

Success – A Spiritual Matter

EXCLUSIVE Interview with Gary Vurnum

History

1

Many of our values come directly from our childhood and upbringing. What are the most important values you feel you still carry today from your parents and other family members, friends, teachers, etc.?

Although I didn't always think that my childhood was particularly happy at the time – as I've got older I've realised how much fun I had!

The biggest thing I learned was that I was free to make my own mistakes. My parents never really enforced anything upon myself and my three brothers and one sister – and ALL of us got through to adulthood without any problems with drink, drugs, crime etc. As a parent now – I realise what a fantastic achievement that was by my parents.

One thing my mother always said to me has stuck – she said that she would rather we were naughty at home as long as we were well behaved when we went out. It's something I'm proud to say that I carried through to my daughter, Katie.

2

Did these come from your socioeconomic status, your home life, spiritual and/or religious experiences? If so, please describe.

We weren't a particularly poor family – though how my mother managed to work as a typist at home with five kids is beyond me.

Nor were we particularly spiritual. We were brought up with a sense of what was right and wrong – and we never went too far beyond those boundaries.

I've always tried to maintain my sense of honesty – even when I was 'battling' in the corporate world. They say that the 'good guys' never win – but I firmly believe that, as long as you remain true to yourself – everything will fall into place in the end.

3

Exactly how did you get started in your business or career? What prompted or pushed you to be attracted to your field?

I worked in a merchant in the City Of London for 11 years and I always knew that I wanted to one day work for myself...but I would never had had the 'guts' to do it unless my son, Connor was born.

He was born with severe physical and mental disabilities on June 2nd 1998 – and from that very moment on – my life changed.

Whereas before I was a career man with a longing to make more of myself – I now found that I had much more important things to worry about. My firm allowed my a few months off to spend at the hospital – and, once I realised that I couldn't combine the two very well – I decided that I needed a change.

But...I still didn't have quite enough belief to 'go it alone' – so I joined a banking software company as a consultant, and although I liked the challenge of the job, the travelling put a massive strain on my family life.

I resigned on 30th November 2001 – and vowed to do what I had always wanted to do – work for myself.

The only problem was – I didn't really have a fixed idea of what I wanted to do. So – I took a couple of months out to write a couple of ebooks based on how myself and Lesley (my wife) had remained so positive despite Connor constantly being close to death.

When we came through resuscitating our son on his first Christmas morning – and still 'laughed' about it – then I realised that perhaps I had something positive to share with the world.

4

What do you feel is your major accomplishment in business (list a few if you wish)? Did you have setbacks that were an influence on where you are today?

My major accomplishment in business is managing to combine both my working aspirations with juggling the needs of Connor, and my (thankfully, 'normal') six-year-old daughter, Katie. I'm lucky in that Lesley and I were friends before we got together – so we can cope with so much time in each others' company.

Also – I've approached my business with an attitude of 'you've got to spend money to make money'. Too many people approach starting a business on the 'net with the naïve hope that they can do it all for free. They can't. I've racked up massive debts on my credit card – which, almost a year later – are being paid off.

But...unless I had spent the money in the first place for the best resources etc – then my whole 'presence' on the 'net would be viewed entirely differently.

The only setbacks I have had have been technological – where I have been let down by the reliability of third parties. Part of the reason was probably that, although they were fairly cheap, and had a good reputation – they grew too big too far. A lesson for us all!

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Who has been the most influential person in your life – and why? These could be family members, friends, teachers, business associates, spiritual leaders, business leaders, authors, speakers, etc. If you have more than one, please tell us about the MOST important ones who were instrumental in helping you arrive at where you are today.

The most influential person on my life is undoubtedly Connor. The way he still silently laughs and smiles despite his never-ending problems always makes me realise how lucky I am.

Without him – I wouldn't be doing this – no question.

Without him – I wouldn't have been able to 'see' what I should have been doing all along.

I have always been a student of personal development – but I never realised that I had 'it in me' to be able to write about it before. Now I know that I have a talent and experiences that can benefit other people as much as me!

6

What books or resources have been especially influential in your life?

The book that finally made everything 'click' was "The Science of Getting Rich" by Wallace D. Wattles.

I read it at a time when I was at a crossroads in my consulting job – and reading it made me realise that I knew practically all of what I needed to succeed already. It was almost as if the book was 'given' to me at that time in my life to give me a little mental push to make the step to working for myself and sharing what I knew.

