

KNOWLEDGE that STICKS!

# the skinny on™

## direct sales

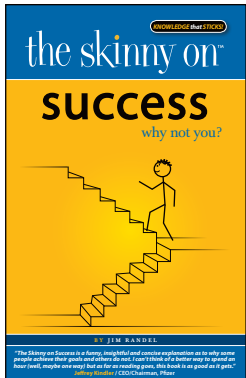
your first 100 days



BY JIM RANDEL

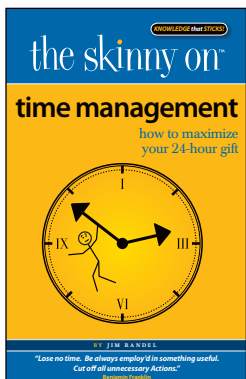
*"All over the world, women and men are discovering direct sales. Many have achieved the financial and personal freedoms and goals they aspired to. This book tells how."*

Rainer Paul / CEO, IMS



"The Skinny on Success is a funny, insightful and concise explanation as to why some people achieve ... this book is as good as it gets."

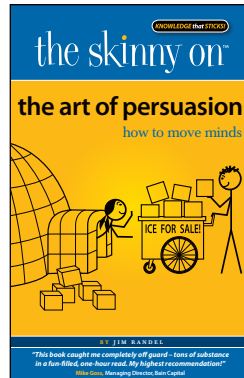
Jeffrey Kindler, CEO/Chmn, Pfizer



"A friend gave me this book ... perhaps because he thinks I'm time-challenged. In any event, I loved it ... substantive, fun, and funny. I give it my highest recommendation."

Steve Pagliuca, Managing Partner, The Boston Celtics

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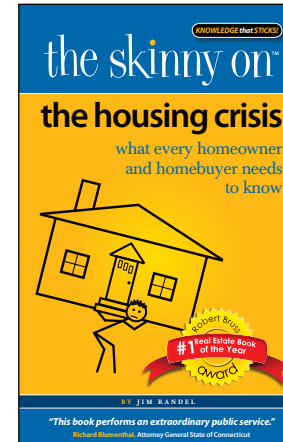
"This book caught me completely off guard – tons of substance. My highest recommendation!"

Mike Goss, Managing Director, Bain Capital

**COMING SOON!**



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"This book performs an extraordinary public service ..."

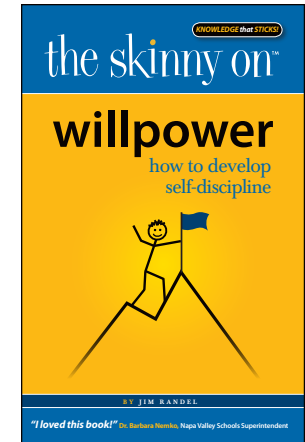
Richard Blumenthal, Connecticut Attorney General



"I've tracked Jimmy's incredible run of successful real estate investments for twenty years."

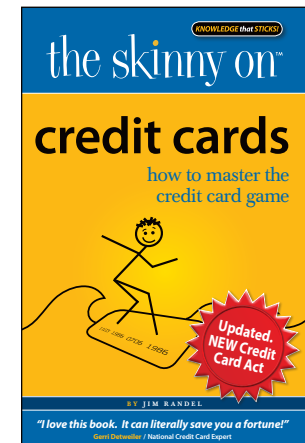
Jeff Dunne, Vice Chairman, CB Richard Ellis

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"Don't let the stick figures fool you ... Jim Randel will have you laughing and thinking at the same time. A very enjoyable read!"

Ken Blanchard, author *The One Minute Manager*®



"I love this book. It can literally save you a fortune!"

Gerri Detweiler, National Credit Card Expert

## The Skinny on Direct Sales

the skinny on™  
**direct sales**  
your first 100 days

**Jim Randel**

# the skinny on™

Welcome to a new series of publications entitled **The Skinny On™**, a progression of drawings, dialogue and text intended to convey information in a concise and entertaining fashion.

In our time-starved and information-overloaded culture, most of us have far too little time to read. As a result, our understanding of important subjects often tends to float on the surface – without the insights of writings from thinkers and teachers who have spent years studying these subjects.

Our series is intended to address this situation. Our team of readers and researchers has done a ton of homework preparing our books for you. We read everything we could find on the topic at hand and have spoken with the experts. Then we mixed in our own experiences and distilled what we have learned into this “skinny” book for your benefit.

Our goal is to do the reading for you, identify what is important, distill the key points, and present them in a book that is both instructive and enjoyable to read.

Although minimalist in design, we do take our message very seriously. Please do not confuse format with content. The time you invest reading this book will be paid back to you many, many times over.

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# INTRODUCTION

By reason of the fact that this book is in your hands, I am assuming that you have either decided, or are seriously considering, launching your own direct sales business. Congratulations, you are entering the world of entrepreneuring where your results are directly tied to your individual efforts.

As you will note, the subtitle of this book is “Your First 100 Days.” We have called out the first 100 days because it is the most critical period of your new endeavor. Many people who begin direct sales either quit or go dormant (and never really wake up) in their first 100 days.

This book will explain why, and will help you not only make it through this period but also set the foundation for real success in the years to come. Let me state right up front that although we at **Skinny On** books have been educated about direct sales by some of the most knowledgeable people in the industry, we are not “shilling” for the direct sales business. We are not funded by any direct sales company. Our goal is to give you the facts. To help you be the best you can be.

So, just give us an hour or so of your time to follow the story of our hero and heroine, Billy and Beth. Billy is the breadwinner in the family and although Beth works part time, he makes all the financial decisions for the family. That is about to change.

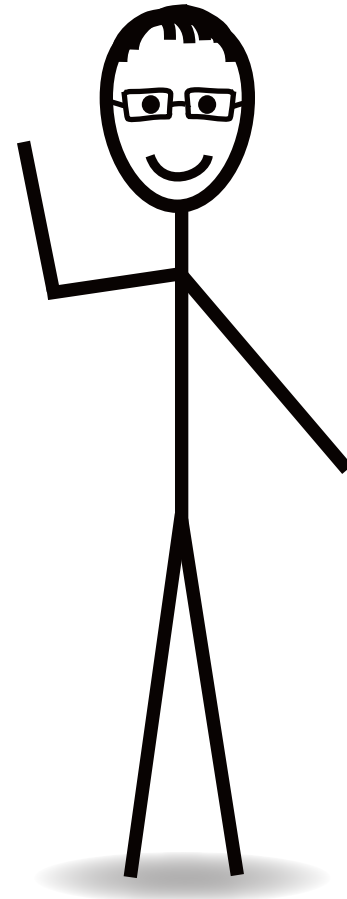
In the pages following, we use the pronouns “she” and “her” more often than we use “he” and “him.” That is because most direct salespeople are women (85%) although we are aware that increasing numbers of men are entering the business.

