



“Best Of”

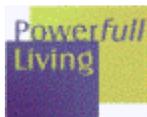
Powerfull Living Articles

*The Top Articles From 2000-2006
For Personal and Business Success*

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[Creating Your Roadmap To Success](#)

Do you have some goals and dreams you want to achieve? Do you believe you are here on this earth for a purpose? Do you have a life passion you feel compelled to fulfill? Creating a vision is an important key in reaching the outcomes you desire.

What is a Vision?

A vision represents what you see as possible for yourself, others, and THE WORLD. Your vision provides the "The View" of your life; a state or outcome you can see that naturally draws, attracts, and pulls you forward with excitement, joy, or creative inspiration.

Powerfull Visioning

Written as a story, single sentences, drawn as a picture, a collage...visions can take whatever shape is most meaningful to you. The point?

1. How do you know what you want if you don't define it?
2. How will you know when you get there if you don't know where 'there' is?
3. Putting things down on paper makes what you think or say – REAL.
4. Saying and seeing what you truly want in your life opens you up to HAVING it!
5. Allowing you to step back and view your life from a fresh perspective.
6. Creating hope and possibility.
7. Compelling you to TAKE ACTION and 'claim' what you want!

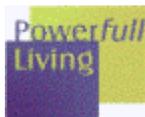
Questions that evoke clarity in creating a vision:

- ◆ What do you truly want to experience or accomplish for yourself, personally and professionally?
- ◆ Where do you want to see your life a year from now?
- ◆ What do you want to change/add/eliminate in your life?
- ◆ If money were not an issue, what would you be doing?
- ◆ What brings you joy? Makes your heart sing?
- ◆ What does your perfect life look like?

Your vision is your plan for your life. To live your life you must live your vision. **Dare to dream big** and take the chance that your dreams might come true. Open your eyes and your mind by opening your heart and soul to possibilities. For whose life is it anyway? It is yours.

"Imagination is everything" - Albert Einstein

Imagine yourself on the 31st day of December looking back over this past year. What changes do you want to see? What challenges have you overcome? What are you most proud of having accomplished? Who have you become?



In Keith Ferrazzi's book, "Never Eat Alone", (a book I HIGHLY recommend!), he says, "A goal is a dream with a deadline." I just love that definition.

Now that you've created your vision, it's time to identify your goals, right? The next step is to write out a clear list of goals, commit to timelines and action steps. After all, unless you clearly define what you want, how will you create an action plan and strategy to reach them?

So, what's your success with goal setting? Are your results better than making resolutions? About the same? If you make a list of goals and find you have difficulty reaching them, you're not alone.

Read some statistics from the American Society of Training & Development.

The probability of achieving a goal if:

- ◆ You hear an idea, is 10%
- ◆ You decide when you will do it, is 40%
- ◆ You plan how you will do it, is 50%
- ◆ You commit to someone else you will do it, is 65%
- ◆ You have a specific accountability appointment with the person you've committed to, is 95%

Many people start out with the best of intentions to reach their goals. Typically, after about two to three weeks, enthusiasm and motivation wanes from a variety of factors including unrealistic expectations, challenges that arise, negative self-talk, and fears.

You more than double your chances of success when you move from a decision into a commitment, when you have someone in your corner to report back to on your progress. Imagine having someone to cheer you on and hold you accountable to be your best.

In "The Power of Intention", Wayne Dyer defines intention as "a strong purpose or aim, accompanied by a determination to produce a desired result."

Does intention mean you are willing to do whatever it takes to attain a result? Does it mean you must be *fully* committed to what is desired? Perhaps it is more accurate to say that ***intention is the first step towards being engaged and fully committed to your vision and your goals.*** Of course the desire has to be strong enough for a total commitment!

In my opinion, commitments are really agreements and promises we make to ourselves, and others. When we agree to do something, we make promises that reflect our integrity. When we break agreements and promises, we might feel disappointed, frustrated or angry with ourselves. Breaking agreements might be the result of committing to something that you feel you *should* do rather than what you really want.



Having a vision and an action plan is great. If you lack the passion or commitment to that result and don't take action, all you have are good ideas that are going nowhere! Ask yourself, "*Does my vision reflect what I really want or what I think I should want?*" If not, then your goals won't excite you to take action. If your vision is not yours, then you are living someone else's life.

The bottom line: I believe that to achieve success you must begin with a strong intention. In other words, how badly do you want it? ***What are you willing to do to make it happen?*** Adding your burning desire to intention to your commitment is a key ingredient to successfully reaching a goal. Identifying your goals allows you to clearly define what you really want. Having clarity will aid you in developing your strategy and roadmap for success.

Your call to action:

Refer to your Vision. If you don't have a vision, create one.

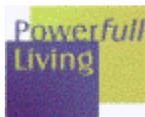
Focus on the goals and dreams you wish to achieve. I strongly recommend you write down a detailed list of all of your goals and dreams. Writing down specific details will help you view what you wish to attract, create, or achieve from a different vantage point. You might want to begin your statements by saying "My goal is..., my dream is..., I want..." Paint a picture in your mind and describe it (or draw, paint, make a collage) on paper.

Describing in detail what you envision, will provide a tangible and concrete picture on which to place your focus and intention.

Make your goals realistic and attainable. If they are too high and unrealistic, you are setting yourself up for failure and disappointment. Goals and dreams that both stretch your comfort zone and excite you to action will empower you to succeed.

Read over what you wrote and review your answers.

1. Is this what you *really, really* want? If it isn't, what do you want, ***really?***
2. Do you feel a burning desire and passion for what you really want? I know this may seem a bit dramatic. *The point is* that to move from intention into commitment, the desire must be strong enough to overcome whatever obstacles might arise. So, this question speaks to "how important is your dream or goal to you? What are you willing to do to accomplish it? If your desire isn't that strong, then return to question #1 for greater clarity.
3. Assess your commitment level. Look at your list of goals and dreams. Rewrite your list to begin each statement with "*I intend to...*" For example: Your goal may be to
4. Read each new statement out loud. Notice what are you thinking and feeling. Do you feel engaged and committed to "go for it?" If not, return to steps 1-3.



5. You now have the beginnings of a plan of action and strategy based on goals and dreams anchored in intention. What do you need to get from *here to there*? Action plan, strategy, systems, people, experts, time, etc.

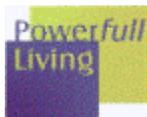
Step out of the box - change the way you *think* about goal setting. Think about fulfilling your intentions by goals as meandering with purpose. I love this approach!

Meandering with purpose adds flexibility into goal setting so that you are open to opportunities and experiences that might take you in directions that bring you greater results than you could have imagined for yourself. Notice the ways the Universe brings people and opportunities into your life to help you grow so that you can fulfill your vision, purpose, and mission.

Or, create a theme for the year such as: being in contribution to others, financial independence, success, peace, or personal growth. Choose actions that support your theme.

Add accountability to your action plan. (Psst – like hiring a COACH!)

The next step is up to you! Ready, set, GO!



Fear of Success? Fear of Failure? What's Holding YOU Back?

One of my clients came to me saying he wanted to expand his business - something he had thought about for years. He described the changes he wanted to make. He said he had taken little action to make those changes happen despite many attempts to move forward. When he talked about what he wanted, his eyes lit up, he smiled, and there was passion and joy in his voice. Years? What was stopping him? He said "My business is going well, and it's not like I have to make changes, maybe it's not that important...on and on."

Over the years, he has continued to feel an internal struggle to move forward in ways that challenged his comfort zone. Bottom line – he continued to feel restless because some part of him was unfulfilled.

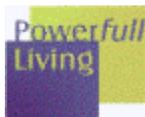
On the surface, it sounded like the changes he wanted to make were for financial gains. Talking further, he realized he was really speaking of a level of service (how he wanted to help people improve their quality of life) and personal fulfillment (actualizing his values, purpose, and vision) that would come from aligning who he is and what he does in a BIGGER way. He was describing a desire to 'be in contribution' to others by living his passion and purpose.

We discussed the things he told himself that kept him stuck. His initial objection was "*If I put myself out there and take some risks- what if I fail?*" (What if this or that happens???) I replied, "*With all the years of experience you have thinking about what you want without committing to action, you have brilliantly **SUCCEEDED** in **FAILING!** Congratulations!!!*"

His eyes widened, and he burst out laughing. By doing nothing, he successfully insured his failure!

Going forward in our coaching sessions, we focused on his attitudes about success and failure. We spent considerable time identifying his values, needs, purpose, and vision. Increased self-awareness enabled him to make choices and design strategic actions to create greater life satisfaction and self-fulfillment.

Why do people fear success? Having to maintain a high level of success can be daunting. Many people believe (fear) that when you're at the top, the only place to go next, is down. Success is life changing both personally and professionally. Success brings losses and gains such as friends, lifestyle, etc. Success can go to one's head and have a negative impact. You know the old saying "It's lonely at the top." Examples of fear of success include: fear of commitment, responsibility, change, or fear of growing up, (being mature/an adult). For many, fear of success is scarier to many people than failure.



