

Building Purposeful Prosperity:

An Introduction to the Principles and
Practices of Authentic Promotion™

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Life could be a dream....
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Introduction

This ebook began as a series of short articles for my free weekly ezine, *The New Leaf*. Actually, the origins go further back than that, to a time in my life when I received a grant to develop a workshop and manual to teach business communications to artists. In many respects, the lessons of the past fifteen years of my life have been about how to thrive in the world while being authentic.

Since opening my coaching practice in 1996, I have fielded numerous inquiries from coaches and other practitioners who want to know how I built a successful practice. As time went on, these inquiries took so much time that I faced a dilemma: while I love sharing my success with other professionals, doing so was taking more time than I wanted to spare from working with clients, writing, and my personal life. How could I be a generous champion for professional success and still have the time for my clients, my business and myself?

The answer came in the form of these articles. I decided to share what I know about building a prosperous, joyful practice through my newsletter. Of necessity, this sharing is a highly personal account, for I believe the foundation of my success is that I have grown my practice by honoring who I am at essence and by choosing marketing strategies that allow me to show up as myself.

While my choices will therefore be somewhat different from what any one of you may choose, I believe the principles are widely applicable. It is my intention to share those principles, illustrating them with examples from my work and inviting you to come up with your own unique expressions of what I call “Authentic Promotion™.”

Promotion, or putting yourself out there, is essential to building a practice. Authenticity is the cornerstone of effective, sustainable promotion because being authentic draws on a renewable resource, i.e., your core values and strengths. Put them together, and you have Authentic Promotion™.

Chapter 1

Show Up and Serve

Authentic Promotion is based on a simple proposition:

The key to professional success is to show up and serve.

It is necessary to show up, because if you are invisible, your clients will not be able to find you. It is necessary to serve, because that is how your value is expressed and received in the world. This means that not only can you not afford to play small, you cannot do good if you play small. So begin with a commitment to make an impression every day, an impression that shows people who you are and what you do.

Do you have gremlins* around showing up? Perhaps you grew up with the message that it was not nice to promote yourself or to attract too much attention. Perhaps you believe there are only a few “right” ways to show up effectively and that you cannot do them. Whatever your gremlins are saying, now is the time to face them. Name them in writing (an essential step). Get some space from their incessant commentary. Notice what they have to say. Process them with a coach. Do not pass “Go” until you are 100% clear that you intend to show up BIG.

* Gremlins are the beasties that provide the ongoing negative commentary you hear in your head. Sometimes I call them “the committee.” The term originates with Richard Carson in his book, *Taming Your Gremlin*.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0060961023/mollygordonperso>

Chapter 2

GO! The 12 Principles of Authentic Promotion

Last week, I concluded with the admonition, “Do not pass ‘Go’ until you are 100% clear that you intend to show up BIG.” This week, I outline twelve principles that will sustain you in doing just that.

1. Know Yourself

In order to promote yourself effectively, you must know (and be able to articulate) who you are and why you do what you do.

2. Be Yourself

Once you’ve established a sense of who you are, be true to it. By practicing the art of telling the simple truth about your experience and your work, you will build a powerful, personal communication style.

3. Do Your Homework

Your homework around Authentic Promotion™ means studying the opportunities you have to show up, deciding which to employ in promoting your work, and then deciding how to follow through.

4. Keep It Simple

Whether you’re writing a press release or building a Web site, keep it simple. Don’t lose your message in a welter of jargon or JavaScript.

5. Double Check Your Promotional Pieces (And Everything You Do In Print or Online is a Promotional Piece)

Nothing undermines a good impression faster than misspelled words, poor grammar, or incorrect accounting. Since none of us is perfect, the only defense is to check and recheck your work. Spell check programs help but will not catch all errors.

6. Mind Your Manners

Cultivate simple good manners. Everyone appreciates a “please” and “thank you.” Let your frustrations flag opportunities for making fast business friends: if you are

understanding and reasonable when folks make a mistake, they will be doubly committed to helping you in the future.

7. Listen

Promotion is communication, and communication is a two-way street. Learn to listen and really hear what others are saying to you. This will keep your promotions vital and pertinent.

8. Ask Questions

As you develop listening skills, you'll often want more information. Get in the habit of asking questions to clarify, investigate, and expand new ideas and territory. The ability to ask questions is a key factor in transforming your communications from passive and reactive to assertive and proactive.

9. Set Goals, Make Choices

Set written long- and short-term goals for your practice. Use these goals as a guide to making choices.

10. Ask for What You Want

Once you know what you want, ask for it. Ask for help from friends, colleagues, clients, and family members. Ask magazines to write about you. Ask newspapers to publish your column or tip sheet. Ask an ideal client to try working with you for a month. Ask your current clients for feedback and for referrals.

