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# Now is the Time for Guts and Guile

*"Life has a way of testing a person's will, either by having nothing happen at all or by having everything happen all at once."*

~ Paulo Coelho

Consciously or not, we all face choices every day to do what is right or what is easy. Most of the time these choices are small in consequence or impact. It is in these small decisions that we train ourselves how to choose with the bigger and much more impactful choices. In life, we often get on a path that provides us with what we and our families need, and following that path becomes easy and comfortable as it provides us with what we are seeking at that moment. We often continue on that path, even if there are signs that point to a need or opportunity to choose a new path, not recognizing that the path we are on now leads to a dead end. Recognizing the need for a change in direction and a new path can be difficult. As Coelho's quote above suggests, when everything is happening all at once, we can miss out on making the choice to take a new path for future prosperity and achievement of our goals and vision. I have been asking myself these questions as our markets change, as our client's change, and as the competitive environment we play in changes.

When we face these situations in our lives we can choose to do a couple of things. We can ignore the signs that life is giving us, and in doing so shrink our perspective, capacity and abilities so that we don't see a problem; or we can choose to move forward boldly to find the new path, with all its uncertainty, possibilities and potential. This requires us to open our minds and thinking, and to take bold action moving forward.

It is extremely difficult for me to rethink old assumptions, beliefs and approaches, and be entirely open to new information that reframe our beliefs, and reset our path forward to success. In these situations, I must be reflective on what is the right course of action vs. what is the easy thing to do. The easy thing to do is very tempting in the moment, but that should not overpower our thinking and responsibility to do the right thing. When I think about my life, there were many times when I made easy or convenient choices, which allowed me to stay small and mediocre. When I made a habit of these choices, I found that I acted like a victim and things became quite negative. Courage and bigger thinking must prevail to find the new path.

Elizabeth Taylor is one of Hollywood's most celebrated actors, a humanitarian and successful business woman. She led a full and engaging life and was a force during her time in the entertainment business when it was dominated by powerful men. She was known for being bold and courageous when it came to difficult human and social issues. This led to a full, and often unpredictable life. During one of the most difficult times in her life, after the death of her close friend (and twice husband) Richard Burton, who was always a source of her courage and strength, she spoke of her approach in a most famous quote – "Now is the time for guts and guile". For those who don't know what guile is (I had to look it up too), it means applying insidious cunning in attaining a goal; to be crafty and clever in your approach.

As we face the uncertainties of a new business year, I think that this quote is a fantastic reference to the mindset and thinking that we need to have. With all the uncertainties of business ownership change, tariffs, client needs, market changes, competitive pressures, and pressures for financial improvement, I can think of no better reference than the courage and cunningness that Liz Taylor is referring to.

Following the same path will likely not serve us well. Finding a new path, a new way of thinking, and using our creative capacity, courage and guile, we will forge the next stage of our businesses path to our vision and mission. I believe part of the direction of this path is a stronger focus on client needs and what they value, and creating the most effective way of realizing and delivering that value...creating experiences that will help their businesses be more successful.

Please join me on this journey...with the guts and guile we need to succeed.

Thank you for listening.