Five common beliefs regarding success:

- ◆ *People expect a lot from me and I must consistently deliver at a high level*
- ◆ *If I succeed, people will expect me to succeed at everything I do*
- ◆ *Success has to be hard*
- ◆ *This will take too long*
- ◆ *This is too hard*

Why do people fear failure? Many people associate self-value and self-worth by their success and accomplishments. How often do we measure success by how well or how fast goals are reached? Failure equates to loss of love, money, respect, job, family, situation, etc. Examples of fear of failure include: fear of rejection, not being good enough, or confrontation.

Five common beliefs regarding failure:

- ◆ *I have to get it right (perfect)*
- ◆ *I don't have what it takes*
- ◆ *If I say no, people won't like me*
- ◆ *I have nothing valuable to offer*
- ◆ *If I'm really "me" people won't want /like/love me*

If you feel fear is holding you back from moving forward, below is an exercise to help you gain greater clarity.

Your call to action:

Consider a change you have been thinking and talking about for a while without much progress. To learn more about what may be holding you back from moving forward, write down your answers to the following questions:

1. What is my definition of success? What does success mean to me? Be specific.
2. Identify specific successes. What made these successes for me? What value did I receive from succeeding?
3. What fears, concerns, or assumptions do I have associated with success?
4. How would my life change if I were/felt more successful?
5. What would I have to give up?
6. What would I gain?
7. Who would I become? Would I be happier, more self-confident, authentic, or stronger??? How would I feel? What would I be thinking?

Explore your attitudes about failure. Write your responses to the following questions:

1. What is my definition of failure? What does failure mean to me?
2. If I fail at something, does that define ME as a failure?
3. What specific failures have I experienced? What value have I received from failing? Be specific.
4. What fears, concerns, or assumptions do I associate with failure? Are they true?
5. Can there be success in failure? If yes, how? If no, say more.
6. If I could not fail, what would I be doing?
7. Who would I be?

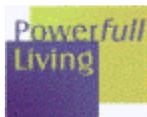
Schedule time to answer these thought-provoking questions – it's a lot to contemplate! Uncovering your view on success and failure might be new to you. Be objective in reviewing your responses. In truth, how can you change or transform something if that knowledge is unknown? ***The more you understand yourself, the more empowered you can become in creating your reality.***

Fear of success and fear of failure are two sides of the same experience. By definition, success and failure is perceived from multiple viewpoints. Both results offer opportunities for self-discovery and change. Developing the clarity to know who you are on the inside is a key ingredient to achieve rich outcomes with ease, strength, and focus! To live fully, you must fully participate with the willingness to succeed and fail for the joy of the experience.

We all know that Thomas Edison invented the light bulb. Did you know he also invented the stock ticker, the electric vote recorder, the automatic telegraph, the electric safety miner's lamp, fluorescent lights, the motion picture camera, and the phonograph?

While struggling with the light bulb, he replied, "I have not failed seven hundred times. I have not failed once. I have succeeded in proving that those seven hundred ways will not work. When I have eliminated the ways that will not work, I will find the way that will work."

From the book "[The Power of Patience](#)", by M.J. Ryan



Uncertainty - The Doorway To Possibilities

"The only thing that makes life possible is permanent, intolerable uncertainty; not knowing what comes next." – Ursula K. LeGuin

"Uncertainty and mystery are energies of life. Don't let them scare you unduly, for they keep boredom at bay and spark creativity."- R.I. Fitzhenry

About 8 years ago my life underwent a major transition both personally and professionally. Everything in my life seemed to be in flux. I felt at a crossroads filled with excitement and huge fear. Where was I going? What might happen next? At times, I felt overwhelmed with so many questions and so much uncertainty.

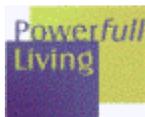
One day, while at a low point, I flipped on the TV and caught one of the Public Broadcasting Station fundraising drives. Deepak Chopra was the featured presenter. He was introducing his view about uncertainty. To illustrate his point, he recalled a story that involved his son during the Christmas holidays. When asked what he wished for in the New Year, his son replied, "I wish for another year of uncertainty." I felt my stomach churn when I heard that! Deepak Chopra continued to speak. The essence of his message was this:

Open your mind to see uncertainty as a state of possibility. Limitless possibilities. So often we view uncertainty with dread and anticipation of something negative happening to us. Imagine seeing the potential of limitless possibilities that might result in wonderful things happening. In other words, expect the best instead of expect the worst. What if you held the thought, "*I wonder what new (and exciting) experiences might be coming my way?*" and pondered upon the possibilities instead of fearing the unknown. What if you approached life as learning experiences rather than problems or obstacles to overcome?

If everything always stayed the same, day in and day out, what would your life be like personally and professionally?

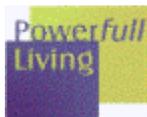
Would you be growing as a person?

Imagine stepping into new experiences with an explorer's sense of adventure and curiosity! When you open your mind and your heart to possibilities, amazing things can happen!



Your call to action:

1. Adopt a new attitude about uncertainty. Create opportunities to approach uncertainty with an open mind and heart. Be the explorer every day! Unleash your adventurous nature!
2. Watch what happens when you are open to possibilities. You might find people and opportunities coming to you that you might have missed when you approached uncertainty as a negative.
3. Notice your reaction to this exercise. Learn more about yourself. *Tip:* Journaling is a great tool to capture your thoughts and feelings!



Give an "A"

I was introduced to the idea of "Giving an A" when reading "[The Art of Possibility](#)" by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander. I loved the concept!

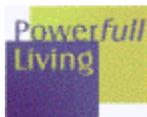
The authors point out that "the main purpose of grades is to compare one student against another." They believe that "in most cases, grades say little for the work done." When compared to other students, grades focus more on performance rather than mastery of the material.

How often do you measure your successes to another? How often do you compare yourself to someone else and feel less competent, less confident, or lower self-esteem?

On page 26 they say, "Michelangelo is often quoted as having said that inside every block of stone or marble dwells a beautiful statue; one need only remove the excess material to reveal the work of art within. If we were to apply this visionary concept to education, it would be pointless to compare one child to another. Instead, all the energy would be focused on chipping away at the stone, getting rid of whatever is in the way of each child's developing skills, mastery and self-expression."

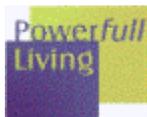
They further state, "We call this practice "giving an A." It is an enlivening way of approaching people that promises to transform you as well as them. It is a shift in attitude that makes it possible for you to speak freely about your own thoughts and feelings while, at the same time, you support others to be all they dream of being. **The practice of "giving an A" transports your relationships from the world of measurement into the universe of possibility.**"

They talk about "giving an A" to people from all walks of life – to everyone and anyone." Imagine speaking to people without needing them to measure up to your personal standards or expectations. Approaching people from a place of respect and appreciation of who they are, gives them the room and freedom to realize themselves and their unfolding potential.



Your call to action:

1. Practice giving an "A" to people in your life – both to people you know and strangers. Observe what you notice about yourself, the other person(s) and the experience as a whole. Write it down.
2. **Give yourself an "A"**. Do this as a buddy exercise with someone you are close with. Write a letter to your buddy (and that person will do the same) dated one year from the day you do the exercise. Using the example in The Art of Possibility on page 27, the instructions for this exercise say to begin the letter with, "Dear (your friend's name,) I got an A because... Then tell your story, in as much detail as possible, about what has happened to you over the year that is in line with this extraordinary grade. Place yourself in the future, and write the letter looking back over the year recording the insights acquired and milestones achieved. Write everything in past tense as if the accomplishments were already in the past. Fall passionately in love with the person you are describing in the letter!
3. Above all, enjoy the experience!



Small Business Spoiler – Procrastination

One of the most common challenges for business owners (and many people in general!) is procrastination. Examples include: wasting time, rationalization, making excuses for delays, creating confusion or busyness. Procrastination is a self-defeating behavior.

We are adept at rationalizing so that we can avoid taking action. We have become masterful in presenting a logical *sounding* viewpoint that successfully defends our position to procrastinate. In this way, we give ourselves permission to step into avoidance, despite the results we *say* we want!

Having a game plan with action steps can foster procrastination. Over time we can develop an automatic patterned response to change, convinced that what we are doing *is* moving us forward. In reality, we're just playing the same old game, creating the **illusion** of moving forward. Bottom line: we just don't want to do it! The solution? Get real by getting honest with yourself.

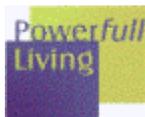
As a small business owner do you:

1. Keep saying you're going to do something and don't follow through? Saying one thing and doing something else? The intended action continues to exist in the future as a goal, always out of reach without being fully actualized. The dangling carrot.
2. Prioritize other things of lesser importance so that you delay moving forward? Do you use a litany of excuses to explain why you haven't taken action to achieve what you say you want? Are you a yes butter? Yes, I want to accomplish this but. Yes I'm excited to get going on this, but... yes but... yes but ... Sound familiar?
3. Overextend (over commit) your time that you never quite get to some things because you're too busy? Some people think scheduling is just a time management problem. In actuality, it's about making better decisions and creating boundaries in how you allocate your time. What do you always manage to fit in despite all the busyness?