11. Consciously Nurture Relationships

Consciously create an interdependent practice. The *independent* practitioner is limited to his/her own financial, imaginative and physical resources. The *interdependent* practitioner has access to the funding, vision and resources of a virtually unlimited community.

12. Don't Take Yourself Too Seriously

Though it's important that you do your best to communicate your values and vision, keep your efforts in perspective. A healthy sense of your own importance will grow your practice; a healthy sense of humor will help you rebound when you encounter temporary setbacks.

Chapter 3

Going Deeper with Knowing and Being

The first two principles of Authentic Promotion™ are Know Yourself and Be Yourself. What do these high-sounding precepts have to do with promoting your practice and building a viable business? Everything.

Know Yourself

In order to promote yourself effectively, you must know (and be able to articulate) who you are, what you do and why you do it. Any sales person will tell you that it is essential to know your product inside and out so that you can talk about it with ease and utter familiarity. If you provide a professional service, you ARE your product, and anything you hide from yourself will get in the way of promoting your practice and building prosperity.

This is fact, not theory, and it requires ongoing rigorous self-examination and self-awareness. After all, if you are growing and learning (and you are doing both so long as you are breathing) your product is changing every day.

Here is an exercise to help you get at who you are and why you do what you do.

Take five minutes and invite into your awareness those aspects of your work that amaze and delight you. Jot down words and short phrases as they occur to you. Don't worry about making sense or connections. You are gathering raw material here and, believe it or not, the less sense you make at this stage the more authentically you will be able to articulate your passion and purpose later.

Choose two words that you find especially evocative. Trust yourself and go with your instincts here. There are no wrong choices. Look up each word in a dictionary and a thesaurus, faithfully copying the definitions (all of them—even those that seem not to apply) and the synonyms. To go deeper, look up the roots of your words in an etymological dictionary.

Reflect upon these words, their meanings, and associations, and write down what you notice. Was there a surprise in what you found? An “aha!”? A dissonance? A resonance?

Be Yourself

Once you know who you are, be true to it. By practicing the art of telling the simple truth about your experience and your work, you will build a powerful, personal communication style.

Being yourself in your business requires that you walk your talk and talk your walk. In other words, strive to make conscious choices about how you show up that reflect who you really are. Articulate these choices as simply, clearly and honestly as you can.

One of the most powerful ways to grow in being yourself is to ask daily, “Who am I being?” Hold this question with compassionate interest so that you can answer it honestly. Out of the willingness to notice when we are being incongruent or inauthentic comes the awareness that fosters authentic choice.

Chapter 4

Do Your Homework

The third principle of Authentic Promotion™ is *Do Your Homework*. What homework? The work of finding and evaluating opportunities for showing up, finding ways to articulate who you are and how you will serve (your offer), looking for ways to collaborate and add value, and creating a plan of action. In summary, build a marketing plan.

Trust me—you WANT one of these. A written marketing plan taps into the power of setting down written goals while providing a framework for promoting your business.

An aside about promotion: all too often service professionals consider this a dirty word, running from it like so many blushing maidens from the sweaty satyr of the marketplace. Their defense is modesty, but I call it coyness, and being coy won't attract clients or invite opportunities for you to serve.

“Promote” comes from the Indo-European root, *meu*, push or move around, shared by the words **move, motive, and momentum**. In order to be successful in private practice (and whom can you serve for how long if you are not successful?) you must **move** out into the world, making your **motives** (and your gifts) visible. Doing this in a manner that generates **momentum** will bring you long-term success.

Your marketing plan need not be elaborate. Here are the essentials:

1. Write down who you are and who you intend to be in your business. What promise are you making to the world and to your prospective clients? What problem will you solve? What benefits will you confer? What advantages will you offer? What, in short, is your unique selling proposition? (Your work on knowing and being yourself is a big piece of this one.)
2. Write down, in detail, everything you can imagine about your ideal client. Risk being too specific. If you already have a practice, think about the folks that you have most enjoyed working with and who have thrived in relationship with you. What do they have in common? How old are they? Where do they live? What do they value about working with you? How do they spend their free time?

If you are starting a new practice, who wants and needs what you have to offer? Who is prepared to pay for it? Who is in a position to benefit from it? What do you know about them? Where will they find you? What are they looking for?

3. Find out how to reach your ideal client. What do they read? Where do they get their information about services like yours? How do they make decisions about hiring someone like you? What clubs do they belong to? How do they spend their leisure time? In other

words, where and how can you show up so that you are noticed by your ideal clients in a manner that is credible, valued and remembered?

My favorite resources for finding and implementing creative ways to show up are:

Guerrilla PR: How to Wage an Effective Publicity Campaign Without Going Broke,
Michael Levine

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0887306640/mollygordonperso>

Guerrilla Marketing: Secrets for Making Big Profits from Your Small Business, Jay
Conrad Levinson

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0395906253/mollygordonperso>

4. Choose as many methods of reaching your ideal client as you can afford, in terms of time, talent and money. Be sure you choose methods that make the most of your strengths. (Do make speeches and presentations if you love the limelight. Don't do a newsletter if you hate deadlines.) Name your methods, set specific goals for each method (a weekly newsletter, two speaking engagements per week, a business card ad in the weekly newspaper for 52 weeks, etc.) and prepare a schedule and budget for implementing your plan.

