

DR. DALE HENRY: Well, good morning.

("Good morning" from the delegation.)

I know you've already figured this out
but I'm from the south.

(Laughter.)

Thanks for letting me come and be with
you. I love Las Vegas. We've just started getting
cool days. It's nice to be somewhere where it's
warm finally.

You, like me, probably get up every
morning and you have a ritual. My ritual is pretty
easy to follow. I live in the foothills of east
Tennessee and I'm a runner. Now I know that's hard
for you to believe that I'm still running at
70 years old and I love to run.

Now here is what I want to happen. I
want to go and do my 45 minute run. I want to come
home and I want to have a big southern breakfast.
Now does everybody understand a big southern

breakfast?

(Murmurs of agreement from the delegation.)

I'm talking biscuits and gravy and eggs and sausage. I mean, I'm from the south where gravy is a beverage.

(Laughter.)

Well, let me just say that's not going to happen. That's not going to happen because my two daughters have grown up and have moved away and both married nice young men. I love them very much. I have six grandchildren. So it's just me and my wife. My wife is a retired schoolteacher, which basically means she does the same thing she used to do for money and now she does it for nothing.

(Laughter.)

So I got nobody to eat with.

Now I just got through running 45 minutes and I get to eat. See, because I run to eat. Because I'm 5 foot, 6 and if you don't run, you will roll.

(Laughter.)

Especially if you like to eat breakfast like I do. Now my wife doesn't diet.

Debra -- Debra she likes to say she's dieting.
She's actually been on a diet for 50 years, same
diet and lost five pounds every time.

(Laughter.)

But I tell her, I say, Honey, dieting
is ineffective. You should run with me. She said
no. Running makes you sweat, not going to happen.

(Laughter.)

So I told her, I said, Look, part of
the problem with dieting is you have to stay on it.
So what you should do is just exercise with me.
Well, that's gonna weigh.

So anyway, I come home after my run.
There's nobody there. I get in my car. I drive
down to the bottom of the hill in east Tennessee
where I go to my favorite fast food eating
establishment, a little place you've probably heard
of called Hardee's. They got good biscuits. They
got good gravy. They got good bacon. It's just a
good deal.

Now I'm not your typical Hardee's
shopper. I don't drive through the drive-thru
window and get my food and eat in the car. I go
inside. Now inside at that Harriman Hardee's is a

group of men. There's always a group of men there, about 14 of them. I call them Romeos, retired old men eating out. You know this group, right?

(Laughter.)

They kind of wave at me and say, Hi, how you doing, Dale, and how is everything going? And I move over and I stand in line. Now it's a busy morning. I know the focus of this restaurant is to take care of the drive-thru business. They're not there to take care of the walk-in business but I stand there patiently waiting my turn.

And I've got this condition. It's called ADHD. They just simply called it hyper when I was a kid but I'm a hyper guy. So if I got nothing to do, my brain just starts wandering. So I'm counting ceiling tile. I'm doing whatever I can do to keep my mind occupied and all of a sudden the door opens to the Harriman Hardee's.

Now, I've developed this little hobby over the years. I like to look at people and try to guess what they do for a living. Now I see this guy and he's a big guy. I'm going to put him at 6' 6," 6' 7," 425 pounds. He is a full grown man. Tater fed we call them in the south.

(Laughter.)

Tater fed. Now, I look at him and he's wearing coveralls with the sleeves cut out and the first thing I'm thinking is probably not a physician.

(Laughter.)

I look over his shoulder and there's a Roadway truck sitting outside. So this guy's a truck driver. Now he sees me standing in line. He did the same thing all of us in this room would have done, he walked up and got behind me in line.

Now, here's the problem though. He is standing just a skosh too close. Now, if you don't know the word "skosh," skosh means you're in my body space and I don't want you there. I can feel your body heat. Too close for me. But he's a big guy. He doesn't know he's that close. So I said you know what I'm going to do, I'm just going to take a half step forward. Well, he thinks the line's moving.

(Laughter.)

He takes half a step forward, right back where he started from and he's a breather. Have you ever been in line with a breather? Whew. What do I want? What do I want? What do I want?

So we stood there for a few minutes.
Nobody comes to wait on us and I feel this tap on my
shoulder. Now, I know in every group I'm going to
have what's called visual learners. Visual learners
are people who pick up visual cues from the speaker
by the things he tells them. So for my visual
learners I want you to know this, this man's belt
buckle is right here. (Gestures.)

(Laughter.)

So spinning around is not an option.
Does everybody understand?

(Laughter.)

So I just take a little side step over
the side and look up at this mountain of a man, this
huge, huge human being looks at me in a really deep
southern accent and he says this, Hey, you hungry?

(Laughter.)

Now here's all I can think of. I hope
you're not because I'm all that's catchable right
here.

(Laughter.)

And I said, Yes, sir, I am hungry. I
ran almost 4.5 miles this morning. He said, Huh, I
walked in here from that truck.

(Laughter.)

Calorically speaking we're dead even.

(Laughter.)

Then he looks at me and says something really strange. He goes, So, can you see me? Now I can't see the sun but I can see him. I said of course I can see you. He said, Well, I can see you. Why can't they see us? Now you know what he's saying, right? Somebody needs to say something because we're both hungry.

So I see this lady walking by with a big bag of biscuits. It's easy to tell it's a big bag of biscuits at Hardee's because of the multiple grease stains.

And I said, Ma'am. Excuse me, Ma'am. Excuse me, Ma'am. Ma'am, Ma'am. This lady turns to me. This is my hometown. This is where I was raised. This is where I live. She looks at me and says this. Can't you see I'm busy? I didn't know what to say.

So I turned to George -- George is the truck driver. I know his name. We had breakfast together that morning. I said, George, you know what she just said to me. He said, Yeah, we ain't

getting no biscuits.

(Laughter.)

I said, No, George. We're going to get us a biscuit, see, because this is an economy and an economy is easy to understand. You have a group of people that provide a good or service and a group of people who want that good or service. You put those two people together, you got yourself an economy.

Now, when you pulled off the interstate this morning and you took Exit 429 there at the Harriman exit and you pulled right in front of the Harriman Hardee's here, did you see the marquee out front? He said, No, I really can't I say as I did. I said, Well, let me tell you what it said. Right out there on the marquee it said biscuit and sausage \$1.29. Across the street at the McDonald's, it said, biscuit and sausage \$1.39.

