

The Power of Gratitude

Call facilitator and IdeaMarketers official relationship expert Nancy Gerber discussed the concept of gratitude.

Participants included the following IdeaMarketers.com experts:

- Marriage and family therapist Dr. Linda Miles - www.DrLindaMiles.com
- Attraction marketing expert Laura West - www.JoyfulBusiness.com
- Ideamarketers founder and author Marnie Pehrson - www.pwgroup.com
- Communications and Marketing 101 expert Nancy Gerber - www.sstones.com; www.MarketingMambo.com

This is a transcript of the highlights from this panel discussion. An audio recording of the entire panel discussion sponsored by IdeaMarketers.com is available at <http://www.ideamarketers.com/experts/calls/gratitude.cfm>

The Power of Gratitude



Nancy Gerber: “From what our preliminary discussion has revealed, each of you sees gratitude as a really powerful tool in living a more meaningful life. Let’s talk about this power of gratitude.”

Laura West: “When you’re in gratitude and feeling appreciation for something or someone, it is like a heart opening. What I see happening is that it shifts your perspective, and that’s where the power come in. It opens you up. When your heart is wide open, you are so much more accessible for opportunities, ideas, and people to come in. You are much more likely to see possibilities. In a closed perspective, you wouldn’t be able to see those.”



Nancy Gerber: “I like that word. ‘Accessible’. Say a little more about what you mean.”

Laura West: “We hear a lot about gratitude. Every list about joy and happiness talks about having gratitude, writing your gratitudes every day. It feels like something you have to do, but it’s much more subtle than that. It’s about letting yourself be open so that you can see the beauty, joy, and wonder right around you.”

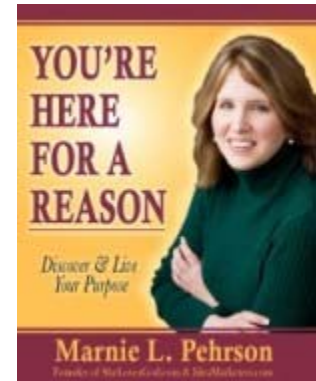
Nancy Gerber: “It’s like that book, *Ask and It Is Given*. They say the stream of well being is always there. You’re either blocking or not blocking it.”

Laura West: “You’re either allowing it in, or you’re ignoring it.”



Dr. Linda Miles: “The Talmud says, ‘God wants your heart.’ That’s such an important point. If you think about the Greek word for enthusiasm, it originally meant that God was in us. I think all of us within us have a great power that is so much greater than our thoughts or ego. In these stressful times, we can get so egocentric instead of looking for abundance and opportunities. The grace is constantly showering on us. Over 30 years of working with clients, when they’re in that place of being in their own ego or a space of envy and comparison with other people, it literally blocks you from seeing opportunities, gifts, and blessings that are surrounding you.”

Marnie Pehrson: “From a more practical standpoint, I spend a lot of time working on the computer. I get so bogged down, and that mentality doesn’t lend itself to gratitude. If I go out and walk in nature for 15 minutes, I see this abundance all around me. Everything we need to fulfill our root heart desires is within our reach, but it’s whether we choose to acknowledge it or not.”



Nancy Gerber: “I think that all of us agree and accept that this is a perspective devoutly to be cultivated. It is a very powerful place to stand in. I’ve been hearing a lot of people making lists of everything that’s wrong. It would be useful to talk about cultivating gratitude when you just don’t feel like it.”

Dr. Linda Miles: “I have a series of letters that I get people to think about: NEXT. In working with clients, I tell them to think of trying to get to the NEXT moment. The four letters stand for: First, “I am Not my thoughts.” I have a woman whose son is abusing drugs, and her thoughts are, ‘I’ve been a horrible mother; I’m a terrible person.’ I tell her that’s not going to help. Send him prayers and healing thoughts through her heart to him so that she does something productive. ‘E’ stands for “envy”. So often, we get stuck in envy. She might say to herself, ‘Why do other people have kids who are okay?’ That takes her down into a very negative place. I tell her not to get stuck in envy or ‘why me’. Open yourself past envy to abundance, to what you can do. ‘X’ is ‘X marks the spot where you feel the tension in your body’. Ask what this feeling is reminding you of. We don’t just have a thought; we have clusters of thoughts. All thoughts associated with a mental state start to weigh down on you. I love what Maya Angelou said. She lost a job when she was 16, and she said she was crushed. She came home crying. Her mother said, ‘Maya, ‘fired’ is just a word. Get your clothes on, get back out there, and start looking for another job.’ It’s tuning into the power of words to activate clusters of thoughts. This is where a lot of people get stuck. They feel overwhelmed, not

just by one thought, but the clusters of thoughts. ‘T’ stands for transformation. I’ve found that model to be very practical for my clients.”