5. Build a calendar with key dates for carrying out your marketing plan. Be specific both about the results you want to create (six new clients per month from speaking gigs) and the way you intend to get them (five phone calls every Monday to organizations who use speakers in my subject area). Write key milestones and commitments into your planner, Palm Pilot or desk calendar.

6. Hire a coach to hold you accountable, leverage your learning, and ask more from you than you would ask of yourself.

BONUS: Three more great references especially for people who think they hate to sell:

Marketing Without Advertising, by Michael Phillips & Salli Rasberry

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0873373693/mollygordonperso>

Marketing Your Services: For People Who Hate to Sell, by Rick Crandall

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0809231573/mollygordonperso>

Marketing Your Services, by Anthony O. Putman

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0471509485/mollygordonperso>

Chapter 5

Moving Right Along

The next three principles of Authentic Promotion™ are along the lines of *All I Ever Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. They are:

Keep It Simple

Double Check Your Promotional Pieces (and Everything You Do In Print or Online is a Promotional Piece)

Mind Your Manners

Promotion is moving yourself (remember its root) into the awareness of those people whom you expect to benefit from knowing about or being able to buy your work. It's about establishing that you exist, that you embody a valuable offer, and that you are interested in serving by delivering on that offer.

In other words, it's about relationships. Therefore, it stands to reason that you will draw on basic relationship-building tools.

Keeping it simple means to communicate in ways people can understand. Throw them a pitch they can catch. Avoid jargon, unnecessarily complex language or hype. The truth, told with good will to people who will profit from hearing it, is your most powerful sales pitch.

Proof your work. Every time I advise this in writing I find an error in my own work that escaped me. Thus this one goes hand in hand with having a sense of humor and humility. It's hard to perfect, and your audience will just as surely notice if you are habitually sloppy as they will forgive you for the occasional slip.

This double-checking applies to everything you do that puts you in front of a prospective client. Many otherwise impeccable people have unbelievable typos on their Web sites or forget to proof their emails.

Finally, mind your manners. Yes, I do mean say "Please" and "Thank You." In addition, send thank-you cards, not only because it is a nice thing to do but because of the salutary effect it will have on your mood. It's hard to be grumpy when you are sincerely grateful.

Manners today include online etiquette or netiquette. If you show up in email or on the Web, take the time to learn the cultural norms.

Netiquette: an extensive online guide.

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/index.html>

Chapter 6

Be a Powerful Listener

Listening may be the most powerful tool in your promotional tool kit. It applies to every business relationship you have, and your business will succeed or fail based on your relationships.

Listening is the key to unlocking the whole-hearted collaboration and cooperation of your clients, your suppliers, and your employees. When you listen fully and reflect what you have heard accurately and respectfully, you enroll others in your goals and aspirations. When you lecture, explain or prescribe without first listening, you alienate these same people.

There's a simple way to identify opportunities for more powerful listening. Keep a simple tally—hash marks on a sticky note—of every complaint you make today. Every single complaint signals an opportunity to listen powerfully because complaints identify the things you'd like to change, and listening is the first step in changing the things you can.

The authors of *Co-Active Coaching*[†] identify three levels of listening. The levels are distinguished by where the listener focuses his or her attention. Each level is valuable, indeed indispensable, and you will want to become proficient in all of them.

Level I, Internal Listening, is listening for how things affect you. It is typical of information gathering: you call a theater to find out when you can get tickets to a show and on which nights you can get the best seats. You listen for answers to your questions and pay attention to how those answers affect you and your plans.

In Level II, Focused Listening, your attention is focused on the person you are listening to. This is the attention you might bring to your child when she complains of feeling ill. You ask questions and listen for what is going on with your child. You notice not only her words, but also her tone, and you pay attention to how your questions affect her as well as to what she says in response to them.

Level III, Global Listening, expands your field of awareness to 360 degrees. It is sometimes called Environmental Listening, because it takes in everything tangible and intangible that you can perceive. The person you listen to is the center of this field. It requires openness, full attention and a soft focus, and it includes listening to your intuition.

What do these levels have to do with building a practice? Let's look at a common complaint (remember, complaints flag listening opportunities) about promoting a practice: how hard it is to convince prospects to value your services.

[†] *Co-Active Coaching*, Laura Whitworth, Henry Kimsey-House, Philip Sandahl.
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0891061231/mollygordonperso>

In a Level I conversation with a prospective client, you focus on getting the job (benefit to you). As soon as you sense that the other person is interested in something other than how fabulous your services are, you lose interest. Once you lose interest, your prospect loses interest, too. The relationship ends here.