I could go on citing examples.

Working with more than 2,000 people over the last 20 years, I believe fear is usually at the root of procrastination. Fear of failure, success, change, the unknown, can all be *powerfull* drivers to avoid taking action. The first hurdle to address might be in recognizing patterns of procrastination. Once recognized, transforming the mechanisms that cause procrastination is possible.

People can become so proficient in rationalizing and avoiding that they lack the clarity to recognize the ways they are sabotaging themselves. Self-defeating behavior is caused by self-defeating attitudes. Identifying internal attitudes and assumptions is a key element in fully dismantling self-defeating behavior.



Common objections to justify procrastination:

1. **I can't! I'm too fearful! I'm not strong enough!** Is that *really* true? (Or is this your drama?) Can't??? Try won't – life is about making choices.
2. **I can't afford to!** How often do you use money as an excuse to deny having something you need? Consider what procrastination might be costing you in time, energy, income, resources, stress, and peace of mind. At what point is the cost too high a price to pay? Consider short and long term value for a questionable investment.
3. **I don't have time!** How much time is needed to take one step? What changes can you make to open up some time?
4. **Now is not a good time! It's not the right time!** When is? What would the right time look like?
5. **I'm not ready!** What needs to change for you to become ready? What does being ready look like?
6. **It's too hard! It's too big!** What smaller steps or ways of looking at it will make it more manageable or attainable? What support and help is available?

Are you a procrastinator? How is procrastination impacting your business success?

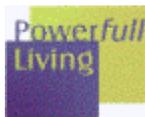
Consider the following questions:

- ◆ What are the mechanisms/reasons/excuses you use to block your success? – i.e. over-promising/under-delivering, time management, poor marketing, negative self-talk?
- ◆ What do you tell yourself (and others) to justify your procrastinating behavior?
- ◆ Have you *really* made the decision to be successful?
- ◆ What beliefs do you have about success? Are they true?
- ◆ How will your life change if you replace this behavior?
- ◆ Who will you *become* if you change this behavior?

In the book, Get Out Of Your Own Way, the authors, Mark Goulston, MD., and Philip Goldberg say “There are, of course, many reasons why people procrastinate: self-doubt, boredom, fear of failure, the feeling of being unready or unprepared and so on. But these feelings by themselves don't necessarily lead to procrastination. Often, what tips the scales is going through them alone, with no one to help you, bolster you, or cheer you on.”

Your call to action: Tips to break the pattern of procrastination

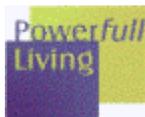
1. The first step is to make a decision to have the success you want. Say “YES to success!”
2. Next, create the vision you want in detail. Paint a picture that excites you to move towards achieving that result. Include a good marketing and business plan!!!! Refer to the article, Creating Your Roadmap to Success.



3. Identify and replace self-defeating beliefs and behaviors that sabotage you. Be open to add expertise to help you with this piece.
4. Craft your action steps and break them down into small steps with timelines.
5. Design a defensive strategy to deal with your procrastination. Define concrete actions. For example: You have warm business leads and don't make the calls. One suggestion is to make it a game so that making calls might be fun. Be creative.
6. Join a mastermind group or develop one. Build a network of support AND accountability.
7. Need more help to stay motivated and on track? **HIRE A COACH!**

Adopting the habit of procrastination means you can avoid having to commit to an action, make a mistake, fail, succeed, take a stand on reaching a goal (take responsibility to make things happen) change your life or yourself. You may make some progress, but continue to hold yourself back. Progress occurs at a controlled, manageable pace, enough to keep you interested and wanting more. And yet, you're always falling short of reaching your heart's desire - like eating fast food vs. sitting down to a healthy feast.

I've come to know is that people put time and energy into what's most important to them. I've watched people move mountains, jump over hurdles for something or someone they love. I know when I'm working with a procrastinator or with someone who really wants to move, by what they are willing to do and unwilling to accept to have what they want. Their actions prove their point more than their words do. People who are ready to take action are too excited to wait and are willing to commit to whatever action is needed to reach their goals. If you keep pushing your dreams away by continuing your love affair with procrastination...it's your life, it's your choice.



Make Your Pitch – Turning Chit Chat Into Big Business

I'm at numerous business mixers and networking events for personal and business purposes. Whether for professional reasons or casual conversation, the question, "What do you do?" comes up repeatedly. The answer is usually the 30-60 second elevator speech... Hi, my name is...I work for/my company is... I help people...Sometimes the response goes on for more than 60 seconds.

Last week, at a networking event, a colleague introduced me to a man who is a financial advisor. Next - the question, "So what do you do?" I have several short responses that invite questions if people want to know more. He didn't. My turn came up to ask him the same question. After learning he was in financial services in less than 60 seconds, I asked him a question to learn more about who he was. He proceeded to tell me about **how good he was** at his job, how happy his clients were with his services for 10 -15 minutes. I stood there nodding and smiling, looking for a way to escape! Sound familiar? All I could think of was, "How do I get away from this man?"

During the entire conversation he never asked me anything that showed any curiosity in knowing who I am. It was all about HIM! Then he gave me his card, asked for referrals and said he'd get in touch with me. Are you kidding????? Guess where his card ended up?

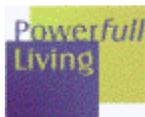
Here's my 64 cents. People like to be talked *to* not talked *at*. Building a business and marketing go together. If your focus in networking is *only* to get clients to build **YOUR** business (a "what's in it for me?" attitude) that's what people will sense and believe about you. Is that how you want to be remembered? The first thing people buy is **you** not your product or service.

You have about 10 seconds to make a good impression! We assess people in three ways:

- ◆ 55% - How you look and act. Examples: Appearance, posture, and eye contact = non-verbal communication.
- ◆ 38% - How you sound. Your voice quality and tone (resonance).
- ◆ 7% - What you say. The actual words you use to express yourself.

Successful networking means **building relationships!** Below are three ways we connect with people:

1. Attitude. Are you warm, enthusiastic, or curious?
2. Establish rapport. How do we do that? I.e. eye contact, interest expressed, great listening skills, authenticity (sincerity), common life experience, which leads to...
3. Establish trust. What is your initial instinct and intuition telling you about the person?



The potential to make a new connection is as likely at the checkout line in the supermarket as it is at a formal business event.

The Law of Attraction

Have you met people who have shown a genuine interest in you and your needs? Did you feel a connection or want to affiliate with them? Were they people you might want as friends? And, if that person had a service or product something you needed, would you want to buy from them?

If your intent is to forge strategic alliances and build relationships, notice how you present yourself to people in all situations. Do you meet people with a desire to "be in contribution" to them by listening for opportunities to be of help? Or do you look for opportunities to impress them with your practiced pitch and dazzling accomplishments? Do you have a specific agenda that might be off-putting rather than attracting people to you? Do you appear to be listening when, in reality, you're thinking of what you want to say next?

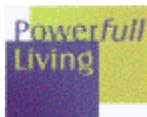
Creating connections naturally opens the door to referrals. If you knew of a great person who would be an asset to folks in your life, would you keep that person a secret? Of course not! What I am describing is the difference between attraction and selling. The **Law of Attraction** is a way of being "in relationship" (establishing rapport, trust, friendship) with the people with you meet.

Three Attraction Tips:

- ◆ Be sincere and real. In other words, be yourself with people. Express authenticity from your heart rather than trying to impress people.
- ◆ Be genuinely curious in learning about people in casual or business situations. Listen for how many times you make "I" statements to draw the focus consistently back to you. Remember, it's all about THEM. Good conversations have a back and forth flow. Otherwise, you're giving a speech.
- ◆ Be present with people. Practice different ways to listen: **Empathic listening** – listening and responding with both the heart and mind to understand the speaker's words *intent* and *feelings*. **Attentive Listening** – paying attention and focusing on the speaker's words. Eliminate the *need* to make comparisons to your own experiences to shift the focus on YOU. **Active Listening** – recapping back what you hear the person saying. Asking questions invites conversation by conveying genuine interest. Read more about listening in the upcoming article in this eBook!

Three Networking Tips:

- ◆ Identify the number one, two or three key problems you solve for your clients. When asked, "What do you do?" Respond by saying the #1 problem you solve for people. You might say "I solve three problems for my clients." Say what they



- are and keep it short!! Remember to smile, make eye contact, and stop talking. Allow them to ask you questions if they want to know more. If they have no interest in getting to know you, move on.
- ◆ Focus on making quality contacts rather than trying to meet as many people as you can. If you see people you know, ask them to introduce you around. Warm contacts can open door to warm leads. If you meet someone you'd like to know better, arrange a coffee, lunch or dinner meeting.
 - ◆ Only offer your card when someone asks for it. If you want their card, ask for it. Are you cringing at this tip? Seriously, what's the likelihood you will keep a card handed it to you, whether you wanted it or not? That's all about THEM. If you want to give your card but haven't been asked you might say, "*May I give you my card?*" When given a card, hold it in both hands and say something about the card (I like the color, very striking) before putting it in your pocket or purse.

