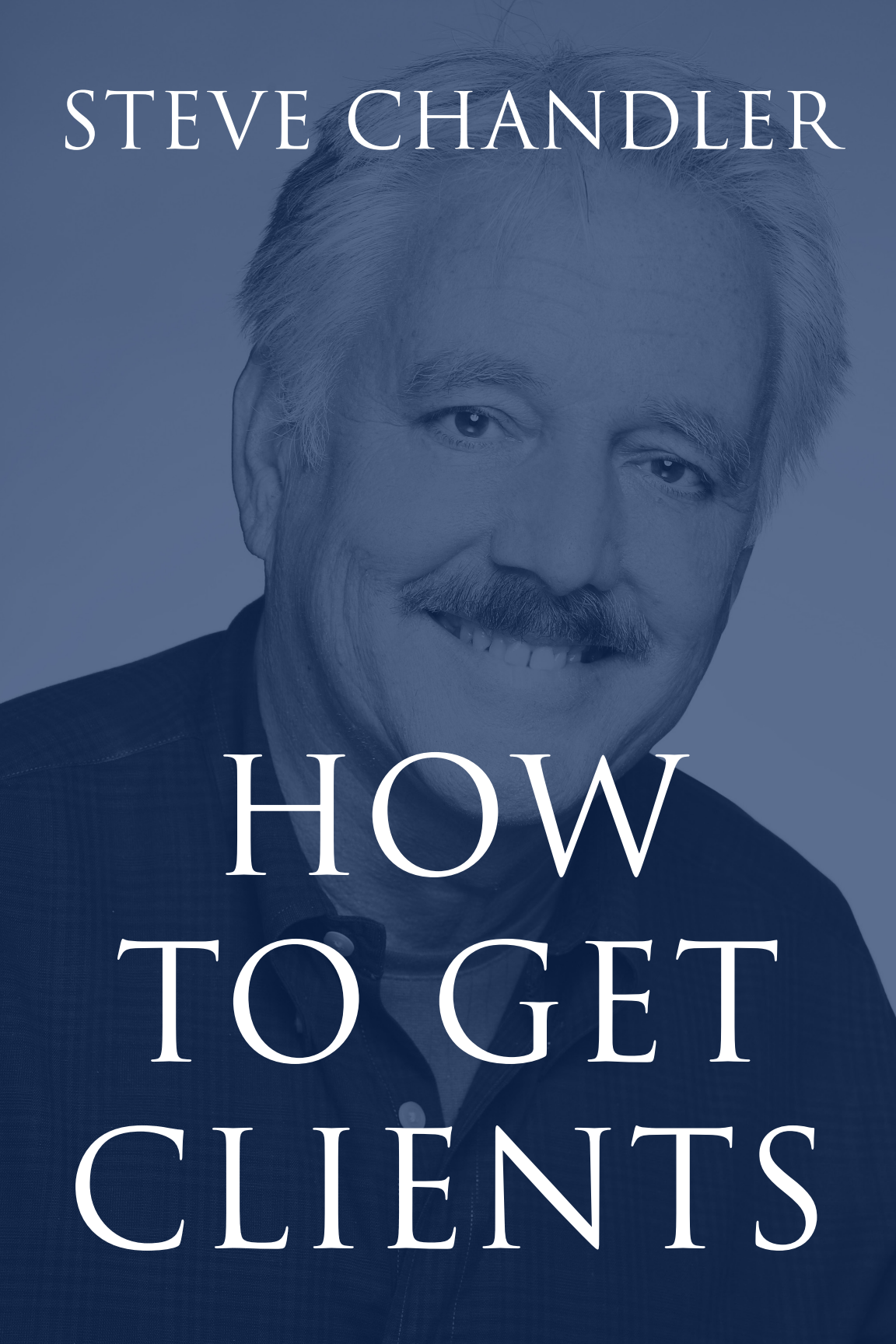
STEVE CHANDLER



HOW TO GET CLIENTS

How to Get Clients

Steve Chandler

www.clubfearless.net

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If you've ever dreamed of a fearless life, join the club:

Joyfully conceived and joyfully delivered, Steve Chandler's Club Fearless gives you the support, motivation and tools to transform your life. Club membership includes two monthly mailings, each containing an audio program on CD that is exclusive to club members. Members may also participate in a monthly teleseminar and pose their most urgent questions to Steve Chandler. Regular emails from Steve keep inspiration and motivation high throughout a member's whole week. Plus many more gifts and benefits. More details are available on the club website at wwwClubFearless.net.

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1) First, get really curious

Before talking to a prospective client, jot down 20 questions you want to ask that person. Visit their website and let your curiosity grow to a fever pitch. Read their blogs. Go deep.

Because there is no expression of LOVE and services that connects more deeply and intensely than *curiosity.*

Curiosity is caring in action…it is *proof* of your commitment to serve, help and transform. The more authentic curiosity you demonstrate the faster your practice will grow.

Every sale takes place in the other person's world, not your own. That's where the decision is made to hire you and pay the strong fee. Not in your world, but theirs.

The only way to really get into their world is to ask continuous genuinely curious questions and follow up questions. Don't talk about yourself until invited to. And even then, tell a short success story, make a jaw-dropping promise to the prospect related to the story, and finish with another question to them so you get back quickly into their world. You don't want to remain in *your* world. Big mistake.

And remember, before you call, have 20 questions. It's twenty, not two. Most people only have two.

2) Practice being unreasonable

Bold requests and asking for "unreasonably" big financial commitments from people never harm your business, and often generate surprising leaps forward.

If people say no, nothing is lost.

If you could hold the courage for that each day, that practice of making big requests and proposals, it would move billings forward so fast you could barely track it.

We lapse, though, into the default mode of the bio-computer, which has all communication monitored and filtered through WHAT WOULD PEOPLE THINK OF ME?

Three ways to double your income today: 1) double your client list, or 2) double the scope of work being done for each client, or 3) double your fees. They all work. You can do the math on all three and see that any one of those you chose would work.

3) Honor your computer files!

Honor your computer and the clients it holds for you that you don't realize are there.

Set an hour or two aside to surf lazily through emails you have received over the past six months. Put some Hawaiian music on. These are **clients** you are looking at. Send each one of them a simple email that says, “How can I serve or assist you right now? What's the biggest problem you face?” (Or something like that that you like even better than that.)

You will be surprised at your responses...and when you get a response that is positive (and you'll get many), answer that one with this: “Call me.” Then when they call, don't “sell” them, but jump right into their world and start solving their problem! Tell them the truth about the source of the problem. After the conversation, they will hire you.

4) Now practice saying your fee

Now practice communicating the number that is your fee. Most people, when they set a fee, never actually say it. So when it comes time to *speak it* their voice catches and they choke and their heart flutters and their knees go weak.

Practice saying it. Have it be so normal and minimal that it just comes out like you are saying your phone number. You don't get a catch in your throat or feel pressure on your chest when you give out your phone number, because it's just information...it's just a number.

Have your minimum fee be that. And make sure you talk to as many people as you can about it. Even people who you don't think it matters to...just casually mention, “It's a five thousand minimum fee to do a project with me....”

There may be people, small people, minnows, who will scatter and swim away when you say the fee, but that's good because the people you want as clients and repeat-business clients are NOT those people. When we take on minnows, our net (our life, our practice) gets cluttered and bogged down with small stuff...the small stuff ends up taking just as much work for much less pay.

5) You succeed faster when you slow down

Part of the beauty of slowing down is that it gives you time to research your client's business. One way to get all the clients you will ever want is to learn your prospective client's business through and through.

You can rapidly expand your contract with an existing client if you almost know more about their business than they do!

6) How do I make my client list grow?

How do you make anything grow? You plant it, you water it. You give it light. You cultivate it. You watch over it. You weed around it. You give it more water. And it grows. Inch by inch. Row by row.

But not for the past six coaches I have referred clients to. Do you know why? They did none of the above. None of it. They had too much to do to do any of that nonsense. They had too much to do and too little time. They were horror film flies buzzing and bouncing against the window trying in vain to get into their own futures every day...in vain! You know why it's in vain? (Secret: the future doesn't really exist.)

People don't get referrals only because they don't reward referrals. It's that simple. They don't cultivate referrals. They don't water them. They don't even turn the soil over.

I have a lot of people ask me for coaching these days and I like to refer them to coaches I know. But the coaches I know don't know how to treat referrals, so I keep referring to *different* coaches hoping I'll find one, just one who knows what to do.

So I sent (we are changing names of course) Melissa a referral. She thanked me and signed the client to a coaching contract. That was the last I heard. For me

to know whether it was working out, whether my referral was happy, what was happening at all I myself had to ask. It never occurred to Melissa to keep me informed. To let me know it was going well. To keep me in the loop. Therefore, when I had another referral to make I did not make it to Melissa. Not because I was hurt that Melissa didn't keep me in the loop, but because Melissa would never know how to teach her clients how to get referrals. Also, because I would not know what Melissa did with clients after I referred, so why send people into a black hole?

This isn't just with coaching. I talked to a business owner last month who said he got his best leads and best business from dentists. They referred people to him. I asked him what he does for the dentist when the dentist refers. He said he sends a nice card.

Do you keep the dentist in the loop?

No. Not really.

Do you have the client referred get back to the dentist and thank him personally?

Never tried that.

Do you call the dentist three months later to let him know how you are taking care of his referral? (This is called watering and cultivating a referral.)

No. Just that one card. That's it.

You may be thinking right now, *What's wrong with the card?* Everybody does it. Well that's it! Because everybody does it, it has no unique heart in it and therefore no sincerity. It's what busy people do who don't slow down and become present to all the possibilities in their world.

If a referrer keeps learning from you how the referral went, he will refer more and more people. Every client I have taught this to has THRIVED on referrals! Every one, every time.

So this business started going back through their list of all the dentists who had referred people. They gave them written and verbal reports on how things had gone, and you know what? They started getting a wave of new referrals.

People LIKE TO KNOW IF THEY ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN LIFE.

If they referred someone to you, they want to know all about what happened. They love knowing they made a positive difference in someone's life.

A thank-you card alone is unconscious and robotic. It's self-focused. (It's about you. It's not about the person being served by all this. It's about *you* being

grateful for money, so it's basically off-putting when you really think about it.) It's phony. It comes from a frantic mind trying always to get into its own future and never slowing down to be present to this precious moment.

In business you get what you reward.

But only always.

How do you reward referrals? With genuine informative feedback...real news from real people being real with each other.

So I referred another client to another coach I know. I heard nothing back. I heard, “Thank you” at the moment of the referral but nothing more. Even if the referral didn't work out, I would want to know that.

But he was too busy. It's a busy-ness problem. Most people are too busy to succeed.

That coach has no vision about how he might slow down, treat people in considerate ways, and grow his business like a beautiful garden. He is racing and pumping and pressing, trying to force himself through the glass into a better, wealthier future. It's the ultimate time management mistake...having more than one thing to do.

Just do one thing well. Just do one thing artistically, completely, lovingly and thoroughly. See what happens to your career.

And when you're trapped in it, notice how sick a millions-of-things-to-do mind really is. Notice how ungrateful that mind is. And notice how broke that person is compared to how wealthy he could be. It's all related.

7) Practice thinking BIG all day long

Think big. Don't be the shy girl at the dance. Your client won't think big for you. It's your job to think big.

Whenever you get a prospect on your radar screen, especially one who you know already wants to work with you, don't just offer them the same old stuff. Don't just offer them the tried and true, the old reliable. How would you explode your earnings that way? By being a plow horse trudging along every day offering the same old stuff?

Get creative and think big. Your existing clients will make you rich if you think of even BIGGER ways to serve them.

You can't lose, ever, by proposing something big. How many NOs did you get this week? That's the real measure of whether you are stretching yourself and stretching your clients. Before the end of each day ask yourself, did I get my NO today? No? I didn't? COWARD! Wimp. Lazy old sloth doing same ole same ole with my life.

Who's going to reach for the stars if I don't?

Think big. Your star will ascend IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO HOW MANY NOs you get every week. Collect them! Be proud of them. If you are getting all yeses you are really letting yourself down.

You are playing WAY too safe with your life. And what for?!? Why base your life on avoiding fear and feeling safe? Why do that when you could have been GREAT?????? This I want to know. And when you finish reading this, go GET A NO!

8) Write down the people you want to serve

People realize way too late that they can provide service to virtually anyone they want.

Just write down the people you want to serve. Then, start with just one on your list, the next one. The one in front of you right now. Have the conversation that moves that person into your camp. It's the simplest thing in the world, but the last thing people really systematically do.

Instead they chase all over doing talks, webinars, seminars, telenars, rolodexing, marketing, social networking, glad-handing, list-building, facebooking, Twittering and all the half-hearted half measures that attempt to get people to *give us respect* when all they really want is our good service!

To serve and love people you do not need their prior approval; you do not need to please them and win them over…. you do not need to please anyone; that is an absolutely false and toxic hopeless dead-end near-suicidal (business-wise) pursuit…just love and serve….

Let prospects know what working with you would be like by having your intake conversations be long, extremely real and truthful…because you are selling yourself, you don't want to mince words or do the

dance of money-fear wherein you are flattering them and acting in ways that disgust your own heart.

Instead, be willing to listen deeply and be the first person in their lives to tell them the truth. Be real and tell the truth about how you really see their problems. Don't hold back.

And this is done, remember, by simply talking to one person. The next person. The one thing in front of you right now. The only thing. It's the simplest time management system in the world. Just do one thing. Because, as Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Do the thing, and you shall have the power."

Byron Katie is the best resource I know for learning to slow down and love the fearless life. Katie once said, "When we do the thing in front of us, everything that we are to do, everything that needs to be done is always done. Also, when we are doing the thing in front of us, doing the thing we know to do in the moment, we are one-minded, mind is not at war, split, in competition with itself, and that is where love lives."

Most of the time our minds are in competition with themselves, always thinking of all the other things we should be doing while only half-doing the unfinished thing we think we're doing.

Katie continues, “Also, when we just do the thing in front of us, even if it is just walking, closing the car door, picking up the socks, we are always creating a better world and life is loved without effort. No decision, no fear. That is how it works. When people say, ‘I want,’ and I watch them live differently than it takes to get what they want, I see clearly that they don’t want it, and that their mind is split, and when they believe that they want it, they are believing the opposing thoughts that are running. You will always suffer when your mind wants two opposing things at once.”

So just do the thing. When you do the thing. Just that one thing in front of you at the moment. That’s when you have the power.

It may be time now to rise up. Now that there’s just one thing to do.

And there is so much power in being present to The Next Thing (the only thing) on your list, and to do that thing with all your heart and soul. Put your heart into your task, and amazing benefits, almost like meteor showers, gather in your future for you…because the future is created ONLY in this present moment, never in the future itself.

9) Make your birthday list

Ever get an email that says, “What do you want for your birthday?”

I know smart people who keep just such a list handy so they have specific answers for that question.

Now you’re going to do it with future clients. Write down five names of people or groups you would really like to work with. Your dream list. Put the list somewhere where you'll see it every day. At some point go for a walk with your list and let your mind ponder the fab five.

Who do you know who knows them? How would you help them? What can you learn about them?

By having this list be a conscious thing in your world you will activate the reticular activating system of the brain...it's that part of the brain that finds in the world exactly what you have in your mind. By being consciously aware of those five names you increase the likelihood that your mind will hear the right connection inside some unrelated conversation at a non-business gathering that will lead you to the business.

Even if this practice looks silly or new age or like it came from *The Secret*, it does also work. Which is why I recommend it. I've used it with myself and clients for years and years and even the most skeptical ones are

amazed by it. Write things down. They become real when they are written down.

The reticular activating system of the brain is this: whatever you picture and ponder repeatedly (your list of five) starts showing up in the outer world……

10) Challenge your clients

Yes, challenge your clients. Especially those who are "trying to decide" whether to work with you.

Put the question to them. Let them know that that very "trying to decide" thing that they do is what your work is designed to cure, so the irony is that the very thing your work will help grow in them (some real fearless decisiveness) is exactly what prevents them from getting the work. Poor them! All of life will go that way for them. They will waste their lives trying to decide what to do about things.

Ask them to step up and play big. Ask them whether they are really ready to work with you…whether they are committed enough to USE you to succeed with…because if they are not ready for their transformation, it won't happen.

Don't let their decision be a referendum on you, and what you offer. Have their decision to work with you be based on them. Their willingness to commit right now. And whether they themselves have the courage to change. The willingness to be better is a powerful thing. Acknowledge your prospect for that willingness. The true desire to play bigger than they have played. Because if they are not ready to change their situation, you are not a good match for them.

The more you ask of your clients, the more they will want to work with you. It's a paradox. The reason Michael Phelps adored his coach is because that coach asked more than any other coach. He asked Phelps to do things in training that other coaches don't dare to ask….Phelps revealed in interviews that he swam miles that other swimmers do not swim…..(because other swimmers' coaches are more concerned with *keeping their clients* than they are with radical transformation of the human in question).

11) Limit yourself to increase your value

Without courage, life stalls. Nothing moves. But open the mind, and things change. Open the mind and courage comes in, and then flows back out as action! Movement. We are happy when we are moving.

One reason my clients always pay up front is that I don't want to waste one precious moment collecting from them later. That's a moment I could have used to coach them and make their lives better.

My mentor for the past fourteen years, Steve Hardison, has taught me over and over that limitation creates value. My time is limited, as is my availability. Some people worry that when they state their limitations it's just trying to create the "perception" of scarcity, as a manipulated sense of limitation….but, actually no…it's the REALITY of it I want people to get….

For example, let's say I have blocked off two days to read and swim and reflect. And now a potential client calls and asks if I am available on one of those days; he might want me to deliver a keynote at a breakfast meeting for top leaders…but I will simply tell them I am not available. Because I already have an appointment that day (with myself…with my solitude,

with my inner peace and outer silence. An unbreakable agreement.)

I say to my client, “But please keep me in mind if our calendars allow for a future engagement.” And he does. He always does.

I was not creating a “perception” of limitation….I was NOT available to him because I had already made myself available to myself on those days.

Your clients will end up paying you according to whether and how much you value your own time.

You are the person who gets to say when your dance card is nearly full and when there are only limited openings. The trick is to keep simplifying your life and your professional practice….the more simple and focused your life is the more wealth will be created….but again, as I said up front, without the courage of an open mind, all of this stalls.

A life simplified in this way allows for more slowing down and thinking big…you (and all of us) will create big projects out of thin air (thin air is the birthplace of big action plans and proposals and brilliant ideas) when you slow things down.