A Level II conversation with the same prospect will focus on what s/he wants or needs. You will listen for how you can serve him/her, for how s/he will know if her/his needs are being met, and for what value will be created for her/him when he does get those needs met. As long as you maintain active interest in her/his agenda, the prospect is likely to remain engaged in the conversation. Even if you decide together that your services are not appropriate at this time, you have advanced your relationship (and her/his understanding of what you do). Your prospect will be in a position to speak positively of your work.

A Level III conversation with this prospect will be centered on the prospect (as in Level II) and will also take in other elements in their field. The conversation might explore what is going on in the spheres of home and work. You might intuit a reservation on the part of the prospect that you can raise and explore. You might discover that there are more applications for your work than the prospect initially imagined.

When you bring Level III listening to this encounter, you instantly integrate the impact that your questions and statement have on the prospect, allowing you to explore larger implications of your work together. You will pick up subtle clues about the prospect and the whole situation that will enable you to respond with greater appropriateness and power. You may get an intuitive “hit” about how you can be of service. If this prospect becomes a client, you have laid the groundwork for a powerful relationship. If together you determine that this is not the time, you have still made an ally, a person who is enrolled by your commitment to hearing and serving, a person who will be an ongoing source of good will and referrals.

Similar scenarios play out when you call on all three listening levels with employees, colleagues, and suppliers. The more of yourself you give to the listening process and the more of the other person you honor in your listening, the more viable your relationship. This is the source of that Holy Grail of marketing: word-of-mouth promotion. You listen and they talk—nicely—about you!

There’s another aspect of listening that is crucial for building a powerful, prosperous professional practice: listening for, hearing and accepting praise. Really taking in the praise you receive builds confidence, and it helps you when it’s time to tell others what people value about what you do. Practice accepting compliments with a simple, sincere “Thank you,” and don’t hesitate to ask folks if you can quote them in your marketing materials.

Chapter 7

Ask Questions

Professionals in private practice are prone to what Michael Gerber calls the *E-Myth*[‡]: believing that being good at what they do will guarantee success in business. WRONG. Being good at *business* is the key to success in business, regardless of the product or service that you offer.

Since most professionals are not born good at business, they need to ask a lot of questions. Interestingly, asking a lot of questions is exactly how a wise business person goes about building a practice. (It's also how you get clear about what you want, so that you can ask for it in later steps.)

What sort of questions should you ask? The possibilities are extensive. Here's a short list to get you started, along with links to online resources for finding answers.

Note: There is no getting around this step. Think about it this way: you can invest your time, attention and energy in learning how to make your dream business a reality, or you can open your doors and work until the money runs out. It's just about that simple.

What do I need to know about rules and regulations?

<http://www.whowhere.lycos.com/Govt/main.html>

How do I create a business plan?

<http://www.sba.gov/>

<http://www.score.org>

http://www.allbusiness.com/cmt/Information/top_level/1651.asp

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1880394235/mollygordonperso>

http://www.quicken.com/small_business/cch/tools/?article=buspln_m

The E-Myth Revisited, by Michael Gerber.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0887307280/mollygordonperso> .

How to Really Create a Successful Business Plan, Inc. Magazine

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1880394235/mollygordonperso>

Do I need a trademark?

<http://www.marksonline.com/>

[‡] *The E-Myth Revisited*, by Michael Gerber

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0887307280/mollygordonperso>

What is marketing and how do I do it?

<http://www.the-dma.org/>

<http://www.ideacafe.com/>

Guerrilla Marketing Secrets for Making Big Profits from Your Small Business, Jay Conrad Levinson

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0395906253/mollygordonperso>

Who are my clients? Where are they?

<http://www.demographics.com/>

<http://www.census.gov/>

How do I get media coverage?

Notes from a teleclass I taught on this topic, along with sample press releases.

<http://www.mollygordon.com/sa/pr/sapr4.html>

Guerrilla PR, How to Wage an Effective Publicity Campaign... Without Going Broke, Michael Levine

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0887306640/mollygordonperso>

How do I write effective promotional materials?

http://www.adcopywriting.com/Tutorials_List.htm

Brush up your writing with the classic, *Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White. It's online at

<http://www.bartleby.com/141/index.html>

or order your own hard copy:

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0024181900/mollygordonperso>

How can I use the Web to promote my business?

<http://www.businessthinkers.com/>

<http://www.nua.ie/surveys/>

<http://www.searchenginewatch.com>

<http://www.sitepoint.com/>

http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/99/04/index0a_page4.html?tw=e-business

How do I start an email newsletter or ezine?

