

How to Get Your Business Relationships – and Yourself – Back on Track After a Year of Isolation

Orlando Business Journal

February 23, 2021

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It is not surprising that after months of dealing with unprecedented challenges people are personally and professionally hitting a wall. The title of this article was chosen delicately because most of us are tired of reflecting on 2020. Even so, there is an intrinsic value in reflecting on the challenges we have overcome and how they changed us. In speaking with colleagues across a variety of industries, the emotion expressed most often was a sense of feeling misplaced in their own lives. Not lost – misplaced. As weeks turned into months and now months have turned into a new year, the new normal of everyone working and living almost exclusively in a remote environment has challenged networking, socializing and bonding, and it has strained relationships. To put it simply, we are tired. In the past, challenges may have gotten us off track but this time we feel like we lost the train. A simple truth: we are the train.

We cannot take care of others, our business, or anything else if we do not take care of ourselves. Exercise, meditation, spirituality, connecting with people, and eating well have always been common sense. Right now, as initial feelings of shock and loss of control are giving way to an almost universal feeling of exhaustion, we may need a bit more. One book, “Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being” by Martin

Seligman, explains that well-being is like the weather: no single measure defines it. Weather is made up of elements such as barometric pressure and precipitation. Each plays a role but only the sum makes “weather.” Likewise, well-being consists of elements such as feeling life is pleasant, getting into the flow, relationships, belief in something bigger than oneself, and accomplishment.

Addressing all the current challenges at one time may seem overwhelming but taking one step at a time is better than taking no step at all. Even if you have lost touch over the past year, make the first call to reconnect. There are a number of books and online tests to identify signature strengths. Find and use yours to help yourself and others. Engage in hobbies because doing, making and creating things makes one feel centered, more interesting, and it reduces stress. Declutter and organize your home, office and life. Actively plan something you do well every day. Even if you do not feel like it, do it anyway. “The 5 Second Rule” by Mel Robbins and “Eat that Frog” by Brian Tracy are excellent resources to help you get started.

Finally, a simple exercise is to encourage gratitude. No matter how small, ask yourself why something went right and actively express your gratitude. Saying “no

person is an island” has more meaning than ever. For the first time in our lifetime, every person is connected by similar feelings and challenges. Reach out, hold hands, and help each other take one step at a time with confidence that even if temporarily misplaced we can and will find our way back to the tracks.



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