12) Learn to work backwards

Let's start—not at the beginning—but at the end. Let's start with the final picture. Now you *have* a client and that client has been referred to you by someone else. We're going to talk about this process called referrals; because more than any other process, cultivating referrals is the most powerful, reliable way to build your client base.

To build any business.

To build anything.

The referral process is something you really want to slow down and pay attention to; because referrals are a beautiful way to build your list. Most people waste their time trying to get clients from unknown entities, so they spend their time going outside their inner circle of friends and acquaintances and associates—people who know and trust their work. They go outside of that circle and try to communicate with people who have never heard of them. They cold call, they market, and then they sell.

So, if you picture on your wall (let's say you have a white board) and you have drawn a tiny circle in the middle, and that's you—right there—that's you and your *known professional expertise*—right there in the middle of the universe.

Now draw a circle around you—a small circle—but it's just outside you—those are people who have already worked with you. Those are people who know and trust your work and people who are familiar with what you do.

Those are the people you want to be talking to and communicating with all day long.

Now as you keep drawing circles around and around and around, you get further away from yourself. Soon you've left yourself behind altogether! And that's where most people go. Most people go way out to the eleventh circle and beyond to try to get new clients. Like in Star Trek, they think they need to boldly go where no man has gone before.

So they go way beyond their circle of influence and circle of certainty; and they go out into the great unknown and they try to sell themselves to people who have never heard of them. They get on the phone, and they cold call, or they do some kind of email blitz, or a spam, or an internet hoax of some kind that draws people in to sign up for something; and they go on and on, and all this activity, and all this anxiety, and all this energy dumped into marketing themselves, and branding themselves, and linking up to unknown people.

All of this is largely a waste of time. I call it a waste of time because over the last fifteen years, working with people who have their own businesses or their own coaching practices or their own consulting, they really don't get clients that way.

I mean they *try*. They spend half their day doing it, and they keep finding new gurus to show them how to do it further and to enhance their Internet site and to do all these things and to step up the blogging; but it really doesn't bring clients in. And the reason it doesn't bring clients in is because it's not intimate. There's no real connection in the communication.

13) Stay away from the galaxy of heartbreak

The Star Trek outer space communication is always about selling, and branding, and enticing, and trying to get people to try you out, and trying to get people to put their toe in the water, and trying to get people to kick the tires; and those kinds of people are not committed clients. They are not people who really want to change their lives with your service. Those are people who are checking you out.

And it's so heart-breaking.

It's heart-breaking because you spend all day working with these people who tentatively may want to check you out, and then you end up trying to figure out what your real value is, so you lower your price, and you go all the way back to childhood, and your money issues, and life becomes a nightmare.

Business becomes a nightmare! And it's all because you won't focus on referrals as the primary source for building your practice. You focus instead on more arms-length things. From a distance. God is watching us. Lose our businesses.

Arms-length marketing will always keep prospects at a distance—out of fear. People don't know it's out of fear—the fear may be totally subconscious—but they

keep their prospects at a distance and they sort of call to them across a canyon. And when they finally do get someone on the phone, they hint-hint-hint at what they are good at, instead of making an intimate, transformative connection.

If you were going to talk to your brother, and your brother was interested in having one of his friends use your service, there would be no question about how to talk about it. You'd talk about it with certainty, you'd be excited to share your effectiveness, and you'd tell some fun case histories, and you'd urge that person to come see you and it would be over.

Well, we can do this every day.

We can do this as a way of acquiring clients instead of all these Hail Mary passes, all these schemes and scams, and all this nervous marketing, and all the things people do to get the word out.

It's one of the nine lies (*9 Lies That Are Holding Your Business Back*) that a person needs to get the word *out* about what he's doing. Not true. He needs to get the client *in*, not the word *out*.

Because just getting the word out—what does that do? Usually nothing. People print up all these brochures and they send all these things out not realizing that it's folly to be marketing to the masses.

You don't want the faceless masses showing up at your door! (Assuming they would.) But you're communicating as if you did!

You want one person—that's all.

One client—that's all you need; and then another and then another. You don't need masses and masses of clients approaching you—yet.

If you look at most people's communication, that's what it looks like. It looks like they are appealing to the masses, and they are spamming something out there, and they are throwing it against the wall to see if it sticks, and it's all fear-based. It's completely fear-based as a way of building a client list. Fear of intimacy.

So what really needs to happen now is the referral. People who already know your work, being missionaries and advocates for your work to other people. That's really how it works. That's really how it builds and grows.

So you have a client and that client has been referred to you. So let's look at what happens. What do you do? Do you know what to do? Do you have a system?

14) What the criminal defense law firm learned

Let me share a little story about referrals that I'd like you to apply to your own practice (your own business) and see how it applies to you; because I promise you there's relevance in it for your business; and if you'll listen to the story, you'll hear something unusual.

Years ago, when I lived in Tucson, I owned a public relations and advertising agency and I was hired by a criminal law firm to come in and help them get referrals to the firm. Their primary source of good business was referrals from other attorneys. So I agreed to take on that account and to help them get referrals.

They imagined because I was a PR and ad firm that I would design brochures and all kinds of communications for the law firm to put it out there to the legal communities that they were looking for referrals, and we would build many steps of marketing between us and the final client. That's what all this communication does, by the way, that you put out about yourself—it actually creates distance between you and your recipients.

It puts things between you and the end client; and what we want to do to acquire clients is to bring the client right in front of you with no distance, only intimacy.

So, I went in to the law firm and I sat down and the various partners were seated around the big round polished oak table and I said, "Let's begin by finding out what we do when people refer clients to you now. So, what I'd like to do is go around the table and you tell me when you get a client referred to you by another attorney what process do you follow, what system do you use, and what do you do to communicate back to the attorney who has referred a client to you?"

And they all looked at me like I was kind of crazy and one of the lawyers finally started and he said, "Well, I don't know. I try to thank them. Sometimes, I might even send them some tickets to a game."

"OK, great. Then what?"

"Well, that's it, you know, that's all I do."

"Alright, who's next?"

"Well, yeah, I…I…, I try to thank them… you know…I try to call them, always, or thank them when they refer. I don't call them after that."

"OK, who's next?"

So what I found was, even though referrals were the number one—the NUMBER ONE source of business and prosperity for this law firm—they had no system,

no purposeful process in what they did with referring clients.

So, we eventually put a process in place so that the legal assistants and the people who were in the firm who worked with the attorneys would have to communicate back to the referring attorney *seven* times over the next year with a sense of feedback, gratitude, reporting back, letting them know how things went, etc., etc. so that referring attorney was in the loop and felt like the referral made a difference.

That's the key to referrals. The *difference* the referral made in the life of the client. Someone who refers someone to you wants to make a difference in life. They don't need your gratitude. They would rather know that referring that person has made some kind of positive difference in the person's life. That's really what they want to know! And therefore, that's how they will refer more people.

15) Why do people KEEP ON referring?

People refer more people to you only because they received the fulfillment and the satisfaction of knowing that the person they referred to you has actually received good professional service, and you took good care of them.

But that almost never happens.

Instead people focus on the wrong thing. They focus on the money they themselves make from the referral! So they thank someone with a fruit basket or sports tickets as if to say, "Thanks for making me richer!"

And this leaves a bad, corrupt, creepy feeling in everyone involved.

Now just let me tell you as a final footnote to that attorney's firm. Once they put this process into place (even though at first they thought it was absurd—you thank someone seven times for something?) referrals went through the roof at that law firm. They got more and more and more.

Let's say you refer someone to me and then I coach them. Now, if I want more referrals from you, even if I just want to be a courteous, decent, kind human being to you, I will not just thank you for the referral, or just

send you tickets to the game, or flowers, or Starbucks coupons, or something like that. Because when I do that, all I'm saying is, "Thanks for the money that came my way. Thank you, I'm a greed-head like you so I appreciate it!"

Let's say you are a consultant, and I refer someone to you (which I have done many times). I've said my coaching card is full, I can't coach anyone, but I recommend you! So the prospective client says, "Fine, I'll check them out, give me their contact information," and I say great and so I let you know that someone is coming to you and you say, "Oh, thank you Steve, thank you so much for the referral."

And so you thank me and then, what happens?

I hear nothing.

Months go by. I hear nothing. I don't know whether you ever got together with that client, I don't know if you've changed their life, I don't know if they ever called you. I don't know if you are working with that person. I have no idea. And because I have no idea what happened—because I don't even know if things went well—I am frustrated. I'm clueless. I'm not aware that I am making any kind of positive difference in life.

And life, when it's good, is about difference-making!

So what happens when I get another client to refer? I will not refer to that person to you! Because I have no confidence anymore. I have no idea whether that ever works out when I do that. I don't have any feeling that when I refer someone to you, anything good happens. I really don't know what happens at all. So, I'm going to refer to someone else.

I want to keep doing this until I find someone who gives me positive feedback about the RESULT of the referral. I want you to keep me in the loop. Even if it takes you one minute on a voicemail. (I don't mean that you bother me, hound me, or stalk me. It only takes a minute if once every three months you say, "By the way, I just want to give you an update—the client you referred—things are going great—their business has done this and that, we're doing great work together—I'm flying out to inspect his new franchise that he just bought and before I go on that trip I want to thank you.")

Another way to keep me in the loop is to have the client himself thank me. So when the client thanks you for your work, you say, "Hey, don't thank me, thank Steve! Steve is the one who sent you to me. If it weren't for Steve we wouldn't be doing any of this."

"Oh, yeah, that's right. I'm going to send Steve a message and thank him for that."

So, why do people refer clients to you? They refer because *they know* the referral has made a difference. They feel the satisfaction that they've really helped somebody by referring them to you. But if we do nothing to allow that referring person to feel that satisfaction, they will not refer again.

Let's say it's a year from now and my client has decided to renew another program with me and sign me up for another year of coaching. I will celebrate that by thanking the person who originally brought us together. In fact, I never want to imagine my client as just my client. I want to always picture my client *and* the person who referred my client. It's two people sitting over there because without the referring party I would have no client. In my mind it's always three people, not two.

Now here's the good part. Here's the final scene that occurs. And I mean this really, in my experience, (case history after case history) this happens over and over. When I teach people how to do this and when people actually start doing this, more referrals occur!

Let's say you are now doing this, and you've called a referrer and said, "I know (it's six months later) six months ago you referred Mark to me and what happened was we've had a great time together and now I'm going to actually be coaching his vice president as well or expanding and doing new business plans.

We're working on great stuff together and I just want to thank you again and let you know what's occurring. This has really worked out well for Mark, and without you, it never would have."

Now, if you've got that person on the phone or are with him in person he says to you, "I've got someone else for you."

You say, "You do?" and he says, "Yes, I have someone else for you."

Why is he referring someone else to you? Because you kept him in the loop! You let him see that he made a difference in someone's life— that he's really made a difference by referring someone to you. You aren't just giving him your gratitude.

Because if you just have it be about you and him, and leave the client out of the conversation, that will always feel a little a greed-based. It's a vaguely corrupt kind of thing. When you only send a gift for sending me a client—that feels corrupt.

16) People on their deathbeds

When people are on their deathbeds, looking back over their lives, what people are most interested in figuring out is *whether they have made a difference* by being here in this world.

"Have I made a difference? Is anything different because I was here? Has my life on this planet made the planet any different than it would have been if I hadn't been here? Have I made a difference? Have I put children here that are now leading productive, helpful lives to others (that's one way to make a difference). Have I created business results that have helped people be employed? Did I serve people? What have I done that has made a difference?"

People are always looking to see whether their lives have made a difference, because that's really the meaning of life. That's the meaning of meaning.

If something makes no difference, it has no meaning! Something that makes no difference has no meaning. So, meaning, itself, is the difference something makes. (I learned this from my wonderful mentor Lyndon Duke, whom I've written about in another book.)

Now if meaning itself (the meaning of life—the meaning of my life) is the difference that something

makes, then having made a difference is the deepest craving I have. The same is true for other people. Like that person who referred a client to me.

So when someone refers someone to me and I don't let them know whether it made any difference, I cut them off from the deepest craving they have! And I will not get more referrals.

I talk to so many of my clients who are coaches or consultants or in some profession or other and they say, "I don't get many referrals. Oh, every once in a while, I get some."

And I always say, "Well, when you do get a referral, what do you do? What's your system? What's your process?"

And they look at me with a blank stare. Process? System? What am I—a robot? I have to have a system? I have to have a process? I'm a human being. I am spontaneous. I come from love and authenticity.

In other words, I do nothing.

I do nothing! Or maybe I thank them, sometimes I send *tickets,* sometimes I give them a *Starbucks coupon*, and if it's a really big client they have referred I'll sometimes send a *fruit basket*.

That's a payoff. That's like *The Godfather*. That's like "Hey, Thank you for the *money* that's coming to *me*." That's the only message there. There's no message in that that says you've made a difference.

Even if the referral leads to nothing, I want to report back that I had a great conversation with the person you referred.

"We talked for 45 minutes. I think even in that talk I was able to help them. I offered to be available to them if they ever had any more questions and needed anything from me. I sent them a book of mine I thought would be helpful. It didn't look like working together was a good fit at the time. They didn't have the resources and it wasn't a good fit. I offered to refer them to someone else as well. Thank you so much for this referral to me. If there's anything else I can do, let me know."

So, even if it *didn't* work out, give the most thorough feedback that you possibly can so that the person who referred is satisfied, is happy, is fulfilled, and believes, "well, at least the person I referred was well cared for and treated very nicely because even that is a small difference."

Feedback doesn't have to be anything formal. It can be, "I'm just driving away from a meeting I had with Mark. We've been together six months now. You put

us together and I want to thank you for that. Things are happening that are really wonderful."

Even if you aren't allowed to disclose what happens in your work with a client, you don't have to. You can simply say we are still working together and enjoying the process. It's been six months now, it's been nine months now, it's been a year now and I want to thank you. Great things are happening. Because it has the person realize they are making a difference in life. They are making a positive difference. The deepest craving they have is to know they are making a difference in their life.

When you *do* take care of referring parties this way, they refer more people!

Why do people not do this? And, believe me, they don't. Even people who are supposed to be enlightened, advanced and wise people. Like coaches! Life coaches and business coaches of my acquaintance that I know quite well, when I refer people to them— I hear nothing back.

17) People want to know what happened

About two months ago, I referred someone to a well known public speaker that I know who is a friend of mine. I referred a major client that I had been speaking to and I didn't have the time to speak to any more and I said, "Why don't you speak to them," and she was so happy.

"Thank you so much, can I pay you a percent of this?"

"No, no, just take good care of them, they are a good client of mine."

"Oh, I will, I will."

Now, I've heard nothing back. I don't know whether she gave a speech to the client. I don't know what's going on. I don't know if she took good care of my client, but I do know one thing: If some other client calls me tomorrow and says "Do you know a good public speaker?" I will not refer that person because I have no sense of what happens when I do. I have no idea. And because I have no idea, I don't want to risk it. It's human nature. We don't want to repeat something unfulfilling.

Look at your list of clients. Go down the list slowly, one by one. Who sent them to you? Where did they come from? Who sent them from their site to yours? Whose blog did they read about you that sent them to you, because you want to communicate with that blogger! You want to keep people in the loop who have referred people to you even in the most obscure, abstract ways.

Your inner circle of people has all the business you would ever need. Those names on your computer—that are already in your computer—could be the source of the greatest explosion of clients that you could ever have. Not new people. Not new companies. Not new names, but names you already have!

Because acquiring clients is not about believing in yourself, it's about creativity. Creative action.

18) Systems are better than beliefs

Many people think they don't have a good business because they don't believe in themselves! It's not that at all. It's because of a lack of certainty that you have a system that rewards the behavior you want repeated. In business, you get what you reward.

Belief, if you break it down etymologically, means fervent hope. Fervent hope. I have a fervent hope that I am as good as my fees say I am.

You can feel how stressful that thought process is. Why do I have to try to conjure up some kind of belief in myself so my voice won't shake when I state my fee? Why don't I speak from certainty instead? Why can't I tell prospects what I'm certain about, so it just flows out of my voice as if I were describing facts instead of making breathless claims and beliefs, and faith, and hope, and wishing, and hoping, and faith, and belief, and trust, and all those things that cause us to fall apart with fear.

Why not just state the plain truth? What do I do for a living? I coach people. How does it work? Let me tell you a story about what happened when I coached so and so. This is just fact. This is just what happened.

19) Find your certainty and stay there!

So, acquiring clients is about coming from certainty. Coming from what you know for sure to be true and speaking that, so they can hear the certainty in your voice of what this service performs; and when they hear that certainty they'll want it for themselves.

When they hear a wavering, quavering voice, when they hear you trying to sell them or impress them or win them over, they will tell you, "Let me think about it. I've got to talk to someone else. Let me get back to you. I've got to check my finances. I've got to see if I've got it in the budget. Let me talk to my wife."

All those phrases that mean, "This is creepy, you sound needy. I'm out of here."

Now how do we reverse that and really acquire clients quickly?

We begin with our inner circle. Remember the circles we drew at the very beginning of our conversation today. In the middle is a tiny circle. That's you. Now, draw a circle around that circle. These are the people closest to you…those who know your work the best. They're the ones who can send you the most clients, the most reliably. It's just that we never ask.

We never ask for it. We never talk to them in those terms because we let our own money fears infest and infect the body so that we become flooded with this cold water of fear, "Oh my gosh it's about money—they'll think I'm asking them to give me more money if I ask for a referral."

So, let's see how asking someone for a referral might work. If I sit down with someone and I say, "Now, we've had a great conversation. May I take maybe three more minutes of your time for something?"

That person says, "Yeah, sure, what?"

"As you know, I build my list of clients through referral. I don't do a lot of marketing. If you get on the subway today you're not going to see a poster with my picture—1-800 Steve Chandler, DISCOUNT COACH! You are not going to see that. I get my clients from referrals. People who know what this work is and who know who would benefit from it. People I trust to know how to select candidates for the work. That's how the work grows. Now, that's how it works. If you (who really have an inside knowledge of what my work is) have someone in your life who would benefit from working with me, let me tell you what I would do. If you send someone to me who you believe would truly benefit from this work, I will give them an hour and a half with me at no cost to them. That's a gift from you.

Because you have pre-selected this person, it is worth my time. And certainly theirs. In that hour and a half with me, we could solve the biggest problem in that person's life and they could be on their way, if coaching's not appropriate for them, and everything would be great. I would be happy, because my list will be filled anyway. All I'm saying is it's filled through referral and I'd be so honored if one of the referrals came from you. So they would have that hour and a half with me and they would know that was a gift from you. And they could decide after that—after having experienced the work whether they would like to continue or not—freely based on their own decision. One thing I will not do is sell them, push them, try to get them to do it. Will not happen. I will not do that to anyone you know or anyone else. That's not how my business was built. Now as I've been speaking, has anyone occurred to you, has any name popped into your mind who might benefit from the work that is similar to the work you and I have done together?"

