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5 Simple Strategies for Keeping Your Life Stuck

By Mary Ann Bailey

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One of the most common statements I hear when I talk with potential clients is, "I feel stuck." People find themselves feeling stuck in different ways. They may be in a relationship that no longer is working, but they don't know how to leave. They may have a dream of starting their own business, but aren't exactly sure where to begin. Or they may just want to incorporate more fun in their lives, but aren't sure how to make that happen.

The feeling of being stuck is very familiar for most of us. Even though our lives seem to be in constant motion, very little of that motion actually moves us forward. We are similar to a log-jam in a river. The river is rushing all around us, but we aren't going anywhere. Why is it so easy for us to lose life's flow? What is it about the way we live our lives that leads us towards "stuck"?

There are probably many answers to these questions. In this article I will talk about 5 of the most common behaviors I see that hold us back from living the lives we really want to live.

Believing What You Think

The average mind has about 60,000 thoughts a day and most of us believe about 99% of what we think. Some of our thoughts are a product of how we were raised and the culture in which we live. Others are the product of our mind synthesizing our observations into our own brilliant deductions about the world. Our thoughts help us make sense of our world and our life so it is only logical that we hold our thoughts to be the truth.

This, however, is where we can get into trouble. We cling to beliefs that no longer may serve us. How many of you know for certain that you are not good at art, sports, or math. Most of us didn't leave elementary school without having gotten some negative feedback in at least one of these three areas.

What beliefs are you still hanging onto that may be keeping your life stuck? What things do you think you could never do? What things shouldn't be the way they are? Who would be very upset if you were to follow your heart? It might be time to examine your belief system and see what thoughts are holding

5 Simple Strategies for Keeping Your Life Stuck

you hostage in your life.

Blaming Others for Our Circumstances

How often have you heard comments such as, "My manager is such a jerk. No wonder I am having trouble doing my job." Or, "Don't blame me. I didn't make that decision!"

We all have things in our lives that are not going as well as we would like. That is just the way life is. It throws us curve balls and our job is to figure out the best way to deal with them. Some people defer to curve balls. They remove themselves from the batter's box and wait for a pitch they like better. Meanwhile, life continues on and after a while these people find themselves still standing outside the batter's box feeling stuck and stalled in their life.

Another approach would be to step up to the plate and give that curve ball your best shot. Realize that you are the only one who can truly take charge of the situation. What would it take for you to hit that ball? A good place to start would be putting together a game plan that included intention, determination, and lots of practice. You might not hit the first few pitches. But eventually you will get your timing and swing down and you will start knocking those balls out of the park. You will begin to see that the more you step into your life, the less stuck you will feel.

Taking Life (and Yourself) Too Seriously

Most of us were raised to believe that the key to success was hard work. Recently that belief has been revised to include hard work and very long hours. I would like to challenge that belief with another old adage: "All work and no play makes Jack/Jill a dull person."

To keep our lives flowing we need to intersperse fun, laughter, and creativity with our work. We need to be able to take time to enjoy and reenergize ourselves without feeling guilty or irresponsible. It is during these times of rest and fun that our minds are free to dream and imagine. This is when we very often come up with solutions to our problems, new ways to hit life's curves balls, and new strategies to enliven and enrich ourselves.

Living Life from the Middle

One of the easiest ways to keep our life stuck is to live it from the middle rather than closer to the edge. Living life from the middle means to remain safely in your comfort zone. It means to do things the same way, avoiding change at all costs, and eliminating all spontaneity from your life. As boring as this may sound, it is the way a majority of people live. And, as a result, the middle is an extremely crowded place and it is very easy to feel stuck when you are there.

By encouraging yourself to take small, yet consistent, steps toward the "edge" you will find that life has much more room in which to move around. And the edge is not as scary as you might think. As you begin to try new things, new perspectives will open up and you will begin to see more possibilities and opportunities. You will meet people who are also stepping outside their comfort zone and who can be

5 Simple Strategies for Keeping Your Life Stuck

supportive in your journey. As your life begins to open and flow, you will wonder how you ever stood living in the middle.

Falling Prey to the Fear of the Unknown

Fear is a powerful emotion. It protects us and keeps us from doing dangerous things, yet it can also keep us from doing new and wonderful things. Most of us get a little nervous when we are not sure about what is around the corner. Yet, sometimes getting our life unstuck takes a leap of faith and a strong belief that fear really does just stand for: "False Evidence Appearing Real".

Have you always dreamed about starting your own business, becoming a sculptor, or sailing around the world? To give any chance to those dreams coming true you must face the fears that are holding you back head on and put your trust in you and your dream. Will you be successful? Maybe yes, maybe no. But at least you have opened the door to the possibility of your dream coming true. If you let yourself get frozen by the fear of the negative things that might happen and never open that door, you will have no chance of realizing your dream and you will always be left with the question of what could have been.