<http://www.ezine-tips.com/>

<http://www.mollygordon.com/sa/writenews/sanltop.html>

<http://www.newslettercoach.com/>

These links are not intended to be exhaustive. I do hope they open your eyes to the wealth of information—much of it free—that is available to help you build a successful practice. Off line, use informational interviewing, your public library, college or university libraries, and bookstores to get your questions answered. Learn to recognize “I don’t know” as an opportunity to learn something new.

Chapter 8

Setting Goals and Making Requests

The next two principles of Authentic Promotion™ are *Set Goals* and *Ask for What You Want*. These are closely connected, for professionals typically underperform in business because they are unclear about what they want. Not knowing what they want, they fail to set specific, measurable, achievable and dated goals. Not having clear goals, they also fail to make effective requests for help.

What do you want from your practice? Do you want community? Income? Time? Excitement? Prestige? The opportunity to change the world? Knowing the answer to this question is essential for growing a thriving business. The book *The Aladdin Factor*[§], by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, can help with practical exercises and inspiring anecdotes.

As you come to know what you want, write it down. Start with a master list (Canfield and Hansen suggest writing down 101 things you want in your life). Then break out what you want in five years, one years, and the next three months. Put dates on each of these goals and decide how you will measure your progress toward them.

Once you have set dated, measurable goals, you can decide how to accomplish them and you will be MUCH more likely to follow through. After all, running a business inevitably involves some tasks that you'll find unappealing. Knowing what you want is the engine that will drive your performance of essential tasks that might otherwise seem tedious.

That bears repeating: Knowing what you want is the engine that will drive your performance of essential tasks that might otherwise seem tedious.

Once you know what you want, ask for it. Ask for help from friends, colleagues, professional organizations, and schools. Ask magazines and newspapers to publish your articles, announcements or columns. Ask clients for testimonials that you can share in your brochures or on your Web site. Ask more experienced colleagues for support, feedback and guidance. Tell people what you want and why. The more clearly you can ask for what you want, the more likely you are to get it.

Asking is part of delegating tasks to employees, colleagues and contractors. In order to get what you want from your requests, be sure they are complete: specify what you want, when you want it, and any important details of how you want it delivered or completed. The more clear and complete your request, the easier it will be for others to respond to it.

[§] *The Aladdin Factor*, Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0425150755/mollygordoperso>

It's important to acknowledge that your requests can be met with acceptance, refusal or negotiation. Sometimes we do not ask for what we want because we are unwilling to entertain negotiation or refusal. We deny ourselves the opportunity for a yes in order to avoid the pain of a no. Again, I recommend reading *The Aladdin Factor* if this behavior describes you.

Chapter 9

Lighten Up!

If you've read this far, you may be starting to feel that promotion is a heavy matter. That's exactly why the next principle of Authentic Promotion™ is: *Don't Take Yourself Too Seriously*.

Building a practice is a daunting task, and it raises serious questions. Who am I? What values do I stand for? How do I deliver value in my work? How will I show up? How much will I charge? Who do I need to be in order to sustain this? Where will I get the support and focus I need? How do I work with my fears and limiting beliefs?

All these serious questions are important, yet we must not take ourselves too seriously. What's the secret?

In the spirit of not taking ourselves too seriously, I'll share what I know about this in the form of another Top Ten List.

Top Ten Ways to Get Over Yourself

1. Practice the Failure Bow (See Appendix 1.).
2. Shift your perspective. When disappointed, ask yourself, "How much will this matter in five years?"
3. Give yourself credit for choosing and acting, whether or not the short-term results of your choices work out. Every choice—even a poor one—is a platform for learning.
4. Remember, you are **playing** a bigger **game**. When it stops feeling playful, it is time to fly a kite! (Yes, literally.)
5. Treat yourself like a valued employee. Take regular breaks in the day, week and month.
6. Ask for help early and often. The sooner you get over believing you have to do it all yourself, the sooner you will get over believing you have to be perfect.
7. Let every error be the opportunity for swift, gracious correction. It's not nearly as important to be perfect as it is to be at ease with recognizing and correcting errors.
8. When you catch yourself dramatizing your problems, lean into it. Give yourself five minutes to get truly melodramatic, or to tell your tale of woe and intrigue as a stand-up comedy act. "You think you have computer problems? Well, let me tell you..."
9. Shift perspective (in the other direction). When you find yourself disaster planning—running your current difficulties out to their most horrific possible conclusions—check in right here, right now. Are you breathing? (Well then, take a breath.) Is there peanut butter in your refrigerator? Are you okay in this very moment? Let that be enough, moment to moment, until your gremlins back off.
10. Cultivate a spiritual life. The very best way to get over yourself is to have an abiding awareness that there is a power greater than yourself. How you cultivate and practice this awareness is up to you, and it is indispensable for sanity in business.

Chapter 10

The Spiritual Path of Self-Employment

Of all the paths I have followed in my life, self-employment has been the most challenging and enriching. Every day that I work for myself is a day I come face to face with my worldview and my belief system. Working for myself is a constant reminder that my success is determined more by my state of mind than by external events.

