

LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

Lessons From Dad

It was 10 years ago that I wrote my first “Lessons Learned” column. The concept was simple — spending a lifetime in the music products industry has provided me with a treasure trove of lessons learned that I recall and share with you, my valued readers. Some of those lessons were learned the hard way by making mistakes and gaining enlightenment through the process of finding solutions. Other lessons came easier thanks to so many great people with whom I’ve associated throughout my career.

Chief among my teachers was my dad, Harry Rosenbloom. As founder of our Philadelphia-based retail store, Medley Music, he’s the guy who would set the tone and lay the foundation for the person, the businessman and the leader that I would become. Dad passed away April 9, 2019. His story is detailed in his obituary on Page 19. This month’s column details a handful of valuable lessons I learned during our many decades working side by side. It’s my way of paying tribute to him. Lessons from Dad:



Visiting backstage with my dad when he was 79. He played bassoon in the Treasure Coast Symphony.

“Time at work is meaningless without a rich personal family life.”

ARRIVE EARLY AND STAY LATE. This one is all about work ethic. To this day, my team never beats me to work. Showing up early gives you a head start on the day before things get too frantic. It also sets the tone for your team by demonstrating that you can’t wait to get to work! Likewise, not racing your customers to the exit shows their needs come first.

THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE MATTERS. Time at work is meaningless without a rich personal family life. Remember, you’re ultimately working to take care of your family and yourself.

NEVER EAT ONIONS DURING WORK HOURS. By forgoing the flavorful boost of a good onion on a sandwich or salad, you’ll save yourself from the bad breath that could turn off a customer or co-worker. Look at yourself in a mirror after eating. An errant piece of lettuce or broccoli

between your teeth can undermine your best sales efforts.

PENNIES COUNT. Because he started the business on a shoestring budget, my dad was always thrifty. He taught me that seemingly meaningless small savings in expenses add up at the end of a month, quarter or year. And those savings often drop right to the bottom line.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE. Never ask your team to do something you wouldn’t do yourself. I often saw my dad do everything from shovel

snow on the sidewalks to cleaning the toilets. It made a huge difference in the attitude of our staff.

TEACH THE CHILDREN WELL. Through the years, we had a cavalcade of young applicants that we hired. It was one of the rewarding parts of business seeing these young folks mature and develop into functioning adults. Dad was very generous in giving young staff a chance.

SLEEP ON IMPORTANT DECISIONS. He lived by this credo, and it often served him well. That said, it’s also important to understand which decisions just won’t wait for tomorrow.

CREATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY. Our store became the center of our town’s music scene. Musicians loved hanging out at the store because of the gear, the other musicians there, and because chatting with my dad about music and life was part of the whole hang. He was accessible and never had an office.

BE RELATABLE. Dad always viewed the employees, rep partners and industry constituents as part of an extended family. The countless fond remembrances that have streamed in are an indication that he was on the right track. Now that I’ve shared these lessons with you, they’ll hopefully live on through you and those you teach. I can think of no better legacy. **MI**

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