

SHUT UP! The Power of Silence in Business...

Last week I treated myself on a holiday. 5 days of hiking in Turtmanntal (Switzerland). Beautiful snowy mountains. Clear blue sky. Indian summer trees. That on itself was enough to get me totally re-energized.

However, it was not just a holiday. It was a retraite. During the 7-hours a day of serious hiking no speaking was allowed. Of we went. Backpacks on with all equipment included. From hut to hut in very primitive circumstances –no shower for 5 days– hoping to find some sort of a trail to be able to reach the next top. Hoping to find a path that led us to some insights.

No time. No iPhone. No Facebook or Email. No communication at all.

That was qui(e)t(e) some experience...

First I became an absolute freak. My mind exploded.

How far to the next top...will I make that...my shoes hurt...what time is it...how long have we been walking by now...do I call my parents enough...I hate my boss...did I install an out of office reply...I forgot to pick up my cloths from the drycleaner...I love my boss...do I love my boyfriend...I hate hiking...does he love me...am I a good daughter...I am useless...it is way too warm....it is way too cold...how far is the top...why did I go on this hiking trip...what are we having for dinner...blablablabla.

And then all of a sudden...without warning...it was there.

SILENCE.

In all major religions around the world silence is one of the common rituals spoken about. The finding of inner-peace. The moment where you have reached total silence in your mind, is the moment where you can truly feel, hear and see God without interference of your historical, social and cultural tides. Just listen and talk to His inner-voice.

I don't believe in Gods. So, I finally just started talking to Me. With Myself. And I.

And at this moment of silence in my mind, just pure stillness in its brightest form it was. Everything became so clear. My life. My love. My work. It all made sense now. It was me and these mountains. I was part of it all. The bigger picture. My picture. I could just feel and hear and smell my surroundings. It was all about being. Being there. I just was. I am still.

Well...Ok??!

So what does this all have to do with business you might think by now?

Silence is an underestimated tool in doing business. Let me summarize some research for you:

- Often in conversations the key is not in what is said, but in what is not said
- Impressions are done in the first 3 minutes, when hardly a word is spoken
- If you keep quiet in a meeting just for a couple of seconds after the other party has spoken, often the uncomfortable moment of silence forces the other party to speak again. And that is just the moment where he reveals himself
- Over 60% of the messages sent to you in a conversation are not in words, but in someone's body-language. If you are not talking yourself it is easier to read these messages
- Quiet people are perceived as smarter, more trustworthy and are perceived as being more in control
- People who meditate are less stressed and more focused
- Your chances of success in a sales pitch increases significantly if you let your target do the talking. It will enhance their self-esteem and therefore they will like you better

Hence, scheduling a weekly moment of silence will make you more focused and goal oriented. In addition, when your mind is clear and free from all the noise around you, it is easier to see what step to take next. You become more productive and more efficient. In addition, people who meditate regularly are more relaxed and are perceived as a more pleasant person to work with and work for.

So do yourself and your colleagues a favor once in a while and SHUT UP!