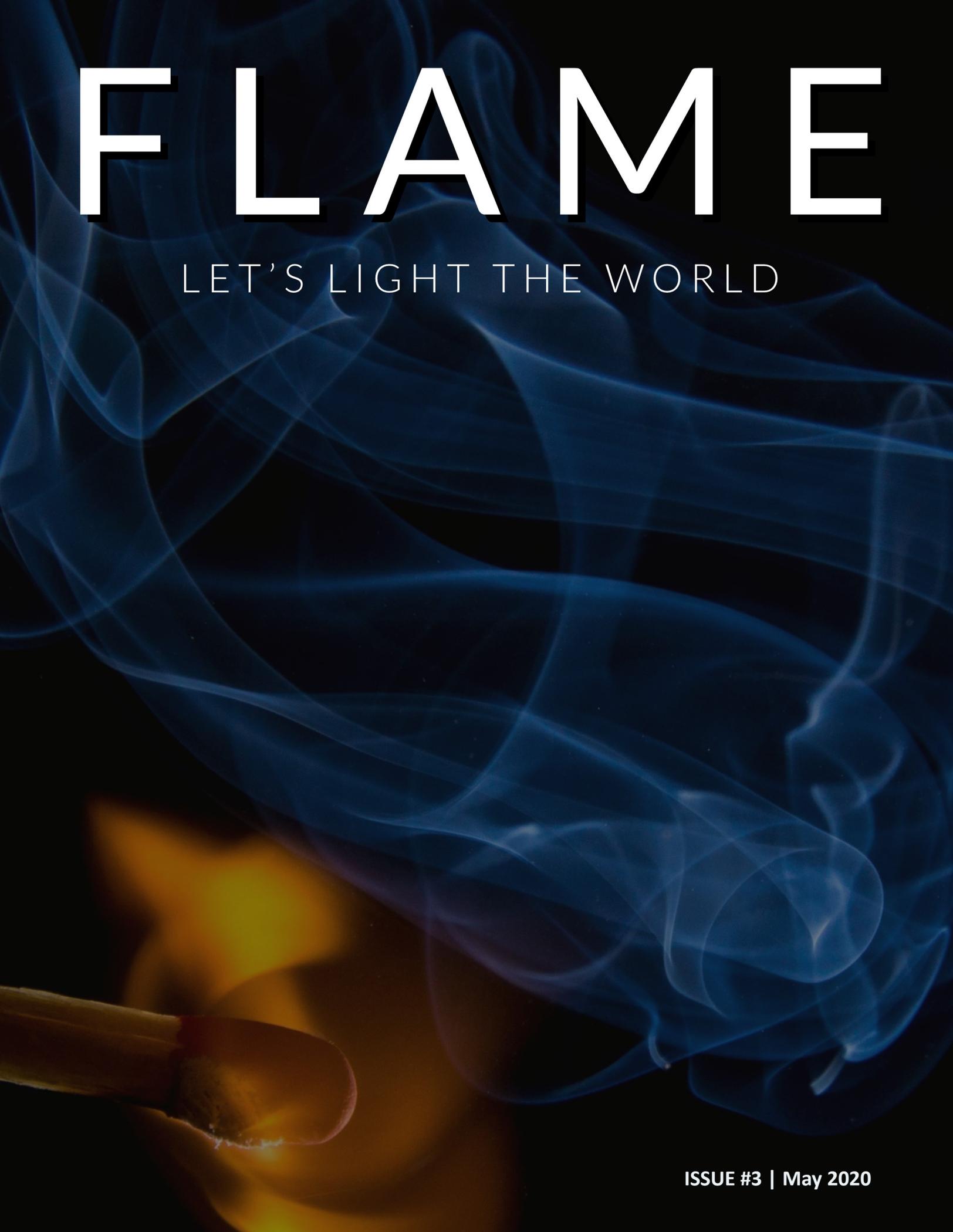


FLAME



LET'S LIGHT THE WORLD

ISSUE #3 | May 2020



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Message



Friends,

We cook our food and feed a family with a FLAME.

We light the way in the midst of darkness with a FLAME.

We honor fallen champions and heroes with a FLAME.

