



Day Job/Night Job

with Ed Attanasio

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IL Body Shop Owner Becomes Nationally Acclaimed Motivational Speaker

Running a body shop is a daily challenge that is not for everyone. Each day, shop owners encounter issues and obstacles that can be challenging and daunting. Finding the inspiration to go on can be difficult, but what if you were both a body shop owner and a motivational speaker/life coach that helps individuals to overcome life's many impediments, including your own?

It would definitely be a win-win and that's why **Louie Sharp**, the owner of *Sharp Auto Body* in Island Lake, IL, is winning in every aspect of his professional and personal life by motivating himself and others to achieve great things.

Sharp's journey started when he joined the U.S. Marine Corps right out of high school and served almost five years on active duty as an aviation ordinance man on A6 Intruders. He was selected to the elite duty of Marine Security Guard where he spent his last 2 ½ years guarding American Embassies

overseas. He was posted at Nicosia, Cyprus and then Paris, France.

Upon release from active duty Louie joined the Marine Corps active reserve program at Glenview Naval Air Station. He was assigned to HML-776 a helicopter squadron and became a crew chief and door gunner on Huey helicopters. His squadron was activated for Desert Storm and served 12 months overseas. Louie then retired from the Marines after 20 years of honorable service.



Louie Sharp owns *Sharp Auto Body* in Island Lake, IL during the day, but is a motivational speaker and life coach the rest of the time

After retiring from the Marines after 20 years of honorable service, Sharp started *Sharp Auto Body* doing collision repair and restoration repairs on all makes and models of

cars. In the mid-1990's he started his towing operation and in 2000 he purchased a local auto repair shop adding mechanical repairs to the mix.

Today, Sharp has 13 employees and runs a busy shop in a small town (population: 8,000). He is currently writing an automotive blog for the *Lake County Journal* and delivers his "Car Cents" power point presentations to local clubs, organizations and companies to show people how to save money on every aspect of their vehicle maintenance.

In 1999, Sharp was elected village trustee in Island Lake where he successfully completed a four-year term. He retired from political life to focus on his passion for music. Louie plays guitar, harmonica and mandolin in a number of local bands including *Stone Quarry Road* and his local church band. He also performs solo acoustic guitar performances.

In 2000, Sharp started on a jour-

ney that would lead him to his newest company. It began when his doctor's nurse suggested that he try yoga to lower his high blood pressure. The rest as they say is history. In 2009, he started *Sharp-Skills*, a company with a simple goal to help individuals and companies to develop and achieve their full potential. In June of 2010, he successfully completed a year-long training program under **Jack Canfield**, a nationally renowned motivational speaker and the co-author of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, which has more than 250 titles and 500 million copies in print in over 40 languages.

Being a personal coach is not just a profession for Sharp, but rather a calling, he explained. "I've been a motivational speaker my whole life but I didn't know it. I want to change the world, to be honest and that's why I'm here, I believe. Once you find your passion, it's not work anymore

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and this is something I am driven to do. I tell people that you can change the world everyday by the way you interact with others. In a service driven-oriented business like collision repair

Sharp also tells people that networking and getting involved in the community is essential for any business and that's why he is currently a member of the Island Lake Chamber of Commerce, the Wauconda Chamber of Commerce, Island Lake Lions, the local American Legion, VFW, Business Exchange, Wauconda Rotary, BNI and Messiah Lutheran Church. He is also the past president of the Island Lake Chamber of Commerce and past president of the Island Lake Lions club and sits on the board of directors for Transitional Living Services, an organization that helps homeless veterans.

"The old days of hanging a sign and waiting for the customers to start filing in just doesn't exist anymore," Sharp said. "Getting out there is difficult for many body shop owners and managers, but the benefits and rewards can be great. People tell me 'you know everybody' and I tell them that's the idea."

Sharp takes many of the skills he has learned owning a body shop and communicates them to people in all fields during his motivational presentations. "Being a body shop owner has been a springboard for everything I'm currently doing," Sharp explained.

"I've learned so much working in this industry, but in many ways, the things I've gleaned in this business can be used in any industry. Continual learning and getting better is one of the things I really stress, because some people hit a certain age and they don't want to learn or try new things anymore. But not growing means you're shrinking and going in reverse."

Many body shop owners live in a life of scarcity within a world of abundance, Sharp said. "There are wrecked cars everywhere, so there's no lack of business. But, some shop owners tend to get caught up in things like being suspicious of the insurance companies and the other shop down the street. They're working their butts off with no retirement in sight and they're scared of the future, because the industry is changing every day. I teach them how to no longer live in fear, which allows them to do things they didn't think they could."

A final note from Sharp summarizes his approach to life. "Learn to love unconditionally. It sounds easy, but it is one of the most difficult things that people can do. If you can achieve that, other great things will happen for you."

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Jose Costa Discusses

foresee with CARSTAR we'll start investing back within three to six months and we'll put a lot more resources behind the brand. We see a lot of wide space for both brands to continue to grow. Our dream is to double the size of both brands from a unit count standpoint and from a top line sales standpoint.

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