

## **Turning a Business Crisis into an Opportunity**

**Your business is ticking along. you feel on track,** happy and focused and then suddenly, something happens that is totally out of your control.

**This scenario happened just this way for one of my clients recently.** I'll call her Shari. Shari's retail business had been growing gradually over seven years and everything felt great. Then one day, with no warning, she received a notice from her landlord that he planned to tear down, rebuild and develop the space she was renting. It was an old building so she understood. but was in shock. She was given a nine month notice to vacate. It was all legal but she was thrown into a turmoil and felt "out of control." At first she felt like a victim, and therefore unable to feel any sense of empowerment in her situation.

**She went through all the stages** of anger, resentment, grief and despondency and had thoughts of quitting her business or doing something different.

**Her story reminded me of one of the rules of thumb** I used when I used to be a marriage counselor. "The health of a relationship is measured by how well people cope when facing a crisis. " Most relationships do well when everything is cruisy. The real test is when the relationship faces immense stress.

**Your relationship with your business** can be quite similar. You are, in fact, in a deeply intimate marriage with your own business. When everything is easy and the money is coming in, you love your business. Add a bit of stress and you immediately feel like quitting and getting a "job". The grass always looks greener when things are hard. Healthy strong relationships require the ability to be flexible and open to change and transformation. Sometimes change is forced. You have the option to struggle against it or instead, flow with it and look at it as an opportunity to move and expand.

**In a way what I did** for Shari was not much different than what I used to do in couple counseling many years ago. I had Shari look at her relationship with her business. I asked her about her

commitment, strengths, her vision and her passion. They were all high. I asked her if she was open to looking at options of how she might see this forced move as an opportunity for business growth and expansion.

**Once she shifted to that state of mind** the possibilities emerged. It involved her listening and changing her attitude from one of antagonism to one of synergy. From that synergistic place the best decisions get made in any kind of relationship. Business is no exception. Sometimes the decision is made to quit and move on. This is not necessarily wrong or bad. It is all about how that decision is reached. If two people can reach that place from a position of synergy it can be ok. Shari and her business might have made the decision to quit as well, however once she was able to operate from a space of empowerment and deep cooperation she was able to see the next steps for her business and the opportunities began to materialize.

In my book, [Unleashing the Spirit of Your Business](#), I offer a deeper look at this process. It will help you to look at your own relationship with your business. Is it strong enough to withstand stress? If not, ask yourself what needs to happen to make it stronger and more able to be sustainable in the long haul. In Shari's case, with the help of her family, she bought a commercial property and is now able to offer more services than before and she has added additional income streams. What began as a crisis has ended as an opportunity.

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