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Getting Bent into Shape

By Jean R. Charles

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The other day, I unfolded a Chinese food container getting it ready for the recycling bin. I noticed that flattened, it was a very interestingly shaped white piece of cardboard. It could have been used in that state for several things including, something to write on, to cover something else, or as a decoration. In order to fulfill its real purpose of being a container for food, it had to be bent into its final boxy shape.

I thought about how many times in life we come upon people or events that disturb or annoy us and we say that we get "bent out of shape" by them. Maybe these things are really meant to bend us into shape so we may fulfill our real purpose in life. Perhaps they teach us about how to cope with adversity, or show us an aspect of ourselves that we had previously ignored. They may move us out of our comfort zone so we may experience growth and change.

So next time someone or something gets you "bent out of shape," look for the lesson in the situation. Consider the possibility that you are getting closer to your really purposeful shape.

Jean coaches professionals and small business owners to discover, design and live their just right lives. Through customized coaching sessions, she provides support, focus, and momentum to keep clients on track and progressing. She can be reached at jean@justrightcoach.com or visited on the web at www.justrightcoach.com. Subscribe to Just Right Coaching Clips newsletter by email: justrightcoaching-subscribe@topica.com

DON'T BE A SHAPE-SHIFTER

By Sharon Dalton Williams

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When I was a little girl, I used to love to play "name the cloud." I bet you played this too. I remember lying on my back in the yard and

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watching as the clouds passed overhead. As the wind blew the clouds across the sky, the clouds would change shape. It was more fun to play with someone else, because two people could look at the same cloud and see something different.

Look, a three-headed dragon just floated by. No, now it's a cow with a really big hump on the back. Wait, it's now a celery stalk racing across the sky. Oh, no. The cloud is gone. What fun it was.

OK, I will admit that I played this game earlier this week while watching out my office window. Clouds came, and clouds went. All the while the wind was blowing across my viewing screen, they shape-shifted. And then I noticed the tree.

The same wind that was blowing on the clouds and causing them to shape-shift was just merely bending the branches of the tree. The tree bent with the wind, but it still remained a tree. The tree didn't shape-shift, nor did it fade away. It remained true, strong, and straight because it had a good root system holding it up.

The cloud is a cloud because it was created that way, and the tree was created to be a tree. But you as a business owner can choose how you are going to do business. Are you going to be a shape-shifter like the cloud, or are you going to remain rooted like the tree?

All of us have winds that blow through our lives. The winds are inevitable. There will be times when your business grows – you reach more clients, you receive more orders. And there will be times when your business slows. There will be times when everything just seems to be clicking along at a smooth pace. And there will be times when everything seems to go wrong at once.

When the wind blows through your business, will you immediately give up on what you are doing and look for another business opportunity to try for a while – shape-shifting as you cross the sky? Will you give up saying there's too much wind for you to be prosperous and fade away entirely?

Or, will you bend with the wind and only allow it to affect your

branches and not who you are or what you are doing? Will you remain fixed and stable because you have laid a solid root foundation in your business and built it slowly and steadily?

In the end, the choice is up to you. As for me, I'm choosing to be a

tree. What's your choice?

Sharon Dalton Williams is the author of "How to Succeed and Live a FullLife." Learn how to reach the goals you have set for your life and business. Surf to <http://www.sdwassociates.com> to order your copy.Learn how to use what is uniquely you in building your business. Subscribe to *Out From the Crowd.* <mailto:oftc-subscribe@topica.com>.



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