FEATURE | THINKING

Ignore the Memo: Fly Anyway

All the reasons you can't succeed aren't worth a teaspoon of honey

Thinking outside the box is even more powerful when the thoughts are followed by action.

by **John David Mann**

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I was seventeen and dissatisfied. So were my friends. We were dissatisfied with the schools where we currently punched our time clocks five days a week. We wanted to create a better way, a way where we took the pursuit of our education into our own hands. We imagined a school with absolutely no requirements or mandates, where each student designed his or her own course of study.

> ***A place where we learned what we wanted, when we wanted, how we wanted.***

Does this sound at all familiar?

We didn't know it, but we were thinking like network marketers. We wanted to be a volunteer army, not a lockstep formation of grudging corporate conscripts.

We were educational entrepreneurs.

Among our motley crew, I was the one blessed with unusually forward-thinking parents—parents who believed in me and us and our vision enough to let me leave my mind-numbing career at our local public high school and spend the rest of the school year spearheading the project.

Q: How do a scattershot band of disaffected high school sophomores and juniors start their own high school?

A: They don't.

There was of course *no way* we could possibly accomplish this task. It was impossible. Happily, we did not know this. Much like the bumblebee—you know, that bug that flies because it never got the memo explaining that it can't—we didn't *know* it was impossible. So we did it.

The next year our school opened, and it operated successfully for a solid decade. We had absolutely no accreditation from any private or state body, but we were accredited by our own results. We successfully placed our graduates at such places as Yale, Harvard and various state colleges. The environment we had imagined, that place where students voluntarily pursued their own education, worked.

> ***Here is one reason it worked: early on, we realized we needed someone who could do things we couldn't, like fund-raise, secure a location and help us find teachers.***

We declared an opening for director (great position, starting salary of zero), and began interviewing. Through our parents and other adults we knew, we found some extraordinary candidates. We eventually chose a wonderful man named Julian F. Thompson, who had a strong background in education and grasped what we were up to.

> ***It's a good formula: decide what you want, commit yourself for at least a year to building the foundation, and then go sponsor people who have what you lack.***

And if you happen to get that memo? The one that says bees can't fly, kids can't build schools, and you can't be a major financial success and leader of thousands?

Ignore it. Fly anyway.

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John David Mann is one of the most recognizable and well-respected names in network marketing. As co-founder (with John Fogg) and senior editor of *Upline®,* Editor in Chief of *Network Marketing Lifestyles* and the current Editor in Chief of *Networking Times,* he has been keenly observing and insightfully commenting on the Network Marketing world for more than 15 years. And... John has been one of the top-earning distributors with the same networking company for nearly 20 years.

The Last Word is an i-book in process, an ongoing collection of short essays on the experience of network marketing. Each article is linked to an interactive forum for "reader comments" so now, you can have the last

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