

Being the Right Person in the Right Place at the Right Time

I've been writing a chapter for Heart of a Woman in Business, by Sheryl Roush, of Sparkle Presentations and author of several inspiring Heart of a Woman books. My mind kept circling back to the importance of being prepared, so that when opportunities appear, we're ready for them. In today's Tip, and with Sheryl's permission, I'll share this brief chapter with you.

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The turning points in my life were unplanned and out-of-the-blue, but I was ready for them. When I was 16, a girlfriend said, "I'm going to be an actress". A thunderbolt flashed over my head and "Me too!" flew out of my mouth. At that moment, I became an actress and although I didn't know how I was going to make it happen, I found my way. Within a few years, I was a New York-based professional stage actress, performing in 33 productions throughout the United States, sometimes sharing the stage with big film stars - not because I had an action plan but because of "Me too!". I was being true to my word. There's power in being.

And magic. Before moving to New York, as a university graduate in Chicago, I needed a union card. I had no idea how I was going to get one but I went on auditions for everything - print work, hair modeling, voice-overs, films, plays, commercials, industrials, you name it. Once I was auditioning for a musical and was in the ladies' room warming up my voice. When I walked out, a gentleman was standing there, waiting to meet me. He was the producer, had been walking by, liked what he heard and ended up casting me. Because of this job, I got my Actors' Equity card, entered the professional ranks and soon got a position with a theater company that moved me to the East Coast. I was the right person in the right place at the right time - just being and doing what I loved.

Eventually I was ready for more, but didn't know what. I relocated again and was working in the theater box office at Los Angeles City College. A professor and I struck up a conversation and I shared about my acting background. He asked to see my resume and immediately asked if I would be interested in teaching voice and speech at the West Coast American Academy of Dramatic Arts, where he was the department head. I had never thought about being a teacher, but accepted his invitation and still remember my first day on the job. I had landed on the shore of my life's work!

Today, my passion for teaching still burns brightly. It's three decades later (three blinks of an eye) and as an adult education instructor, corporate trainer and executive coach in communication skills, I have worked with thousands of professionals from every

industry, in the US and abroad. This, in turn, has prepared me to write "Speak with Passion, Speak with Power!," my workbook for transforming inexperience and the fear of public speaking into energy, know-how and results, which I use in my public speaking courses and trainings.

What I've learned from my life and work is that the key to having both steady growth and quantum breakthroughs is preparation, persistent preparation, continuous readiness. Being the right person in the right place at the right time is not accidental. It comes out of who you're being and being powerfully in action, which turns you into a human magnet that attracts the right people and circumstances into your life.

This is the key to powerful communication too. Communicating is taking action and whether you're delivering presentations, leading teleconferences or webinars, interviewing for positions, teaching courses, managing others - whenever you're communicating for results - ask yourself "Who am I being?" "Am I being the message?" "Am I being the purpose?" "Am I being effective?" "Am I being a contribution?" Answering these questions requires you to be accountable to your listeners, to do what works and drop what doesn't work.

It works to be prepared and this is the focus of my courses. Students model what it means to be extraordinary communicators by repeatedly preparing and practicing brief presentations with each other, before going in front of the whole group. They coach each other, asking "Is your purpose clear?" "Are you being congruent in your delivery?" Partners give and receive feedback based on body language, voice, ideas and organization, energy and inner state, because these work harmoniously together in extraordinary communicators.

Many presentations, practice sessions and partners later, distracting behaviors and limiting patterns, including procrastination and perfectionism, are replaced by greater self-confidence and self-mastery. Students train themselves to do what works, be prepared and have better results.

Sometimes before an individual is ready to be an extraordinary communicator, they need to overcome an intense fear of public speaking. At this point, they're being afraid of the fear, so I coach them to face it, get familiar with it, build a tolerance to it and work with it. They shift into being neutral about having fear and this allows room for them to be prepared for success and extraordinary.

If a client is interviewing for a position, they must be "The One!" and have the interviewer get it: "I'm the one who's going to solve your problems, make you look good and here's why." I help them identify what isn't right person, right place, right time - right down to what they're thinking, visualizing and feeling. When these are brought into alignment, a powerful force field is created.

When your outside and your inside are one and the same, you're congruent and a powerful human magnet. This is why preparation is the key, persistent preparation,

continual readiness. Actions issue from who you're being and both lead to steady growth and to unplanned, out-of-the-blue breakthroughs. So follow your heart, live a life consistent with your vision and opportunities will appear. They have for me and like Shakespeare said, "The readiness is all."