7

What is your favourite quote?

My favourite quote is from my favourite 'guru' – Jim Rohn.

“Time is more valuable than money.
You can get more money, but you cannot get more time.”

I have it pasted on my home office wall – so that I can look at it if I start feeling 'lazy! Lol

8

How much courage has it taken to pursue your goals?

In retrospect – I suppose it took a lot of courage to make that step between having quite a good, reliable income which easily paid for the mortgage and a few 'treats' – to having literally no income – yet with the mortgage still to pay!

But...deep inside me – I KNOW that I can make a difference with what I write – so that spurs me on – even when I contemplate if I should go back and work in the 'real world'.

9

What role do you feel fear might play as an obstacle to personal and financial success, if any?

It is not so much fear that holds people back. Sure – there is a fear of failure – and of the consequences of that, but I believe that most people aren't confident enough in their own abilities to make that big step. (I know – I was guilty of that for many years!)

If you can believe in yourself – you will grow into whatever challenges you will face. A year ago I wouldn't have believed that I would have learned marketing from scratch because of writing my ebook – but I did. Now – this side of my business is almost as much of a challenge to me as the writing side.

You can only benefit from trying – even if you fail! The way I look at what I do is that, for whatever reason, it falls apart – then I'm going to have a wonderful entry right at the top of my CV – and a wealth of experience that I never had before.

10

Has fear ever been responsible for something great “not happening” in your life?

Although there isn't anything specific that has responsible for something 'not happening' – I am always fighting the battle of belief in my own abilities as I try to push myself forward.

I have a rounded idea of what I want to do as my online business grows – but I know that, unless I step out of my 'comfort zone' – it won't happen.

It takes me back to something my dad always used to say (and still does! lol) when I was in 'two-minds' about going somewhere:

“Come on, you'll enjoy it when you get there!”

And you know what – he was right! I did always enjoy it when I got there – and I still find it the same now when I do something that I spend days beforehand worrying about!

Present and Future

11

What are your current projects and what do you hope to accomplish with them?

I am currently working on converting an old, almost forgotten 'classic' into an ebook. This has become a 'labor of love' and I spend as much time as I can on working on it.

It should work well for me, financially – but, just reading, and re-reading it non-stop for weeks has given me a 'buzz'...and I can't wait to share it with as many people as I can!

I also have my second 'main' ebook that I wrote at the beginning of the year to complete. It's over 200 pages long – but I have yet got around to completely 'finish' it yet – but I'm going to schedule its release for early next year.

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What specific plans do you have for the future?

I want to make sure that my need to help as many people as possible doesn't compromise my own family's financial security. It may sound a little trite – but I have in the past 'shot myself in the foot' from an income perspective as I literally gave my knowledge away.

Being helpful can be combined with being financially successful – and I am at the early stages of working on a membership site where the best of both worlds will be available. Watch this space!

Spirituality in your business

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In your opinion, is there a difference between religion and spirituality?

I firmly believe there is – because I am one of the least religious people there is! Sorry if that offends you – but I never really 'got on' with church etc as a child – and it has stuck with me ever since.

But...

I am a firm believer that there is 'something' else out there which we can't explain. We have had so many close 'scrapes' with Connor where someone being in the right place at the right time has literally saved his life.

Also – the more I write, and the more I read – I have come to realise that there is a common thread through everything we do – you become what you think about. As we can't explain why from a material sense – then there must surely be some other form of 'creation' out there wherever – based upon solely on what we think.

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Do you bring spiritual principles to your day-to-day business? If so, specifically how do you do this? Please cite general things such as a mission statement or overall guiding principles, as well as specific examples of these. i.e., customer policy and customer service in action.

I believe strongly in two things where my business is concerned:

“Treat others as you wish to be treated.” And “Give more than you receive.”

I always answer every email I get – although I get so many every day that sometimes it takes me a while. I’m not in the business of treating people like email address – I know that I would appreciate the personal touch – so that’s what I try to provide.

I write as if I am talking directly to the person who is reading – which can sometimes be difficult when you are talking to over 20,000 people who all want to read about different things.

I am also conscious of the fact that I should be totally honest – and make sure that I give as much value as I can. I know that there are many readers of mine who can’t afford to buy mine, or any others’ ebooks – so I try to give as much value as I can for free in my weekly ezine - Our Success Partnership.

