



## Part 1 of 3

### Feel Like a Prisoner to Your Business?

To begin, let me ask you some revealing questions. As a business owner, can you walk away from your business today for one or two months and come back to find it operating smoothly and profitably? Can you even escape for two weeks? Have you ever had a work-free vacation? If your answers are “no”, you don’t have a successful business, you have a glorified job in which you are trapped! You don’t have an effective business system; you are the business system! In a large sense, you are a prisoner of your own success.

Please do not be offended by these very direct and frank statements. You must realize I get paid to help my clients “face reality” and then hold them accountable for the changes and goals they desire. Facing reality is a critical step owners must take to begin to build a better business and a better life.

Go ahead, ask yourself the following questions and be brutally honest with yourself:

- Do I often question, “Why do I have to do every darn thing myself”?
- Am I still working too hard and making too little?
- Am I trapped working “in” my business instead of “on” my business?
- Do I ever wonder if business ownership is truly worth the time, effort, headaches, hassles, and sacrifices?
- Do I feel trapped on a treadmill, moving faster and faster, but going nowhere?
- Do I constantly face frequent interruptions and repetitive questions from my staff?
- Do I go home many nights feeling mentally and physically drained?
- Do I dread the drudgery of facing and solving the same issues and problems each and every day – the burden of re-creating the wheel time and time again?
- Do I daydream about regaining my sense of freedom, joy, passion, and peace-of-mind?
- Do I have anxiety about drowning in projects, problems, deadlines, crises, meetings, employee issues, unanswered voicemails/emails, customer complaints, administrative trivia, and on and on?
- Do I feel like a master juggler with too many balls up in the air and dreading they will soon begin hitting the floor?
- Am I forever chained to a phone, computer, email, or pager?
- Am I tired of having customers rely on me personally for services, solutions and satisfaction?
- Am I fed up with missing family time, family events, and making other personal sacrifices on a semi-regular basis?
- Do I crave more free time to do the things that matter most to me?

If you answered, “yes”, to a majority of these questions, your approach to business management is broken. No matter what industry you are in, you should not be a prisoner to your business! If you are, you have it backwards. Your business should serve you and your dreams. It should give you greater freedom, not less. In fact, your business, properly designed, should function practically without you, **not because of you**. It should run predictably and automatically whether you are in the office or not, in the store or not, out in the field or not, on vacation or not. Your business should not depend upon your presence, personality, problem solving and perspiration for its daily survival. If so, your business does not work, you do!

Bottom line, you should run your business; it should not run you, your family or your life. Your business should work harder so you don't have to. It should be systems-dependent and not owner-dependent or expert-dependent for its success. It should have its own heart, mind, and soul – it should not steal your vital organs and spirit!

Stop for a moment and think of the consequences. If everything in your business flows through you and is dependent upon you, then **you** are restricting dramatically the growth and profits of your company. As a single human being, there are natural limits to the amount of work, transactions, problems, and decisions that can flow effectively through you in a given day. Stop being a bottleneck or clog. Otherwise, you will continue to restrict the potential of your employees and business and ensure your persistent exhaustion. Stop missing out on greater personal freedom, money and happiness.

You need to face reality, admit to certain problems, and then resolve to change your thinking and approaches. Next month, we will focus on the five most common causes of business bondage: (1) technical tendencies, (2) busyness (3) ineffective leadership and delegation, (4) inadequate or missing business systems, and (5) escalating business complexity.

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