

My Irreverent Business Thinking

A random collection of articles from The Ratliff Report™ intended to inspire you to travel outside of your comfort zone.

By Joseph Ratliff

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Is Attention The New Currency? Or Just Another Gerbil Feeder?

By **Joseph Ratliff** | December 27, 2010

Have you ever thought about **why** you've hit the "retweet" button on a blog post or other piece of [content](#) beyond "*that was a good piece of content*"?

Be honest with yourself here, I've certainly "hit the button" a little early quite a few times myself, perhaps where I shouldn't have at all. Was a piece of content really worth telling a thousand other people on your follower list and adding to the "noise" of Twitter?

Really? Was it?

In other words...does something like a Twitter button just equate to a gerbil feeder or does the resulting "attention" actually mean something to you?

(and I'm using Twitter only as an example, Facebook and others can follow this pattern too)

Think about this today.

Well Yes And No

By Joseph Ratliff | August 22, 2010

Yes...

- Yes online marketing is a valid business model...
- Yes it does require that you work hard...
- Yes it requires marketing skill...
- Yes it requires the ability to sell and persuade (not illegally, unethically, or immorally however)...
- Yes it does take some time to build an affiliate marketing business...
- Yes you will have [competition](#) in niches that make money...
- Yes you will have to do things better from time to time...
- Yes smart competitors will be watching what you do...
- Yes you could make excuses, whine, or worry about “how hard this is”...and yes you could give it all up.

So...

Can you do this? **Yes.**

Will you do what it takes?

And no...

- No marketing does not create overnight riches.
- No there is no magic button to fill your bank account with cash.
- No there aren't many “untapped niches” where you will dominate anymore.
- No marketing isn't easy.
- No there are no shortcuts.
- No you shouldn't try to figure this business out beforehand.
- No you shouldn't over-analyze opportunities, that will paralyze you.
- No the Internet isn't some big shiny object anymore, so “make money online” isn't a new topic anymore...

So...

No you're not going to succeed without the right mindset...

...will you do what it takes to develop that mindset?

If the answer is **No**, maybe you should keep your day job.

Are You Writing For The “Slush Pile” Of Online Content?

By Joseph Ratliff | February 10, 2011

Magazine editors store un-used queries in a “slush pile.” This gives them an area where they can pull from ideas submitted to write articles for their mags.

But on the Internet, this “slush pile” takes a very different form, one that is actually kind of weird when you think about it.

I wonder, what would a blogger think if he/she had to pay \$1.00 a word to have a blog post written for [content](#)? Would we have the same Internet we have today (content mills, autoblogs, and some other low-level content) if that was the “standard”?

I don’t think so.

What about article directories? What if the standard was to get your byline AND get paid 50 cents to \$1.00 a word to submit to Ezinearticles? Hmm...

Sure, your content would have to be high quality, but overall, the Internet landscape might be different if there wasn’t low-level, low-pay/no-pay content being so easily distributed (obviously, not all low-paid content is low-level, but writers should hold themselves to higher standards IMO).

And obviously, if you have your own blog, you wouldn’t pay yourself to write your own content, but to leverage and scale the blog, guest posts could be paid for, product reviews would fall into a different category, and overall, I think the Internet would be far better off.

So, think about this today, are you [writing](#) for the slush pile (I have in the early days)? Are you an editor that pays \$2 – \$5 an article “just to get content”?

I say, let’s raise the bar everyone. 😊

The Quality Versus The Quantity Of The Conversation

By **Joseph Ratliff** | April 28, 2011

While you're sitting in a taxi, you could pull out your smart phone and find info on the net, update your Facebook page, Tweet something...and on...and on...

But are you having any sort of quality conversation doing all that at once?

Is all of this "[real-time](#)" stuff really doing us any good?

I don't think we've adapted to it fully enough to say yes to those questions.

I mean, can you **really**, truly have a quality conversation with someone at this current place in time (be honest with yourself)? How many times have you been in a conversation with someone only to hear a variation of the following:

"Can you hold on just a sec, I've gotta take this..."

