

ShopTalk



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August 2011

The Downside of Making Money

A coaching client recently told me about the fully restored 1967 Pontiac GTO he had purchased. It's black with a red pin stripe and a red interior. Under the hood the chrome makes the big block sparkle like a 325 hp diamond.

While we talked about the car, this shop owner told me he'd learned how to work on cars from his brother, who had owned a '67 GTO when they were kids. He was excited to finally have one of his own after all these years.

I asked, "What does your brother think of the car?"

"He hates it, told me it sucked. Then he got into his Toyota Camry and left."

There is a downside to making money and generating wealth for yourself and your family. Many times it makes the people around you jealous about your success.

When we are broke, we visualize wealth and believe money will solve all of our problems. Fact is, it doesn't.

Money does solve the problem of "how do I pay my bills this week," but that's all. And often, it'll create new problems.

Family and friends who knew you when you were broke are comfortable with that order of things in their world. Then you join ATI's coaching program, fix your margins, boost your net income and soon you've got some real money in your checkbook. You pay off your bills and after a while decide to reward yourself with something you've been dreaming to buy.

You expect your family and friends to be excited for you. Often they aren't.

When you show him your new toy, your brother has two choices. One, he can admit to himself that you worked harder than he did, took some risks and made smarter choices. Or two, he can tell himself you were lucky and don't deserve to be wealthy. People almost always choose the latter.

Some shop owners try to fix this problem by giving their family members jobs. That's a mistake because you can't bring them up to your

level. The only possibilities are either they'll become more jealous or they'll bring you down to their level by sabotage, whether deliberate or unintentional.

If family members need a loan and you can afford it, you may feel like you should "help out" by giving them the money. Don't loan money to family or friends; refer them to a banker. If you want to help them yourself, then give them the money outright. Otherwise, the debt between them and you will make them grow to resent you. And when they stop paying on the loan, they'll disappear completely. Even if you offer the loan at great terms, they'll eventually resent your generosity.

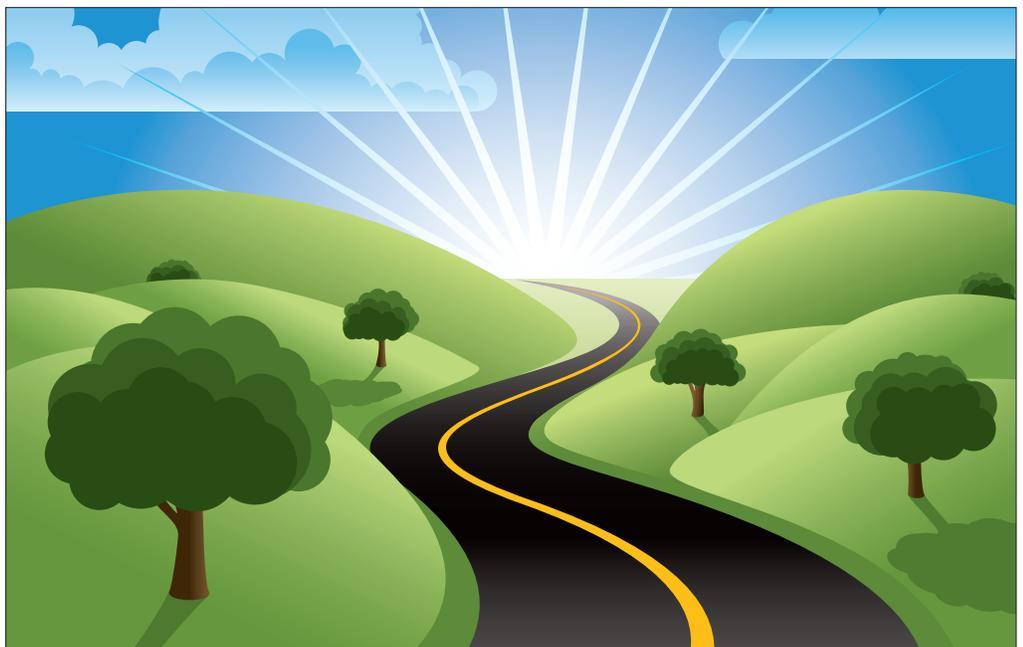
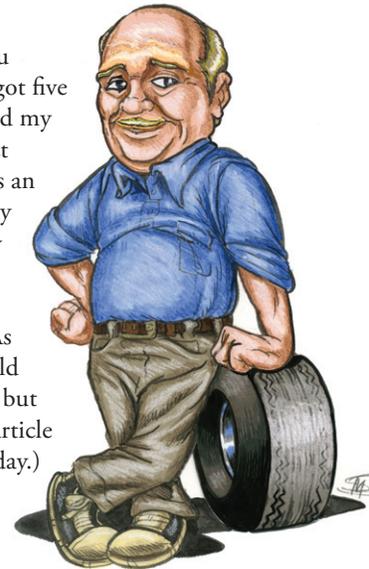
Is making money worth all the hassle and lost friendships? You bet it is. That is one of the reasons ATI invests in 20-Groups and SuperConferences — so you can be in a positive environment that encourages wealth and success.

