

Extraordinary Events Often Give Us the Most Important Lessons

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

I believe that God and the universe have a way of letting us know that certain things we learn and are told at various times in our lives have more importance than others. I had an evening like this not too long ago.

Some time ago, and after several conversations, I received an offer to merge one of the companies I run into another company. The offer contained innumerable conditions and other fine print I did not understand.

Luckily, I knew that when someone offers you a business opportunity—but with tons of conditions attached to it—it is always a good idea to seek legal advice. To make sure that I responded to this offer appropriately, I decided to call one of the best attorneys I know who handles this sort of thing. I spoke to his secretary and made an appointment to go see him and some of his distinguished partners in his Beverly Hills office.

Because I was going to meet such fancy attorneys, I put on a suit and tie and made sure that my shoes were well polished. The appointment had been set for 4:00 p.m. on a Tuesday, and I gave myself around ninety minutes to get across town to Beverly Hills for the meeting. To prepare, I had written up a list of questions and had red-lined the offer I had received. I figured I was in for a serious meeting in a conference room inside a quiet law firm with a bunch of uptight attorneys and I wanted everything to go smoothly. This was going to be a very important meeting for me that would help determine the course of my career.

About sixty minutes into the drive to Beverly Hills, my car phone rang. It was the attorney I was scheduled to meet:

“We’re at the Wolfgang Puck Steakhouse sitting outside on the terrace,” he told me. “Can you meet there instead?”

A few minutes later, on a warm late summer day, I pulled up in front of the steakhouse and valet parked my car. Since it was late afternoon, there was no one whatsoever in the restaurant. I made my way back to the terrace area and saw the attorney and two of his colleagues engaged in loud conversation and laughing. Scattered in front of the attorneys were at least ten empty drink glasses. The guys had obviously been drinking a lot.

An 18-year-old girl was seated next to the attorneys. She had come up to their table while walking down the street. She was raising money for her volleyball team, and to my astonishment each of the attorneys at the table had just given her \$50. When I sat down, they asked to me to join in:

“Give her a donation!” one of the attorneys shouted at me. “It’s a good cause! Women’s volleyball!”

Against my better judgment, I pulled out my credit card and gave her \$50. The attorneys assured me that I probably had enjoyed watching 18-year-old girls jumping up and down before playing volleyball and now it was “time to pay”! I understood right then and there that this was going to be no normal attorney meeting.

A few minutes later the girl had disappeared and the attorneys and I were all sitting at the table. They were ready to give me some advice. They offered me a drink, and not wanting to feel out of place, I ordered a glass of wine. When I placed my order, the waiter said something to me I will never forget:

“Would you like to make that a double?”

“Excuse me?” I asked.

“Yes, these guys always order doubles—double glasses of wine, double martinis, and so forth. Would you like me to make your glass of wine a double?”

“Sure,” I said, still wanting to fit in.

I watched as the bartender went to the bar and poured more than half a bottle of wine into a large cup. It was the largest glass of wine I have ever seen. In fact, there was so much wine in the glass that some of it spilled over the top as the waiter carried it to me.

For the next fifteen minutes or so the attorneys gave me drunken advice while alternately whistling and hooting at various women walking by on the street. These guys were really something.

The benefit of the sort of advice I was receiving, though, was that it was completely uncensored. The attorneys were so loaded at this point that they had no interest in trying to talk me into doing business with them, and they explained to me in very simple terms how I would end up getting screwed if I went into the deal. They told me a few horror stories, and as their subconscious unburdened itself to me, I realized that I would be best off not taking the offer I had been presented with. They told me that I should walk away from the deal—despite the fact that if they had worked on it, their fee would have been around \$250,000.

After all the business talk was over, I chatted with the attorneys about their personal lives. They all had children and were married. They seemed like pretty happy guys. At some point in the conversation, we stopped speaking for at least a minute or two. We sat there quietly until someone said: “This is boring. We need some girls.”

One of the attorneys picked up his cell phone and to my astonishment had a conversation that as I recall went something like this: “I’d like a blond and is the girl you sent last time available for my friend? She is? Great! Send her too. We’re outside at the Wolfgang Puck Steakhouse.”

I was not sure what any of this was about, but I certainly had my suspicions.

Within fifteen minutes of the phone call, a black Mercedes stopped in front of the steakhouse and out popped two gorgeous women. They walked right up to our table and sat down. Immediately they started chatting with everyone at the table about the weather, sports, and all sorts of things. The women were incredible conversationalists.

Shortly thereafter, the group of us decided to walk over to a martini bar and then to the Peninsula Hotel. A \$300 drink bill arrived and one of the attorneys charged it on his credit card without thinking.

When we got to the martini bar, one of the attorneys started kissing one of the girls we were with. Another attorney seemed to be holding hands with the other girl. We chit-chatted for a while about unimportant things, like the taste of the martinis and "how cool" Beverly Hills was because you could walk to various bars. Then, after thirty minutes or so, we arrived at the bar of the Peninsula Hotel. Here, another girl who had been called was waiting for one of the other attorneys in our group. The bar was dark and there were a variety of couches and other places for us to sit and get comfortable. It was a relatively mellow experience. It was probably only around 6:30 or so at this point, but I started ordering Diet Cokes.