And this is what bothers me. I mean, it's cool to have these [tools](#) at our disposal...but I think the way we're using those tools at the expense of a quality conversation is irresponsible (and I'm guilty of it as well).

It's almost like a conveyor belt that just keeps moving even when you turn it off. We have all this time pressure to "cram in" as much technical life as possible into one day...and 24/7 that day just keeps plugging along (people keep Tweeting, Facebook updating etc...).

When do we have time to have truly meaningful conversations anymore?

Why does life have to move so fast? And even more importantly, who said it had to?

I've written a sort of "[Manifesto](#)" on the topic before, but I'm going to be thinking and [writing](#) about this a lot in the coming weeks...and how it has been impacting businesses (because yes, it has). Customer service has gone out the window, profits are suffering, and we blame this economy thing...but what if the economy really had nothing to do with it to begin with?

Maybe it has to do with how we're truly treating the people who support our businesses.

More to come...

Mobile

By Joseph Ratliff | July 31, 2011

Please remember this article.

Not because I said so, but because in about 5 – 15 years you'll come back to it and say *"You know what, he was right."*

About mobile, mobile web marketing, mobile web apps, and on and on...you're going to hear the supporters, the detractors, etc...

You're going to feel "the big shiny object syndrome" as all the geeks, magazines, business people and so on rant about how something will die (like the web), something else will live...and some other disruptive statements.

Folks, the mobile revolution is just like the telephone was, just like the radio was, just like TV was, just like the Internet was even.

Yet...they are all still used for business.

Nothing is going to die, yes the business world might change (a little), but in the end...none of these so-called huge developments for the business community have developed into anything beyond tools to connect with *people*.

Business still will be about the people who support those businesses...period.

It is the same today as it will be in 5 – 15 years or more...the only difference might be in the toolbox.

Rules, What Rules? Part 2

By Joseph Ratliff | August 23, 2011

As entrepreneurs, because we don't follow some traditional "rules", we're sometimes thought of as "rebels."

That thought makes me vomit in my mouth every time I hear it. What are we really "rebellng" against? Let's analyze that for a minute:

- **We must be rebels because** we "think differently", instead of following some pre-determined "standard ways" to live set by society that are older than my grandpa.
- **We must be rebels because,** for the most part, we hold ourselves accountable to improve, instead of looking to blame other people and institutions for our shortcomings.
- **We must be rebels because** we actually took the initiative and supposed "risk" to want to work from home or create a business in a real world where you "need to get a good job" according to society. I use the term "risk" lightly, because it's actually riskier to hold a single income at a job that dictates our lifestyle...but don't tell anyone that because you'll really be labeled a rebel.
- **And on, and on...**

Are we really rebels though?

Or is that just a term used by society in general to describe us?

Should we even accept that description as the "norm"?

Or, should we raise the bar as entrepreneurs?

I think we should raise the bar.

I think that every time we get the chance, we should encourage others to join us as entrepreneurs. Sounds cult-like I know...but think about it for a second...what really happened to your quality of life when you "took the leap" as society describes it?

Most of the entrepreneurs I talk to won't ever give it up, even when the chips are down.

Personally, my quality of life improved drastically once I realized that working 8 hours a day really ISN'T required (who wrote that "rule" anyhow?).

Sure, we have our long days, but it's at our discretion as entrepreneurs...not some stupid "work for work's sake" mantra.

So...I ask you the question again...

Are we really rebels? Or, should we be the ones setting the standard?

And one last thought...

Are you following the rules, or creating them?

A BONUS THOUGHT:

You've no doubt heard the phrase "think outside the box" right? If you "think outside the box" as an employee, and sometimes as an entrepreneur, you typically get praise or recognition of some sort.

My bonus thought for you today is...*was there really a box to think outside of in the first place?*

The Elevator Pitch

By Joseph Ratliff | October 30, 2012

Forget the elevator pitch.

In fact, forget the idea entirely... don't practice one... don't even say the words, ever again.

Here's why I think so, what you should do instead, and why that will work.

