

An Open
Letter
from *New
York Times*
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Selling
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It's time that a few leaders stepped up and brought network marketing out of its dark cocoon into a new butterfly reality. Wanna play? Wanna be one of them? It won't be easy. But it'll be worth it. Let's earn a huge stream of excellent, enlightened income together and transform our own lives and the image of network marketing forever.

Got a few minutes?
I think it will be worth your time.

Let's chat about financial freedom—as in *your* financial freedom.

I believe that each of us needs multiple streams of income—real estate, mutual funds, internet marketing, to name a few. But high on the multiple streams short-list is the opportunity of network marketing. It really is the “Ultimate Money Machine.”

Network marketing is probably the least understood, most maligned business opportunity in the world.

And the fault for this misunderstanding lies directly in the lap of many of the people in the network marketing industry itself. That's right. Network marketing is great. But amateur network

marketers are fouling the nest and costing you and me a fortune.

Before I continue, I'm assuming that you know what network marketing is. If you're like me when I first was approached about network marketing (and who hasn't been?) I had some preconceived notions that were, at best, inaccurate. For twenty years I kept saying "no" to network marketing based upon what I *thought* network marketing was.

And what did I think? I *thought* it was a low class way for small-minded people to make a few extra bucks by harassing their friends and family into buying garage loads of expensive products.

Frankly, that's the way old style multilevel marketing used to be thirty or forty years ago. You know what they say about "first impressions?" Hard to overcome. So when anyone approached me about network marketing, that old MLM image was stuck in my head.

But thank heaven for a family friend. And I mean that literally—Thank Heaven! Collette Larsen was a godsend. She was a close friend that acted like a true friend. She would not let that old MLM image stay stuck in my mind.

She knew I was stubborn, maybe a bit arrogant, certainly skeptical, and probably a bit fearful. I saw myself as a classy, professional guy that wouldn't be caught dead getting involved in some fly-by-night business opportunity.

She patiently loved me and my wife into the "real" vision of network marketing...gently deflecting my MLM diatribes until I finally agreed to take a more serious look.

And what I saw quite literally stunned me. It wasn't ANYTHING like I had thought. When I researched the major players—the companies that had been around for five, ten, fifteen, twenty years—I could see why they had staying power. These were classy, successful companies with incredible products at reasonable prices. What's more, as a bonus, their ordinary consumers were offered a way to create extraordinary streams of income... residual income (i.e., money while you sleep) for sharing these products with interested others.

Then my wife and I launched our own networking business and, as they say, the rest is history. We worked our way straight to the top and have been in the top ten income earners for almost ten years. The money was (and still is) great. The experience was (and still is) magnificent. Our company was (and still is) peopled by some of the smartest, nicest, classiest people I've ever met anywhere.

Network marketing is certainly not my only stream of income, but it certainly is my most favorite. I prefer to call myself an author (it has a nice ring to it), but professional networker is a close second.

I'm a big believer in entrepreneurship and the virtues of freedom. In network marketing, I found an industry that leveled the entrepreneurial playing field. Rather than starting a business from scratch (with the high cost of entry and exit), entrepreneurs could let someone else manage the hard parts of the business—product creation, warehousing, distribution, employee benefits, equipment leasing, property acquisition, etc.—so they could concentrate on marketing the products and earn substantial streams of income for doing it.

When done right, network marketing is an enlightened, inexpensive way of getting more people involved in entrepreneurship and ultimately, in controlling their own financial destinies.

That's the good part.

Here's the ugly part.

By leveling the playing field—removing the barriers, lowering the bar—network marketing has attracted an amateur class of people—a get-rich quick crowd of hustlers and fast-talkers trying to make a killing from their downlines and ultimately killing the reputation of our wonderful industry.

And that really frosts me. I'm upset.

I think it's time we took back our industry from these amateurs. Or at least trained them better.

Every profession has its code of ethics and standards of practice and certification. Doctors earn their diplomas. Lawyers have to pass the bar. Pro athletes have to make the team. That's what makes them professional.

It's time that networkers adhered to their own standards of excellence and professionalism.

If I could wave a magic wand and transform this industry, it would be to adopt a new professional designation of entrepreneurial excellence: "The PEN." The Professional Enlightened Networker.

To earn the PEN, a beginning networker would agree to adhere to a Code of Commitments. At the very least, here are five areas of commitment.

I commit to tell the truth.

I hate it when I hear someone talk about how easy it is to build a fortune in network marketing. Easy money! That's a lie. A flat-out lie. There is no easy money in this or in any other business. It's going to be hard yards from day one. Don't come in if you think the money will be easy. Stay away. It'll be cheaper—for

all of us. Come in only after you understand the costs. My wife and I worked hard to build our downlines. It took several years. But now that the residual streams of income are pouring in, it's been the most lucrative thing we've ever done.

