

OUT OF THE BOX

A short time ago my husband and I volunteered to make phone calls to raise money for a charity. All volunteers were given T-shirts and boxes with mugs inside. I took the T-shirt, but I really didn't want or need another mug. I have enough mugs for loose change and pencils so I declined the offer. I visualized a mug with writing on it and I knew I didn't need it. My husband ended up taking a box. When we got home. I decided to open the box to see what the mug looked like. It was a beautiful flowered mug in a very unusual shape. I was so sorry I didn't take one, but I never even opened the box to see what it looked like.

I realized there was a message here. I was so sure that I knew what the mug looked like, that I refused to take one without even opening the box. How often do we judge something unfairly? It's the old story of not judging a book by its cover, but how true it still is. In what areas of your business or personal life have you not opened the box?

OPEN THE BOOK

Is there a book that you have been wanting to read? Is it on your shelf untouched? Did you start the first page and lose interest? If it's important to you personally or professionally maybe it's time to open the book. Perhaps there's a course you've been wanting to take but you've filled yourself with reasons why not to take it. Make a commitment to yourself that this year you'll open the book or take the course and stretch a little. Learn something new and grow.

OPEN THE RELATIONSHIP

Is there someone that you've met and thought about getting together with, but haven't done it? Maybe you've made excuses about why you haven't made that first move. You're busy, they're busy, there might not be any purpose to it, etc., etc. I often hear excuses like, "he's so busy" or "we might be competitors" or "I'll get around to it when things slow down." Take a few minutes now to write down the names of five people you would like to build a relationship with. It might be for a possible

strategic alliance in your business, or someone with positive energy that you would enjoy getting to know. Does someone have a hobby or interest that fascinates you? A few months ago I was the speaker at an organization in center city. A woman handed me her card with a note on the back reading, "let's meet for lunch" A few weeks later we got together. She's a lawyer and she was fascinated with the concept of coaching. She took action and we have met several times and have opened a relationship. She liked the package and decided to open the box.

OPEN THE DOOR

Do you know your next-door neighbor? If you work in an office building have you ever met the people who work next door? I've known salespeople who travel many miles between appointments when they could be calling on several companies in the same building. Do you know the people who live next door to you? I must admit I have been living in a townhouse for over ten years and I don't know

every family in my cul-de-sac. I've always wanted to have an open house and invite all the neighbors, but I too, have not opened the door. As I write this I am motivated to put invitations in my neighbor's doors and to reach out for the New Year. Has your door been closed to your neighbors both at work and at home?

Have you made a judgment without considering the possibilities that could develop? What boxes do you need to open?

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