Let's start with the obvious, **we're human beings.**

Not an earth-shattering concept right?

So, if you think about/form an "elevator pitch" in the traditional sense, we are basically saying it's a numbers game... we're going to say the same thing or a variation of the same thing to every potential customer, client, or vendor so they can get a clear idea of what our business is about in a short period of time. Some will get it, some won't, but forget the rest... or try to explain your business to those folks if you have to.

Right?

Wrong.

We are human beings... and there are so many variables at play when attempting to do this, we cannot possibly account for them all... so I have a better idea...

Just start a natural, meaningful, and dare I say it, human conversation... and where it's natural talk about your business and what it offers. Just let the conversation flow.

You're not a fucking billboard for your business, you're a human being for crying out loud!

And so is the person you're talking to.

Now, you might be thinking... *"Joe, you're a moron, an elevator pitch is something short and pithy designed to express 'what you do' in a short period of time... like an elevator ride."*

To which I ask you a question... dear reader...

Which is more valuable to whom you're talking to (which is the point, right?):

1. A concise billboard ad about your business, or...
2. A conversation that is interesting, adds value, and naturally leads to a deeper discussion about your business and what it offers the potential customer, client, or vendor (and perhaps, a discussion of the value they might have for you).

Which leads to the next natural question...

How do you start that conversation?

And this is the most important part of this article...

Why on earth would you start (or continue) a natural conversation with a billboard ad? Or, even if you have well-developed "elevator pitch" that is interesting to the other person... how deeply effective is that... really?

That's why I wrote this, because I'm going to develop this thought further, and continue this as a series of posts as we go along (under the ["elevator pitch"](#) tag).

I know I'm NOT the smartest person in the room of life, so I will learn a lot while I explore this important topic.

What say you?

The Elevator Pitch – Part 2

By Joseph Ratliff | November 12, 2012

When I wrote an earlier post about the [elevator pitch](#) I suggested strongly that you ditch it, never mention it, and instead start a meaningful and valuable conversation instead.

In this post I'm going to focus more on "how to" start that meaningful conversation in about 60 seconds or less (which seems to be the time period we were supposed to give our "elevator pitch").

Let's get started...

The first suggestion from my perspective, which has worked well for me, is NOT to talk about your business intentionally AT ALL in that first crucial 60 seconds.

Instead, start a conversation. This isn't rocket science by any means, start with "Hello" and work your way forward, naturally progressing with exchanging names, common ground, weather... whatever starts and continues the conversation naturally. The key word is... **naturally**.

This is where most people get it so wrong it's not even funny.

DO. NOT. SELL.

I know this goes against conventional wisdom, I mean, you're "supposed" to get to the point where you pitch something right?

No... you're not.

But, if we examine the typical elevator pitch scenario, you use your pitch and set up a meeting or sell your idea/product/etc... in 60 seconds or less. The law of averages says if you talk to enough people, with an "effective" elevator pitch... you'll get results.

I'm telling you that is like directly selling a \$2000 training course with ONLY a classified ad and no further contact.

Even if your only objective is "get a meeting"... and you have further selling to do to "convert" and make a sale, I'm going against the grain and saying this:

Starting a normal conversation and then seeing where it leads, focusing on building a relationship with the person instead with NO alternate motive (like selling)... is MUCH more valuable.

- With the traditional method, you might get a few sales or schedule a few meetings.
- With the “relationship building” method, you’ll get whatever sales or meetings you get initially, and it may not be as many (again... initially)... PLUS you’ll have developed a relationship worth so much more by putting the person first, and the sale second.

What I’m saying is you can get **so much more from that initial 60 seconds** than a few sales or meetings... but if you don’t focus on beginning a relationship with the other person at the start, and instead focus on your “greed gland”... you’ll lose the opportunity or have to work even harder to get:

1. Referrals
2. More sales
3. Easier to close sales
4. More valuable attention
5. And more

Nobody likes to be “sold” by someone with the “used-car salesman” mentality... but they LOVE buying from someone they trust, when it’s THEIR decision to buy.

