



The Howells Group, Inc.

Bringing Business to Life

FIND IT –

Owning Your Life and Your Own Point of View

Monday, May 7, 2007

Owning My Life and My Point of View: Lesson #1

There's a rhythm of change in my life, kind of like a trade wind that blows through on a fairly regular cycle. Could be it was hitting the half century mark? Or, maybe becoming an empty nester stirred up by this vague, needling sense that I had outgrown how I was expressing myself in writing. The exact answer was elusive. No matter. Instinctively, I knew it was time to refine and rethink my direction. Time to "re brand" what I was doing in the marketplace – to "re envision" the future.

So early autumn 2006 found me launching ahead toward the next iteration of myself and my company with the help of 3, the brand communications company. Frankly- it was more than I bargained for. It's taken more time, been more fun, and been more frustrating than I could anticipate. Around October I realized I was walking right smack dab in the middle of the road I take my coaching clients down. Excavating one's deepest values, beliefs, life operating principles and aspirations is no picnic. Not to mention defining the demons and detours that can block the way... I was reintroduced to the wrestling required to take this path. And I was reminded why it is ever so tempting to just avoid the whole exercise. More than anything else I was confronted with the need to unearth and fully own my point of view. Make no mistake - a fierce point of view is resident within me. No one would describe me as "milquetoast" or "shy about my opinions." But like many, I had hesitated to extract, from the deepest recesses of my heart and soul, what I truly believe. Too often, I've been content to simply quote others and lean too heavily on the minds I most respect and aspire to.

Why did I hesitate? Why do we all, at times, hesitate to find and own our point of view? First, many of us are products of the educational system that asserts that there is only one right answer. What if my point of view is "wrong"? And then there's life in the age of tolerance. What if my point of view offends someone? Let's see – did our suffragette sisters offend anyone with their point of view that all people (ahem) deserve a voice in a truly democratic system? And Rosa Parks in her simple but profound act? Or, what about the people that founded this country? I'm sure they were less concerned with tolerance and more concerned with life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all! For me, there is also the quiet fear of moving toward arrogance. I have heard too many radio talk show hosts spewing their

Point of View – often vicious, biased and self-serving. Finding and owning one's point of view harbors a dark side that I wanted no part of. "Give me balance or give me death," I've been known to say in conversations with myself! Should I have said, "Give me mediocrity?"

But a funny thing has happened on this journey toward embracing my true Point of View – I am feeling more freedom about myself and the way I work with others. I am less concerned about pleasing others simply to avoid ruffling feathers. Many decisions seem more natural and fluid. I believe I am becoming more effective and more passionate. Because, when you express your true point of view you are becoming more yourself. And that is not only good, it is peaceful. As I've peeled this next layer off – embracing my experiences and deepest beliefs - I can more readily hear others, even when we differ.

So let me hear from you. What's hard about finding your point of view? What's good about the journey? What holds you back? Let's get these Points of View circulating and take ownership of what matters most to every one of us.

"No two lives are the same. We often compare our lives with those of others, trying to decide whether we are better or worse off, but such comparisons do not help us much. We have to live our life, not someone else's. We have to hold our own cup. Many people can help me live my life, but I have to make my own choices about how to live it." –Thomas Merton

Refreshed Brand Identity for The Howells Group

The "triple flame" is an entirely new approach, but touches back to the original butterfly design that defined my brand for the past 15 years. A flame, when directed brings life, warmth and illumination. It represents a timeless place for gathering as community to consider learning and life. The triple flame also represents creativity in approaching work & life. Because the design is entirely original, it exemplifies leadership. Leaders are made – or forged, if you will – in the heat of a challenge. The different shades of red in the logo represent the varying degrees of fire one might find in a forge.

The movement inferred in the design also represents the Trinity, the Spirit of God and the gift of passion. Spiritually, it is a very basic part of how we approach our work and how we live our lives. It is what makes us feel complete.

Last, there exists a synergy & harmony within the design that is a bridge from the old brand to a new one. Bridging the gaps in human understanding is an essential brand attribute as it embodies the philosophy and approach of The Howells Group to business and life.