Money creates problems, that's the truth. Yet the problems it creates are easier to deal with than the problems the lack of money creates.

Enjoy your toys. My advice, if your brother doesn't like your GTO, buy yourself another

one to keep you company. I've got five muscle cars, and my idea of a perfect Thanksgiving is an afternoon in my garage with my cars, with my family in the living room. (As if my wife would let me do that, but that's another article for a different day.)

Whenever friends or relatives try to make you feel guilty about your success, remember that those people won't pay your family's bills if something happens to you. It's your responsibility to accumulate wealth for your family. As long as you've been honest in your dealings with customers, you should be proud of your accomplishments. I'm proud of you. Welcome to the club. I look forward to seeing you at the next SuperConference. **ATI**



ATI Client Profile

Leaving Corporate America: Mid-Life Crisis or Smart Career

Tim Allen was an IT professional with a financial services firm when his mid-life crisis hit. Instead of buying a shiny, new sports car, Tim decided to start his own business to fix cars. With three partners, he opened European Auto Solutions in Waltham, Mass., in 2006.

“Running the shop was a lot of fun,” Tim says, “but it was filled with some challenges I hadn’t foreseen. We weren’t realizing the potential I knew we could have.”

Tim says his partners were thinking about their own world as opposed to the bigger picture.

“We weren’t able to get out of our own way to make the productivity and performance improvements we needed to get to the profit curve we wanted,” Tim explains.

A cold call from ATI changed that, but first, Tim needed some convincing.

“We went to the Cash Profits Boot Camp,” Tim recalls, “and we were invited to participate in the ATI program. I will tell you, right out of the blocks, we were extremely ambivalent about it, me specifically, because in addition to being the majority owner of the business, I’m also the CFO. At that time in our business lifecycle, spending the money on an ATI program quite

literally could’ve meant the difference between staying alive and going under.”

Tim had been a consultant himself during his corporate days, so he was cautious about making such a large investment. But now he says it’s the best one he and his partners have ever made. What did they get from their investment? A swift kick in the pants.

“We needed an independent set of eyes, ears and opinions to come to the table,” Tim explains. “There are four of us who are partners in this business, and we’re all very opinionated. We had difficulty moving off of our positions. But when we did, we started to see the benefits almost immediately.”

Tim and his partners made a number of changes to the way they run their business, from the way paperwork flows, to accountability on where each car is in the process, to communicating with customers, to the valuation of each job.

Tim says, “It was literally soup to nuts.”

Pricing was a big issue, actually a “never-ending battle,” as Tim puts it.

“Two of the partners are service techs,” Tim explains. “One of them is the service writer, and then there’s me who counts the pennies. The two partners that spin wrenches tout the fact that their work is superb and therefore they should be paid a lot for it. The service writer, who has the relationship with the customers, is saying ‘If we price it that way, no one will ever come through our doors, and we’ll lose all our business.’ Our coach was able to get us to a happy medium on pricing.”

