

Max Your Attitude!

I came to know Max Merget through my friendship with his father and over a short amount of time I came to respect Max and the challenges he had faced and overcome in his life. I recognized Max as the young man who was featured as Mott Children's Hospital's "poster boy". His successful battle with brain cancer was captured throughout southeast Michigan with large billboards of Max and a brief documentation of his fight against cancer with Mott as his chief ally and medical provider. I became a personal friend and an advisor to Max as I engaged with his uplifting personality and learned of his positive curiosity about life, business, and career.

Max earned my respect in a way no other young (high school aged) person had. He was full of positive energy and he questioned me on many fronts, but mostly on how to build a career and successful life from both business and personal perspectives. He never dwelled on the past or on the multiple challenges he had faced with his 3 life-saving brain surgeries earlier in life. He instead focused on the future, with discussions on his career interests, how to succeed in business, and what I thought about motivational speaking, medical field career opportunities and other walks of life. As our relationship developed and Max progressed toward his high school graduation he again faced another round in his battle with brain cancer. In this incidence, it was successfully treated with state-of-the-art radiation. This experience made Max's courage and powerful positive attitude much more evident to me. While we weren't communicating regularly during this time, I did see that the side effects of his treatments were challenging. Once again, when I spoke to Max, I never heard him talk of his challenges or of any limitations to his life plans. He wanted to earn a college degree, become successful in business, start a family, and realize the American dream.

As I entered the twilight of my career as an Automotive OEM Engineering Executive, I began to think of Max, his interest in motivating and helping others, and how many employees in my organization could benefit from a "dose" of Max and his remarkable positive energy. My company had been hurt badly by the financial crash of 2008-2009 and attitudes within the organization were severely strained at the time. I spoke to Max about coming in and speaking about his life experience with my people and he agreed that it was a cool idea. Max then introduced me to some key people in the Mott Children's Hospital organization and together we developed a one-day program to present to a large number of my employees in the Vehicle Engineering Organization at Fiat Chrysler Automotive in Auburn Hills, Michigan.

Max was the key-note speaker for this event and in his own words, he told his story in a series of four meetings with people across all aspects of my organization. I knew Max would make an impression on my people, but the feedback from this event exceeded my expectations. Many of my people gave me personal feedback on how Max's message impacted them, and how the problems with our business (and in many cases in their personal lives) seemed insignificant when compared to issues that Max had faced and overcome in his young life. Max had also left many of these people with a dose of his incredible enthusiasm and love of life. This is part of what makes Max so impactful on others, and I believe it will serve him for many years to come as a story teller and motivation speaker.

I wish Max much more success and a quick recovery as he deals with another challenge in his ongoing battle with brain cancer. I also remain confident that just beyond his latest challenge we will see more from Max that will help spread his story and enthusiasm for life with many more people.

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