See, George, what this lady just said to us is we ain't worth a dime.

(Laughter.)

Now I want you to think about that just a minute. Let that kind of roll over your body. Do you mind if I ask you a question --

actually it's two questions.

And your name, sir?

A DELEGATE: John.

DR. DALE HENRY: John, you ain't going to like the second one, but the first one you won't mind.

You ever been treated like you were not worth a dime?

A DELEGATE: Yes.

DR. DALE HENRY: He said yes.

Now the second one is easy. I already know what he's going to say. You ever treat somebody else like they weren't worth a dime?

A DELEGATE: I hope not.

DR. DALE HENRY: I hope not is southern for you bet.

(Laughter.)

Am I right, John? Yeah, I figured I was.

So let's form an agreement between us, if you wouldn't mind. And the first one of those agreements is we're going to be truthful with each other. I like truthful. Sometimes truth hurts but it's just the best policy.

So I'm going to ask the people in the audience a couple of questions and just be truthful with me.

Sir, if you had the option, would you rather be optimistic or pessimistic?

A DELEGATE: Optimistic.

DR. DALE HENRY: Optimistic. Very good, sir.

If you had the option to either be a problem solver or a problem starter?

A DELEGATE: Problem solver.

DR. DALE HENRY: Very good. Sir, given the choice, would you rather be happy or constipated?

(Laughter.)

A DELEGATE: Happy.

DR. DALE HENRY: Happy is a good choice.

(Laughter.)

Now, let's be honest. Everybody in this room if I asked that same question would have answered just like my three friends. We all want to be happy, optimistic problem solvers. Now, where I live this means yes. (Nodding.) Is that what you think? Just give me a little nod there. It's good.

It's good. It's good, yeah.

So why would you start out by lying to me again?

(Laughter.)

Because you don't want to be happy, optimistic problem solvers. You'd rather be whiners, wouldn't you? We love to whine, don't we? Get in a group of people and just -- you know, whining is because misery loves company.

I'm over in Dallas, Texas doing a program. I have a wonderful office manager who takes good care of me, takes really good care of me. She gives me -- used to give me a sheet of paper and I used to love that sheet of paper. I love paper. The batteries never go out on it but everything now is over the phone. She sends me everything on my phone. The phone is okay. I mean, it's a great way but, you know, sometimes you don't get it like you do on a piece of paper.

So anyway, I'm in Dallas and I pick up my phone and look at my phone. And what she does is she almost writes like a research paper, tells me about who I'm going to be speaking to, tells me their history. She loves doing this. Now, just so

you know, if you ever meet Michelle, don't tell her I said this, but I don't read that stuff.

(Laughter.)

I mean, I read it like a Sunday paper. I kind of skim it, look at it, you know, make sure I understand everything. But the one thing I always look for is the last page because if there is anything important, it will be at the very bottom after an asterisk. Everybody know what an asterisk is? It's a Latin symbol. It means read this, stupid.

(Laughter.)

So I look down. There's no asterisk, there's no nothing. This is great. I can do whatever I want to do. So I got through with my program. I went outside and I'm sitting talking to people having a good time, been out there talking about an hour and I get this feeling that there is something I should be doing right about now.

So I pick up that phone and look at it again. Well, I didn't go to the last page. I had gone to the next-to-the-last page. And on the last page there's a big old asterisk. And not only is it bolded, it's italic. And it says this, Dale, when

you get done get yourself to the airport. Now Michelle does not use the word "self." She uses a body part. I'm sure you know the body part.

(Laughter.)

Get yourself to the airport. You are catching the last flight to Atlanta.

How many of you ever been to Dallas?

(Show of hands.)

How many of you ever been at Dallas at 4:00 with any idea that you're going to catch a plane at 5:00?

(Laughter.)

It's not going to happen. And I've got to turn in a rental car.

But here is what happens when we hear something like that, we get two things that's going on in our brain.

The first thing is uh-oh. Everybody has had the "uh-oh," right? The second one is we immediately start lying to ourself. Here is what we say. I can make this happen. I can do this. I can do this.

So I grab my luggage and I ran to my rental car, I jump in and start my car. I'm making

up some pretty good time. I must have been doing really good because people were telling me I was No. 1.

(Laughter.)

I'm weaving in and out of traffic. I get to the airport and I've got a little time. So I pull up to the -- I turn my rental car in and it is packed with people on vacation returning their cars. I got to get this car returned.

So I've got this little thing I do. I don't do it very often, but I do it when I need it. I stand in the back of the rental car place and look at my watch and go, Wow, man, I'm going to miss that flight. Nice young man at the front of the line says, Sir, come on up, we're just on vacation. We're not in a big hurry. So I get up and turn my rental car in. I ran to that rental car truck. I know you know what I'm talking about, the van. I jumped on that van. I'm the very first person on that van. I looked at the driver and this is what I said. I said, If you leave right now and you run over people, I can make my flight.

(Laughter.)

Now, I remember a lot of conversations

I've had in the past but I'll never forget this man's conversation. As a matter of fact, he taught me a word I'm going to teach it to you.

He looked at me on that gray day and said this, You know when they hired me yesterday --

(Laughter.)

Never a good sign. Ready for the word? Here it comes. They told me -- told. If you don't know that word, it's the future, past and present tense of told.

(Laughter.)

They told me not to leave the parking lot until the bus was full. You ever been there? You know what I'm talking about, right? You tried, did your best, did everything you could do, just not happening. You kind of sigh and you just let it go.

I walked up to the young lady there at Delta and she asked me a question. I never heard it. Here is what she said. How are you doing today, sir? You see, you're not actually done with anything in life until you state the obvious. We have to state the obvious to somebody.

And I looked at this woman and I stated the obvious. I said, you know, I missed my

flight. Didn't answer her question. Didn't say I was doing great. Didn't say I was doing badly. I just said I missed my flight. She said, What flight were you on? I said, The one that left about 20 minutes ago. She said, 1156, our last flight to Atlanta? I'm going that's good, just rub a little salt in this eye now.

(Laughter.)

I said, Yeah, that's the one I missed. She looked at me and she said this, You didn't miss that flight. That flight has been delayed.

(Laughter.)

You know that feeling, don't you? How many of you have severely screwed up and still managed to be successful, would you please raise your hands?

(Show of hands.)

We all know what it's like.

