

James Butler's Newsletter #45

Amuse, Inform and Inspire

May 2006

I had a great response to the last newsletter (if you missed it, you can view all previous newsletters at www.painlessbusiness.com/newsletters) - it is always fascinating hearing how you react to what I write here. I hope you have all made a conscious effort to sow the right things in the last month. Perhaps this month you will reap the reward!

I would especially like to thank Nikki Walker, who sent this email:

Hi James,

*Just peeping at my emails before the end of the day and the first one I clicked on was your newsletter, even though there are other things more urgently requiring my attention.....
(WOW - your newsletters must be making an impact.)*

Then I wondered why I do that?? I think it is because they contain some great common sense words of wisdom, some gentle support and encouragement after a long hard day, plenty of food for thought, and they always end with bringing a smile to my face.

THANK YOU.

Nikki Walker

If you agree with Nikki in any way, wouldn't it be great for some of your friends and colleagues to receive that wisdom, support and encouragement (her words, not mine!) too? If you could forward this onto just five people, don't you think they'd appreciate you thinking of them?

And thanks to everyone who helped me meet my latest subscription target – after a brief pat on the back I am now striving for the next target!

This weekend I was inspired by a conversation with someone on the strength of the human mind – it is amazing just what we can overcome or achieve if we put our mind to it. My daily inspiration, the lovely Mrs Butler, is an awesome demonstration of what can happen if you focus on getting something done. In fact, she is so powerful she can focus on me doing something and I'll do it (I know what side my bread is buttered!). What can we learn from her?

Doing the Can-Can

Whilst she is a great mover on the dance floor, that isn't what I want to focus on in this newsletter. Instead, I want to consider the power of telling ourselves we can do something.

Henry Ford once said "**Whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you're right.**" Who am I to argue with the man who changed the world with mass production of cars? It does seem the case that when people are convinced they will succeed in something, they do better, and when they tell themselves they are no good, they struggle.

It is a sad reflection on our society, that we seem so much more adept at the latter than the former. We all have that inner voice telling us we can't do what we see others do, that we're not good enough (Remember the newsletters on Dobby? If not, follow the link above to the newsletter archive – he's featured twice already!). How much more could we achieve if instead we just believed we could do things? We may not achieve everything we intend to, but I bet we'd achieve more than we would if we listened to Dobby!

If I learnt one thing from running a marathon last year (other than the importance of Vaseline to a long distance runner), it was that completing the race was achieved in my head, not my muscles. Sure, the training meant I finished before it got dark, and that I could walk again within a couple of days, but it was the power of my mind to say “keep going” when all the other parts of my body were begging me to stop that got me to the line (and that internal argument raged for about seven miles – well over an hour). I am convinced that believing I could run 26.2 miles throughout the race and the training beforehand is what enabled me to do it. Now I am so lucky that I can take that belief and apply it to other parts of my life. In fact, Sandra Bullock is trying to track down my phone number as I write this!

On a higher athletic plane, in early 1954 it was believed it was impossible to run a mile in under four minutes. Some physicians even gave scientific reasons why it couldn't be done. Then, not far from where I sit now, Roger Bannister smashed the four minute barrier – and within a year 10 other people had done the same. As soon as it was shown it CAN be done, others were able to do it.

What do you tell yourself you can't do?

Is that a fact, or a belief?

What would you differently if you changed the question from “Can I do X” to “HOW can I do X”?

Run your own four-minute mile

I am sure you are all relieved I didn't suggest you run a marathon! Of course, your four-minute mile is a metaphor, not a literal challenge (though if you do it, please let me know!). I am sure you can identify something that you have wanted to do for a long time, but have always convinced yourself you can't. What could happen if you believed you can?

What can you do to change that mindset? Here are a few tips that may be of use:

Remove limiting assumptions:- at the end of the 19th Century, two German pioneers of car manufacturing sat down to discuss just how big this whole car industry thing could get. Their calculations were that the worldwide limit on the number of cars that would be sold was around a thousand. Not because of the cost of the car, but because only that number of people could afford a chauffeur. Now, that assumption proved to be a little off beam – what assumptions are you making, that stop you from achieving your four-minute mile?

Visualise yourself doing it:- many successful athletes visualise themselves lifting the trophy, crossing the line or accepting the medal. There is a wide body of thought that believes that visualising the outcome you want programmes your sub-conscious mind to make that happen. Create a strong connection with that moment – imagine the sights, sounds, smells and feel of achieving what you want, and let your sub-conscious mind work.

