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## Embracing Adversity at Serious Business

By Stacey Soble | 02/03/2011 11:00:00 AM

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Embracing adversity and leveraging it to spur success was the common message communicated by the main-stage speakers at the 2011 Serious Business held in New Orleans, LA, in late January. Neill Corporation's Debra Neill Baker, Edwin Neill, III, and Carol Augusto welcomed the sell-out crowd to the event themed, "No Ifs or Buts, Just And," by promising to expand attendees' lives AND their businesses. Over the



Edwin Neill III and Debra Neill Baker welcome a sell-out crowd to Serious Business 2011 in New Orleans, LA.

next two days, a number of inspirational speakers moved the audience:

**The Relationship Guru:** Best-selling author **Keith Ferrazzi**, who personally overcame financial hardship to complete a first-class education, kicked off the first day by demonstrating the importance of relationships to business. "People with good social capital find jobs more quickly, are more likely to be promoted, receive larger bonuses and higher performance evaluations and are 7% more productive," he shared. Furthermore, Ferrazzi encouraged the audience to develop a relationship action plan.

**The Breakthrough Artist:** As the best-selling author of *Busting Loose from the Money Game* and *Busting Loose from the Business Game*, **Robert Scheinfeld** empowered attendees to break through the boundaries of life and business to attain a new kind of success.

**The Daymaker:** **David Wagner**, the owner of JUUT Salonspas based in Minneapolis, MN, shared his recent personal journey of overcoming cancer to find a new state of grace and related it to the audiences' recent journey of surviving the economy to build a stronger business. "I am now in awe of this whole experience and feel blessed that I get to live this life," he said. "And, yes, you can recover with grace."

**The Entrepreneur:** **James Morrison**, co-founder of Toni&Guy and TIGI USA, demonstrated how winning attitudes and behaviors push businesses and individuals to reach their full potential by detailing his personal journey from the Scottish 'projects' to the leadership of one of the most successful education and product empires. "Don't let a small thing like talent stand in the way of success," laughed Morrison.

**The Advocate:** As author of *Change Your Brain, Change Your Body*, **Daniel G. Amen**, M.D., pointed out the importance of the mind-body connection and offered applicable solutions for overcoming bad habits to build a healthier brain. "When it comes to the brain, size matters," he said.

**The Heroine:** Speaker **Aimee Mullins** closed the two-day session to a heart-felt standing ovation. Born without fibulae in both legs, which necessitated a double amputation, Mullins persevered to become a world-record holding athlete, model

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Aimee Mullins is touched by the standing ovation she received after her moving presentation.

and activist. "Disability is anything that undermines your confidence in your ability," says Mullins. "Acknowledging it is the first step in having the power to change it."

#### In the Classroom

While the main-stage speakers motivated attendees to action, the breakout speakers got down to business. **Gregory Bledsoe**, a civil rights and employment-related litigation attorney, revealed the inner workings of the legal system as it relates to the beauty business. As the director of operations for the Jackson Ruiz Salon, **Heath Smith** shared his best business practices for growing a successful salon. Motivational speaker and former salon owner, **Geno Stampora** showed owners how to M.A.R.K.E.T. themselves. And, **Harry Wood IV**, salon director of Van Michael Salons, outlined the steps to becoming a six-figure stylist.

Check out more images from Serious Business 2011 below, and please post your favorite Serious Business memory.



Keith Ferrazzi talks about the importance of relationship-building in life and in business.



At the end of David Wagner's moving presentation, his wife Charlie joined him on stage as he ended with a simple, yet powerful, statement.

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Aimee Mullins in front of the magazine showcasing her with her athletic legs.



"Don't let a small thing like talent stand in the way of success," coached James Morrison.



Dr. Daniel Amen with a side-by-side comparison of a healthy brain and an unhealthy brain.



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Stacey Soble has been involved in the conversation of salon business for 14 years—as a reporter, a consultant and as the editor in chief of SALON TODAY.

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