



## Don't Pee in the Pool

By Jim Vasconcellos

As a boy, I would look forward to swimming in Miss June's pool. She had the only pool in the neighborhood. Miss June put on a rough and tough image. She was a short, stout, harsh-looking woman with a raspy voice to match. If we cut through her yard, she would yell at us with one hand on her hip and the other one wagging a cigarette at us. Yet every summer she let us swim in her pool for an entrance fee. We could swim the entire day for a mere twenty-five cents!

The longest two weeks of my life came about a month into that first summer of being privileged to swim at Miss June's. It was a hot, muggy Louisiana day, and swimming in that pool was like heaven. Everyone was laughing and yelling and splashing. Then suddenly, the shouts of laughter turned into shrieks of horror, and every kid was bailing out of the pool like lemmings in reverse migration. When there's a sudden change in the water temperature, the news spreads fast!

Miss June came out shouting, "What in the hell is going on out here!" No one was bold enough to claim credit for the incident, though we were certainly willing to point the finger at each other. It was a chaotic moment. Accusations were being hurled -- fingers were pointing -- denials were flying. She was so furious she said, "I don't give a damn who did it. Until you can learn to follow the rules, the pool is closed!" And she kicked us all out.

That was my first lesson in **collective responsibility**: It doesn't matter what you're involved with in this world -- when someone doesn't take responsibility for their own actions, everyone pays the price!

Just as in business. Every day we make decisions and take actions that have an impact beyond our desk. As our choices go out, they cross the paths of many individuals, businesses, projects, situations, and events. As these paths cross, it creates positive and negative effects that impact everyone.

A negative impact creates what I refer to as a **crash point**. These collisions are not always seen, felt or recognized right away. For instance, if you produce at a subpar



level, you may still get the same paycheck. There's no immediate impact on you, but there is on the business. Eventually, you will feel the impact, and so will many others.

Crash points from poor mind-sets have left many scars on society throughout time. Actions that seem harmless in the moment are carried out with little thought to impact. In 2008, in New York City, a crane collapsed and seven people lost their lives. A report showed that the crane was inspected two weeks earlier for violations. The city inspector was arrested for falsifying the records. Did someone pay him to 'overlook' safety violations or did he just want to catch up on his paperwork?

It's critical that we not lose sight of the potential crash point of our own behaviors. The stakes are bigger than what we see on a daily basis. Look around: Should you turn a blind eye when coworkers are not performing? Turn down a request for help because it's not in your job description? Limit your input due to poor relations? Stifle communications for your own benefit? Could your decision limit profitability? Could your judgment put others in harm's way? Be willing to look at the possibilities truthfully.

As we learn to take responsibility for our own efforts and the impacts they make, we dramatically improve the odds of success for ourselves, our business, our customers and our associates.

So be careful not to **pee in the pool!** And ensure others don't either -- it ruins it for everyone.



Jim Vasconcellos is a professional speaker and author of *Living by the Boomerang*. He created **Boomerang Concepts** to inspire audiences to return better results by changing the way they approach life's daily challenges. To book Jim V. for your next conference, call 678-427-5063 or go to [www.BoomerangConcepts.com](http://www.BoomerangConcepts.com)