

Author Offers '5 Cool Ideas'

By Neal Rubin

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Among Michael Angelo Caruso's many rules, tricks and strategies for success is a simple ambulatory directive: Walk fast.

"Walk with purpose," he instructs. "In any company, you can tell who's running the place within 10 seconds. It's the person walking fast."

Or, that could be the person who needs a rest room. But Caruso thinks about this sort of thing a lot, and he still says to step a little livelier.

"That way," he explains, "you send a signal that you respect your own time. If you respect your own time, other people are more likely to."

Caruso, 44, is a motivational speaker. Like snowboard instructor, video storeowner, IT manager and tongue piercer, it's a job classification that didn't much exist 20 years ago.

In a highly competitive field, the former musician from Royal Oak is making strides. Half a decade into his third personal reinvention, he's doing 180 presentations a year.

His latest step toward standing out is a self-published book, Five Cool Ideas for Better Working, Living & Feeling. It's actually about 60 groupings of five ideas, and you can buy it for \$20 on his Web site, www.Edison House.com, which also stands out with its allusion to the brilliant inventor.

In truth, Caruso says, he works out of his house and he lives on Edison Street. But as he stresses to his listeners, an edge is an edge, and what's most unusual about him is the simple fact that he enjoys standing in front of crowds with a microphone.

Every few years, a study shows that the average person's greatest fear is public speaking. Making a speech even ranks ahead of death. As Jerry Seinfeld points out, that means people at a funeral would rather be the dead guy than give the eulogy.

Meantime, Caruso wakes up on seminar days and tells himself, "'Seventy cool people want to meet me today!' You don't stay in bed after a thought like that."

Caruso is the only motivational speaker I've ever spent time with, and what I most wanted him to tell me was how he jumped from what he was to what he is.

A big step, he says, was not listening to his dad – or rather, not being able to.

He and three brothers spent the 1980s in a touring pop band called – no surprise here – Caruso. After Michael Caruso came in from the road, he found an increasingly frustrating job with a telecom company.

As a former showman, the part he liked best was speaking at trade shows and seminars. “I want to do more of this stuff,” he told his boss.

“We’re happy with what you’re doing now,” she said. About that time, Caruso lost his father, Mickey, a wise and careful Depression kid from Trenton who always said, “Never quit a job without another one to go to!”

“When my dad died,” Caruso says, “I didn’t hear that voice anymore.” Then, sounding much more pop-psych than usual, he elaborates: “Sometimes positive angels offer negative messages.”

Caruso quit the job and declared himself a professional speaker, in the manner of Zig Ziglar, Tony Robbins and the other motivational superstars whose work he continues to study. He scheduled some gigs through a booking agency and got to motivating.

“You have to tell people you’re special,” he advises audiences. “They don’t always figure it out on their own.”

Shake hands firmly. Give your full name. Put a brief but enticing outbound message on your voice mail.

In an increasingly complex and confusing world, he says, people need this stuff. They respond. He revels.

“I feel like I’m doing what I was put on the planet to do,” he declares. “I feel like I am in my stride.”

It’s a swift stride, a little faster than normal – just enough to stand out.

Michael Angelo Caruso is President of the Edison House, a Detroit-based communication company. He is the author of “5 Cool Ideas for Better Working Living & Feeling,” “Hmmm . . . Little Ideas With BIG Results” and the audio book, “Dear Michael Angelo – A Father's Life Lessons To His Son.” Mr. Caruso delivers 180 presentations per year. Click [here] to request booking information. Mr. Caruso can be reached at 248/546-9140 or at www.EdisonHouse.com. ©2003

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