-inspired; it's most often achieved by paying attention to others. I chuckle when remembering a favorite quote from my late friend and country comedian, Jerry Clower: *It's amazing how much you can learn by just payin' attention!*

I can assure you that most of these commitments can work for you, as well!

SMART PROPPORTUNITIES:

For 2020

You will most definitely face adversity this year - situations you will definitely classify as "Problems." Some will be relatively minor while others may very well challenge the very survival of your business model, and even your enterprise itself.

I survived such a situation when I managed KCLE radio in Cleburne many years ago and turned DISASTER - which is tenfold worse than a "Problem" - into my greatest success. Here are the lessons I share with you.

1. **Define - but don't overstate - the situation:** A Fort Worth radio station wanted to produce an agriculture show that would pull out six months of revenue from my largest advertisers
2. **What's the worst possible thing that could happen?** We would lose approximately half our gross billing, plus our relationships with these advertisers - we could have gone out of business
3. **Do I have the power to disrupt this potential situation?** Yes
4. **If so, what are my options to disrupt?** To create our own Ag event and reclaim our advertisers
5. **What are my limitations in regard to resources and capabilities?** Time and finances, because this event could be costly
6. **How will the disrupted competitor respond?** The large radio station simply turned their attention toward another community
7. **What are my next steps?** Consult with leading Ag leaders and advertisers, schedule an Ag-friendly entertainer, produce a banquet to honor 4-H and FFA, and sell out a 2,200-seat auditorium
8. **How soon do I need to act?** Yesterday
9. **How did it all work out?** Our traditionally two worst months of the year - January and February - became our two most profitable, and we became a community hero
10. **What lessons did I learn?** *Proportunities are not always the major challenge they appear to be!*



— PROPPORTUNITY —

THE Tiebreaker

10-Run Rule

I learned a valuable lesson from my consultant, Jim Goodnight, many years ago. I had proudly explained the concept of a tiebreaker for those times when a prospective client might need to choose between my company and a competitor.

He asked a very revealing question: **Why do you need a tiebreaker when you should want a 10-Run Rule?** He explained that in baseball and softball at certain age and competitive levels, if one team is leading by at least 10 runs after five innings, the game is declared a victory in favor of the high-scoring team.

Here's the lesson I learned: You are far better off to have so overwhelmed your competition in the proposal stage that there is no reason to have a tiebreaker.

He taught me to "10-Run Rule" my competition with so much value and benefit that there is never a close decision to make.

I challenge you to 10-Run Rule YOUR competition in 2020. Please email me if I may assist you.

