

## **Zen and 5 Keys to Staying Positive**

Last night my husband and I went to see Kung Foo Panda as I tend to avoid violent, negative films, and I choose happy endings that leave me feeling hopeful and light. This movie is right in that genre! One of the best lines was when the veritable kung Foo spiritual master turtle looks at his protégé and says "there is no bad news and no good news. There is just news!" How true. How we respond or react is our free choice and it is also the place we have empowerment. Our real demons are our own judgments.

The daily news goes right to our core survival fears; not being able to eat, the cost of gas keeps going up and on and on.

The news is given as facts but portrayed as "bad news." This is important information, however how we each deal with the news in our small business, is where our power lies. Some people plug themselves into the socket of bad news and feel constricted, negative and make decisions from that place. It can take a lot of internal effort and energy to make a different choice against the tide. I am not talking about putting your head in the sand and pretending there are no world issues. I am talking about listening the turtle and to realize your choices.

For some reason there is an addictive pull toward being fear based and negative but the one thing you have total control over is your attitude and your ability to make choices. Here are a few ideas of what you, as small business owners can do to keep yourself vital, vibrant and alive.

1. Focus 100% on your customers . Your own fears will always get in the way of being there for customers. As a small business owner you have the ability to talk directly with your customers and find out what they want and how you can help. Ask questions, listen and care.
2. Find someone to listen to you if you are stressed about money and feeling desperate. Do whatever you can to grow in your self-confidence and empowerment so you don't project that on to your employees and customers. Getting this kind of help will pay for itself.

3. Evaluate your products and services and make sure they are truly valuable to your customers. The world is filled with cool inventions that seemed amazing in the inventor's garage but fall flat out in the world. Look for new ways to help your customers. Be creative. Brain storm with your team.

4. Follow-through with customers. This is the most under-utilized service. Check back with people, care about them, see if there is any other help you can offer them. I am always impressed when someone calls me back. If it is coming from a sincere place then I feel that. Again, as a small business owner that personal touch is an asset.

5. Keep working on all aspects of your business including your money management, marketing language, your website content, and business strategies. This will make your business stronger and more sustainable in the long run.

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