

Zig's Message: Be Yourself; Then Be Better!

There will certainly never be another like him.

by **Michael York**

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The letter was dated May 25, 1994.

It was a letter to me from Zig Ziglar...

I first heard Zig speak in 1978, on the power of goal setting. I still have that 3 cassette album all these years later in my library. Coming right off the farm from a small town was just one of the reasons I related to Zig and his story.

Over the years I worked at becoming a student of Zig's teaching, learning to set and achieve goals. Learning to read more, listen more, think differently, and welcome the challenge of GETTING BETTER.

I would smile time after time hearing him recount his days of selling and being sold, always in his "signature" down-home style. How he had to sell 2 sets of cookware just to earn enough money to get his wife and new baby out of the hospital.

It was that style, and the substance of his messages that endeared him to generations who became students and CEOs and business-owners and just flat-out (a Zig term) BETTER PEOPLE because we had been exposed to the inspiration and instruction of this singular special individual.

His messages weren't just about SELLING, they were about SELLING US on SELLING OUT and going ALL-IN in every area of life, becoming better fathers and mothers and husbands and wives and brothers and sisters and workers, all through PERSONAL growth and personal development.

He challenged us to THINK!

To grow by learning and by doing... He was the example and he made it sound like almost anyone COULD, if only they WOULD.

He was WISDOM personified. Story-telling and humor drove his points deep inside us. He became unforgettable with a sharp wit and deep meaning in whatever his message needed us to grab hold of.

He would kneel at the edge of the platform, seemingly trying to get as close as he could to his audience and allow us to feel as if he were speaking directly to us.

I started in "his" business in 1978 (right out of the military); the cookware business, where his legend first began. Hearing all the stories and many of the tall tales about Zig's selling prowess. Later on in his books and tapes I couldn't help but smile and think back to those days each time I'd hear him recount his cookware stories to make a point.

I can still recall some of his powerful instruction that impacted me in a huge way, changed my thinking, which ultimately changed who I was and what I became.

That's what he told us, "You can change what you are, change where you are, by changing what goes into your mind."

"If you wanna' GO UP, you gotta' DRESS UP!"

He would tell the story of being asked about always being in a good mood to let us know that it was available to anyone, ***"YEP, I decided a LONG TIME AGO I would be in a GOOD MOOD TODAY!"***

And of course the Network Marketing classic...

"You can get anything in life you want, if you'll just help enough OTHER people get what they want."

Two decades later I got into “his business” again, this time entering the speaking business as a full time profession around the end of the 1990’s. Still a big part of my coaching and consulting business today, the speaking business is what had led to the letter from Zig, when I wrote to him asking his advice on public speaking as a professional, as in, getting PAID to do it.

I’m sure he must have received thousands of those letters and tens of thousands of verbal requests just like mine over the years, but opening his letter that day in 1994 and reading his well-thought-out response was a testament to who he was and how seriously he took his responsibility as a coach, mentor and encourager. He was more than just a professional speaker. He was a walking talking real-life example right out of those Bible pages he continually spoke about.

“Dear Michael, Thank you for your letter. The only advice I feel qualified to give anyone interested in breaking into the field of professional public speaking is to simply share my story...”

Zig was a SHARER of stories, his and others. He was an ENCOURAGER, and his encouragement to me over the several other letters and personal encounters through the years have left an indelible mark on not just my career, but my life as well.

For the past 16 or so years, each new year begins the same way; with me filling in the days on my Zig Ziglar PERFORMANCE PLANNER, one of the staples of my personal library. Even in this electronic age I still love capturing my days, my travels, and the times of my life in this black leather book.

**Zig was all about IMPROVING
PERSONAL PERFORMANCE in
every area.**

And as I write this column, that’s again how this New Year begins; with that shiny new 2013 black book here on the table, ready and waiting for all that the coming days have in store. So hardly a day goes by, for 16 years or so now, that I don’t think about Zig and all that he’s meant to me.

After his 2 pages of encouragement and suggestions and stories, he closed his letter with

“Now you know what I know. My very best to you in this endeavor, God Bless you in everything. Have a good forever, and I will... SEE YOU OVER THE TOP!”

And then he signed it as only he could.

The one and only...

Zig Ziglar.

There will certainly never be another like him.

But generations of us will carry on his messages and his stories to generations to come. He will never meet my grandson, but my grandson will know about Zig Ziglar. He was larger than life, and made life so much larger for so many of us just by being himself.

That just might be his greatest message of all. BE YOURSELF...and then be better!

Godspeed Zig, have a good forever. I'll see you over the top again one day...

Michael



In 2009 **Michael York** was named “*International Business Coach of the Year*” by Prime-Time Business Institute and E-Z Coaching Worldwide™

Michael wrote the book on *Becoming Uncommon* (www.Amazon.com).

He has been called “Mr. Mastermind” for his ability to bring together individuals and ideas that radically change personal and business PROFITS. He is a business-owner and marketing consultant who has addressed over 1000 audiences on Major League Marketing and Top

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