Converting Warm Leads to New Clients

Ask the right questions - Ask open-ended questions designed to elicit critical information and build rapport. Consider asking what you really want to know rather than creating a cookie cutter list of questions. Remember to include typical pain-point questions from your experience with other clients. In other words, ask questions to learn more about their pain (problems, challenges, stress).

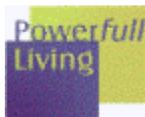
Connect with their purpose – Be aware of making assumptions that potential clients all have the same goals. If you're talking about helping a client build a million dollar business, you may miss the mark if a prospect is looking to spend more time with his or her family. Learn more about who they are and what they want. Listen for their core values and needs. You might start by sharing your reasons for entering your business to open up the conversation.

Communicate your real value proposition – It's not always what you think. Not sure? Ask your current clients why they work with you.

Talk bottom line benefits – That's what people are listening for, "What's in it for me? Why should I care about what you have to offer?" Not sure about the difference between benefits and features? Read the enclosed article by Janet Ryan.

Your call to action:

At the next networking event, practice strong listening skills with everyone you meet. Be curious to know more about people rather than waiting to make your pitch. Even if you initially believe they might not be a strong contact for you or a potential customer, remember that each person you meet has a Rolodex of about 250 people, many of whom might be potential contacts for you. If you believe in relationship building as a key to



success business networking, be willing to ask, "How can I help you?" Having a genuine interest in helping others become successful is an Attraction principle that will magnetize success to you faster than any marketing technique you seek to master.

In your willingness to help others succeed, ask people to help you too. Refrain from hesitating to ask for introductions or leads to potential clients. Why would they want to keep you a secret too!

SPECIAL BONUS!

Keeping It Brief: Features v. Benefits

Closing the Sale Series: Part 9

You have the appointment with the key decision maker, you have spent the time to learn her business and demonstrate your knowledge and experience, and you have gotten agreement on the problem they need to solve.

Now you get to show your stuff, pitch your offering, and make them fall in love with what you are selling. For many sales people, this is where things go south, fall apart, kill the deal. The offering may be sound, but the moment we start talking about our stuff, we forget all about the customer and start droning on and on about every wonderful feature of our offering.

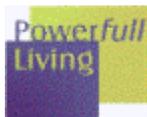
In sales circles, we call this throwing up all over the client.

Sound familiar? Even if you can't recall ever doing it (though most of us have been guilty one time or another) you can certainly remember a sales situation where some overeager seller did it to you. A time when the moment was lost, that great rapport destroyed or badly damaged, and the sale killed or at least stalled.

Go ahead, delve into that memory, feel all that discomfort, and make a vow never to do that to your customers and prospects. It's hard, I know, to resist the urge to tell all, now that you've finally got the permission to show your stuff.

But fight that urge, because even though its now your turn to tell your story, it's still the prospect's interests that need to hold center stage, and losing sight of that key rule is the basis of far too many lost sales.

Instead of telling all, discipline yourself to tell only what is important to the prospect, based on your earlier in-depth discussion of the individual prospect's needs and interests. Even with that shorter list, prioritize and summarize, so that you are talking only about those features and benefits that really matter, not every cool thing you like about your offer.



You notice I said features and benefits. You know the difference between the two, but do you know how to use them each to your best advantage? A feature is an aspect of the product or service; the benefit is why it matters to the buyer. The more technical the offering and the buyer, the more you can get away with talking features. The less technical, the more you want to talk benefits, referring back to the related feature only when necessary to illustrate a point or demonstrate why the benefit claim is real.

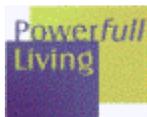
Truly customer-oriented sales people spend time before the call figuring out which small list of features and benefits will matter most to the customer and which others to have ready should questions arise.

Ideally, you'll talk about the main benefits, back up your claims with the features that allow those benefits to be delivered, and then invite questions, letting the buyer lead you to the details that interest him or her. Keep it conversational, allowing the buyer to interact, so you are sure you are focusing on what your buyer cares about, not just what you like to talk about.

If you have any doubt about what are features and what are benefits, make a list with two columns, listing product attributes in the first and the related value statement in the second. Be clear on which benefits derive from which features, and then discipline yourself to talk about one or the other, and only those items on the list that matter most to THIS customer. Going through this exercise before the call helps even the most experienced sales person remember what is truly important to focus on in the meeting with the prospect.

And it will keep you from undoing all the good you've done in getting to this crucial point in the sales conversation.

Submitted with permission by Janet Ryan © 2005, author of the popular "Sales Skills for Non-Salespeople" column in *Thinking Aloud* and a WorldWIT board member, VP - Publisher for *Macworld* magazine.



"Secrets" to Feeling Power-Full In An Uncertain World

Life has always been full of uncertainties. Over the last several years with downsizing, bankruptcies, scandals, crime, the economic environment, and the threat of war, people are feeling power-less, fearful, and stressed about their present and future lives. I know people give their power away, often in ways they don't realize.

Question: What's the #1 SECRET to being "in power"?

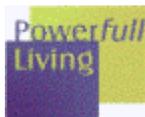
Answer: No matter what life situation you are experiencing; your interpretation – your perception and attitude towards that situation is the key to shifting from power-less to power-full.

Do you view experiences as problems, barriers, or something too big for you to handle? Do you focus on the negative thinking and become stressed out? Do you see the glass half empty instead of the glass half full? OR, do you perceive the situation as an opportunity that excites you to action and stimulates creative problem solving?

How you view that situation and view yourself in that situation can shift you dramatically from power-less to power-full in an instant!

Empowerment KEYS to stay strong and focused in the face of uncertainty:

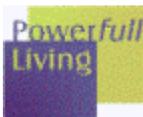
- ◆ **Ramp up self-care.** I use *extreme* because taking the best care of You is serious. Identify ways to replenish and strengthen yourself – mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. When we feel replenished, we handle situations with strength, clarity and focus. Consider what fuels and energizes you?
- ◆ **Decrease/eliminate energy drains.** What are you tolerating/putting up with that drains your energy? We put up with, accept, take on and are dragged down by people's behavior, situations, unmet needs, crossed boundaries, in-completions, problems and even our own behavior (avoidance, silence, compliance). We can even normalize things because we have become conditioned to put up with it! You are putting up with more than you think, so what are you tolerating? Be specific. Here are some examples; needed repairs, clutter, unanswered correspondence, debt, a job, a relationship. What are the subtle energy zappers that drain you? What is this costing you? What changes are you willing to make to simplify your life? Want to direct your energy more productively, feel more revitalized and focused?
- ◆ **Create and enforce boundaries.** Find your voice! Boundaries (limits) separate us from other people and situations; keeping us safe from threats, real or imagined. When we set boundaries (and reinforce them), we create a "living space" for ourselves that tells us where we "end" and someone else "begins." By



setting and maintaining your boundaries, you will teach people how people to treat you with greater respect. The result? You become a great model for others and your relationships benefit by being with a happier YOU!

- ◆ **Monitor self-sabotage.** What is self-sabotage? Self-sabotage is the combination of attitudes (beliefs, thoughts, and feelings) and actions (behaviors) that create obstacles and roadblocks to our success, life fulfillment, etc. Self-defeating behaviors are the result of self-defeating attitudes. Eliminating self-sabotage requires having an open mind and letting go of self-judgments and criticisms (I know this can be easier said than done). Forgive yourself for past choices and take the lessons and experiences learned to strengthen and empower you as you move forward in your life.
- ◆ **Surround yourself with people and things that lift your spirit.** What brings you joy? We are influenced and impacted by the people in our lives especially within our inner circle. Allowing the special people in your life to love and support you is a gift from which to draw strength, clarity, and courage.
- ◆ **Practice daily gratitude** – Take time each day to consciously appreciate the people and things that bring your joy. Focusing on the gifts and blessings that fill your life generates peace and well-being.
- ◆ **Be a risk-taker. *MOVE!*** Take action! Focus on the outcomes you can control or influence in your life.

Read on to learn about a fabulous tool that will help move from feeling *powerless* to *powerfull*.



My World Diagram

This diagram represents a concept adapted from Steven Covey's book, "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People". I use this model with my clients to regain perspective in any life situation, personally or professionally.



Each of us has a huge circle that contains every aspect of our life. Toward the center of that area, there is a space called **control**. For some people, the space is relatively small. For others, the space might be larger. Within that center space we are in complete control of all the situations and outcomes we face. Outside of that circle is another area. In this space of **influence**, we are no longer in complete control. We have the ability to influence outcomes and events. Now focus on the final area – that outer ring of **no control**. In this space, no matter what we do, no matter how hard we try or care, we have no control over the ultimate outcome.

So our lives have three places represented by three circles that interrelate. Covey states our goal is to live life learning to improve the quality of each circle so that we can experience a great sense of life balance.