Now, every time I've had this conversation, somebody names somebody. They say, "Yeah, yeah, my brother-in-law." Or, "Yes, yes, my former business associate. He just started a new business. I saw him at a picnic the other day, he's really struggling. He asked me about my coaching with you. He said, 'How's that going?' He's very interested in it. He's someone you could really help."

And I say, "Thank you for that. What's his name? Would you please share with him what we talked about and have him call me? I will not call him. I will not bother him, pursue him, sell him, market to him, network out to him, link to him, scam him, spam him, or do anything like that. I will not tie him down like a roped calf and put my brand on him; I will not do an Internet hoax that loops him in. I will simply take his call and set up time with him to honor you."

So this kind of request of anyone in your inner circle is going to lead to people lining up at your door. But it only happens when you are not afraid to ask.

You could have anything if you were willing to ask for it. We don't ask because we make it about ourselves instead of about the work and the service and the product we provide.

People have told me that repetition is what really has things sink in for people, so I'm not afraid to use repetition—like a chorus coming up in a song. For a song to really hook and for people to really love it and to want to hear it again, the chorus has to keep coming up and repeating.

So, to acquire clients, the process is this: Request, propose, and invite over and over and over and no is as good as yes. It's OK. The process is what's important—not the outcome. We get so fascinated with

the outcome, we forget the process and by not doing the process we get so scared about the outcome, we forget the process, and by not doing the process we don't get the clients.

But if I make it about some real help I can give someone in someone else's life—if that's what the conversation's about, I will never be afraid to ask. If I say, "I could really help someone you know," that feels good to me and that feels good to the person I am talking to.

Here's something that most people don't quite realize. People *love* putting people together. People love being matchmakers. They love putting two other people together and having it work out. They really enjoy that. It's really a thrill. It tickles them. Further, it makes them really realize that they make a difference in life. Yet we are afraid to give them an opportunity to do that. We are afraid to allow them to feel that wonderful feeling. Because we shrink down into the most infantile version of ourselves and we fear what it says about me to ask for a client.

I want to share the good work I do from a place of certainty instead of trying to find a way to believe in myself.

People waste so much time trying to figure out how to develop confidence, and to learn how to believe in

themselves, and to trust their own product and to have faith that the future will turn out fine, and not be so scared.

Can you see the level they are playing at?

They're playing at the level of the soap opera or even worse, Jr. High School—"will Sally look at me in math class today? Or will she look over there at Jason and go to the prom with him?"

It's a ridiculous way to do business. To make it all emotional. Business is a logical process and it always turns out prosperous if you follow it logically, unless your product or service is just absolutely fraudulent or out of date—if you're trying to sell 8-tracks or something like that it's not going to work. But if you have a good service and it has helped people, you're home free if you follow a logical process.

Business is a logical process run by emotional beings and therefore it gets messed up.

20) The most damaging feeling to have

The most damaging emotion is fear. Fear stops us asking for what we want. The fastest way to acquire clients is to ask for clients. If I'm unwilling to do that, it really means I'm unwilling to speak to others about the powerful benefits and the powerful experience that my service has had in the world and that unwillingness will stop me every time.

That will have me try to find gurus and mentors, and PR experts and marketing wizards and people who will not make me talk to real people but will go out and find clients for me. They'll do Internet scams and things on Amazon that will make it look like my book is a bestseller when it's not—they'll do all these tricks and every one of those marketing tricks is designed to take you out of your inner circle and put you way out with the faceless masses so it plays to your fear. It plays to the fear you have of that conversation that would lead to a client.

Clients come from conversations. We acquire clients because of the conversations we've been in, and if we systematically enter conversations throughout the day, we will have more clients than we know what to do with. No sale ever occurred outside of a conversation.

21) Too disorganized to get clients?

Sometimes I will go into a client's office and she'll say, "Forgive me. I'm so disorganized. Look. Look at the things lying around here. I apologize. No wonder I don't get anything done."

And I'll say, "Well, do you have the file I sent you on the training program we're going to do?"

"Oh, it's right here," and she'll pick it right off the top of the desk.

"So you're disorganized?"

"Oh yeah, isn't it obvious? I've always been very disorganized. It's a real problem. I need to take some kind of class."

I say, "Well, it took you less than a second to access that document, so this seeming chaos here (if you know anything about chaos theory, chaos is the highest form of order, it's just that we can't see the order in it immediately), this seeming chaos in your office is actually not, and your subconscious mind has ordered this place to be the way you want it to be for quick access to what you need."

Now there might be another person down the hall, and if I go into her office and I say, “Where's the file I sent you, let's pull that out and talk about it.” She

might be very neat—a “neatnik”—and she might go to a file drawer and make her mind run through the alphabetized list of where it would be in that file, and finally after maybe three or four minutes come up with the file and say, “Oh, finally, here it is. Yeah, I thought I had it here, but I remember now I'm filing those over here to keep them orderly so I know where to go to get it. Here it is.”

Well, great, that took four minutes of wasted time because you are organized. The woman down the hall here got it in half a second—in a heartbeat. So who is really more organized?

The next time you wake up and express yourself through your personality (I'm disorganized!), understand that you are walking through Jell-O. You have this big Pillsbury doughboy of an additional layer of gooey stuff you've built up called your personality that's not necessary. And if you were to have a really great day and become truly successful, out of what you did today, it would be by throwing the Pillsbury doughboy aside and taking action. ACTION!

With absolute freedom of action. Lightness and spirit, joy, creativity, top of the ladder—and that comes from no personal story at all. Am I organized, am I fearful, am I lazy? What would it matter, given what I am up to? Given the joy I'm feeling in serving you right now. Given the commitment I have to be there in

time. What would a personality matter right now? This is pure action coming from me.

Charlie Chaplin once entered a Charlie Chaplin lookalike contest in Monte Carlo and the judges awarded him third place. So the truth is you can start your life all over again today from nothing and surprise yourself, because all these beliefs and all these old worn out repetitive thoughts about who you are and what you're not good at, keep surfacing and that becomes personality.

People just believe they have a personality, and that's never even questioned, but the problem is by believing that myth I'm now limited to what that personality could do about anything. I don't want to be limited by that. I don't want to be limited by anything. I'd like to be free.

22) Never let them start

You never want prospects to decide whether to start working with you. That's always a tough decision.

Why do I want to give someone a difficult decision to make? Why start the relationship off that way? Assuming it starts at all.

Instead of having your prospect trying to decide whether to start, why not make it easier? Why not have them decide whether to continue?

Isn't that an easier decision? Safer? More confident?

How is that done, though? If the prospect is new to you, how would they be continuing?

In the early 1950s, the very best door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesmen would throw dirt and dark oil down on a housewife's carpet to strike fear and horror in her heart. He would then say, “What if I had something that could make that carpet even cleaner than before I threw that down there?”

“I think you had better.”

And he would go out to his car and bring in his prized product and demonstrate what it could do.

And she would buy it.

Because she was now deciding to have that machine continue to do its work.

You can do the same thing.

Whatever your service is, find a way to demonstrate it. Allow your prospect to already get started with you.

For example, when I used to do sales team seminars I would be glad to give a sales team my fifteen-minute version. Once they were excited by that experience—what I had demonstrated—they were happy to have me continue.

Most people never demonstrate the value of their work. They just announce it. Or claim it, or advertise it. And then wonder about why they have very few clients. How can anyone trust a claim? Or a promise?

23) How many dogs and ponies are needed?

When I owned an ad agency long ago, our firm would often be a finalist in the running for a lucrative contract. The prospective client would have three agencies do a final live presentation to their leaders. You had anywhere from 90 minutes to 3 hours to make your pitch.

Most agencies did a dog and pony show. They showed commercials, gave talks and did a multi-media credentials pitch.

We never did that. We left our credentials in a folder; a handout they could read later.

Instead we demonstrated what it would feel like to have us be their agency. We had the whole presentation be interactive, and we attacked the client's problems and objectives as if we were already working for them.

Our goal was to give them the experience of working with us. So their decision would be whether to continue.

We won more clients than our competitors by a huge margin.

I know life coaches who try to sell themselves to prospects who call. They talk about fees, hours and

results, and it's basically a sales call. These coaches don't get very many clients this way and they often end up hating their profession because of it.

On the other hand! There are coaches who demonstrate. A prospect inquires and they ask the prospect for an hour of their time, “to see if it's even a fit for us.”

Then, during that hour they coach the prospect. The prospect has an easy decision to make after that, because they can base it on experience.

For a few years I made a fair portion of my living as a consultant to authors. For a substantial fee, I would take their rough book manuscript and help them convert it into a highly readable, exciting book.

If someone began to inquire about my services I would often have them send me any four pages of their “book.” Just for fun, let's see what I can do for you. Then I would re-write and edit those pages so that they jumped off the page (in my opinion). The client was able to then decide whether to continue working with me. Not whether to start.

Never have anyone try to decide whether to start being a client of yours. You won't get many clients that way.

24) Are you willing to ask for it?

One of the things that Byron Katie teaches is that you would get whatever it is you wanted—if you were willing to ask 1,000 people for it.

Well, people are not willing to do that! They might ask one or two but then they stop asking. And why do they stop asking?

Why do people stop asking for what they want even though they didn't get it yet?

Rejection!

But that's a sad, misguided mistake, because there is no rejection. No such thing. No one can reject you. Rejection doesn't exist.

All that happens is the *thought* of rejection—and then the *feeling* of rejection.

Rejection is a feeling. It's a sense and it's a story. It's not really reality—nobody can be rejected, but they can sure *feel* rejected.

The trick to getting clients, then, is to get yourself into a fearless state in which you realize that you can't be rejected—you can only feel rejected.

And if you felt rejected, that would always be because of some story you had about something

somebody said. You would have to make up a story that concludes, "that means I've been rejected. I've been personally rejected, I don't measure up, I'm not worthy, I'm not good enough, they don't like me." And all those terrible things that we place on top of some simple information called "no thank you."

When you look at rejection you can see that it starts with a story. Then it descends into a *feeling*. Rejection can only be a feeling that comes from my story in my head—it's not something that lives out there in the world. It's the result of an interpretation.

Prosperity occurs for me when I am willing to truly see that, and get that, and choose not to interpret anything anyone says in the business world as being anything other than information—just information! Is it yes or no?

25) Where does YES live?

One of the things I like to teach people who sell their services and seek clients is that "yes" lives in the land of "no." In fact, I'd like to write a children's book some day called *The Land of NO*. It would be a book for adult children. And what's so magical about The Land of NO is that yes lives there!

Know that about the whole world. There are yeses and there are nos and they live together. You cannot separate them. They are integrated.

Therefore the only problem people have is their prejudice. They don't like no. They believe "I need to get a yes." And their superstition tells them that yes is better than no.

I'm about to make a call to a prospect. She's a potential client! I really want to get a "yes"—I don't want to be rejected—I want people to approve of me—I want people to affirm and validate me—I *need* a "yes" today. I've been depressed lately. I don't have as many clients as I'd like right now, so I'm really not in the mood for "no." In fact, I don't think I could take it!

So I don't make the call.

I don't ask for that investment from her because I'm afraid I won't get a "yes."

The feelings are so volatile and tipsy in my stomach that I am carried back, in my mind, to high school. I don't ask Maria out for a date. I don't ask Maria to the prom because I think I need a "yes" and I'm afraid of a "no."

But what if I could alter that? What if I could shift my mind? What would happen to the world I live in?

What if I did a total mindshift and I stopped thinking and creating the story that said, "I need a yes" and I begin to see it a different way. What if I were to think I needed yeses *and* nos. I need yeses but I also need nos, because if I'm OK with nos, in fact, if I'm actually *seeking* nos *and* yeses (not just yeses) then I'm perfectly happy to call people because they are going to give me what I want. Every time!

They are going to give me nos and yeses. Exactly what I'm after!

Once I can just have it be OK that I get "nos" and "yeses," and if I can really understand on a deep level that yes lives in the land of no, then my client acquisition challenges are over.

Because I'm now working with the truth. And the truth will always set me free. Yes, it's really true that you cannot separate yes and no, any more than you can separate heads and tails or life and death or night and

day. They go together. They must go together. Any attempt to separate them leads to misery.

You can't separate up and down or north and south, either. You need one in order to have the other. Someone needs to be able, always, to say no, in order for yes to mean anything at all.

Let's say you had a bar magnet. Your bar magnet has north on one end and south on the other and you say to yourself, "Oh, I only want north! I am afraid of south. South hurts my self esteem." So you take some tin snips and you cut off the south end. Now you see that your bar magnet is shorter, but it still has a south end!!!

"Oh shoot….that didn't work!...it still has a south end on it…" so you cut again, and you can keep cutting, but you'll never get rid of south.

It's the same with a coin. It's heads and tails. You'll never get rid of tails. Keep slicing that coin thinner and thinner. Or file off the tails side, and you can't. It will always have both sides. Everything is like that!

Yet, we go insane.

We think we need yes without no. We think we can't handle no. We think we have got to have a world of

pure affirmation. A world of approval! A world of appreciation of *me.*

It's a sick delusion—it's a narcissistic, paranoid, delusion that we "need" constant approval—and that's the very delusion that stops us from getting what we want.

Because in the face of possible rejection, we stop! We close up shop, we hide, we crawl into a cocoon (we're not a butterfly anymore). We are now cocoons, kind of inching our way through life on a linear path—on our bellies moving along the ground—it's a worm's life this way—trying to avoid no.

26) NO is actually heaven on earth!

Now it's time to just open myself up and say, "no is fine with me—I need yeses *and* nos—in fact I need plenty of nos because the more nos I get, the more yeses I will get. Why? They go together. I finally get that!"

Look at it this way. What if I gave you a coin and I said to you, "OK, I'm going to pay you $100 for every time you toss the coin and it lands on heads." You've got ten minutes to toss it.

So are you willing to toss the coin? Are you really going to say, "I'm afraid to toss this coin because it might land on tails and when it does I'll know I won't get a hundred dollars"?

Then I walk up to you and say, "What are you doing? I've given you ten minutes to flip the coin and you're not flipping it?"

And you said to me, "Well, I'm afraid if I flip it, it will land on tails and you're going to pay me only on heads."

And I say, "That's true, but if you flip it and it lands on tails, flip it *again* and *keep flipping it* because the more tails you get, the more heads you'll get!"

The person with the most tails is also going to have the most heads. The person who gets the most nos in life is also going to get the most yeses. Yet to others they will appear to be lucky. Fortunate. In the right business at the right time. Having found a good location. A good niche. Etc. All the things we say about people who succeed, not knowing that their real secret is that they are okay with no.

27) Some know about this secret

I once went to a seminar, about 15 years ago, where the leaders were enlightened to this secret of success. They said they wanted to teach us to not only be okay with no—but to actually seek it out.

They sent us out into the community one evening for a two-hour meal break and the assignment was to get five "nos" before we came back to the seminar.

It was amazing to people how hard that really was. They thought it would be easy, but it wasn't. Some people asked the manager in the restaurant, "Could you please have this meal be on the house for me? Would you please have the restaurant pay for my meal? Just as a gesture to me?" And in some cases the manager said yes!

One person talked to a young woman, a cashier in a grocery checkout line, and said, "Would you please go out with me Saturday night? I know you don't know me, but I would love to take you out to dinner." She thought for a moment, shrugged her shoulders and said yes!

There were all kinds of stories like this when people got back to the seminar room. People were just startled. They were shocked at how many surprising yeses they got. And "yes" wasn't of any value to them! Because

they had to get a certain amount of nos before they could come back to the seminar room.

The world is more ready to say yes than we realize. But we never find that out because we are so afraid of no. Yet, yes lives in the land of no. Yes does not live in a separate land by itself. Just as south doesn't live in a separate land by itself. South on a bar magnet goes with north.

You know the great Alan Watts actually created a word for this deep hidden secret of life, and the word he made up was "goeswith."

Yes *goeswith* no.

You cannot have one without the other and trying to separate them is like trying to split the atom with your bare hands. It will not work. And yet we do it all day.

And yet, many of my clients, when we begin working together, are attempting to split the atom it all the time. Why didn't you call? Who have you called? How many people have you invited to do business with you this week? How many people have you invited to be a client of yours?

"Well…..uh….. nah…I'm afraid to call him…I'm afraid…."

"Why?"

"Well… you know I'm afraid he'll say no…I'm afraid he won't want it…I'm afraid she won't want to do it."

And so people are *stopped from getting what they want* because they are afraid of people saying no.

But no, that's not it. That's not really it! Really, that's not what they're afraid of.

They're afraid of the story that goes with no! They're afraid of what that made-up story will do to them. That story will shock them to their very being about what a loser they are. How unlovable. How unappreciated. How unwanted their service is. How preposterous their fee is. How dare you ask me to be your client? You are not worthy! That's the story they attach to no. No wonder it stops them.

But what if "no" were just information?

28) A practice that eventually solves the problem

Here's one of the things I have my clients do if they're caught in this paranoid superstition that says "no" is bad news. I have them seek no. We set up a game wherein they can't leave their desk without getting a certain amount of "nos" that day.

Because once they are able and willing to get a certain amount of "nos" every single day, the "yeses" will come along for the ride with it—you can't have one without the other; they live together.

Again: the reason we don't get the "yeses" when asking for clients is that we are afraid of asking. We're afraid of the no. Well, what if the "no" were fine? What if the "no" was just information? In fact what if the no was what I was after?

"No" means nothing. It has no emotional charge until I add it. It's information that tells me either to move on or to ask further questions, but that's all it is. When I am sane, and in a mentally healthy frame of mind, "no" cannot be bad news. I'm always okay with it.

If there's ever a day or a week and I'm in the job of enrolling or selling or getting people to join or become a customer or client of mine or whatever I'm doing—getting people to donate money to my non-profit—

getting somebody to go out with me—anything like that—If I'm willing to get a bunch of nos every day, I'll have more yeses than anyone else.

They'll say, "How do you do it? You must have a magic touch! You're a born salesperson! How do you sell so well? You're just a natural."

Not really. I have just defused "no." "No" is just information. It's not a condemnation of me—it's not the last judgment about me—it's just information—that's all it is.

So when I wake up in the morning I want to get yeses and nos. I want to get a lot of yeses and I want to get a lot of nos. In fact, if I'm not getting very many nos there's something about my prices that's got to be wimpy and weak. Because if my requests were something that caused everybody to say, "Well, yeah…sure!" what kind of life would I be living?

