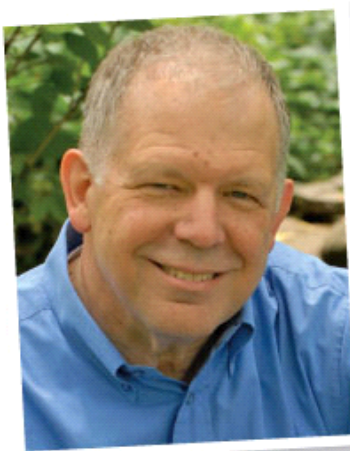


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Getting “Woke” to Success

Bill McCurry



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Does waking up in a pool of blood equal success? Arianna Huffington called it her “wake up call” when she collapsed from exhaustion in 2007. She shared her story at NRF: Retail’s Big Show in New York City and how she realized something had to change. She implied she wasn’t really “successful” until she took control of her life.

How many times have we heard the burnout scare stories? Yet, when talking to many industry greats who have retired or moved into different jobs, they all agree with these two statements: 1) You don’t know what stress is until you don’t have it; 2) Burnout is real, but doesn’t announce its presence until there’s a crisis (like Arianna collapsing in her office, breaking her cheekbone and adding blood to the office décor).

But we all have so much to do. We’re under so much pressure. How do we make the time? Arianna references Amazon’s Jeff Bezos, who says he doesn’t make a lot of decisions, but the ones he does make are very important. The best value he can bring to Amazon shareholders is a good night’s sleep, so he can make the best decision from a fully functioning, decision-making process. That’s true for your business, too.

Arianna remarked that most people know the battery level of their phone. If it’s below 15%, we start to panic while searching for a charging shrine where power can be restored. She asks how many of us know we have a vital sign—blood pressure, cholesterol, etc.—that’s too high and have shelved that concern to deal with it “later”?

What keeps us from getting enough sleep? Researchers stress looking at any screen, television/computer/phone, just before sleep is counterproductive. Our eyes/brains weren’t made for screens and can’t instantly shut down. Turn off screens 30 minutes before bed. Arianna says for hygiene and rest you should escort your phone/tablet out of your bedroom.

Think about the destructive/questionable time you’re spending. Does it really help your decision-making process to have social media tell you someone got a better salad at lunch or a more exotic vacation? When did the time invested online last affect you or your business positively?

Is your phone the first thing you look at in the morning? Take the first few minutes for you, consider what you want to accomplish today. Set your priorities over the world’s “noise.” You’re in control. Learn to refuse any request that won’t help you reach your goals.

Consider interns. Critical thinking requires different perspectives. The National Retail Federation's (NRF) Big Show brought over 36,000 people to NYC's Javits Convention center—over 25% were international. It was an exposition of present and future ideas, accompanied by some wake-up calls to societal changes.

The Student Program at NRF 2018: Retail's Big Show encouraged some 800 college students to talk about retail careers. They “worked the room” at a Job Fair where dozens of retailers extolled each company's virtues, emphasizing why it merited the students' interest. Brief conversations with enthusiastic young adults convinced me they were clear on their goals to share values with a corporation they believed in. The quality of the job applicants blew me away. They were serious about a retail career. It was uplifting to observe.

Many students were looking for intern positions. Do you feel uncomfortable handling your social media? Ask your local college/university about getting some help in this field from student interns.

The busiest, highest-pressure time of year is coming soon to a garden center near you. Decide today how you'll take control so you aren't collapsing on your floor. Arianna Huffington learned to take charge, you must do the same. Your team and family are counting on you. **GP**

Bill would love to hear from you with questions, comments or ideas for future columns. Please contact him at wmccurry@mccurryassoc.com or (609) 688-1169.