For example: you may know people who spend a lot of time in their outer circle. They worry about the weather, complain about the traffic, lament about the past, and blame people and things for their life situations. Their outer circle becomes so large, that the other two are smothered and everything in their life seems "out of control." Sound familiar?

Your call to action:

Describe a situation you perceive as having no control. *Is that really true?*

Using the My World Diagram, ask yourself:

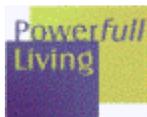
- ◆ In this situation, what do I totally control?
- ◆ In this situation, what do I influence?
- ◆ In this situation, what don't I control?

In viewing any situation, the answers to those questions will help you regain perspective and clarity to design *powerfull* strategies.

Now, consider that situation once more. Has your original perception of having no control changed in any way? If yes, how?

Commit to at least one action you will take in the next 14 days to feel more *powerfull*. Implement any of the empowerment keys to support you in moving forward.

**** Remember, no matter what situation you are facing, the one power you always retain is how you choose to view this situation. Do you see your life as filled with problems or possibilities?***



Navigating Through Transition And Coming Out On Top

If I had \$1.00 every time I heard someone say "I don't like change or, change makes me uncomfortable" I'd have a bundle of money. Some people thrive on change. They love it and even create more of it. Others view change with anxiety and resistance. So often, we don't associate potential, excitement and wonder with change. Instead, we react to it; we try to control it; we create situations and problems to avoid dealing with it. We experience change daily in many forms – the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the conversations we have, traffic patterns, the WEATHER.

According to William Bridges, author and expert on transitions, "**Change** is an external experience of something new, clearly defined, often with a starting point or a stopping point. It can be sudden something we know about in advance. Such as ending a job and starting a new one, being married and getting divorced. **Transition** on the other hand, is the psychological impact change has on people. Transition can be highly emotional and personal. It's an internal process that must be navigated to successfully make a change"

At some point in every person's life, change has wreaked havoc. Whether change is brought about as a result of technology, politics, cash-flow problems, an act of God or a deliberate decision, there exists a set of simple, logical steps which, when carefully taken, will bring about a successful transition.

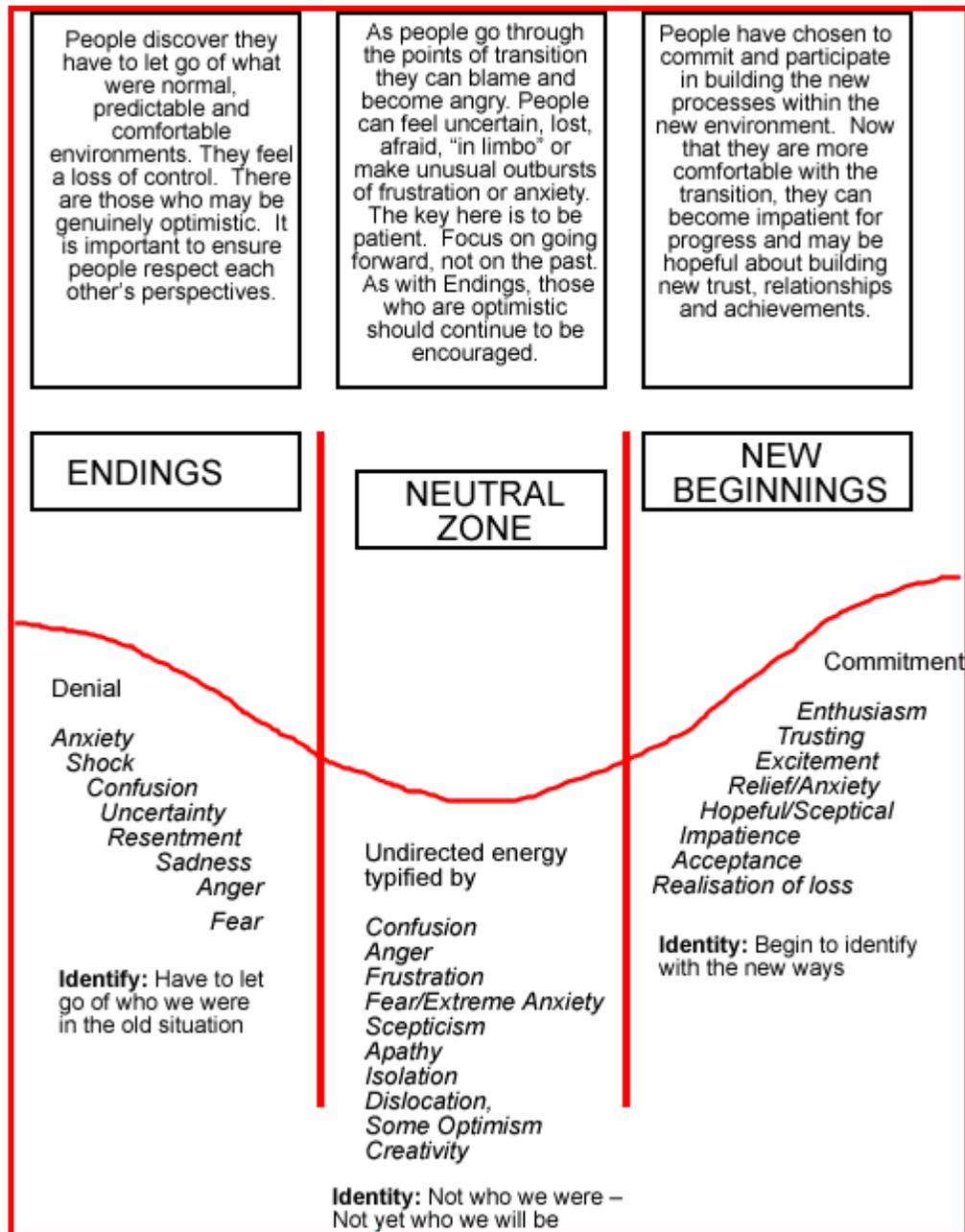
Mary, (not her real name), has been in business for eighteen years. Up until five years ago, her business was thriving. In the period of one year, her client base was reduced by 50%, dramatically affecting her net income **and her entire life!** The timing couldn't have been worse.

She had just purchased a new home, a new car, and tickets for an Alaskan holiday. Facing major expenses and responsibilities, Mary said, "It felt like the rug had been pulled out from under me with so many changes happening all at once!" She felt in the throes of some many emotions - uncertainty, confusion, anxiety and the "F" word. **FEAR! Big Time!** Navigating through transition with education, empowerment strategies, and a support team, Mary used the transition period to clarify her values, purpose and vision, re-inventing herself in an exciting business. Five years later, it's a whole new ball game with plenty of home runs.



Leading Change > Transition Management > The Three Phases of Transition

There are three phases of the transition process- Endings, Neutral Zone, and New Beginnings. These three stages are shown in a Transition Curve and whilst this curve is over simplified, it is a useful tool for understanding the sorts of issues people might be facing during a change.



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Source: http://www.effectingchange.luton.ac.uk/leading_change/index.php?content=transitioncurve

Phases of Personal Transitions

People go through three to five major personal transitions throughout a lifetime. Each transition requires time to reassess and realign our core values, beliefs, purpose, mission and vision in our life to find meaning in the experience. While some transitions are external and easier to recognize, others might begin as an internal transition and can be harder to recognize and explain. Learning about the phases of personal transition and actions for each phase helps to avoid getting stuck in a phase and assists in achieving the enrichment the experience is meant to provide. Individual transitions include:

- ◆ Change or loss of health
- ◆ Retirement
- ◆ Marriage/divorce/parenthood
- ◆ Career building promotions
- ◆ Return to work
- ◆ Death or loss of a loved one

1 - Endings	2 - Neutral Zone
Loss of personal identity and sense of self.	Life feels out of control and chaotic. Feeling lost.
<p><u>Behaviors:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional overreactions to everyday circumstances. • Aggression, irritability, anger response to neutral requests. • Denial, non-compliance. • Sabotage own efforts. • Fear. <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create "boundary" actions and events to separate your past from your present "That was then, this is now." • Make an inventory of your losses. Begin the process of letting go. • Create a "ritual" to honor what's being left behind. • Choose your attitude. Seek to view change as an opportunity vs. a liability. What's possible? 	<p><u>Behaviors:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal or disengagement from routine habits (even ones you enjoy). • Active intention to be alone. • Poor concentration, inability to focus or stay on task. • Possible addictions. • Negative thinking, depression. <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule time for self-care activities. Critical! • Assemble a support team • Identify feelings you're experiencing. Give yourself permission to feel them. • Prioritize demands on your time and energy. • Have some fun!

3 - Moving Forward (New Beginnings)

New or significantly changed personal identity and sense of self. "A new YOU"

Behaviors:

- Expressed excitement and enthusiasm.
- Openness and willingness to try new things.
- Renewed energy and activity.
- Creation of new habits and routines.
- Ability to respond to life circumstances with greater confidence and skill.
- Integration of new identify and sense of self.

Emotions:

- Inner peace and calm.
- Sense of achievement.
- Trust in self.
- Optimism.
- Confidence.
- Relief.

