

TAKE A DIVE

into the deep end

Sink or swim. We've all heard the phrase as it relates to being thrown into the proverbial "deep end" in any number of scenarios throughout life. Sometimes we find ourselves forced to swim when/where we don't want to; other times, we have the opportunity to decide whether or not we want to make the dive into waters that aren't as safe or easy as those we're used to.

How many times do we pass up the uncertain waters of some situations because we're afraid to sink? What if, instead, the opportunity allowed us to experience something greater—even if it started out a little rough? Let me share a time I took a leap into unknown waters. It happened on a fateful day on the trading floor at Bloomberg in New York twenty-five years ago. A colleague was heard screaming from the top of his lungs across the floor, "Anyone here speak Spanish? The Central Bank of Mexico is on the line. I don't understand this guy, but it sounds like he wants to buy with Bloomberg. With 120 professionals on the floor, all of them college educated, not one raised their hand. My boss ran over to me and said, "Your last name is Garcia. Don't you speak Spanish?" Nope. Born and bred in America. I took three years of Spanish in high school and haven't uttered a word in ten years. Telling him this prompted him to say, "That's more than anyone else around here. Pick up line one. Congratulations Chuck, you're now in charge of Latin American Sales. Oh, and good luck."

I bumbled my way embarrassingly through that call, understood just enough to send the guy a brochure.

And I swore I would never be embarrassed like this again. However, I was just promoted! This is what it felt like to get a battle field promotion. I was the only man left standing. I was immediately an army of one—in charge of a continent that stretched as far south as Argentina and Chile. I was not only unprepared for this, I was unqualified. I subsequently hired a tutor, and obsessively worked on Spanish for months until I took my first trip south of the border. The rest was history—we did great and I capitalized on an amazing opportunity. I certainly wasn't a victim of circumstance, but it sure felt that way at the time.

CARPE DIEM

Carpe diem, or "Seize the day," is a maxim used from high school counselor offices to spontaneous body tattoos and motivational posters you stare at the dentist's office. While it may seem somewhat of a trite phrase, there's a reason it's so popular. The Latin phrase originally comes from a line from an ode of the poet and philosopher, Horace, stating, "Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero," meaning, "Seize the day while trusting little what tomorrow might bring."

When applying this phrase to life, it's often a justification to do something wild, different, and/or exciting. It's the rationalization of, "this opportunity may not come around again, so I'm going to take it now!" As a result, people eat crazy delicacies, jump out of planes, travel to unexpected places, and more. What if this phrase motivated more than personal exploration?

What if you approached your career with an attitude of seizing/taking/leveraging unexpected opportunities and moments that come up at your job? It's easy to let them pass you by. These opportunities are often uncomfortable, anxiety-inducing, and can sometimes feel like "not the right time/fit." But what if, when in a situation similar to that of mine at Bloomberg that I shared with you, the next time you were called to step in or step up, you answered the call—no matter how unqualified you felt?

EMBRACE THE UNKNOWN

We fear the unknown. And often the opportunities that present themselves exist in a realm of the unknown. They may require improved communication, confronting personal weaknesses, increased public speaking, etc.—these can all be monumental struggles, and can create a frustrating internal conflict.

I acknowledge there is fear and danger inherent in taking on these struggles, the unknown. But, when you want to take that next big step in your career, take a moment to analyze the importance of taking a dive into the deep for the sake of personal development. Embrace it. You'll appreciate that self-improvement pays off in unexpected ways.

There's no better teacher or motivator than being immersed in a situation where you need to quickly adapt—sink or swim. Be willing to jump into deeper opportunities, to be an interim director, to lead a

meeting, coach associates, take over an account, try a new position, etc. They don't come around often, so make them count when they do. easier to listen to.



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A 25-year veteran of Wall Street, he spent 14 years in sales and marketing at Bloomberg in a variety of leadership positions. He was Director of Business Development at BlackRock Solutions, an arm of the world's largest investment manager, and was a Managing Director at Citadel, a prestigious alternative investment manager.

He is also a mountaineer and has climbed some of the world's tallest peaks, including Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Elbrus, the Matterhorn, as well as mountains in Alaska and the Andes.