When we spark a FLAME within our community, our businesses, relationships, and everyday communication, we see results that are profitable, enjoyable and victorious.

F.L.A.M.E. or Faith, Love, Appreciation, Motivation, and Empathy, change the course of the things that matter most in our lives both personally and professionally. We empower our own success and that of those around us when we go to business and life with F.L.A.M.E.

I encourage you to pour into others, and allow wisdom and value to pour into you through the lens of FLAME. Now, please enjoy this edition of FLAME, which is powered by Collaborative Solutions Group, our supervising editor Christina Bartolotta, and all of our amazing contributors!

About CSG

Personal and professional growth only happens after YOU start growing. Taking action is key when your expectations are to fully develop skills and enjoy meaningful results. There are six core elements that we focus on to help you grow in to the best version of yourself. These elements do not exist on their own. Each element influences the others and how you balance these interactions is vital to personal growth...

Opportunities For Growth

1. Growth Events:
2. CSG Premium—Private Coaching
3. CSG Lite—Group Coaching
4. Club CSG
5. The Master Within
6. Solutions From the Huddle
7. Critical Strategy Guide

FAITH



The Business of Relationships

Yesterday I was sitting at my desk at the Chamber immersed in planning for several small business seminars when the phone rang. On the other end of the call was my friend Titus Bartolotta who opened the conversation, "I was just thinking about you, haven't chatted in a while, and wanted to see how you were doing."

Titus was not calling to ask me for a favor, to get advice on a business matter, or help promoting his business or an event. He simply wanted to make sure I was safe and doing well despite this pandemic we have all faced. We had a great conversation and hanging up the phone I reflected on what a great friend and business relationship I had in Titus.

Since the beginning of time, humans have struggled with their ability to create and maintain healthy business relationships. Some of us have great personal relationships but struggle to maintain strong business ties in our professional careers. Others are champions in their professional field but have difficulty balancing work with their affairs at home with their family.

Regardless of who we are or what we do, the one constant is we all have to deal with other people and to be truly successful at any endeavor we must be *masters* at the ability to manage and maintain healthy relationships.

Several years ago, I heard a preacher telling the story of a castaway who was stranded on an island all by himself for two decades. As the old man gathered up his belongings he had collected over his long stay, the captain of a rescuing vessel remarked at the three buildings on the island. "If you were the only one on the island all these years, why are there three different structures?" inquired the ship captain.

"Well," began the old man. "The first hut was the house I built for myself. Then I realized I must build a church to thank the Lord for my deliverance from the sea."

The ship captain waited patiently for the explanation for the third building. Seeing none forthcoming, he asked, "What is the purpose of the third structure?"

The old man looked dejected, shrugged his shoulders a bit, and then replied. "To be completely honest, things were going great for a while. But one day the congregation had a fight and I just left and built a new place."



The Business of Relationships

I still recall the laughter which rolled through the church that morning as most of us understood well the preacher's point. We see strife in relationships played out every day in the office, politics, through social media, and at home. Someone usually comes out on top and someone else loses. Usually, the issue is not so much the loss but how they feel they were treated in the loss.

In business or any other field, the single most important element of success is learning how to get along with people. Often, it's not what we say to people or how we say it that matters the most. It is how we make them feel by saying it.

James MacGregor Burns once said, "In real life, the most practical advice for leaders is not to treat pawns like pawns, or princes like princes, but all persons like persons."

Like the old castaway, we can move from relationship to relationship, turning our back and burning bridges, or we can recruit and nurture our associations with others. At the end of the day, it is not the new technology filled with webcams and Zoom platforms which will allow for our success – it is the people in our lives that make it possible and the friends we make along the way.



W.E. "Bill" Russell, CCE, IOM
President & CEO
Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce



LOVE

Why is having a marketing strategy so important?

Do you ever wonder why your marketing efforts seem to never generate the amount of business you desire? Are you spending lots of money and not generating quality leads? In most cases it is because you are marketing the way that most small businesses do. You buy a list, put down some great offers and hope that the phone will start ringing. This doesn't work and will continue to reinforce the general feeling that marketing doesn't work. For any of your marketing to have an impact you need to have a strategy first, before you do any tactics. Some times we put the cart before the horse.

