UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM
Student Affairs and Enrollment Services Leadership Conference
Navigating Your Success
Uncommon Wisdom to Inspire Your Life’s Work
Brian Mills - Assistant Director for Recreational Sports and Family Programming
Learning Outcomes

• Articulate what an inflection point is and response methods to those points.
• Understand the ripple effects of both short term and long term decisions
• Explain three key factors from the book, Howard’s Gift, and how those points apply to their professional lives
Howard’s Gift Book Overview

– Lesson's on pursuing both success and fulfillment beginning with:
  • Creating a vision of your own legacy - business planning for life
  • Being entrepreneurial in driving your career ahead (even if you are not an entrepreneur)
  • Exploit the inflection points in your life - whether friend, foe or silent
  • Cut risk in tough career and life decisions by shining a light of predictability on them plan for the ripples, not just the splash from your actions and choices
Howard’s Gift Book Overview

- Legacy visions
- Inflection points – on and off ramps of life
- Balancing life and work and
- Giving yourself a flexible framework for decision making
- Prioritizing and decision making - is the juice worth the squeeze
- Personal and professional satisfaction - are you cheating yourself or letting others cheat you out of opportunities
- Outside perspective from others vs. personal reality of your skills and worth
- Internal Board of Directors (IBOD) - finding and utilizing mentors and role model
- Finding your catalysts
- Working with a culture you are a part of vs. working against a culture you are forced to be in
- Decision making - a light of predictability
- Failing forward - ambiguity into opportunity, disaster into discovery
Why This Book is Crucial

ALWAYS HOPE, THERE IS
Why This Book is Crucial

• We all have doubts about our career
• We all feel frustration from time to time
• We all have been or will be blindsided
• We all need help along our journey
Inflection Points

"Self, do I want to continue on this path or is now the moment to change direction?"
Inflection Points

• Friend
  – We are grateful for these...they are easy - feels like an awakening, the realization of new possibilities.
Inflection Points

• Foe
  – These are, at least initially, unwelcome.
  – Typically come out of the blue, sneaking up on us and they bite us in the butt.
Inflection Points

• Silent
  – We may not recognize it, and as a result, we may not respond to it at all.
  – This is an opportunity to discover something about yourself
  – It occurs when we realize that something is waiting for us to make it happen. It's the inflection point that we create.
  – It occurs in the recognition of a connection between was IS and what SHOULD BE.
Your Experience?

• An inflection point is a lot easier to overlook or ignore - until the window for action passes.
• Very few people see inflection points as the opportunities they often are: catalysts for changing their lives; moments when a person can modify the trajectory he or she is on and redirect it in a more desirable direction.
Making a Splash and Ripples
What are some splashes?

• Who can think of a “splash” they can share?
  – Anyone from UH Main Campus?
  – Anyone from UH Clear Lake?
  – Anyone from UH Victoria?
  – Anyone from UH Downtown?
What are the ripples?

• Based on those splashes...what ripples came from it?

• The most important question...were you prepared? Were you proactive or reactive? Where did your ripples intersect others?
What are the ripples?

Opportunity Cost and the Choices We Make
Group Exercise

• Everyone should have quotes from the book
• You will have two minutes to read the quote and reflect on it
  – Think about how this quote may or may not apply to your life (work or personal)
• I want you go and find someone who has a different color sheet of paper and share your quote and briefly how it applies to you and vice versa. YOU HAVE FOUR MINUTES EACH
• Once you have shared, you will switch quotes (if you want to) and find someone else
Closing

• John Milton from Paradise Lost - "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." - you choose your reality - choose wisely

• Arthur Ashe - "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."