

THE GARY HALBERT LETTER

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The Boron Letters - Chapter 8

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Dear Bond,

Another digression. I am tired. I was upset after last night's visit plus my roommate was snoring like a buzzsaw last night. (Poetic justice)

Anyway, what should a person do when he is tired? Should he stay on his program or should he rest? It all depends. I am skipping lunch today and I am writing this on my lunch hour. If it turns out, that in my opinion, I am just spinning my wheels, I will stop writing and start resting.

The same applies to my road work which I will start a couple hours from now. You see, the way I look at it, if you halt your forward progress every time you get a little tired or irritable or whatever; then you are suffering from a lack of discipline. On the other hand, if you keep pushing when you are chronically tired or really sick, then you are a fool. A lot of men do this because of a misplaced sense of macho.

It's not macho, it's stupid.

So what I do when, like today, I don't feel like working, is that I start working anyway and I pay attention to what signals my brain and body is sending me. Then, after working a while, if I honestly do start to feel worse I will stop and quit. However, if I just feel a little bit crummy (as I do now) I keep on plugging along.

As someone once said, *"Most of the world's work is done by people who didn't feel much like getting out of bed."*

So true.

By the way, I am having coffee and V-8 Juice. I am a big fan of V-8. It's cheap, it only has 36 calories, and, when you pour it over a tall glass of ice cubes it really tastes great.

Give it a try. It's a nice alternative once in a while to eating or having a soft drink.

Now, back to marketing. You know, one of the remarks I hear all the time when I ask someone what they think of one of my ads goes something like this: *"Oh, I'm not a good person to ask. I never buy anything by mail."*

Really. Mail order sales run into the billions of dollars each year but rarely will you run into anyone who admits to being a mail order buyer.

Personally, I think all these non-mail order buyers are the same people who don't read the "National Enquirer."

Once again, it must be all those Martian invaders.

What I am doing here is redundantly making a point and I am going to be even more redundant. Here's another little glimpse into one of the vagaries of human behavior: Once I asked at class at USC how many of them preferred to go to plays more than movies.

Lots of people raised their hands.

"Bull!" I said to them. *"You are all fooling yourselves and I'm going to prove it."* I then asked for a show of hands of those people who had seen a play in the last week or so.

No hands.

I then asked to see the hands of people who had seen a movie in the last week or so.

Many hands.

Bond, this phenomena is common. All of us, including thee and me, have a slightly shrewd idea of ourselves. We often try to convince others and ourselves that we are something we are not, something we have an idea we "should" be.

Therefore, truth, my good son, can be determined NOT by how people use their mouth but rather how they use their wallet.

I want to burn this message into your mind. Be skeptical of what people say. Be skeptical of surveys. Of questionnaires. Instead, believe in numbers. For example, if everybody you talk with says they like plays more than movies and yet the numbers say that 10,000 times more people buy movie tickets then you believe the numbers!

If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck - guess what? It's probably a duck!

So keep reading the "SRDS" book. Keep looking at hot mail order publications and repeat mail order ads. Get yourself on as many mail order lists as possible. (Get a P.O. Box.) Watch the offers you receive. Anything you are going to buy anyway, and you can purchase by mail - do so.

Keep your finger on the pulse of the industry. Stay aware. Keep awake to the possibilities of overlooked marketing opportunities. After a while you will develop a sixth sense.

Here's a true story that illustrates what I am trying to get across. It has long been my belief that a lot of money can be made by making offers to people who are at an emotional turning point in their lives. For example, when they have just had a baby, just gotten married, just lost a loved one, just gotten a raise, just filed bankruptcy, just purchased a new car, and so on.

Well, guess what? For a long time I have been wishing there was a way to get a list of pregnant women. Now there is! While looking through the "SRDS" I discovered that now you can rent 120,000 new names of pregnant mothers every month. Oh boy! Well, I got myself a hold of an M.D. who is very skilled in research in the areas of human and animal intelligence and I have commissioned him to write a report titled "How To Raise Your Child's IQ Before It Is Even Born!"

This is exciting. Let's talk numbers. I plan to sell the report for \$19.95 + \$2.75 postage and handling. (Total \$22.70) My fulfillment costs will probably be (including the 10% I pay the doctor) about \$5.00. This means that every sale will yield a \$15.00 contribution to overhead. Now, let's assume I'll get a 5% response. This means, of course that out of every 1,000 letters I mail I will be receiving a total of 50 orders at \$22.70 or a total gross income of \$1,135.00. Now let's deduct \$5.00 per order for fulfillment (which is \$5.00 x 50 orders or \$250) from this \$1,135.00 and, as you can see we will have \$885.00 left. Now, of course, we must also deduct the cost of the mailing. I figure it will cost (including list rental) about \$400 per M (thousand) to mail a promotion like this. Thus, when we deduct this \$400 from the \$885.00 we have left to play with, you will see that we have a profit of \$485.00 for every thousand letters mailed.

Hot damn! I'm cooking now! I'm glad I decided not to rest.

Onward. Let's see now \$485.00 profit per M times 120M equals a total profit of \$58,200.

EVERY MONTH!

P.S. I'm sitting here with Bobby B and I have just discovered how to get Paul Harvey on my new radio. What I get is a very weak signal from KABC but, my other co-worker Jack (The Plantation Nigger) (he's really white) has just shuffled over. Jack told me earlier, that you can get Paul also at 2:30. Maybe I'll interrupt my running and see if I can get him then.

I Love You and Good Luck!

Dad