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Has there ever been a time when you felt that spiritual principles had no place in business? If so, what changed your mind?

When I worked in the corporate world – I always believed that if your face ‘fits’ – you would get on and succeed. It was true to some extent – although now I realise that you can base your career on hard work, honesty, and integrity and still become a success.

I never believed that I was good enough – and THAT was MY problem. It wasn’t that my face didn’t fit – or that I didn’t work hard enough – it was because I was mentally ruling MYSELF out!

My mind only really changed once I started working for myself and realised that coincidence, belief, attitude, and ‘fate’ DO work TOGETHER with hard work and effort to make a success. Too many people fall between the tangible and spiritual sides without realising that you need both to succeed.

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Has there ever been a time when you felt that your own failure to use spiritual principles might have caused you unnecessary challenges? If so, please give as much detail as you are comfortable with.

A milestone happened a couple of months ago when we had a severe invasion of our privacy which made me question why I was doing what I was. Although it wasn't due to my business online – this episode could have easily come from there.

I was ready to quit because I didn't want to put my family at risk. But...Lesley talked me out of it – and I began to look for 'reasons' why I had this 'sign' that could have forced me to stop what I loved doing.

I realised that I wasn't always 'walking my talk'. I was talking about success – yet I was constantly undermining my own ability for financial success because I believed that I should give as much away for free as I could.

In short – I had felt guilty that I wasn't qualified to charge for my knowledge. This episode changed my mind. I realised that the only way I could continue to provide as much 'value' as I could was if I was financially secure through doing it.

From that time I haven't looked back – and my belief in my abilities is getting stronger every day – I KNOW what I was put here to do.

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If you could give other business owners one key piece of advice on the subject of bringing spirituality into their business, exactly what would it be?

The one thing I have always believed in is that "Every problem is a solution to a future problem."

Sure, I've had times where I have had my head in my hands with worry about what had gone 'wrong' – but then I would look for how I could benefit from it. What had I learned? How could I stop it from happening again? Had I indirectly brought it upon myself?

I look at every problem as a challenge because I know that, unless you have a positive attitude to your setbacks – you will lose the 'edge' that could help you solve it. It's always worked for me so far!

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What are three things you know now that you most wish you had known earlier?

I wish that I had more belief in ME in the past. Too often I would have reconciled myself to the fact that so-and-so was better than me – and would therefore get promoted before me etc.

But...I know that I have a potential only limited by myself alone.

I also should have worked harder on myself and actually 'used' all of those personal development books I had read. Sure – some of it 'rubbed off' – but I never realised how powerful they could be as 'tools'. The feedback from my own ebook – "The Science of Success" has proved that.

I should have also focused more on what I wanted to do – rather than what I believed 'society' said I should do. I always looked to work for the bank for 40 years then retire comfortably with a two-thirds pension. I no know that I would never have made it. Too many people look at job 'security' as a crutch – when, in fact, there is really no such thing as security where working for someone else is concerned.

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What is the single most important thing you'd like to share with our readers that we haven't discussed yet.

I believe that YOU can achieve whatever you want – provided that you believe it. Too many people chase after money instead of happiness – and if they do get it – they realise that having lot of money isn't all it is 'cracked up to be'.

You should focus on having a happy contented, and worthwhile family (or home) life – and you will be surprised how this will come to be reflected in your working life.

Not everyone can (or wants to) become self-employed – and the Internet will be a false dawn for many people.

If you cannot manage to do what you love – find something about what you do that you can love. Everything comes back down to what's inside in the end – rather than what figure is on your bank account.

Closing Question

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Even though the tragic events of September 11 are still very recent, do you feel they have (or should have) changed the way we conduct both our personal and business lives?

I believe that more people are now aware of how fragile their careers can be, for one. We can never account for why these things happen – so we should never assume that the ‘status quo’ will be kept for the next ‘x’ years.

We SHOULD look more towards personalised contact where business is concerned – but I think that most of them will just carry on regardless.

If there is one positive to come out of this horrendous episode is that people ‘in the street’ are now more open to looking at the ‘why’ where their lives and careers are concerned.

Perhaps it won’t show up for a few years – but I think that this ‘signal’ is an important milestone in an age where people want to live a more fulfilled life instead of literally burning through 40 years working hard – and miss ‘living’ in the meantime.