A safe life.

But safety is the enemy here. It's not what you think it is. It's not really security, as you imagine. It's dangerous. It's like flying a plane too slowly because you're afraid of crashing. Ask a pilot what happens when you get below a certain air speed. You plunge toward the earth.

Yet we try to live that way.

So, what Byron Katie said is really profound when you think about it. If you are willing to ask 1,000 people, you can have anything you want.

People kind of nod their heads when she says this. But only one in a million is willing to ask a thousand people for something. Think of the discouragement! Think of the meaning they would attach to the first 100 nos they would get.

But if they could see that "no" has no meaning—that there's no meaning at all when someone says "no," then they would have a lightness, a playful freedom about this whole thing called making money, getting clients and prosperity.

Because, really, "no" doesn't mean anything. If someone comes to the door and asks me to enroll in their religion, my saying "no" doesn't mean anything other than no. It's just information that I'm not ready to do that at this moment—that's all it means. It doesn't mean that there is something wrong with their religion, it doesn't mean that I'm prejudiced or doesn't mean that I am an atheist or that I am a heretical person, or it doesn't mean anything. It doesn't mean that they are bad sales people either. Those are stories that people can make up about my no. Please don't make up any stories about my no. Let it just be a simple no.

When people have stories about life that are different than real life, fear takes over. Discord, inner

conflict and fear. Because these stories are always worse than life itself really is. What goes on in my mind is always more frightening than reality. Always.

29) This is a very popular story

Here's a very popular story (and it keeps us from the joy of life):

"I couldn't handle it if that happened."

I'm afraid of foreclosure. I'm afraid of illness. I'm afraid I might go bankrupt. I'm afraid she would leave me. I'm afraid my child would get injured.

"But why are you afraid of that?"

Well, because, you know, I don't think I could handle. I don't think I could handle it if that happened.

What I don't see about that thought is that it's never true. Yet it's the big fear that causes all the other fear. It's the story of "I couldn't handle that," that causes all the fear in my life when my mind projects the future. When I do worst-case scenarios and I project all the scary things that might happen to me.

30) It's not even true

If I look back on my life and look at how I've lived my life right up till now, I can't find anything I was not able to handle. And I have been a total coward most of the time! Yet I have handled everything. Sometimes things were uncomfortable for awhile, sometimes it was rough, but I handled it.

Most people realize this on their deathbeds. But not before. They realize that all their worries, the worries that *dominated* their lives every day, were meaningless.

One of the most profound experiences I've ever had was when I worked with Devers Branden, a brilliant and kind woman who was also a great coach and consultant. She utilized something she called "the deathbed exercise." (I wrote about this in the first chapter of *100 Ways to Motivate Yourself*.)

Devers had her clients imagine that they were on their deathbed. So I would lie back and close my eyes and picture myself being on my deathbed because we were doing the deathbed exercise.

Then she had me look back on my whole life and have people come into the room and say goodbye to me and I would say goodbye to them—it was really a movingly profound experience. But one of the things I noticed while looking back on my life now that I was dying was that *there wasn't ever anything that was as*

bad as I feared it would be. Nothing really turned out "wrong." Not from the perspective of looking back. Ever. Ever.

Even things that other people consider very tragic and horrifying and alarming and catastrophic. I've had those in my life. Maybe I've even had more than most, but never, ever was it something that I couldn't handle. And it wasn't because I was some kind of great paragon of courage—I certainly wasn't. It was because nothing in reality is as bad as the mind makes it ahead of time.

31) Yeah, but what about foreclosure?

I have a close friend—a very talented, gifted young man who had a foreclosure on his house. So he moved through that and moved quickly into a rented home, and kept creating the life he wanted, and rebounded and turned his life around, and turned his financial fortunes around by creating what he wanted, and staying upbeat and staying in action, and not having a huge story about the foreclosure—it's just what happened.

Because he didn't have some "story" that brought him down, he was able to handle it quickly.

Other people (on the other hand) tell me, "I'm going through a tough time, I can't sell, I can't enroll clients, I can't even talk to my wife and kids because I'm so consumed by fear that we might lose the house."

"All right. So why are you afraid of that?" I ask them. "Why would you be afraid of that?"

"Uh….Uh….Oh….I couldn't handle it if we lost the house."

"Really? What would you do? Would you kill yourself?"

"No….no….No, I'd never kill myself, but……"

So, what they finally (if they really sit with it and stay with it) realize is that it's not true that they

couldn't handle it. There are lots of things they would do if that became the reality. And they could handle it, and they would handle it. You'll always handle what's there in the moment and nothing will be outside the moment unless you project it.

All fear is a projection of the future. It's never about what's going on at the moment.

So how does this awareness help me get clients?

Just this way. If I were willing to have a world of "yeses" *and* "nos"—which would be the world of beneficent reality, and if I were willing to see that yes lives in the land of no, just like to have daytime I have to have night, then I can be in action acquiring clients *all the time*.

People who have terminal cancer often have a remarkable thing occur—and actually this is not just the few remarkable people we read about—this is most people. They have a new appreciation of life when they have terminal cancer. All of a sudden, every day becomes really precious. Every hour! Every moment. Every conversation becomes valuable and gratifying and important and wonderful and lovely. Why is this? Because of finally accepting that death *goeswith* life.

In a funny way, death gives us life! We wouldn't have life if there wasn't death—we wouldn't have a

distinction for it. It wouldn't feel like life. It wouldn't feel like anything.

Without death life would be the ultimate nightmare. Like a basketball game and that will never be over. Picture an NBA game where they decided they were not going to run a clock—no clock, no quarters! We're just going to play and play and play and play. Well, that would be a nightmare. It would be a nightmare for the players to have no end of the game. It would be a nightmare for the people watching the game—to have no end of the game.

Same would be true if life were everlasting here on earth. It would be a nightmare if there were no end of the game—there would be no sense of life. You can't have a sense of life without death. You can't have yes without no. You can't have daytime without night. If there were ever a situation where there was no nighttime, daytime wouldn't seem like anything at all.

There wouldn't be anyone saying, "Oh, what a lovely day"—there would be no sense of a lovely day. "What a beautiful day?" *No, it's always like this.* (Welcome to Arizona!)

So the key right here to getting what we want is to have "no" be good. Not just OK, but to have "no" be exactly what we want. I want yeses *and* nos.

That's why I require that my clients get a certain amount of nos. It's an assignment. Don't leave your workstation without your five nos today and if they are getting harder to get, then raise your fees, create better projects that you offer people. Create some outrageous, unreasonable proposal to a client, so it's a slam-dunk "no." You need your "no." You need five of them! So you propose big and your prospect says, "No!" and you clap your hands and say, "OK, good! Thanks, I only need four more!" and the more comfortable you get with that—the easier that becomes for you—the more wonderful life becomes.

Why does life get more wonderful? Because in any conversation you are in you won't wait to ask for the business later. You won't be thinking, "Some day, once I've won them over…some day once I get them to appreciate me…some day, once I have credibility with them…I'm going to ask them for the business…yes, I'll ask them to be my client!"

How pathetic does that now sound? But that's what most people do all day long.

"Oh, I don't have the credibility yet, I haven't won them over," and they don't ask.

Whereas there are other people (successful people with all the clients they could ever want) who would ask right then and there, "Will you join me?"

"Is that something you would be willing to do?"

What a beautiful question that is. Study it. Notice that the answer it seeks is yes or no. That's why it's so beautiful. The coin is now in the air! Most people keep the coin in their pocket.

If the person says "no," I want to say, "Excellent! I got an answer. I collect answers. I gather them like flowers, like applies, like berries, I love them. They make me a wealthy person." Yes-no questions have me in action. They have me living life in the land of yes and no and embracing *all of life*—yes *and* no.

It's only when I embrace all of life, the yes and the no, that the yeses come. It's mathematically impossible for this not to happen. It's just so obvious when you can detach yourself from it. That's why I like to use the example and the story of paying someone $100 for every heads they get when they toss the coin.

They're going to toss and toss and toss and when you look back (if I did this with 100 people) the people who got the most tails, also got the most money! Even though I only paid on heads. Because they figured out how to toss the coin the most times and so they got the most money.

None of them figured out how to toss the coin so it would land *more often* on heads. That would be folly

(yet that's what most people trying to acquire clients do all day).

When I ask you if you'll do something—"Will you join my club? Will you become my client? Will you be my apprentice?" When I ask you that, I really *want* you to be able to say "no." I don't want you to be forced to say yes. I want you to have freedom of choice.

It's a good thing that people can say either yes or no. It's freedom! Don't we all love freedom? When people ask me something—like will you join my religion or will you buy this car?—I love being able to say yes *or* no. That's the beauty of it. The beauty is the yes and the no going together—both always there as options, living together in harmony—supporting each other.

The one creates the possibility of the other. That's why it's literally insane to demonize "no" or to be afraid of "no." Or to think of it as rejection. It's literally insane. It's like a child being afraid of nighttime.

"Oh….oh….the world's coming to an end and the sun is going away…."

And you hear about primitive superstitions that various people had about the "disappearance" of the sun. It was so primitive and we laugh now and "how

could they be such idiots and cowards and superstitious and how could they believe that?"

Well, we are worse!

We believe there is something wrong with "no" and "no" is harmful and "no" does damage to us.

Picture the guy flipping coins, believing that when it turns up tails it means, "Oh, my gosh, no I won't get paid…I'm depressed…I can't even move my thumb now…I can't even flip this coin. It's so heavy to me having just gotten tails on a flip!"

Now that would be just insane—we would come up to him and say, "Look, you're going crazy here…don't worry about it…*just flip it again*. Just flip it again because you're going to get your $100 on every heads. So just flip it. If you get a tails, just flip it again, flip it again, flip it again, flip it again."

And that's the answer to your success, too. That's where the money comes from. It's not having any story about tails other than this one: "Time to flip again!" Not having any story about "no" other than, "Time to ask someone else!"

32) The best questions I get about getting and keeping clients

Q. I am currently requiring my clients to pay me in full up front. I'm a little scared to do that in this economy, can you tell me how I can do that without scaring them off?

I love that you are being clear and strong with your clients about payment. By doing this you will model no-nonsense adult commitment to keeping one's word. One reason my own clients pay up front is that I don't want to waste one precious moment collecting from them. That's a moment I could have used to coach them and make their lives better.

Q. The day gets hectic, and I know it's a numbers game of how many prospective clients I can talk to in one day, so how do I keep from stressing out?

Stay in the conversations. No sale was ever created outside of a conversation. And slow down! Slow down so you can think big. One benefit of slowing down and THINKING BIG is that you have greater potential for creating big projects with your client and not just grabbing the minimum. Good things happen when we slow it down and really take time to ask ourselves (and them) how we can *really* help.

Q. How do I know if I'm on the right track with my client-acquisition systems?

Your billings will tell you. Look at your bank account. It will not lie to you. That's how you know whether you are serving humanity or not. The number will tell you.

To get more clients, be in more conversations that have a person decide to go with you or not.

Get into those conversations, and have those very conversations themselves help people. Get out of your world and into theirs.

How do you plan your day? Is it to honor those conversations and make lots of space for them? Or is it being busy with other things? You will never defy this formula: the more conversations, the more billings. Touch people deeply with your conversations all day long. Don't chat.

Q. How much of my time should I spend establishing my credentials to a prospect?

To serve and love people you do not need an involved prior stamp of approval from them. You do not need to please them and win them over first. Just demonstrate what you can do. Have every

communication demonstrate something you want demonstrated.

Q. I've been having tons of conversations and I can't seem to get any clients interested. How do I know there's light at the end of the tunnel?

There is no tunnel. Your light is eternal. It's not in some imaginary future tunnel. There is no light at the end of the tunnel. These are all false concepts…worried mind parasites that eat your life up. You ARE the light. People who meet you see the light in you. But you don't?

Anxiety can only come from a thought that you have attached the VELCRO of belief to. What you are believing says, "The future will be bright ONCE certain things happen…the house gets sold, the kids move out, I find a school or job, I re-settle!"

You keep pushing the light away into a future. You can only stress yourself out by these unreal mental visits to a "better future." Get real with yourself now. It's more relaxing that way.

Self esteem is everything here. Not false ego, but deep, inner, quiet and confident self esteem, the kind that both **comes from** being effective and **leads to**

being effective. It serves you and your clients. Practice it.

Q. I notice that I get so much more quality work done on the weekend or in the evenings during uninterrupted time. Is there a lesson in that for acquiring clients?

I like your insight about uninterrupted time. The mind goes haywire when it's interrupted, and sometimes takes a full hour to restore itself to sanity. From one tiny interruption.

One hour of pure, solitary uninterrupted time is worth two or three hours of chaos. Growing a prosperous client list is benefited by this insight. Then you can practice an inner discipline of quiet choices executed in silence that has you doing things that lead to big contracts instead of all the people-pleasing that slows prosperity to a standstill.

Q. I've been giving away a lot of my time lately doing free consulting, hoping it will lead later on to clients. How do you feel about this?

WATCH OUT for the temptation to give away your time pro bono or for the time you spend doing anything as a "means to an end." You serve people *more* when

you interact with them professionally! (Which means you get paid for it. That's what professional means. Are you ready to be a professional? To turn pro?)

Giving away your time is giving your life away...why not give your money away instead and keep your precious time for major billing activities? I know you are a giver, and you have a passion for changing the world. But! You will change the world more if you are performing your *profession* than if you are bopping around sharing yourself for nothing.

Do NOTHING (and I mean nothing...and I am speaking to everyone, including ME) as a MEANS TO AN END. Do the thing itself. You don't have to be roundabout.

Q. I had a prospective client who was all excited about working with me and even said, "Let's do this!" but I have not heard back in a long time and now I wonder what to do.

Whenever someone says, "Let's do this," make certain you don't let any time go by between that moment and putting the first work on the calendar. Take that spoken commitment seriously and schedule a payment and service time.

Q. I'm thinking of writing a book. I know it will help me get clients. But I have no discipline for writing it. I keep avoiding writing this book. Any ideas?

Boy I know what it's like to start a book! But your problems are not real. They are all a projection of the mind. It's your thinking that's the problem, not the book. You're thinking of ALL THAT work instead of just doing one little thing to start.

I used to trick my mind when starting. I'd say, "15 minutes on the book today, NO MORE" and then do 15 minutes. It would amaze me how much I could do and how easy and fun it was to start the book….all the HELL I put myself through PROJECTING the book, when in reality it was fun and easy. It always is. So trick yourself into doing it.

Fool the worried mind's desire to scare you.

Q. Right now I'm putting in 12-hour days for my client although I am only billing for about two hours a day of work…I still want to do a great job, and this is how I work. Do you see a downside?

Your willingness to work around the clock to deliver for someone is on the one hand admirable, but as an hourly consultant that will end up taking you down financially. Remember your client is paying for your

brainpower, not your literal number of minutes expended. Charge for your brains, not for the day-laborer mentality that has you equate volume of work with fees.

Q. Tell me an immediate reliable source for me getting new clients. I have an okay client list, but I could use twice as many. How do I begin?

Every client you now have has a business associate, former colleague, family member or good friend who would LOVE your work.

Just ask your clients to give you a name. And ask in the context of service: "I'm opening another client opportunity next month and I have a list of interested parties to fill the opening, but before I went to them I thought I would offer that opening to *you* in case you had anyone in your life that you believe would benefit from the kind of work that you and I have been doing together. Anyone in your network of friends, business associates, family or clients that comes to mind as a worthy candidate?”

When your client says, “Why yes!” then you might say, “Would you have them contact me and let them know that my first consultation with them will have no fee attached and will be a gift from you to them?"

Q. What's another good way to get referrals?

Relate past client successes to current clients…in your time with a current client, tell your client about other client breakthroughs...you don't have to mention names…but just tell the stories. Telling Client A your Client B success stories is something you should NEVER forget to do! It will inspire your current clients to higher levels of commitment to their success, and it will establish you further as a person who gets results, and finally, unexpectedly, it will lead to referrals. I have often, after telling one client about another's breakthrough, had my client refer someone right on the spot! Stories always get the right side of the brain lit up.

Q. How do I get prospects to answer my emails? I try to put a lot of value for them into the email. But I don't hear back.

People reply to emails and voicemails, not because they perceive value, but because you have made them *curious*. So never forget that if you want a prospect to return a message, be sure you have made them curious about something you'll talk about when they call you.

Surveys show that curiosity is the NUMBER ONE reason people return calls and emails, and quite often when you are trying to demonstrate value, you are

simply perceived as selling (because you are). You can be more creative than that.

I highly recommend Tom Freese's wonderful book, *Question-Based Selling,* because it has the best approach to this subject I have ever seen.

Q. I don't want to get too obsessed with how I'm doing financially and how low my billings are, do I?

Why not? It's just numbers. Like musical notes.

It's important to think a lot about what billings are possible for you this coming week, because billings reflect service. Billings mean you are serving.

You want to enjoy billing people, because only by billing them do you have a true exchange, a true connection, a true collaboration. True love.

(In the song Bing Crosby sings with Grace Kelly called *True Love*, it goes, "I give to you and you give to me, true love, true love.")

Billings become your guardian angel.

Q. How do I keep my mind off how bad I need the business when I'm talking to a prospect?

Keep focusing on your prospects' prosperity more than yours. The more you focus on the prosperity of your clients, the more prosperity you will have....it will always work that way. You can't spend a full week actively connecting with people and helping them without money and contracts coming in. I've never seen it happen.

What I do see happening is selling...cold calling...the person focused on his *own* prosperity, not his clients'. When that happens, the well runs dry. That's when we sit on the bank and watch the crawdads die.

The relaxed, carefree person is more likely to hit a free throw than the one who thinks he really needs to make it.

You would make an absolute fortune if you would relax into it and truly BE a great professional instead of DOING it to get quick money. And I do understand being without money. I understand that more than anyone you know. That's why I teach these things. All these things I teach about getting clients worked for me, over and over.

Q. What do I do when there is a faraway client interested in working with me, and I really don't want to do it. I feel irresponsible saying NO, but to

travel all that distance to work with them fills me with dread.

Don’t say no. Simply quote a very large fee. So large that you no longer mind the travel. Let *them* say no.

We have this fear of quoting large fees. We think it’s arrogant or offensive or abusive. We have an inner voice that says, “How dare you?” Then we imagine our prospect saying that: *How dare you?*

But here's the beauty of stating a large fee instead of saying no.

When you say, for example, “$10,000,” it goes into the world. It gets repeated by other people. Word of mouth spreads. And soon people see you as being that value. You *must* if people pay that amount for your services. So even if they say no, it is not a wasted conversation at all.