***“(T)here are vast numbers of financial opportunities available to those who want one, and who are open-minded to doing something a little different. There are numerous part-time, home-based businesses ... fun, easy, and require no more than a few hours a week. In addition, many of these businesses require very little initial cash to get into and no prior experience.***

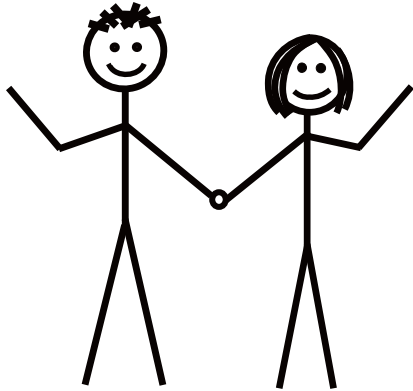
***“So what’s the catch? ... As is so often the case, fear and worry are the greatest dream snatchers.”***

***Don’t Worry, Make Money, Richard Carlson***

Hi, I'm Jim Randel and I am your moderator.  
At times I will jump in and out of the story (right  
up to the edge of being obnoxious ... **I hope.**)

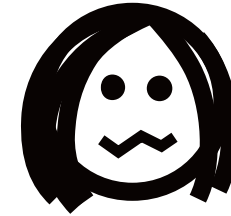


**MEET BILLY AND BETH. THEY HAVE BEEN MARRIED TWELVE YEARS. THEY HAVE TWO CHILDREN, A 10-YEAR OLD SON AND AN EIGHT-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER. BILLY IS AN ACCOUNTANT AND THE BREADWINNER IN THE FAMILY. BETH WORKS PART-TIME IN A JEWELRY STORE. SHE DOESN'T MAKE MUCH MONEY.**



2

**BETH IS AT AN IMPORTANT CROSSROADS IN HER LIFE. SHE IS WORKING FOR SOMEONE WHO, FRANKLY, SHE DOES NOT RESPECT. SHE FEELS SHE CAN DO BETTER BUT DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPITAL NOR THE EXPERTISE TO OPEN HER OWN STORE.**

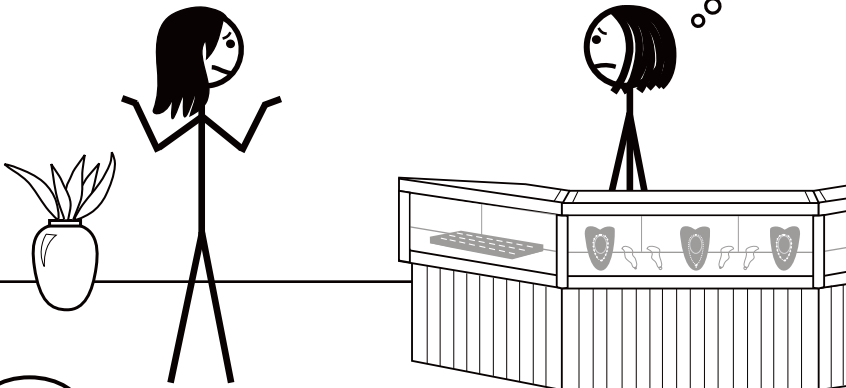


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"Sorry, Beth, I have to cut back your hours. Sales have been a bit off of late."

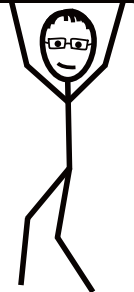


*Of course they are... our product isn't great and you don't seem to be paying attention to the store.*



3

**BETH'S FRIEND JAYNI HAS BEEN TALKING TO HER ABOUT DIRECT SALES. BETH IS SERIOUSLY THINKING ABOUT IT AS SHE LIKES THE IDEA OF CONTROLLING HER OWN DESTINY. BETH IS THINKING OF BECOMING AN ENTREPRENEUR!**



5

# ENTREPRENEUR

(from the old French, *entreprenre*, meaning “one who undertakes”)

*“A person who assumes the organization, management and risks of a business enterprise.”*

6

Beth is considering starting her own business:

## BETH, INC.

No longer will she be able to blame her low income on her boss at the jewelry store. At the same time, she will no longer receive a salary. Her income will be tied directly to her effort.

8



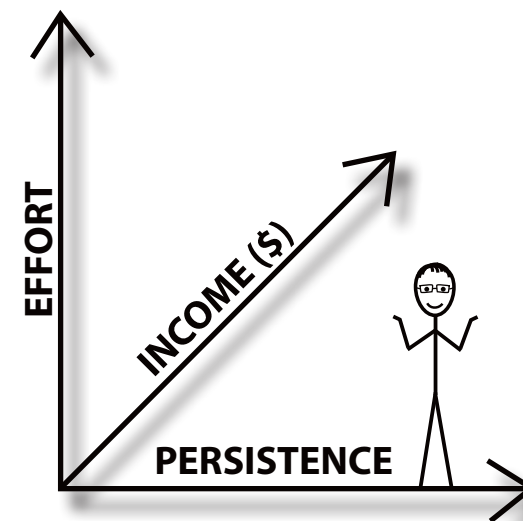
I will disclose a bias that I have. I have been an entrepreneur all my life and I love entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are responsible for their own destiny. If things don't work out for them they have no one to blame but the person in the mirror. To some people that is frightening, to others it is exhilarating.

Being an entrepreneur is not about higher education. Here is what it is about:

1. Determination
2. Work ethic
3. Passion
4. Desire to be your own boss
5. Desire to be rewarded commensurate with your individual effort
6. Tenacity and persistence

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There are no guarantees for the entrepreneur. However, for most, the graph that tracks their income looks like this:



9

Since you are holding this book in your hand you are thinking about opening your own business too:

## YOU, INC.

One of the goals of this book is to help you make YOU, INC. as successful as possible.

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## LET'S CHECK BACK IN WITH BILLY AND BETH

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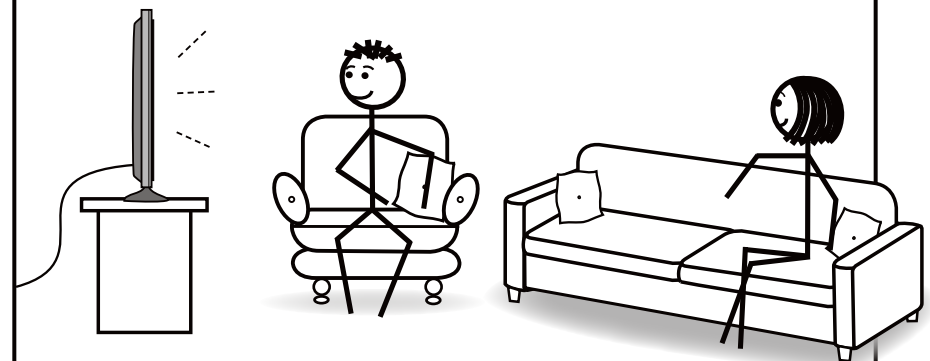
## WARNING

1. Entrepreneurship is NOT for everyone. Being an entrepreneur means being PROACTIVE, not REACTIVE. In other words, an entrepreneur has to get up every day with the intention of making things happen. That is a lot different than working for someone else who tells you exactly what to do ... in the latter example, you REACT to instructions and demands from others.

