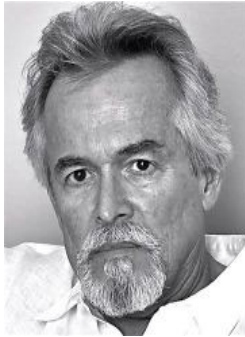


The Psychology of Networking

Becoming Perfect, 5 Minutes at a Time

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This is a story about network marketing and becoming a successful entrepreneur. But it doesn't begin that way, just like most of us probably didn't begin by thinking we'd find our way to MLM.

My story begins with my two fathers who—in very different ways and by separate means—prepared me as a network marketer and signaled the skills and character important to succeeding as an entrepreneur.

My father died of a heart attack when I was 14. He was an oral surgeon with a specialization in anesthesiology, head of oral surgery at Los Angeles County Hospital, and just finishing a Ph.D. in Higher Education, hoping to become the president of a dental school. He had worked his way through college selling encyclopedias door-to-door, and like many network marketers, he was an over-achiever. When he died, he was 42.

My mother became the sole parent of 6 children, until she was reintroduced to the man who had introduced her to my father, Joice B. Stone, Ph.D., a doctor of educational psychology whose wife had recently died of cancer, leaving him with 5 children to manage. They married and had another child, making us a family of 12 kids (of which I was the eldest)—enough to start a network marketing company of our own!

Dad Stone was an imposing man—6'2", jet black hair, and a deeply authoritative voice—most noted academically for being the first to standardize the Rorschach Ink Blot test from free association to a multiple choice instrument that could be machine scored. It went from being a tool used by a privileged few psychiatrists to a useful instrument of education anyone could interpret with a computer.

Dad Stone consulted to major corporations—testing employees to determine who was best suited to what tasks—before returning to the

university where he became Assistant to the President of California Polytechnic University in Pomona, California. Like my father before him, his ambition was to become a university president, but his passion was the study of *entrepreneurship*, in which he invested hundreds of hours of study and psychological modeling to unravel the complex mindset of those who seek or are thrust by necessity to embrace the challenges and uncertainties of entrepreneurial enterprise.

Entrepreneur: Meaning of the Word

This was back in the '60s and '70s before the word “entrepreneur” had been sanitized to an ambition aspired to by a majority of the MBAs graduating from Harvard. In our age of “entrepreneurial start-ups” that generate millions of dollars of investment from PowerPoints, it’s hard to imagine a time when “entrepreneur” was regarded with the same disdain that many today hold for “MLM Distributor.” But that was the case, so Dad Stone’s research could never find a publisher...until now.

Maslow’s Hierarchy: An Entrepreneurial Staircase

According to Dad’s notes—which I study at least once a month to remind myself of the business I’m in and the quality of people with whom I deal—an entrepreneur is a person who has many of the qualities Maslow would identify as “self-actualizing,” which was the highest achievement in the *Maslow Hierarchy of Needs*—a scale from the most fundamental (food) to the more sublime (love).

Being self-actualized has something to do with what today we might identify as *being authentic*; or perhaps more accurately, authenticity is one of the key evidences of *self actualization*.

Authentic Network Marketing

Dad Stone identified a number of traits most abundant in an entrepreneur, and most of them align with the 15 traits Maslow identified as characteristic of someone who is self-actualized. I haven’t space (and you haven’t patience!) for me to name them all, but you will immediately recognize a few of them in yourself or in those you aspire to become like.

Maslow regarded self-actualized persons as those who sought to fulfill their highest potential, to achieve what he called “peak experience” where one becomes so involved in and consumed by an occupation—whether it be music or art or *network marketing*—that distractions slip away and one finds oneself suspended in time, simply *happy to be*.

Among the foundation stones of that “peak experience” are:

Truthful. Some might think “honesty” to be a curious place to begin, since we’ve all met people in network marketing who are not, some of them successful. But they are not the models upon whom the industry is founded. In network marketing, no one is compelled to do business with anyone, to accept anyone’s direction or receive anyone’s council. Only when we *trust* a leader do we follow.

Aliveness. The best people I’ve known in MLM are “spontaneous, self-regulating, full-functioning,” which Maslow defines as “Aliveness.” *Alive People* are the kind of people I enjoy being around, who inspire me and make me want to follow their example and be *more alive myself!*

Perfection. Maslow says that *constant perfection* is impossible.

But any of us can be perfect for about 5 minutes at a time. And that’s what the best networkers I’ve known do regularly: when they are on, they are *absolutely perfect*.

Order. At first this may seem to be the opposite of “spontaneous.” But even the most charismatic leader won’t *earn enough to survive long enough* in the competitive arena of network marketing without sufficient organizational skills to *attract and manage an organization to lead and motivate*.

Simplicity. I once thought I’d make a good MLMer, like my Grandmother who earned a living on which to raise my mother. And like Grandmother, I thought I might make a crackerjack *Distributor*. But as good as I believe I am at consulting to C-Level executives of network marketing companies,

I lack what Maslow called the “nakedness” or “essential skeletal” ability to motivate and manage a field organization. I can help—provide tools, encourage compliance, and recognize the success of leaders in the field—but I can’t take the place of an inspired field leader.

Richness. Ever wonder what makes the difference between a flash-in-the-pan MLM and a solid and surviving network marketing company? It has to do with Maslow’s sense of *richness*: the “differentiation” and “totality” that comes with a mature Distributor culture and a competent corporate culture to support it. It’s not an accident that Herbalife has survived initial slow growth, the death of its founder (under unfortunate circumstances), the acquisition of its organization by owners initially under-informed in network marketing, and an attack on its reputation and regulatory compliance by one of Wall Street’s most powerful icons. Something in the foundation of its mission and philosophy has supported it through all the muckraking and malaise to continue as one of our strongest institutions. That something has something to do with *richness*.

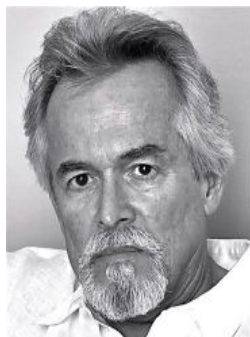
Effortlessness. A commonly trumpeted virtue of MLM (and untrue claim) is *how easy it is, how simple, how anybody can do it*. Which isn’t true. Direct selling takes time, effort, the development of skills, and gifts that not everybody has. However, even those of us who will never become a field leader can profit from the leadership, example, and direction of those who are. And the people who make our business appear to be *effortless*—who perform their duties with what Maslow identified as “ease; lack of strain, striving, or difficulty”—can contribute to our own success and *sense of ease*.

It’s part of the gift of networking: *None of us need to be everything.*

Which is a gift I wish someone had given my father. With a little more sense of *simplicity* and *effortlessness*, and a little less need for *continual perfection*...he might be with me still.

Which was Dad Stone’s gift to me and mine to you: the knowledge that all of us are capable of *becoming perfect... but only for 5 minutes at a time*.

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Dr. Jolley has consulted to Network Marketing C-Level Executives for more than a quarter of a century, providing everything from leadership development to crisis mediation and marketing communications (speech writing, content development, audio/video, websites, media relations, etc.) His Aunt Delila and Grandmother Holt were two of Shaklee's first Distributors long before Dr. Jolley left a career as an Assistant Professor of Communications and newspaper columnist to serve companies such as Herbalife, Sunrider, and Nikken. Traditional companies to which he has consulted include Sprint, Nokia, Maidenform, and Zig Ziglar.

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