

Pain and Fear—Good or Evil?



by Jay Goltz

GOLTZ ON BUSINESS

Are pain and fear the twin evils of business, or are they necessary evils? If you aren't concerned about growing your business and you're happy with the way everything is going, you can "coast." That's assuming, of course, that your customer base is not eroding, your competition isn't getting more fierce, and changes in the industry aren't threatening your very existence.

If you have absolutely no fear about your business, you are either very smart, very ignorant, or very rich. Now, if you have a healthy amount of fear, it will be enough to keep you on your toes, but not so much that you're paralyzed.

Business is volatile, and there are thousands of examples of companies that at one point were very successful, only to fail ultimately. The other issue is if you really want to grow your company and you haven't experienced some level of fear, then maybe you haven't been pushing hard enough.

Whenever you try new things, borrow some money, open more stores, hire new people, or take on an intimidatingly large job, fear is an excellent motivator and governor for keeping your head on straight. If I decided not to grow my company and just coast, I could probably eliminate most of the fear of running my business. But then I wouldn't be able to enjoy the thrill of victory or enjoy the benefits of increased income.

The other necessary component of being successful, whether it is in business, sports, relationships, health, or some personal growth, is pain. You see, if getting to

the "next level" did not require some pain, everyone would be doing it. If diet and exercising were not painful, no one would be overweight. If conditioning to be a world class athlete wasn't painful, everyone would be in the Olympic Games. If going to school for a field of expertise was not painful, there would be many more doctors, lawyers....If working at personal relationships was not painful, everyone would have a great connection with their spouse and kids. Each one of those things has a certain amount of pain associated with it that a person has to commit to in order to succeed. How many thin, Olympic-winning, heart surgeons with happy family lives do you know?

Which gets us back to *your* business. Unless you run the perfect business, which I don't think anyone does (including me), some change is necessary. And change is painful. If you don't accept that, you're wasting your time, just like a person wanting to lose weight who doesn't change their dietary habits.

Pain is a necessary ingredient for success, and I have decided that I need to continually change and endure it. That is why my business continues to grow. Whether it's firing a mediocre employee, training myself to be a better manager, having the patience to go through pricing structures (*that is pain!*), or coming in early to catch up on things, I continue to pay the price.

The old axiom, "No pain, no gain" is true. Unfortunately, your mother-in-law doesn't count! ■