

## A Continuing Leadership Lesson – “Controlling the Dark Side”

### Dear Small Business Owner:

In last month's newsletter, I talked about one of the traits of a good leader---how well we come to grips with our flaws. Said another way, it's how well we integrate our dark and light sides, the integration of our public and private personas. We all have to keep our flaws under control in order to not derail the good we do.

I was reminded of this battle in several of the commentaries after the death of Senator Teddy Kennedy. In a quote from his just released autobiography, Kennedy says, "I think the reason I have been so restless in my life is that I have been trying to stay ahead of the darkness..." He clearly dealt with this very issue.

So, what are some of the ways we can help ourselves stay on the right track? I'll offer 4 of them that David Gergen (political analyst and counsel to four U.S. Presidents) noted in a recent interview I heard him give.

- 1. Surround yourself with people who help you make smart decisions.** Much was said about the support Teddy Kennedy's wife provided to him to help him get his life back on track after several set-backs. It takes a conscious effort to say no to the people who pull us the other way.



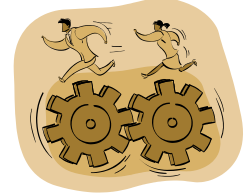
- 2. Regular reading of good books.** These can be any kind of uplifting books that interest you. Some like biographies of successful people, some enjoy leadership books, some believe in spiritual direction books. You pick what you enjoy, but always have a positive book that is providing insights about others' suggestions on being a strong leader.

- 4. Don't confuse motion with progress.** We often feel like we have to be doing something to feel successful. Sometimes "no" would be the better answer to doing something that isn't what we really enjoy doing. As David

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Gergen said in this interview, "Go to the balcony. See how it looks to be doing that activity from a distance. Does it fit into what you should be doing?"

- 5. Develop regular, disciplined habits.** This will provide some amount of regularity to the areas you can control. Whether it is around physical habits (nutrition, exercise, sleep), mental (meditation, quiet times), or relationships (regular times with children or spouse), develop habits that will help you accomplish the priorities of your life.



If you are serious about making changes to your life and business, a coach can help you do it faster. Give us a call.

Sincerely,

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