

A Jumping-Off Point™

“Five Strategies for Beating ‘DRAIN’ - Discouragement, Rejection, Anxiety, Insecurity and Negativity”©

I guess they don't call them the “dog days of summer” for nothing. “Dog days” are defined in Merriam-Webster as “the period between early July and early September when the hot sultry weather of summer usually occurs in the northern hemisphere” and as “a period of stagnation or inactivity”. Here in the mid-Atlantic, it has been very hot and very dry...when it hasn't been humid as all get out...and those in business for themselves (beach based businesses excluded) can attest to the stagnation and inactivity. To misquote Cole Porter: “Summertime...and the livin' isn't easy”.

But the challenges I've been hearing about in the last few weeks have gone beyond depressed sales and severely reduced billable hours...there seems to be a fair amount of discouragement, rejection, anxiety, insecurity and negativity (“DRAIN”) to contend with too.

“D is for Discouragement”

Gwen Lloyd, of G. Lloyd's Leading Edge Consulting, reported that she recently took advantage of some free mentoring services through a resource for start-up businesses, as hiring a business coach was simply not in the budget right now. She eagerly looked forward to receiving guidance on how to get her growing business to flourish. With notepad and pen at the ready to catch the advisor's words of wisdom, she began to answer the advisor's questions about her business.

To her surprise, many of her answers and ideas were met with cautionary words about what not to do, what to be concerned about and even worse, how not to think about and how not to view her business. When the advisor said the words “You have to think small” and “Your business is not going to get any large clients”, she stopped listening for a moment and started to have a conversation in her own mind about how this service might not be for her after all, free or otherwise. But Gwen quickly decided to take whatever usable information she could get and make the most of it. She listened to the rest of what the advisor had to say and after politely expressing her thanks and shaking the advisor's hand, left feeling a little discouraged.

Now Gwen is by no means a “know-it-all”, nor is she a “Pollyanna”. She is a realist and a life-long learner who uses any guidance she receives in a constructive manner (as she already has with some of the advisor's advice). But being someone who is always there to encourage others, Gwen was looking for a little positive encouragement for herself and

for her business. The good news is that she is also very resilient...and she came to the realization that being encouraged is an inside job.

“R is for Rejection”

Ann Squire of Royal Blue Productions (www.royalblueproductions.com) shared in a recent email that a client expressed frustration that others were saying “her company was too new, and not yet established enough, for them to sink their money into her services”. As Ann pointed out, it is the customers right to choose who will best serve them, but that “this is a universal dilemma faced by all of us trying to grow our businesses”. Rejection can sting, especially when you’re ready and eager to provide great service to others and the answer is “No, thank you.” The good news is that Ann has an encouraging perspective for us at the end of this piece.

“A is for Anxiety”

A colleague of mine knows what she wants her business to offer, but isn’t sure if it will fly. She often says “There’s so much competition...what if I really can’t compete?” “What if what I offer isn’t that unique?” One of her good friends even told her “Oh, but doesn’t “X” do that...you sure you want to do that?” when my colleague shared with her friend the plans she had for her product line. Which made my colleague think: ““What if she’s right?”

Ah, the famous “What if” questions...the hallmark of anxiety. And all this anxiety has my colleague going around in circles! And consequently, she isn’t sure how to proceed...which means her ideas aren’t manifesting.

Now here is a good “what if” question...what if there was a way to talk about your business with a group of peers – not friends or family – who could help you to focus and achieve clarity? The good news is that my colleague just learned about an opportunity to become involved in a tried and true method to keep her on track. See more in the strategies section.

“I is for Insecurity”

I have been feeling so heartened by the new direction and initiatives Vivacity has been pursuing and have been feeling quite optimistic. Then one day a couple weeks ago, I read the new brand statement written by one of my “virtual” mentors which she shared in an email and it sounded a lot like what I had written for my brand statement...except hers was on a much BIGGER scale!!! I felt puny in comparison! And how could I even

dream of doing what someone as successful as she was now committing to do...with tons more experience and tons more resources than I had! The good news is that I didn't stay in that mindset too long. I knew what my mentor would say if I ever had an opportunity to talk with her in person and she would be solidly supportive of my business. There really is room for us all. I realized that the reason I was so insecure about standing my business next to hers was that I was not 100% clear about my own uniqueness and what Vivacity had to offer. The good news is that I took action. See more in the strategies section.