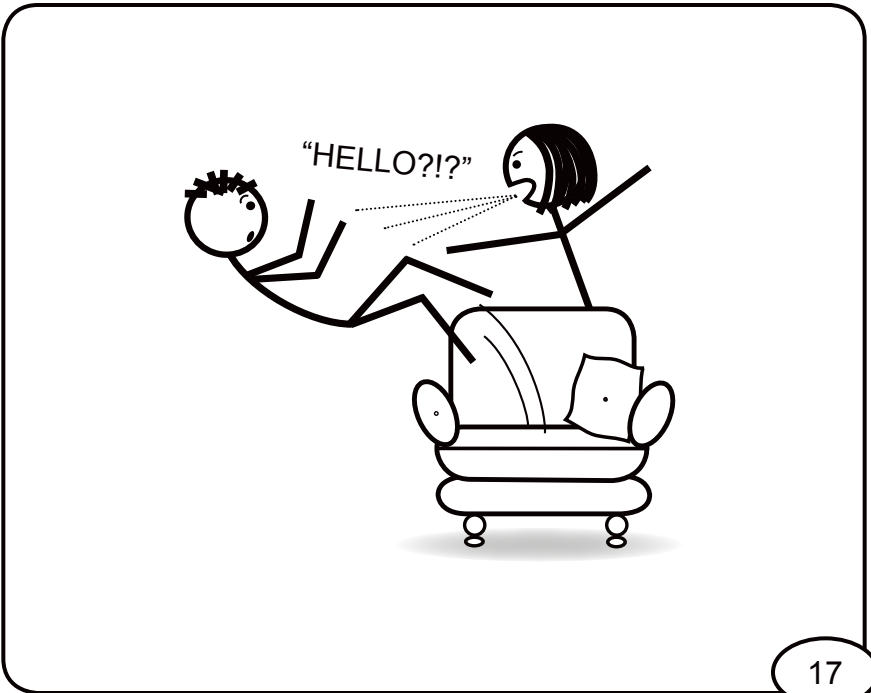
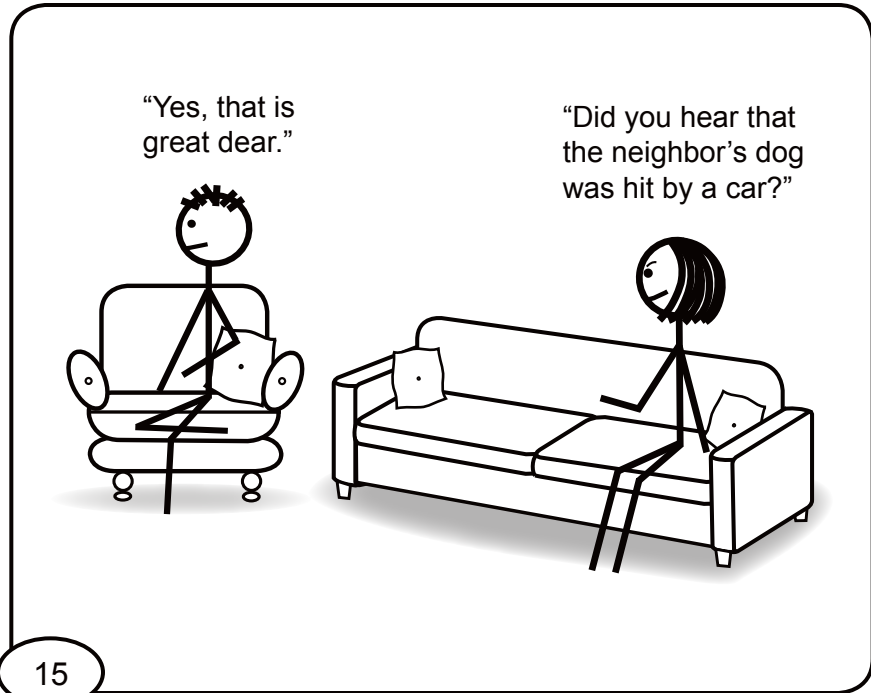
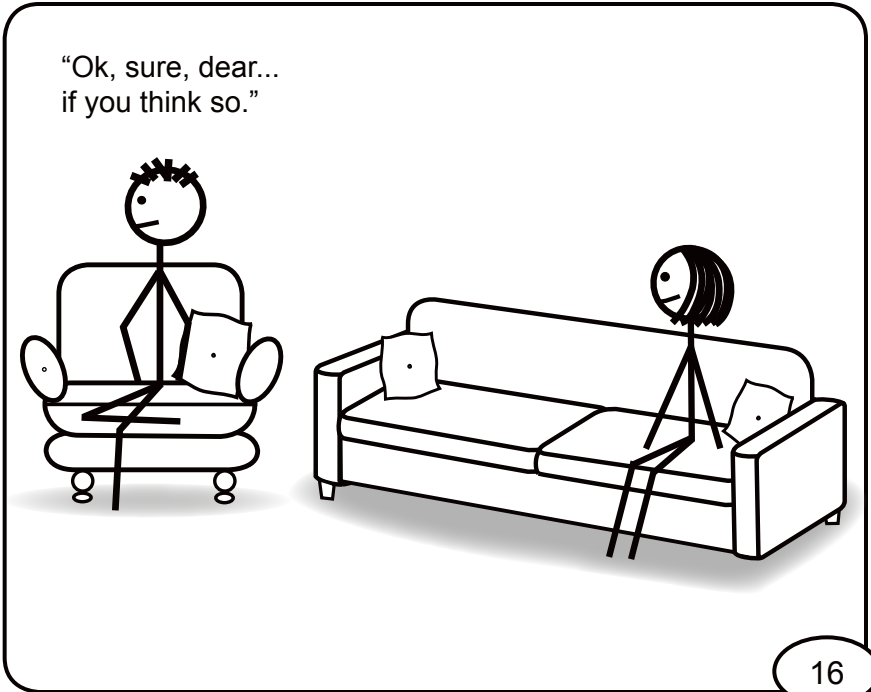
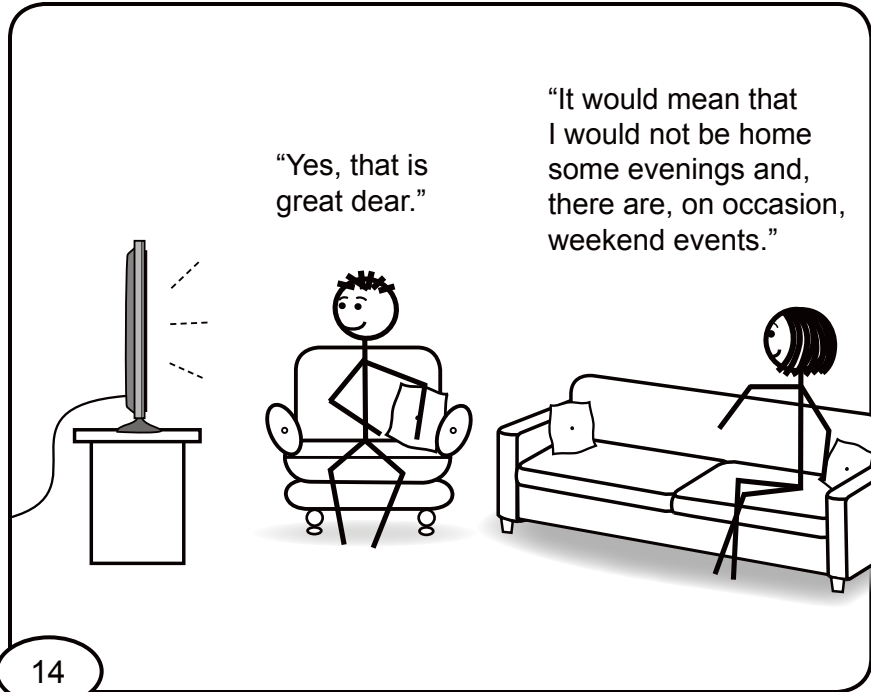
2. There are many ways to be an entrepreneur. Some folks are full time – working every free hour they have. Others fit entrepreneurial activities within their other obligations and commitments. There is no one right way. The success or failure of YOU, INC. depends on the energy and commitment you invest in your business.

