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THE Key to Total Success in Network Marketing: Authentic Self-Expression

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Here's a question for all network marketers: How big can your business grow and how successful can you be if people do not listen to you, if people do not find you credible and believable?

The correct answers are: my business will not grow and I will not be successful.

But that's not the saddest part. The saddest part is your dreams will never come true. The financial aspirations and lifestyle freedoms you and your family want, the same ones that interest others about Network Marketing, will never be realized.

You might think that all you have to do to attract others into your business is to show your product line and explain the profit potential and organizational structure. You might think that wildly promising stories of others' success will trip the light fantastic for your audience, sending them into a frenzy of "I want to join!"

But you would be wrong. Dead wrong. And your business will not grow and you will not be successful and your dreams will never come true.

The simple reason is that people are not impressed or inspired by your product line, profit potential, organizational structure, or success stories. They are impressed and inspired by YOU.

Before people will look at what you have to say, they want to look at YOU and see if you are for real, if what you say is gold or fool's gold. For some people, this is a challenging idea, because many people think there is no difference between their message and who they are. Thus, they hide behind their messages: their product line, their organizational structure, their profit potential, their PowerPoint.

If you think this, you would be wrong.

We all have an intuitive radar with which we scan others for their believability, though we may have this radar switched off and leave ourselves open to deception. Not the deception of others, but self-deception. We all know the disappointment of this, don't we?

If our radar is on, what are we looking for? We are looking for integrity, for transparency, for honesty, for truth. We are looking to see if the speaker is using their verbal and nonverbal speaking to reveal, rather than conceal, their true intent, their true motives, purpose, and goals. We are looking, and sensing, if the speaker is telling the truth — of who they are.

Your credibility must come from YOU, not from your message. Only when you have shown yourself fully and openly will people begin to listen with their full attention and be open to having you influence them. Only when you have stood before people without hiding, without pretense, without posturing of any kind, will people open themselves to you and your message.

That is when real communication begins, not before.

In seeking to develop and build your own business, you may have been taught to leverage people's fears of remaining stuck, of being like their parents, of being consumed by scarcity and poverty. You may have learned communication "techniques" to help you imbed your message in the subconscious minds of your audience members, or to give your message more impact and oomph. Those techniques only keep you from doing the one thing that is guaranteed to inspire, move, and impress your audience. You may have learned marketing strategies, sales techniques, pretty packaging — these won't really help you build your business.

In network marketing, YOU are the message! Forget the techniques and strategies and just get real. Are you willing to do that? In practical, behavioral terms, what does this mean?

The American actor James Cagney was once asked by a novice actor for advice. Mr. Cagney put all his acting chops and wisdom into his response, "You walk in the room, plant your feet, look me in the eye, and tell the truth."

Can you do this? Can you stand before people with YOU as the message? It's not as easy as you might think. Why? Here is what one recent workshop participant discovered:

I realized that I had imprisoned myself in the idea of freedom, the idea of authenticity. But to really be free, to speak authentically, that was a different matter. The fear of consequences had stopped me. The fear of criticism and the fear of judgments had stopped me. But I saw that these were all imaginary, that it was really my own decision that kept me from living a free and authentic life, from speaking the truth and showing myself without hiding.

What might happen if we are truly seen, without our masks and roles and ideologies and sales pitches and lofty promises? We would be seen. And somewhere down deep we are afraid that if we are seen, we will be criticized and judged as "not being good enough."

This is why there is so much hiding, because we are afraid of truly being seen. We are afraid that we will not measure up, that in our essence we are simply no good. It is an existential fear of being inadequate.

You don't think so? Well, try this. I do this exercise in all my public speaking and authentic self-expression workshops and it is a challenge for *everyone*, even experienced polished presenters.

Next time you have an opportunity or sales meeting, stand up, without speaking, and simply make eye contact with everyone in the room. See the audience members. Let them see you. This is the relationship of authenticity that is the prerequisite for true communication: see and be seen. Speaking is a contact sport, you have to touch and be touched. You have to create a connection of intimacy and vulnerability *before* you speak.

This is where the risk comes in. If you are simply being with people, you risk being seen and you risk receiving the inevitable judgments of others. Will you let a lurking fear of inadequacy prevail and drive you into hiding, or will you declare and announce your wholeness and integrity by standing without flinching in the full view of others? Will you display the courage and confidence to speak from your hearts, to show yourself fully and honestly, to stand transparently before others and say, *This is who I am. This is me, and these are my words and they are true.*

Where does our speaking power come from? It does not come from the quantity of our content, *it comes from the quality of our connection!* It comes from speaking the truth of our heart, and of putting this truth as a part of our self into others.

When we can do this, when we are no longer afraid to see and be seen, when we stand without pretense or defense, speaking with authenticity and vulnerability, in full and honest connection with others — a kind of miracle happens. We enter a state of grace by virtue of this self-blessing and in so doing we become a blessing to one and all.

This is how you dignify speaking and sanctify relationships. This is how you create credibility and trust. This is how you inspire others to find their own inner greatness and joy and abundance.

This is how you build your business, realize your dreams, inspire others. This is your freedom and your passion. This is your success.

YOU become the message.

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