Laura West: “My clients and I talk about cultivating that gratitude energy, because it will shift everything. A lot of times they don’t feel like it, or don’t see the money coming in. The first place I have them look is their desire for it to be different, even if they don’t know how to look at it differently. If they’re not willing to look at it, it’s hard to get to gratitude. From there, do it over and over again, almost like a muscle that you have to build up. That’s how they start their business day. It’s tough to sit down at the table and write down ten things you’re grateful for. Call a girlfriend or colleague who is positive, or read something inspirational. It shifts your energy so that you can start accessing ten things going well in your business. It can be small things.”

Gratitude During Difficult Times

Nancy Gerber: “I love what you said about gratitude being like a muscle. This builds on what Linda was saying. These days, there aren’t a lot of gratitude messages floating around the way that our culture has been, there’s a lot of criticism and negativity. A lot of angst and anxiety. We are discussing this the day after the presidential election. No matter what your politics were about it, this is an historic moment. For those of us who lived through Martin Luther King, Jr. being assassinated, an African-American president is something to be grateful for. It’s finding those things to be grateful for. When I’m not in that place of gratitude, I’m unconsciously blocking my own growth. I know that gratitude and being open are the lubrications that move me forward in life. It’s the only lubrication that will move you forward when things seem stuck. If we begin to pay attention to how much we’re whining, we need to cultivate a new habit.”

Marnie Pehrson: “Some people might not know why they need gratitude. When I used to do a lot of multi-level marketing, I’d be training a sales team. A lot of times, I’d get one of my new people on the phone, and they’d be down. They weren’t in the mood to make a call. If they weren’t in the mood, they wouldn’t have any success with it. Even on the phone, the vibrations of negativity transmit. I used to say, ‘Drop and give me 20.’ Twenty things they’re grateful for. They would have better success rates after they had taken the time to be grateful. They had opened themselves up so that good could come to them. If you look for the good, you’ll find it; if you look for the bad, you’ll find that, too. I watched a video recently. A man had you watch a group of people in white shirts and black shirts. They were passing a ball to each other. He said to count how many times the people in the white shirts passed to one another. When it was done, he asked how many people saw the gorilla walk through. I was too busy counting, but sure enough, there was a gorilla walking through the middle of it. Sixty to seventy percent of the people don’t see it because they’re looking at those white shirts. You really do see whatever you’re focusing on.”

Nancy Gerber: “If you look for the good stuff, it’s right there. You’re looking for evidence to support your perspective.”

Laura West: “When I started doing a gratitude list every day, especially for my business, it is life-changing. It shifts your energy from the universe being against you to seeing how much is going in your favor. The universe is on your side.”

Nancy Gerber: “Even if you make a list of the people who believe in you and appreciate you, even if your business is going through a tough time. The climate has been a bit unsettling, to say the least. I’ve been having some challenges lately and have been letting my gratitude slide. I do it before I go to sleep at night. It helps me to ease into that place of letting go. It doesn’t matter when you do it. It really is transformative.”

Laura West: “A week-and-a-half ago, my husband found out he’s going to lose his job. He was in the U.K., and he came home. I’ve been on him about his mindset, attraction energy, gratitude, letting him go through his process. He started doing the gratitude list, everything amazing in his life already. By the time he got back into the States, it shifted his energy so much that they are amazed at how well he’s handling it. Now, I think he’s going to be okay through the end of the year. He bought a little bit of time. And now they’re talking about doing contract work with him.”

Dr. Linda Miles: “I wanted to go back to something that Marnie said about calling someone who’s really positive when she’s down. We know moods are contagious. You certainly want to avoid people who are going to reinforce it, because then you get on a roll with it. They did this really cute study at UCLA where they took ten-month-old babies, built a plexiglass bridge, and put their mothers at the other side. They would have the mom have different emotions. When they were encouraging, all the babies went. If the mother looked shocked, the baby didn’t come crawling. What do you think the babies did when the mother got mad? Fifty percent of them came, anyway. The bottom line is, emotions are very contagious. We’re wired for connection. For some of my clients who are depressed, I tell them not to watch the news. Keep up with current events and read the headlines. But, for some people, it’s absolutely toxic to watch it every day.”

