



NEWSLETTER
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This Issue:

What Are You
Complaining About?

Table of Contents:

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For busy professional women and small business owners wanting more success and fulfillment in their careers and more time, balance, and joy in their personal lives.

What Are You Complaining About?

A couple of months ago I read *The Traveler's Gift*, a parable that outlines seven decisions that determine personal success. It inspired me to look at habits and behaviors that may be getting in the way of my success and fulfillment. That exploration led me to make a commitment to stop complaining.

Many of you know how fervently I believe that what you think about **E X P A N D S**. Whatever you put your focus on, is what you're going to get more of. That's why my commitment to limit the amount of airtime and energy I give to my complaints is so important to me. I certainly don't want to be expanding my complaints!

I want to be clear that complaining is very different from expressing your feelings. It's one thing to tell someone honestly and openly how you feel about something. It's quite another to have that negative *EDGE* of complaint to your words and your attitude.

For a month, I made a concerted effort to stop complaining. My plan was simply to notice when I was dissatisfied and then let it go. It was much easier in concept than in actuality!

One of the first things I discovered is that there is some kind of payoff we get from complaining. I began to be aware of times when I knew I was breaking my promise and I just didn't care. I complained anyway because it felt good to let it rip!

It was interesting to watch the dynamics. Given the consequences of complaining – the inevitability of creating more of the same – there were times I would still choose to do it. Why? *Because the immediate gratification of complaining*

provided greater reward than the long-term – and not immediately evident – reward of not voicing that complaint.

So, what's at the heart of that gratification? What's the *real* payoff we get from complaining? It may not be pretty... and it may not be easy to look at... but I believe it's the satisfaction we get from being "right." And when we're "right" that means that the other person or situation is "wrong." *Our complaints justify our position.*

If we're "right," then there's no need to look any further. No need to look within to find that we might be responsible.

Whoa! That's a pretty big payoff!

So, what could we do instead? What would be better for us in the long run?

I've discovered that underneath every complaint is a request to be made. If you'll take the time to look, somewhere behind every complaint is a request that you're not verbalizing.

If I'm cooking dinner while my boyfriend is relaxing in front of the TV and I notice myself begin to stew about it, I look for the request that I'm not making. If my phone isn't working and the phone company says it'll be three days before they fix it, I explain how critical my phone is to my business as a coach and request that they get here sooner.

I'm not always successful. (Although, I have to tell you I often am!) Sometimes my requests can't be honored. But the secret is that there is *relief* in making the request. Voicing my concern. Taking action. Being heard.

So here's my challenge to you. For a month, I want you to stop giving energy and airtime to your complaints. If it's easier for you to make the commitment to someone in order to follow through, reply to this email right now and let me know you're going to play this game with me.

Do whatever it takes to keep this commitment fresh in your awareness. Post reminders all over your house or office. If you find you're ready to criticize your boss or your husband... if you're going to complain about how your house looks or about the service you received... STOP. *Don't move into the negative energy of complaining. Look for the request and verbalize it kindly and directly to the person who can make a difference.*

See how often you're able to do it. Notice what happens when you do... and when you don't. I believe you'll find that this one change will make a tremendous difference in the quality of your everyday life!

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