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Leadership and Bowling for Columbine

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Welcome

Thank you for joining us to explore your *Inside Connection*. We hope our newsletter encourages, challenges, and supports you in reaching your potential. Our belief is that success comes most directly when you look inside and change yourself before seeking change from other people or the things around you. If you enjoy our e-zine, please forward it to colleagues, friends and family and encourage them to subscribe.

Inside The Inside Connection

Considering that three months have flown by since my last newsletter, it's more apparent to me than ever that time is our most precious resource. As we all have 24 hours in a day, it seems that how we use our time may be the determining factor that either enhances or diminishes our satisfaction with life.

With a heightened awareness of the value of my time, I recently hired a virtual assistant to handle tasks that don't make best use of my talents. For those of you who've left the corporate world for self-employment, remembering the benefits of administrative support highlights the challenges you face when you "go it alone."

As soon as I handed off the first scheduling task to my new assistant, I felt an instant sense of relief. I also noticed how annoying some of tasks have been for me. But what's the point of paying attention to something annoying if you don't believe there's an alternative? Well, now I have an alternative and I encourage you to look for alternative ways to "hand off" anything that doesn't make best use of your talents and gifts.

It's counterintuitive, but the more you give others to do, the more productive you'll be. Hopefully it won't take you as long as it took me to learn this important lesson.

Leadership and Bowling for Columbine

What kind of future do we create from fear? This seems like an important question as we stand on the brink of war with Iraq. And

although I'd like to know the answer, what I really want to know is...

How do we create real security in our lives and in the world?

Last summer I got unusually anxious about my business. Although I had a healthy amount of work booked through the end of that year, I had nothing committed for the following year. So I began to worry.

I got to the point where the only way I could stop worrying (about a potential business problem that was 6 months away) was to promise myself that I would completely stop looking for any new work until November. Instead, I made a simple but powerful decision to just pay more attention to the things I enjoyed doing and see where that led.

My decision to stop pursuing new business might sound dramatic or even naïve, but it had a profound effect on me. Not only did it allow me to experience a deep sense of comfort and security, one that I'd been missing for quite some time, but it also resulted in much more business than I imagined.

Here's what happened. Within a week of my decision to stop "marketing" myself, I got an email inviting me to participate on a long-term leadership project with a dream team of people who are some of the acknowledged experts in the field of organizational leadership. In fact financially, last year turned out to be the best year I've ever had and this year looks to be even better.

Why did that happen? Perhaps when I stopped my anxious worrying and started focusing on what I loved doing, I began creating a different future.

Michael Moore, in his movie *Bowling for Columbine*, proposes an interesting hypothesis - he suggests that the reason we have more murders in the U.S. than anywhere else in the world (per capita) is that we've created, and live in, a culture of fear. He cites commonly known data on the influence of the media along with statistics on how many violent scenes we watch on TV-but his conclusion is what startled me...

We respond to our self-generated culture of fear by creating dangerous and isolated lives.

Our fear leads us to isolate and separate ourselves. We seek to interact less often with others, especially when they are different from us. We live further and further apart and build walls between ourselves and those we believe we can't trust. In effect, our response to our own fear actually increase the chances for misunderstanding between people, sets the stage for increasing mistrust, and results in less real safety and security. That troubles me.

I was amazed at the difference between the U.S. and the Canadian citizens interviewed in the film. As a New Yorker, I was surprised to learn that in Canada, many people in urban areas leave their

homes unlocked. In fact, Moore actually walked right into some of the unlocked homes during the filming of his movie and talked with people about why they felt comfortable leaving their front doors unlocked.

Even though some of the people he visited had been robbed in the past, they weren't afraid. They wanted their homes and their lives to remain open to their community. They didn't want to close themselves off and lock themselves inside their own little worlds. Well, that was certainly different than what I'm used to hearing here in New York City!

It got me wondering just how much of our environment and fear-based culture is actually no more than a figment of our imagination. And if it is just our mental creation, it's almost unbelievable how much credibility and power we give it.

Take a few moments and consider some of the things you fear. Once you have a few fears in mind, spend some time thinking about these questions:

- | When did I start being afraid of this? What was the origin of my fear?
- | If I wasn't afraid, what would I be doing differently?
- | How does my fear restrict me?
- | How does fear prevent me from living a more enjoyable and truly secure life?

What is real security? Natural systems and Chaos Theory both suggest that there is nothing that remains constant in the universe-except constant change! Our concept of stability is mostly a mental illusion. We are constantly changing as is everything around us.

I wonder if real security comes when we make peace with the reality of constant change.

I wonder if real security comes from our willingness to challenge our fear by exploring what we don't understand, examining what we don't feel comfortable doing, and getting to know the people and places in our world that seem strange and foreign to us.

I struggle with the idea of living in a reality of never-ending, constant change. Stability and predictability definitely comfort me. But if the reality of our existence is that everything is continually changing, seems to me we'd all benefit by getting used to change, learning to enjoy change, and leading our way into future changes. The alternative is that we sit back, wait passively for the future to happen, resist change, and then complain about it!

So, what kind of future are you creating? And how will you deal with your own fear of change?

Will you sit and wait and resist and complain... or will you proactively lead yourself, your family/team, your community/organization into the endless opportunities present in an always changing future. The choice is yours.

And remember, your choice affect us all.

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