

Mark Valenziano

Creator of Sensory Awareness Experiences, Author

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

Topics

- Communication
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Inspiration / Achievement
- Motivation
- Overcoming Adversity
- Personal Growth

About Mark Valenziano

Mark was fifteen when he was told he was going blind. His journey from sighted to blind filled his life with change and challenge. Mark had to develop and utilize tools so he could build the happy life he enjoys today.

After graduating from college, Mark learned the brokerage side of the insurance industry with a leading company specializing in disability income coverages. He was recruited by Prudential to spearhead marketing of their products in thirteen states. Mark's creativity and success then got him noticed by the top executives at FORTIS, who hired him to run the disability income line of products at Time Insurance.

After launching new products and restoring growth with profitability, Mark moved on to pursue his entrepreneurial passion, co-founding a cutting-edge medical resource company. Mark grew the company from an idea to 59 employees, a nationwide customer base, multi-million dollar contracts and soaring revenues.

After that, Mark founded a manufacturing company and worked with scientists and engineers as they developed air quality products that reduced symptoms of asthma and allergies, and created healthier environments for people with weakened immune systems. Along with manufacturing, Mark built a subsidiary wholesale and retail sales company.

In 2015 Mark suffered the losses of two brothers only three months apart. These devastating losses made Mark realize that we don't know when our last breath will be. So, Mark sold his companies in the Spring of 2016.

Shortly thereafter, Mark was contacted by Young Presidents Organization (YPO) and asked to create a sensory-awareness experience around losing one's sight. His creation, Dining in the Dark, received extremely high ratings and went on to win a YPO Best Personal Development Award.

Mark adapts this inspiring, fun, get-out-of-your-comfort-zone experience for all types of organizations. This powerful motivating message can also be consolidated into a 'non-experiential' keynote address.

Mark's book:

While we all need a level of uncertainty in our lives to keep us motivated and driven, too much uncertainty makes people uncomfortable. Uncertainty can lead to stress, worry, and doubt. Uncertainty can lead to feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. Uncertainty can stifle your progress and development. But uncertainty isn't going anywhere; life will always be full of it.

So, what if you could turn uncertainty to your advantage?

Outsmarting Uncertainty will help you do just that. Find your Uncertainty Sweet Spot to take charge--and bring balance and composure to your life. Instead of worrying, use your three Pillars of Strength to focus on improvement, accomplishment, and a lifestyle of happiness. And by rolling your inner movie, you will write, direct, and produce the perfect life for you to star in. *Outsmarting Uncertainty* won't remove uncertainty from your life, but it will guide you toward acceptance, social intelligence, purpose, and resilience--in other words, toward the powers you already have within you.

Select Keynotes

- Dining in the Dark - Sensory Awareness Experience



Mark's signature program, Dining in the Dark, is A Transformative Sensory Awareness experience that's educational, fun, and memorable. In addition to giving a compelling glimpse into what it's like to be blind, Dining in the Dark gets audience members thinking differently and out of their comfort zones as they attempt some hands-on tasks and enjoy a tasteful meal and conversation – all while wearing luxurious blindfolds. The keynote will open minds and leave guests feeling inspired, grateful, optimistic, and empowered!

Dining in the Dark is ideal for corporate team building at all levels, for professional organizations chapter events, or annual conferences. This can also be an excellent opportunity for company or industry thought leaders to network and learn from one another like they never have before!

- **Grab Your Uncertainty and Flourish!**

In this talk, Mark introduces uncertainty as a new avenue for growth and development – personal, professional, and organizational. When you raise the sights, achievements, confidence, optimism, and happiness of individuals, your entire organization benefits.

Mark shares the secret to turning anxiety and uncertainty into accomplishment and resilience. He weaves together stories, wisdom, experience and humor into a heartfelt and inspiring talk that will leave you and your team optimistic, energized, and confident to step into the future more successfully.

- **Open Your Eyes to Blindness: A Fun Experiential Workshop on Inclusivity**

Diversity touches all of humanity from many angles. Inclusion requires awareness, knowledge, and acceptance. This experiential program educates specifically about blindness, with principles that are relevant to increasing understanding, compassion, empathy, and inclusion for diversity of all kinds. For the first half of this session, attendees wear blindfolds to get them thinking and learning differently. While blindfolded, they will be challenged to complete a few simple tasks that often are taken for granted. Attendees learn about different types of blindness and the various challenges that visually impaired people face each day, as well as the social do's and don'ts when interacting with the blind. Employers will learn about the possible needs and costs, as well as the benefits, associated with hiring a blind employee.

Select Book Titles

- **2021:** Outsmarting Uncertainty

Select Testimonials

Mark's presentation was simply amazing and meaningful, with an impact that will be life-long! It was especially powerful for our teenagers. His words gave us a renewed sense of gratitude, optimism, and compassion. I strongly recommend this program!

– *Bruno Mercenari, YPO Americas Gateway*

Mark Valenziano's event is very impacting and insightful. Participants will gain insight into deeper gratitude and hone into what is most important. This program is very beneficial for teens/youth as well as leaders of organizations. Patrons will gain a deeper understanding of the world and gratitude.

– *Dirk Bak, President SDQ Janitorial YPO Member*

What fun Saturday evening was! Many thanks for providing the chapter with a unique and very memorable experience. Many people commented to me on how impactful your talk and stories were, and how it was such an incredible experience. It was a real pleasure meeting you in person and having a chance to work with you in planning the event. Again, many thanks!!

