

Expert Tips & Tactics

Passion

Aesop, the fabled Greek writer said that Passion should be the slave of Reason, and you might think that this is a reasonable precept for living. But if you walk into a thriving business you will see passion, you will be able to feel it the moment you enter, and not without good reason.

Last year at about this time I wrote a column about stagnation and having fermented this idea for almost a year, I thought I'd share some more thoughts with you. I think we stagnate because we lose the passion and drive that we once had. The loss of passion can happen in our hobbies, our careers and our relationships.

As a point of departure, let me begin by saying that I envision passion like a fuel, it keeps the fires burning, it keeps us moving and it keeps us warm, it sustains us. Passion is what keeps us working into the long watches of the night. Passion drives us forward when we need to go the extra mile. Passion is what draws people to us and infects them with a desire to share the energy. Passion is what allows me to leave a bad day behind me when I step into being a martial artist. Passion sees you through when doubt and fatigue would make you a coward. Passion is a trampoline; it keeps us bouncing back!

So, how do you get it? How do you keep it? How do you nurture it?

I'm not sure that you get passionate about something unless it inspires you. For certain you can develop an interest in something and it can grow into an all-consuming passion, but it is difficult to *make* yourself passionate about something. So if you are not passionate running your business, I might suggest that you rethink what you are doing if you own a business or are planning to open one.

Keeping and nurturing passion is easier. Look for novelty, always. View your business through the eyes of a child. To a child, everything holds the potential for discovery and discovery brings with it excitement and the pleasures of accomplishment. Maintain a sense of awe and wonder.

In times of doubt look at your success stories, look at the lives you have affected and the people who have come back to thank you, often years later. In times of trouble and frustration, look to all the obstacles that you have already overcome to get where you are today.

One of the great things about the martial arts is that they provide a great metaphor for business owners. The martial arts teach us about ourselves, our talents, skills and work ethic. There are lessons in our martial arts classes that have direct application to running a business.

Go to clinics and seminar. Hang out with passionate business owners and I guarantee you the passion will re-emerge if the flame is burning a little dimly. I can almost guarantee that going to a clinic or seminar will invariably allow me to come away with something new and a sense of rejuvenation.

Bottom line? Inspiration is the spark that ignites passion. The flames of passion only die if we choose to let them. Like any fuel, however, passion is a renewable resource and needs to be replenished on a regular basis.

One of the reasons I write this column is that I am passionate about writing, I am passionate about the martial arts and I am passionate about the development of the human spirit. For sure, there are times when the ideas flow like sludge, there are times the computer screen is empty, but there is always a sun in the sky tomorrow and the frogs by the lake chatter to each other all night.

Passion is where you find it. Soak it up, bathe in it. Share it. That's why I own a business, and that's why the learning process is the greatest thing since sliced bread!

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