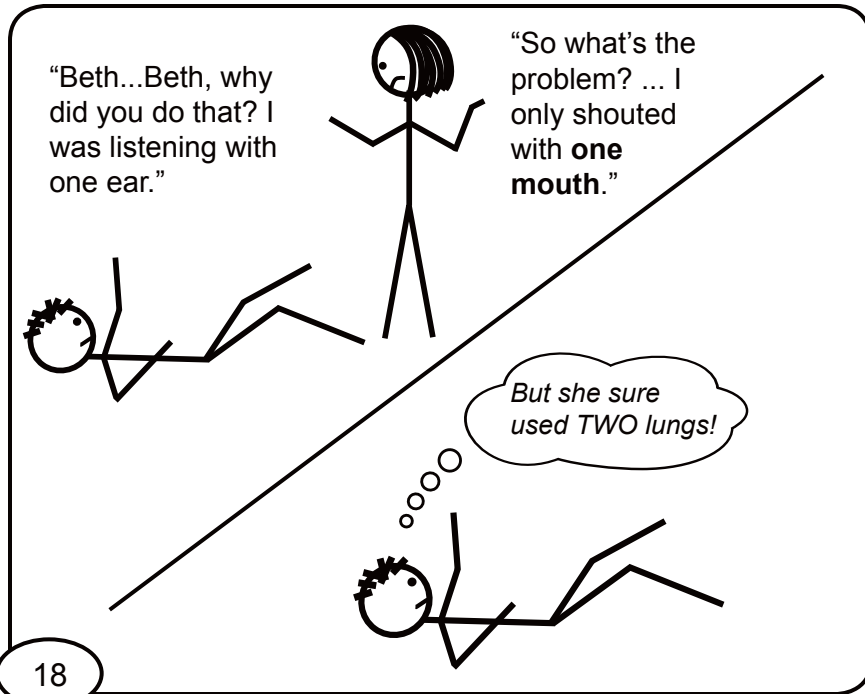
11

“Billy, I’ve been thinking about getting into direct sales.”



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We here at **The Skinny On** book series are aware that today about 15% of all new direct sales consultants are men. It’s just that women actually tend to listen when men speak.

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For a great book explaining the different communication styles of men and women, see **Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus** by John Gray (Penguin, 2000).

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On the other hand, Beth was not exactly forthcoming with Billy. She has already committed to a direct sales company and has purchased a starter kit. Soon she will be selling.

As with any new venture, there is an initial period which will have a lot to do with whether the venture lives or dies. We have selected the first 100 days of a person’s entry into direct sales as the critical period. What happens during that period will have a tremendous impact on not only whether YOU, INC. succeeds or fails, but also what level of success YOU, INC. achieves over the long term.

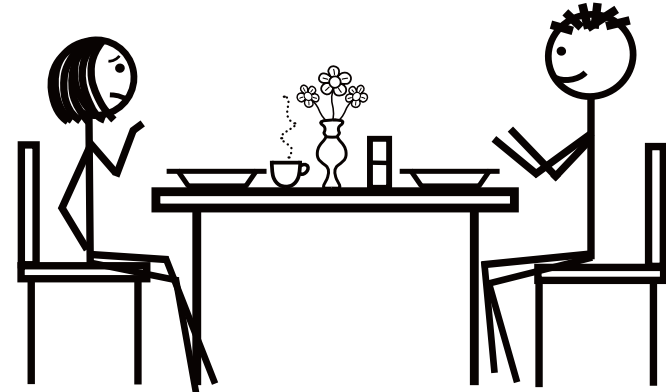
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As part of our research for this book, we have spoken with many direct sales consultants who not only survived their first 100 days, but also used that period to create a foundation for a significant, long-term successful career.

We have identified what works and what doesn't. We have talked with them about techniques and mind sets. We have discussed the pressures and uncertainties a new consultant faces. We have tried to isolate those steps a new consultant should take in order to maximize his or her prospect for success.

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"Billy?"

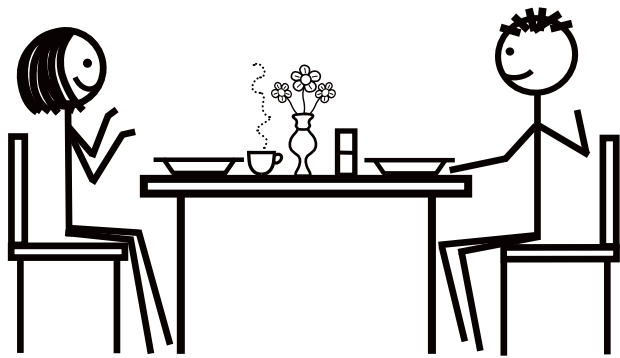


"Yes, and he is sitting here having breakfast with you ... what is this about?"

24

"Billy, what is the name of the man who takes care of our lawn?"