Tell yourself you can do it:- at the simplest level, this can be the ‘pep’ talk you give yourself before a sales meeting, a difficult conversation or a date. Or it can be statements you repeat to yourself every morning and every evening. Henry Ford will tell you that if you keep training yourself to think you can do it, you're going to end up right!

Give yourself evidence you can do it:- I often suggest the writing of an achievement journal (a list of all your achievements in life, to which you add at least one thing each day), and I make no apology for this because I see it work wonders with so many clients all the time. Creating a physical record of why you are an achiever has a powerful effect on your inner mind.

I would just like to note that you may not wish to do all of these – people will be keen on different methods and be less trusting of others. You may even have ideas of your own to help you. All of that's fine – I just ask that you do something!

And whenever I quote successful athletes and the sports psychology they use, I am mindful that for every gold medal winner there are runners behind them who may also have visualised winning the race. That's a hard one to counter but I want to make clear that I am not claiming that the mental attitude is the only thing that won the race – training, talent, luck and other factors will have an impact, but when you watch a lot of sport like I do, you can tell when someone never quite believes they're good enough, and when someone truly believes they can be champion.

Painless Business News

I had a great time recently speaking to the Milton Park Women in Business Group on "Being Assertive". If you belong to a networking group or similar and would like to know what a tiger, a bee, a mosquito and Tim Henman can tell us about being assertive I would be happy to discuss visiting your area.

This month has been a good month for new opportunities, many coming from referrals from clients or contacts. I am always telling my small business clients that referred prospects are the best ones to have, so I am very grateful to receive them myself!

On 25th June I am holding a training day in Oxford, focussed on the needs of osteopaths and other alternative health practitioners. We will be working on understanding what they want from their practice/career (and why), how to make that happen, and how to deliver the right customer or patient experience every time. If you know anyone who works in those fields who would like some thought-provoking, cost-effective Continuing Professional Development on improving their practice, please refer them to my other website, www.painlesspractice.com for details.

Book Review

Having said last month I am a huge fan of the Dummies series of books, my recommendation again comes from that range. This time it is *Neuro-linguistic Programming for Dummies*. NLP is a technique many coaches use to work with clients to aid their development. This is an excellent introduction to the field, and is useful for anyone who wants to achieve more or communicate better.

And when it comes to having the can-do attitude, there is only one book to recommend – *It's Not About the Bike* by Lance Armstrong. To go from facing the slimmest of chances of surviving cancer to seven consecutive Tour de France wins and becoming a legend in a tough sport requires extraordinary mental fortitude and this is such an inspiring read.

Painless Puns

Some thought provoking quotes:

All of the significant battles are waged within the self.

Sheldon Kopp

An ounce of action is worth a ton of theory.

Friedrich Engels

If you can command yourself, you can command the world.

Chinese Proverb

After the joke about marriage last time, a few of you kindly sent me some others. My favourite is "Marriage isn't a word, it's a sentence". Not in my case, of course, but I have heard it can be so for less lucky men!

A friend has been very depressed recently: his wife threatened to leave him. Even that didn't cheer him up.

Did you hear about the aardvark who kept getting beaten up? In fact, really he was just a vark.

Final Words

This month, I challenge you to notice when you tell yourself you can't do something, and find a way round it. As always, if you have a particular challenge you would like to discuss with me, please give me a call.

And whilst I may jest about the sanctity of marriage, I am delighted that two pairs of good friends are tying the knot this month. I want to wish John and Ali in Devon and Brian and Lerae in Canada a very happy future together!

And, of course, when Sandra Bullock does get hold of my number, I can let her down gently because I am already spoken for.

What can you do this month?

Warmest regards

James Butler

email: james@painlessbusiness.com

voice: +44 1491 659073

web: <http://www.painlessbusiness.com>

© James Butler 2006

Painless Business is a trading name of Painless Ltd. Registered in England No: 5362019

Quick Links...

Subscribe Now

<http://www.painlessbusiness.com/newsletters/>

More About James Butler

<http://www.painlessbusiness.com/about/profile/>

Previous Newsletters

<http://www.painlessbusiness.com/newsletters/>

James Butler helps business owners build the business they want. Through improving your strategic outlook and guiding you on sales, marketing and personal development he can provide renewed motivation and momentum in building your business.

Careful assessment of your needs ensures that the most appropriate intervention is supplied – whether one to one ongoing coaching, strategic reviews, training events or facilitated group exercises within a team.

To discuss how you can painlessly build the business you want, call James today for a no-obligation discussion of your situation.