So I walked out of that gate -- what kind of mood you think I'm in? I'm in a dad gum good mood, right? Now here's the problem. 211 people are standing in that gate and they heard the same news I heard. What kind of mood are they in? Oh, they could eat their young.

(Laughter.)

I walk out there just standing there smiling, this big old smile on my face. The lady next to me grabs her daughter and says, Sit over here, baby, there's something wrong with that man.

(Laughter.)

See, people don't want to be happy. They don't want to be happy. So I'm standing there and the young lady who's going to be running that flight checking us all in and whatever walks up to the lectern there and grabs a hold of that little microphone there. You know the one I'm talking about. The one you can't understand a word their saying.

And she goes, My name is Wanda, and I love my job. You know you can always tell when people love their job, can't you? They show it in their face. Have you ever seen somebody do this, though, Well, I really love my job. Well, why don't you tell your face?

(Laughter.)

She says, I love my job. As a matter of fact, I love 99 and nine-tenths of my job. There's only part of my job that I don't like and

I'm getting ready to do that job right now. I'm getting to ready tell 212 of you that your flight has been canceled.

I know what you're thinking. Every one of you in your mind is saying this right now. Kill Wanda.

(Laughter.)

Wanda didn't cancel your flight. Some gutless, spineless, yellow-bellied coward in Atlanta canceled your flight but he's not even going to come and tell me. He sent me but he had no idea who he was sending because I think I'm the best leader at Delta, and I'm going to take care of you. And I want you to listen very carefully to what she said. I'm going to take care of each and every one of you like you are family.

I said, Wow, that's great.

Who's that coughing over there? Is there somebody coughing? Take care of that cough, sir. First cousin died of a cough just like that. He was under another man's bed at the time.

(Laughter.)

You know, if you would like a good cough cure, Brother, I got one. Drink a gallon of

prune juice, eat two boxes of prunes and a whole half a bar of Ex-Lax. You'll want to cough but you'll catch yourself.

(Laughter.)

See, it's not safe sitting up here at the big table. It's just not safe.

(Laughter.)

So she said, Here is what we're going to do. I'm going to see that every one of you get taken care of. Every one of you to get a flight or something. I'm not going to leave here until we all are happy with the situation that we have.

Now, as you can tell, I travel a lot. I'm a 5 million miler on Delta, so I know exactly what this means. You better get in the front of that line. Now, why is that? Well, it kind of goes like this. You know, you come in in the morning and you're in a good mood. You know what I mean, Brother? You're happy. It's payday. It's Friday. It's a good day. And somebody comes along and just licks the red off your lollipop.

(Laughter.)

Because it only takes how many people to make you mad, just one, ruins your whole day.

So I know that even though Ms. Wanda is in a good mood, a couple of these people might be in a bad mood. So here is how it went. Six nasty people were in the front of that line. I was No. 13. Didn't get there. Didn't calculate. Didn't say, Oh, no, that is one unlucky number. I was just 13. That's where I was.

It took six people to give her joy. Number 7 in line heard this from Ms. Wanda. Where you going Atlanta? Not tonight.

(Laughter.)

Now here is what I'm thinking, No, no, no, no, no, I want happy Wanda. I can deal with happy Wanda. I want happy Wanda but happy Wanda and Elvis have left the building.

(Laughter.)

No. 7, No. 8, No. 9, No. 10, No. 11. We can talk about those people, their life, and all the rest of us. We need to talk just for a minute about No. 12. Now, here's the problem with No. 12. We've all met No. 12. Some of you are No. 12.

You ever met somebody that whatever they were thinking comes out their mouth?

(Laughter.)

Whatever is on their mind then they just talk about it, right? He walked up to Ms. Wanda and he slapped his ticket down. He slobbered, he stomped, he cursed and he fussed. You know what Ms. Wanda did? Where you going, Atlanta? Not tonight.

How many of you have children?

(Show of hands from delegation.)

How many of you have looked at your lovely children and said this. You look at me. You look at me. Now, why do we want them to look at us? Because if they are looking at us, we know they're paying attention, right?

Ms. Wanda did not give this guy eye contact and it sent him in the next dimension of anger. So he walks up to Ms. Wanda, he takes his finger out and does this, Hey, do you know who I am? Ms. Wanda picked up her microphone and said, Excuse me. Anybody here know who this man is?

(Laughter.)

He did not think that was funny. 211 of us thought it was hilarious.

(Laughter.)

He grabbed his ticket and he stomped off. Now, I'm next. I like being next. As a matter of fact, I love the word next. Sometimes I like it so much I'll let somebody get in front of me so I can be next again. I like being next.

And I heard this, Next. Now, how do you think I was going to be treated? I was going to be treated just like No. 12, right? I walked up and I was exactly right. Ms. Wanda said, Where you going, Atlanta? Not tonight.

I said, Ms. Wanda, you've made my day. Ever have somebody look at you like you grew a third eye right here in the center of your forehead? What are you talking about? Ms. Wanda, I spent 27 years in the Air Force. I have flown hundreds of sorties and I'm going to tell you I know a lot about airplanes. I'm a 5 million miler on your airline and for 12 years, I had my own airplane.

So let me tell you what I know and what I don't know. I know if there is anything wrong with that airplane out there, I don't want to be on it. Anything wrong with the pilot that's going to fly that plane, don't want to be on it. Anything wrong with the weather that that plane is

going to fly through, don't want to be on it. See,
I don't want to hear at 35,000 feet, "uh-oh."

(Laughter.)

I read the USA every day and there's
never been a single air terminal crash in history.
The terminal stays on the ground, sir. It does not
fly.

Now, what do you think Ms. Wanda did?
She smiled. I said, Ms. Wanda, before we do any
business, can I ask you a question? She said, Sure.
I said, Do you have any siblings? She said, Yes, I
have two brothers. I said, great. Older or
younger? She said I have one younger and one older.
I said, Perfect.

Let's talk about your younger brother.
Do you love your younger brother? Here is what she
said, Sure. Now, how many of you men in this room
if your wife called you this morning and said do you
love me would say sure. And how many of you now are
afraid to go home after that?

(Laughter.)

See, it's not a very passionate word.

I said, Ms. Wanda, see, we have a
small problem we need to fix first. Let's fix that

problem and then we can move on.

She said, Okay. I said, I travel a lot, and tomorrow night I'm going to get home and I'm going to call my wife, Deborah June, and this is kind of how the conversation will go. We have done it numerous times so I already know how it goes.