Laura West: “I encourage my clients to set a timer. You get three minutes to go on CNN.com. That way you know if a big storm is coming your way. That’s it.”

Marnie Pehrson: “I don’t even watch the news. I know everybody around me will tell me what’s going on.”

Nancy Gerber: “If it’s something important, I’ll find out. It’s so amazing, when all the economic news started to hit these last few months, these people were reading the headlines, and they were smiling. The worse the news, the more they were grinning. It

was bizarre. I think what you all are saying is so important. One of the biggest barriers to gratitude is the stuff we allow into our lives. There's an old technology saying: 'Garbage in, garbage out.' It's infectious. It's like an infection for good or not for good."

Dr. Linda Miles: "Exactly. If a group of people meditate together, the crime goes down in that area. There's research about that. I like to think that we're trying to be part of the solution. The more people focus in a positive direction toward the abundance, the more it will spread. It's very contagious."

Nancy Gerber: "There's an energetic resonance. You can't measure it in any particular way, but you know it when you feel it. When we have our coaches' meeting, I feel like I'm ten feet off the ground, because there's so much good-natured, positive encouragement. I feel like every single cell in my body is tingling all over."

Laura West: "I love putting myself in environments with people who are positive. I was just home with my family, and my dad likes to sit down with a coffee or beer on the back porch and talk about all the reasons the sky is falling. I had to explain, 'It's really important for me to be in a really positive environment. It's really hard to go call clients when I'm stuck in anxiety.'"

Nancy Gerber: "We're talking so much about how other people's energy affects us. What are some of the ways that we can help ourselves when we're in an environment like Thanksgiving with our families? There's going to be negativity and discourse. How do we keep that connection with gratitude when we can't control other people's behavior?"

Dr. Linda Miles: "I sometimes use the example of Sea World with my clients who are going to face that. I explain that, at Sea World when they're training the dolphins, they give the good dolphins fish. When they're not good, they don't. With the family, don't reinforce negativity. Don't get reactive with it. Go take a long walk. Have exits. Again, 'X' marks the spot in your body. When you're feeling really bad, it's probably time for a walk or to do something else. We don't realize how much we reinforce the negativity by even listening to it."

Nancy Gerber: "I love that Sea World analogy. What you pay attention to, you get more of."

Laura West: "I agree with Laura about not getting engaged in the conversation. Also, going and setting the intention – if you're driving your family's and you think it's going to be negative, start pre-paving the intention for how you really want. When all else fails, going outside and playing with the kids is the best way."

Marnie Pehrson: “There’s something I’ve done with a gratitude journal that was really almost prophetic. I started writing my gratitude as if an event had already happened. If I’m going to a convention and I want it to go a certain way, I would post-date it and write it as if it happened. If you go back and read it, you couldn’t tell what I wrote before from what actually happened. It was almost right on the nose. If you’re feeling anxiety about an event, think about how you would want it to go. We spend so much time fretting, but we don’t get conscious about what we do want. When you ask for that or write that down, then you’re setting an intention of what you *do* want rather than focusing on what you *don’t* want.”

Laura West: “It’s subtle, but you start shifting your actions because you’re giving your brain a different story. You choose different words, your energy’s different. You choose to do different things. I went through a divorce a few years ago, and I was really committed to my spiritual course. I didn’t want to be negative. Every time we had a meeting, I would write in my journal. I started planning what I wanted to happen rather than worrying about what I didn’t want.”

Dr. Linda Miles: “Affirmations are so powerful. Another thing I suggest, imagine the negative thought surrounded by a bubble, going off to a higher power to repair it.”

Nancy Gerber: “I think the practice of gratitude when you’re with somebody who tends to be negative – change the subject. You can express your gratitude about them to them, and, boy, does that shift the energy. Most people are so busy complaining about what they’re not getting that people forget to tell them how much they appreciate them.”

Dr. Linda Miles: “It’s tough. A lot of times, you need to take a break. I am a real believer in time-outs. I tell people that if you’re going to go and be with your family, and you’re about to mouth off, take a time-out. I teach them how to get really relaxed by deep breathing or meditation. I have them touch their wrist, so when they get in the situation, they can touch their wrist to calm down. They’re pairing touching their wrist with being calm. I have practiced it so much that, when I touch my wrist, I am totally come. The more you practice it, the stronger it gets. My clients tell me that, initially, it takes the edge off, but eventually, they can sit around with Uncle Joe who’s had too much Jack Daniels.”

