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Speed and deception are critical elements of victory in warfare, competitive business, and in any other competitive environment. If your adversary knows what you are going to do, he can move to counter your efforts and even defeat you by turning the tables. By moving quickly and in complete secrecy, you can gain tremendous advantage and win great battles.

In your business and your career, the tactic of “surprise” can be effectively used to achieve a competitive advantage in rapidly changing markets or situations. In many instances “speed” equates to surprise. Producing a product or service first or faster creates a surprise that either delights or terrifies.

In the military, the elements of speed, deception, and surprise are so important that most wars begin with a surprise attack, only followed later by a formal declaration of war. In business, the first to get a new product on the shelf reaps the first wave of revenue. In the professional world, the unexpected extra given to a client establishes trust and loyalty.

Surprises are typically unexpected. When you need to reset the leverage in a given situation, it helps to do the unexpected. Doing the unexpected gets

other people’s attention. Surprises don’t mean you have to jump out of a closet at someone. It means you can deviate from a typical pattern of behavior or action when people expect you to behave or act a certain way. Your unexpected deviation can create new momentum in others--in their thoughts and/or actions.

Let’s face it, the more you keep doing what you are doing, the more you will keep getting what you are getting. If you don’t like what you are getting, start doing things differently, faster, or in an unexpected way.

If you are bored at work, consider volunteering for additional assignments, changing jobs within the company, or taking a more drastic measure such as moving across the country to start a new and different career in a different field--this would definitely catch some people by surprise.

Before you launch a surprise or do the unexpected, though, be sure to develop new knowledge and new skills, if necessary, that could make you a more valuable employee or could transform you into a more capable specialist. If you take an unexpected turn without being adequately trained and prepared, you’ll be crashing into a wall with a car that won’t protect you.

Don’t let complacency prevent you from making a move to surprise or doing the unexpected. The wise ones

will tell you that the greatest enemy of success is complacency. Complacency often happens when you slip into a comfort zone at your work or in your personal life. You become comfortable and content doing your job and living your life the same old way, even if you are no longer enjoying the fulfillment and satisfaction that you once did.

When you begin to feel bored or unchallenged, it’s an indication that it could be time for you to change things up and do something different, surprising, or unexpected.

In a world where the only constant is change, you have to change with it in order to survive or thrive. And doing the unexpected is certainly a change! When it comes to change, you basically have two choices. You can either take the initiative and make the changes you need to make to enjoy the kind of life you desire, or you can wait until the changes are forced upon you by other people and circumstances. It’s much better to be the one who surprises rather than the one who gets surprised.

Lastly, when choosing to surprise or do the unexpected--don’t overdo it. It’s a matter of timing and good judgment. The key is to be consistent and reliable and every now and then toss in a surprise to keep things interesting. Sometimes, you have to do what’s unexpected.

~ The End ~