I'm going to call her on the phone and I'm going to say, Hey, honey. And this is what she's going to say, Who's this?

(Laughter.)

I'm going to say this is Dale. And she is going to be, Oh, it's been a long while since I've seen you. It's just a little thing we do. You know, it's a harmless kind of thing. We've been doing it for 50 years.

And I say, Look, would you like to go out to eat? Now, if anybody on this planet asked you if you want to go out to eat, it's yes or no, right? Not my wife. She goes, Is it a nice place?

(Laughter.)

I said, Of course. She's not asking about the place. What is she asking? How do I have to dress? I said, Of course, it's a nice place, honey.

She walks to her closet and looks in her closet and says this. I got nothing to wear. Now, this is a closet I can't even get a pair of shoes in. I said, You know what, honey, you got a beautiful black dress. It's got sequins on it. It's got little red sparkles on the shoulder. You know what I'm talking talk? Yeah. Why don't you put that dress on and let me take you out and show you off.

Now, folks, the 23rd of October, this month, I'll have been married to this woman for 50 years.

(Applause.)

Thank you. I'll tell her that applause was for her.

(Laughter.)

And she was arm candy when I married her and she's arm candy today.

So I said, Honey, I'm going to be home in about 45 minutes. She said, Okay, I'll be ready, which is a lie straight from hell.

(Laughter.)

Woman can't put her face on in 45 minutes. So I get in the car and I said, Look, I'm

actually going to stop and pick up a couple things for my next trip. She said, Okay. I said, I'll probably be an hour. She said, Okay, that'll give me time.

So I get home. I walk down the hall in my house to where my bedroom is. My wife steps out of the bedroom. She says something to me that every woman has been saying to men since Adam. Does anybody know what it was? How do I look? Exactly right, sir. That's exactly right. Now do you all know the answer that's not the answer. Here's not the answer. Fine, let's eat. Not the answer.

(Laughter.)

Now, see here's the thing.

Communication is the most important thing we can do with one another. Some people think this is a communication device. It's not a communication device. It's an information sharing device. The only time it's a communication device is when you're on Facetime if you have an Apple or you're on some other product, WhatsApp or whatever, when you're looking at someone. Then it's a communication device. Other than that, it's just an information device.

So I'm there and my wife says, How do I look? Now, I knew I had several choices. But here was the one I chose. When she says, How do I look I? Looked at her and went (sound effect).

(Laughter.)

We went out to eat but not right then.

(Laughter.)

Ms. Wanda laughed and she said, Can I ask you a question? I said, Certainly. She said, What's your name? I said, Ma'am, we are too early in our relationship to be sharing that information but my name is Dale Henry and I'm a speaker and a trainer. And I've promised 3,500 Ace Hardware conventioners that I will be in Atlanta in the morning at 8:30.

Now, while you were making your announcement and you told us that the flight had been canceled, I got on my phone and was trying to figure out whether I need to go get my rental car again. But it'd be a waste of time because if I drove all night long, I'd get to somewhere right around Birmingham, Alabama at 8:30 in the morning and I'd still miss the opportunity.

I don't miss programs, Ms. Wanda. I

have been doing my job a long time. I've only missed five in my life. Three of them when my mother died, two when my dad died. I've rented airplanes and I've rented helicopters. I've hired people to drive me all night long, so I can get there. I've spent more money than I will make on the program getting to the program. But it's because I come from a long line of leaders that believe that when the handshake is given, the deal is made. And you can't go back on your deal.

Now, Ms. Wanda, I would love to tell you that I would love to get there on your airline but you have canceled your flight. So would you do me favor? She said, Of course. I said, Since you know this airline much better than I do, I'm sure, and you know all of the airlines much better than I do, do you think you might be able to find me a flight that will get me to say Knoxville, Tennessee, Nashville, Tennessee, Orlando, Florida, Jackson, Mississippi, somewhere I can get in a rental car and make my trip in the morning to be able to do my speech on time. You think you could do that for me, Ms. Wanda, if I was your baby brother?

(Laughter.)

Now, she opened the door because she said what, she was going to treat us like what, family. I wish you'd been there. She had a phone on each ear, a walkie-talkie in her hand and a computer going in front of her. And after three minutes she looked at me and she said this:

Dr. Henry, I have you a flight to Birmingham, Alabama. It leaves in 12 minutes, 11 gates down on a sister airline of ours. Run, Forest, run.

(Laughter.)

Now, I've got to ask you a question. It just has to be asked. Let's say you were standing in that line in Atlanta. Let's say you had to get to Atlanta that night. Let's say you were either No. 12 in line or No. 14 in line, which one do you think had a better shot of making it? 14, exactly. Now why is that? Because a leader changed everything. See, some people say that one person can't make a difference and I beg to argue with you, if you'd allow me just for a minute.

Now, you've been sitting in this room for a couple of days and I'll bet you that you have not heard something that's so obvious that I'm going to make you listen to it just for a second. And I

want you to be really quiet and I want you to tell me what you hear.

Do you hear the air-conditioner? Can you hear it? Interesting thing about that air-conditioning unit. Two things make it work, a return and a vent. The return takes the air that we have in this room and pulls it through the return and pulls it up to the air-conditioning mechanism itself. It's cleaned, humidified and filtered and then it's sent back to us on another little device and it comes out the vent nice, cool, warm, whatever we've set the thermostat for. But that apparatus that makes that happen is called a duct. It's not very fancy. It's not very sexy. But until you understand the meaning of the word duct or go to its Latin root word, which is ductus, you will not understand what it really means and the word ductus means this simply, to bring the best of what's available to where it's needed most.

Now, I've heard a lot of definitions of leadership, but I've never heard one that was any more well pointed than that. Because if you spend your day bringing the best of what's available to where it's needed most, you will be happy. You will

be a problem solver and you will be optimistic.

I'm staying in Chicago, Illinois a number of years ago and I get a call on my cell phone. We all do the same when we get a call on our cell phone, don't we. We look at it. We don't answer the phone. Nobody hears ring, ring, ring, ring and just picks up the phone and answers it. No, we look at it. What are we looking for? Who is calling. But why are we looking at who's calling, so we know how to answer the phone, right?

Well, I look down, don't know the number. It's somewhere in California. So I said I don't know who it is but I'm just going to go ahead and answer in my I don't know who this is voice.

(Laughter.)