Another challenge for European Auto Solutions is space — or lack of it.

“We’re very much constrained by our facility,” Tim says. “We have a parking lot that holds six cars. Our guys were complaining they couldn’t make their numbers because there were always cars in the way.”

Their ATI coach came up with a creative solution to this problem. He made Tim the “lot Nazi.”

“For about six months, the first thing I would do when I showed up at the shop, and the last thing I would do at the end of the day, was move cars. Plus, I would smack people upside their heads if they thought about leaving a car in the path,” Tim laughs.

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Sam’s Corner

TOP SHOPS! AWARDS! NETWORKING! NEW SKILLS and FUN IN THE SUN

You can receive them all at SuperConference 2012 with an early bird registration for March 14 - 17 in sunny Fort Lauderdale, Florida, at the beautiful Harbor Beach Marriott Resort and Spa.

TOP TEN REASONS TO ATTEND SUPERCONFERENCE 2012

- 1) The very best shops in North America will be participating sharing their success so you can learn more from the best!
- 2) The weather in South Florida is warm and sunny in March so you can vacation and learn at the same time in flip-flops and shorts.
- 3) Learn new skills from our relentless quest to put the very best speakers right in front of you to help you increase profits and car count.
- 4) Fish for bonefish, tarpon and sailfish with Chubby’s personal guide, Gregg Poland, in the calm backcountry or out front on the Ocean Reef.
- 5) Attend your annual SuperConference 20 Group Summit and network with your shop owner friends to help you stay the best shop in your area.

6) Escape to the largest private beach in South Florida, dive into the 8,000-square-foot tropical lagoon pool with lush tropical foliage. Or go diving on the Ocean Reef.

7) Participate with your coach in the Beach Olympics, awards banquet and scavenger hunt to further your relationships.

8) A world of fun opens up for children when they participate in the Surf Club for kids! The surf club features a Hawaiian Surf Simulator custom-built for the Harbor Beach, allowing one to four children at a time to surf the waves!

9) Spend time with the best vendors in the automotive industry at the trade show and cocktail party.

10) You deserve a break in winter so spread the travel cost over eight months. Invest in yourself and your family to keep from slipping back to where it all began!

Best of all you get to hang out with yours truly,

C. L. Frederick

Chubby Frederick



MARCH 14 - 17, FORT LAUDERDALE, FL

Graduating from Groundhog Day

By Eric Twiggs

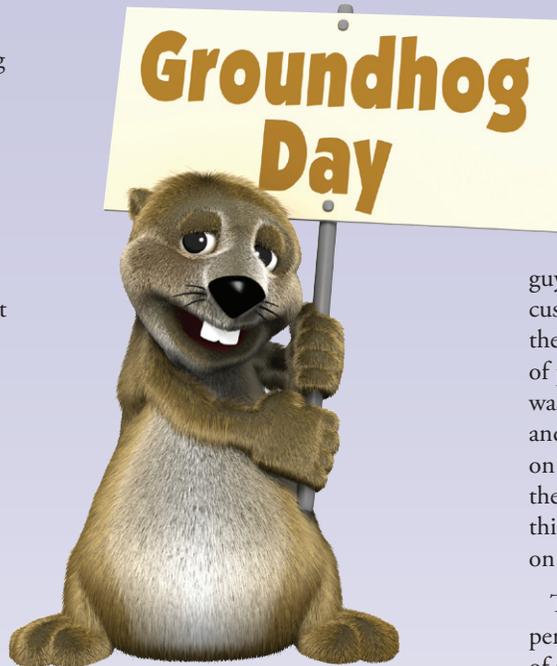


One of my favorite movies is “Groundhog Day” starring Bill Murray. In the movie, Bill Murray’s character is stuck in a frustrating cycle. Every morning when he wakes up, it’s the same day.