– *Emily MacEntee, YPO Windy City*

I've known Mark for years and have seen him in action. His message will inspire and entertain. Prepare to be amazed and energized.

– *Frank Vascellaro CBS News / WCCO-TV*

Thanks for coming to Winnipeg and sharing your unique "Dining in the Dark" event with us! Everyone had an experience they will not soon forget! I appreciate the way in which you communicate your strength and what you have learned through the experience of losing your site. I also appreciated the encouragement for us to embrace discomfort! Without it, we will not change, and change is good. Best wishes for continued success.

– *James Buhler, EO Co-learning chair*

"Mark Valenziano is hands down, the most engaged presenter/resource I have ever worked with. Mark truly cares about the overall experience and every detail of the event itself. His infectious upbeat attitude was a day brightener every step of the planning process. Mark doesn't start and stop with the presentation. He arrives early to review the venue and meet with the team, and stays until the last question is answered. His upbeat approach to life as a blind person, put the staff at ease and ready to create a valuable experience for all. Often, people are afraid to ask "just anyone" what it's like to have a disability. Mark opens up so quickly, and so easily to everyone... That asking those awkward (yet we want to know) questions, becomes comfortable...like talking with a longtime friend. He is completely approachable!"

— *Jayna Larrea, Former Executive Director, YPO Twin Cities & Florida*

Mark created an impactful experiential night for our YPO regional leadership team that we will all remember for a lifetime. It was so good and so relevant to our industry that we have hired him to speak at our company's upcoming annual meeting. I look forward to sharing Mark's gifts with our employees and industry colleagues.

— *Joel Wright, President & CEO MoboTrex*

November 24, 2019 "Our YPO Honduras Chapter had the opportunity to have Mark as a resource for a day. "Dining in the Dark" was a beautiful eyeopening event for our members and their families that created awareness and an amazing feeling of gratitude. As a member of the YPO Honduras Chapter, I couldn't have been happier to witness the engagement of the attendees while Mark was speaking and during the activities of the dinner. Mark is an amazing person, has a beautiful soul, and is a wonderful person to listen to. His story is inspiring and his spirit is contagious. I highly recommend Mark as a speaker and we would be honored to have him visit us again in Honduras."

— *Jose M. Jarquin Director Administrativo - Jamar Comercial Industrial SA de CV*

We were so fortunate to have Mark Valenziano speak at our corporate event. Over the past 10 years, we have had various inspirational speakers. None comes close to Mark. He is passionate, eloquent, and gets his message across to the entire audience. After Mark's talk, many attendees told me how much they enjoyed the talk, both professionally and personally. I would highly recommend Mark to speak at any organizational or corporate event. Give your people this gift!

— *Karen Holzberg, President, KH International, Atlanta, GA*

"Wow! Mark's Dining in the Dark program was so unique, inspiring and fun! He got us out of our comfort zone and seeing the world from a different perspective. We learned, we laughed, and enjoyed a truly great experience. This is a YPO must!"

— *Kim Jeremic, Superblinds & Draperies, Owner, YPO Winnipeg*

Working with Mark Valenziano was a unique and satisfying experience. He helped us throughout the organization process, gave us ideas, as well as input and recommendations about his previous events. He was engaged during the setup, and gave explanations to the restaurant staff. As a result, the logistics process was very comfortable and pleasant. Everything flowed very well during the event and it was a success. Dine in the Dark in PR was one of the best events held in YPO PR, Mark was to the point and his message was of true value for our members.

— *Lizette Diaz, Chapter Admin YPO Puerto Rico*

"Mark did a diversity/inclusion workshop for about 200 of our employees. The feedback was incredible! Several people remarked that this was one of our best programs ever! His authentic style and moving message touches people's hearts. During his talk, people were so attentive and engaged that they were physically "leaning in". Several days later people were still talking about what they took away from the event; now that's real impact! I would highly recommend Mark Valenziano as a speaker/facilitator!"

— *Loretta Menke - Associate Director, Organization Development & Learning at UCare*

Thank you for delivering a unique and inspiring session at our all staff celebration! Your keynote was enlightening, motivating and most fitting with our current changing work environment! Our staff heard your message - to become their own visionary- and improve their day-to-day operations through a lens that most had not even considered. I hope we can work together again in the near future!

– *Omar Guevara-Soto, Operations Manager Minneapolis Public Schools | Nutrition & Wellness Services*

Mark did an excellent job presenting to our group. His energy and sincere style engaged my company's employees. As opposed to a "rah rah" motivational speaker, Mark's message is one that people will relate to and can resonate for a lifetime. I highly recommend Mark! Mark did an excellent job presenting to our group. His energy and sincere style engaged my company's employees. As opposed to a "rah rah" motivational speaker, Mark's message is one that people will relate to and can resonate for a lifetime. I highly recommend Mark!

– *R. Andy Fazendin, Owner Fazendin Realtors Wayzata, MN*

It was such a pleasure to work with Mark! He was so helpful and made sure we did not miss a single detail. Mark's "Open Your Eyes to Blindness" program is fun, memorable, and inspiring! In the hospitality industry, we serve people every day and Mark educated us on how to truly be more inclusive and welcoming. I can't tell you how many messages I received from attendees expressing gratitude for this program. I highly recommend Mark Valenziano to everyone!

– *Sarah Cash-Darvell, VP of Programs and Education - International Live Events Association*