Marketing isn't just about generating leads, it is about everything your business does. It is about finding a way for your ideal client to get to know you, like you, trust you, so they will try you out, buy from you more than once and then refer you to everyone that they know. We often forget this point and only see marketing as a way to get a name to a salesperson. Without a strategy, you can't move a client all the way through your business processes from start to finish with consistent results.

What does strategy really mean?

1. A [method](#) or [plan](#) chosen to [bring](#) about a desired [future](#), such as achievement of a [goal](#) or [solution](#) to a [problem](#).
2. The art and [science](#) of [planning](#) and marshalling [resources](#) for their most [efficient](#) and [effective](#) use. The term is derived from the Greek word for generalship or [leading](#) an army.

[Definition from BusinessDictionary.com](#)

What does tactics really mean?

[Means](#) by which a [strategy](#) is carried out; planned and [ad hoc activities](#) meant to [deal](#) with the [demands](#) of the moment, and to move from one [milestone](#) to other in pursuit of the overall goal(s). In an [organization](#), strategy is decided by the [board of directors](#), and tactics by the [department](#) heads for implementation by the junior [officers](#) and [employees](#).

[Definition from BusinessDictionary.com](#)

So a marketing strategy is a plan to attract your ideal client through consistent marketing tactics. Then it is a plan of how to keep them and get the to refer your business.

Spending time to develop your strategy is time well spent. It can mean the difference between wasting hundreds, if not thousands of dollars on marketing or attracting lots of qualified leads that turn into hundreds and thousands of dollars of profit for your company.

You must be able to differentiate yourself or run the risk of getting lost in all of the other me too marketing that no one pays any attention to. As our attention spans become shorter and shorter, your company has to find a way to

Why is having a marketing strategy so important?

cut through the noise and help your ideal client understand that you are the right choice to solve whatever problem they have or reason for looking at your products/services.

When you have a strategy that helps your ideal client understand that you are the best person to work with because you can solve their problem better than anyone else they may be talking with, you almost always can eliminate the price conversation.

A good strategy includes:

- Truly understanding your **ideal client**
 - Who are they?
 - Where do they get their information?
 - What problems they are trying to solve?
- Having a **unique** way to talk about your business and the services/products.
- Truly understanding your competitors and how they talk about themselves and you
- Considering packaging and combining services/products as a way to **differentiate** yourself
- Defining what you are the **expert** at. What do you know more about than the majority of your competitors that will help your potential clients see you are the obvious choice
- Making sure that marketing and sales function as a cohesive **team**
- Distinguishing only those tactics that will truly get your ideal clients attention and move them to **action**
- Understanding how you will execute the tactics you select, so that you have a **consistent** marketing effort, not just a tactic of the week
- Developing a way to **track** your efforts to decide what is working and what is not



Over the next several months I will attempt to guide you through understanding how to put a great marketing strategy together. As always if you need help, contact me at llorenz@marketingdirectionnow.com or pick up the phone and call at 704-699-4099.



enjoy
the
little
things

APPRECIATION

Healing Your Soul to Bless Your Business

How do we live in these times? Why does having a healed heart matter?

There are more distractions now than ever because there are so many opportunities. So many concerns. So much confusion. So many distractions.

How do we live in these times?

There are experts giving just totally contradictory information. We are to honor our leaders. Does there come a point where we don't just go along with things that don't make any sense?

How do we navigate this season? Since you're reading this publication you are a leader. You may lead your own business or you may lead within a business but you lead.

How do we live, how do we lead?

There is so much I do not know. So many answers I don't have.

One thing the Lord has given me in the last few days is James 5:8. It says, "You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord, is at hand." NKJ

Many times, especially if you have young children, we want them to be patient as in, "be quiet, leave me alone until I'm ready". And that's not what the Lord means when He says to be patient.

The Greek word that's translated patient in James 5:8 is "to be of long spirit and not lose heart." (Strong's) It's waiting with hope. That waiting also doesn't always mean doing nothing.

