



its just business... right?

this industry is still very strange to me - i struggle with definitions. we lack the language to confront some of the larger issues of this business - different agencies have different objectives but go by the same names... its just training. working out. exercise. it is coaching. certification. endorsement. is it teaching? mentorship? merchandising? what is the growth curve here? the long game? as a friend once asked - what comes **after** what comes next?

the way I've seen it: people get trained, they begin to train others. if they are successful they get too busy, or they price themselves out. often times other trainers try and shortcut their growth curve by learning from their predecessors, or they try and buy respectability by entering into a licensing agreement... essentially this industry is eroding - or perhaps more likely, i am just getting more cynical. cynicism however can be useful. it keeps us sharp, attentive to hypocrisy... and cynicism coupled with forethought and the will to do better is a fine toolkit to start with.

there is a difference between lineage and patronage. a difference between giving credit to your teachers and expecting that association to be a pyramid scheme, a cycle of money/promotion/clientele/money *ad infinitum*. so much of this industry starts with a genuine idea - a real will to help. but the realities of running a business, of owning and operating a physical space lead to some uncomfortable situations. some slippery slopes...

*my clients all wear shoes - they all buy shoes, what if i sold shoes here? im helping them, and getting a little money to make the space better... they buy protein powder more, i could have a pro shop... maybe sell clothes. or diet plans. maybe i will team up with a supplement company. an apparel brand. we can help each other, right? i can only charge*

*so much per hour, help so many at a time - what if i coached other coaches? a lot of people are paying \$1000 each for a weekend... i could offer information worth that... then maybe charge a franchise fee... it will help me maintain quality. im not greedy or anything, im just trying to do business here...*

for me, it is pretty simple: i can only do my job if people trust me - especially when i am lying to them. also, like many people: i want to be good at my job. therefore, i need to be extremely careful with my lies. i need to spend them well, and solely to the benefit of those in my care. maintaining trust while lying for long periods of time is difficult, to say the least. i know the margins of retail sales, having grown up surrounded by advertising it often leaves a bad taste in my mouth. i have been exposed to the value of education - i am the person i am today because of my teachers and i feel that they should be compensated, both monetarily and with all the care and respect that i can muster. i do not have anything against the sellers of a good product - the purveyors and transmitters of a skillset - but i do distrust those who try and enter into one door and exit another. someone who claims they want to teach you and ends up just pushing their product. the get rich quick seminar that teaches you how to sell get rich quick seminars... yoga teacher training...

this all comes down to a seemingly simple question: what do we do? this is not a rhetorical question, i feel that this is a discussion worth having - how do we maintain personal integrity and fiscal solvency? how do we honor and compensate those who got us here and avoid participating in some kind of pyramid scheme? is it feasible to have a concurrent career to feed our wallets while this one feeds our soul? is it possible to walk a line, to build a legacy - a far reaching network that maintains quality and honesty? who does this? how? and how do we communicate our agenda to the broader public?

i dont want this to be easy, i want it to be useful. i do not think it should be free, but that it should be both valuable and accessible. many gym owners i know run on very thin margins - any time i get asked about starting a gym my first piece of advice is "don't quit your day job". the unpacking is that multiple revenue streams will allow some time and space to grow a business without compromises. it allows for a resiliency - an adolescence of sorts. there is a freedom in being able to say no, to make mistakes, and to rebel. your errors will show you the cost of your decisions, and despite best efforts the burned hand still teaches best. the gym to me is an exercise in controlled failure - an exploration in overreaching. that being said, there is a point where you have seen enough people fall off a particular path that it is irresponsible to not plan an alternate route - and for the record: "it won't happen to me" is no sort of plan at all.

so what is your plan?

your retirement?

how will you thank the people who got you here?

how will you impact those who come next?

who will you learn from?

and who will you teach?

do you want to have a thing or do you want to build a thing?

and where do you draw the line?

not to be too dramatic, but what is your soul worth?

we work in nuance, and despite earlier language i don't honestly believe that there is a bright line... but there are trends. it is important to keep this discussion going. as a trainer, as a gym owner, or as simply someone who spends their energy in this community. language is a living thing, it is powerful in its usage, it provides us with a framework in which to think. exploring the differences in both approach and how we define success will help suss out what exactly it is we are trying to do here. help us fill out the discussion, to connect ideas, and through that, connect people. because, to me, that's what this is about. discussion more than answers. challenge not conformity.

i don't have the answers - don't know if the answers even exist... but i think there is worth in the asking. there is growth to be found in this discussion, because ultimately this is what we do.

we confront.

we strive.

we explore.

we overreach.

and we share.

we talk about our experiences, learn from each others mistakes. because there isn't enough time to make all of them yourself. because despite feeling alone there are more of us than we imagine. because curiosity, determination, and the audacity to make something better are, in fact, not in as short of supply as it feels.

now, lets talk business....

-the station