Also, your own subconscious mind hears you say it. So it becomes accepted internally. Therefore the next time you speak your normal fee of "$3,000" you say it so lightly and breezily that people sense that you're giving them a very good price for the work you do.

What, by the way, *should* it be worth to change someone's life for the better?

Q. I have a hard time focusing my proposals on my customer. They end up being all about me, and my rejection rate is high.

No wonder. Who wants to read about you? People are interested in their own problems and opportunities, so make the proposal about that.

And then take it even further than that. If you really want to get clients, start talking about the client's customer. Have your proposal be about helping them get customers, and the qualities and tendencies of *their* customers.

Have those proposals you submit focus on the customer's customer. Make sure they are lovingly created and beautifully re-written a few times as if they were chapters in your new book. Have the creation of proposals be thorough and relaxed and artful, otherwise don't do them.

When a prospect realizes that you share their commitment to obtaining customers, that it's your fascination and obsession, then you will get the business. So never focus on yourself. And don't even focus on your prospect. FOCUS ON YOUR PROSPECT'S PROSPECT. Write that on your wall. I put it in all caps so you wouldn't forget.

Q. How do I promote myself better? How do I let the world know what my service is? I've only had one referral in the past two months, so I probably need to promote myself better.

Treat that referral very, very seriously. Have your relationship to someone who refers someone be VERY special. Allow that person to experience, with you, the thrill of making a difference in someone's life. Give them updates and keep them in the loop. The better you cultivate the referrals you do get the more referrals you will get. This, by the way, is much more important than marketing.

Most businesses I coach put way too much time in doing what they think is "good marketing and PR" by laboring over their websites, newsletters, spams, brochures, scams, shout-outs, giveaways, webinars, talk shows, free workshops, etc., etc. Compared to having a great relationship with someone who has referred someone to you, all that other stuff is a complete waste of time. Your practice will grow the fastest when you slow down and enter into long conversations. If you learn to do that well, you'll never need to "promote" yourself. Self-promotion is a form of insecurity and is always seen by your prospective clients as that.

Q. You are always emphasizing the physical in your writing. Obtaining physical strength and endurance

through exercise. But how does that really help me get clients?

The way you look is not unimportant. Most people feel that if you can't manage yourself, how can you manage their business?

But that's only the most superficial way being in shape helps you get clients. There's something that runs even deeper.

As I have pointed out before: Bobby Fischer was the only American in recent times to ever become the world chess champion and he was World Chess champion when he beat Boris Spassky. He and Spassky had skill sets that were very similar—there wasn't a great deal of difference between them in chess-playing skill. But what he did that Spassky did not do was … ready for this?... *he swam laps under water* in preparation for his chess match.

By doing that he had a great deal more oxygen going to his brain during the chess match than Spaasky did. Spaasky was a heavy smoker, was overweight and Spaasky saw chess as only a mental game—all you use is your brain so why do you have to take care of your body?

One of the things about success in life that seems to be an ironic coincidence is that when people really understand mind-body-spirit—all three elements of

success—wealth is drawn to them faster. They simply have more energy and more creativity. They are in a better state of mind. They are happier, they are more fun to deal with, they are more upbeat (and this is all physical).

When you take care of yourself physically you will think better, you'll be more open, you'll listen better, you'll bring more enthusiasm to what you do.

So get physically in tune.

The more you work out and eat right (I recommend the book, *Good Calories Bad Calories*) and take care of yourself, literally, the better your circulation. Your blood is of a different character, there's more oxygen going to the brain, and whatever your IQ is, the more oxygen you have going to the brain, the more creative thoughts you have. This is just a biological fact.

So, listen to Bobby Fischer when he says that people succeed faster and better when they get that component of success that has to do with fitness, and oxygen, and taking care of the body. Understanding that everything you bring to the world is mind, body and spirit—you can't leave any one of those three elements out without suffering in your success.

Q. You are always telling me I'll get more clients if I slow down. But I feel like I need to speed up because I'm behind in my goals!

I hear you. I understand the mental conflict. It is not NORMAL in this culture to slow down. Everyone else is speeding up! Which is why it gives you such a huge advantage.

At least four times a day whisper...big self to little self... "s l o w d o w n." As you get off the elevator and stride rapidly toward your client's office, "slow down." As you spin in your chair to place a call, slow down. Slow down.

You *will* get more clients. Experience proves this.

Q. I'm a life coach but I think this question might apply to all people seeking better client income. When a client contacts me and asks for a proposal for my work, how do I maximize the fact that they contacted me first?

Here's the prosperity-builder that maximizes that situation: call it: Multiple Options. (You have to slow down to do this...but it works wonders.)

Any time any client wants you to do anything, coach them, serve them, give them a massage, speak to their leadership team, paint their garage, do a one on one

with someone, etc....ALWAYS come back to them with at least two choices for them: a) What they already want and b) something BIGGER and more helpful than that. Always do this.

So if you get a call from the husband of a husband and wife team who own a small business and he says, “I want you to coach me,” use that conversation to ask about 20 questions about his world, his business and especially his customers. Who are they? How do we attract them? Etc., Etc. Then when you PROPOSE you say, “I am happy to do what you asked (choice A, coaching him, something you've already GOT), and after our conversation I gave it a lot of thought and wanted to offer you another choice and that would be…” —fill in the blank here, but it's always something bigger and more helpful to his life than just the thing HE wanted—you might just say, “I am recommending that I coach both you AND your wife, both separately, and on some occasions together, which will, I believe, move your goals forward much faster.” The client does not have to accept Plan B.

Worst case: he says, “Well, let's just go with coaching me for now.” Fine! But the bigger plan is now on the table and the better the coaching goes the more he wants to expand to that bigger plan. And when he asks you to now include his wife, once again you don't simply do that. You give him that (which he already wants) plus SOMETHING BIGGER (a full leadership

retreat) that now that you've been coaching him you see would be enormously helpful. Think bigger.

Whenever somebody wants you for something, let them choose between what they already want, and something bigger and bolder and more helpful to them than what they want. Clients don't KNOW what else you could be offering them. You do. Their vision is RESTRICTED to the thing they think they want. Help your clients think bigger every time. Don't rush from client to client always trying to get new clients when you could be expanding your services for existing clients all across the board.

By the way you will NEVER lose this way. If the client says no to the $20,000 idea and just goes with the $5,000 idea, he now thinks he's going the frugal, low-fee route with you. You have expanded his thinking...so when he writes the check for $5,000 he contrasts it to the $20,000 he THOUGHT ABOUT paying you and suddenly sees $5,000 as very, very small.

By stretching your client, and always having him choose between a bigger number and the number he already wants, worst case you shrink that number, and best case (and this will happen more than you can realize ahead of time...I've seen it happen WAY over 50% of the time once people get the hang of this) you will have them make the bigger choice.

But this, too, comes from slowing down. And asking yourself as you take on a new client, what could I REALLY be doing here? What if I were thinking BIG instead of small?

Q. How do I develop a sense of security about my business? I don't want to have to get clients every time a big bill is due.

Create a business savings account. Put 10% of every incoming check into that account so that you never have to negotiate from fear-of-no-money again. Admire the growth of that account as other people panic whenever they "can't get credit."

Look back on your past two years. Could you have made it on 90% of that income? Of course. So do it now.

Q. What's the most effective way to achieve my client acquisition goals?

Translate your OUTCOME goals into PROCESS goals.

If you have an outcome goal of billing $50,000 by November, convert that immediately into a process goal…doable activity. You might now commit to

making five $25,000 proposals in the next three weeks. You NEVER know where a proposal will lead…but it can never be bad. What's bad is to stress out over outcomes in life. Always jump into your PROCESS. It's something you are sure to win. And it keeps you in action.

Whether you make those five proposals is totally up to you. So you are in control. That's the beauty of a process goal versus an outcome goal. Spend your time in the process.

Outcome goals can freeze you in your tracks. They remind you that you *don't have* something you think you ought to have. That thought can shut down your whole system.

Michael Phelps may have dreamed of Olympic Gold, but his daily work was always about PROCESS. He had laps and miles and times and MEASURABLE, DOABLE activities to do.

Therefore every DAY was entirely satisfying. He was a daily winner.

Have your every day be entirely satisfying and fulfilling.

Q. What do I do when I am exhausted from the pressure of my hectic workload? Everyone agrees

that traveling is brutal, and when I get home it's this workload that has piled up…when do I find the time or energy left over to get clients?

It can be a "workload" only if you say it is.

It becomes whatever you call it.

Start here: Allow for space around travel so that you don't go "hectic" out of fatigue and frustration. Why not set a work day aside to do nothing? And I mean nothing; no activities on behalf of friends and family….just nothing.

Bill Gates used to take a full month off every year to do NOTHING! Just to slack off, be lazy and loaf. Do you think loafing is negative? Do you think it's wrong? Are you still in childhood? Parental scolding voice between your ears?

Loafing is a source for creative genius.

The month Gates took off and loafed around was always the month that quantum leaps in imagination occurred within him…he would bring the ideas into Microsoft a month later and they would result in billions of dollars being made. It takes great courage to decide to do nothing, for *nothing* is the very HEART of all creativity.

Q. Is it possible to be too busy to succeed?

Oh, absolutely! In fact it is the norm! So slow down.

Spend at least one hour EACH DAY in quiet contemplative, meditative practice-building time wherein you take no calls and send no emails.

Go to the park if you must, with a yellow pad, and just allow your meditative, creative self to subconsciously BUBBLE UP some ideas on enrolling clients and expanding your business. You'll be amazed.

Napoleon Hill and Earl Nightingale both said this was the most important success factor in their lives—that one hour each day of non-structured creative thinking time.

Q. I'm worried about how my clients will react when they see how young I am when I meet them?

(I also get versions of this question called How Old, That I'm A Woman, etc., etc.)

YOU get to decide, shape, influence and CREATE how they will react to that and anything else. Make it a HUGE PLUS for them. Show them the advantages of it. Don't sit back and let yourself be judged. You do the judging.

Clients are waiting and longing for YOU to create the context and the paradigm of understanding of the great service only you can offer.

You get to say who you are and what you do.

When your own story is filled with enough energy and light they will be BLINDED by how good it is….you will INSTRUCT THEM how to interpret you…then you will LIVE INSIDE to the very picture you have created for them…

They are not better than you. They are not superior to you. So take the lead and shape their brains any way you want. They are waiting for you to define the context of all they see!

Their opinion of you is CLAY and PUTTY in the hands of a sculptor who knows their own value and WHERE she is going and WHY. Create your own momentum.

Q. I'm raising my fees. Anything I should do to make that less terrifying for me?

Don't just have your fees be raised. Raise everything!

Let fees be raised as a logical byproduct of raising everything else. Raise the game. Raise the stakes. Raise

the level of service. Raise the commitment you are personally making to them. Raise the STAKE you are asking them to put into the game. Change everything. No more chatting, commiserating and petty advice-giving to your clients in the name of service. You are changing the rules of this game. Step it up. Give it a backbone. Challenge them. Change everything. Invite them to play at a different level. Add one more level of service (not more of your time) from you to them and one HUGE level of commitment from them to you. Require something from them you haven't required in the past.

And then once you've communicated the new game, in a wholly enthusiastic way, you add that OF COURSE you are strengthening your fee so that it's appropriate to the work ahead.

Q. How do I keep from being intimidated by my prospective clients whose business I want so badly?

Communicate without being needy.

If we could hold our value, and hold the certainty of what a service we are to people, we would never feel needy.

So never see your prospects as SUPERIOR to you. You have something unique to offer them. They do

NOT have anything unique to offer you! They have money. That's it!

That's the best they can do for you.

But you can get money anywhere. They can't get you anywhere. They can only get you through you. You can always move on and get the exact amount of money they are offering. You can always get it elsewhere. But they cannot move on and get your exact service anywhere else. You can get money anywhere. So *they* should be the needy ones, not you.

Q. I really am awful at handling rejection. Any tips?

Our greatest OBSTACLE in building our client list is FEAR… fear of not being liked and appreciated. But to let this fear run our day (by making it a week without proposals) is to be very confused about life and love and wealth.

So… have your proposals be fun, loving and creative...put as much into them as you would a short chapter in a book.

Remember that proposals are PROCESS not OUTCOME. Outcomes can bring pressure, as we bite our nails worried about an uncertain future, whereas PROCESS is something you can do right now, slowly, lovingly, creatively and wisely all the live long day.

Enough process work and outcomes always come easily. The reason (but only always) we don't get the outcome we want in life is that we are AVOIDING THE PROCESS.

Q. How often should I look at what it is I offer my clients?

Reinvent yourself constantly. Keep looking at ways to do that so that you are spending a lot of time working ON your business instead of just working IN your business.

As you sit with clients and note their problems and struggles, keep thinking of something new you might offer them.

Another possible addition to how your business operates is to always have a follow-up call the day after a particularly powerful meeting with a client. Like a doctor or dentist who is thoughtful enough to call you after surgery. This only takes three minutes, but clients really love it. It helps anchor your role as someone who is really THERE for them 24/7 instead of someone who simply bills by the project and then leaves.

It deepens the connection. What's the cost to you? Three minutes? Five minutes?

Sometimes a meeting with your client can be so paradigm-shattering that the client doesn't quite believe

it has happened. By checking in, and doing your follow-up reality check, you can really SUPPORT your client in anchoring the new commitments and breakthroughs. You'll make them more real and lasting.

If we only communicated enough love for our clients we would have more wealth than we knew what to do with.

Q. What do I do when people say they can't afford me?

Just stay in the conversation. Don't let that be the deal-breaker.

One thing I like to say is, "I do get it that you can't afford me right now, but I'm really interested in what we would work on together *if you could* afford the work. Let's talk about that."

Because a lot of times when I do that, people see that the things they want to have breakthroughs in would make ANY FEE worth it.

Have the conversation that let's *them* create the successful vision. Let *them* describe the breakthroughs they are after.

When the conversation is over, you can say WHEN YOU ARE READY TO COMMIT TO AND CREATE

THAT BREAKTHROUGH YOU JUST DESCRIBED CALL ME AND WE'LL BEGIN.

Q. I am having a hard time trusting that there will be abundance flowing to my business.

Why would you have to trust that? Why add the task of learning to trust on top of what you are already doing with your time? Why not *create* the abundance? Why not just *produce* it? What's trust got to do with it?

I would always question whether you have to "trust" things. Things like "the flow and abundance."

I don't have to *learn to trust* that electricity will work when I turn on the light switch. It just works whether I trust it or not. So the whole concept of trust, in my experience, adds a dimension of doubt and postpones my service to another. That's just my experience.

Q. How do I become a public speaker? I know I could be a good one, but I don't know how or where to begin.

Start by really wanting to do it. Because if you really wanted to do it, you wouldn't be asking me this, you would be speaking somewhere right now.

This is the rule of thumb: if you want to be a speaker, speak…there are opportunities everywhere …once I committed to being a public speaker I spoke at least once a week…I gave free talks, but they led to paid talks…..every business has a sales meeting or a team meeting where they would LOVE to have you come do a 15-minute talk……and if they like the talk they will have you back…..all the groups who meet…and I myself put on a free Goal Achievement seminar every Thursday night at 7 open to the public….I had a business let me use their big room…first night there was one person attending…next week that person came back and brought two friends….within a year it was standing room only, and within that same year Texas Instruments was paying my company $40,000 a day to have me come to give them seminars……from zero to $40,000 in less than a year….all because I was committed…COMMITTED to having that happen…..we can have ANYTHING happen if we are willing to commit…..which means total focus and devotion to it and a willingness to be a little crazy about knowing deep down how great you are willing to be.

Q. How do I get rid of my fear of rejection?

Why would you fear your best friend?

Because NO is your best friend. It is like Pacino's little friend in *Scarface*. It's how you learn all you know.

NO stops 95% of people in life. It makes them afraid to move toward their dream with requests & promises because once a couple of requests get declined they form a STORY about being UNWANTED, NOT ENOUGH, unappreciated and unlovable.

Then they find clever ways to fill their days without ever making any requests. They can't get rejected if they don't ask. Clever. But miserable. And broke, too.

Q. Should I start a blog? I'm not crazy about the idea, and I don't really like to write, but I've heard it helps get clients.

Forget the blog……cut to the chase! Unless blogging is a true, deep love with you, and you would do it even if you were a retired billionaire, then don't do it….do what you love…if coaching others is what you love, why not just do that? What do you (and all of us) believe we must do to establish credibility? It's all insecure nonsense based on the fear that we don't really offer anything (despite huge evidence to the contrary).

Deep-seated self-esteem issues do NOT get fixed with things done to "increase credibility." I have trained over 30 Fortune 500 companies over the past 15 years…NEVER did any of them ask for a degree or

a Coaching CERTIFICATE or whether I BLOGGED or anything….they all had just one question,

And
It's
The
Only
Question
Anyone
Will
Ever
Have
That
Matters.

And that question was this, "Can you help us?"

That is all anyone wants to know.

Q. I would dearly love to make $75,000 between now and the end of the fiscal year. Any suggestions?

Yes! Put "$75,000" on the top of a white board or a piece of paper and brainstorm with yourself and ask yourself to list a minimum of 20 places that income could come from.

Which companies will be open to a new dimension to their work with you? Which individuals would you love to serve? (You would serve only a few of these.)

Allow your creative self to create and create with 75K as the GAME. Find a partner to do this with. Do it ALL DAY for a day. I promise you that you'll get your 75 out of that day.

Q. I've had my eBook for sale online for a couple weeks, and when I got back from vacation, I noticed I'd only sold ten copies. Tiny amount! How do I keep from being depressed about that?

It's not tiny, it's huge. Ten real live people. Ten lives. Even while you relaxed on vacation, ten lives are changed. It would only be "tiny" if you were comparing it to someone. Like who? Stephen King?

Who to compare to? Why compare? When I compare myself to others, I am out of serving and into myself...into WINNING and MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION and BEING IMPRESSIVE ENOUGH FOR PEOPLE (father figures and mother figures) TO FINALLY GET WHO I AM! AND THAT I'M VALUABLE and a WINNER!!!!!

But we could do life another way. We could be SO grateful that the blood and tears and HEART that went

into that book will now touch ten people...ten new people. And these are real live people. And in case you are still into comparing yourself, try this: most people, in their whole lives, will never touch ten people this way.

"If you had an hour to live and could make only one call, who would you call? What would you say? Why are you waiting?"

– Stephen Levine

Ask someone for a client!