This is the truth:

It will be harder than you think. It will take longer than you hope. It will cost more than you want. But when you succeed, it will be worth more than you can possibly imagine.

Can you handle the truth?

I commit to plant realistic expectations.

There is so much disappointment with amateur networkers because their expectations are out of whack. After all, this IS marketing. And any professional marketer will tell you that it's a numbers game, and the numbers are extremely low. In other words, a direct mail letter will rarely find more than one in two hundred people willing to pull out a credit card and buy something. One in a hundred is an excellent response. Two or three in a hundred is incredible.

But beginning network marketers are encouraged to make a list of their hundred top friends with the expectation of signing up a bunch of them! Unrealistic! One sharp new associate out a hundred close friends would be an excellent response—even if you have the most exciting product on the planet. Two would be excellent. But if a person is not taught the true numbers, they run off to sponsor a few friends and find ninety-nine rejections staring them in the face. After twenty solid rejections, they quit and blame the industry of network marketing. "It just doesn't work!" "It's a scam!"

I'll tell you what's a scam—an amateur who plants the

unrealistic expectation that talking to a few close friends is all that it takes.

Finding good, solid business associates is HARD. I would rather people expect that it will be hard. Maybe the hardest thing they've ever done.

Then, if they discover that it's a bit easier than that, they're encouraged. They want to forge ahead, through the tough stuff, until they succeed. And success is SO SWEET!

I commit to appreciate the real value of residual income.

If it's slow and hard, just how much income can you earn at this?

That depends on you: An extra \$1,000 a month. \$1,000 a week. Maybe even \$1,000 a day!

Now let's compare this to incomes from the "non-networking" world. It takes a doctor at least ten years of study and training to become a physician. The average doctor graduates with over \$100,000 in tuition debt. It takes several more years for them to be earning up to \$365,000 a year, or \$1,000 a day. That's a marathon with a big payoff!

Realize the powerful difference between linear income and residual income. Doctors earn linear income. They only get paid when they show up. If they stop working, their income stops.

The income from network marketing can be residual... which means that it can continue to flow to you EVEN AFTER YOU

STOP WORKING.

Not even your high-paid doctor can say that. That's why doctors are joining excellent network marketing organizations in droves.

A thousand dollars a day in "doctor-type" income isn't nearly as powerful as \$1,000 a day in "networker-type" income. A doctor-type check is just that—one check. But a networker-type check represents a stream of future checks as far as you can see into the future.

Did you get that?

This powerful lesson came to me three years ago as I was driving home after delivering a speech to 1,000 people in Anaheim, California. The weather was horrible—a pounding rainstorm. My car spun off the road at high speed and smashed directly into a stationery tree. I was moments from death. I ended up in intensive care in a coma.

The doctors and nurses rushed to save my life. Orthopedic and plastic surgeons performed their magic at hundreds of dollars an hour. I was oblivious to their heroic efforts.

When I awoke to see my family at my bedside, I was so thankful to be alive. And then I had the strangest thought:

While I had been laying there in a coma, I had been earning more money than all the doctors and nurses taking care of me.

It felt good to know that even if I had died that night, my family would have continued to receive income from my efforts. Residual income transcends even the bands of death.

That's why you work hard to build your residual streams... just

in case there comes a time when you CAN'T work. You want the streams to continue to flow.

Don't you?

I commit to refuse to be offended.

This one isn't easy. Most of us are pretty soft and mushy inside. We hate rejection. We hate to look like fools. We hate to fail. And now I'm telling you to prepare for a 98% failure rate?

Actually, there is a simple way not to be offended. The answer lies in this sentence from network marketing guru, Tom "Big Al" Schreiter:

Amateurs convince; professionals sort.

Amateur network marketers are always selling—trying to convince someone to join their team or to buy their products. No wonder they're so despised. Nobody likes to be sold.

Professionals never sell. They select. They have an image in their mind of the ideal member of their team. They are looking for applicants—someone who is already sold, already convinced. It's a subtle but profound difference—the difference between selling and selecting.

People who select can't be rejected because they are the ones deciding who's in and who's out. If YOU don't qualify, the professional won't select you.

Did you get that? This is how professionals behave. Do you want to be a professional?

I'll never forget the first time I finally "got it." I was doing a three-way call with one of my team members. They'd run a newspaper ad and had attracted a few interested people. We

were doing one-on-one telephone follow up calls.

