

The North Fulton Marriage Newsletter

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I was shocked...

Seriously, I was shocked. About a month ago a thunderstorm rolled through our neighborhood. I had just put my daughter to bed, walked into my man-cave to get on the computer and WHAM! A lighting strike. Apparently the lighting struck somewhere on or near our house and found its way to my computer, and then jumped to me. I felt the electricity pass out of my left foot. I was unharmed but shaken up. I stumbled downstairs and told my wife, "I think our computer is fried." Her response? "Oh no! Our pictures!" Oh and by the way honey, I am OK/alive/not crisp. I understood her concerns for our family photographs, but in the moment I was searching for a smidgen of empathy. (For the record, she will never live this comment down and will be teased about it until death-do-we-part, which is hopefully later rather than sooner, barring any unforeseen lighting strikes in my future). Realizing that I had dodged a bullet I spent the remainder of the evening running up and down our stairs with a pair of scissors, and later that week I went swimming immediately after eating. I figured what the heck?

The above paragraph was written on September 30th and the remainder of this newsletter was written on October 12th. In between I took a much-needed sabbatical from the counseling center. Ten days at home with my family, no business related activity. I told the three associates that work for me that it was fine to contact me during the sabbatical as long as it was fun, happy, jovial, non-work related contact. ☺ See, as it turns out, the lightning did not fry me but nearly four straight years of running this business had fried me. And, in particular, the last three months had really turned me crisp. Our business, like many other businesses, has experienced a significant slowdown. When business slows down, for better or worse, I take it personally. So, the last three to four months I have been served one large helping of "humble pie." But, with humility and several days off, there is a lot of room for *recharging* and *renewal*. Today, as I write, I feel totally *revitalized*. I am once again excited about my business and excited to come to work. The irony of my burnout is that every four months I lead a continuing education workshop entitled *Counselor Burnout: The Ethics of Self-Care*. I must say that leading this workshop was an unforeseen blessing for me because I believe I was more readily able to recognize burnout in myself. Prior to the sabbatical, I knew I had become impaired. And during the sabbatical I listened to my own advice: I spent a lot of time with my family, I began to eat better and I began to get significantly more exercise. I plan to continue heeding my own advice now that the sabbatical has ended, i.e. eat right, exercise more, and spend more time with my wife and daughter. So, at this point, you may be asking, "What the heck does this have to do with marriage?" I thought about this and the answer is: Not much. But, I hope you got a charge out of it. ☺

Special thanks to Sasha Asumaa, LPC, for suggesting I write a newsletter about my electrifying experience, and to Todd Leonard for a lesson on humble pie and the power of humility. Thanks also to my associates for taking care of business while I was gone and to my wife and daughter for 10 very relaxing days.

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