

THE NETWORK MARKETING GENE

BY ROSIE SPIEGEL

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Have you ever wondered if some people have the ability to succeed in network marketing programmed into their DNA, as if they were born to be good at this? While others seemed genetically challenged to ever make money, much less to reach the top of their company's pay plan. If there is a network marketing gene, does that suggest that perhaps there is a network marketing birth defect?

In my previous life I had a career that spanned three decades. At about the five year mark I recall vividly thinking that I had really gotten the hang of my craft. Then, over the next 25 years, I continued to sharpen my saw. In my 7th year as a professional networker, the same is true: I no longer feel that I am prospecting, enrolling and training in the dark. The experience of proficiency is not to be confused with knowing it all. It does mean, however, that the initial push up the learning curve has become less arduous. In both careers I performed very poorly in the beginning. I hold that experience of having moved from beginner to seasoned in another field as a template to guide me through the trials and tribulations of building and leading my networking organization.

The first career was a long and exciting one. I got so proficient at what I did one might think I was born to do it. But having inched my way to the top and having failed many times along the way, it is hard to say which was my greatest asset on my road to success: nature or nurture.

Most adults and many young people have mastered something in their lives. Parallels can be drawn from these different experiences, even in diverse fields. What are the common threads that appear in our various endeavors of going from novice to expert?

- Perseverance
- Acquiring new knowledge
- Learning from mistakes
- Motivation
- Having a goal, an objective or some measurable outcome
- Capitalizing on our natural assets and overcoming our limitations.

THE SCIENCE OF SUCCESS

There is a science to getting really good at something and part of that is being bad at it at first. What did Jerry Clark say? *In our business you don't have to be good to get started, but you have to get started to get good.* Everyone in our industry who has ever gotten really good at something can look back on the steps taken in another endeavor to go from being a beginner to becoming accomplished and apply that to their network marketing career.

Each new distributor comes to the team with strengths and challenges. Someone may be a whiz at the computer, personable and motivated, but who has unfinished business regarding her health which must be addressed on her way to success. How about someone who is smart, professional, has an enormous circle of influence, highly motivated, but who never acquired good listening skills along the way? These plusses and minuses come in an infinite assortment.

As leaders we must observe these assets and liabilities in order to guide our partners to achieving their goals. We teach our teams to fully utilize their natural, “genetic” abilities. And we work with the challenging areas so that they become growth opportunities and stepping stones. Just as everyone is challenged in different ways, the precise path to success is different for each individual.

Here is a little ditty that might get you through a tough day of collecting your yes’s and no’s. *It’s not always easy, and it is always worth while.* When I thought I was going to perish from the effort of building a thriving organization, I leaned heavily on my previous experience of having woken up after five years in another gig really knowing what I was doing. I knew that feeling would come and I knew it was worth the time it took to get there. Are there experiences in your own past from which you can draw? Can you duplicate your own tried and true recipe of taking yourself through the paces of mastering a craft? Using those previous experiences as a compass, you might feel relief and confidence as you develop your new business skills.

THE OTHER DIMENSION

Through his seminars, Brian Klemmer of Klemmer and Associates (www.klemmer.com) teaches thousands of network marketers that there are two things that tend to run our behavior.

- Protecting our image
- Having to be right

In business building these two tendencies are as insidious as an unpaired electron scavenging as a free radical. I learned this when listening to one of my partners describe a prospecting encounter in which she asked the standard question: *If time and finances were not limited, what would you do with your life?* When relating this story to me, the distributor obviously was a tad smug, knowing that she had asked the right question. After a little digging, it became apparent that there was no follow-up and no meaningful conversation with the person to whom she had asked this question. She succeeded in asking, but she neglected to understand the reply. This would be analogous to going to Barcelona, with the ability to ask perfectly in Spanish the whereabouts of the post office, but being clueless to decipher the response.

Our businesses will not be built on technique alone. Relationships are not built with prospective business partners solely as a result of saying the right thing. The metaphors for the quality of relationships we seek to create are often body based:

- Something you feel in your gut
- Heart to heart
- Belly to belly
- Eyeball to eyeball
- Getting under someone's skin
- A meeting of the minds

Once you say the right thing, the next step is to be present enough, with enough awareness, to make some real contact. Network marketing is not two dimensional. The third, critical dimension comes from your core. Helping people is not a throw-away term; we must walk our walk and close the gap between what we say and the real life results we achieve in touching other's lives. Is there a gene for success in network marketing? Yes, I think so. But is it not pre-ordained and it is not in short supply. We bestow it to ourselves. Natural talents plus sustained personal growth over time equals a shot at becoming one of those successful networkers who look like they were born to do this.

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