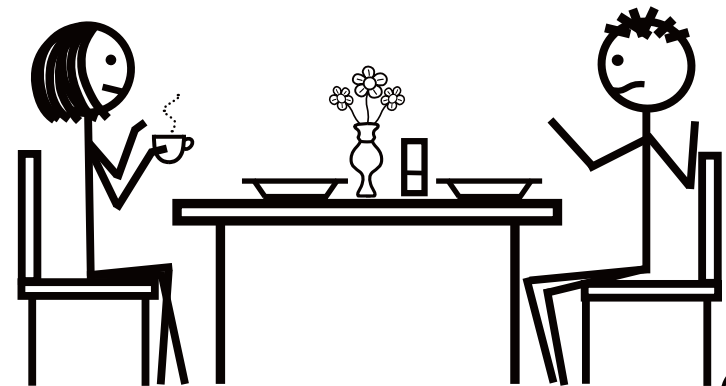
"His name is Billy."



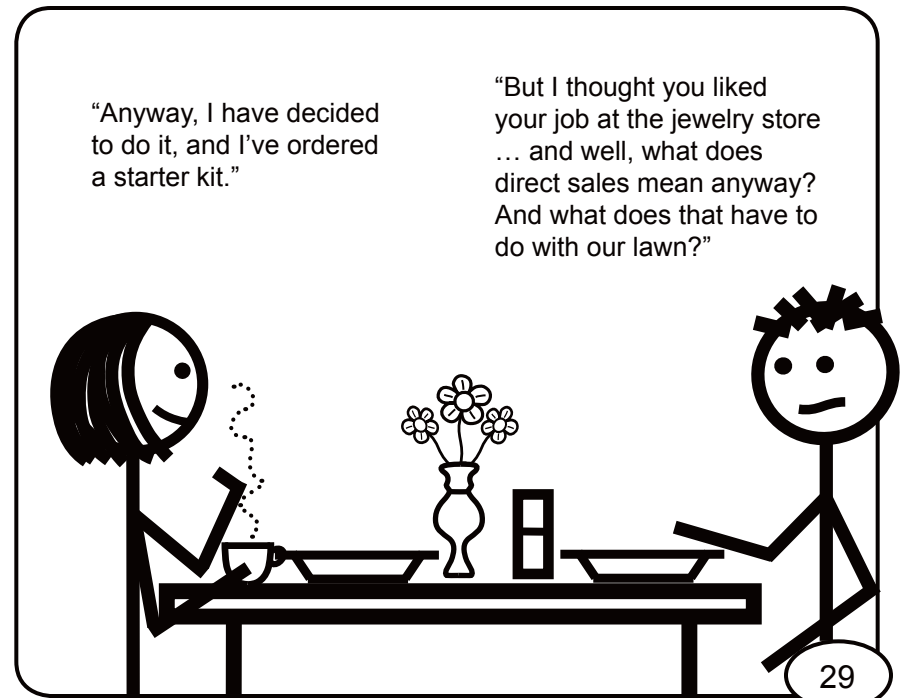
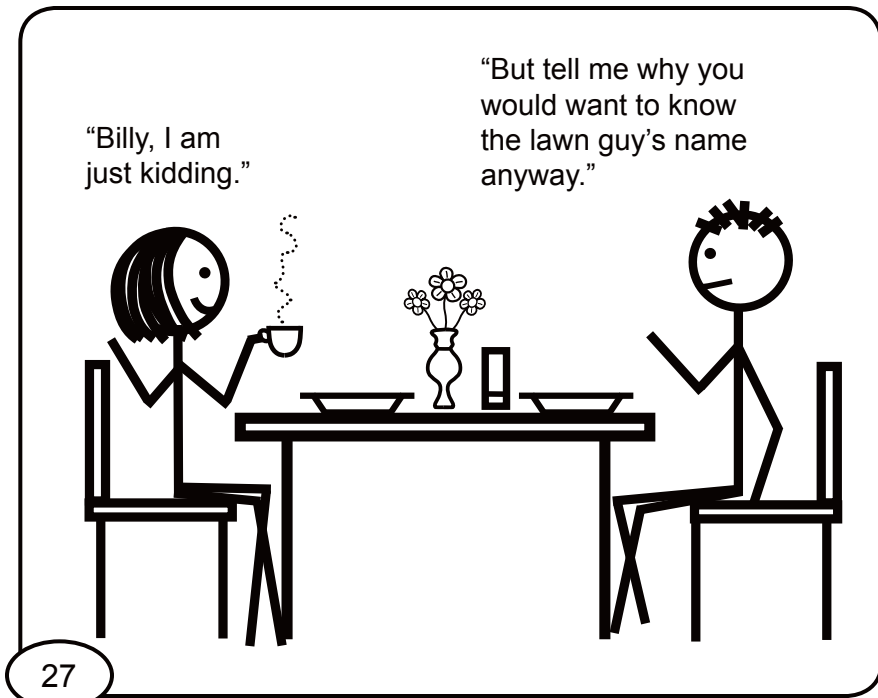
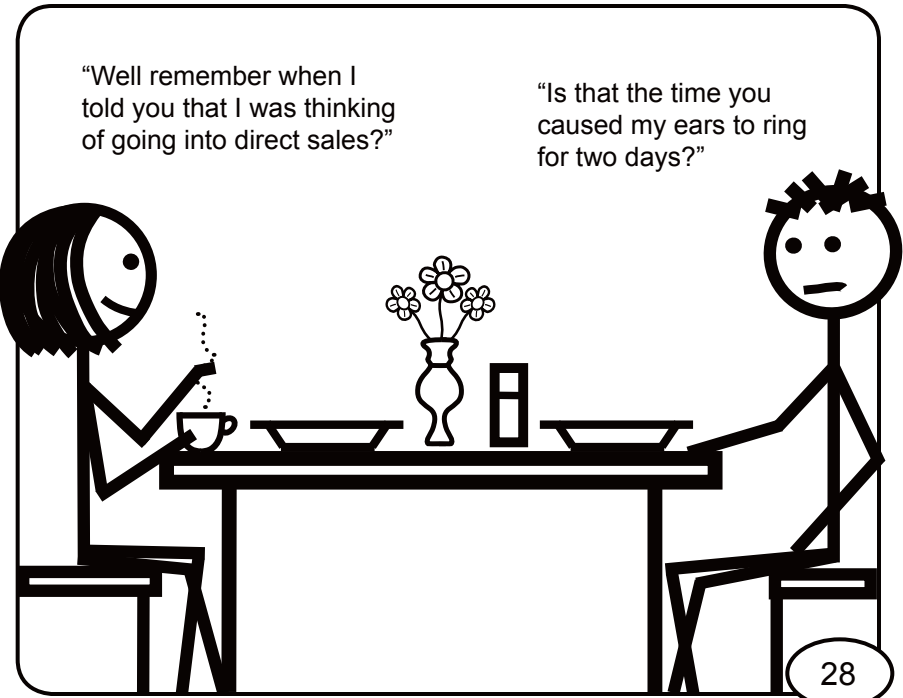
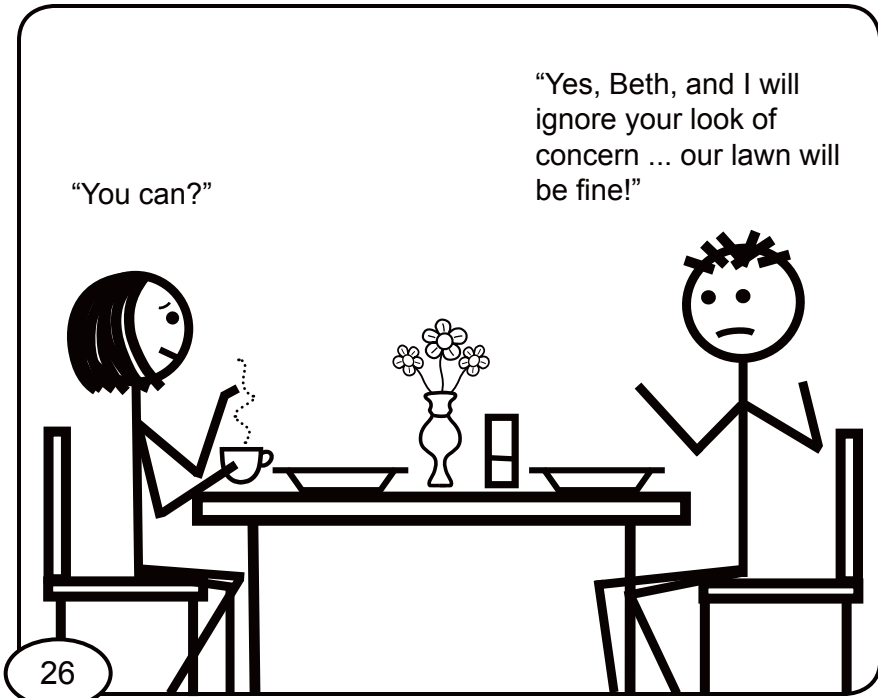
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"Didn't we hire a man to care for the lawn last year?"

