

The Value of Your Story

The vital component of making money in the new economy

by Pamela Ziemann

www.pamelaziemann.com

In the Industrial Age, the idea of spending time and money to understand our “*why I’m alive story*” didn’t make a lot of sense. It was obvious. We were alive to work (mostly in a robotic manner) for the denser, material world. But as we rapidly shift into the new age of *humanity*, the dynamics of what will make our business successful is also shifting. An intangible, self-revealing experience may be the most profitable investment we make.

I still remember the day in 1996 when I wrote my first big check for \$1,500 for a personal development course. My hand was shaking. It seemed huge. Was I losing my mind or what? I wouldn’t even have a tangible product to take home! But like many of you who’ve taken a similar risk, you realize that strategically investing in your *self* is worth every dime.

Why?

Without a solid foundation, we can waste thousands of dollars on promotional materials that don’t accurately represent our essential Selves. When we take the time to unravel the mystery of why we chose our particular business - our brand, logo, image and communication style comes from a place of inner strength and visible congruency. When we dedicate ourselves to *that*, our clients feel our commitment. They know they can count on us. It’s more than making money now; our business is infused with a deeper, unshakable purpose.

And it won’t even matter how many coaches, massage therapists or other service providers there are. When we discover at a core level why we’re here and then express it, we’ll have plenty of clients. Sharing a well-told personal story reveals our uniqueness and who can compete with that?

Taking Care

Sharing a story isn’t about rambling on wasting people’s time, but simply the compelling truth that, once revealed, creates a strong bond with another human being. It’s the story Gandhi referred to and encouraged us not to betray. It’s the life that lives on in the speech from Martin Luther King. It’s Steve Jobs speaking freely from his heart and clearly stating his purpose.

A balance between owning our life experiences and not getting stuck in them is the key. If we haven’t taken time to examine our lives, we often live in fear and denial, which leads to constant, frenetic activity. If we spend too much time with

our story, we can become paralyzed by it to the point that we take little or no action.

Getting into Action

There are many formulas for composing a compelling story. (i.e. what you wanted, the challenge or obstacle, how you resolved it, and the point) It's important to clarify your intention and know when to use which story (i.e. introducing yourself, building trust and making it easy for people to decide) Chris Haddad's video is a good example of a story that makes it easy for people to decide (www.haddadink.com). Steve Chandler uses witty examples of using trust-building stories versus spouting features and benefits in his CD series called *The Joy of Selling*.

The beautiful thing about telling stories is that people come to their own conclusions. Most of us would agree that the days of manipulative selling are over. Stories unite. Some futurists say what our world needs most right now is to bring back the story: the ability to tell ours and genuinely listen to others.

You probably wouldn't risk being an indie professional if you didn't have a high level of conviction about your product or service. Learning how to communicate your story succinctly with enough sensory detail is crucial in today's noisy business environment. When we invest the time and energy to understand the relevance of our distinct story, it's likely that our prospects will also recognize our value. The outer world reflects the inner world.