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Keeping your Business Alive

By George Torok

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As long as you eat and breathe you will stay alive. But is that really living? In a crisis that may be enough. If your business is in crisis – deal with it. But the secret to keeping your business alive is growth.

That is the litmus test of keeping your business alive. Look at nature. Everything that is alive continues to grow. Growing your business is the best way of keeping it alive in the long term. How do you continue to grow your business? Feed it, nurture it, invest in it and treat the business as a journey – not a destination. On your journey you must keep one eye immediately on the road in front of you and the other on the horizon.

Invest in your business success with smart marketing. Smart marketing does not entail expensive advertising campaigns. Instead it means managing all the messages you send about yourself and your business. Be aware of the unintended messages as well as your conscious messages. Test for your unintended messages by asking your best clients. Ask those who did not give you the business – why did they chose to go elsewhere.

Marketing is a long term investment. Because of that, many get frustrated, and complain, 'I tried marketing and nothing happened.' The credibility you build today will help you gain business months or years later. It may seem tough to justify that. But don't stop running the day-to-day activities – just invest a little in your future

Marketing is like planting bamboo. In the first six years the seedlings only grow about 12 inches high. It could be very discouraging to the bamboo farmer. Then 'suddenly' in the seventh year the bamboo sprouts to 6 feet tall. In marketing – nothing happens suddenly. It takes time for results to appear. Prospects need to see your name many times before they remember you and recognize your value. You may think nothing is happening because you don't see the growth. You are the bamboo farmer.

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Not only is marketing sometimes a slow pay back. It is uncertain. Not everything works all the time. It's been said that half of your marketing efforts are wasted. The problem is to discover which half. You don't know – so do it all.

Make your marketing personal. Relate to people because people buy – companies don't buy. But don't take rejections – real or imagined – personally.

One of my good clients stopped returning my calls. I continued to call and send information. I felt discouraged. I thought she didn't like me any more. A year later she called to say, "I had a major operation and I did not feel like talking to anyone." Boy, did I feel stupid for thinking it was about me. Often when we don't hear back from our clients and prospects –we think it is us. How can we be so self centered. The world does not revolve around us. Just ask my teenager – it revolves around her.

Fine-tune your database of clients, prospects and contacts. Treat your best clients special. Offer them

special services. Airlines do this with their frequent flyer points and special status. Stay close to your best clients, keeping them informed and staying informed about them and their business.

Be unique. Discover the 'unwritten rules' of your business then break them to be different. Dell broke the 'rule' that computers must be sold through dealers. Dell is now a leader in computer direct sales. Stand out from the crowd. Watch for changes in your industry that may threaten your market. If the crowd goes down you don't have to go with it. The leaders in any market do well even in downswings.

Network with leaders in other business to learn about changes – threats and opportunities in their industries. These are people who may or may not actually buy your product – but you gain information, prestige and inspiration from them. You might partner with them for a joint promotion. It builds your credibility to be seen with leaders.

Build your credibility as an expert with the help of the media. Develop your media contacts. You will get the best results from appearing in print. Print has the greatest credibility and you can photocopy it for those who did not see it. Build relationships with editors, writers and reporters in the publications your prospects and clients are most likely to read – or respect. Include these media contacts in your database and treat them like your best clients. Keep them informed of changes in your business. Meet them for lunch or coffee. Offer to introduce them to some of your other contacts they may be interested in meeting.

Write articles about your expertise for the publications. Don't expect to be paid for the articles – you want to get your name out often. The easiest articles to write are tips lists. Editors like them and readers love them – easy to read and use. Once you get published – recycle the articles and offer to other publications. Photocopy the articles and send them to everyone on your database – or at least to your best clients so they receive useful information and see what an expert you are. You must be an expert if your words are in print!

Keep your business alive; invest in future growth through smart marketing.

© George Torok is coauthor of "Secrets of Power Marketing"; Canada's first guide to personal marketing for 'non-marketers'. He delivers seminars & keynotes across North America. To arrange a speech or training program you can reach George Torok at 800-304-1861 For more information about seminars visit

Keeping Love Alive

By Margaret Paul, Ph.D.

When I was 24 years old I fell madly in love. I was madly in love for three weeks, and then spent the next 30 years struggling to regain and maintain that wonderful feeling. In the course of my long marriage and in the 35 years I've been counseling individuals and couples, I've learned what it takes to keep love alive and what diminishes the feelings and experience of love.

The concept of what it takes to keep love alive is really quite simple, but not so easy to do. The simple answer is this: love flows between two people whose hearts are open to learning and to sharing love. The hard part is keeping the heart open.

Before I go more deeply into what does keep love alive, I want to focus on what doesn't work to keep love alive. The bottom line of what diminishes or even eventually kills loving feelings is controlling behavior.

There are two major forms of controlling behavior that always result in dampening loving feelings:

Overt control such as anger, blame, criticism and judgment, defensiveness, lecturing, teaching, righteousness, physical violence, and so on.

Covert control such as withdrawal, withholding truth, compliance, giving oneself up, resistance, denial, and so on.

None of us like to be controlled. Most people, in the face of controlling behavior, react with their own controlling behavior. Controlling behavior diminishes love because the focus is on changing the other person rather than on changing yourself. When the intention of your behavior is to change your partner's feelings or behavior, your behavior will often be experienced by your partner as manipulative and/or rejecting. Trying to change how someone feels about you or treats you with overt forms of control feels manipulative and rejecting to your partner, while covert forms of control such as compliance or "niceness," feels manipulative and inauthentic to the other person.

The good news is that love can be kept alive, even in long-term relationships. Love is kept alive when each person is more devoted to learning about being loving to themselves and to each other than to getting love. The moment the intention is to get love, controlling behavior takes over. In any given moment, we either want to be loving and share love, or to get love. Trying to get love diminishes love. Being loving and sharing love keeps love alive. Being loving and sharing love means:

Each person learns to take responsibility for your own feelings rather than making the other person

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responsible for your feelings of worth, lovability, security, happiness, joy or pain.

Each person has your own and your partner's highest good at heart. Each of you supports your own and your partner's joy and well being. Both of you are considerate of the other person without giving yourselves up.

Each person chooses to be honest and authentic about how you feel and what you want and don't want. You are willing to speak your truth without blame or judgment.

Each person stays open to learning about your own and your partner's wants, needs, and fears, especially in conflict.

What keeps love alive is each person's willingness to do whatever inner work is necessary to keep the heart open to loving and learning. Controlling behavior is motivated by fear - of loss of self and loss of other, of engulfment and rejection, of smothering and abandonment. When each person is willing to do the inner work necessary to heal these fears, they are able to keep their hearts open more and more of the time. Love flows freely when hearts are open to loving and learning.

Practicing the Six Steps of Inner Bonding that we teach is a powerful way of doing this inner work. Partners who both consistently practice this process discover the great joy of keeping their love alive. Even when it seems that there is no way to get love back, it does come back when both partners are devoted to learning to take loving care of themselves and to sharing their love with each other.

We cannot give to another what we do not have within. Inner Bonding is a process for creating so much love within that it comes spilling out, to be joyously shared with others.

Margaret Paul, Ph.D. is the best-selling author and co-author of eight books, including "Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By You?" She is the co-creator of the powerful Inner Bonding healing process. Learn Inner Bonding now! Visit her web site for a FREE Inner Bonding course:

or

. Phone sessions available.

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