Another meaning of patience is "to persevere patiently and bravely when you're enduring misfortunes and troubles" and "bearing the offenses and injuries of others". That hints to why a healed heart is important. The word for patient in James 5:8 is the same word in 1 Corinthians 13, where it's describing love and saying that love is patient. This is that long-suffering.

It is not being a victim and it's not being passive. And I think too often in our church religious circles, we have been taught it's being passive. Just waiting to see what happens.

That puts us in a victim mentality because we're just waiting to see what happens to us. Like there's nothing we can do, but just sit here and wait. And that's not true. It's not ever true because we can partner with the God of heaven and pray what He wants to release and agree with what He is doing.

While we are patient, while we're waiting with hope and we're enduring we are to establish our hearts. The Greek word there means "to make stable, to set it fast, to fix it". So while we're patiently waiting, we're supposed to be strengthening our heart in the Lord.

Healing Your Soul to Bless Your Business

So we're not being patient doing nothing, just waiting to see what happens to us. We're being patient and strengthening our hearts. We strengthen our hearts by seeing the Lord more clearly and understanding who He is.

The Greek word for heart denotes the center of all physical and spiritual life. It is your soul, your mind as the fountain and the seat of thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, and endeavors. The center of your will and character in the middle and central in most part of anything. And it also includes the seat of your sensibilities, affections, emotions, desires, appetites, and passions.

Having a healed heart, having your soul healed is vital to be able to wait patiently and be able to live in these days, how He's calling us to live.

How he calls me to live - where to get involved or what things to question - might be very different than what He has for you. Being patient and establishing your heart is something that we all need to do. You don't need to do it as I do it, but it's still something that you're supposed to be doing in this time.

A wounded heart is easily offended, withdraws, or attacks. A wounded heart compares to find worth, strives, and confuses performance with identity. All these things are magnified when the pressure is on. All these things get in the way of loving and serving well. You can't lead well if you can't love well.

If you want to know more about establishing your heart in the Lord or finding healing for your soul in Jesus, please reach out to me. Your followers will thank you.

[Get more tips on Supporting Yourself to Support Your Business:](#)



Mukkove Johnson is a certified Christian Life Coach specializing in Childhood Emotional Neglect Recovery and healing emotional wounds through prayer. She lives in Alaska with her husband of 25 years and their four children. The oldest is 20 and the youngest is 2. She has written 3 books. Her latest book, *Mess to Majesty: Let God Love You in Your Mess*, was a #1 new release on Amazon. Connect with Mukkove at

www.mukkove.johnson.com



MOTIVATION

How Far Will You Go?

“How far will you go” is a question best asked by the person taking the journey and should be asked of themselves. One of the key elements here is that person driving the journey not only ask this question but know when to ask question. Having a realistic idea of how far you will go is important because you must be aware of the difference between the distance you will go, and how far the destination really is...

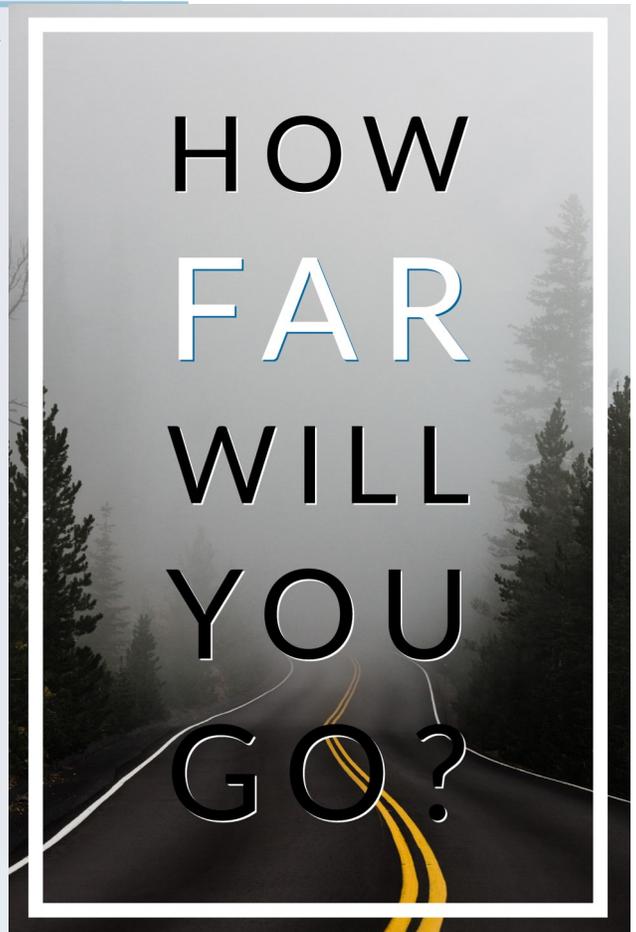
We are not talking about a concept of how far a person is willing to go, but rather an understanding of how far one can actually go. This will require one to take an inventory of all their resources. A person should do many things in preparation ahead of a journey of almost any magnitude. I can't think a better first step in the marshaling of effort, energy and resources than to ask one's self simply “How Far Will You Go?”.