Ask someone for a referral this week. Ask an existing client. I am making this dialogue up for you so you can reject it and make your own BETTER script based on YOU being YOU:

ME: Now that our coaching session is over, may I ask for a few minutes of your time?

CLIENT: Yes. Of course! What's on your mind.

ME: I have decided to add four more coaching clients to my list in the next month or two, and it is very important to me to be able to continue to build my practice by referral. It keeps the quality of the clients and the quality of their commitments at their highest level. My request of you is that you think through your list of friends and closest business associates…even family…and think about who might benefit….and I mean truly benefit from doing the kind of work that you and I have been doing together. It would mean a lot to me to receive a referral from you so that at least one of my four new clients comes directly from you.

CLIENT: Yes, well sure.

ME: I do not cold call or FISH the public database for clients, as you know, I don't troll for work, it all comes by referral. This work is too intimate to try to explain to big lists of people…..and if you send

someone to see me I promise you this: I will meet with them for a good two hour intake session at no charge to them as an explicit gift to them from you…..we will accomplish a lot in that session and they are free to go without employing me and I am happy to do that….that will be their choice….that is something I will do to honor you and your referral. Now…as I have been talking about this, has anyone come to mind…have you had anyone's name pop into your head as someone who would really profit from this kind of work?

CLIENT: Yes, two people….

ME: Good! Who are they?

CLIENT: One is my brother-in-law…he just started a new business and he has actually asked me about you and the work we do together...I know he'd be open….

ME: Would you be willing to share with him what our work has been like for you and then invite him to call me for an appointment?

Etc., etc., etc.

I have to tell you that the coaches I have given this "CONCEPT" to in the past have been AMAZED that 1) they never felt greedy or forward or pushy for ASKING, and 2) how many clients they got from the PROCESS. Note that it's a process.

Q. How do I get the word out to more people?

Rather than reaching "more people," what about reaching one person? But really reaching that person in a deep, profound and transformative way…so that his or her world is altered by working with you. And then move on to another person, and do the same with that second individual.

Q. How do I develop faith and trust that I've made the right decision going into this business?

As I've told you before, TRUST is a strain you put on your system. You'll get spiritual hemorrhoids by such straining to try to TRUST things pertaining to money.

When you go to sweep the sidewalk, do you say to yourself, "Now I just have to TRUST that I can sweep this sidewalk," before you sweep it? NO. Because you **know** you can sweep it. If you KNOW you can build a prosperous client list at will, there is nothing left to try to trust.

Our little hearts go pitty-pat when it comes to the big dragon: money, and we all want a prince to rescue us….we are damsels in distress when it comes to money. So let your damsel mind drop away.

When you want to paint your room, you just go out and get the number of buckets of paint that you need. You don't lose sleep over the paint. It's just paint, and you can always get more. Once you see money that way, you are free. Once you see that growing your practice with prosperity simply means deciding how many buckets of money you want, and then just going out and getting them, you are free.

We complicate that easy process with long-held emotions about money and how we link it to personal worthiness…which is incredibly creepy. It's just paint. Your practice is your room.

33) How to hit home runs

Here's what the great coach Stephen McGhee tells the business coaches and life coaches in his coaching school when they ask him how he gets so MANY clients gladly paying his $25,000 fee:

> My "home runs" are believed inwardly first and then the outward expression seems pretty grace-filled. Firstly, I think all of us need to ask: What value do I provide in my coaching/consulting? I mean really challenging that question into existence. I believe that my work is literally transformative. I believe that people I work with will peel back layers and be born renewed from the conversations. I am confident that transformation will take place. I am as confident of that as I am the reality that 25K is a huge bargain. For me, it does not come from my ego, but more from my mental capital as well as my deeply grounded belief that Spirit is doing the work in the coaching room. I don't ever think money is a viable reason to not get coaching. EVER…There is a "reason" why a person feels scarce. We are not scarce when we come onto this planet. So, I simply talk to the abundant one in everyone. I assume that if the person wants true change they will find a way to commit financially.
>
> I ask people: what do you want? If the answer that they have is something I believe I can do for them, I tell them. If they want something I don't think I can deliver on….I tell them that, too. I don't want anything hanging over me either.
>
> Then I ask: What are you willing to do to have that? This is where the conversation gets real. This is where as

a coach I will find out the inner state of my potential client. Some will immediately make the connection. Some will not. Either way it is fine. The truth is: if someone cannot come up with the fee (or is not willing to spend the fee) they are simply not ready to do the work that is required from me as the coach. I only want to work with people that on some level get their own intrinsic value is exponentially greater than a coaching fee. Now we as coaches get to assist in someone remembering what they already knew at birth.

CLUB FEARLESS
WORLD MASTERMIND

If you've dreamed of a fearless life, join the club.

I have put together a worldwide network of people committed to personal freedom from fear and victim thinking - and anyone and everyone can afford to be in it. It is a mastermind for the world. An international membership for people who are committed to being successful and making a positive difference in the world... not waiting around to see if it “happens” to them.

It’s a club for people who want to express their awesome and unlimited natures without waiting for permission to do so.

It is called CLUB FEARLESS: World Mastermind. It's for people more interested in immediately AVAILABLE creative ACTION than alibis and victim stories. We are owners or we are victims. And we become one or the other through practice. We become fearless, too, through practice. And my club will be a

place for people to be inspired to do their practice. This club will rock, and it will circle the world.

CLUB FEARLESS is how we will deal with the global changes. Things are changing dramatically. Sick systems are getting cleaned out so that we can build back stronger. Fat and rot are being blown from the corridors of the financial complex. It scares people to become this healthy this fast. Hold on! Let me languish in the false sense of security I used to have!

But change is a good thing. It allows us to develop self-reliance in an age of codependence. No longer do we ride the bubble, or look for parental companies to care for us. We grow.

And as Andrew Cohen said, “It seems to be the human tendency to want to resist change, to want to create the illusion of security in an insecure universe, and to avoid at all costs facing into the awesome and unlimited nature of life itself.”

Hard times allow us to see that we ourselves have awesome and unlimited natures that we haven't even begun to call upon.

People are asking me what the World Mastermind Club Fearless is all about and it is about a spirit of people STANDING BY each other, supporting each other in being fearless and creating the courage to

change the things they can.....and they can.....and I promise we will stand by you.....

Club Fearless
Monthly Membership

Members will receive:

♦ Newly-released CD mailed out every month – new audio CDs are available exclusively to Club Fearless members.

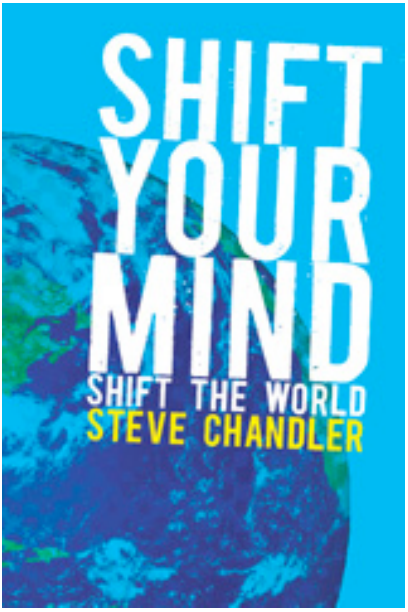
♦ Monthly Live interactive teleseminar with Steve Chandler – An audio CD of the teleseminar will be mailed out to members.

♦ Weekly Email to inspire you and guide you on your path to becoming fearless.

♦ A printed copy of the Personal DAILY REINVENTION Journal, Steve's personal diary of breakthrough writings, concepts, distinctions and tips and guidelines for individual success and courageous self-reliance....all the learnings and tricks of a master coach's trade shared with members.

♦ A printed copy of Steve's monthly report, Who is FEARLESS in the World? Timely reports of intriguing acts of courage and creativity from around the world gathered by Steve and commented on by him. This monthly report will serve as a counterweight to the mainstream media's focus on the most negative and frightening stories they can find.

♦ An autographed copy of Steve's new book SHIFT YOUR MIND: SHIFT THE WORLD will be SENT to MEMBERS ONLY in April 2009 (the book will NOT be in bookstores or sold on the Internet for a full year after it is released to Club Fearless members!).



♦ Invitations to see Steve Chandler LIVE in person at members-only events.

Join Club Fearless, $19/Month

Questions about Club Fearless?

Contact Maurice Bassett at (510) 292-4278 or
ReinventingYourself@gmail.com

Bonus Chapters from:

50 Ways to Create Great Relationships:

Building Your Network One Person at a Time

50 Ways to Create Great Relationships

Building Your Network
One Person at a Time

By

Steve Chandler

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For Kathy

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And last but not least, a tremendous acknowledgment to my dear Dr. Merlin F. Ludiker for the gift of humor. (Ludiker, like Quixote or Pickwick, ventures into fields he does not belong in. And his innocence and enthusiasm for "faking his way in" are characteristic of an inverse heroism that causes us to

laugh for joy. His attempts to look good are absurd, and his attempts to cover his tracks elegantly reveal the foolishness of our own lives wasted by trying to live up to other people's expectations.)

We will now discuss in a little more detail the Struggle for Existence.

—Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*

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Introduction

How to Handle a Woman

I remember as a boy going to New York City to see the Broadway musical *Camelot,* and I remember Richard Burton singing a song about the wisdom he, as King Arthur, had received from Merlin, his wizard.

The song, by Rodgers and Hammerstein, was called "How to Handle a Woman." As a teenage boy I had more than a passing interest in the subject, and I was spellbound by the quiet, dramatic ballad. I remember the song ending with the king singing that the way to handle a woman was to "love her. Simply love her. Merely love her." I was young but I remember that the formula sounded simple enough, and I don't know why I didn't just adopt it right then and there for *all* relationships in life, because it would have saved me a lot of unnecessary trouble.

It took me many years after seeing that play to get that formula back, but when I did, powerful things began to happen.

As I grew older and began to make my living teaching seminars, I realized that almost all of us forget to use this effective process. We end up having difficulty in even the simplest relationships because we do not use it.

For “how to handle a woman” is also how to handle a teenage son and how to handle a customer and how to handle a business partner and, finally, how to handle any relationship.

But where we often seem to go wrong is in misunderstanding the mechanics of love itself. Because we associate love with feelings and because we associate the absence of love with feelings, we turn the whole idea of relationships into a “feelings” thing. Even (and especially) in the workplace. And that is our first mistake.

Because love is not a feeling. Love is a *creation*, and, therefore, love comes from the spirit. It comes from the highest part of every human being and it asks that we access our greatest powers of imagination. As writer Emmet Fox says, “Love is always creative and fear is always destructive.”

Recently I received a letter from a man in Japan who had purchased audiotapes of a relationship seminar I’d given years ago. One particular image intrigued him:

> “Boy, I loved it when you used the dead fish as an example. It’s so true! All a dead fish can do is react. If you put a dead fish in the stream it just reacts to everything, every rock, every branch, every flow of water. Dead things react. Like you said: Live fish don’t react, they create. They create a path through

> the water or stream depending on where they want to go. That's so great. Reacting is done by dead things. If we just react to other people all day we...are dead already. We're a dead thing responding to the life of the other person."

The solution to the problem is so easy and gentle: You can change everything when you make it your gentle practice to create rather than react.

The 50 ways to create relationships all come from my workshops and seminars on the same subject. These are easy thinking tools that have worked well for average people like me. Through the process of trial and error I have saved the 50 mental concepts that work the fastest and easiest and put them in this book.

Each of these thinking tools asks us to be creative just a little beyond the norm. Each one requires a certain awakening of the artist that lives in all of us. But to awaken that artist within is to learn how to feel joy again—in business and in life.

Useful though pessimism is,
it can't cover it all.

—Tibor Fischer, *The Thought Gang*

Chapter 1

Use the Element of Surprise

Experiments never fail.

—Dale Dauten
The Max Strategy

The element of surprise is a notorious military strategic advantage, and it's an even greater advantage in relationships.

Think back throughout your life. What are the best gifts you have ever gotten? What do they have in common?

Some people guess that it's the gift of time, or the gift of something handmade, or the gift of compassion, the gift of listening, the gift of service; the guessing goes on. But many people rarely see it—the best kind of gift anyone ever gets is the *unexpected* gift, the one they never dreamed they'd get.

There's nothing better in life than a pleasant surprise. I remember G. K. Chesterton's characterization of a spiritual experience as the one in which you get an unexpected feeling of "absurd good news."

When cancer research fund-raiser Mike Bassoff began to realize this, he instituted a program with his staff called "Innovative Thank you's." He realized that an expected thank you was practically worthless to his cause, because it is instantly forgotten. But a thank you that was unexpected would be remembered forever. So his team constantly experimented with thanking people in ways they didn't expect.

Mrs. Harvey Johnson lived in Omaha, Neb., and had lost her son a number of years prior to lymphoma. She was terribly depressed at the time as only someone who has lost a child can understand. Years later, she told the story of her son's death to Michael Bassoff, and he listened. Soon after the conversation, she donated $50,000, which was used to buy new laboratory equipment for doctors experimenting in lymphoma research. A year later, those same doctors had achieved a breakthrough in experiments they were doing on the blood of lymphoma patients.

Whereas most fundraisers would have given Mrs. Johnson a pen and pencil set or a wall plaque to thank her for her donation, Bassoff arranged for her name to get prominent mention in an article in the obscure hematology journal, *Blood.* The journal recounted the experimental breakthroughs made by the doctors.

When the magazine came out, Bassoff traveled to Omaha unannounced to present Mrs. Johnson with copies.

“I’m going to be honest with you Mrs. Johnson,” Bassoff said, as the surprised woman invited him into her living room, “This isn’t going to make you famous because no one reads this journal but hematologists. But there are, quite frankly, eight people who are walking around today who wouldn’t be alive if it weren’t for you.”

Bassoff handed the stunned woman the journal and pointed to her name, saying, “You’ve done something very important as a way of honoring the memory of your son.”

Traveling to the unknown

Access to creativity in relationships is right there in the unexpected. All you have to ask is: “What does this person expect right now?”, and then go one or two steps further into the unexpected.

I’ll never forget the one Saturday morning my college roommate was rustling around and I woke up to see him putting on a tuxedo.

“Are you going somewhere special?” I asked him while rising up on one elbow in my bunk bed.

“Not really. Just over to Heather’s apartment.”

“Well, would I be out of line to ask you why that would require a tuxedo?”

“It’s her birthday today.”

“Okay. Fine. Are you taking her someplace really special?”

“No. I don’t even have a date with her. We’ve sort of been having problems. We have kind of been split up for a while. I just wanted to take her a rose and a card and wish her a happy birthday.”

“So you’re wearing a tuxedo for that?”

“Right.”

“Why are you doing that?”

“I want her to know that she’s still means a lot to me, and I honor the day she was born. That’s what I’m going to tell her, and then I’ll give her the rose and the card and leave. Because we’re not really together right now.”

I went back to sleep thinking he was insane and I didn’t give it another thought until a couple months later when I asked him how he and Heather were doing and he told me they were engaged to be married.

Chapter 2

Turn Your Light On

This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.

American folk song

I have a friend who, compared to me, has always seemed to have it together.

He's always been extremely well-organized with his time. A number of years ago when my own life was chaotic and out of control, I went to visit him to ask his advice on how to get myself organized like he was.

We sat down in this living room, which doubled as an office. He showed me his daily planner in which he had a simple list of tasks on this day's page. He showed me how he worked on one item at a time, according to its priority, until the list was finished. As I glanced over his list, I noticed something strange. At the bottom of his list, there was something written in a foreign language. It looked like Arabic or something. I asked him what it was.

"Oh, that's code—that's code for my wife's name."

"Why do you have that there?" I asked him.

“Because if she happens upon my notebook sometime during the day, I don’t want her to see her name under the heading of ‘Tasks.’ That’s why I put it in code.”

I told him I understood, then I asked him why he had put her name there this day.

“Oh, it’s there every day.”

“Every day?”

“Every day.”

“Well, what’s that about?”

“Every day I do something for her. Some days I don’t have much time, so I do something that might just take a minute or two—maybe I leave her a nice voice mail message at her office saying that I look forward to seeing her that night. Other days, when I have more time, I do more for her—a nice surprise.”

“Every day?”

“Every day.”

I told him I thought I got the picture, but I still didn’t understand why he did this every day.

“Because,” he said, “in my previous marriage—the one that didn’t work out—I left everything to chance. I left everything to how I was feeling. I always thought relationships were about feelings, so I waited

until I *felt* like doing something nice for my wife. I waited until I *felt* like telling her I appreciated her. The only problem was that when I *felt* like it, she often wasn't there, and when she was there, I often didn't feel like it. I let myself live in total bondage to my feelings, and the relationship got worse and worse."

"What's different now?" I asked.

"Just me," he said. "In this relationship I decided to do things differently. I decided not to leave this one to chance. I decided that this relationship was very important to me, so I was going to make sure I treated it like it was."

I asked him if it wasn't a little fanatical to do it this way, where he would do something *every day* and have it be on his task list.

"I think it's worth it," he said. "There's never any doubt in her mind about how I feel about her. That's worth it to me. That's worth the two minutes I put into it. If you have 24 hours to live in a day, and you have a relationship that's the most important thing in the world to you, don't you think a couple of minutes put into it is rational?"

I had to admit he had a good point. And his key word was "rational." He created a great relationship with his wife because he made it his rational and conscious intention to do so. He kept his level of consciousness up. He turned the light on.

We can consciously create the relationships in life that we want, or we can unconsciously follow our feelings. Our popular culture always promotes the unconscious way: Just follow your heart. Just trust your feelings. But that kind of blind romanticism always seems to backfire.

In the end, how we *are* in a relationship is a choice. One choice (higher consciousness) leads to a happy life, and the other choice leads to the ongoing black magic of human mood swings.

How conscious are we willing to be of the choice?

How to bring the light

Relationships always get better when we raise our level of consciousness. Conversely, relationships always get worse when we lower our level of consciousness. I owe a great indebtedness for this fundamental principle to Nathaniel Branden, whose books on the human mind are, in my opinion, the best written contribution ever made to the art of consciously happy living.

Try to think back to when you first learned to drive a car. Most people can remember the exact car in which they learned how to drive—the way it looked and felt, even though it was many years ago. Why is that? It's the same reason why most of us, who are old enough, can remember *exactly* where we were (where we were sitting, how we found out, everything) when

we heard that President John F. Kennedy was shot. Why is that?

Think, too, of when you learned that a family member had died. I remember hearing the news of my father's death from my brother. I remember where I was standing with the phone in my hand, in which room, the expressions on my children's faces when they saw mine, and it is a terrible, staggering memory frozen forever in my brain, every last detail of it as unbelievable today as it was then.

