

**Business Bullet ~  
Be Careful—Not All Business is Good Business**

I actually 'fired' a couple of clients in the first few months of 2013. One of my New Year's Resolutions was to take a close, hard look at my client activity and see what clients were just not worth continuing to work with. Why did I do that? Because of many reasons, and all of those reasons were strong ones...negative ones. You probably have had an experience like that...realizing that a client/customer is more work than is reasonable, and also that the relationship is not a smooth one...one that you would love to walk away from.

We often take on clients with ridiculous demands, the ones who are late for every appointment, the whiners, the belligerent, the professional victims, the ones who want us to jump through every hoop imaginable, and my personal favorite, the ones who can't make a decision.

Think of some of the clients you've had over the years. If you're new at what you do, think of some of the people whose business you're trying to bring in. I'm sure many of these people are (or will be) a joy to work with. They will honor you as a professional; they will readily state their needs so you can assist them; they will be thrilled at the solutions you provide AND they will refer you to their friends and colleagues. Those are the people we all want to do business with. Sadly, many of us settle for much less than we deserve.



Not all business is good business. Many people, particularly when they are just starting out, or when the economy takes a downward turn, are so hungry to bring in new clients (and the resulting dollars they may bring), that they lose sight of what works for them, what satisfies and fulfills them. I think that in some form, many of us are driven by external forces to build that all mighty database at all costs, that we wind up trying to become all things to all people, and that we lose ourselves in the process.

I'm sure you've gone after clients/customers who didn't work out very well...we all have. My New Year's Resolution is to take quality over quantity. The better suited you and your clients/customers are for one another, the better you work together, and the better the results are that you'll produce.

I've built my business from the referrals of happy clients, and you can too, if you understand what I consider to be the key ingredients in making any business grow: knowing who you are, and honoring yourself as a value. It's very simple, but it's not easy to do. When you've got it down pat, though, you're going to find yourself attracting people who will be as excited about working with you as you are to be working with them.

So, who are you, and what do YOU want to achieve? What makes you tick? What's important to you? What do you stand for? How far will you go? What have you got to bring to the table? What drives you, and what drives you nuts?

As for values, we all have things that we value highly in life and they're different for each and every one of us. For some it is family. For others, it may be lifelong learning, companionship, integrity, freedom, or health. There is no set list; it's totally unique to each of us. Regardless of our individual values, though, how many of us actually take the time to honor 'ourselves' as a value?

When we realize that we are of value and thus a wonderful asset to anyone who comes in contact with us, we lose our hunger to do business with just anyone who comes along. Instead, we naturally become attracted to people and projects that honor us for who we are, the skills we possess, and the gift of freedom we give to our clients by easing their burdens with our expertise. And while we are attracted to those clients and projects, amazingly, those projects and clients become attracted to us.

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Each and every one of us is a valuable addition to the network of man/woman in some unique way. Sadly most of us never take the time to think of ourselves in that regard, and we often wind up doing things that are important to others and neglecting ourselves in the process. Often we lose ourselves completely as we descend into the self-destructive world of 'people pleasing.' Sound familiar? That was me most of my life, both in my personal and professional lives. Every day. It has taken me almost a lifetime to figure out that I just can't please everyone, no matter how hard I try. And so today, I have chosen to value myself and be very selective with whom I do business.

You see, when we honor ourselves, it follow just as surely as night follows day, that others will honor us as well. When we begin to run our businesses on our terms, we will find fulfillment, satisfaction, balance, and the happiness that comes from dealing with people because we 'choose' to, not because we have to.

So, as you move along in your business, and you find yourself questioning the wisdom of working with a certain client or taking on a new project, go to your values for guidance, and ask yourself if you are honoring the most important value of them all: yourself.

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