

Hi, this is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. This week I want to address a chicken and egg type question - are family business leaders so nice as people because they're super successful, or are they super successful because they're so nice? And I'll give you two examples, I'll tell you my theory, and then we'd like to hear what you think about it. So as always, your comments below, any topics that you'd like for us to cover, let's have those in terms of the comments, and we always welcome your ideas.

So, not long ago I was at a meeting in Paris, Texas, and we happen to have a client in Paris, Texas - Harrison Walker Harper. And I was going over to visit, just a social visit really while I was in town, and as I got to the parking lot the rental car started behaving oddly. As I got out of the car I realized the tire is as flat as a pancake, I mean it's a goner.

So it's a rental car, and I'm there to visit, and then I've got a tight schedule to get back to the airport in Dallas to get home. I walk in and I'm meeting with Jordan and Brandon, thanks fellas, and you'll see why in a minute. And I said "Jordan I'm going to have a little bit of a hard time here concentrating in the meeting, because I've got a tight schedule, I've got a flat tire." And he basically looked at me and said "Give me your keys. Give me your keys."

And he got on his phone and he made a call, and I don't know what happened, but an hour later he hands me back the keys, actually Brandon handed me the keys and says, "Okay, your car's ready." And somebody had come, fixed the rental car tire, driven it to a place ... got it in a position where they could drive it, took it over to the car repair shop, fixed the tire, brought it back to me. And I said, "Well, before I go, who do I pay?" They wouldn't take a nickel, I mean would not take a nickel from me, just done out of pure kindness of their hearts, their time trouble, and their money.

And it happened a few years before. It dawned on me that almost this exact same thing had happened years before. I was going to a meeting in Macon, Georgia, and it began to snow. Well, I was in South Carolina and southern states, let's face it, cannot clear snow worth a darn, so the roads got worse and worse and by the time I got just a little bit south of ... Where's the big golf tournament? Augusta, Georgia, man, the conditions were miserable, and sure enough I was driving my wife's big old suburban thinking I was bullet proof, and I hit an icy patch, and I went off the road. And whoever engineered those three steel cables along the road is a genius, because instead of me toppling over a barrier, that cable expanded just as it was designed to do, and it very gently pushed me right into the road.

Of course, I was the only car out there, the only one stupid enough to be driving around in the terrible snowstorm. But the car was damaged pretty bad and I get to my meeting at the Pyles Brothers, Brent and Bryant Pyles at Macon, Georgia, and I said "Golly fellas, I've really messed up my wife's car," it wouldn't turn very well and the fenders were all mashed up.

And Brent Pyles looked at me and he said ... He called his buddy at the Chevrolet dealership, we drove the car over there, we got back to his office to being our meeting, and he just tossed me his keys, and he said "you're

going to need a car while you're here." And he tossed me the keys to his brand new car, and I'm like "Golly, are you sure. This is kind of a big deal!" And he's like "Absolutely."

So, I just couldn't believe these two acts of kindness, probably 10 or 15 years apart. And I talked to my consultants here, they'd had some of the same experiences, as travelers there's always a challenge here and there, and our clients uniformly, universally have just been so giving and generous and kind with us, it's just been an overwhelming pattern over the years.

So, these guys saw somebody in need, whether it was us or somebody else it probably would not have mattered, and they leaped to offer assistance. They couldn't have been more kind and generous.

And I think if you look at the statistics, if you look at giving statistics, charitable giving statistics, family business leaders are always generous with their time and their treasure. When it comes to their churches or their local charities and things like that.

And there's this stereotype out there that family business leaders are just rampaging mad men, slave drivers who demand the most from their employees and all this other stuff, and I'm sure there are guys out there, and girls, that are like that. But our folks just seem to be among the very kindest people you can imagine.

So, our theory is this. Our theory is that they're not nice because they've been so successful in their careers, these are really genuinely good hearted nice people. And that's been a launching pad for their careers. I don't think, in small business, I don't think that you can get ahead if you're one of these rampaging bully yelling screaming and saying types. I think it really does take somebody with a big heart to attract the right kind of people, and to attract the right kind of lifetime customers.

And I think that's what our people have. So my theory is they're not nice because they're successful, they're successful because they're super nice people. So I'd like to hear your theories about that. You let me know what you think, you can hit me up by email if you think I'm all wet, who knows. And also if you've got any stories like mine, I bet you do, about how people have been extraordinarily kind to you in a tricky situation, we'd like to hear those too. So, this is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute, thanks very much.