This kind of perfect memory occurs because our level of consciousness is so high when we experience these episodes that our entire mind is engaged.

The mind is like a mansion at night. When we want to, we can instantly turn on all the lights. There is no preoccupation and no distraction. There is just pure and complete light.

When we were first learning to drive a car, the same thing was happening—total, lit-up focus of the human mind. It's the kind of focus you can take to a relationship any time. Just *bring* it, like a pitcher brings his best pitch. It takes a little practice. But so does pitching.

Imagine, again, yourself first learning to drive. You're completely present to the experience—the feel of the wheel in your hands, the exciting and almost dangerous sense of the other cars rushing past. Now

imagine what would have happened if someone sat next to you in the car and started chatting with you. What if he or she started gossiping about someone while you were trying to drive? You probably would have said, "Hey, please, not now, I'm driving."

Now, think of how you drive a car today. If you are like most people, you can drive using very small amounts of consciousness. Only one room in the mansion is lit for driving. You can listen to the radio, talk to friends, yell at other drivers, even talk on the phone. There is no longer pure focus on the act of driving.

The same thing is true when we first learn how to type. We begin by sitting at the keyboard completely engrossed, learning to type. Weeks later, a friend can come up and talk to us and we can talk and type and laugh all at the same time.

This is the reason: When we human beings learn something, when we master something, like driving, or typing, or anything, we proceed to automate it. We make it unconscious and automatic. We turn it over to the robot inside so we can do the task while we're thinking of a hundred other things.

The problem is, we also do this with relationships. We lose focus. Once we develop a fairly safe and easy way to be with a person, we automate it. Soon it becomes how we are forever. We continue our

relationships at a very low level of consciousness and then we wonder why they lose their appeal.

Relationships always get better when we raise our level of consciousness, and turn on the light.

Chapter 3

Lose Your Self

Celebrity is a mask that eats into the face.

—John Updike

I don't know if I can think of anything more damaging to happy relationships than the very idea of personality.

More cowardice is forgiven in the name of "I've got to be me," or "That's just the way I am" than with any other misguided ideas. Much too early in life we decide that we have a certain personality, and then we climb inside it to hide.

Great relationship builders are willing to continuously grow and change their personalities in order to make and keep new commitments.

People who struggle unsuccessfully with relationships are willing to abandon any commitment, break any promise, break any vow, in order to keep their personalities.

Personality is a damaging myth. It's just not true that you're stuck with who you are. You can be whomever you think you need to be. It all starts with your commitment.

I once had a friend who gave self-esteem workshops for a living. She lived in a small town in California. More and more often, big companies were bringing her to the big cities because she had a nice way of firing people up.

I'll never forget, though, the day she confided in me that she was terrified. Her worst fear was that someone in the audience would challenge her facts or theories and reveal her to be a fraud. She said she was curious about me for not having the same fear. She wondered why I wasn't afraid that someone who knew more than I did would reveal my lack of expertise.

"That's because I'm making it obvious that I'm already a fraud," I said. "I'm not trying to be an expert or an authority on anything other than my own life. If someone in the audience had better facts or theories I'd welcome them up to the stage to share them with everybody. I am not trying to be an expert on anything but my own personal experiences."

"I would be afraid to do that," she said. "I don't want them to think that that's all I have to offer."

"That's all *anybody* has to offer," I said. "And besides, what do you care what they think?"

"I make my *living* on what people think of me!" she practically shouted.

"Well, then, that's why you're miserable," I said. "That's why you're living in fear. You should try to do without that idea. Because the truth is you're making a living on the difference you make, not on what people think."

"I'm terrified," she said. "I'm terrified that unless I use facts and figures and studies, they won't want to listen to me."

I could see that her fear was running her life. It was even running her career. She was obsessed with her reputation, and that's always a deadly blind alley to wander into. I knew her feelings because I used to feel them myself before I turned too in as a non-authority figure.

The tomb of personality

I can spend my life trying to control my reputation—trying to control what other people think of me—but the problem is that when I turn my control to what other people think, I, myself, go *out* of control. Living my life this way is, in the novelist Richard Brautigan's words, "Like trying to shovel mercury with a pitchfork." Or like trying to nail Jell-O to the wall.

And so we face the inevitable paradox of good relationships: less is always more. The less I try to get you to like me, the more you like me. If I focus instead on my own small acts of difference-making, then my

reputation will take care of itself. It won't be my anxious concern; it will be my pleasant surprise.

There is a bumper sticker that says: "Practice random acts of kindness." And it's such a good idea to do this! For our *own* good. And they don't have to be so random either. "Random" is used in the slogan because it gives it a poetic contrast to the more widely used media term: practicing random acts of violence.

You *can* plan out your acts of kindness. Acts of kindness don't *depend on* who you are, or who you've said your personality is. They actually *create* who you are. The acts come first and the personality comes second. Always. Yet most people live in reverse order, prisoners to their perceived selves.

Recently, I met with a musician who I was considering hiring to perform at a large event. In our talk over breakfast we found that we shared a love for much of the same music. As we talked further, I found that there was an old Harry Nilsson album he had not yet heard. I told him how great I thought it was. On my way home, I bought a copy of the CD *A Little Touch of Schmilsson in the Night* for him and mailed it out with a note thanking him for his time at breakfast. I did not do this because there is something especially nice or good about me. I did it because I saw it as an opportunity to perform an act of kindness. And it took virtually no effort at all.

I've found that the more of these random acts I do, the better my life gets. These are things I never used to do. But as I studied relationship-building, I began to see the power of it. And I didn't have to wait until something changed in my personality to start doing things like this. I didn't have to wait until it was "in my nature" to do it. I just realized that doing it was "a way of being" that I was willing to experiment with, and so the point was to simply do it. Doing it is all that matters.

Through these experiments, I was able to lose my "self." I was able to realize that who I am is not who I am. Who I am is what I do.

Chapter 4

Think as a Creator

Imagination should be used not to escape from reality, but to create it.

—Colin Wilson

In relationships, there are two kinds of people: creators and reactors. Creators create relationships. Reactors react to other people.

Creators know how to use the most complete and most human parts of the brain. And in doing so, they engage their imaginations. Reactors, on the other hand, use the lowest, most marginal animal section of the brain. They just react emotionally to other people.

Animals react all day. That's all their brains can do. If I look at my dog as he's lying by the fire, it never occurs to me to say, "He's thinking about the future. He's planning out his next week."

Because animals can't do that. They are simply stimulus-response beings. They just respond to what stimulates them at that moment. The smell of food. The sight of the owner coming up the walk. Their brains are like mirrors that just reflect the outer environment of stimuli.

They often do it in such a charming way that we assign them all kinds of human characteristics, but the one characteristic we cannot assign is the ability to create the future.

Once we start studying people who struggle with relationships we see that they are almost always trying to operate by using this low-energy, animal portion of their brains. They fall into the same stimulus-response habit that animals have no choice about. They have learned to get by on their least active brain section, and they just react and respond all day. Rather than creating the relationships they want, they react to other people.

It seems to work for them. It is a way of living that is rarely challenged. But deep down they know something's wrong. It's as if they were driving their cars around in a low gear and never shifting. They eventually get where they're going, but it never feels quite right.

Shifting is what makes everything smooth again. Shifting is what takes a person up into higher and higher gears of creativity in relationship-building.

To shift up, you just breathe in and expand your vision. Soon your whole brain is filled with the picture. It's a picture of the relationship you want.

Follow the sword master

I knew a woman named Mary Anne who worked in a seafood restaurant that specialized in bluefish and lobsters. Mary Anne was devoting most of her free-thinking time to wondering why her manager was such an idiot. When she came home at night she talked for hours with her husband about it. Her husband suggested many things, but Mary Anne didn't want to hear them. She was becoming addicted to being a victim. Addicted to reacting.

One day Mary Anne was browsing through a book of quotations that her sister had sent her and she came across a quote from an ancient Japanese sword master.

She said to me, "When I first saw the word *sword* I thought I'd like to take a sword to work with me and see if I could get my manager to take me more seriously."

But then she read that the sword master's recommended formula for winning the battles of life was to "enter into your enemy's heart and become one with your enemy so that your enemy is no longer your enemy."

"It's funny how that one little idea seemed to light me right up," she said many months later. "I just decided right there to enter my manager's heart, whatever that would take, and that entering her heart would be my new pet project at work. It was interesting

what happened. I had coffee with her every day. I learned about her personal life. I helped her with some problems she was having with her son. I just made her heart my heart. I never had a problem with her again. My husband was shocked when I announced one night, after he had asked about her, that she was doing great and that I was enjoying working with her."

Mary Anne had, in one instant, become a creator. Creators are people in the habit of shifting upward whenever they start to feel down. Even before communicating with another person, they imagine the best relationship they can imagine. And then future conversations are all influenced by that image.

Reactors do the opposite. There is no vision at all until the other person appears, and then the reacting begins. The emotions kick in, and anxious moments follow: What if I don't get what I want? What if this person doesn't appreciate me?

The habit of reacting doesn't always feel like a habit. It often feels like a normal spontaneous response to reality. But it *is* a habit, and it's a habit that appears by default. Just like a neglected garden turns to weeds, a neglected mind turns to reacting. Reacting happens by itself when we're not generating a vision. If we don't choose to create, we cannot help but react.

Therefore, the first step in good relationship-building is knowing about that choice to shift. Being

aware of the choice. I can shift up to my imagination at any time. Repetition of this awareness is like living with an on/off switch suspended in the air in front of me. The upside of the switch says “create” (the “on” option). The downside of the switch says “react” (the “off” option). That’s why people who simply react to other people all the time can’t help feeling turned off by life. That’s also why people who create are always feeling turned on by life.

Chapter 5

Commit an Assault

Thinking is the hardest work we ever do,
which is why so few of us ever do it.

—Henry Ford

Sometimes the most obvious idea is the one that stays hidden the longest. It's a shame when that happens between two people who are having a hard time with each other, but it does.

One such simple idea is this: Thinking solves problems. Or as Voltaire said, "No problem can withstand the assault of sustained thinking."

This is especially true of relationship problems.

If the problem is one with your car or with your house, you quite naturally apply sustained thinking until the problem is solved. You do that out of habit, and because you know it works.

However, if you're like most people, when the problem is about a relationship, you don't do the same thing. You don't sustain your thinking, because the minute you begin, feelings seem to take over, and a voice inside says, "I don't want to think about it."

That's why counselors and consultants do such a great business in the area of people problems. They don't feel anything about those problems. All they do is listen carefully to their emotionally charged clients, and then apply sustained thinking. They have no emotional involvement with the problem, so they never hear the inner voice that tells them not to think about it. They are prepared to think about it until the cows come home. And that kind of sustained thinking will always solve a problem.

The people who actually *have* the problem are so emotionally wired up, they're no longer rational. A consultant can come in and help solve things quickly. Is it because the consultant is smarter than the client? No. The consultant has a different advantage. The consultant can painlessly think about it forever.

That's why it's so valuable to create an inner consultant's voice for yourself. An inner therapist. Someone you make up inside you who can give you the distance you need from your problem so that you can think about it. It helps to get this process going by asking yourself, "What if this were someone else's problem? What would I advise them to do?" Creating that distance allows thinking to occur.

A final method you'll enjoy using when you have a problem is to brainstorm with yourself. Take out a piece of paper and number it from one to 10 and then ask yourself: "What are 10 ways I could solve this

problem?" Don't leave the room until you've written ten things down, no matter how weird some of them are. It will almost never fail to give you the problem-solving idea you need because it is an exercise that manipulates you into thinking. No problem can withstand the assault of sustained thinking.

Chapter 6

Release Your Butterflies

For of all sad words of tongues or pen
the saddest are these: It might have been.

—John Greenleaf Whittier

In many of my public seminars, I'll begin the day by asking people to get up from their seats and go around the room and introduce themselves to as many people as they can in 90 seconds. We make a game out of it.

There's happy chaos that ensues, although the exercise usually begins with some tense, timid beginning moments. But once the momentum gets going, you can't sit people down. They're going all around the room laughing and shaking hands.

Most people, including me, hate exercises like this.

At least at the beginning. Because these kinds of exercises feel artificial and corny. Here we go with the woo-woo touchy-feely, I say to myself. I roll my eyes. I'm too cool for this kind of thing. But once I start to do it, I am having fun and feeling great. I have crossed some kind of invisible line. If I could only keep that invisible line in mind, that's where all great relationships happen. *On the other side of that line.*

The first day of my own kindergarten experience in New Jersey I remember playing a similar game called In-And-Out-The-Windows. We began as shy kids who didn't know each other. But soon the dancing and singing and locking arms with our partners to go under and through the "windows" made by other partners brought all of us together instantly. By the end of the game, all the kids had run together, locked arms, laughed, and danced. There was no problem building relationships there. We had relationships right away.

These two exercises illustrate a vital point in relationship-building. It's a point about risk. Without a willingness to risk, there can be no happiness in relationships.

Now I think back on the hand-shaking exercise. When I first began introducing myself to people in the room, I felt self-conscious. What if I'm rejected? What if I'm bothering people? What if I *look* like a self-conscious person? What if someone doesn't take my hand?

But once the momentum gets going, it becomes fun, even joyful. People are happy to shake my hand and I realize that they had the same fears that I did. In very small ways, we were all taking a risk.

When I made my first audiobook a few years ago, I decided to take another kind of risk. Rather than give a hyped-up super-motivated reading of the book, I gave

a deliberately laid-back, soft-voiced conversational read. The kind I used to hear when I was young listening to all-night jazz stations in Detroit. The DJs soft and mellow. I wanted people to be able to listen to my tapes over and over without getting stressed out. I didn't want to sound like a former Ritalin baby, like so many of today's personal power motivators sound. I was also modeling myself after the best of the earlier Wayne Dyer tapes on which he spoke so softly and calmly. But I may have gone too far.

One reviewer titled his review of the audiobook, "Wake Me When It's Over." The *Library Journal* wrote: "Chandler's narration is soothing, which may inspire some and put others to sleep." Other reviewers also had similar problems with the tape: "This guy sounds like Garfield the Cat." "Do not drive a car or operate heavy machinery when you are listening to this tape."

"I guess the book is always better than the tape."

Yet the tape has sold extremely well. And when I asked the president of the audiobook company if I could *please* re-record it, he refused, citing the long-lasting sales history of the product.

He doesn't care how bad it sounds as long as it sells.

I know that there are a lot of people who will probably never buy another tape of mine again after

having heard that one. That was the risk in reading it that way. But I also know of a lot of people who have thanked me for not shouting at them. That was the benefit.

Psychologist Dr. David Viscott wrote an entire book on the importance of risking. He established the very direct link between willingness to risk and human happiness. “If you cannot risk,” he concluded, “You cannot grow. If you cannot grow, you cannot become your best. If you cannot become your best, you cannot be happy. If you cannot be happy, what else matters?” If we go through our lives without ever feeling butterflies in our stomachs, then we are suffering from a kind of death by comfort zone.

In our attempt to be safe and comfortable, we’re isolating ourselves from the source of all happiness—personal growth. Every unknown person’s hand I shake represents a small risk. But I need to consciously make sure I’m risking every day, or my relationships will die.

The great thing about risking is that we can begin with small risks. A compliment that I wasn’t going to give you, I give. A thank you note I wasn’t going to write, I write. A warm hug I wasn’t going to give, I give. A new manager at work I wasn’t going to talk to, I talk to. Every small risk expands my concept of who I am. As I grow in my own concept, I start taking larger risks. Soon the whole world is opening up to me and my requests. My comfort zone is a thing of the past. My

butterflies haven’t left me when I risk, but they’ve become wings on which I can fly.

Chapter 7

Magnetize Yourself

People talking without speaking,
People listening without hearing.

—Paul Simon

Listening is the most powerful part of a relationship.

Listening is what we value the most in other people. Listening is what turns other people into friends for life.

Listening is much more powerful than talking. Talking is always overrated. (When was the last time you heard someone say, "Hey, let's ask Megan to come on this picnic with us. She talks all the time.")

Listening is what we value most in *all our relationships.*

The great writer Brenda Ueland once wrote a short passage about listening that I've always read aloud in my workshops because it expresses it better than anything I've ever thought to say myself:

> I want to write about the great and powerful thing that listening is and how we forget it, and how we don't listen to our children or those we love, and least of all, which is so important, to those we do not

> love. But we should, because listening is a magnetic and strange thing. A creative force. You can see that when you think of how the friends who really listen to us are the ones we move toward and we want to sit in their radius as though it did us good, like sunshine. This is the reason. When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand. Ideas actually begin to grow within us and come to life.

The next time you're with someone you care about, magnetize yourself. Allow all her words to be drawn into you. Take her thoughts down deep into the deepest parts of you that you're willing to open up. Become enchanted and spellbound by the music of the human voice speaking to you. Notice everything. Silently feel it, touch it, and see it. And watch what happens to your relationship with that person.

Chapter 8

Break Someone Up

If I had no sense of humor,
I should long ago have committed suicide.

—Mahatma Gandhi

When two people are laughing together, they don't need any systems for how to create a relationship. The relationship is already, in that brief moment, as good as a relationship can get.

When Victor Borge said, "The shortest distance between two people is a laugh," he was describing an instant relationship.

Humor is something we often forget about as we go through the day communicating with other people. In fact, many of us have a belief that work has to be separate from fun. Work has to be grim and serious. So we white-knuckle it through our daily existence. We're hoping, I suppose, that maybe in the hereafter we will be able to lighten up a little. Fly around and share a laugh.

So we miss the opportunity that is always there to lighten up and fly around right now. To experience a little bit of heaven right here on earth.

As the great NFL quarterback Fran Tarkenton used to say, “Whatever you’re doing, if it isn’t fun, you’re not doing it right.”

This is especially true of creating relationships. If creating them isn’t fun, they can always be created differently.

There is an elderly man that I see at the local post office almost every day. He looks to be in his 80s. And either he and I have similar schedules, or he hangs out at the post office all the time, because I almost always see him when I go there. The most remarkable thing about this man is that he *always* tells me a joke. As I’m walking to my car, he asks me if I’ve heard why “six is afraid of seven?” “No,” I always say to his questions, so he can tell me the answer: “because seven ate nine.”

At first I used to dread seeing him coming at me. I knew a new joke would be presented to me, and I would have to force my first smile of the day, whether I felt like it or not. But soon his jokes, all of which were so innocent and corny, began to have their affect on me, and now I can’t even see him without starting to laugh. I actually look forward to seeing him when I go to the post office. One day recently as I was driving through town I saw him walking rapidly across an empty lot with a huge sack over his back. Is he homeless? I wondered. But as I saw how fast he was walking, with obvious purpose to get somewhere important, I began laughing in my car. All his jokes came back to me at

once, and I couldn't stop laughing. It suddenly occurred to me that this absurd old man, this man who may have nothing at all, just might be the biggest difference-maker on the planet.

