

The “Coronavirus” Dash

By Andy Springer, Business Consultant and Coach

Wow, do we have a story to tell! When the tales of 2020 are told, there will be much to talk about. Included in these conversations will be the dreaded start date and the celebrated end date of the Coronavirus Outbreak.

Little attention will be given to the small dash that separates those two dates, but Linda Ellis so wisely reminded us in her moving poem entitled THE DASH that “*what matters is how...we spend our dash.*”

With that in mind, I offer these two concepts that will make you extremely proud of the way you spent your “Coronavirus” dash.

Concept #1 - Ignore the Weatherman

Fairweather business owners have no chance. In January 2009, in the heart of the recession, I borrowed a friend’s bucket and squeegee and began to wash storefront windows in Santa Rosa. Within 3 years, during that same recession, I launched and built a cleaning business that grew to provide work for 18 people.

None of this growth can be attributed to the advice given by the weatherman, nor to my vast knowledge of the cleaning industry. Prior to borrowing that equipment, I had washed windows “professionally” for about 2 weeks in my entire life, but if you are on TV getting paid to predict the weather, I expect more from you. Nothing against the weatherman. He was just not very helpful as I attempted to grow my company.

As a matter of fact, the weather had little to do with my success, but it almost helped me fail. During those first few months, I made it my habit to check tomorrow’s weather before calling it a day. If the forecast were rain, I would typically call the customer and give them the option to reschedule. Often, it seemed the predicted weather would not arrive, and I would find myself sitting around on a perfectly good day.

My attitude began to shift and so did my business success. I decided that there was no room for bad weather during this week or next because my schedule was already full. You and I have a choice – we can let the howling winds of COVID drive us to our knees or we can let those same winds fill our sails. The wildest storms of today will be those wonderful stories of tomorrow. Sail on.

Concept #2 - Do Something Valuable – One of my clients recently shared, “There is no worse feeling than owning a job.” I had to agree. After 20 years of hard work and dedication to his company, he deserved better. “Owning a job” was not his aim. When he risked everything and poured himself into the growth and development of his company, he anticipated greater value and achievement.

It has been seven years since my business coach asked me, “What do you really want to do with your company? What do you really hope to achieve?” I must admit, I did not fully understand what he was asking, but looking back, he rescued me from the plight of owning a job and redirected my thoughts toward the value I hoped to deliver.

It was almost a year later that I discovered my answer. My desire is to “LIVE OUT LOUD the life that I was CREATED TO LIVE by daily stretching toward and reaching for MY GREATEST POTENTIAL, resulting in a life worth living that is attractive to observers, that causes them to want what I have, so that I might INSPIRE them to move closer to their GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL, purpose and plan.” Seven years later, this is exactly what I get to do for my clients.

As a business leader, I have a question for you. What do you hope to achieve through your business? We are in business for much more than the delivery of a product, the provision of a service or to “own a job”. We have a dream, a purpose, a mission. We are looking for ways to invest in that which will outlast us, to change our world and to do something valuable.

Linda Ellis ended “The Dash” with this incredible thought, “with your life’s actions to rehash, would you be proud of the things they say about how you lived your dash?” My hope is that your “Coronavirus” dash becomes an inspirational story forever told.

Here’s how to participate in your inspiring story...

1. Answer this question, “What do I hope to achieve through my business?”
2. Make a list of the people that will benefit the most from your achievement. Be sure to include those closest to you.
3. Generate positive conversation - avoid “the weatherman”.
4. Identify action steps and begin to move forward.

When the stories of 2020 are told, there will be much to talk about. Included in these conversations will be the story of how you chose to live your dash.