

THE “BUSINESS” IS YOU



By Geeta Sidhu
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Index

1. Beginnings and Endings
2. The Systems
3. The Business – the Company
4. The People (You!)
5. New Millennium Business Tools
6. The sub-Conscious Mind.....

Chapter I

Beginnings and Endings

2003 was the year I fell off the face of the Earth.

I managed, by December 17th 2003, 12.35pm to have been suspended for six months as a lawyer, lost my job in said industry, been bankrupted, had my home repossessed and divested myself of my husband.

I did keep the kids though, all three of them. I considered that a pretty awesome achievement considering. Well, they were mine, but still.

This is all the more amazing when you consider that in December 2002, I was on my way to watch the fireworks on New Year's Eve from the terrace of my apartment in Monaco. My family and I then flew home to our 8,000,000 pound, house in London on our private jet. Our chauffeur dropped us at Luton private airport in one of our Bentleys. I am not sure which one now, we had a couple, in different colours.

It would probably amaze you even more to know that I consider myself now, as a result of the events of 2003, to be one of the 'haves' not one of the 'have not's'; this being somewhat contrary to popular opinion.

Being a 'non-person' allows you to live on the fringes of society and to do whatever you want, how you want, when you want, without too much interference. After all, who is going to stop you? With such a comprehensive track record of so-called failure, most people are too scared to come too close to keep an eye on you anyway.

I didn't realise then, but it gave me the freedom to be myself in a way I didn't really understand till much, much later. It enabled me to spend some time to work out who and what that really was. Not matching any of the labels society throws at you (and I mean NONE of them) really does force you to work out your own space and time within the world. Everything I had spent my whole life becoming and doing, thinking and being, had suddenly disappeared and now – who on earth was I?

And the worst thing is, you really can't ask anyone you know. Then they'll know you have no idea what you are doing, and could find out the depths of your total despair, terror, anger and all those other wonderful things which are just there, begging for someone to come along and take a look at them and interfere in your life and tell you what to do.

I decided the only thing to do was to fall back on the most spiritual of all maxims 'Fake it till you make it.' I did, and I did.

Along the way I worked out a few things that I realised have become very relevant in this day and age of 'economic slowdown', recession, cutbacks, downsizing etc etc etc.

So I decided to write them all down and hopefully you'll find them a helpful too.

This is a Business Handbook with a difference. It's essentially the Recession Business Bible. After you've read it, you will be grateful for the economic situation, not despairing.

You will also finally be able to work out the inherent advantages and opportunities in such a situation.

You will understand and be grateful for all that the Universe is really offering you whilst seeming to take away.

Be aware and be warned, empowerment is on the way.

NB. The Chinese symbol of crisis is two symbols interwoven, danger and opportunity.

Chapter 2

The Systems

When you want to set up a business, it seems to me that received wisdom is that it is all about systems. Learn all the systems and you will be alright. You will succeed. We are taught that most businesses fail because they aren't organised enough, and didn't keep their eye on the ball of cashflows, management policies, expenditure and a great many other things.

Hands up everyone who's heard this before?

Hands up everyone who's believed it, and actually done it all before?

And yet, hands up all those who faithfully learnt management systems, cashflows, business analysis, and then went on to add all the online learning too; SEO management, google rankings, ezines, blogs etc etc?

And then, hands up all those who still failed?

I have always wondered why.

Why, if all of these systems are so vital, so foolproof, if they have been around for so long, if so many people use them and win, why then, don't we all succeed when we use them?

What is it that we are missing, what is it that we aren't getting or aren't doing right?

Being part of an entire social and professional infrastructure is very seductive. It makes you feel good, gives purpose to your days, embodies your and society's idea of success and there are many rewards to this sort of behaviour; this sort of learned response. We are rewarded for this from childhood.

However, what do you do when; put succinctly, it's just not cutting it? You've done it all, learnt it all and bought the t-shirt and it's still not working. You've tried all the systems, bought them, moved them, made them and it's made no difference to your business at all. Well it's made the odd bit of difference here and there, just enough to keep you going and waiting and hoping for the next 'hit'. The point is that it all works for a while, before things stagnate again. You feel like this time, you managed to crack it and then after a while, you are sat back down again with a calculator and a spreadsheet, trying to make 100 equal 1,000.

I have been through countless cycles of this internal and commercial boom and bust with my businesses. It has totally driven me demented. All I could think was,

'What? What now? What on earth did I not manage to do/think/remember this time business suddenly tailed off, clients disappeared and cashflow just well, flew!'