Our lives, like rivers, will always experience a few log-jams. The issue is not whether we get stuck. The issue is how we get ourselves extricated from the jam and get our lives flowing again. Becoming more aware of which behavior patterns are responsible for keeping us stuck is a great place to start that process.

Mary Ann Bailey, MC, is a life coach who works with people who are feeling stuck or out of sync in their lives. She specializes in helping professional women who are struggling with midlife career changes. Visit her website at: <http://www.baileycoaching.com> for free articles and resources that will help you get your life moving forward in the direction you want.

Simple Strategies for Marketing Success

By Charlene Rashkow

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SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR MARKETING SUCCESS!

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While most online business owners realize that promoting their products and services are necessary, some are stymied by how to reach their target audience. Some business owners even believe they are too small to invest in a promotional campaign but nothing is further from the truth. While a full-fledged marketing effort may not be necessary for a smaller business, it is however crucial to your success that you employ some type of marketing activity. After all, if you don't spread the word about your business,

5 Simple Strategies for Keeping Your Life Stuck

how will anyone find you?

Without question, learning a few SEO strategies and including interesting copy on your site are necessary tools for empowering your efforts, that is only the beginning. When it comes to a productive and fruitful business, at the root of your success is making sure that your marketing efforts are having an impact.

The following uncomplicated strategies will definitely empower your efforts and best of all will not cost a lot of money.

1) Word of Mouth: Still the best form of advertising!

Each time you work with a client, ask if you can use them as a reference. If they've been happy with your services, they will surely say yes. You should also ask your clients if they would be willing to refer you to friends and business associates. To encourage others to recommend you, offer them a small finder's fee for their referral.

2) Testimonials Work Extremely Well!

Obtaining a testimonial to include on your site works miracles. Personally, when clients comment favorably in response to something I've written, I immediately ask for permission to post their comments on my site. I then include a link to the client's web site so that we each gain in the process. All in all, nothing pays off in dividends as well as good testimonials and referrals.

3) Networking with Others!

Whether it's at a meeting, at an informal gathering or during a brief presentation, every contact you make is a potential client. Share what you do with others when striking up conversations with those in close proximity. You never know if that person might be in the market for exactly what you have to offer.

4) Give something Away Free!

To get your foot in the door it's often a good idea to give something away free of charge. This is not to imply that your services are not worth paying for, but your potential client might need a little convincing. By way of example, if you're an SEO expert, and you want to gain greater exposure for your services,

arrange to speak at an event. In exchange for the exposure give the person who arranges the presentation some of your services free. If he or she discovers how talented you are, you'll get a lot of new business.

5) Your Presentation & Marketing Collaterals!

A well-written bio, press release or soft sales letter included in your marketing kit is ideal. You might also consider creating a powerful marketing slogan that helps you stand above the crowd. The goal of your marketing material is to demonstrate right off the bat what you can do for your clients, what makes you unique and where your specialty lies. Come up with a catchy slogan or line that defines your services and before you know it, you'll be branded effectively.

6) The Tried and True Article Writing!

5 Simple Strategies for Keeping Your Life Stuck

Each in our own way has gained powerful tools through our experiences therefore coming up with an article is a great strategy for gaining exposure. Some people think that it's all been said before, but in truth everyone has something of value to share. Be daring and share something no one else knows about or present it in a way it's never been said before. Pay particular attention to your experiences and before long you'll have great ideas to write about.

7) Keeping Records of Your Strategies!

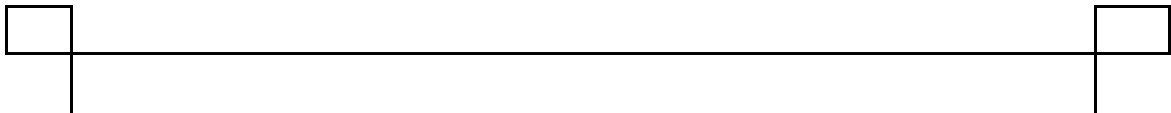
While keeping clear records may not seem like a marketing strategy, it is probably one of the most important marketing tools you'll ever use. By keeping records of your clients, where they come from and how they find you, you always know which of your efforts is working best. I make it a habit to ask visitors if they discovered my services via articles, through word of mouth or through search engines. In that way I know which of my strategies have been most effective and which aren't bringing me new business.

As you give thought to your marketing strategies, don't be timid about trying something new and simple. Very often, the simplest, least expensive method brings the greatest results.

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