How often do you place yourself on a journey that has more miles in it than you're able to travel? When these things happen, and they do happen... We find that more fuel, motivation and drive is required. It is possible to dig deep, rally more resources, and push on, but why do we have to do this so often? If you think about it, you've seen lots of people have to fire themselves up and call in favors just to make it to where they're going. In fact, as a culture we often create ecosystems that champion going far and belittle taking a path that's shorter, perhaps easier. You've seen it, you've heard it, and maybe you've even done this to others. The act of pushing and explaining how the charted course is not taking one far enough.

Let's look at it this way... Instead of saying go further, keep going, why didn't you plan to go further? What if we simply said “How Far Will You Go?” If everyone who ever takes a trip arrived at their destination, on time, and in tact every time, they'd likely be up for another trip and you'd feel comfortable charging them with another trip, planning for them to go again and rather than feeling frustrated about performance, we'd feel excited about the start of another journey.

People even talk about “GOING THE EXTRA MILE”. We talk about this as though it's a badge of honor, a righteous behavior and an act worth celebrating. I understand in some contexts this is a moment for exuberance, however if we go an extra mile, would we not be in a different place than we set out for? If we over shoot our goal by a mile as we are traveling to see our parents on Thanksgiving, or trying to land on the moon, or maybe even taking a cruise to a beautiful island, we would end up lost, alone, and without enough resources to make it back.

Sometimes that extra mile should have been a part of the original journey. If ending up at this magical extra mile is indeed the place we needed to reach than our initial gameplan was wrong. Our course chart was not completed before we took off. If we truly think though the journey and identify how far we will go, if we understand than what we need to get that far and hopefully know the why behind the journey, we simply need to arrive there, not go an extra mile. Listen, doing a job to completion and performing well during the course of the job



How Far Will You Go?

should be the mission. The consent of an extra mile being a mostly empty stretch of road because few drive on it is thrilling but it's really not an extra mile of your journey if it's a needed mile to arrive at a job well done, a job completed, and a project worthy of your name being placed on it.

Often how far we will go is not as far as we need to go, we should know that up front. Understand the limitations that are real and the ones we place upon ourselves, others and the journey. We should respect the ability we have and remain hopeful for what we will grow into through intentionality and effort one day. Perhaps our journey should include points along the way where we make camp, hold up, take a break, and refuel. Maybe the answer is I will go this far, and then I will go again. The point is we must be aware of our destination, know the points of interest along our journey and understand how far we will go mentally, emotionally, financially and physically.

There is virtually nothing outside of our reach, however we do have a reach and we must respect that reality. Knowing how far we can reach is more important than our ability to stretch. If we chart the course before we go the course, we will have all that we need to stay the course.

So ... How Far Will You Go?



Titus Bartolotta is the founder, president, and lead consultant for Collaborative Solutions Group, the founder of The Lotta Foundation, and Co-Founder and President of Business Leaders Unleashed. Originally from New York City, Titus has spent the majority of his life in North Carolina. Titus studied business management at York Technical College in SC, along with having completed both culinary arts, and seminary training. Having worked as a manager & executive for several companies ranging from small to large businesses, Titus has spent the better part of his life staying teachable and gathering knowledge at every stop of his career. It was in the city of Charlotte NC, that Titus met his wife Christina. Today the Bartolotta family works to raise their two beautiful young boys Josiah, and Noah.

