

# Straight Talk From Coach Pitino Cuts to the Quick



By T. Patrick Hurley

Coach Rick Pitino's message clicked for me within minutes of his stirring keynote address to the capacity crowd at ACG InterGrowth 2006.

It dawned on me that afternoon when a sell-side client called in the middle of the Capital Connection. A tricky intellectual property issue threatened to jeopardize a very sweet sale to a strategic buyer.

Our guy was forlorn. We were down big at half-time and needed to believe victory could still be ours.

Without realizing it at first, my advice was laced with Rick Pitino's message. We can get through this. It's up to us, and we can determine the outcome. There was no mistaking that I was following his advice. And it worked. Rather than continue careening off in the wrong direction, we got back on course.

That is the magic of ACG InterGrowth. Every spring (35 years running), this one-of-a-kind event draws a bigger group of ambitious dealmakers for spontaneous interaction and relationship building.

The event puts us in a receptive frame of mind. We see deal ignition all around us. Messages from world-class speakers reach us when they otherwise might not. There is nothing like it.

What is so special about it is the people and the menu of networking and programs in relaxed settings to choose from. And like anything else, it's what you make of it for your business and personal agenda.

Back to Pitino. He talked about being positive and tenacious, about listening more and acting on what we hear. He talked about discipline and inspi-

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ration, about healthy pressure and confidence. He talked about living in the present.

We ACG folks love sports and striving to succeed. Most of us work in teams and tend to appreciate the coach as much as any player, identifying more with the responsibility than the glory.

We're all in tough businesses. Whether you're a principal or service provider, it's a rough-and-tum-



ble marketplace, and none of us enjoys tumbling. Without a winning record, the market shows us the door. We all need a boost now and then.

Competition across the board is intense and not going to let up. Coach talked about how his mindset on recruiting has evolved over 30 years and how he has honed his approach to prevail when the outcome is not a lay-up.

Chasing a deal smacks of much the same. When it's too close to call, everything you've done bears on which way the decision goes. Setbacks are inevitable. How we learn from them depends on us. Our job is to learn from those setbacks and enact change.

Live in the present. Coach Pitino did as he chatted during lunch and then on stage leaned forward on one knee to drive home a point about making the play to win at the buzzer.

Every turn requires us to adjust our game plan to outmaneuver problems and opponents. We're eternal optimists. We believe we can win. Thank you, Coach.

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