And, when you’ve developed the relationship properly... you’ll have a list of people to contact who will do much more for you, with you, and buy from you because the progression of your business relationship was **natural**... not forced.

I suppose I’m basically promoting the idea of selling without the “classified ad” mentality of the traditional elevator pitch... right?

Wealthy people get wealthy because they do what other people don’t... so go get wealthy.

What...Are You Scared Industrial Institutions?

By Joseph Ratliff | April 19, 2012

Old publishing, the current entertainment industry, the former recording industry, mass media, ~~some~~ nearly all idiotic members of government and all big companies who once relied on antiquated ways of delivering average products and services to consumers.

Guess what, you're running scared.

I see it.

What I call "industrial institutions" from MPAA to RIAA... from News Corp to government... and from Fortune 500's that are slow to move... I see it.

You're running scared because there is a HUGE power shift. You try to pull the wool over our eyes as consumers... but once we catch on, it's all over the Internet... and your attempt has failed. But you keep trying... you keep holding onto the business models, the "controls", the DRM, [SOPA](#), PIPA, and the other stupid tactics that just piss people off from wanting to do business with you.

Which means you're running scared.

And the scariest thing of all... not everyone in the buying public has caught on yet. When they do, you'll be put out of business.

Don't get me wrong, we live in a capitalist society (for now), so I want you to make a profit. But you need to listen to your customers... really listen, not treat them like idiots, not placate them like children.

Really listen to your customers... because they aren't consumers any longer... average "institutionalized" products and services won't work any longer.

The pressure is on you. Adapt or die. Quit running scared, and instead embrace the new age and new technology for what it is...

A way to focus on my core message to the people who choose to read my blog:

Business is and always will be about people.

The “Shiny-ness” Is Finally Wearing Off — Now Let’s Get Back To Business

By **Joseph Ratliff** | November 10, 2011

The “shiny object” of social media is finally wearing off.

Now let’s get back to business, and quit letting it be a distraction. Use social media **tools** (which is all they are — tools) if you need to use them for your business. If you don’t feel you need to use them...then don’t.

Contrary to popular belief, you don’t HAVE to use social media at all...and you can build a successful business. Don’t let the geeks tell you otherwise.

Advertising as a form of getting your message out there is still working, although the larger “mass-media” forms aren’t being paid attention to all that much any more (TiVo anyone?).

Direct marketing (like direct mail) is still working...as long as the Postal Service stays afloat — and even when they don’t, smart marketers will adapt.

Nothing is “dying”, no one is going to “kill Facebook” except Facebook themselves, and business will still be conducted.

In short, nothing to see here people...let’s just get back to the main driver of our businesses...**the people that support our businesses. Without these people, none of this hyped up crap matters...even though I do contribute to that problem at times when I get excited about something 😊.**

Let’s just get back to connecting with, sharing with, and supporting the people that support us (the top 20% supply 80% of the revenue for our businesses...how well do you support that group?).

Be REALLY Careful Where You Get Your Images

By **Joseph Ratliff** | October 15, 2012

Online images and photographs, and the appropriate use and licensing of those images is an important topic.

Recently, my friend and fellow copywriter **Ryan Healy** wrote a [blog post](#) covering a series of letters he received demanding payment in settlement for use of images that claimed he allegedly violated **copyright** law.

Read the linked post at <http://www.ryanhealy.com/getty-images-extortion-letter/> to get his explanation of what happened.

In short, folks... if you use images of ANY type online, in blog posts, articles, on websites... whatever... you have to be **extremely** careful you understand the rights surrounding the use of images. You also have to be careful from whom you purchase those images, and who controls the rights to those images.

I'm not an attorney, so consult one if you feel you need to... this is that important.

Now for my opinion on the topic...

In short, there are a few companies Ryan listed in the blog post I linked to above where he recommends you do NOT shop for images. I will be following his recommendation.

EDIT: I've gotten a few emails asking those recommendations be posted here, so I will quote [Ryan's post](#) where he placed those recommendations in a nice listed format:

A List of Photo Resellers to Avoid

If you disagree with the use of settlement demand letters that ask for extortionate amounts of money from innocent infringers, then you can vote with your dollars and take your business elsewhere.