So I picked it up and go, Hey, this is Dale. How you doing? The person on the other end says, Hey, Dale, this is Bill, which was no help whatsoever.

(Laughter.)

So I started playing that game. I'm sure you've played it. You don't know who someone is, you try to figure out who they are.

I said, Hey, Bill, the weather in

Chicago today is awesome. How's the weather where you are? He said, You don't know who this is, do you? I said, No, I do not. He said, Dale, this is Bill Marriott. I said, Well, then that's unfair. He said, What do you mean? I said because I've got you on speed dial. I've got your office on speed dial. I've got your secretary on speed dial but you're calling from a number in California that I do not know, so that is very unfair.

He just laughed. And he said Harold Queisser and I were sitting here thinking how you were going to figure out who I was on the phone. He said, Dale, we've just opened a new property in San Diego and I want you to come and speak to our 1,200 employees, 600 in the afternoon, 600 of them in the evening. And I've set to do that tomorrow. I said, Well, I hope you got a good speaker. He said, Well, I do. It's you. I said, No, it's not me. He said, What do you mean?

I said, Now, you should know this Mr. Marriott. I don't do anything until Michelle tells me to do it. He said, I just got off the phone with Michelle. I said, I'll see you tomorrow.

(Laughter.)

Then he said this to me. I'm going to pick you up at the airport. Now, I want you to stop just for a second. When Bill Marriott, the owner and President and CEO of the Marriott Corporation says to you, I'm going to pick you up at the airport, he ain't going to jump in his Toyota Corolla and come and get you. He's going to send somebody. Now, I knew that's what he meant and I said okay. So I step out of the nonsecure area at the airport and here stands Bill Marriott with a chalkboard sign with my name on it. He knows me. I know him. We know each other. I said, Bill, you know me. He said, I know but this is too cool. Isn't this too cool?

(Laughter.)

I said, I've got to tell you, it's cool.

We step outside and I saw Peter. Peter is my favorite limo driver on the whole planet. Peter is about this tall. If he's 4' 6," he's tall. He looks like Yosemite Sam.

(Laughter.)

Handle bar moustache, deep Russian accent. He looks at me and says this, Dale,

Brother, give me hug. And he reaches around my waist, picks me up with his big cheeks just makes your day.

I get in the back of the limousine with Mr. Marriott and he gets in the front to drive us. We're sitting in the back of the car for that six-minute ride over to the San Diego Marriott. And Bill Marriott said, Dale, let's talk for a few minutes. We ain't got much time. When I get there, they're going to pull at me a thousand different ways. I said, That's all right.

And looked at his watch and he said, That's weird. I said, What's weird? My watch has just stopped. Now, what kind of watch do you think Bill Marriott has? Yeah, something nice, right? Now, I put myself work through college working in a jewelry store. I know what I'm doing. I said, Why don't you let me take a look at it, Mr. Marriott? I might be able to fix it. I think he was kind of shocked. But he unclasped it and he handed it to me and it's the first time I have seen the watch. It was a Sports Illustrated watch, free with the subscription. You know the one I'm talking about.

(Laughter.)

It's a \$2 watch.

Now immediately, I said this to myself. Same thing you would have said in your head. That's a \$2 watch, Bill. You could do better than that. But before I could say anything, he handed it to me and he said, Be careful with that watch. My grandson gave it to me.

Now immediately, I understand this watch is, what, priceless, which is good. Let's break the \$2 watch, Dale. That will go over really well with Mr. Marriott.

(Laughter.)

And Mr. Marriott in that moment taught me the real gift of leadership. And the real gift of leadership is it's not what something costs, what's it worth to you. See, if you try to put a cost on everything, you'll get in trouble. But if you ask somebody what it's worth to them, they will tell you. Everybody in this room that's sitting here has had good leaders and they've had bad leaders. But the one thing that you've got to understand is that you will never lead until you know how to serve, never.

So I took the watch and I took a dime

and I popped the back off of it off. It was green on the inside. He had been wearing this thing every day for probably two years. I cleaned up the batteries, cleaned up the connection, put them back in, snapped the back on it. It fired right back up. You would have thought I gave Bill Marriott a Renaissance Hotel. He just kept going, You fixed my watch. You fixed my watch. Now, in my head I'm thinking this, No, Bill that would have fixed the watch. Just get you a new watch. Okay.

(Laughter.)

Now we pulled up in the front of the Marriott corporation. I want you to think about this just for a second. I'm walking in with Bill Marriott, not just anybody. This is Bill Marriott. You think everybody on that property knows him. Of course they do. So when I walked in the door, my stock value has gone out the roof because I'm walking in with Bill Marriott. And I know everybody is going to say, Who is that with Mr. Marriott? And I'm thinking Bill Marriott is going to introduce me, Hey, this is our speaker. He's going to talk to us tomorrow. He's going to teach us a lot about service, gonna teach a lot

about leadership. No. Do you know what he says to every single person he meets? He fixed my watch. They think I'm a jeweler.

(Laughter.)

Women are walking up to me, Is this a good ring. I said, Did it turn your finger green? How would I know?

(Laughter.)

I did my program the next day, got ready to leave. Bill Marriott met me at the limo again. Peter dumped my stuff in and we started off. Bill Marriott did something very unusual. Actually, it's kind of a test. Let's make it test, shall we? I'll tell you the story and let's see if you get it.

Sat there in the limousine. He reached over and put his hand on my knee and said this, Thanks, Dale. See, I knew you'd miss it. Let's all help you out a little bit. I like that tie. It's a nice tie, sir. I like that shirt. That's nice. That's -- who bought that shirt, sir?

A DELEGATE: I did.

DR. DALE HENRY: You did. No, you purchased it.

A DELEGATE: That's true.

DR. DALE HENRY: I asked who bought it.
So what does that shirt -- what's that on that
shirt, sir?

A DELEGATE: 86. That's our local number.

DR. DALE HENRY: That's your local number,
isn't it? Yeah. So you said you bought the shirt.
Let me help you a little bit with that. The money
that you bought that shirt with where did you get
that money?

A DELEGATE: The membership.

DR. DALE HENRY: The membership. So the
membership bought you that shirt. Have you thanked
them for it yet? No, you didn't think of it because
you didn't even know they bought it until just a few
minutes ago. Good story, though. You're good.
You're slick but do you get my point? The point is
we take things for granted. You know what we take
for granted the money tree. Where is the money
coming from? And it doesn't hurt to thank the
person with the money.

