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Lower Michigan. Dr. Gray-Boothroyd provides wellness coaching and education on an international level primarily to spiritually minded women who are looking at making small or big changes in how they live, reflecting what feels more meaningful to them and their well being. Her services are offered through one-on-one coaching, teleclasses, retreats, and group coaching programs. She also trains and mentors new coaches.

As I recall, you first came in contact with Action Plan Marketing and Robert Middleton back in 2006. Can you tell me a little about how you came across these materials and what was going on in your business at that time?

I had been in the business for about a year, but I was really struggling to find clients. What I hadn't anticipated was what to expect. I had no entrepreneurial experience whatsoever. I knew nothing about business. I thought of marketing as cold calls, harassing people and pushing people. I had all of these misconceptions about what marketing is and how to go about doing it with integrity, so I did nothing. I had a handful of clients at best. I was really struggling and was not clear on my marketing. I'm a psychologist so I should know better, but on top of this I felt as though I was failing and didn't want anyone to know. It was exhausting and completely ineffective.

I decided to hire a marketing coach and worked with her for close to a year. One of the favorite resources she shared with me was Action Plan Marketing. I signed up for Robert's Middleton's e-zine and started gravitating toward the Action Plan products. For me, anything that felt remotely linear and step-by-step was helpful. My coach was helpful in breaking the inertia for me, but I found this material fit me more authentically. It was really sincere and not fancy.

I purchased the Infoguru Marketing Manual and used the Web Site Toolkit to get my web site up and running. I also signed up for the Fast Track program. I didn't do every single thing, but what I found was just implementing a few things made a difference. Number one was changing my mindset about marketing. I do a lot more mentoring now with new coaches and I remember being where they are now and the fear around marketing being pushy or aggressive. They have this idea of service marketing and that it is all permission based. It doesn't mean I have to change who I am to grow my business. For me that is a huge integrity piece and authenticity piece.

I find it interesting that you are licensed psychologist and yet the mindset piece, which is a pretty simplified process, was a huge shift for you.

This was enormous in how I viewed myself as an entrepreneur. It changed my attitude about marketing and about all my efforts. I was building a business and was able to accept responsibility for that and feel good about that. What it allowed me to do was free up my creativity to have my own message come through in my marketing in a real sincere way. It made all the difference because I wasn't trying to be someone else in order to be an effective marketer. What I learned and what helped changed my mindset is that marketing is just about offering help and offering service. That was the core shift.

I have found that personally myself. Authenticity is so critical. You begin to attract people to your services that are a better fit for you.

That is so true. It is going to speak to the people who are going to work best with you anyway. You're not trying to speak to everybody. For me there was an initial fear that what I did was too specialized and there aren't enough people who are going to gravitate toward this message. I would try to keep things more general, but then that of course speaks to no one in a very helpful and convincing way. For my voice to come forward and feel confidence in that is what allows the clients I want to work with, and am best at helping, find me. A lot of people have done nothing more than read my home page and have told me, "You were reading my mind." I remember how difficult it was for me to put that home page out there, but it works.

These materials prompt you to think deeper about your business and what you stand for, what your business means, what your values are and who you are trying to attract. You mentioned earlier being able to take these materials and have your message reflect what you do was really important.

Knowing and honoring the spiritual side of me comes through my materials even when I don't use the word spiritual. I know this is true by the clients who are attracted to work with me. It allows all those parts to come through in a very authentic way. It really gives you clarity of the big picture. This was another big confidence and integrity piece for me. I believe my service is helpful and I am passionate about offering this to people. There is value and worth and a way for me to create a livelihood through helping others.

You mentioned earlier you were a participant in a Fast Track program. I've found some people are afraid of group coaching and have preconceived notions about that. I know you've had great results with group coaching in your own business. What are your thoughts about the group approach both from a consumer standpoint as well as a leader of your own group coaching programs?

There is a different kind of intimacy and power that develops amongst group participants that is in some cases more powerful than what I can offer one-on-one. I think people equate groups with not giving as much personal attention; therefore it is not going to be as beneficial. I have found the opposite to be true. There is power in shared support and knowing you are not alone. Learning vicariously through hearing shared stories and experiencing other people being coached it is a rich experience. It is a win-win.

We have to be very careful of isolation. Group coaching helps with that as well. In the dark period during the first year when I was building this business I felt so isolated and so alone and felt like I was the only coach struggling with getting this up and running. Having the peer support is also critical.

How have these materials impacted your business?

I am doing well financially. I have also noticed I am now in more of a maintenance phase with my marketing. Recently my husband has had some really serious health issues so I have not been attending to marketing as much as I had been. In the past, I would have been afraid the bottom was going to drop out, but that has not happened. I still have a steady stream of clients because of the marketing pieces I had put in place.

I now have greater faith in those periods when it's necessary, or if I choose to, I can coast a bit. It even gave me a chance to take some concentrated time off recently to recharge my own batteries and put together ideas for new programs I want to offer through the upcoming fall and winter. Now I am at a place where I can see more of the big picture and the best part is a higher level of confidence and assurance this business is sustainable and will keep going and growing. I have more freedom to add new services and programs but the core stays steady. I have a tremendous sense of accomplishment. It is very reassuring. I am able to track new clients back to the marketing pieces I have put in place.

Before we wrap up, if someone was considering the Action Plan Marketing programs or materials what would you like to leave with them?

It is so straightforward, so practical and effective. It is about letting your authentic self come forward so you can attract the people you most want to work with who want to take advantage of what you offer. For me it was taking a leap of faith based on the good feelings I had about Robert Middleton. He is a deeply trustworthy marketer. That's rare. There are a lot of marketers who have bells and whistles which are easy to fall for when you are in a vulnerable place. But with these materials the bells and whistles are not there. There's nothing fancy about it. It is just solid, supportive material that works with effort and time.

I'm sure I will never outgrow it. I can go back to it over and over again and still find something new, learn more and still have fresh ideas when I am ready. As part of this process I was looking for the golden key, the shortcut or for somebody to give me that magic wand. But what I realized is it doesn't really exist. Action Plan Marketing's materials have been the tried and true thing for me. It's honest and it works. It is the one thing I recommend to all my clients.

ACTION PLAN MARKETING

For more information on the products and services of Action Plan Marketing, go to www.ActionPlan.com

Our first recommended program is the "Action Plan Marketing Club" and then the "InfoGuru Marketing Manual," followed by the "Web Site ToolKit."