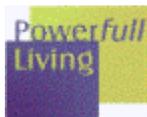
Actions:

- Acknowledge progress. Celebrate!
- Implement safeguards and strategies to keep you moving forward.
- Recognize and accept that you are in a process of "mourning" for those things you've ended (positive or negative). The timeline for completion is individual.
- Identify "trigger" behaviors to alert you if reverting to old behaviors.
- Develop your ability to listen and respond to your intuition.

Additional tips for creating a defensive strategy:

1. Acknowledge what's happening. Get real about your situation and eliminate denial. Identify what you can control and influence to gain perspective in devising a strategy for action.
2. Invite collaboration. Brainstorming is an excellent resource for pooling knowledge by gathering other points of view for creative problem solving.
3. Ramp up self-care. Taking good care of yourself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually is a key factor in staying strong and focused. Establishing some daily routines and habits provides consistency and a sense of control. Examples: exercise schedules, morning and evening routines.
4. Need to vent or have someone just listen? Build a support team of family, friends, colleagues and or professionals who will hear you with objectivity and encouragement. Sometimes we just need to be heard!
5. Identify and replace negative self-talk. When we are in fear we tend to view situations by concentrating on problems and worse case scenarios. Take charge of your attitude. Instead of focusing on the worst, expect the best.
6. Be engaged in pleasurable or stimulating activities. Lighten up and take time to relax with friends and family.
7. Recall a past experience you successfully transitioned. How did you do it? What can you take from your past success to use in future experiences? Drawing from personal history builds hope, confidence, and stirs the creative juices.
8. Be curious. Ask yourself, "*How does this situation compel me to grow? What can I learn about myself and my life from this change? What opportunities does this change offer me? What can I take from this experience to improve myself and my life?*"? Use what you discover to help you move you forward.
9. See yourself in the future, at the other side of the transition. Create a vivid picture in your mind of how you see your life. Incorporate this image as part of your daily routine (see #3) and use this image to pull you forward through your transition.

In closing: **Put your attention on the opportunities that are possible rather than concentrating on the problems.** Remember, the Neutral Zone is not a permanent phase. You can move through it with greater ease or struggle within it. It's your choice!



Negativity – How It Impacts Your Business and Personal Success

I received an advanced copy of a book called "How Full Is Your Bucket", by Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton. Gallup Press (a renowned company that provides research and scientifically based educational materials) publishes this little gem of a book filled with nuggets of wisdom and inspiration.

In my early twenties I worked in retail sales for many years and had the misfortune to work for under a bitter, negative woman. Over time, daily contact with her had begun to erode my self-confidence and self-esteem. Leaving that job to join a large retail chain, I found myself in a positive environment and rose to the position of office manager in less than six months. Being treated with respect and feeling appreciated for my abilities helped to restore my self-confidence.

That's why I liked this book. It centers on a theme I have been practicing for years – focusing on what's right about people instead of what's wrong.

Below is an excerpt from page 15:

The Theory of the Bucket and the Dipper

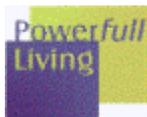
"Each of us has an invisible bucket. It is constantly emptied or filled, depending upon what others say or do to us.

Each of us has an invisible dipper. When we use that dipper to fill each other's bucket by doing and saying things to increase their positive emotions – we also fill our own bucket. But when we use that dipper to dip from other people's buckets – by saying or doing things that decrease their positive emotions – we diminish ourselves.

A full bucket gives us a positive outlook and renewed energy. Every drop in the bucket makes us stronger and more optimistic. But an empty bucket poisons our outlook, saps our energy and undermines our will. So we face a choice every moment of every day: we can fill one another's buckets, or we can dip from them. It's an important choice – one that profoundly influences our relationships, productivity, health, and happiness."

Pioneering research studies by Psychology expert John Gottman suggests there is a "magic ratio" of 5:1 (5 positive to 1 negative) in terms of our balance of positive to negative interactions. Meaning: While a single negative interaction can have a strong emotional impact, several positive interactions will refill your bucket.

Being emotionally positive does not suggest that every comment and action should be one of only praise and acknowledgement because dealing with mistakes and helping others to learn and grow is important. The authors say that "*positivity must be grounded in reality*" or the result may be to create false optimism that is counterproductive and off-putting. In truth, most people do not suffer from too much positive support. The



opposite is true. Many people receive negatively critical support. While we are not responsible for how people interpret our actions and words, we are responsible for *how we deliver a message. Our responses will affect whether it may be filling or diminishing someone's heart.* **Words and actions are more powerful than you might realize!**

According to the Gallup poll:

1. The #1 reason people leave their jobs: They don't feel appreciated.
2. Bad bosses can increase the risk of stroke by 33%.
3. The cost of disengagement or extreme negativity: \$250-\$300 billion per year.
4. A study found that negative employees could scare off every customer they speak with – for good.
5. 65% of American received no recognition in the workplace last year.
6. Praise is rare in most workplaces.
7. 9 out of 10 people say they are more productive when they are around positive people.

The bottom line – sustaining negativity is costly to both business and personal success!

Examples of filling people's buckets:

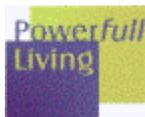
- ◆ Random acts of kindness
- ◆ Unexpected gifts
- ◆ A smile
- ◆ A compliment
- ◆ Praise
- ◆ Acknowledgement

Examples of dipping into other people's buckets:

- ◆ Blatantly or subtly criticizing others people mistakes or faults
- ◆ Poking fun at people (at the expense of the person)
- ◆ Attacking people's insecurities
- ◆ Withholding positive emotional support

We are responsible for the amount of power we give to people to influence or control us. And we are affected by negativity especially when it is consistent.

By recognizing and appreciating people's talents/gifts, strengths and uniqueness, we increase positive emotions in our relationships, both personally and professionally. When we say and do things that evoke positive feelings in people, we also feel good about ourselves. People thrive when they feel respected, appreciated and valued. Approaching each interaction with the intent to help others feel good is a *powerfull* way to initiate new relationships and deepen others.



Want to know how you score in filling people's buckets? Visit www.bucketbook.com to take the Positive Impact Test.

What kind of person are you? A bucket filler or dipper?

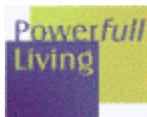
What would you change about yourself to be a more supportive person?

In what ways do you bring out the best in the people at work and in your personal life?

Your call to action:

Over the next 30 days, intentionally become, "a bucket filler" to people in your world.

Watch what happens!



I Want To Be Happy

"Happiness is the whole aim and end of human existence"
- Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony"
- Mahatma Gandhi

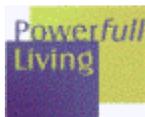
The underlying reasons for why clients have come to me over the years are their desires for happiness. What is happiness? Conventional wisdom often defines happiness as status, financial security, worldly goods, possessions, lifestyle, accomplishments etc. I have met many very successful people, who seemed to have it all; who have come to me saying they felt something was missing from their life. In short, with all of their *apparent* success, they weren't happy! They say, *"I want to be happy. What do I do?"* What I have come to know is that things and people do not create happiness. Feeling happy as a **response** to an external experience adds to our own happiness, and it is not **the true source** of happiness. **Happiness is a state of being**, independent of external influences and situations.

In a gem of a book called, *"What Happy People Know"*, Dan Baker, Ph.D. defines happiness as *"A way of life – an overriding outlook composed of qualities such as optimism, courage, love, and fulfillment."* He says, *"We all have a neurological fear system embedded within our brains that once helped us survive, but now limits our lives. This biological circuitry of fear is the greatest enemy of happiness!"*

According to Baker, *"Happiness is a by-product for the condition (state of being, outlook on life) that comes from several indispensable qualities. The sum of the following qualities is happiness."*

The Twelve Qualities of Happiness

1. **Love** – the antidote to fear and an essential quality of happiness. Love renews and energizes the human Spirit.
2. **Optimism** – provides power over painful events to be able to see the profound value of the experience.
3. **Courage** –the strongest weapon for overcoming the lightning fast power of the fear system.
4. **A sense of freedom** –freedom is choice. Using courage to exercise choice is true freedom.
5. **Proactivity** – actively participating in creating your destiny and forging your own happiness.
6. **Security** – liking who you are on the *inside* and developing a strong inner foundation that will last a lifetime.
7. **Health** – health and happiness are interdependent. It's hard to feel happy if you don't feel healthy and vice versa.



8. **Spirituality** – having the connection to a Higher Power, Spirit, God, or Religion extends the boundaries of our own lives for extraordinary experiences.
9. **Altruism** – helping other people and contributing to the quality of their life fulfills a sense of purpose and personal satisfaction.
10. **Perspective** – being able to see shades of gray and knowing how to prioritize problems (challenges?) into possibilities and opportunities. Seeing the big picture!
11. **Humor** – Humor is the shift of perception that gives you the courage to take action. By lifting the suffering off the heart, humor empowers the Spirit to heal it.
12. **Purpose** – understanding why you are here on this earth and doing the things you were meant to do.

