

## **"LIFE LEARNINGS"... TRANSITIONS... ENDINGS and BEGINNINGS**

perspectives from the life of an entrepreneur . by Jeannie Fennell

This month we celebrate Black History Month and next month Women's History Month. So, I have been thinking about my own history as an entrepreneur and what it means to me.

I notice that I want to "re-live" the successes of the past and hold on to them as a guide for the future. And, even though I know that the times are very different now, I find it challenging to change my thinking about my history and look at the new world I am in.

Sometimes, what once "was" gets in the way of being "in" the present. Having to change so quickly is upsetting and I want what was secure. I like beginnings, but am not so sure about endings.

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Not sure of next steps?  
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Recently, one of my clients brought this situation to my attention as she cried over having to close part of her previously successful business. She said she kept thinking of how it used to be, was angry and sad that it was gone and could not think of starting again.

I realized that she is going through a grief process where anger and depression are normal stages. Until this is complete, she cannot move on.

We think of grief as only appropriate when a person is dying, but as part of our business ends, it is a great loss...the dreams, the security, the money and the identity fade away.

I suggested that she create a ceremony to release her business history. She could then honor the tangible, as well as the intangibles that her business gave her and create a way to shift her feelings.

Rituals and ceremony can be very powerful in creating appropriate endings...giving us a way to respect our history and mark an ending while celebrating what was.

She did create a ceremony where she burned some business cards, buried the ashes and then planted flowers there. She said that it was a major step in releasing the past and going forward. Although grief

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## **"GUEST COLUMN"... Four hands are better than two... How to get FREE help and be a hero, too**

by Elaine Millen . TeknoLink Marketing Services

It's 4:30 p.m. and you have a critical project to complete by 5 p.m. If you only had another set of hands to help you out! What can you do?

Of course, hiring another person may not be an option, but capturing an intern from a university in your area could be a sure bet. Not only are you providing a spot for a newbie to gain valuable experience, you often can seize this opportunity at little or no cost. Seniors often must complete this course structure to graduate. This provides your company with needed human resources to fill gaps no matter what the economy

I know that having one of these "ducklings" has made my life richer. I am able to impart knowledge

along with sage wisdom to them as I watch this person turn into a participant in the workplace. Once the intern has completed the requisite real-world experience, they leave with a tremendous sense of confidence and success. And, you seem like a hero.

However, it does not come without a caveat. You will have to do some training. It might take up some of your time, but it is worth it. I consider it a refresher course for me every time I do it. I have to think through the processes I use. Sometimes I find that I was overdue for a revamp in my procedures — efficiency wins out.

Maybe the intern route is not for you. Many

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### How to be a hero

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non-profit organizations are hungry for pro-bono gifts. Budget cuts have left them without the necessary resources to provide for their clients effectively.

Perhaps you can offer some time in one of these areas: accounting assistance, tax preparation, business plan guidance, career/personal/psychological counseling, grant writing, clerical support, event coordination, promotional marketing, or a host of other services that can bring much to your community.

When you make yourself visible, you make it easier for those you serve to see how great you are. The next time they need to use your business for a real project, they already have the faith that you will do an amazing job. You have already pre-qualified yourself. You have done your marketing by simply being you. Those to whom you bestow your gifts upon may often provide referrals and recommendations for you too.

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### How to be a hero

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What we do for our communities can only enhance them. It is a sustainable resource which, when utilized, makes for a brighter future for our world. I know my circle is ever expanding. How about yours? ▶

### Making transitions

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is a long-term process, she created an ending so she can have a beginning.

Most of us need to do the same...in some place in our lives.

And, as more of us have to change our businesses, it is important to release the old ways.

We have to have endings before beginnings...and in honoring our history, we can appreciate it without it weighing us down.

So, if your business has "transitioned," free your old ways in order to create new ones. ▶

— Elaine Millen provides promotional marketing services to give her clients a crisp, cohesive public face. She sits on the professional advisory committee for the Art Institute at Charlotte and spends her spare time doing community service.

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