"Yes we did, but I decided to do it myself this year. Things are a little tight and I can do as good a job as he can."

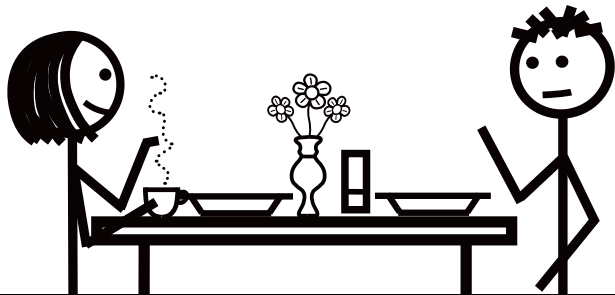


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“Direct sales just means I market and sell products directly to people I know and meet. I don’t have to work in a store. I don’t have to work for someone else. I can work my own hours and I don’t get paid by the hour.”

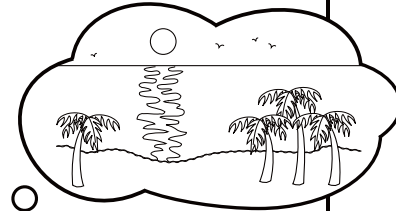
“Yes, and you don’t get a paycheck every week. You don’t have a storefront for people to see your products. Your work day doesn’t stop when the store closes. What about the kids? What about me?”



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The story of each sales consultant is unique; perhaps your reasons for entering direct sales are similar to Beth’s. While Billy indicates that their family does not need “extra money,” Beth would love to provide the funds for a family vacation – a trip that Billy doesn’t think they can afford this year.

Even if one’s family doesn’t need extra money, many direct sales consultants enter the business to have their own income, independent of their spouse.



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“Billy, I have thought a lot about this. I do know the negatives. But the kids are at the point where they don’t need as much of my attention these days, and I would like to start making some real money. It’s a little tough on minimum wage.”

“I’m doing OK, Beth. We don’t need extra money.”



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According to the information we have received, the three most often cited reasons for people entering the direct sales field are:

1. To make **one’s own** money – a majority of direct sales consultants are women entering (or re-entering) the work force to have a source of income not dependent on their spouse.
2. To **structure** the day as one sees fit – working the hours you can and desire to. Especially for Beth, as a working mom, the flexibility of working in direct sales is very important to her.
3. To **engage** in a community – we are all looking for a sense of belonging ... being part of a direct sales organization can provide an extended “family.”

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The specific reason you decided to enter the direct sales world is actually less important than the fact that **you keep your reason in mind at all times**. The next 100 days are not going to be easy. You may be tested, challenged ... lonely and frustrated. That comes with the territory of starting something new and pushing yourself beyond your comfort zone.

One way to stay on course and not lose heart, is to keep in mind WHY you are doing what you are doing.

We even suggest writing down and reading, and rereading every day the reason you went into direct sales in the first place.

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By keeping in the forefront of your mind exactly **WHY** you are taking on the challenge of being an entrepreneur, you are less likely to falter. People have an enormous ability to outperform even optimistic expectations **when their objectives are sufficiently important to them**. By reminding yourself every day **why** you are doing what you are doing, you reinforce your fortitude and improve the chances of meeting (or exceeding) your goals.

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Here is one sales consultant's writing which she keeps in her purse and reviews every morning:

**I WANT TO HAVE A SOURCE OF MONEY THAT IS DEPENDENT ONLY ON MY EFFORTS. I WANT TO BE ABLE TO HELP THOSE I LOVE IF AND WHEN THEY NEED ME. I WANT TO BE MY OWN BOSS AND SEE THE DIRECT BENEFITS OF MY EFFORTS.**

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## OUR SUGGESTION

Experts suggest that in thinking about your WHY, you go deeper than just contemplating additional money. What is it that you will do with that money?

Would you fund a family vacation (as Beth hopes), start saving for a college education, help an elderly parent, or satisfy a desire to travel.

Money is great, of course, but what keeps people focused and on course is how they intend to use that money to improve their life!

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## GOAL SETTING

Not all successful people are goal setters. Some do not set specific targets but rather keep the big picture in mind and do their best every single day. Others set very specific goals – sometimes even weekly.

We have heard all the points for and against goal setting. Our advice, given that you are a new entrepreneur, is that you **do set goals** – realistic, incremental goals for each month of your first 100 days. Here are some suggestions:

**Goals in Month #1:** “(A) to become totally conversant with my product, (B) to study my company’s training materials and participate in whatever seminars, webinars and training sessions they provide, (C) to practice my presentation to prospective customers (preferably in front of a mirror) no less than five times, (D) to make a detailed list on a spread sheet of all the people I intend to contact within my first 100 days – this spread sheet (we like Excel) should identify contact information, prospect responses, follow-ups and so on, (E) to hold a launch party or event for friends and family.”

