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## **Tapping Your Personal ESP**

By Mark Zust, M.A.

(excerpted from his book, ESP For Everybody)

What would you think if I told you we all have ESP?  
Wait. Don't tell me. I'm beginning to receive your thoughts.

You're thinking: "Is this guy nuts? ESP is a bunch of baloney.  
Next, he'll tell me to join the Psychic Friends Network!"

The ESP I'm referring to is your intuitive intelligence and we all use this intuition every day, whether we realize it or not.

Maybe you've had an experience like this: You were in the process of making a business decision but something didn't "feel" right. You collected data, ran the numbers and checked the projections. Everything looked promising but you still didn't move forward.

Why?

In that instance you trusted your intuition, your "gut" and allowed the signals from your emotional intelligence to weigh in against the facts. You also didn't regret your decision, did you? In fact, you were probably relieved to discover later on that moving forward on that project would have proven disastrous. According to business guru Tom Peters, the most effective CEOs weigh data carefully but ultimately trust their business savvy, intuition and understanding of human nature when making tough decisions.

Here's another scenario: You're working with a new client or supplier and the information they shared with you didn't "match up" with what their body language was telling you. You couldn't say why, but you didn't believe what you were being told. Later on, a critical piece of information surfaced that contradicted the information you were given. Had you acted solely on that initial information, your decision would have been a poor one.

Hold it. Here comes another thought transmission. You're thinking: "C'mon, that's just common sense."

Perhaps. Or, are you taking your well-honed intuition for granted?

Let's look at the big picture for a moment and replace the term common sense with intuitive sense.

By taking your intuitive sense into account, you will start noticing opportunities and solutions that are right under your nose. After all, when you tune your intuitive antennae properly, you begin to pick up more of signals, resources and insights that can help you in all aspects of your personal and professional life.

So, let's get started. The following techniques are easy to use, don't require a crystal ball, and can be put to work right away. It's as simple as **ESP : Expand Your Thinking; Sensitize Yourself; and Power Up Your Perception.**

### **Expand Your Thinking**

Developing new products, uncovering innovative ideas, creating ground-breaking approaches to sales or service all require a dramatic shift in the way you look at and think about who you are and what you can offer your company.

Your greatest strength is your point of view. Tapping the power of your mind requires trusting your gut, that part of you that can't be easily quantified but is vitally real. Intuition is like any other mental or physical muscle – it responds to repeated exercise. You'll get a chance to flex those muscles in just a few moments, but first, it's important to recognize the enemy within – your professional intellect. Regardless of our professional and personal expertise, we all have blind spots in the way we see and process information. We collect, sift through and eliminate information and stimuli based on our current needs. Unfortunately, we also process information through our irrational collection of fears, preconceptions, ego, prejudices, and the Numero Uno of limitations, our professional tunnel vision.

Where does this tunnel vision come from? It's built up over years and years of developing proficiency in a particular area, whether it's in medicine, sales, accounting, teaching, you name it. Our proficiency allows us to become experts in our chosen field and to operate efficiently. All well and good, except that our pattern of logic follows this well-worn path because it has worked for us in the past, not because it is necessarily the best way to look at a new situation. As a result, we tend to solve problems and meet new challenges based exclusively on our past successes, and in so doing we ignore 98% of the problem-solving approaches available to us.

In today's tough marketplace, none of us can afford to sit back and play it safe. We need new models for innovation, but we're afraid to take a chance on an unproven approach. Wouldn't it be great if there were field-tested techniques that we could put into action right away? You guessed it, there are. These techniques are all around us, ripe for the plucking, and they come from the success stories outside of our industry. The challenge is to spot these strategies, adapt them to the needs of our business, and put them to work.

For instance, a real estate agent will solve a realty issue (selling a house or commercial building) from a realtor's point of view. This approach seems reasonable on the surface, but what if the realtor tried a completely different tactic, one taken from another industry?

