LISTENING | PERSONAL GROWTH | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | WOMEN

What Matters Most Now?

Things to think about (and do) in the next year...

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While the flickering signs of economic recovery are heartening, for many it is too late to recapture their dreams – at least their old ones. Or is it?

We are in a time of great transition. While some of us feel a sense of a new awakening, there are far more who are feeling a sense of catastrophic doom and gloom.

Last night we had a delightful dinner with close friends. While the fire was crackling and the conversation was warm and engaging, all of us realized without saying anything, that this would be the last supper we shared in the couple's $2 million dollar home as it was in the final stages of a bank foreclosure.

I had a few moments alone with the host, Sam, where he shared with me that he felt his business was doomed when the world changed and he didn't even see it coming until it was too late. Sam also felt it was too late now for him to begin anew. At 64 he was just going to deal with the harsh realities of his diminished resources – looking forward to his social security check?

There was a great deal of sadness in his voice and tears came to his eyes as he spoke about feeling like a failure in his life. While I felt great compassion for him... and while I knew I could introduce him to “a better way” of creating a “new” dream, I just kept quiet... and this is something women are much better at than their male counterparts in our beloved industry of network marketing.

What is it?

It is listening with compassion

and **an active ear.**

In a down economy – particularly one that has taken most of us by surprise – things get very tactical. We are just trying to survive. What worked yesterday does not necessarily work today. What works today may not necessarily work tomorrow.

Let me back up a bit here...

Like every business right now, those of us who are professionals in network marketing know that it is more important than ever before to find alternate ways to connect with customers than return to “pre-economic crisis” form with hard pitches and hypey sales attempts. More than ever, recent surveys show that cranky customers don't trust advertising and they don't hesitate to show it by posting snarky tweets about companies and pitches. How many MLMer's are loudly and blatantly pitching their business opportunities through people's FACEBOOK walls or Twitter streams?

PEOPLE DO NOT LIKE FEELING MARKETED TO!

What this really means is they don't want anything in their face like a loud megaphone with the hard pitch message.

“More megaphones doesn't equal a better dialogue.”

If you want their trust, their loyalty, and ultimately their dollars, then you as a brand also need to get into their lives.

Your message needs to strike an emotional chord.

I heard a phrase recently that demonstrates what I am explaining... this phrase refers to “gentle collisions.” A “gentle collision” will extend your reach through personal interactions that strike an emotional chord, meet an everyday need, or deliver something useful in a way that connects in a deeply personal way.”

Back to my friend Sam... as women we have a strength of building

relationships. Sam, didn't need to hear about my “perfect business timing” or the “perfect business solution” at the time he was confiding in me.

I will approach him at a later date when he has actually successfully made the transition to his new life and had time to start rebuilding his confidence.

In summary, one of the biggest challenges facing us in our network marketing profession is to start celebrating our female strengths and not just “duplicate” the actions of men or become the mini-men that much of the training has been for up to now!

Women are rather UNLIKE men and often approach problems and opportunities with a different outlook. Yet books and coaches often encourage us to adopt male strengths and, lacking understanding, to relinquish our own.

The irony is, studies show that *more women in leadership in every business translates unequivocally into better business results.* The industry pundits say we have 85% participation of women in our industry.

Wouldn't it make more sense for both men and women to appreciate each other's strengths so we all work on what comes naturally?

When the new reality of the new business climate finally kicks into an upward swing, our industry could be recognized as a solution to many of the pressing needs to earn more money and build a stronger foundation for economic independence.

Let's be ready to collaborate as strong professional leaders,

teaching others to play to their strengths and talents.

Elizabeth Harrington - A writer, international speaker and passionate networker, both as a leader and a student. Elizabeth is inspiring to the many 1000's of people in the teams she has created in the 16 years she has been in network marketing! Passionate about marketing to women, she is leading the conversation about how to make our businesses more female friendly and focused on what women really want!