

Talked to Your CEO Lately?

By Rev. Cat Cox
UUSCM Good Officer

A little less than a year ago I surprised myself with a decision I made concerning my community ministry: I enrolled in a year-long "business coaching" program serving solo entrepreneurs. The program featured two three-day retreats, and I approached the first one with considerable trepidation. I dreaded that it would feel like a convention of water filter salesmen getting amped up about a pyramid scheme.

What I discovered was far different: a room full of conscious business owners with a passion for bringing their gifts to the world who want to do well while doing good. This was a business mentoring program that blew me away with its combination of integrity, practicality and, yes, spiritual depth. It's been challenging and transformative.

I'm a deep believer that we can only heal the world from a paradigm of abundance and that attending to our own inner (and yes, outer) abundance serves life because it models a way of being "good" which draws people to explore how to make their own lives richer while serving others. The alternative is the tired and failing Puritanical model of guilting them. Let's dispense entirely with hair-shirts, of which there are many subtle kinds. I've had to examine in myself my semi-conscious belief that serious ministry equals a vow of poverty and asceticism.

One of the primary learnings from this program is that I am the CEO of my ministry (and my life!). I am learning to ask questions like: what's the relationship between my vision for my ministry and my business plan? (Hint: what business plan?) How will I get word of what I offer out to those who need it most? I'm learning that as long as the words "marketing" and "smarmy" are equivalent in my mind, I will always find reasons to do nothing. A teacher I much admire once said something about not hiding your light under a bushel. I've long agreed, and now I'm learning better how to live it.

This is the spiritual practice to which I invite you. The world needs YOUR community ministry. Whatever the nature of your ministry, whether solo or within a service organization, full or part time, ordained or lay, you have gifts you know you are called to give. Talk to your inner CEO about getting the support you need to give them abundantly and to receive abundantly what you need to keep nourishing the wellsprings of your giving. Put aside any stories that whisper that there are more important things to focus on than that YOUR ministry should flourish. In the words of business coach and stealth spiritual teacher, Bill Baren, "take imperfect action."

Stop playing small. You really are the light of the world.

Blessings on Your Ministry -
Rev. Cat Cox, M.A.T., M. Div.
UUSCM Good Officer
The Path of Joy -

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www.revcat.net

revccat@revcat.net