

# The Business Connector

A Quarterly Newsletter from AmSpirit™ Business Connections

## Relationship Shifts

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It is said, “the only thing that we can count on for sure is change.” This is true of almost everything, as change is all around us.

Just when we make a substantial investment to upgrade our computers, new technology is released.

Just when we have perfected a method for effectively completing the mountain of paperwork required in our business, the required paperwork changes.

Just when we have found the best way between home and the office, road construction forces us to re-route.

Change is all around us, sometimes seemingly frustrating our every effort. Change even invades our networking initiatives.

We devote years to training and developing an assistant, and then we receive notice that he or she is quitting.

We flawlessly and diligently service a client for years. Despite our efforts, with little warning, the client hires someone else and reduces business with us.

We invest a tremendous amount of time and energy in nurturing a relationship with an accountant who provides us with significant referrals. Then the accountant sells the practice and retires.

Suffice it to say that our relationships – whether personal or professional – are not stable. Much like everything else in life relationships are constantly changing or evolving. Alan Loy McGinnis, PhD, refers to these changes in his book *The*

*Friendship Factor* as “Relationship Shifts.”

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McGinnis (who is a psychologist and nationally renowned expert on relationships) has straightforward advice.

What do we do to prevent these Relationship Shifts? Answer: Nothing. Essentially, changes in our networks (basically our relationships) cannot be prevented. These changes are generally beyond our control and a part of life.

What should we do when such a change in our network occurs? Answer: Nothing. McGinnis concludes these changes are inevitable, so expect them – factor them into our master plan, so to speak.

This is not to say that we are able to know or even anticipate these changes – we can do neither. This is to say, however, that because Relationship Shifts are to be expected, we should be more accepting of them.

Although much of McGinnis’ discussion of Relationship Shifts revolves around our relationships with our parents or children, the concept is easily applied to our professional networks.

After all, if we have little or no control over our own children’s desire to be

more independent of us, what makes us think that we can prevent someone from selling their business and retiring? We cannot.

Knowing this, when these Relationship Shifts occur, even if we cannot be totally accepting of them, we should certainly attempt to be less frustrated by them.

After all, business is not and never will be an endless period of forward progress. Every few steps forward are accompanied by a least one step back. Usually these steps back are nothing more than Relationship Shifts.

Beyond being more accepting of and less frustrated by these changes, we also can attempt to focus on the positive aspects. While in the short run, these changes can seem like a setback, over time they can serve to benefit us.

For example, perhaps our assistant departs to a vendor and becomes our new customer service rep – someone who truly understands our business.

Or perhaps our client’s decision to hire someone who seemingly eliminates the need for our business, puts us in a more profitable consultative role with our client.

Or perhaps the accountant, now retired, is no longer worried about losing clients to competitors and introduces us to other area accountants – expanding our referral base.

The only thing we can count on for sure is change. Change, however, can be good. As the saying goes, “when one door closes, another one opens.”

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