During this day the town, events and people never change. It is not until HE changes that he is able to break this cycle. Have you ever felt like Murray’s character? Some of us feel stuck right now. I refer to this as the Groundhog Day syndrome and it is important for us to grow out of this trap. Bill Murray was able to break this cycle when HE changed, so what is it about us that we must be willing to change? I will give you three things that we must be willing to change if we plan on graduating from Groundhog Day.

The first thing that we must be willing to change is our blame strategy. It is our natural instinct to blame other forces and people for our failures in life. I will introduce you to a principle that Dr. John Maxwell refers to as the Bob Principle through the following example: Over the years, I have coached shop owners that have not achieved the goals and objectives that they set for themselves. When I speak with them about where they are, they list many sources of blame. They blame factors such as the economy, their previous service manager, the competition, the customers, and their previous business consultant. So here is the Bob Principle: If at every stop, Bob is blaming other people and factors for his failures, BOB is the real problem! The starting point of becoming a success is taking ownership of your failures. Each failure carries with it a lesson. If we are blaming other people for our failures we miss the lesson and do not graduate. In grade school, if you miss too many lessons, you are forced to repeat the same grade. The same holds true in life. Playing the “blame game” will keep you in the same place.

The second thing that we must be willing to change if we plan on graduating is our belief system. A belief system is a pattern of thinking based on previous experience and education. The primary cause of a limiting or misguided belief system is taking an experience that was designed to be a stand alone event and making it a general rule. An example of this is when a shop owner has one customer leave the shop without making a purchase because



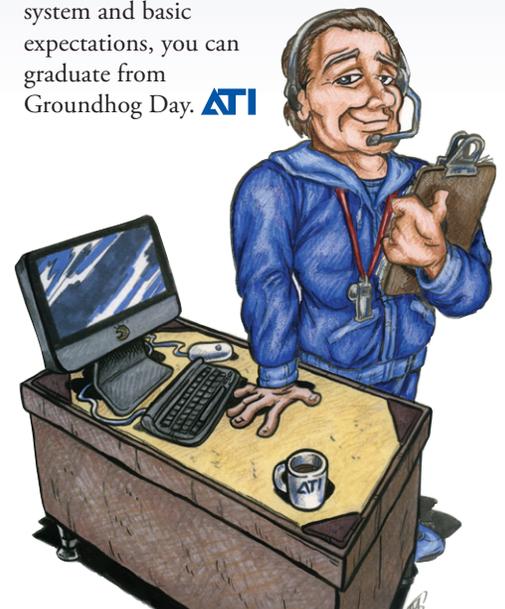
of the price. The owner now believes that all customers will leave over price and refuses to charge the true value of the service. A limiting or misguided belief system causes us to learn the wrong lesson. Instead of learning from this experience and improving in the ability to overcome objections, the owner learned the wrong lesson and is stuck in the Groundhog Day of low profits. At the end of the day, we are what we think about. This is true whether the thought is accurate or not! A limiting or misguided belief system causes us to learn the wrong lesson and keeps us from graduating.

The third and final thing that we must be willing to change is our basic expectations. Our minds are designed in such a way that we get what we expect. We all reside at the address of our thoughts. I have met with shop owners that tell me at the start of the week that they will have a bad week. The week has not begun but they are sure in their minds that it will not be successful. Approaching your business expecting to fail is like someone needing water and going to the ocean with a teaspoon. Just like the man at the ocean, what you collect from your business will be limited by low expectations even though there is great opportunity. Studies have shown that a service writer that is optimistic outsells a pessimist by as much as 40 percent. I am reminded of a story that our CEO Chris “Chubby” Frederick tells of a new service advisor that did not have an automotive background but

was experienced in the sales process with other companies. The technicians at his shop thought they would play a trick on him by having him present a large estimate to a customer that had a history of declining repairs. The technicians all crowded together expecting to get a big laugh at the new guy’s expense. They were shocked to hear the customer inform the advisor to proceed with the repairs! This is a case study on the power of positive expectation. The reason the advisor was successful is that he expected to succeed and did not have a negative expectation based on the customer’s history. The desire to change the business is not enough. If you don’t expect things to change, you will be like Bill Murray on Groundhog Day.