Not until I considered closing it all down and marrying for money did I actually stop and take stock. Only then did I look back and notice patterns of behaviour in myself, mirroring themselves into my business. Then I finally worked out that it wasn't all those systems, maybe that were going to lead me to success in business.


Not to say that these systems don't have their uses. You will find that as you progress through the next few weeks, days, months you will notice that all these things are just tools that were appropriate for a different age.

What does that mean? They turned outwards from you and were about the functions of the business or enterprise itself. They were tools for you to use in service for your business.

But they don't always help your business to survive.

All received business wisdom, business books, business courses are all about applying these current tools and about how well you learn them all, and how quickly you can apply them and then, wonderful heaven, can you possibly invent a new one? And if you can, how amazing and you are lauded for your deep intellectual prowess.

The first inkling that all is not right comes when you look at the current climate and how it is affecting your business. And when you start to look for help for how to survive it and beat it.



But when you discuss an economic downturn, a recession, a slowdown, all the books just seem to say the same old stuff but with a slightly different angle to it. Its essentially a reworking of all the same old basic tools, with different window dressing and a bit of purse tightening. 'How to market your business on tuppence ha'penny from your laptop' instead of advice on how to hire a marketing director.

All the pundits need to say something, they can't just say, 'Look I don't really know and so any advice I was to give you know would be about as worthless as if Barbie wrote it down. There are so many variables and so few constants, that there is no meaningful comparison I can make, against no useful data that's been collected' and so I have no intelligent conclusions.' Phew!

Of course whoever first said that would either be fired, run out of town, or be offered a slot on a reality show. Particularly as it has the merit of being absolutely and utterly true. Clearly another failing in the business world. I mean now we even have courses on 'ethics' god help us. (By the way I find that utterly fascinating, you teach someone how to do right and wrong, as an adult? How have they lived so far then?)

The issue is that these rules, these frameworks, this advice is all based on certain parameters being in existence, certain scenarios running and certain expectations being in place. Primary among them being 'as yesterday, so tomorrow' (with a bit less money lying around).

They are all outward looking tools, things you apply to events, scenarios, projections to get outcomes you can then use to predict further outcomes, upon which you can then act, in the complete assurance you are doing the 'right thing'. Well I have news for you, that isn't going to work anymore. Not this year, not next and maybe not even the one after.

We are all going to have to find different ways to operate and work. And ultimately we will find that coming forward, taking a step out of sync with society, deliberately in this way, is very rewarding on many levels, particularly when all the known tenets of society are about to go into freefall.

When you have nothing left, and nowhere to turn to, you inevitably look inwards. There is nothing else to do, there is no white noise left for you to hide behind.

My thoughts are these: we will no longer live in the way we see it now. We will no longer own property in the way we do now. We will no longer inhabit the earth in the way we do now either. As a group and collective thought form, we can see and feel this now, as it approaches.

The question is, what does it mean, and how will this freefall help us?

Because it will help us, that is my guarantee to you, today.

Chapter 3

The Business – The Company

What exactly is the point of a business? What is it set up to do? The product it produces? The people it employs? The money it generates? The service it provides?

What exactly is the right answer and what is the wrong answer to that question?

This is the part that has always confused me. I am a classically trained corporate lawyer and I can answer you all of the above in a few simple sentences.

The company is everything.

The management is there to create value for the shareholders. The shareholders are there to protect the company from the management in its capacity as wealth creation vehicle for themselves.

The brand is there to help the company to sell more products, and that takes care of sales and marketing too. The offices are there to house the employees of the company, and their job is to help the company develop by executing the vision and demands of the management and the CEO of the business.

The company is everything.

Now a small company or a partnership just does all that on a much smaller scale.

Where does this leave the small business owner, the entrepreneur, the management team?

Who are you (the business owner and one with no life and no sleep) in the grand scheme of things and what is your purpose? Clearly you must have some as your entire point is 'value creation'. How do you apply that and why?

It means that you are the one that has to go out and learn everything about how to run, make and build a company and yet you're not, at least not in that capacity allowed ownership of it. NO, your ownership must be kept separate in an artificial divide from your 'function; within the company.

Now how did this come about? Well first we all needed some sort of name for our businesses so people knew who they were dealing with. Then they needed some sort of responsible structure to deal with as the company need to buy land, get credit, order stock. We went from it being the person and family run business to being a more independent and distant creation, with 'powers' to emulate humanity.