Let's follow a sample transaction. The realtor gets a call from a prospect interested in buying a house. Using the traditional model, the realtor would then arrange to show the prospect several homes with the hope of selling one of the houses shown. This traditional model works, and many realtors have made a comfortable living using this approach. The realtor would talk to the prospect using such words as "equity," "appreciation," and "variable mortgage rates" to try to close the deal.

Now imagine the realtor using a sales technique she learned through a personal experience rather than a professional one. She is walking down the meat aisle at the grocery store one Saturday morning when a chirpy product representative appears, seemingly out of nowhere. "Good morning! Would you like a free sample of our new wonder weenies?" she says with a big smile. "Hey, sure," she thinks. "It's free food!" Never mind that our realtor normally wouldn't have a taste for hot dogs at nine a.m. As it turns out, the wonder weenies aren't half bad, and the salesperson hands her a 50% off coupon. She thinks "Hmmm. Tasty, and a dollar off. Why not?" The wonder weenies go into the shopping cart.

Upon leaving the grocery store, the real estate agent has a radical idea: Why not try "demonstration, plus free sample with coupon" approach on her next prospect? The agent tells the prospect that rather than just looking at houses, she's created a moveable feast! For the first course, she serves sandwiches in the kitchen of the first house on the tour. Dessert is served in the dining room of the second house. And in the living room of the third home, coffee is served, along with conversation about what makes a "home" for this buyer. The agent goes one step further, offering a "homeowner's coupon" (created on her computer and personalized with the prospect's name) that offers a discount off the closing costs if a contract is signed within the next three days. The result? A positive, memorable experience for both agent and buyer, and a signed contract.

The key to the agent's success was that she expanded her thinking and looked for a connection between her expertise and the proven sales techniques all around her. She was willing to leave her

comfort zone, try something untested in her industry, and use the proven ingredients of the free sample offer, which include:

- Involve the person in a surprising way.
- Engage more senses (in this instance, taste, smell and touch, which aren't common to a typical house walk-through)
- Offer a free trial or sample, which allows the prospect to experience the homes as a guest (or better yet, as an owner) by serving food and reinforcing the moods of various rooms. Remember, purchasing decisions are based on both intellect and emotion.
- Provide an added incentive for purchasing in the form of a coupon or other discount.
- Make the selling/buying process fun!

Are you thinking that a radical approach like this is too far-fetched to work? As a branding consultant to a national realty organization, I suggested this particular idea at their regional realtors conference. The idea is currently being used with great success by several agents.

The next time you're faced with a tough problem and need to pull yourself out of a comfortable rut, try the following:

1. Look for connections between your service, product or situation and an unlikely example from an unrelated industry. Remember the 3M chemist who took a failed adhesive that wasn't very sticky and combined it with his penchant for leaving himself written reminders? Voila! Post-It® Notes were born. Find an unexpected connection for your product or service and you could be on your way to discovering a startling innovation.
2. Ask yourself: "How would \_\_\_\_\_ approach this situation?" Fill in the blank with the name of a famous person, preferably not from your industry. This is a great way to go "outside of your head" and begin thinking from a completely new perspective. For instance, ask yourself how would Picasso handle a problem employee? How would Albert Einstein approach a product roll-out? How would Mark Twain look at a thorny customer service problem? If you need extra help, there are dozens of business biographies and self-help books on the market with titles like "How to Think Like Einstein," which provide a fascinating glimpse of the great thinkers and leaders throughout history.
3. Feed your head! Along with devouring all the specialized trade publications, business journals and industry-specific books, you also need to read junk novels and high literature, attend live theater, watch art films (not just the over-hyped Hollywood blockbusters), or enroll in a course at your local library on a topic that you've always been interested in but would never devote the time to. Most importantly, be open to searching for random connections and off the wall ideas.

Tip: When I'm pressed for a new approach and I feel myself slipping into a comfortable rut, I walk down any aisle of my local library and pick a book at random. I've found inspiration from such unlikely sources as quantum physics, child-rearing, auto repair and classical ballet. The seed of a new approach can come from anywhere!

Put any of these techniques to work for two weeks and watch your creativity blossom.