“N is for Negativity”

All of the women previously mentioned were dealing with negativity in one form or another. Negativity can come from many different sources...our family, our friends, our colleagues, our customers and clients... and even our own thoughts. And if we give counsel to negativity, it can be a show stopper.

If negativity is coming from family and friends, we should not (under most circumstances) distance ourselves from them, but we can limit what we share about our goals and aspirations with them. If negativity is persistently coming from a colleague, we may need to distance ourselves from that person. If negativity is coming from clients and customers, then this may be the time to really listen and learn where you may be falling down on meeting their needs (and if you sincerely search and find that a client or customer's negativity is unfounded, then it's time to fire them with integrity). If the negativity is coming from our own minds, then we need to employ the good solid technique of thought stopping to silence them. And by the way, snapping a rubber band worn around the wrist is still one of the best strategies for stopping a negative thought. Our marvelous computer of a brain cannot hold two thoughts at the same time and will default to the pain. After a few welts, you will begin to see the negative thoughts decrease.

The good news is there are all sorts of strategies to deal with negativity and the other components of “DRAIN”. I'd like to now share some of the best ones I know:

“Life is too short to be small”

- Benjamin Disraeli, former Prime Minister of Great Britain

Strategy # 1: Beat Discouragement - Have a BIG Vision for Yourself and Your Business

Have a vision for your business, career, volunteer project - or any goal for that matter - **that is BIG**. Refuse to think and play small and do not let others try to convince you to

do so. Visualize your end state. Write down your goals on index cards and carry them with you. Read them often – at least twice a day. Meditate on them. Believe in them.

If you need help clarifying your vision, remember to use the tool of a brainstorming group that was mentioned in the June “A Jumping-Off Point”. Brainstorming can get you thinking outside of your bandwidth of consciousness and can bring life, depth and breadth to your vision. (For this issue, go to: <http://www.vivacitynow.com/vivanews/June2007/index.html>.)

So dream big, write your vision on a whiteboard and hang it where you can see it. Do a Mind Map of your vision. Or learn how to do a Vision Board with pictures representing your vision. Read motivational quotes and motivational books, e.g. Unstoppable or Unstoppable Women. Keep yourself in the orbit of visionaries and big thinkers.

“Imagine if...everything you dreamed about and wanted was right at the tip of your fingers...and all you had to do was reach out and take it...How far would you stretch?”

– Jennie Armato, Web Business & Internet Marketing Expert

Strategy # 2: Co-Opt Rejection and Use It as an Opportunity to Stretch

Experiencing rejection by potential clients/customers is a normal part of life in business, so in many ways, it is important not to internalize it. But having your services rejected can mean that it may be time to **stretch beyond what you know and believe and begin to discover new possibilities for yourself and your business**. Sometimes, it may just take a bit of repackaging of an idea to have it take off. Sometimes it means a complete overhaul. But it usually means leaving our zone of comfort to do so.

One valuable “stretching exercise” is to learn from the strategies of masters in one’s own niche and in marketing (the most important tool for your business or any endeavor). Get on some free teleseminars and teleconferences by experts in your area of interest and in marketing. You’ll receive valuable information from experts and you’ll be on the line with like minded people who want more for their professional and personal lives. I have recently been inspired by the teleconferences on achieving success on the Internet created by **Janet Beckers** of **Wonderful Web Women**. To learn more about Janet and her free teleconferences, go to <http://www.wonderfulwebwomen.com/rep/katesanner.html>.

“No individual may have great power without availing himself of the “Master Mind”

-Napoleon Hill, Author of Think and Grow Rich

Strategy # 3: Quell Your Anxiety and Master Mind Your Way to Success

It's been said that "It's lonely at the top"; but they forgot to tell us that it's also lonely getting to the top! It can feel very isolating being in business for yourself or single-handedly spearheading a project for your organization. As human beings, we all need each other's insights and input. We're not wired to be solo acts. **The best way to support your goal, your business or your project is to be in a Master Mind Group.** Napoleon Hill defined the Master Mind as the: "Coordination of knowledge and effort, in a spirit of harmony, between two or more people, for the attainment of a definite purpose."

If you are interested in forming or joining a Master Mind Group, I would like to suggest that you take training in forming a MM Group from a dynamic teacher on this topic, Karyn Greenstreet of Passion for Business. To learn more about Karyn and her business, go to: <http://www.1shoppingcart.com/app/?af=643140>. I recently had the opportunity to take her Master Mind class and I highly recommend it. Karyn is also forming new Master Mind Groups which she will facilitate and help launch. If you don't have the time or finances to take the class, Karyn also has a very affordable E-Book on the subject.