The common dynamic in this discussion is personal change. To emphasize the importance of personal change, I will share with you the following story of an old monk that was reflecting back on his life: *“When I was young, I tried to change the world, but I could not do it. I tried to change the nation but could not do it. I tried to change the town and could not do it. I tried to change my family and could not do it. Now, I realize that if I had only worked to change myself, the positive change in me would have changed my family. The change in my family would have changed the town. The change in the town would have changed the nation. The change in the nation would have changed the world.”*

There is Power in personal change. If you are willing to change your blame strategy, belief system and basic expectations, you can graduate from Groundhog Day. **ATI**



Your Available Training Programs for August and September

August 2011

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday/Sunday
1 Service Advisor 1 of 4	2 Service Advisor 2 of 4	3	4	5	6/7
8	9	10 Shop Owner 1 of 9	11 Shop Owner 2 of 9	12 Shop Owner 3 of 9	13/14
15	16	17	18 San Jose, CA Service Advisor 3 of 4	19 San Jose, CA Service Advisor 3 of 4	20/21
22 Service Advisor 3 of 4	23 Service Advisor 3 of 4	24 Shop Owner 7 of 9	25 Shop Owner 8 of 9	26 Shop Owner 9 of 9	27/28
29 Service Advisor 1 of 4	30 Service Advisor 2 of 4	31			

September 2011

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday/Sunday
			1	2	3/4
5 Labor Day	6	7 Shop Owner 1 of 9	8 Shop Owner 2 of 9	9 Shop Owner 3 of 9	10/11
12	13	14	15 Master Mind 20 Group Salt Lake, UT	16 Master Mind 20 Group Salt Lake, UT	17/18
19 Service Advisor 3 of 4	20 Service Advisor 4 of 4	21 Shop Owner 4 of 9	22 Shop Owner 5 of 9	23 Shop Owner 6 of 9	24/25
26 Service Manager 1 of 2	27 Service Manager 2 of 2	28 Shop Owner 7 of 9	29 Shop Owner 8 of 9	30 Shop Owner 9 of 9	

Leaving Corporate America: Mid-Life Crisis or Smart Career, continued from page 2

The “lot Nazi” strategy worked. Since joining ATI, European Auto Solutions has doubled its car count.

“We move 50 to 60 cars a week,” Tim says. “We’ve doubled our productivity. We’ve added an extra writer. We’ve added extra technicians, and truly we are on the brink of really blowing this thing wide open.”

Tim credits their success to having learned to think like owners.

“Our coach helped us realize we needed to make decisions we didn’t necessarily agree with, but if we put our ownership hats on, they made sense for the business,” Tim says. “Even

though we had the ATI financial metrics, if we didn’t change what we were doing, we were never going to reach those metrics. Without coaching, none of us was going to take the steps to get there.”

Now that the partners have made the necessary changes, Tim says business is fantastic.

“We have been on a growth curve and a profit curve that we’re all extremely happy with,” Tim says. “Our business is quite literally exploding out of the facility we are in. So we are actively looking at as many as three different sites to move our business so we can actually continue the expansion.”

So, does Tim miss his old IT career? Not for a minute.

“I have a wife and three children. One is out of college and on her own, one is a senior in college and one’s a senior in high school. I spend more time with my family in this environment than I ever did in corporate America.”

Because managing time is so important, Tim has this advice for other shop owners who are learning the ropes with ATI: “First, keep the faith. The process works. If your coach is recommending something, you should give it a chance to let it demonstrate itself. Second, it’s absolutely impossible to implement 100 changes at once. So, identify the top two or three, do them and do them well, and then move on to the next thing.” 



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