EMPATHY



Online Marketing Doesn't Have to Cost an Arm and a Leg

We are definitely not in a state of "Business as Usual" these days. So Businesses have really had to tighten their belts on a wide range of marketing and customer engagement strategies. The following are a couple of digital marketing strategies that you put to work for your business and show a little appreciation for your customers and employees that don't cost anything more than a little time and effort.

- 1) Make sure your Google My Business profile is up-to-date and relevant: If you haven't taken a look at your Google My Business profile since you set it up, there is a pretty good chance that new features and functionality has been added. Considering this is one of the first things that your customers see when searching for you, its important that this is accurate.
 - a. Are your hours and contact information up to date?
 - b. Have you added products and services – are these worded to be relevant to your customers today?
 - c. Have you added relevant blog posts to your profile? Google may have shuttered Google Plus, but some of that functionality has resurfaced in Google My Business. Posts here can have an off-site positive effect on your visibility in search.
- 2) Go Live – Facebook Live that is. This an opportunity to engage directly with your audience. Some reports show Facebook Live viewer engagement has increased by as much as 50%.
 - a. Have a sale going on, let them know.
 - b. Want to show off a new product or service, Facebook is a great way to demonstrate things for your audience.
 - c. Build evergreen content that can be used over and over in the future
 - d. Do a live drawing for a give-away – this rewards and encourages future engagement – and makes people happy
 - e. Be human – customers engage with people more than they do with businesses and brands – this is a great opportunity to put a human face on your business.
- 3) Use Instagram Like a CHAMP – hashtags are powerful. Instagram is a very visual medium. Use great imagery content to tell your story
 - a. Boost morale – be positive, keep those around you in a good mood. So keep things light and fun whenever appropriate
 - b. Tell people what's going on with your business – if its business as normal, great, remind them. If things have changed make sure they know what has changed and how you can continue to meet their needs

Online Marketing Doesn't Have to Cost an Arm and a Leg

- 4) Show appreciation for your customers and employees – say thank you. Wish people happy birthday. It doesn't matter what the medium is, people love to feel appreciated. Show them that they are.
- 5) Leverage Reviews – Did somebody leave a glowing review on Google, facebook, or somewhere else? Tell people. Say thank you. It's social proofing at its best because it isn't you saying your business is the best. It also reminds people that you appreciate reviews and notice them which may lead to more people leaving you reviews.



Matt Swanson is the owner and founder of [MS Digital Solutions](#), a digital marketing agency that focuses on helping businesses make the most of their digital footprint. 15 years in the media industry and experience a variety of marketing roles has prepared Matt for helping businesses understand the possibilities and processes of a strong digital presence. Matt is married to Jen, his wife of 19, and together they have 1 son, Ryan, and live in Mooresville NC.

LEADERSHIP



May Peace Be With You

Growing up in the church, there was always a point in the service where we would turn to our neighbors, shake hands, and say 'Peace be with you.' Whoever was quick enough to say that phrase first would be immediately hit with a response of 'And also with you.'

It was a beautiful moment of connection during a 45 minute service where, for the most part, we were separated, isolated, and in our own worlds simply listening to the words of the priest, and doing some internal reflection on what the words spoken during the mass truly meant to us. Yet in that moment when we were encouraged to engage in this interactive behavior, it shook us up enough to stop, pay attention, look up, look around, and acknowledge our neighbors.

That phrase that is forever etched in my memory brought up what is so needed nowadays.

It reminds me of the song by Stevie Wonder, "Love's In Need of Love." In this song, he states "Love's in need of love today; Don't delay, send yours in right away. Hate's goin' round, breaking many hearts. Stop it please before it's gone too far."

Such profound lyrics, written in 1976, that still apply today. While love is definitely in need of love, lest we forget that peace is also in need of peace.

You see, we are often overrun with such emotions as fear and anger. And we know that those are the easiest emotions to access and run with. If you don't know what I'm talking about, just open up your Facebook newsfeed...I'll wait.