We began to talk about corporate personality, corporate views, corporate accounts and other things animate being attributable to an inanimate object that couldn't survive without human support. And yet it purported to control and run the humans that gave it its very life.

Then we went the way of all things and found that unscrupulous people began to take advantage of that distant, neutral entity and use the corporate entity as a shield to hide behind.

Suddenly we did give people human characteristics again, they were called responsibilities, Directors duties and other similar things. But they became negative yardsticks, not positive growth opportunities. It all became for the good of the company and the people again became the fodder for the ultimate goal.

The company is everything.

All brand, sales and marketing efforts become a concerted effort to relate to the product and service as a baby that the company has given birth to.

Does this seem as nuts to you as it does to me? We talk about being enslaved to computers who are suddenly going to get these amazing minds, grow and grow and then just take us all over. Newsflash. This is a scenario that's already going on, it's called corporations, companies.

This concept has been taken one step further in the US where companies actually own patents of natural products eg. Aloe vera, the 'Happy Birthday' jingle (I kid you not, you are meant to pay a royalty to some company every single time you sing that song).

Chapter 4

People (You, Me, Everybody!)

Let me put this fallacy right, right here, right now.

Nothing is about the company, it doesn't even exist. Its all about you.

You are the person who builds the company, in your image.

You are the person who hires the right people for the right job, based on your vision.

You are the person who decides what the company does, with whom, for whom.

This means YOU are everything. And everything is you.

So it stands to reason, doesn't it, that if you work on yourself, you are directly and indirectly working on your business. In fact what's the point almost of working on anything else. This should be your starting point and your ending point of each and every day, week, month and year.

You get an idea, you research it, you decide to pursue it, you set up a system, you look for clients, you hire people, you get an office, you decide on a marketing campaign, you sell a product. What word was repeated constantly in the above, very long list of things you do to set up a business? And yet, as soon as that is done and as soon as you run into a snag, you are taught to look outside yourself for a solution.

Maybe it's the economy, maybe it's your pitch, and maybe clients are not being persuaded to buy? Well, yes, maybe. But why don't we start even closer to home and maybe, just maybe, you have hit a wall inside yourself?

Maybe you need to

work out what it is you are and aren't doing which you need to change which will enable the business to grow? And in order to do that, you probably would succeed quicker if you worked out where you were limiting yourself first. I guarantee you; you will see parallels between your business limitations and your own personal limitations.

I believe that the single biggest growth experience any human being can undertake is to set up their own business. It is truly a forum for your own character development, thinly disguised as a commercial activity.

Before you write this off as a bunch of nonsense, who are the single most successful business people you can immediately name, and why? Richard Branson, Anita Roddick, Oprah Winfrey. What did they do? They took an idea and developed it by being 'mavericks'. They were each and every one of them clearly told again and again that their way was absolutely not the 'right' way. And yet they believed in themselves enough to persevere.

Think about how many companies are built around names of people – Ralph Lauren, Giorgio Armani, Jo Malone, Yves St. Laurent, Chanel – these people became their businesses so much, or rather, their businesses became in their image so much, that they are synonymous with a service, or a product. That association endures.

And yet, what do we do? As soon as possible, we try to create a detachment about our businesses by putting in place systems that 'anyone can run' so that when 'anyone' does start to run it, we wonder why on earth everything starts to flatline! Well it suddenly stops being about you and starts being about 'the company'. And since no-one quite knows how to define it other than the systems, it can only grow as big as the current system allows it to grow.

Let's be clear, no –one becomes an entrepreneur because they have a burning desire to end up cash poor, lose sleep, work endless hours and generally lose all semblance of a life. We become entrepreneurs because, much like most writers, we simply cannot be anything or anyone else. And yet no one ever gives us an 'Entrepreneurs Handbook' saying, look, its really hard work and much of it really sucks but while you still think that work is play and play is work, you are on the right track and don't give up, whatever you do! Because the rest of it is awesome and huge, enormous fun and very, very rewarding.

This is one of the reasons so many women are now setting up their own businesses.



Our current desires and lifestyle choices just don't fit into the established infrastructure companies' produce. We can only stay in them for a certain period of time, or rather up to a certain period of our lives, like when we have children is usually a breaking point. We become incompatible with the system as it exists. Beyond that, we are really on our own.

Well you were on your own, now you've got me to help.