A guy comes on the line. He's a bit surly. I don't like the tone of this conversation. I tell him we're looking for a certain type of person to play on our team. He asks me what kind of business opportunity this is. I tell him it has to do with a certain reputable network marketing company, and he goes off on me.

"You people," he snarls. "Selling expensive stuff to your friends and family." He's livid. I don't get offended—after all, this is exactly the way I used to feel. I don't try to convince him, or overcome his objections. I've made my decision. This is not my kind of person. I'm rejecting HIM before he has a chance to reject me. But just before I hang up I have a brainstorm. The words start flowing out of my mouth:

"Come with me on a quick trip into the future... let's say five years from now. You're driving up to your new house in your new car, and you stop at the mailbox. You open the mailbox and find an envelope containing a very large check there. This isn't your monthly check; it's your weekly check. And you smile to yourself and realize that although you worked very hard for five years to earn those checks, you haven't actually done any work for the past six months. And the checks still keep showing up. Amazing, you think to yourself.

You stand there in front of your new house and you hardly believe your new lifestyle. The products you've been taking are making you feel more energetic. You're healthier than you've ever been. You feel fantastic physically, financially.

Now, let me ask you a simple question:

"If that was you and that image was real, would you tell your friends and family about it? Or would you hide from

them how you'd achieved this level of success?"

His answer to me was shocking. He said, "If that was real, I'd tell everyone I knew."

"Well, sir," I said. "That is exactly what happened to me. And that is exactly why I'm talking to you right now. I'm looking for a few sharp people who want to make that happen in their own lives. By the reaction you gave me earlier, you're not the kind of candidate we're looking for. If you know of someone who'd like to live that kind of lifestyle, please give them my number. I'm taking applications."

There is silence on the other end of the line. I wait. He says, "What do I need to do to qualify?"

When I hang up, my team member is amazed. There is no rejection, no failure, no embarrassment. I don't allow it. I'm sorting for the kind of person who is looking for... even praying for... a once in a lifetime opportunity like this. They may only be one or two in a hundred. But those one or two in a hundred are worth their weight in gold.

I commit to finish strong.

Let's review the real numbers again. One out of a hundred is good odds. Two out of a hundred is phenomenal. Get prepared for the ninety-eight rejections that might be your experience. But realize that those few acceptances, if followed through, can earn you a fortune.

Did you notice the secret in that last sentence? Underline the words, *if followed through.*

Follow-through—that's the secret.

This is a country of quitters. We're great starters, but lousy finishers. Do you want a formula for failure? Start strong, finish lousy.

Here's a better formula: start lousy (if you have to), but finish strong.

Better yet, here's the best success formula:

Start strong, then finish even stronger.

When it comes to network marketing, you need to make a three-year pledge. Stick to it. Figure it out. The money is at the finish line, no matter how long it takes.

Brian Tracy talks about the two most important characteristics of winners: optimism and persistence.

Optimism is the belief that tomorrow will be better than today. Persistence is the willingness to keep moving even if it isn't.

Think positive. And persist.

And as a final note on follow through: Just as you expect your "newbies" to never give up, they also expect that you will never give up on them. There is a certain type of networker who we call a "sponsor monster." They sign 'em up fast and abandon them just as quickly. Their motto: If you throw enough spaghetti against a wall, some of it is bound to stick.

This is not enlightened. This is giving our industry a bad name. I want to grab those people by the neck and scream, "Don't even bring them into your business if you're not prepared to train and support them. If you love 'em and leave 'em, they'll

not only badmouth you, they'll badmouth network marketing."

Here's the lesson: If you're going to start them, then finish with them.

Let's do for the networking industry what Disney did for the amusement park industry. Before Walt, the amusement park business was full of shifty operators and tattooed carnival barkers—a low class experience. Disneyland became the standard to emulate. A clean-cut, polished, high quality experience—the way it ought to be.

Wanna play? Wanna be a Disney? It won't be easy. But it'll be worth it. Instead of becoming filthy rich, let's earn a huge stream of excellent, enlightened income together and transform our own lives and the image of network marketing forever.

Robert G. Allen is a highly successful network marketer and author of the national and *New York Times* best sellers: *Nothing Down: A Proven Program that Shows You How to Buy Real Estate with Little or No Money Down*; *Creating Wealth, The Challenge*; *Multiple Streams of Income: How to Generate a Lifetime of Unlimited Wealth*, *Multiple Streams of Internet Income: How Ordinary People Earn Extraordinary Money Online*; *The One Minute Millionaire: The Enlightened Way to Wealth*; and *Cracking the Millionaire Code: Your Key to Enlightened Wealth*.

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