

Keeping Your Competitive Edge

By Rhobera Shaler

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## KEEPING YOUR EDGE WITHOUT BEING ON EDGE

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Today's world seems to DEMAND attention, doesn't it? It can be truly 'in your face'. Headlines suggest that unless you're on the fast track constantly you'll soon be on the sidelines. So often you might get the feeling that you simply want to sideline yourself to stop, breathe and smell the flowers, but there is such pressure to keep running. How can you create the balance that allows you to hone your competitive edge in the marketplace without being on edge within?

### KNOW CLEARLY WHY YOU ARE DOING WHAT YOU ARE DOING.

You have chosen the things you have in your life. Whether or not you think they were thrust upon you, you have definitely chosen them or you would be doing something else. Remember why you chose them. When you entered the work world, what were your dreams? What prompted you to enter the field you are in? What is it that feeds you there?

Why have you chosen the lifestyle you have? Are you in a mutually supportive loving relationship? Are you wishing you were? Perhaps you have some things that need to be better worked out with your partner or your family. Why are you in those relationships and how do they serve you? You are there for a reason. Figure it out and decide whether or not you value those reasons.

If children seem to be a pressure in your life, remember why you chose to have them. What were your dreams when you knew the first one was arriving? How did you want to feel? What were you looking forward to? What did you want to give to your children? You chose parenthood. (If you're thinking that you did not, where was the birth control?) Remember why?

Are you choosing to take care of your health? Why? Why not? It's a choice. Think about it.

Taking some quiet time to reflect on these items will help you sort your priorities once again. It will

serve to remind you of what you value.

## DECIDE HOW YOU WANT TO FEEL AT THE END OF THE DAY.

Everyone has a different energy level. There is no one right schedule, amount of sleep or perfect diet. You only know what is right for you. The question is "Do you pay attention?"

In this hurry-up, keep-up world, you may think that there is a big 'should' in what is possible for you. Stop for a few moments and ask yourself what is right for you. What pace works? Where do you get your energy? Are you giving yourself what you need to optimize your day? If so, congratulate yourself. If not, re-think it.

Recently on the TV news, the research was clear that most people are living in a state of sleep deprivation. Somehow, sleeping is considered non-productive. Now, there's a demonstration of how crooked our thinking has become. The news said that most folks need an average of 8.6 hours of sleep. Are you sleeping enough?

It is not news that you need to exercise in order to have energy. Are you taking yourself for a walk most days? Are you doing a little weight-training? At a minimum, are you avoiding elevators in favor of the stairs and parking far enough away from the stores that you do a little walking? Enough said.

You do not need a diet book to tell you what comprises a healthy diet--vegetables, fruit, fish, poultry, breads, dairy products and small amounts of red meat. You know to limit your fat intake to something reasonable--less than 30grams per day. That's not news. What can be news is treating yourself well by using this information for your own good. That affects how you feel at the end of the day.

## KNOW WHAT YOU VALUE AND WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE

Do you know the five most important things in your life? The five things that are the most valuable, important and significant to you? The five things that you would never want to be without such as your health, your family, your traditions, your integrity? Good.

Now set aside some time and sit down with your calendar and checking account for the past three months. Tally up the hours and dollars spent on the five most important things in your life. If you find that the number of hours and dollars is not the most significant portion of your income, one of two things is amiss. Either you don't value the things you think you value, or, you don't demonstrate that you value them by spending your time and money accordingly. Quite a quick measure, isn't it?

I suggest that you make those five important things the ones you say 'yes' to before taking on anything else. That way you'll live in integrity with what you value.

Next step: know what your next goals are in each of those areas. You know that you can 'have it all' in life, you just seldom can have it all at once. When children are growing, they take time, attention, love and care. It's very difficult to provide that while wanting to create a million dollar career. One or the other may suffer. What is important right now? Put those things first and plan for the others.

Clarify your goals. Then ask yourself what you may have to do to realize them. If there is even one thing on your list that you would be unwilling to do, modify your goal. You cannot achieve a goal if there is any unwillingness on your part. This is a secret. Many folks fail to achieve their goals for that very reason.

Make a plan to achieve your goals in tiny increments. Another secret to success: Break your goals down into what I call 'TTDC's'--Teeny, Tiny, Do-Able Chunks. Those are the ones you'll actually accomplish. If the work seems monumental, procrastination is likely. Chunk it down into something you can accomplish in an hour, then, each hour spent will lead you to the goal. It's simple really. If you find yourself resisting this, though, go back to point one in this list...know why you're doing what you're doing. There will be an answer for you there.

These three considerations will assist you in knowing where you want to be in life and why. Your competitive edge is simply creating by clarity of purpose and awareness of what is important to you. To compete actually comes from the Latin word, competere, which means to come together, agree and be suitable. So often, we think that our competition is outside ourselves, but, first, it is internal. We need to live in alignment and integrity.

Is your life 'agreeing' with what is important, significant and valuable to you? Spend some time with the ideas presented for you here. This will help you hone your competitive edge without losing your balance.

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