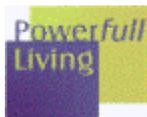
* You can find this list on page 19

Baker states, *“Other qualities such as confidence, self-esteem, fulfillment, and peace of mind are important”*. He continues to say, *“Not all of these qualities must be present or in equal amounts to be happy. Most of them must be abundant for someone to experience the kind of lasting rock-solid happiness that endures even when life gets tough.”*

What’s your definition of happiness?

Your call to action:

1. Over the next month, review the list of qualities for happiness.
2. Select one or more qualities to focus your attention. For example: Break through procrastination and take action on something you have been avoiding (proactive), extend yourself to help someone else for the joy of it (altruism), or prioritize your self-care (health).
3. At the end of 30 days, celebrate taking another step to increase your happiness level!



Stop Talking And Start Listening!

Working with thousands of people throughout my career(s), I've come to appreciate that listening is truly an art. Developing strong listening skills is a key element in building collaborative professional relationships and long-lasting personal friendships.

Many people may claim to be great listeners. Are you?

In Stephen Covey's book, "7 Habits of Highly Successful People", he describes five Levels of Listening:

- ◆ **Empathic Listening** – Listening and responding with both the heart and mind to understand the speaker's words *intent* and *feelings*. Listen for what is not being said.
- ◆ **Attentive Listening** – Paying attention, focusing on the speaker's words/comparing to your own experiences.
- ◆ **Selective Listening** – Hearing only what interests you.
- ◆ **Pretend** – Giving the *appearance* of listening.
- ◆ **Ignore** – No effort to listen.

What level of listening do you relate to most of the time?

Being a great listener includes how you respond to what you hear!

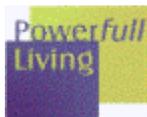
Common responses to information (general conversation, problems, situations, conflicts etc):

1. Telling you what they think you should to fix it.
2. Comparing your situation to something that happened to them which pulls the focus away from you (which may or may not be what you need to feel supported!)
3. Trying to cheer you up or shift your mood distracting you from what you are thinking and feeling.
4. Feeling like you are being interrogated when asked too many questions.
5. Interruptions that control the direction of the conversation.

If you have experienced any of the above responses, how did you feel? Did you feel you were someone who really listened to you in the way you needed?

The most *powerfull* kind of listening is empathic listening. If you have the desire to listen with empathy, some simple physical adjustments will immediately help establish rapport.

1. Stop what you are doing.
2. Turn your body to face the person. Invite them to sit, and if possible, sit near them. If they stand, you stand.
3. Make eye contact as you listen and speak.



4. During the conversation, resist the urge towards distractions (looking through papers, taking a call etc.).
5. Monitor your focus of attention. If you become aware of your thoughts wandering, return to what they are saying. Listen for their tone of voice, notice their posture and facial expression. **Let go of thinking about what you are going to say next so that you can be fully present!**
6. Learn to be comfortable with pauses and **silences**.
7. Summarize what you hear them saying. "What I hear you saying is..."

With practice, you'll have a much better understanding of how you listen, and when to move your listening to a higher level. Having compassion for others is not possible if you are unable to listen with empathy.

Your call to action:

Recall an experience when you felt someone really listened to you? Write down your answers to the following questions:

1. How did you feel? What did you think?
2. What was important for you about that experience?
3. What did you learn about yourself when someone really listened?
4. To what extent do you communicate to others what you need from them as a listener?
5. How can you use to information to be a more empathic listener for others?

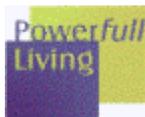
One final point on making assumptions...

We draw conclusions about people through observation, their behavior, past experiences, other people's comments, etc. We assume who people are - what they think, need, and want with such speed that we fail to recognize how our own viewpoint colors the way we relate to people and situations. We even hold assumptions about ourselves!

Pay attention to the ways you might slip into the pattern of making assumptions in your desire to understand others. Words and ideas mean different things to different people. One person's definition of success is not the same as another's.

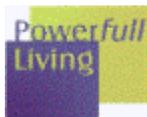
How often do you believe you truly understand the other person only to find out you have made a mistake that results in a **miss – understanding?** To what extent do your assumptions cause conflicts? How often do you make a decision or take action based on your assumptions. What happened?

Making assumptions has become a subtle habit of communication that affects the ability to be fully present as an empathic listener.



Tips to move from unconscious assumptions to conscious curiosity:

1. Look for opportunities to practice being curious instead of "knowing." Choose situations that would benefit you from gaining further information. Pay attention to how you are responding to people.
2. ASK QUESTIONS!!!!!! Say things like – *"tell me more about that", "I know what that means to me, what does that mean to you?"* Consider what you'd really like to know.
3. Reflect back to the person what you hear them say and what you believe they mean. This is active listening.
4. Be willing to look silly or be uncomfortable in an effort to understand.
5. Recall a past experience when you made assumptions that had negative consequences. Looking back, what assumptions did you make that you can learn from now? How can you apply this information to become more open and receptive?



[Recharging Your Batteries](#)

In the past century our lives have become more complicated. By comparison, our ancestors led a simpler life, with priorities focused on family and community life. Well, times have certainly changed. We are accessible by beeper, cell phone, text message, voicemail, email and instant message, telephone, and fax - all day or night. Whew!

Add job responsibilities; including two family incomes or single parenting, living single, family and community relationships, and other time commitments. We're so busy operating in hyper-drive (especially in the USA!) that we can forget how to relax and unwind. Is it any wonder we often feel like we have no time to really enjoy our lives because we always have someone or some responsibility to attend to?

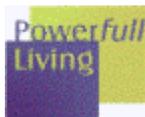
Family, social, and business responsibilities vie for your time and energy. Imagine yourself, when refreshed and energized, like a pitcher filled with water. Beside the pitcher are empty glasses, representing the people and situations in your life that require your time and attention. As each glass is filled with water (your time and energy) the water level in the pitcher becomes more and more depleted. If the pitcher YOU is emptied without replenishment for too long, symptoms of burnout will appear.

"I can't seem to get motivated or focused. I feel stuck, I feel tired, distracted...like I should be doing more and I just don't feel like doing very much." Sound familiar? You might be feeling burned out and in need of recharging.

Symptoms of burnout include:

- ◆ Feeling emotionally over reactive especially with anger
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Diminished performance/functioning
- ◆ Weight loss/weight gain
- ◆ Exhaustion - even if you have rested
- ◆ Self-neglect
- ◆ Irritability
- ◆ Numbing behaviors including addiction
- ◆ Poor concentration
- ◆ Sleep disturbances
- ◆ Mood swings
- ◆ Shift in eating patterns
- ◆ Decreased self-confidence and self-esteem

1 or 2 symptoms do not indicate burnout. Prolonged periods of physical, emotional, mental intensity can normalize the "appearance" of burnout. In other words, we can adapt to being in a state of burnout for extended periods of time, which put people at greater risk for medical conditions and/or psychological problems to develop. In that way, we forget what peace, calm, regeneration feel like.



Getting back on track:

1. **Practice extreme self –care.** I use *extreme* because taking the best care of YOU is serious! When needs are not being met, negative thoughts and reactions intensify. Does your life flow when you are neglecting yourself? Being positively self-ish and putting yourself *first* gives you the vitality and desire to be fully there for those you love – by choice, not obligation. When you take good care of YOU, the people and situations in your life will get the “best” of you instead of what’s left of you! **Give yourself permission to make self-care a priority.** Practicing self-care will show others how to love and respect you by valuing and appreciating who you are. Refer to page 21.
2. **Set strong boundaries and keep them.** Practice saying no more often, especially when saying yes would be dishonest to your self. Refer to page 22.
3. **Delegate things that need to be handled.** Superheroes aren’t real! If you “have to do it all your self”, it is time to consider help. Be willing to give up some of your control to decrease all the things on your “to do” list. Recognize when you have a need AND ask for help (when help is available). Remember, the most successful people work with teams – they don’t succeed alone. One additional plus is that delegating empowers others to raise their competency and confidence level. That’s a win-win for everyone.
4. **Decrease and eliminate energy drains.** Clutter, people, situation, and things that sap your energy. Energy drains include: everything unresolved, undone, incomplete or avoided is an energy drain. Examples: clutter, unanswered correspondence/phone calls, unfinished business, repairs, unpaid bills, avoided conflicts/confrontations, negative thinking. Get the picture? Clearing out the clutter and energy drains will free up your energy dramatically and open more flow to your life. Have you felt stuck or blocked? Watch what happens when you eliminate clutter and energy drains from your life!
5. **Schedule fun!** I mean it.

Your call to action:

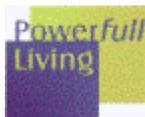
In the next 30 days take at *least* one action from the list below.