I run a group where at the beginning of each session, participants are encouraged to put their hands over their hearts and say, 'may I be peaceful, may all beings be peaceful.' And I start that way for a reason and with intentionality.

We must start with peace inside of us. If I am not peaceful, how can I expect you to be at peace? I will do all I can to make sure I get those negative and nasty feelings outside of me. There is a quote of a book I recently read that said, "emotions are a transferable commodity." In other words, if I don't like a feeling within me, I'm going to do whatever I need to do to get rid of it, like hot potato. If you're the closest bystander, then guess what? Yep. You're it! It's like playing tag growing up, or even the game of cooties. What someone else had, you didn't want. And when you were 'it' or had 'cooties,' you did all you could to transfer that to someone else. After all, misery (and cooties?!) loves company.

If you find yourself feeling angry, upset, anxious, disappointed, or anything along those lines, I would encourage you to look and see what you do with those emotions. Do you look at them, hold them, express them appropriately and give them room to breathe? Or do you push them either down within you or outside of you, trying to hand them off to someone else? Either way, guess what? You have a choice in what you do with those feelings. You can be empowered to do something with your emotions, or they will continue to hold the power over you.

So let me be the first to turn and say to you, may peace truly be with you.



Dr. Damon Silas is an entrepreneur, a healer, and an artist who tackles the subjects of mental health, personal development and professional growth with a dynamic twist. A former contractor with the military and DC school system employee, he has used the challenges he has witnessed and experienced in order to help countless others to increase and improve their healing and growth process exponentially. A two-time published author (with another on the way), radio and podcast host ('A Mental Health Mixtape' which can be found on the WDRB radio station on iHeart radio as well as on iTunes; and 'From Mourning to ACTION' out on iTunes), and hip-hop dance instructor, this father of 2 fur babies and husband is originally from the Boston area and loves calling NC home now. and improve their healing and growth process exponentially. A two-time published author (with another on the way), radio and podcast host ('A Mental Health Mixtape' which can be found on the WDRB radio station on iHeart radio as well as on iTunes; and 'From Mourning to ACTION' out on iTunes), and hip-hop dance instructor, this father of 2 fur babies and husband is originally from the Boston area and loves calling NC home now.

MINDSET



Healthcare workers and first-responders are unquestionably heroes during this time

So are business owners in our community and across the nation who are working around-the-clock to keep serving their customers and to keep providing paychecks to their employees.

I have the privilege of coaching and otherwise supporting dozens of business owners in a variety of industries – and I can tell you firsthand, the commitment, the innovation, the hard work, and the creativity that every single one of these entrepreneurs is pouring out right now is nothing short of heroic.

Keep it up!

What you're doing – right now – is holding the economy together. And the work we do over the next few months will be integral to our recovery.

We understand it to be considered common knowledge that nearly 50% of the workforce in the United States is employed by "small" businesses, and that nearly 70% of new jobs created over the past decade have come from "small" business.

Don't stop. We need you now more than ever.

And – PLEASE don't feel pressure to stop marketing, stop selling, and stop earning money. Assuming that you're not seeking to exploit this situation – you should not feel even one tinge of guilt about doing everything in your power to keep generating income throughout the duration of this crisis.

The *best* thing you can do for our economy is to keep generating revenue. Keep the dollars flowing. Keep providing paychecks to your employees, keep paying your vendors, keep generating tax revenue, keep the economy as healthy as possible.

That means you need to KEEP MARKETING and KEEP SELLING. Many businesses need to be creative in the ways that you engage with your customers right now, and in the messaging, you use while marketing.

We all certainly need to PIVOT.

But please don't STOP.



Danny Decker is a speaker, author, podcast host, and marketing coach for ambitious entrepreneurs. His book, [Marketing Simplified](#), is available on Amazon.com and through other retailers. Subscribe to the Marketing Simplified Podcast on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), or [Google Play](#). To learn more about Danny, and to access a wealth of FREE marketing tips and strategies, visit www.DannyDeckerMarketing.com.

The image features a dark background with intricate, flowing patterns of light blue and purple, resembling flames or smoke. The patterns are dynamic and layered, creating a sense of movement and depth. The colors transition from deep blue to a lighter, almost white glow at the edges of the patterns.

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