Chapter 9

Create a Friend

To make a friend, be one.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Sometimes my relationship seminar gets criticized.

People fill out evaluation forms at the end of the relationship seminar I give, and when negative evaluations come through, company managers show them to me with raised eyebrows.

"We wanted you to see this," they say.

I look at the evaluation sheet and the criticism says the person couldn't relate the course to business life.

"Excellent," I say.

"What do you mean *excellent*?" they ask. "We pay a fortune for this class and you think it's excellent that they can't even relate it to their work day?"

"Oh, they're just saying that," I say. "But you and I both know that how you relate to people is how you relate to people. There is no separation. The skills are exactly the same."

"They are?"

“They are. As someone once said: “How you do anything is how you do everything.”

“Who said that?”

“A Zen writer…”

“That’s what we’re worried about!”

“…who Phil Jackson admires.”

And then they’re quiet again. The someone who once said that is Cheri Huber, a writer admired by many people, including Phil Jackson, a basketball coach who has had huge success by not separating basketball from life. Because Phil Jackson believes that how you do anything is how you do everything. Therefore, Phil Jackson coaches the whole life of the whole person, not just the basketball skills.

People who fail in business are people who try to keep their business lives entirely separate from their personal relationship skills. They are people who put everything into airtight categories and have compartmentalized their lives so much that they no longer know where to find themselves. Which box are they now sealed off in?

This death by artificial separation becomes irony in the work place. For example, when working one-on-one with someone who is having a difficult relationship problem at work I can always help him or her solve it

by removing the compartmentalization. I remove the artificial separation simply by asking, “If this were a friend of yours what would you do?”

Recently a company president was having difficulty with his chairman of the board. He was anguishing over what to do about it.

“I don’t know what to do anymore,” he told me. “I don’t know how to approach him on this. I want to take this company in one direction but he wants us to stay the course. I have no idea how to get my ideas through to him any more.”

“Are you willing to try something?” I asked.

“What is it?”

“Are you willing to listen?” I asked. “Even if what I ask seems really simple?”

“Of course.”

“Okay, then I want you to imagine the best and closest friend you ever had. Maybe someone you knew growing up. Your best pal. Can you picture him?”

“Okay. I’ve got someone in mind.”

“Now imagine that you had these same business problems with that friend. Can you picture that?”

“Yes.”

“Now tell me what you would do. By the way, what is your friend’s name?”

“Tom.”

“Okay, what would you do if this were Tom? How would you approach Tom with this problem?”

“Oh, that would be easy! I’d say, ‘Tom, you and I need to block out a whole bunch of time because we’re going to work something out. What are you doing tonight? How about an early dinner and leave open the whole night until sunrise if necessary. I’m getting us a suite at a resort. We’ll do this in style, but by the time the sun comes up tomorrow, we’ll have a new agreement with each other.’”

“How would you feel about doing that?”

“I’d look forward to it.”

“Why?”

“Because there wouldn’t be any pressure. It would just be me and Tom, just like old times, off together with no pressure. We could loosen up and not have to act business-like. We’d have the whole night to get to the point. We’d have fun.”

“All right,” I said. “So if that’s what you would do if you had this problem with your best friend, then that’s what I want you to do with your chairman of the board. Can you picture it? Can you do exactly that?”

After some resistance, he agreed.

"Just make him your best friend for a night. Because I promise you that it works. How you are with your best friend is *the best 'you' there is*. Don't be stingy with that 'you.' Give it out to people more often. Watch what happens. Look at the kind of agreement you'll get."

I saw him a week later and he was elated. He couldn't thank me enough. He said that my idea had worked "miracles."

"It wasn't my idea," I said. "It was your idea."

If we would use this *best friend* system whenever we are stumped in a relationship, huge doors would open up. That's what happens when we stop artificially isolating ourselves. When we're willing to take our best friendship skills to the workplace, miracles happen. How would I heal the rift if this were my best friend? What kind of communication would make my friend happy?

And that's why it's good to get as personal as possible in relationship seminars. People tend to learn ideas faster when they relate them to their personal lives.

The reason companies keep using the seminar even though I don't relate much of it to the job is because people get better on the job after the seminar

because they've applied it to their personal lives. How we relate to people is how we relate to people. Look at a videotape of how someone treats his family members and you'll see how he treats customers. All of life is interconnected. How we relate is how we relate. Let things break down at work, and things will break down at home. The reverse is also true. Improve things at home, and all relationships improve accordingly.

Chapter 10

Give the Gift of Silence

The single most important principle I have learned in the field of interpersonal relations is: seek first to understand, then to be understood.

—Stephen R. Covey

There is a gift that I can give others that almost never occurs to me to give: the gift of silence.

This was taught to me by Steve Hardison. He is a personal coach who has coached professional athletes and business leaders, and, fortunately for my life, he has coached me.

Steve Hardison is as good a listener as I have ever been with. Half of his effectiveness in coaching comes from his ability to really tune in to what people are saying. When I am with him I sometimes feel my entire mind light up, like a big city at night.

Steve coaches his clients to respect silence. He recommends that you have certain meetings with important people when all you do is bring silence. Let *them* do the talking. Let them do the thinking. Let them really open up and say what they always wanted to say

but were too intimidated by another's clever words to say.

Steve Hardison describes it this way: "When I am silent, the purity of self speaks to me, guides me, nudges me. When I am silent, I hear the purity of another's self. It also speaks to me, guides me, and nudges me. Through silence, I am learning and being taught things I never heard before. In essence, I am discovering that silence is a symphony of selves."

If I am on my way home from work and I know Margery, my teenage daughter, is going to be there, I don't have to have any special agenda in my mind. My intention can be silence. I can decide that I will not fix her, teach her, correct her, shame her, improve her, or advise her tonight.

Tonight, I will be silent. She can talk and talk, and I will be happy in my silence. I will ask questions and I will give affirmations of what she says, but other than that, I will be silent. Silence is a gift we rarely remember to bring.

Bonus Chapters from:

Fearless:

Creating the Courage to Change the Things You Can

Fearless

STEVE CHANDLER

Creating the Courage to
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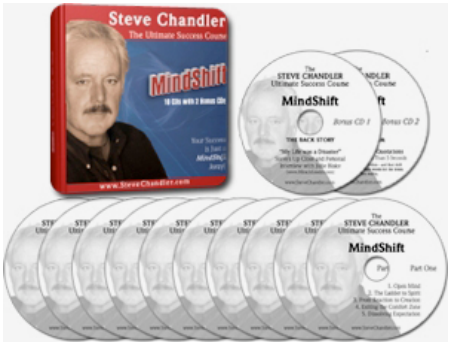

To Steve Hardison

Don’t cure me. Sickness is my me.
My terror was you’d set me free.

Frederick Seidel

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People say we got it made,
don't they know we're so afraid?

John Lennon

1.

They say never push a coward

They say never push a coward.

They say if you push a coward far enough, he will snap like no other. Like no brave man will snap. Push a brave man, and the brave man will push back. He won't allow himself to be pushed.

Push a coward and he won't push back. Push him more, and he'll still take it. But push him too far….well, then you have to watch out.

Because a coward will come back out the other side. He won't just be a brave guy, he'll be insane. You'll be introduced to a wild animal.

I'm a coward myself.

2.

Searching for the courage code

My work as a coach and trainer gives me opportunities to study courage and cowardice at close range. Success begins with desire. People all desire success but they don't always know how to achieve it.

When I work with you on the subject of success, I begin with the question: "What would you like to create?" And once you can identify that for me, my second question is "What's in the way of that right now?"

As if I didn't know.

Because it's always the same thing. Even though I've had it described to me a thousand different ways. It's the same thing. It's not money or circumstance or time. It's fear. Fear is all that's in your way.

"I'm afraid if I did my dream, I would lose my security. I'm afraid my family wouldn't understand it if I did this. I'm afraid I don't know *how* to do it. I'm afraid I won't have time."

Those were my words, too! Most of my life I wrestled with these same fears. My own cowardice stopped me. I've

written about this before. Courage has been my obsession because of my lack of it. Even as a little boy I remember that I always longed to be Mighty Mouse, then popular on TV cartoons and in comic books. It was becoming clear to me when I was young that I had no super powers myself. There was sadness and pain and large doses of fear around such threats as wild animals and bullies. So watching heroes like Mighty Mouse and, later, Superman, lit my little boy's heart right up.

Things would go wrong and people would be in danger and just when you thought things couldn't get worse, Mighty Mouse would *fly in* singing, "Here I come to save the day!" Even today, when I see a picture of Mighty Mouse, I feel a little shiver of good feelings.

Later, as I collected comic books, I also became a fan of Atomic Mouse. Atomic Mouse had no superpowers until he took his U235 pill! I always wondered if my later addictions could be traced back to Atomic Mouse . . . one pill and he was invincible!

It could be that my whole life has been a search for superpowers. So I could fly. And if a bully ever struck I would feel nothing. Most of my life I felt like someone searching the world for a secret . . . a secret code to break so that courage would be available.

I remember once—many years ago—bragging to friends in a bar in New York that I was going to write a book called

The Courage Prayer. But I didn't believe it for a minute. Not down deep. Fear was in my way.

I had gotten the idea for that title while I was going through recovery from addiction. While going to meetings, I was frustrated by this prayer we all recited called The Serenity Prayer. Serenity? Who needed serenity? I thought, this isn't a nursing home, this is re-entry into life. The prayer said, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

I always secretly called that prayer "The Courage Prayer." What I wanted from that prayer was the *courage*. The courage to change the things I could. How would that be? Forget serenity. At least for now. That could come later when I was enjoying the benefits of elderly living.

Courage is all any of my clients have ever wanted, too. Though they call it a million different things. Courage is always what is missing. (For example, even the solution to the time management problem is the introduction of *boldness*.) In all quests for success, what people really want to be is fearless.

So I'll tell you how I get them there.

Life shrinks or expands
in proportion to one's courage.

Anais Nin

3.

Death is like the rose

I was sitting in Byron Katie's nine-day school and we were about to go on a field trip to conduct some very brave experiments. Many of us, including me, were scared. As we were about to board the buses Katie said to all 300 of us, "Remember, the worst thing that could happen to you is a thought."

I burst out laughing! It wasn't the first time I laughed or cried in that school. But the laughs were always joyful and the crying was sweet and grateful. Like crying at a wedding. Finally experiencing the marriage of mind and spirit.

Of life and death.

I'd been listening to Katie for a few years prior to the school on audio recordings played in my car as I drove around or in my headphones as I drifted off to sleep at night. She said one night, as I was falling into a dream state, that if she were to throw me out of an airplane without a parachute the worst thing that could happen to me all the way down was a thought. I slept well that night.

Our fear of death is staggering. Sometimes I think if we could simply erase *that* fear, everything would be okay.

Death even causes us to fear how our bodies change as they get older. We judge the body's changes to be a bad thing. Yet the rose I bought you fades and dies beautifully. You save it, even. You thumbtack it above our bed. It is dry now, and even what some might call dead. But it looks so beautiful and natural.

All form changes. All pain comes from fear of that. Fearless is the rose that fades and dries and falls from the wall, beautiful all the way down.

Some say that *all* fear is fear of death. But why do we fear death? Do we fear sleep? Deep, peaceful dreamless sleep? Where does the world go when I disappear into dreamless sleep? Why am I not anxious about going to sleep and losing everything there? After all, a day is ending . . . a day that is always my life in microcosm. Asleep now, I am happily "dead to the world," and feeling no hint of trouble as I lie fearless beneath the faded red rose pinned above the head of the bed.

You have done a good thing by putting the rose up to die so beautifully right before our eyes.

If you realize that all things change, there is nothing you will try to hold on to.

If you aren't afraid of dying, there is nothing you can't achieve.

Lao Tzu

4.

Our life will never end

To understand the elimination of fear from my life, I must appreciate the role of thought. Because every feeling—especially fear—begins with a thought. And every thought causes a feeling. Nothing else can cause a feeling. Let me give you a very gentle example to begin with. Then we'll crank it up later.

In most of the world, and in Michigan where I grew up, rain was a metaphor for sadness and pain. Our whole society seemed to regard it this way. Into every life a little rain must fall. George and Martha have a "stormy" relationship. Rain is sorrow.

But sunshine! Sunshine is good … rain bad, sun good … you are the sunshine of my life. Things going badly? Don't worry. Here comes the sun! And it's all right.

The secret to bad and good and love and fear is reflected in our views of rain. How we interpret the rain. In Arizona, for example, we don't think the rain is so bad because weather itself is not a concept that we are overly familiar with. When clouds appear, we start feeling romantic. When we watch a

movie mystery set in rainy, foggy London town, we wish we were there.

Driving to Tucson recently the romance of the rain did not let us down. The winds blew across the desert, and as we looked out toward the Catalina Mountains black clouds crackled with thunder and lightning. Rain fell. We smiled and walked slowly from our car to go meet our friends Fred and Lynette.

Fred is Fred Knipe—someone I met in Tucson at college in 1964. Later the two of us wrote songs together for a living for a number of years. Three of our songs had the word "rain" in the title. ("Rain on Me," "Rain Forest" and "Melinda Rain.") In each of those songs, the element of rain was a positive *romantic* element. Most songwriters write songs wherein the rain is a negative thing: "Stormy Weather," "Baby, The Rain Must Fall" and "I Made It Through the Rain" are examples.

But it's all perception. Every feeling in life is! Perceive something one way and you are terrified. Perceive it another way, and you are happy. You yourself get to write the perception. Always in life, *you* get to compose the song.

Consider the eerie power of Jim Morrison singing "Riders on the Storm." ("The world on you depends / Our life will never end.") You hear rain behind the opening cascading keyboards as Morrison sings of the storm and how it brings out

the dark side of humanity, a killer on the road; his brain is "squirming like a toad."

But without his interpretation, the rain means nothing.

I actually saw a little toad come out of the desert last night. I wasn't thinking like Morrison at the time, so I decided it was good. The toad hopped across my path and enjoyed moving along the rain-slick patio tiles at the resort. He had suction-cups for feet. I smiled at the sight of him. Rain is a thought that is welcome here. All sad things can be beautiful when the mind is right. Fear is washed away in the blink of an eye. In the turning of a thought, fear is washed away.

5.

Life’s most troubling comic material

I saw Robin Williams on *Inside the Actor's Studio* once and he stood up and asked the audience to throw an object—any object, anything—up to the stage.

Someone threw him a towel.

He wrapped it around his head and took on a foreign accent and said some hilarious things—then he put it around his waist and acted like a delicate man at a steam bath—people roared, although the towel was just any object—a neutral, meaningless thing until he used it. Re-interpreted it. Just as we do with all the troubling comic material of our private lives.

My coach uses my problem the same way. To him it is “material.” He creates with it. He twists it around into different shapes. By the time we are finished, we are both glad the problem is here because we have taken so much from it. My coach (yes, he's a real person, www.theultimatecoach.net) Steve Hardison says, "This ‘problem’ is going to be a great seminar for you. You couldn't have invented a better seminar for you to take right now."

Solutions are one of the great joys of the fearless life. And all solutions have problems. You can’t have a solution without a problem, and a life without solutions is flat and boring. Some coaches and mentors know how to use problems to create solutions so elegant that it would make Einstein jealous.

That's the fascinating thing about problems. When taken on, they are life-changing gifts. Once we can do the mind shift (from paranoid mode to creative mode) necessary to see them for what they are, all problems become advanced seminars in What I Now Need to Learn to Advance on this Spiritual Journey Up the Ladder of Consciousness to Some Real Fun and Good Mischief and a condition we’ve all heard described as fearless.

6.

Your kids have turned out great!

My seminar attendee in Boulder was named Tracy. She was in the process of outlining her financial desires and describing a good business plan when she blurted out, "But most of the men in here won't understand this, because I am a single mom and I have a child to raise. I do have a son."

Some men, because they have imaginations, *can* understand her. Compassion does not come from having experienced someone's identical life experience. Compassion comes from imagination.

I myself understood that woman's fear, both because I could imagine it—and also because I was a single father myself raising four young children on my own. I had full custody of those kids while also having my own business to run, and so I do have compassion for what single mothers experience. I was one! In fact, now that I think of it my children back then would even sometimes *refer* to me as a "mother."

What a gift to me that time was. What a joy to have that experience, no matter how wild it was. My children and I used to watch the movie *Meatballs* to absorb the central message that "It just doesn't matter." Whatever our situation was at home, it

didn't matter. Not even a little bit. Everything “negative” was illusory, and everything good felt real. There was enough love, music and humor to cover for us. We covered the spread. We knew we had nothing to fear from the rich kids in the camp across the lake.

Was I a good father? No one will ever know. Was I fearful about how my children would "turn out"? No. Not at all. They were not muffins. They were not in an oven. They were free spirits. There would be no "turning out" one way or the other because they were never going to get that final evaluation.

Most parents are always checking in the oven to see if the kids are turning out okay.

"I hope he turns out okay."

What is okay? What exactly do you want from him? Where does this fear come from? Will you be graded on how he turns out? That’s really it, isn’t it? It’s a concern about *you*, isn’t it?

My daughter Margie told me a story recently I hadn’t remembered. She was in grade school, and it was her birthday. Her favorite color was always purple. And as she came outside for recess that one birthday day she saw me sitting on a swing in the playground with a large bouquet of purple flowers in my

arms. I had no fear about how she would turn out. I just wanted to celebrate how perfect she already always was.

About Steve Chandler

Steve Chandler is one of America's best-selling authors. His 20 books have been translated into 15 languages throughout Europe, China, Japan, the Middle East and Latin America.

Chandler is also a world-famous public speaker who was called by Fred Knipe, a four-time Emmy-award winning PBS screenwriter, "an insane combination of Anthony Robbins and Jerry Seinfeld." He recently starred in an episode of NBC's *Starting Over*, the Emmy-award winning reality show about life coaching.

Chandler is a co-founder of the world mastermind network Club Fearless, and was recently a guest lecturer at the University of Santa Monica, where he taught in the graduate program of Soul-centered Leadership.

Chandler has been a trainer and consultant to more than 30 Fortune 500 companies worldwide. He graduated from the University of Arizona with a degree in Creative Writing and Political Science, and spent four years in the U.S. Army in Language and Psychological Warfare. His internationally popular blog is available for all to read at www.imindshift.com.