1. Extreme self-care - Schedule personal time for yourself, regularly. You might be surprised at how *powerfull* small breaks (15 minutes) can be to recharge your energy. Many people feel at a loss to identify ways to increase their self-care. Need some ideas? Here are three suggestions to jumpstart your thinking.
 - ◆ Play....read, draw, sew, sign up for a class, schedule a massage, meditate, have lunch with friends, go away for a long weekend, light some candles or whatever will feed your spirit on a personal level. Involve yourself in some light-hearted fun activities.
 - ◆ Call a friend who always seems to be able to motivate you. Make it a person with high energy and a great laugh.
 - ◆ Celebrate this gift of time and space. How often do you wish you had a moment to breath and relax, stepping out of the fast pace of life?

Identify what you enjoy and what brings you pleasure. Practice saying **yes** to yourself instead of saying no. **MAKE THIS A PRIORITY.** Worried about what others might think or how they might react? Remember, we teach people how to treat us.

2. Set boundaries - For one week, keep track of how many times you say yes when you really want to say no. Observe what motivates you to say yes instead of no. Tally the number at the end of the week. Practice saying no more often. Be willing to trust that people will adjust to handle what needs to be done if you aren't always obliging.
3. Delegate responsibilities to others. Start with small things if you are new to this idea.
4. Identify your top five energy drains. Decrease or eliminate them in the next 30 days. If you have a big job to tackle – like cleaning out physical clutter, chunk it down into small steps (a room at a time, one or two boxes, an hour a night) so that the task is more manageable. Get help if you need it!
5. Schedule fun activities into your calendar (in ink). Book an appointment with yourself. Do you enjoy having things to look forward to? Make that happen without delay.

If you start feeling guilty, face the guilt head on. See the guilt as a sign you are on the right track. Moving yourself off the back burner to the front position might make you uncomfortable for a while. In time, people and situations will adjust and feel more comfortable with the change. People learn to adapt. Additionally, by taking better care of **YOU**, you will help the people in your life to learn how to take better care of them.



One more point...

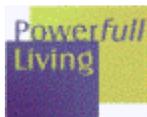
There is a difference between procrastinating and recharging. People who procrastinate have developed a habit of excuses, distractions, attitudes, and self-created obstacles to consistently delay action to resist change. Pausing to regroup doesn't mean you are taking a detour from your course. Slowing down and adjusting your lens of perception is necessary to move forward in your life with strength and purpose.

Recharging Tip:

Develop an action strategy in anticipation of high stress and high activity periods. What this means is identifying those things (people, habits/routines, nurturing activities etc.) that keep you on track and in balance, day-to-day and during busier periods. When people are stretched too thin and feeling on the edge of burnout, figuring out what is needed to restore equilibrium can feel like one more task, burdensome and overwhelming. Preparing a strategy in advance allows people to recharge with deliberate intent.

If you're feeling stuck, ask yourself, "Am I procrastinating or do I need to recharge?"

Obviously you must practice discernment when making changes in your life. The rewards for taking better care of your self are boundless. You're worth it, aren't you?



Bonus Article! Whoo-hoo!!!!

12 Tips to Have More Fun and Less Stress During the Holiday Season

Holidays provide an opportunity for time off from our daily routines to enjoy family and friends. For many, the holiday season is a time of pressure and stress in addition to the challenges we may face day-to-day. Is it the season creating the stress, or us? Read on for some tips on how to thrive during the holidays.

1. ***Choose your attitude.***

Your attitude is the key to how you experience ANY life situation. How do you want to approach the holidays – with light-hearted playfulness or with feelings of stress and dread? It's all up to you. Be kind and patient with others, even if at first there's no response. When you are genuine with your heart, the effect can be contagious by bringing out the best in others.

2. ***Are you taking things too seriously?***

Holidays are meant to be joyful and spent with those you care about and love. Lighten up! Enjoy taking a break from your regular routine to sit down, be silly, and let your hair down. It's up to you how you celebrate!

3. ***Choose what you want to do and do it without the guilt!***

Say "no" more often. Give yourself permission to spend the holiday season going to parties or family gatherings that you really want to attend. Be selective with whom you spend your time. Choose to be with people who lift your spirit rather than draining you. If you have family obligations that might be stressful – choose the length of time you are there, your timetables, who you speak with, etc.

4. ***Volunteer to help others.***

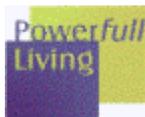
Generously giving your time, energy, and financial support to others warms the heart and lifts the spirit. And, a funny thing happens when we lovingly give of ourselves - we actually receive more than we give. Test it out. See what happens!

5. ***Keep your self-care strong!***

No kidding! Guarding your health is very important. During the holidays self-care tends to go on the back burner. Taking good care of YOU will insure you have the energy and spirit to attend to the people and things you love. Soak in the tub, maintain your exercise regime, get a massage (one of my favorite activities!), read a story to a child, enjoy a hobby, whatever makes you smile.

6. ***Be prepared for delays and waiting in line.***

It's a familiar scene: bumper-to-bumper traffic, trying to find a parking space, grocery store check out lines, the list goes on. The holiday season means more shoppers, delays and lots of lines. By preparing yourself in advance (attitude again!), you will stand a much better chance of reducing stress and maybe meet some new people!



7. Plan ahead and shop early.

Do you wait until the last minute and scramble to get things done? Avoid the stress of last minute shopping by planning ahead. Start with a prioritized written list of everything you need for the holiday season. Getting the jump on your holiday-to-do list will allow you the time to slow down and enjoy the moments. If you see items or services throughout the year (like a special sale) that you know someone on your list would love, take advantage of the opportunity and grab it! Avoid buyer's remorse. You'll be glad you did.

8. Manage the food plans.

- ◆ Plan food you can prepare in advance and freeze.
- ◆ Stock up on non-perishables you will need in advance.
- ◆ Pick up items that are already prepared.
- ◆ Plan a potluck dinner and invite people to bring their favorite foods.
- ◆ Hire a caterer.

9. Be Grateful.

Most of us have so much to be grateful for. Living with a sense of gratitude as a way of being (feeling grateful without needing something to happen) as well as celebrating the specific people and things in your life will fill you with a feeling of abundance, regardless of your material wealth or immediate life circumstance. Who and what are you grateful for this year? Think hard. Keep looking until you find at least 25 things. How about 50?

10. Change the practice of gift giving.

Ouch! Holiday debt? Develop a budget and stick to it. Pay with cash if possible. Cut back on what you normally spend, especially on non-gift holiday items. Looking to simplify your life by streamlining the amount of things coming into your home? Others might be too. Perhaps spending time together at your favorite restaurant would provide the gift of a lasting happy memory. Think about giving your time or expertise. Create something uniquely individual if you have the time and talent.

11. Share the work and the fun.

Ask for help. Delegate tasks to others and look to do family projects that make the work, FUN! By including others in the planning, preparation, and execution of the festivities, you will change this from being another year where everyone sits back while you do all the work. Being asked to help out can be a gift in itself.

12. Remember what this season is really about.

Whatever you celebrate, remember that the holidays are meant to be about fellowship, love, joy and PEACE.

About The Author



Lorraine Cohen brings more than 25 years' experience in personal and business coaching, psychological counseling, and sales experience to her clients. Working with the whole person, Lorraine coaches people from the inside out; to implement innovative strategies that integrate their heart, integrity, and spirituality. **An expert in breaking through fear and roadblocks to success, she empowers people to take linear leaps that reshape their world.**

Her deep compassion and coaching excellence have assisted more than 2,000 small-business owners, entrepreneurs, and executives from a wide range of industries, including real estate, creative businesses (such as interior design, artists, writers), psychology, and healthcare/wellness. Focusing on business development, leadership mastery and life simplification, she helps people articulate what they want and gives them the tools to succeed.

Lorraine's intuition and counseling background heighten her ability to get to the heart of the matter quickly, helping clients to live their lives in alignment with their core values and spiritual heart. Those clients include Sunoco, Sovereign Bank, Drexel University, the American Cancer Society, and Huntleigh Healthcare.

She has several professional certifications, including CoachU, training in DiSC behavioral assessments, and **Psych-K™**, a process for creating internal shifts leading to outward change.

Lorraine's articles on personal and business development are featured online, on multiple Web sites, and in local newspapers. She has spoken on the importance and value of executive coaching as a guest expert on Philadelphia-area radio and local television programs. Lorraine is also host of **Powerfull/Living Radio**, a weekly internet-based show.

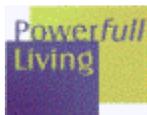


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To learn more about Lorraine Cohen's services, programs, and products including her new eBook, *How Do I Choose? A powerfull 5-step blueprint for making rock solid decisions*. Sign up for the free *Fearless* e-course and *Powerfull Living* newsletter, visit <http://www.powerfull-living.biz>. Want to know more about the benefits of having a coach on your team? Email us at lorraine@powerfull-living.biz to schedule a 30-minute complimentary consultation TODAY!



My Favorite Quote

*“When we come to the edge of all the light we have
And must take a step into the darkness of the unknown*

We must believe one of two things:

Either we will find something firm to stand on

Or, we will be taught to fly”

-Richard Bach, Jonathon Livingston Seagull

Dear readers,

*I hope you have enjoyed my eBook. My wish is that the articles and calls
to action contribute to your business success and personal life fulfillment.*

With love,

Lorraine