Here are a few practical implications of self-employment as spiritual path. In my experience, these implications hold true regardless of your religious beliefs.

1. I am responsible for the value of my work and for communicating that value to prospective clients.
2. Prosperity is directly related to my priorities. It is up to me to be clear about what prosperity means for me and to make these things a priority.
3. Prosperity is also directly related to my expectations. When I expect the best, I make the most of each opportunity, including the opportunities disguised as disappointments.
4. My experience of success and failure is directly related to my fundamental expectations about life. If I believe that things generally go wrong, they will.
5. Marketing is an inside job. When I know what I do, love what I do, and am willing to share what I do, marketing is natural, effortless, and sustainable.
6. The best attitude in the world is insufficient without action. I get results when I walk my talk.
7. When I am doing my right work, I bless everyone around me. The more on purpose and prosperous I am, the more those blessings seed purpose and prosperity for others.
8. When I laugh at and learn from my mistakes, I profit from adversity.
9. When I am clear that my business is a gift and when I trust that more will be given, I surf the shifting tides of success with grace and good humor.
10. When I'm willing to know what I want and to ask for it, I get it (or I get something of greater value).

Chapter 11

Great Soloists Never Go It Alone!

It's all too easy for a professional in private practice (or even a member of a corporate team) to become isolated. The consequences of isolation include burnout, poor reality testing, and chronic disappointment, even a sense of hopelessness. You can prevent these outcomes by building an interdependent practice.

The *independent* professional is limited by her/his own vision, finances, and energy. The *interdependent* professional can call on the wisdom, experience and assets of a host of colleagues, friends and supporters.

Common blocks to interdependence are:

- fear of appearing weak or ignorant when you ask for assistance;
- unwillingness to share credit for accomplishments;
- attachment to your own ideas to the exclusion of other input;
- assuming that there is not enough (time, money, kudos) to attract others to a project;
- discomfort with being in process and an inclination to power through obstacles;
- obsession with staying “even” and keeping track of who did what for whom.

Each of these traits blocks performance, learning and enjoyment as well as preventing interdependent relationships. When you step out of your comfort zone and reach beyond these limits, you not only tap into the resources of others, you release blocked energy and shift your expectations in a positive way.

If you are serious about succeeding in business, evaluate your barriers to interdependence. Inventory the character traits, fears and assumptions that prevent you from asking for and offering assistance. Then choose one block and challenge yourself to change your behavior.

If you tend to do everything yourself, hire an assistant—if only to clean your office once a week. If you are addicted to getting the credit for everything you do, do one good thing each day anonymously.

By the way, the risks of independence and rewards of interdependence apply to professionals in large organizations, too. No matter where you are in the hierarchy, you are the captain of your own career. Take a look at how your career might blossom and benefit you and others if only you were to be more interdependent.

Chapter 12

Love It and Let It Show

Last week I had notable experiences with three very different businesses. Each exemplified the principle of *Love It and Let It Show*. One was a hotel, one a frozen fruit “ice cream” stand, and one an artist at the opening of his one-man show.

The hotel experience was as follows: I phoned The Bishop Victorian Suites in Port Townsend, Washington, to make reservations. The man who answered was not only polite, he was clearly proud of the Suites. He efficiently, but not hurriedly, explained the differences between price levels so that I might choose the one that was best for me—not the one that he might make the most money on. I got the impression that he was the owner, though he might have been an employee with that rare quality of ownership in his work. The transaction was pure pleasure for me and I am looking forward not only to visiting the hotel, but also to telling all of my friends about it.

My next experience was with Kelsey’s 100% Fresh Fruit “Ice Cream.” A small family preceded me into the small store, their order complicated by age (about 3), indecision and crankiness. The owner/counterperson covered the delay with gracious patter about the qualities of her product (organic fruit, the berries from local farmers, each order freshly prepared) and praise for the choices of her young patrons. “Oh, peach and raspberry—that’s a great choice!”

At my turn, she turned the delay into a win, asking if I “minded” an extra dollop of apple flavored “ice cream” on my order—the remnants of the previous fresh-mixed serving. She remarked that it always pays to wait at Kelsey’s, speaking in a matter-of-fact, easygoing tone. No irritating perkiness, just a good attitude and pride of ownership. I’ll be back.

On Saturday I went to a 60th birthday party and coincident gallery opening for artist Richard Stine. Richard mingled with the guests, happily celebrating the remarkable output of months of intensive work. Like the other business owners in this story (and if you intend to make a living as an artist, it’s time to recognize that you are a business owner) his love for what he does and his enthusiasm for sharing it with others was contagious. Need I mention that his work sold well?

Love what you do. Love that you do it. Let it show.

Chapter 13

When Good Exposure Goes Bad

Exposure, or getting your name and your offer in front of the right people, is critical to business success. While exposure is critical to success, the benefits of exposure can become losses if you are not careful that each exposure contributes to your unique identity (or brand) in the marketplace.

