Donald Deibler on the Morning Everything Broke at Once

Donald Deibler, business manager of All Stars Ice Cream and Cafe Bakery and the force behind Dead Horse Beer and Burritos, shares a story from the kind of morning every small business owner eventually faces, and the habit that got him through it.

Hermitage, Pennsylvania Nov 9, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - A Morning That Started Wrong

Donald Deibler says some mornings go sideways before the doors even open. A walk-in cooler runs warm. A delivery truck is late. A staff member calls out sick, and the schedule that looked fine the night before suddenly has a hole in it.

"None of those things is a disaster on its own," Deibler says. "The problem is when they all show up at the same time, and you feel like you have to fix everything in the first five minutes."

He says that pull, the urge to solve four problems at once, is the thing that actually slows people down.

One Task at a Time

Deibler says his approach on those mornings is simple to describe and harder to practice: pick one problem, deal with it, then move to the next.

"I ask myself what has to be fixed right now versus what can wait until after we open," he says. "The cooler usually wins. The schedule gap can get patched with a phone call while the cooler guy is already on his way."

He says writing the list down, even a short one on a notepad or a napkin, helps more than people expect. "Once it's on paper, it's not all living in your head anymore. You can just work down the list."

Deibler says this is the same thinking he applies to goals he sets at the start of each year and each month. Big problems and big plans get easier, he says, once they are broken into pieces small enough to actually finish.

Where That Habit Came From

Deibler grew up in Donaldson, Pennsylvania, with five siblings, in a house where, he says, there was rarely time to sit and worry about something before someone needed help with it. He says that pace taught him to act instead of spiral.

"My parents didn't have a lot of patience for standing around feeling overwhelmed," he says. "You just figured out what needed doing and did it."

He carried that into running a small food and beverage business, where equipment fails, deliveries slip, and plans change without warning on a regular basis. Deibler says the businesses he's involved with, All Stars Ice Cream and Cafe Bakery and Dead Horse Beer and Burritos, run on the same principle every day, just at a smaller scale than a true crisis morning. A spill, a wrong order, a line out the door: all of it gets handled one piece at a time.

What He Tells Others Who Run Into the Same Day

Deibler says he hears from other small business owners who describe the same kind of morning, the one where everything seems to go wrong together. His advice starts with a question.

"I ask them what's actually on fire right now, versus what just feels urgent because it's loud," he says. "Those are two different lists."

He also tells people not to measure the whole day by how it started. "A bad first hour doesn't mean a bad day," Deibler says. "I've had mornings where nothing worked right, and by lunch, you'd never know it happened."

He says the habit matters more on the hard mornings than on the easy ones, which is exactly why it's worth practicing before it's needed. "You don't want the first time you try to stay calm and work a list to be the worst day you've had all year," he says.

Deibler says he still has mornings that start wrong. He doesn't expect that to change. What he says has changed is how quickly he stops reacting to all of it at once and starts working through it, one task after another, until the list is gone and the day looks normal again.

To read more, visit the website here.

About Donald Deibler

Donald Deibler is a business owner based in Hegins, Pennsylvania. He is the business manager of All Stars Ice Cream and Cafe Bakery and supports his wife, who owns Dead Horse Beer and Burritos. Deibler is a graduate of Pine Grove High School and Albright College, where he studied music business. He volunteers with local youth sports and at St. Peter's UCC, and spends his free time riding dirt bikes and ATVs, hunting, fishing, and renovating houses.

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