I'll give you another example here. I
think you'll get this. Words are incredibly
important. Let me show you how important they are.

I'm going to give everybody in this room \$2 million, but you've got to spend it like I want you to spend it. There's always a catch, right? I want you to buy yourself a fast food franchise. I'm going to give you two choices. McDonald's, who wants a McDonald's franchise? Who wants \$2 million to buy a McDonald's franchise? Now, come on. I like hamburgers. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that. I appreciate that.

How many of you want to buy Chick-fil-A? There's quite a few people that want to buy Chick-fil-A. Now why is that? Well, what does Chick-fil-A sell? Chicken. Anything special about chicken? Well, it's the last flavor that God made. Everything after chicken tastes like chicken.

So a lot of people think, you know, this is a great franchise, Dale. The person that came up with this franchise probably thought a great deal about this, did a lot of research. No, that's not the way it happened.

Do you know how Mr. Truett decided to go into the chicken business? He went to a mall and wanted to open a restaurant in the mall. And he said we'd like to open a hamburger restaurant here

and they said we already have a hamburger place. He said, What don't you have? We don't have a chicken place. We'll sell chicken. That was the process.

Now, of course, they've refined it down since then. They've been in business for quite a while. But let me tell you the difference between those people that have would chosen McDonald's and those people that chose Chick-fil-A. The people that chose McDonald's will do just fine. You will make \$3.5 million per restaurant. That's good. That's a good profit margin.

The one who chose Chick-fil-A will make \$5.7 million. And let me remind you of something. They're closed a month and a half. So why? How is it possible that some place that's closed that many days a year can be that much more profitable. I'll tell you why. You go into McDonald's. You order yourself a hamburger. You lay down your \$5 and you say, Thank you, right? And what do they say, Next. Lay your \$5 down at Chick-fil-A, order yourself your chicken sandwich. You say, Thank you. And they say, My pleasure.

Now, have some fun with that the next time you're in by the way. Next time you're in

there and you say, Thank you, and they, It's my pleasure, you go, No, thank you. And they'll say, No, it's my pleasure. No, thank you. And they'll say, No, it's my pleasure.

(Laughter.)

See, do you know want to know why they say it's "my pleasure," because it's a culture. And if you don't say my pleasure, you'll be working at the McDonald's across the street tomorrow.

(Laughter.)

It's a very deep culture.

See, we don't think about the words we use because we don't think it affects anyone. Oh, it affects people a great deal. A lot of people want to know where they got that phrase from. It just so happens I know, you see.

Back in 1995, I was working for a little company down in Atlanta, Georgia and I got to meet a guy name Bubba. Bubba is Mr. Truett's youngest son. He's in charge of the customer service. Bubba and I are sitting there having lunch and he goes, Dale, it drives me crazy. We need something that shows our culture to our customer, something that we can use so they'll know that it's

important to us that they came in. And I said, well, Bubba, why don't you just say, "It's my pleasure," and now as Paul Harvey says you know the rest of the story.

See the words we use in leadership are just as important. Here is one never used. It's the least I can do. Have you ever heard that phrase, It's the least I can do. No, the least you can do is get down on the ground naked and breathe. That's the least you can do. I don't want to see that. I had breakfast this morning.

(Laughter.)

So what we need to do is remember always our vocabulary is the most important thing we do. It's my pleasure. Thank you. You know, Captain Kangaroo was right. Please and thank you is good phrases to use every day. Nothing wrong with saying, yes, sir and no, sir, and yes, ma'am and no, ma'am either.

My wife Deborah is a very unusual person. She has what I call Deb-isms. Deb-isms are things that my wife is the only person on the planet that says them. I'm pretty sure of this.

Let me give you some examples of that

before I go on with my story. I'm in Denver, Colorado getting ready to speak and my cell phone rings. Now, I'm sitting at the front of the room. They're getting ready to introduce me. All the guys are just doing some housekeeping, so I've got like three minutes. I look down it's my wife. And I say, you know, I should answer this. So I leaned over to where nobody can hear me and I said, Hey, Deb, they are getting ready to introduce me. She goes, Whatcha you doing? I said, They're getting ready to introduce me. Oh, okay. I'm sorry. The commode is making a funny noise. I said, Videotape it. When I get home we'll both laugh together. She goes, No, not funny ha-ha, funny like strange. I said, Which commode is it? It's the one in our bedroom. Okay. Can you go there? I hear her walking through the house. She gets there. I said, Okay. She said, I'm here. Take the phone and put it down next to the commode. Why? I'm going to talk to it. What good is that going to do? Exactly. I'm in Denver.

(Laughter.)

This is my all-time favorite Deb-ism. She sent me to get something at the Walmart. I pull

up in the parking lot. She calls me on the phone.
Calls me on the phone. Remember that. Did you
forget your cell phone?

(Laughter.)

How do you answer that question? So I
thought it was -- yes. That's exactly what I said.
I said, Yes, I think I did. She said, Where do you
think you left it? I said, I don't know. I think
on the kitchen -- I can hear her scratching around
on the kitchen counter looking for it. It's not
here. Well, try the bedroom. I'm thinking she's
going to obviously wake up and know that we're
talking on the phone.

(Laughter.)

She gets in the bedroom. She says,
I'm tired of looking for your stuff. How am I going
to tell you what I need at the Walmart? I said,
Well, why don't we use this telepathic things.
Seems to be working pretty good.

(Laughter.)

Oh, you laugh. It wasn't funny for me
when I got home though.

(Laughter.)

Thank you.

So Mr. Marriott has just reached over and touched me on the knee and thanked me. Now do you know what he thanked me for, for taking his money. See when you become a leader, your eyes get opened a little bit. You learn something new every day and you want to teach people something new every day. How to work safely, how do their job more efficiently. But there is a way to teach people that doesn't look like you are telling them, it looks like you're helping them. You know how that is, for you to do it too. See, the eye is a much better teacher than the mouth.

So I looked over at Mr. Marriott and I said something to Mr. Marriott I don't think he's ever heard in his entire life. As a matter of fact, I'm pretty sure he's never heard it because of the way he responded. I said, Mr. Marriott, that's unacceptable. Now, I knew he had never heard this phrase by the way he responded. He said, Say what?

(Laughter.)