The following companies are known to issue tens of thousands of settlement demand letters every year, many of which are sent to innocent infringers:

- Getty Images
- iStockphoto (owned by Getty)
- Masterfile
- Corbis Images

- Jupiter Images
- Superstock

Regardless of the outcome of my particular case, I will no longer support these companies. I recommend you avoid them also.

That being said...

I think photographers who publish their images online with the expectation to profit from said images deserve all the profit and credit from these images that the law allows.

But the law, in my opinion, needs to be clarified and more specific so NO ONE can set damages received for inappropriate use of these images (not the accuser or the accused).

Instead, the law itself needs to get really clear about what damages can be awarded, so clear that there is NO argument about who pays, and who gets paid... then what is paid when something like Ryan's situation happens.

Here's an idea that is circulating in my head, and it is by no means complete:

- When a photographer sets a price for their image they need to be clear in their pricing... and if there are royalty payments, those need to be crystal clear as well.
- These figures need to be listed **clearly** somewhere where the photo is being sold or published for use (not all images are sold for profit, but for purposes of law, these figures STILL need to be published to establish value).
- If someone uses a photo without proper paid license, or does not obtain proper documented permissions from the photographer, then this published value becomes the basis for damages set.
- The published value needs to be set **ONLY** by the photographer, and changed **ONLY** by the photographer, and **MUST** be set in order to claim damages.
- The damages for inappropriate use are set to a specific (and reasonable) multiplier of the base figure set **ONLY** by the photographer.
- Also, the photographer cannot sell the photo for profit at a different rate than would be expected to be paid if someone simply used their photo

inappropriately (e.g. they would price it at a sale price, and a “value establishing” price, and both are the same).

- And finally, a watermark establishing licensing rights, or use rights would need to be placed on the base image uploaded by the photographer in order to claim damages (if someone pays for a license, this watermark would be removed... so it's easier to determine if the images are used correctly).

Obviously, this isn't a perfect system... but the discussion around this sensitive issue will continue, and is an important one... but the bottom line is...

Be very careful about your use of images and photos (e.g. don't just search Google blindly and use images freely). Also be careful from whom you purchase images, keep your documentation on file (offline) for proof etc...

For me, from this point forward, I will either be using a [Creative Commons](#) search to find images licensed for use without the baggage of the license (see the linked website for details)... or taking my own photos for use myself.

It's easier that way... sheesh. 😊

The Entrepreneur's Fast Food

By Joseph Ratliff | October 3, 2011

If you want to start a business from home, working in Internet Marketing, or even a real entrepreneurial venture with VC etc...

You could be on a diet of entrepreneurial "fast food" that could be completely disabling, and killing your venture before it starts.

What am I speaking of?

Information.

There's so much of it, and so many home study courses etc... that an aspiring entrepreneur can be paralyzed by it.

But hold the phones...this isn't a post about "analysis paralysis"...it's about the "fast food" nature of this information we seek to grow or start our businesses.

Have you ever thought who it might be sold by?

Could those people hope, that like McDonalds, if we consume so much of their information we will never start or grow our businesses and compete with them in the first place?

Sounds a little conspiracy oriented, I know, and I also know there are people who are really trying to help by offering usable information etc...

But are some aspiring entrepreneurs becoming *consumers* instead of doing what they should be doing (growing their businesses)? I think so. I think it's become a problem to such a degree that information is the new "fast food", making aspiring entrepreneurs fat on information...sluggish to move and deliver (or ship) their ventures to the world.

So when you peruse Amazon for the "latest" shiny object book that you "need" to read...think about this, you might not need the book.

In fact, I'll bet you already know what's in it anyhow 😊

Seriously.

10000 Hours

By Joseph Ratliff | June 16, 2012

When you need to master a complex skill or concept, it requires you apply yourself to mastering that skill or concept for approximately 10,000 hours to master it.

Pay close attention to the master level copywriters, marketers, business people, surgeons, and on... and on.

