

How Is Your Attitude in The Great Recession?

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This past Saturday I spent the afternoon celebrating our Nation's 233rd Birthday attending the New York Yankees v. Toronto Blue Jays at Yankee Stadium. July 4th also marked the 70th Anniversary of Lou Gehrig's farewell speech at Yankee Stadium. For those of you unfamiliar with this story, Lou Gehrig took himself out of the line up after the first 8 games of the 1939 season, which ended a consecutive game streak of 2130 games, a record that stood for another 56 years.



At 35 years old, Gehrig was diagnosed with a very rare form of degenerative disease: amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), which is now called Lou Gehrig's disease. There was no chance he would ever play baseball again.

On July 4, 1939, there was a celebration at Yankee Stadium to recognize the accomplishments of Lou Gehrig. At the end of the celebration Lou Gehrig addressed the crowd. Here is the full text of his speech:

"Fans, for the past two weeks, you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet today, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of this earth. I have been in ballparks for seventeen years and never received anything but kindness and encouragement from you fans."

"Look at these great men. Which of you wouldn't consider it the highlight of your career to associate with them for even one day? Sure, I'm lucky. Who wouldn't consider it an honor to



**70th
anniversary**

have known Jacob Ruppert? Also, the builder of baseball's greatest empire, Ed Barrow? To have spent six years with that wonderful little fellow, Miller Huggins? Then to have spent the next nine years with that outstanding leader, that smart student of psychology, the best manager in baseball today, Joe McCarthy? Sure, I'm lucky."

"When the New York Giants, a team you would give your right arm to beat, and vice versa, sends you a gift – that's something. When everybody down to the groundskeepers and those boys in white coats remember you with trophies – that's something. When you have a wonderful mother-in-law who takes sides with you in squabbles with her own daughter –that's something. When you have a father and a mother who work all their lives so you can have an education and build your body - it's a blessing. When you have a wife who has been a tower of strength and shown more courage than you dreamed existed – that's the finest I know."

"So I close in saying that I may have had a tough break, but I have an awful lot to live for."*

As the Yankees recognized the 70th Anniversary of that famous speech it really made me think about Lou Gehrig's attitude 70 years ago, and how important attitude is in our daily lives as leaders. Despite having a famous baseball career cut short, and being diagnosed with a disease that will ultimately be his demise, Gehrig chooses to talk about all the things he is lucky for; he spends very little time on what he considers a "bad break".



How Is Your Attitude in The Great Recession?

How is your attitude in the face of the current recession? Be honest. I would agree with most experts that this current recession will be long and hard; and also the fact that it will end. What are the things that you are grateful for in your business and your personal life?

I cannot tell you when the recession will end, only that one day it will. I would suggest that having a positive attitude and focusing on the good things in business and life will help us survive this recession. This same type of attitude is just as important when economic times are booming; it probably just feels like you don't have to work that hard at it.

One thing that has helped me during these tumultuous times is to have an attitude of: no matter what happens, I always look for something good. It has definitely helped me get through the challenges of these past two years.

How are you handling your attitude through these difficult economic times? I am interested to hear from you. Please e-mail me at: cjpolek@polek.com

*source: LouGehrig.com

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