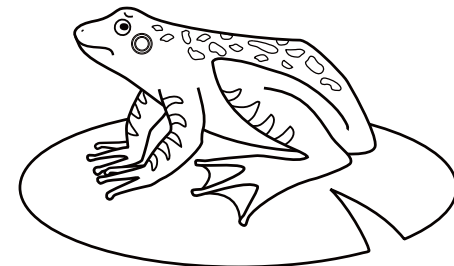
**Goals in Month #2:** “(A) to follow up with everyone who attended my launch party/event, asking for constructive suggestions, bookings and referrals, (B) to explore marketing and advertising in local newspapers and online, to post flyers and try other outreach ideas, (C) to read as much as I can on prospecting and networking, (D) to book as many meetings or parties as possible but not less than the numbers suggested in my company training materials, (E) to achieve the number of sales suggested in my company’s manual or starter kit – targeting incentive reward levels.”

**Goals in Month #3:** “(A) to follow up with everyone to whom I made a sale, make sure they got their product and are happy with it, (B) to update my spread sheet with new names and follow-up dates for customers, (C) to ask satisfied customers for referrals, (D) to contact 10 of the referred individuals, (E) to achieve the incentive-level number of sales identified in my manual or starter kit for month #3.”

The goals we indicated above are arbitrary, of course. The point is to identify specific targets to be achieved within specific time frames. The process of doing that – and then constantly focusing on your monthly goals – will, in and of itself, be a great step to moving you forward in your first 100 days.

By the way, a great book with lots of ideas for goal-setting and prioritizing is:

***Eat That Frog!***, by Brian Tracy  
(Berrett-Koehler, 2007)



## TO DO LISTS

We are a big believer in To Do lists. Some people call them “To Accomplish” lists to highlight the point that each item you check off your list moves you closer to **accomplishing** your goals.

To Do lists are nothing more than a way to stay organized. We suggest you make your list either the evening before each day, or early the morning of – so that you know exactly what you want to accomplish every single day.

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## BACK TO BILLY AND BETH

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***“Every effective executive works from a daily list. It is the most powerful tool ever discovered for maximum productivity.”***

***“When you create your daily list, you begin by writing down every single task you intend to complete over the course of the day. The rule is that you will increase your efficiency by 25 percent the very first day that you start using a list. This means that you will get two extra hours of productive time in an eight-hour day ... You can bring order out of chaos faster with a list than with any other time management tool.”***

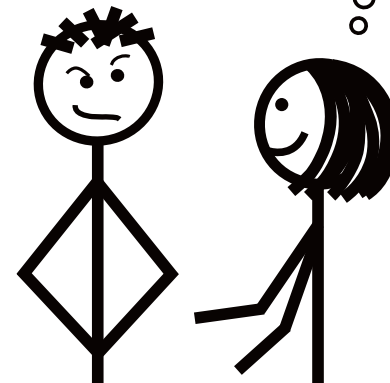
***Time Power: A Proven System for Getting More Done,***  
Brian Tracy

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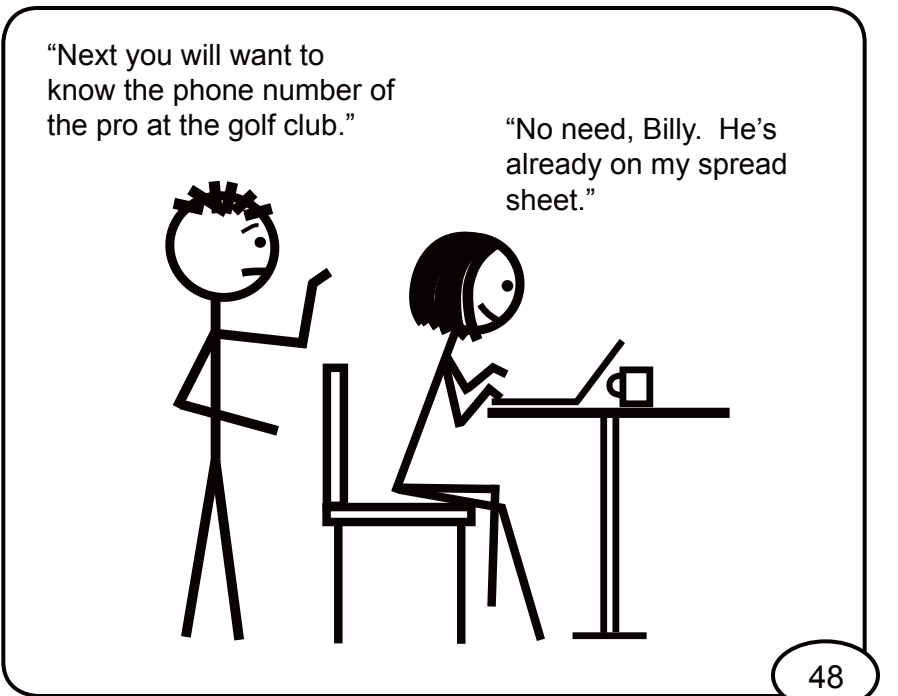
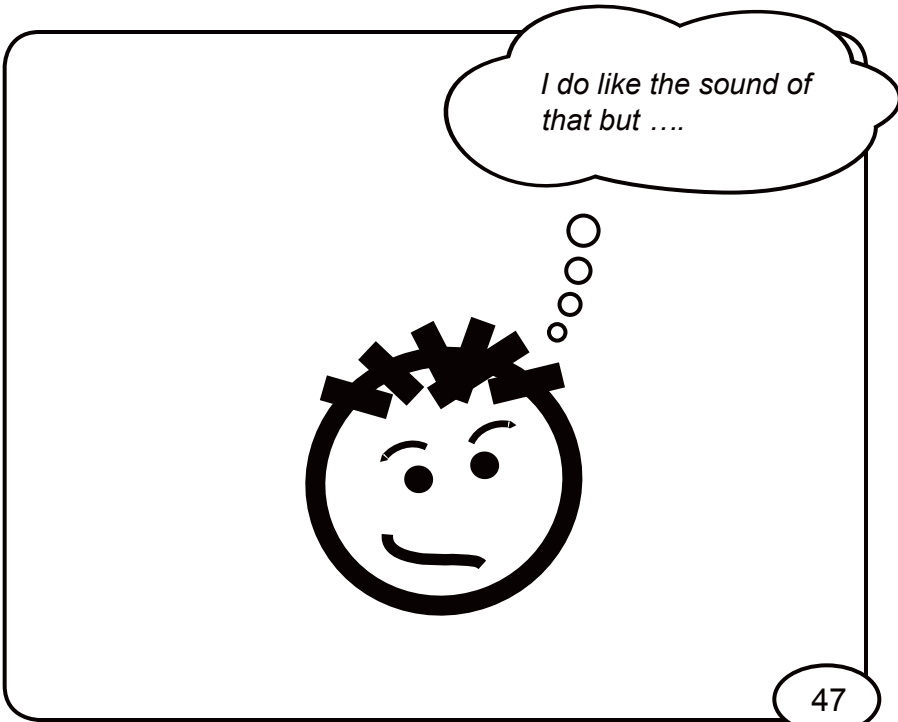
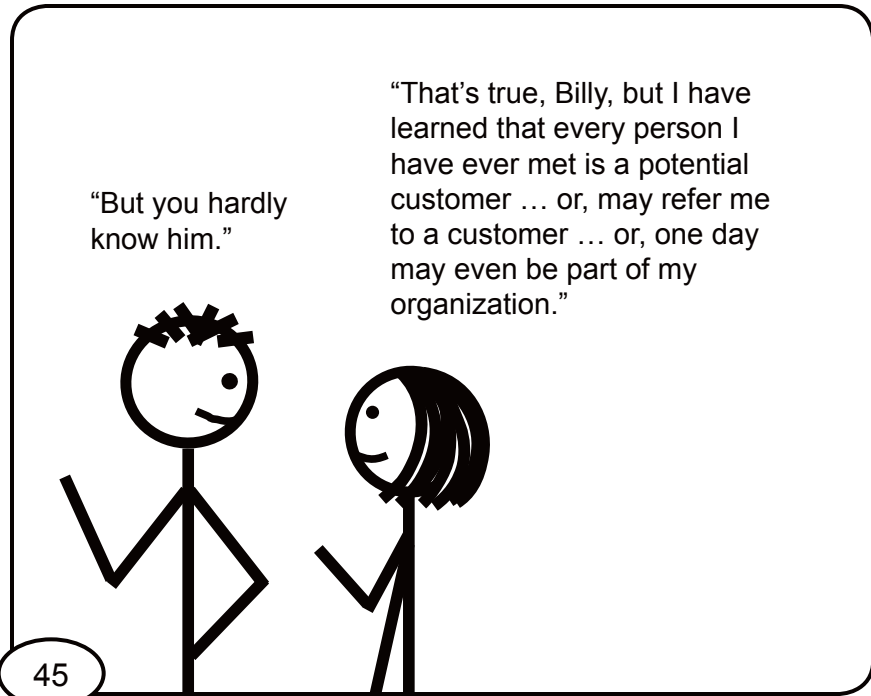
“Is there something you aren’t telling me about you and the lawn guy?”

