

**"Find your true path. It's so easy to become someone we don't want to be,
without even realizing it's happening."
Bernie Siegel, MD**

In our final newsletter of the year, we extend a moment for reflection. This has been an especially difficult year for so many people across the globe. It is important to maintain perspective, both personally and professionally, and draw inspiration from various sources. Please feel free to share the content of this newsletter with anyone whom you feel it might help.

What's in a Name? Apparently More Than We Thought

According to a recent study by Spectrem Group, 41% of wealthy investors don't like the term "wealth management." (view article at: www.ParagonResources.com/library/wmturnoff.pdf) Are you articulating, demonstrating, and validating your value proposition so your clients don't put you in a "box"? The article ends by confirming a strong belief that we have at Paragon and which also forms the basis of the Know Service Book – "advisors would do well to clearly define their client base and make sure clients know the services offered."

Wise for Their Years

A group of educators posed this question to children ages 4-8: "What does love mean?" The answers they got were broader and deeper than could have been imagined.

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen." Bobby, 7

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate." Nikka, 6

"Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs." Chrissy, 6

"Love is what makes you smile when you are tired." Terri, 4

For more wisdom from children go to: www.ParagonResources.com/library/children.pdf

Animal Nature

Author and animal lover, Jim Ellis, shares: "Animals never ignore their own needs; they achieve balance and pursue nothing to excess. When they are hungry, they hunt or forage and eat, and they always eat what is appropriate. Because they balance nutrition and exercise, they are almost always fit. When they are tired they sleep. They pay attention to their grooming and most help to groom each other, partly for hygiene, partly as a ritual of companionship. Animals divide their day and their activities according to what it must be for them, what is good for each as an individual, what is good for all as a whole. They rebel against confinement, they own the world and they want access to it."

For more of Jim's Animal Wisdom go to: www.ParagonResources.com/library/animals.pdf

Taking Control – Be the Difference

by Sarah Dale, Know No Bounds LLC

Doom and gloom seems to appear everywhere you currently look. You pick up the morning paper or watch the news and read about the latest failing industries, mass layoffs, terrorism, catastrophes, deaths, and scandals. You go to work and hear the grumbings around the water cooler about management or the latest new rule from a regulatory agency or general gossip about nothing of any particular importance. You turn on the TV and it's hard to find something of value because reality shows abound and they seem far from 'real.' Negativity surrounds you and perhaps you wonder when life became so crazy. In a world where pessimism seems to spawn at every turn, it's time to seek ways to regain a positive approach to your practice, your clients, your family, and your community. It's time to take charge of that which is in your control - step up to the plate and make a difference!

Take Control of Your Time

Time seems to have become a most precious commodity. Adding more hours to the day is not a viable option, so you need to manage the time you have. Get organized; engage in the activities that will lead you to achieving your goals rather than losing time on listening to those around you who waste precious time on being negative. There is no single right organizational system, but find one that fits your practice and works with your team. Don't set yourself up for frustration; ensure your daily activity plan is realistic and don't let others take control of your day. Most importantly, be sure to include your personal or family activities into your organization system. Define what's important and make it your reality!

Take Control of Your Communication

Lack of communication is the number one client complaint in our industry and miscommunication is typically what fuels personal relationship issues. This should be an easy item to fix but clearly this is not the case. So what do you have control over here? When your manager communicates important information, don't let the chain stop with you. Unless it's confidential, be sure to pass it on to your team – don't assume anyone else will. If communication forums don't exist, get creative and instigate them. By listening and passing it forward, you control the positive flow of news and pertinent information. When there is downbeat news that needs be shared, DELIVERY is key! It is important to not only use the right words but also deliver it with the right tone. Perpetuate the positive and remember the difference between realism and negativism. Likewise at home, be sure you are both listening and sharing with all members of your family on a regular basis.

*Service is more important today than ever! To ensure your clients are not part of the 81% looking for a new advisor, you must build a service model that **articulates, demonstrates, and validates** the value your team offers. This is the foundation of our book, *Know Service: Connect with Clients. Shape Your Future. Differentiate YOU.* This 195 page book provides a simple 5-Step Process to help your team create a systematized service model within your practice. It is loaded with over 55 tools to help you implement the ideas into your business.*

*www.BoundlessPublishing.com
www.Amazon.com*

Take Control – Recognize and Appreciate

'Tis the season for appreciation, so be sure to recognize appropriately. Your clients, your team, your centers of influence, and your family all need to be recognized. Remember that "the act of giving" makes most people feel good about themselves!