Here's an example: you are invited to provide content to a Web site in return for exposure in the form of a link to your own site and/or your email address. I do exactly this at a number of sites, including <http://www.improvemybusiness.com> and <http://www.infirmation.com>. I contribute my expertise in return for the opportunity to reach an audience of small business owners, professional women, and attorneys, respectively.

What makes this work for me is that, in addition to receiving exposure, I retain the copyright to all of my work. The owners of these sites do not get to reprint it, or repackage it, or sell it. Any products (such as this newsletter, my teleclasses, or my free ebooks) remain mine to sell and mine to profit from.

Equally important, my identity or brand as a coach is not in competition with the identity or brand of these three sites. My expertise makes them look good as resources and makes me look good as a coach. It's a win-win.

In contrast, I have turned down numerous offers for "free exposure" that would compromise my brand or co-opt my ability to profit from my own products and services. For example, I have been invited to contribute my newsletter to an online newsletter resource, however all new subscribers would be handled through that site—in other words, I would have no direct relationship with you, my readers. No thanks!

Similarly, I have been invited to donate my content to be sold to another site's subscribers without compensation (other than "exposure"). While this might be valuable to someone with no presence on the Web, I would be reluctant to enter into any agreement that created an income stream for someone else without paying me royalties.

Not only does letting someone else make income from your work without paying you not make sense, it can compromise your brand "promise." When, for example, an artist sells his work for \$1,000 - \$5,000 per piece, he "promises" his buyers that this is the market price. When he donates a piece of work to an art auction and it sells for \$200, that promise is compromised because the market price is undercut. Similarly, a market promise is broken when your work is packaged and sold in a manner that is not consistent with your values or with the support needed to make your work effective.

In summary, each opportunity for “free” exposure to your market needs to be carefully evaluated on its own merits. Here are some of the questions to ask in advance:

- Does this exposure reach my target market?
- Will this opportunity build my brand, or someone else’s, or both?
- Where is the income opportunity (cash flow)? If there is cash flow to the other party, do I receive a royalty?
- Does this agreement constrain my freedom to sell my own work?
- Does this exposure compromise my brand promise?
- Does this arrangement allow someone else to package or sell my work without my control or consent?

BONUS: Here are some takes on branding from *Fast Company* online:

What Great Brands Do | by Alan M. Webber

Eight points to creating a great brand.

<http://www.fastcompany.com/fast.take/online/10/bedbury.html>

No-Brands-Land | by Curtis Sittenfeld

Nike. Starbucks. Apple. The Brand Called You.

The other side of the story—what brands can’t do.

<http://www.fastcompany.com/fast.take/online/38/nklein.html>

She Builds Online Brands on the Street | by Polly LaBarre

Moving from online to off with effective brands.

<http://www.fastcompany.com/fast.take/online/30/eisnor.html>

Chapter 14

Court New Business

One of the smartest marketers and happiest people I know (Hi, Marsh!) talks about courting business. For Marsh Terry, this is more than a metaphor, it's a policy of regarding prospective clients and customers with as much care as you would regard a prospective mate.

The beauty of this concept is that it takes marketing out of the realm of selling snake oil to the unwary and roots it firmly in notions of right relationship and interdependence. Rather than selling yourself by unnatural and inauthentic methods to faceless consumers, courting business is using your best assets to attract clients who can make the best use of them.

If you've ever tried to make yourself over in order to impress a date, you know what a dead-end road it is. At best, you convince a person with whom you have little in common that you are somebody else. At worst, you fail to impress your date at the cost of your self-respect.

Another dead-end approach is trying to convince someone who is not attracted to you that you are the man or woman of their dreams. Boasting and stalking are both distinctly lacking in sex appeal, so why would you want to use them as your marketing plan?

In getting dates or getting customers, being yourself is much more likely to attract compatible partners. This requires that you have a clear picture of who will truly benefit from your work. The challenge is not convincing a prospect to buy from you, but rather making sure that your prospects thrive as a result of doing business with you.

Here's your homework. Do it, then get out there and start dating!

1. What do you have to offer? Ask current clients and colleagues what they value most about your work. This is what makes you stand out from the crowd.
2. Who wants what you have? Note the common characteristics of the clients who get the most value from your services as well as those with whom you most enjoy working. In other words, what kind of person or company will generate the biggest win from working with you? These characteristics form the profile of your ideal client.
3. Get out of the singles bars and into circulation. In marketing terms, this means figure out where and how you can start a two-way conversation with the people who will most benefit from your work.

Chapter 15

Using the Web

It seems that everyone wants to be online these days. I've certainly found it worthwhile to build and maintain a Web site. My site, in conjunction with my email newsletter, generates 70% of my business. Still, a Web site is not for everyone. This chapter will get you started asking important questions about how the World Wide Web can help you to show up and serve.