Almost every single one of them has been attentively practicing their craft for at least 10,000 hours (approximately 10 years) before attaining a level of “mastery” in that craft.

Now, I wonder...

How on earth could anyone pick up a business opportunity magazine for example... then expect to select any business opportunity and develop that opportunity into a successful business in any less time than 10,000 hours?

(don't pick me apart here, sure there are anomalies, but for the most part super-successful, mastery level businesses aren't built in less than 10 years)

You wouldn't expect to bat over .300 in the Major Leagues unless you had been playing baseball all your life would you? Hell, you couldn't expect to make the Major Leagues in the first place...right?

Then how on earth are you planning to turn that business opportunity into a full-time productive income in 30 days?

Think about this today.

[My Thoughts On Publishing Part 1](#)

By **Joseph Ratliff** | April 20, 2012

If you're at all involved in [writing](#), publishing, Amazon, DOJ etc... you can't help but understand that the publishing game is changing.

Right now... not later.

Here are my thoughts, abridged (you can search on Google for a deeper understanding of this "debate").

- Amazon is dominating the book selling and publishing arena right now.

Amazon, in 2007, came out with a device called the Kindle. You might be familiar with it. Who would have predicted the control of the publishing industry Amazon would obtain because of this device.

You buy this device, you can only buy from Amazon and you'll buy 3.3 more books from us, that's the short version.

Because of this, big publishers are whining right now. They can't control pricing as much as they used to, and that pisses them off.

Guess what old-school publishers (and retailers)? This is a capitalist society... deal with it.

I might suggest that publishers quit trying to hold on to outdated methods and control, and instead create [competition](#) to Amazon. Be more innovative than them, add different value to a transaction, etc...

Whatever it is, do it now. Adapt or die. Quit whining. You got approached by the DOJ because of your deep rooted desire to control pricing... which is **illegal**.

It's **not** illegal however, to be innovative and VERY competitive, dominating your industry. All Amazon has to worry about is keeping both sides of the equation as balanced as possible (keep authors happy, keep customers happy). It's not in their best interest to use this as some "end game" to monopolize the market.

More on this as I get into this "debate."

[My Thoughts On Publishing Part 2](#)

By Joseph Ratliff | May 6, 2012

I've been reading into this recent [DOJ](#) stuff in the publishing industry, and as an extension reading into how well Amazon is dominating the publishing industry.

And let me tell you... Amazon is DOMINATING the publishing industry and others.

If you listen to the "old school" publishing companies, in my opinion, you're going to hear a lot of whining...

- Amazon is becoming a monopoly (here is [a well thought out opinion](#) that it isn't).
- We want to protect our prices! (*Ummm... that's called price collusion I believe, maybe I'm wrong, but the DOJ probably doesn't think so*)
- And on, and on... blah blah blah...

You know what I think is the solution to all of this whining?

Someone (maybe one of the "big 6") has to step up and COMPETE with Amazon. But for the Big 6, that means tossing outdated publishing concepts out the window and refreshing your business model entirely.

So, guess what they aren't doing?

And they just [keep whining](#). (*Scott Turow is [wrong](#) by the way*)

Instead... do what Amazon does... **innovate**. The business game isn't won on defense... it's won on offense people.

We... NEED... an... Amazon... competitor... **Period**.

Anyone want to quit bitching about it and step up to the plate?

Do More

By Joseph Ratliff | April 7, 2012

You've heard the phrase...

"Take action."

But why haven't you?

Why aren't you doing the **one thing** that would fulfill your purpose in life? I am ([writing](#)). But I don't say that to brag, because at one point I wasn't, just like you... then I learned (the hard way) I've already wasted most of my life completing someone else's dream.

I discovered it was time to complete my dream.

But now it's your turn, your turn to complete your dream.

You see, "do more" doesn't mean waste your time "doing stuff" for the sake of doing, this isn't a checklist item. This is important.

What do you want to create? What do you want to do? What do you want people to remember you for over the next thousand years?

Go... do that. If it scares you, you're probably on the right track.