Clients. Your best clients should be receiving something personal and customized based on their interests and passions. Best clients should not be receiving the standard chocolates, popcorn, or peanuts! These are more appropriate for the next tier down. Remember, particularly in this environment, clients are very susceptible to the attention of other advisors. You need to take the time on a regular basis to let them know how important they are to your practice. Simple thank you cards, personalized notes, and small tokens of appreciation can make a big difference to them personally and to your client retention ratio. This type of appreciation should happen throughout the year, not just in the holiday season, so be sure to include ongoing appreciation in your business plan and service menu for next year. Exceeding clients' expectations from a service standpoint will make a huge difference, particularly when performance expectations are not being met! (Don't forget the \$100 compliance limitation per relationship.)

Your Team. Be sure to remember the team (both internal and external) who helps to make you the success you are. Your CSA and support staff is critical to your overall success. What about your home office partners? Have you thanked them recently? These could be operational staff, technology associates, or product specialists who help you throughout the year. Sending a tray of cookies is inexpensive and will make a difference to them. You should also remember your external partners such as wholesalers, banking partners, attorneys, CPAs, and other centers of influence who have perhaps provided you with referrals this year and have helped you grow your practice. Again, you should be appreciating your internal and external team periodically throughout the year, so remember to include them in your service menu for 2009.

Community & Strangers. Instead of getting caught up in the depressing headlines or non-constructive attitudes, create time to do something nice for strangers. You can make an enormous difference in someone's life by visiting a senior's home, serving at the homeless shelter once a month, or just listening to someone who needs a friendly ear. By focusing on things in your control, you will create a more positive environment.

Take control by creating a work and home environment filled with encouragement, recognition, and the 'pass it forward' concept. You'll breed more loyalty along the way, feel good about yourself, and make a positive difference in someone else's life.

Take Control of Your Actions

It's very easy to get caught up and follow the crowd when you are surrounded by negativity. Don't fall into this trap – dare to be different and unique. Avoid the water cooler, ignore the TV, and don't take out your frustrations on others. Misery loves company – don't accept the invitation! In your practice, focus on the long term plan and objectives of your clients, not the 'idea of the day'. Don't worry about what everyone else in the office or neighbourhood is doing; live YOUR dream, not someone else's.

Is attitude everything? It may not be everything but it is a good starting point! Without a positive one, we do nothing but perpetuate the cycle of negativity that surrounds us. Changing other people's attitudes and actions is out of your control, but you can certainly respond in a more positive way. Always try to take the high road, and do everything in your power to create an environment that breeds positivity, whether it is at home or at work. But remember, the only attitude you really have control over is yours! So don't let others bring you down, don't follow the crowd and don't ask "where did the fun go?" Take control and re-create it. Yes, financial services is a serious industry, but professionalism and fun do not have to be mutually exclusive. Make the best of your time,



Results-Driven Solutions December 2008 Newsletter by Krista S. Sheets, President

communicate often and effectively, and generate an environment of recognition. Be sure to celebrate the good fortune you have, laugh at yourself, deepen the relationships in your life, and BE the difference.

Sarah and I work together providing comprehensive solutions to our clients. We co-authored the Know Service book which provides a proven process of "5 Steps to 5-Star Service for Financial Professionals." Contact us today if you need assistance with your practice.

NEW WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITY – DRIVE REVENUE WITH 5-STAR SERVICE!

In order to retain ideal client relationships and attract new ones, SERVICE is paramount. You must have a service model in place that adequately articulates, demonstrates, and validates your value proposition. Our new workshop provides participants with a simple process and enumerable tools which lead to dramatic results including:

- An increase in both assets managed and revenues generated
- An increase in asset retention, client retention, and loyalty
- An increase in referrals
- A more efficient practice and team

If your firm is interested in learning more information, please contact Krista Sheets at 770.319.0310 or Sarah Dale at 757.258.0008

TEAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Invaluable tools for determining if you have the right PEOPLE doing the right JOBS in your team. This process includes personalized consulting on the strengths, motivators, and unique attributes of your team members. We utilize well-researched and validated online assessments to identify the talents of each of your team members, and give you tips on how to define your team infrastructure, individual roles and responsibilities, and increase communication and management effectiveness. Included in the process are two 60-90 minute telephone consulting sessions to help you act on the results. For more information, visit our web site at: www.ParagonResources.com/products/team.php

Seasons greetings to you and your loved ones. Please enjoy special memories with your family and best wishes for a healthy, prosperous, and Happy New Year!

Warmest regards,

Krista

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