I am going to tell you about some of the 'tools of the trade' that will make your life clearer, clarify your decisions, expose your thinking processes to evaluation and generally shine a light into the deepest, darkest recesses of your life. That way, there will be fewer surprises, and more focused goals which will, in turn lead to inevitable business success.

I have several children, one of whom has suffered critical ill health, lived in 4 different countries over 25 years, speak several languages, been divorced, homeless, successful, stood for public office and I must say that the single biggest growth experience that I have ever undergone, has been in trying to build a successful business out of a 'start-up' in my front room.

Sometimes I have thought I was succeeding and I had it licked, and then other times I knew I was totally insane and was using it as an excuse not to get a 'proper job', but at all times, boy, did I learn stuff about myself.

I learnt how I interacted with people, whether I was a good or bad boss, where were my boundaries, how to say no, how to praise a good job, how to define what I wanted from people, how to make myself clearer in what I wanted from myself, how to balance my family and my work (ok, still working on that one!) how to balance my ambitions with my desires and my time. All of that and more. And that was just Monday.....god help me for the rest of the week.

But not until I started to use certain tools, again and again, until I had refined them and honed them did I really start to believe I and my businesses were going to succeed – big time. It took over 2 years and so much money and so many mistakes you don't want to know.

Now, I can tell when I am applying my own rules, because success is effortless.

Chapter 5

New Millennium Business Tools

Barack Obama managed to raise money to fund his presidential campaign off the internet, which was totally unheard of before him, and raised more than anyone else who was running against him including people like Hilary Clinton who had been planning to run for years and building war chests for the same amount of time. People gave him money in \$5 and \$10 amounts! Just lots and lots and lots of it!

And yet, until it was done and shown to succeed as a process, no one believed it was even possible.

In much the same way as that was so simple and yet so earth shatteringly ground breaking that political fund raising will never be the same again; I believe business must be carried out in new and innovative ways.

The old ways were good and worked, for the old times. We are no longer there, we have moved on and live in a different world and operate in a different climate. Our competition is different, our challenges are different and the arenas within which we operate our businesses are so so diverse, from marketing, to online presence and sales, to overseas production to environmental issues, that it can actually be hard to explain in one sitting – should a Martian happen to pop in for example.

Economically, the recession, the economic downturn, or whatever you want to call it, is going to prove to be one of the single most defining moments in the history of Business as we know it. We will never, ever do business the way we used to do it, again. Never. We may even be facing a future where we don't even have Banks anymore in the way we did. Imagine that, an institution long thought to be the linchpin of our society.

And it will prove to be a total boon for people like us. And by that I mean people outside of the system. People not part of a corporation, people not expecting to live off a wage from month to month. People like entrepreneurs, businessmen and particularly businesswomen. Why? Well because the system, whatever it becomes, will end up benefitting those that don't have expectations of it and have always worked to create their own micro-climates within which their business may flourish. Come what may.

Think about the basic idea though, without expectation there can be no disappointment. On the flip side, if you have no expectation, it means you have to work a lot harder at being fluid and reacting to the moment as there is no preordained path to follow. You react to circumstances on a day to day basis, whilst always operating within a basic overall strategy.

Specifically there are 5 talents you need to master to succeed:

1. Understand yourself;
2. Boundary development;
3. Physical and nutritional development
4. Energy management;
5. Training your unconscious mind;

You can break it down another way. It can be considered development on the following levels:

1. Emotional;
2. Mental;
3. Physical;
4. Spiritual;
5. Subconscious.

Whatever works for you, just as long as you do it, and keep doing it. You see you don't have to be particularly clever or gifted or intellectual to do this. Fortune in this case, like so many cases, favours the bloody minded. Set up a daily practise, commit to it beyond all else, and just keep plugging away at it. And there you have it. Success.

I know, I know, but did you read the words 'commit'? Discipline is a basic part of any success routine.

Chapter 6

The sub-Conscious Mind

Welcome to your mind.

Why do we go to the gym for 6 weeks and stop. Why do we start a diet in the morning and give it up by nightfall? Why do we swear never to drink again only to be staring down a gin and tonic by 7pm? Why do we do all those things? Why?

Why do we sabotage ourselves, and what we know is good for us, on a regular, determined, daily basis?

This is where the Archetypes come in. They provide a key to your unconscious mind and enable you to get at the very least, a better understanding of how you work. What are your triggers and once we have done that, we at least have a foundation to build on.

Have a look at 'The Game' on www.geetasidhu.wordpress.com to see using archetypes in question.

.....to be continued.....