The first thing to assess before investing in a Web site is why you want one and how you will use it. Do you intend to use it attract clients? If so, are your prospects online and inclined to look for you there?

Do you intend to use your site to provide client support and add value? Then find out if your clients use the Web for this kind of support. Learn as much as you can about their level of online savvy so that you design a site that they can use.

Now it's time to see what other sites offer. Set aside several hours to explore the Web. Think about what you see for a few days, then go surfing again. I know it can be hard to devote so much time to this, and yet it is imperative that you understand what your competition is doing, what is possible, and what works.

This checklist will focus your surfing.

1. *Search engines.* Start here, because this is most likely where your clients will start. Visit the major search engines and directories. Yahoo, Alta Vista, GoTo*, HotBot, Lycos, and Google are all good ones to start with. At each site, enter the key words that you anticipate prospective clients using to find you. Visit the top pages and bookmark any that you especially like to visit again. (Keywords are a topic to themselves. For now, do your best to put yourself in the shoes of a prospective client and enter the words you think they will use to find someone like you.)
2. *Content.* Go back to your bookmarked sites and evaluate them based on content. What information do they provide? How easy is it to find? Is it useful? What can you tell about the market for this site based on the content? What ideas do you get for content on your own site? How might your content distinguish you from others? What do you have to offer that is uniquely yours?
3. *Design.* This time when you go surfing, look at the design of each site. What do you like? Dislike? How easy or hard is it to get around each site? Is there a sense of continuity? Of personality? What would you do differently?

* Goto.com allows you to bid for higher placement in its search engine results.

4. *Technical.* The technical aspects of a site are those things that work behind the scenes to make the design and content show up the way they are supposed to. On the best sites it may be difficult for you to spot technical features of a site because whoever did the technical work made it transparent and seamless. Some technical features that might apply to a professional-services Web site include online order forms or shopping carts, subscription forms, guest books, feedback forms, credit card acceptance, chat, and bulletin boards. What features might you want and how would you use them?

By the time you complete this survey of the Web, you will have a good sense of which sites set the standard in your profession. This will help you define your niche in terms of tone, content, and benefits to site visitors. Once you know this it will be much easier to plan and implement a site that will attract return visitors who are likely to become clients.

The Web is changing constantly; still there are a few good books that are recommended consistently by experienced pros. These include:

Net Results: Web Marketing that Works, Rick Bruner.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1568304145/mollygordonperso>

A good manual for connecting Web design with effective marketing.

Creating Killer Web Sites, David Siegel.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ISBN%3D1568304331/mollygordonperso>

One of the first and remains, now in the second edition, one of the best books on Web site design.

Web Pages That Suck, Vincent Flanders.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ISBN%3D078212187X/mollygordonperso>

How to create a good site by showing you what doesn't work and how to fix it. Straightforward, fun, and unpretentious.

And, if you are serious about online customer service (or consult with people who are), I think the following book is indispensable:

Customers.com, by Patricia Seybold.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0812930371/mollygordonperso>

Appendix

Bow to Failure (It's Not What You Think)

How do you respond to failure?

Often, failure triggers negative judgments and a variety of postures, both physical and attitudinal, intended to avoid exposure and minimize embarrassment. Typical postures in response to failure include hunched shoulders, bowed head, and an overall shrinking. When a defiant, instead of apologetic, stance is taken, chins jut out and shoulders clench.

Now, what might happen if you chose to greet failure with a circus bow?

Try it now. Take a proud, wide-legged stance, throw your arms up in a broad V, fingers spread and palms facing inward. Paste a big smile on your face and take a bow. Wow. You did it! You failed, and guess what? You look terrific!

Feel silly? Try it again. And again. Then try it while saying, "I failed!" Keep checking in with your body, inviting every fiber of your being to say, "Hurrah. You may applaud me now."

How's that for detoxifying and reframing failure?

The circus bow works on several levels. It breaks up physical tension in the back, neck and shoulders. The smile lifts our spirits and broadens our outlook. The overall stance evokes pride and that deep breath of satisfaction that comes with honest effort.

We can reframe failure for others as well. How would it be if you trained yourself and your clients to witness failure with enthusiastic applause? Not denial, but fully felt and expressed appreciation for learning-in-progress. Imagine how teams and work groups and families might change if failures were recognized as the springboards for future successes.

Teach the Failure Bow to everyone you work with. Teach it to your children. Teach it to your friends. Change your culture around failure and you will change your life.

Thank You and A Request

Thank you for taking the time to download and read this book. I hope it has been helpful, and that you have found principles here that will contribute to your ongoing purposeful prosperity.

This document is a working draft, and I ask that you help me refine and expand it. Let me know how you are applying these principles. What is working for you? What are your biggest challenges? Send your comments and questions to molly@mollygordon.com.



Namaste,

Molly