I said, Mr. Marriott, you have just thanked me for taking your money. I'll make this real simple for everybody here. Folks, thanks for the suit. Thanks for the shoes, the belt. Thanks

for the ticket that brought me here. Thanks for my car that I took to the airport. Thanks for the home I live in. Thanks for sending my kids to college. Because without you, I don't have any of that. You are the reason I'm here. And as a leader, you are there because they are there. Never forget that. Never.

I looked at Mr. Marriott and I said, Mr. Marriott, can we try this one more time? He said, Yeah, Dale. What? Okay. Here we go. Mr. Marriott, thank you for the opportunity to speak today at the Marriott Corporation. You know what he said? You're welcome. We set the world back on its axis again.

He reached in his pocket, pulled out this pen, stuck it in my pocket and said just a little something. This is a token, Dale, for the fine job you did today at the Marriott Corporation. I said, I appreciate that, Mr. Marriott. Now let me tell you what I'm thinking in my head. It's a pen. I mean, you got some trade show people here, right? What are they trying to give you? A pen. Everybody wants you to have a pen. Take a pen. Here's a pen. Take two pens. Everybody on the planet wants you to

take their pen -- well, everybody but the bank.
They chain their's down. I never understand that.
They chain down the pen and leave the safe open.
Have you noticed this?

(Laughter.)

There's something wrong. I love to
get one of those little chains that dribble out of
my pocket when I go to the bank and go, Thanks for
the pen. Drives them crazy. They look everywhere
for the one I've taken.

(Laughter.)

I put the pen -- didn't think anything
about it. It's just a pen. How many of you have
ever been to a Marriott? How many of you took a
pen? Raise your hand if you took a pen? That's
called thievery. Thanks for admitting to it, sir.
It's a small amount, though. You know, it's
probably a misdemeanor. No, they did it on purpose
because they want you to take it. It's advertising.
And that's what I thought it was. This is a
Marriott pen, right?

I get to the airport and I call -- my
office manager calls me on the phone and I know
something is up because she said something to me

she's never said before. Michelle goes, How you doing, Buttercup?

(Laughter.)

She's never called me Buttercup. I had a lady once in Georgia call me Sugar Britches, but she never called me Buttercup.

I said, What's going on? She said, Are you happy? I said, Of course I'm happy. She said, I know why you're happy. You're happy because you think you're going home. I said, What do you mean I think I'm going home? Oh, you're not going home. See, Joe Calloway just called me on the phone. His mother is sick and he was speaking in Charlotte and I told him you would cover his program for him tonight. I said, Michelle, you know I get you a USA Today, right? Yes, sir. Is it there handy? Yes, sir, it is. I said, would you open it to the first section, please. It's the weather map. I said, Yeah, it's a map. I just want you to see the map. See, I'm in California that's on the left side of the country. Charlotte is on the right side of the country and I'm going to get to Atlanta at 6:00 and there's no way you can get me to Atlanta in time to do a program tonight at 6:30, 7:00. She

said, Well, I'm not going to take you to Atlanta. I'm going to take you straight into Charlotte. You're riding on US Air. I said, Oh, that makes sense. But she said, You don't have a U.S. Air ticket, so get off the phone and get it because your flight leaves in about 20 minutes.

So I walk up to U.S. Air and a nice lady there took care of me. And she said, Sir, if you'll just sign this credit card receipt, we'll get your ticket. So I reached in my pocket, pulled out my pen, took the top off and started signing. From behind the counter she said this. Ooh, you have a Monte Blanc. I said, Excuse me? She said, You have a Monte Blanc. I said, Well, thanks for noticing.

(Laughter.)

She said, Your pen, sir. Your pen is a Monte Blanc. I said, Oh, cool. I thought it was a like a Cross or, you know, a good pen. So I said, I appreciate that. Got to Charlotte. I'm a little early. Walking up the moving sidewalk and there was this banner there. It said, Visit the Monte Blanc kiosk. Now how many times you think I went under that banner, hundreds of times, never saw that banner. Why? Never had no stinking Monte Blanc

before.

(Laughter.)

Now I said, you know what, I've got to know more about this Monte Blanc stuff. It's the second time today somebody said about my -- so I walked over to the young lady there that was operating the little kiosk and I took my pen out and I handed it to her and I said, Ma'am, can I get a refill for my pen? Now, this is a couthful way of trying to figure out how much the pen's worth. She took the pen. She said, Yes, sir. This is a Monte Blanc Presidential, a limited edition pen. The refill is \$29.95. I said, \$29? For \$29.95, sir, I can get you a Cross pen and pencil, put your name on it and still take this old boy out to Hardee's for breakfast, you understand that, right?

(Laughter.)

And have money left over probably.

I said, What else can you tell me about my pen? She took the top of it and she said, Would you like to know your pen's lineage. My pen's -- I'm from the south. I don't know my own lineage. That's why we marry our relatives.

(Laughter.)

I told that joke in West Virginia.

Didn't get a single laugh two weeks ago.

(Laughter.)

A little too close to home.

(Laughter.)

I said, I would love to know my pen's lineage. She took the serial number off my pen. I said, My car has a serial number. She typed it into her computer. She said, Sir, as I told you, this is a Monte Blanc Presidential, a limited edition pen. It was purchased in Baltimore, Maryland by Mr. Bill Marriott. He bought all ten pens that we had in the Baltimore store. \$695. I said, My good friend, Bill Marriott who is really good businessman gave \$695 for 10 pens? She said, No, sir, for that one. That's a \$700 pen and it has been in my pocket for 14 years. Anybody want to guess why?

A DELEGATE: It's priceless.

DR. DALE HENRY: Because it's priceless. Very good. What did it cost me? Nothing. What's it worth? Everything. Every time Bill Marriott sees me, he pulls that jacket back and he goes, I see you still got your pen. That tells him that I value his friendship. Also, if I ever lose it, I'll

have a buy another one just like it.

(Laughter.)

They have gone up considerably.

(Laughter.)

See, we have a tremendous responsibility, you and I, whether you know it or not, whether you realize this or not, people watch you every second of every day. Did you know that? Somebody's watched you since you got here, sir. I have been watching you. I'm sure other people are too. What are we looking for? We're looking for you to do something to inspire us.

I have two daughters. One of the most precious thing to me is my two daughters, my grandchildren. Son-in-laws, they're expendable --

(Laughter.)