By about 7:00, the attorney I came to see had passed out on a couch and was sleeping, the other attorneys appeared to be kissing and getting ready to get rooms with the women who were there, and I decided it was time for me to leave. I walked about a half mile back to my car, got in, and started driving home.

I was on the freeway for about thirty-five minutes when all of a sudden a light came on in my Porsche (the car had less than 500 miles on it). The light said "TYRE!!"

For some reason, my car had not been set up to display warnings in English. Instead, all of the warnings were in German. I could not figure out how to set the language to English and usually just ignored the warnings. Hence, pondering the bizarre evening I had had with the attorneys, I was not bothered by the "TYRE!!" warning that kept flashing in red on my screen. The car seemed to be running just fine and I had no worries whatsoever about it.

After a few more miles at 60 mph on the freeway, I started to hear some noise. It was very, very loud and appeared to be coming from the vicinity of my front bumper. I decided I needed to get off the freeway immediately. It was then that I realized there was probably an issue with my tire. I exited the freeway and stopped immediately in front of the only business that was open: A "gentleman's club."

I got out of the car and looked at it. The entire rear tire was shredded. It had ripped off the rear bumper and had done some other damage to the body of the car. Indeed, the metal on the wheel had shredded as well. The car was not drivable by any means.

I picked up my cell phone and realized that the battery was dead. I looked around myself. The only possible place where I could make a call was inside the gentleman's club. I did not know why my evening kept coming back to "fallen women," but I decided that I would just go with it.

I went to the door of the strip bar and explained what had happened with my car. I told them I needed to use their phone. A large bouncer at the door explained that I was welcome to come in and use the phone, but only if I paid the \$20 cover. I did not have much of a choice. I gave him \$20, went in, and called AAA on the payphone. They explained that a car would be there within an hour.

The gentleman's club was fairly empty and besides myself there were only a few other people inside. Nevertheless, a woman was dancing, and after every few songs a new woman would come up on stage.

Feeling somewhat guilty and creepy being in a strip club alone, I decided to take a seat at the bar (which was not facing the dancers) and order a soda. Within a few minutes of my sitting down, one of the strippers sat next to me and asked if I would buy her a drink as well. She ordered a soda, and for the next ten minutes or so, we chatted. She was from Iowa and in Los Angeles to become an actor. Her father was an accountant and her mother a homemaker.

The bill for the sodas came and it was \$18!

I gave the bartender \$20.

Since we had finished our drinks, I did not think there was much more to talk about with the stripper. I told her about the incident with my car and how puzzled I was that the tire had simply disintegrated. She feigned interest.

"Would you like a private lap dance?" she asked. "It's only \$20 per song."

Since I had already spent \$40 for nothing more than a Diet Coke and had a wife and two daughters at home, much less had been involved in watching prostitutes ply their trade in Beverly Hills all evening, I did not have much interest in a lap dance. I told her I had no interest and that I was angry I had already spent \$40 for essentially nothing.

For the next few minutes she tried in several ways to talk me into a dance, saying if I got two dances she would give me one for free. But I still wasn't interested. A few moments later she came back with the bouncer:

"If you are not going to buy dances, then you are going to have to leave," he told me very firmly.

"I already paid \$20 to get in here and bought her a Diet Coke for \$9," I told him.

Despite my protests, the bouncer insisted I leave since I was not paying for dances. A few moments later the bouncer and I were standing out by the sidewalk making small talk while waiting for my tow truck to show up. The bouncer was actually a pretty nice guy. I am not sure why he had to kick me out. I probably would have ordered at least another \$9 soda.

A flatbed truck showed up ten minutes later to pick up my car. I got in the front seat of the truck, and we drove for approximately one hour on the freeway back to my house in Malibu. We rode in silence.

The driveway at my house in Malibu is probably 100 feet off the street, and it is also quite narrow. When we got to the top of the driveway, the tow truck driver asked me to get out and help guide him.

I did not realize that the tow truck cab is something like *three feet* off the ground.

I opened the door of the tow truck and stepped out and just fell and rolled at least fifty feet down the driveway. I hit my head at some point and it started bleeding. After I recovered myself, I stumbled into the house. My wife screamed when she saw all the blood coming from my head, and she started washing it off. I told her about my evening and then went to bed. I was exhausted.

In the morning, I went to inspect the Porsche. Thankfully, the insurance company paid for the thousands of dollars of damage that was done. My head healed within a few weeks.

Considering the way the evening had been going, I felt like I had gotten off quite easily. I also feel like I got some of the better advice I have ever received from an attorney. I am making no judgments about morality, sex, drinking, and what have you. I do know, however, that the attorney I met that day played no games with me and told me the exact truth about my situation. I also believe that God intervened and probably provided me with one of the many memorable evenings of my life in order to

make sure I learned and remembered the lesson the attorney gave me well into my future.

THE LESSON

The most important lessons often come from extraordinary or bizarre circumstances. Seemingly unimportant lessons can be underscored and lent significance by the situations in which they occur, as a means of signifying to you their importance. Pay attention to unusual circumstances and situations, and try to see whether there is a lesson to be learned.

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