*Well he did have great shoulders.*

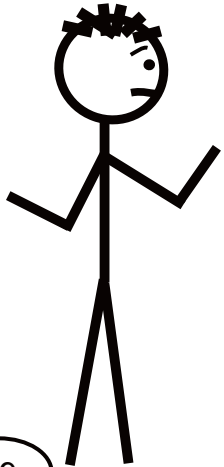
“Don’t be ridiculous ... I am just making a list of every person I know who could possibly be a candidate to buy my products.”



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“Holy cow ...  
you are serious  
about this?”

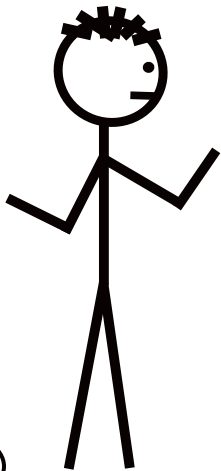


“Billy, we are not going on our  
usual family vacation this year. I  
understand that times are tough right  
now. If I can supplement our income  
and help take the family on a trip, I  
would feel great about myself.”



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“But, Beth, you already  
have a big responsibility  
to the family. To me and  
to the kids.”



“And I will do my best to  
keep up with everything...  
but it is time that I do more.”



50

Perhaps you have already had a discussion with those people who may be impacted by your going into direct sales. Some may be supportive, others may have reservations.

Since the next 100 days may be a bit tough, if you have not already had this discussion, it's time! Experts cite over and over that one element of success in direct sales is the support of a consultant's family and friends.

Be sure to explain why you are doing this, and how much it means to you. And ask for their support and assistance.

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## SPREAD SHEETS

As you have read, Beth is starting to make a spread sheet of everyone she knows who might be a candidate to buy from her, or refer her to someone who will.

Now is the time to be creative. Make a list of every single person you know. Friends and family are first of course. But then you need to expand outward to: casual acquaintances, people you buy from, service people and retailers, people you meet at Little League, your church, or school. Think of it as concentric circles that appear when you throw a stone in a pond.

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## CONCLUSION

That concludes our **Skinny Book**. We hope that you have enjoyed it. As with all of our books, we would love to hear your comments.

Please let me know what you think.

[jrandel@theskinnyon.com](mailto:jrandel@theskinnyon.com)

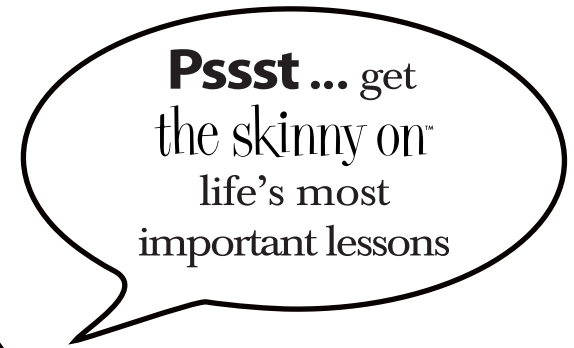
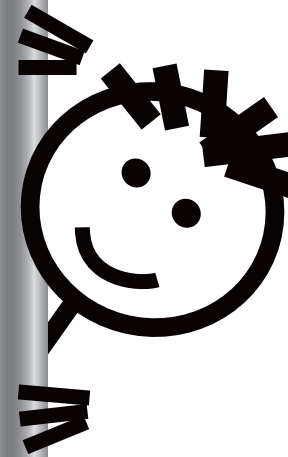
With warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Randel', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jim Randel

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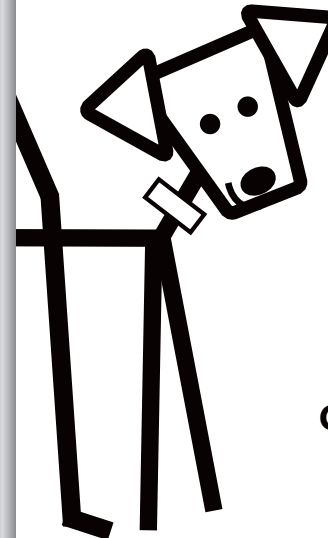
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**about the author:** Jim Randel is an attorney and entrepreneur who has studied topics of financial literacy and personal achievement for thirty years.

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