"There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is, nor how valuable, nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours, clearly and directly, to keep the channel open.... You have to keep open and aware directly to the urge that motivates you. Keep the channel open."

- Martha Graham, Dancer and Choreographer

Strategy # 4: Banish Insecurity and Learn to Recognize Your Uniqueness

In order to banish insecurity, it's important to gain clarity about one's own uniqueness. Kim Castle of BrandU advises to learn to "operate from your power seat inside of you" (to learn more about Kim and BrandU, go to <http://www.whybrandu.com?af=12648>).

Write a list of all that is unique about you, your business, and your goals. Do you deliver service in more than one format? Do you pride yourself on excellent customer service? Do you have unique abilities, for example, being humorous like the wonderful Queen Jaw Jaw, a.k.a. Georgia Richardson (www.queenjawjaw.com) or a great storyteller like

Nancy Goldstein of Mental Healthier Consulting (www.mentalhealthier.com)? When people leave your sphere of influence do they feel energized, empowered, nurtured, strengthened or enlightened? Do you leave them with what Wallace B. Wattles called “Impressions of Increase” in his classic book The Science of Getting Rich?

When you list all these things unique about you, acknowledge them, accept them and recognize them as the truth about your uniqueness. Then you are operating from “the power seat inside of you” and what flows from there is golden!

Just after my brief bout of insecurity, I signed up for Kim Castle’s 4-day Intensive Branding Workshop in September. I’ve known about Kim’s work for the last few years and decided that it was finally time to work with her. It was my action step to truly discover Vivacity’s uniqueness and achieve clarity for my business.

“From small things, mama, big things one day come”

- Lyric from song by Bruce Springsteen, Singer, Songwriter

Strategy # 5: Cancel Out Negativity and Allow Yourself to Grow and Flourish

Plant a seed and you have to wait until it produces fruit. Plant an idea and you also have to wait for it to bear fruit. But in our world of instant access to just about anything, we expect the fruit (success) to show up on our doorstep by overnight delivery...and we want it ripe.

“What we bear in mind, manifests in kind.” The truth is that our success will come in due time...that is as long as we do all the things that will insure its continuous growth. Wallace B. Wattles referred to this as not doing “certain things”, but doing things in a “certain way”.

Finding out how to do things in a certain way can be the point where a business coach comes in. A business coach can help you implement your vision and plan your strategy. Lisa Niederman of Performance Velocity (www.performancevelocity.com) and Bettie Farrar of FVI’s Workforce Solutions (<http://www.wrforcesolutions.com/>) have been invaluable resources to me. (Should you decide to avail yourself to their services, please mention Vivacity). If a coach is not in the budget, then think about approaching several women you admire who are at the same level or slightly above where you are. Ask them if they would consider Master Minding with you. This can either be on an ad hoc basis or on an ongoing basis in a more planned format.

And to finish off these strategies, it’s now time for the rest of the story from Ann Squire. This is a classic example of small things growing into big things! Take it away Ann:

“So I've found something to inspire us, and I hope you'll pass it along to all the other women entrepreneurs you know who might benefit from a little encouragement.

The next time somebody tries to tell you that you're not "big" enough or "polished" enough for them, show them this. It's a picture of eBay's website, from June 14, 1997.

Anyone who isn't interested in your company right now will be KICKING themselves later for not getting in on the ground floor of what will become a very big deal!

If this isn't strong enough evidence of what a little perseverance will do, I don't know what is. And by the way.... eBay is run by a WOMAN!”



Thanks, Ann for the wonderful inspiration! And if any of you have never been to the site, click this link to see what eBay looks like now: www.ebay.com.

“DRAIN” can be inevitable from time to time, the strategies of having a big vision, stretching beyond your comfort zone, becoming involved in a Master Mind Group, recognizing your uniqueness and allowing yourself to be inspired to cancel out negativity can be jumping off points for your growth and success.

WANT TO USE THIS ARTICLE IN YOUR E-ZINE OR WEB SITE? You can, as long as you include this complete blurb with it: Online and offline entrepreneur Kate Sanner publishes VivaNews™, Vivacity’s monthly EZine. If you're a woman ready to discover your possibilities and accelerate your growth and success, go to www.vivacitynow.com. There you’ll be able access free information, find out about our upcoming events and trainings and listen to our podcasts and to VivaRadio™...Internet Talk Radio for Women...all part of Vivacity’s commitment to keep you "well-informed, well-guided, and well-connected"™.