And, don't do yourself the disservice of simply "talking about it"... we don't need more talkers... we need more doers... and badly.

That freedom of choice we have might disappear soon, it could be ripped out from under you. You could look the wrong direction while crossing the street, and it could all end. That pain you're having, it could be "that" pain.

You **need** to create, ship, publish, put forth whatever it is you've always wanted to. If you think it's "stupid", or you think people will laugh at you... do it anyway. We need to see it, because perhaps your true passion is buried beneath whatever it is you ship.

This is not an option, **do more.**

Do whatever it is that will bring more to this world, because we're waiting to see your next big thing.

Connect With People

By Joseph Ratliff | April 7, 2012

Connecting with people.

It's the secret to business, life, and success... but right now, we are losing the genuine human connection we should be making with each other in the name of "advancing technologies" in devices that supposedly increase that connection.

Think about it, do you spend more time on Facebook than you do [writing](#) a letter to a family member?

Do you text back and forth with someone, rather than making time to eat lunch with them and talking, uninterrupted, face to face?

Whatever happened to **genuine human connection**?

Have you ever thought about the time you're missing out on while your life is supposedly being made "easier" by [mobile](#) phones, bluetooths, and other connection devices?

Is a Facebook "like" the same as a genuine connection?

Because you have 500 friends on Facebook, are they real friends who would do anything to help you in your time of need? Would you drop everything and do anything to help them in their time of need?

I propose this...

You stop playing on the human gerbil feeder and start reconnecting with people on a deeper level. Yes, that does mean slowing down... moderating your use of technology... actually having a **face to face conversation** with people (novel idea huh?).

But this isn't some "checklist" idea... something you can knock off the list as accomplished... you have to make it a **habit**. I'm asking you to make a big change in the way you value the human interaction.

Which means **no more** taking a cell phone call right in the middle of the conversation with the person right in front of you... no more texting while driving a motor vehicle... and quit placing value on the fact you have over 1000 "followers" on Twitter (*instead place value on the 20 genuine relationships you can build from those 1000 followers*).

Humans shouldn't want to become the machines they are holding in their hands.

Bottom line... your business is about the people that support your business, your life is about the people who support you no matter how successful you become, and your success depends on how well you connect with people on a meaningful basis (and that isn't because of some "Facebook like").

So go... create meaningful connections with at least 3 people today. Schedule time to talk with them on the phone (not text, not on your Facebook page etc...). Then, eat lunch with them, slow down, and enjoy life for what it is supposed to be...

Connection.

No Bullshit

By Joseph Ratliff | November 4, 2011

When I do get to a point when I potentially work with a new client, I'm **extremely** selective.

(I didn't used to be awhile back, but I've learned like I think most have)

Now, it's time to take it up another notch, and here's why:

We're in tough times people!

If you're in business, and that business isn't generating the kind of leads or sales you need to stay in business or support your lifestyle there's a BIG problem *(sales resulting in actual bottom line profits by the way — all the sales in the world won't help if you're spending too much to get them).*

No bullshit any more folks.

No more "Well, I'm hesitant to do this" or "That sounds like a pretty radical idea" or "I don't know if that will work" ...bull...you're business needs to turn around, NOW.

Right NOW...that or your competitor is going to eat your lunch.

See, tough times have a habit of weeding out weak businesses. Sorry for the shot of reality, but that's the way it is.

So no more bullshit.

If you don't have a business that is producing, it's time to fix the problem or sell the business. Get some help if you need it...but do it now.

I'm going to work under a simple principle from now on (assuming a business meets the other qualifications I have):

If you were having a heart attack — you wouldn't wait to go to the emergency room... So, if your business is having a heart attack — why would you wait to send it to the emergency room?

I'm going to start working with those few business owners who firmly believe they need to send their business to the emergency room, and NOW. Any hesitation, and NEXT...

Is your business having a heart attack?

Grow some stones and get it fixed, then.

I want to see as few businesses as possible shut their doors over the next 5 years.*

*I'm currently not taking any new clients... that is NOT an advertisement for my services.