How to Stay in Gratitude

Nancy Gerber: “Let’s talk a little more about some specific tools or activities that you use that help people to cultivate their gratitude and stay in that energy.”

Laura West: “I work with a lot of solo entrepreneurs. Their energy is one of the most important resources they have. The most important thing they can do every single day

is manage their enthusiasm, confidence, or their doubts. One of the things they do is what I call 'joy flow sightings.' We look where the joy is flowing. They'll pick three infusion words for their business; it's how they want their business to be. A lot of them pick words like ease, magic, prosperity. Each day, they write a list of ten joyful sightings of each word. So many times, it's easy to overlook at it; we're so trained to look at the negative. It's helpful to have those infusion words so that you can look for what it is you want to create. As Marnie said, everything you need is right in front of you. You just need to allow it in."

Nancy Gerber: "I love the joy flow. What strikes me about what you're saying, Laura, is that we're not talking about really huge things here. We're talking about little things."

Laura West: "I talk about the two sides of joy. Sometimes it's a celebration; sometimes it's something small. Lots of times, it's just those subtle things that give you relief and contentment."

Nancy Gerber: "There's this saying: 'Little hinges swing big doors.' Imagine that a prospective new client calls you, and you've either been cultivating your gratitude or you haven't. In which state is someone more likely to hire you?"

Laura West: "Absolutely. And it's not about beating yourself up. Everybody gets out of sorts. But use these techniques so that you don't get stuck there, and so that you can shift your energy a little bit quicker than you might have in the past."

Nancy Gerber: "We're not talking about being in a state of nirvana all the time. We're talking about what the autopilot does in an airplane. Most people think it keeps the plane on course, but what it really does is notify when the plane is off course. We're talking about noticing when you've slipped out of that state, and using these techniques to reorient and reframe."

Marnie Pehrson: "I think a lot of this is about learning to control your thoughts. As an entrepreneur, you start to see that your thoughts are controlling your outcome. If I start thinking negative, then my revenues will go down. If I think positive, they'll go up. It's almost a direct funnel. A lot of entrepreneurs see this same kind of correlation. A lot of it, for me, has been learning to control my thoughts, focus on the good, and make those conscious lists."

Nancy Gerber: "It's a conscious choice, isn't it? You have to notice when you're being negative and think about what other options you have. It doesn't just come. You have to form the habit and practice it, as Laura was saying."

Marnie Pehrson: "I was listening to the radio the other day. The guy said that he wants this woman in front of him at church every Sunday, and he's sitting there with his wife."

He said he couldn't control his thoughts, and I thought, 'What?!' You can control your thoughts. We control our surroundings, our environment, and our character. Gratitude is one of the easiest ways to start controlling your thoughts. It's a baby step that pays into dividends."

Dr. Linda Miles: "I like what you said about the autopilot, Nancy. We do have an inner autopilot that's telling us when we're on the wrong track. Find ways to release those negative thoughts. Our brain always means to protect us. Sometimes the past are from the past, because you walked into a situation that was dangerous in the past. They're yesterday's news. They no longer protect us."

Final Thoughts:

Laura West: "What you focus on today, you're creating tomorrow."

Marnie Pehrson: "Everything you need is around you, and you have to acknowledge it in order to accept it, receive it into your life, make use of it."

Dr. Linda Miles: "The question I always ask myself: 'Do I choose fear or love as my motivation in life?'"

Nancy Gerber: "We have a choice every single moment of every single day. What pair of glasses do we want to view our world through? Be conscious of the pair of glasses you choose."

Panelist Resources:

Laura West: "My website is www.JoyfulBusiness.com. You can go there and get a free gift about creating your joyful business."

Dr. Linda Miles: "It's www.DrLindaMiles.com. I know all this works because I feel the energy between us. I feel like a rocket right now, like I can just take off out of Cape Canaveral. I know that it's our combined consciousness. I want to thank all of you for allowing me to share this time."

Marnie Pehrson: "It's www.pwgroup.com. You can get the first fifty pages of *You're Here for a Reason*. I also have a free E-book, *Nothing Is Impossible for Those Who Believe*." I also have a Power of Gratitude blog at <http://marniep.typepad.com>

Nancy Gerber: "I have two websites: my marketing website for innovative entrepreneurs who want to find and keep their best customers without losing their

souls: www.MarketingMambo.com. My other website is www.sstones.com. I do a free motivational E-zine every week called *Thoughts for a Thursday.*"

Listen to an audio of this call at

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