-- but they're not worthy but they mean so much to me, as I'm sure yours mean to you. But you see, I want to make sure that somebody leads them because I can't always be with them. But I can tell you this, from the time my kids were big enough to see, they watched me every day. By the time your kids are big enough to see, they watch you every day. You know what you do when you do something

wrong, you give them permission to do it as well.

When you work with people and you do something that you shouldn't do, you give them permission to do it too. If you're rude, you give them permission to be rude. If you're unkind, you give them permission to be unkind. If you are forgiving and you're strong and you're a good leader and you serve, you give them permission to do that too. It's really simple.

Unfortunately, my time is starting to slip away, so I need to make my final point before you fine folks get to go somewhere else.

In 1979, which was a long time ago, back when the earth's crust was still cooling, I became a teacher. Now that's probably not much of a story until you consider where I came from. How many people in here are from Tennessee? Any people in here from Tennessee? I can't see any hands? Did I see a hand go up back there or are you just ashamed or?

(Laughter.)

He'll know that I am from a little area that we call Appalachia. I was a sophomore in high school before we had indoor plumbing. I'm not

that old. We didn't have two nickels to rub together, but I didn't know it because I was happy, lived on a farm with my grandmother and grandfather, my mom and my dad. Worked every day. I thought everybody did.

I learned a lot of great principles. Number one, you know what your job is on the farm? Everything is your job on the farm. It's a great leadership mantra. What's your job? Everything. My job is to do whatever needs to be done. My job is to be the ductus and to bring whatever is needed to where it's needed most.

So I became a schoolteacher in 1978. I graduated from the University of Tennessee, which is a land grant university. It was the biggest blessing of my life. My mom and dad grinned from ear to ear when I graduated. See, I was the first person to graduate from high school, the first person to graduate from college. Not a bragging point, just telling you somebody had to do it and I guess I was the one that was lucky enough to do it.

I walked in the classroom that day. A young woman was standing there in the classroom. She gave me a magazine and asked me if I'd join TEA

NEA. And I said, Yes, ma'am, I will. I've always been a strong union supporter. My dad was a printer. He was a union printer. I became a union printer. I became a journeyman pressman and I would love to join the union. And she gave me a magazine. It was a free magazine. I didn't have to pay for it. Didn't mean anything to me. I threw it on my desk.

Now some people would say luck. Don't believe in luck. Believe in Providence. Providence caused this magazine to open to its center section. On the left-hand side of that center section was a calendar, one I would use every day in my classroom. On the right-hand side was a quotation, one I never read, not once, not that whole school year not one time did I read it.

I had a student in my room. His name was Jerry Monroe. Good kid, needy, though. He always at my desk, always asking questions. Good kid. And when he was standing there waiting on me to answer his question, I'm sure he looked down at my desk and he probably saw this quotation and said to himself that must mean something to Mr. Henry. It's always open to that page. And I'm sure he read

it several times. See, I never read it.

The last week of school that school year he took an exacto knife and he cut that quotation out of that magazine, laminated it to a beautiful piece of white oak and gave it to me in 1979, the very last day of school. You want to know something sadder than the fact that I never read this? I never missed it when he cut it out, but I read it that day. And when I did, it clicked in something in my head. You know, you'll hear people say it changed my life. I don't know that it changed my life but it sure gave me a new focus. And as I end my program today, I would like to recite it for you. It's my mantra. It's my leadership role goal. It means a lot to me. I have memorized it. I don't have to look at it anymore. It's in my brain. It's in my heart.

But before I recite it for you, I would like to bring a really good friend of mine up here on the stage with me. Oh, I'm not going to bring him up here physically, that would be impossible but the memory of my friend is very, very deep into my heart. And whenever I get the opportunity to bring him up, I do. See, if he were

telling this story, he would say, You gotta hear the rest of the story.

See 12 years later, I would become the superintendent of the school system. And it had fallen on my shoulders to hire someone to take my job. You're probably thinking it was no big deal. It was a huge deal. See, I looked for the person I wanted to replace me for almost four months and I found him. His name was Jerry Monroe. See, the student became the teacher when he became my teacher 12 years earlier, when he gave me the gift that I would love to give you and it goes like this.

When I was very young, I thought that I could change the world. You can't. It's a good goal but you can't do it. It's too big. It's too broad. It's too vast. Too many ideologies. You can't change this world. I know this you see, because my world would not be changed by me.

So I thought I would change my country. Now I'm a little sentimental about this country. I served it for 27 years. By laying in the back of a KC 97 or a KC 135 putting jet fuel into planes flying at about 40,000 feet. Low stress job. Wasn't my plane that was going to catch on

fire anyway, so it didn't make any difference.

And I'm a little superstitious and heartfelt about this wonderful country. I don't think you can find another one that even comes close. I've been to every continent in this world. And when you come back to this country and you plant your feet on this soil, you get the feeling you get nowhere else in the world.

But you can't change this country. As a matter of fact, we tell people that you can think as you wish and do as you wish, so how can you possibly change somebody that's going to do what they wish? Couldn't change the people in my country. I know this you see. So I thought I would change my community.

Now this makes some sense. Because people know us, right? They spend the day with us. They see us every day. They watch us every day. But a prophet is never appreciated in their own country. And for this reason you can't change the people who know you best. You can't change those in your community. I know this, you see because people in my community would not be changed by me.

So I thought I would change my family.

That's doable. Really? You ever wonder why your kids when they turn teenagers stop listening to you? It's because they have been listening to their whole lives and watching you do what you said you were going to do when you didn't do it. You see, do what you say, say what you mean. Pretty simple. But you can't change your family. I know this you see, because my family would not be changed by me.

Well, you know what, now I lay on my death bed. Mourn for me you might say, a life wasted away. Oh, not so, says I. See I finally figured out the person I truly can change and by now you know who it is too. See for me it's me. For you it's you.

This should be the mantra of all leaders. Change myself first and have other people watch and they will change afterwards. See we have to change ourselves. You were not placed here to change those you work with. You were not placed here to change those that lead you. You were not placed here to change your wife, your kids, the people who live in your community or the people that live within your country. You were placed here to change you, to become the leader of your life. And

if you can do that, you will discover the biggest secret of all, the secret of leadership, which is your family will change, your communities will change, your country will change. But in reality all that's changed is what? Is you. And if we can do that one miracle change ourself only, we might just might change the world.

My name is Dale Henry and I'm done.

God bless us each and every one of you.

Thank you.

(Standing ovation.)