

"Conquering The Chaos Of Your eBay Business"

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Interviews
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Terry: Hi. Today I'm here with Tim Knox, and we're going to talk about conquering the chaos of your eBay business.

In the next hour, you'll learn techniques for managing your home business. This is important stuff, because a lot of people never get the full value out of their businesses. They get caught up in systems that slow them down or spend too much time on non-productive activities.

I've been looking forward to this session, because Tim helps entrepreneurs get the most out of their businesses. And I can always use some great advice.

Are you there, Tim?

Tim: Yeah, Terry, I'm here. How are you?

Terry: I'm pretty good. Tim, can you give the listeners a little more background about you?

Tim: Sure, be glad to. I can, as I say, start from the beginning and move ahead. I am from Huntsville, Alabama, in the northern part of the state. I was raised an old country boy, Terry, just back in the sticks. I really started with nothing. I am the proverbial "started with nothing and built a business" guy.

I went to work full-time when I was 14, always had a very strong work ethic. Graduated high school and was always the star employee, Terry. I was the guy who you wanted to hire because I'd give you 110%.

But after doing that for a lot of years, I started getting the entrepreneurial bug. I always wanted to start my own business and be my own boss. That's the thing that everyone talks about. And I was fortunate enough to do that. I spent a number of years working for a large corporation in the computer graphics department, which really got me educated about computers and programming and this sort of thing.

And then when the internet came along, I just kind of jumped into that with both feet.

My first business was a company called Digital Graffiti, which is still in business today, 10 years later. We do internet design, we do programming, software-type stuff. And over the years, have gotten more into the online sales business, online marketing.

And like you, Terry, I now have multiple websites that sell my products. I create my own info products and market those, and we've been very successful doing that. And that's how I met you.

Terry: Yeah. Doesn't sound much different than my background.

Tim: I've got to tell you, every time I talk to someone who's in this business, the similarities or story are always very close.

Terry: For me, with the exception of working for my dad in his businesses over the years, at 42 years old I only had a job for 16 months. And after about 5 months of working there, all I could see was how much money I wasn't making because my efforts were going to someone else.

Now, I don't regret that time that I spent, because I learned a lot working for that company. But the freedom, which is probably the biggest advantage of what you said, being your own boss.

Tim: I think that is. Now, I work with a lot of new entrepreneurs. I work with people who are wanting to start businesses. And anytime I ask, "Why is it you want to start your own business?" the number one reason always is "I want to be my own boss."

It's just the thing. Everybody would like to be responsible for themselves. I think that like you, all of the hours and all of the time I put in working for someone else really was an education; because everything that I know today has been a culmination of what I learned – not only in my own business, but working for someone else. That teaches you responsibility.

And that's one thing, as an entrepreneur, you've got to be the person to step up and ultimately be responsible, because you're it. You're the guy.

Terry: Yeah, that's the accountability. I'm accountable for my own success. And we'll talk a little more about how understanding the accountability has allowed us to grow our businesses.

So do you sell on eBay, Tim?

Tim: You know, I don't actively sell on eBay now, but I did for many years. That was actually the stepping stone that got me started in online business.

I'll give you a quick story there.

I had my internet software business, and that was primarily all I was doing. Well, I got interested in eBay because I'm a car nut. I would buy and sell old cars on eBay. Mostly buy and lose money.

But I got very interested in eBay. And I remember one night I was kind of poking around and I hadn't spent time there, and I noticed people were selling wholesale information and drop-ship information. I got very interested in that.

I started doing some research, and I'm a writer as well as an entrepreneur, so I was writing a column for *Entrepreneur* magazine at the time and they commissioned me to do a series on using drop-shipping to sell on eBay. And that really was my baptism into eBay because writing that article I got very interested and became an active seller on eBay and actually became a Power Seller in about 60 days.

My big product, I never really did hard goods so much, but I got into creating and selling my own info products; books that I had written. I had become, because of the research I did in the field, somewhat of an expert on drop-shipping. So I wrote a book on drop-shipping and I sold it on eBay. And that led to great things, as you know.

So what we have now is more of an expert advisory service, if you will, rather than an active sales business.

There's not a day goes by that I don't go on eBay and carouse the discussion boards and always keep up with all of the news that's going on.

I think in this business, Terry, even if you're not an active seller on eBay, you need to be aware of what's going on over there because the marketplace is so huge.

Terry: Well, I looked with my eBay stuff, and most of the people listening in on this, we probably come from a different direction than you do, Tim. You seem to have decided that eBay was going to be your ticket out and launched on that, which is similar to most of the listeners. But you didn't start by running around your house, selling junk out of your closets.

Tim: I really didn't. I didn't start that way, but you know what? I did that for a while because it's kind of infectious.

My wife, I always laugh at her because she is a huge eBay user but she just does it from the buyer's side.

EBay really is, to me, it's almost an addictive process. If you find something laying in the closet and you sell it on eBay and it sells, all of a sudden you're looking for something else to sell. I used to joke and say, "You're looking for that next eBay fix."

I actually did that, for a while. I sold stuff out of my garage. And that was an okay way to start. But I knew that I really wasn't going to build a real sustainable business just selling things I had around the house. And I think that's one thing that people really need to understand. That is a great way to start. It's a great

way to learn the process. Unless you have an unlimited supply of stuff in your garage, there's only so much you can do.

And that's what happened to me, when I started creating my own info products, was really out of the frustration of not being able to find something else that I wanted to sell. The info product market on eBay is huge. And that's really what got me into it. I did start with selling little things out of my garage, but it really led me into something else. But it's a great way to learn how to use the system.

Terry: Let's talk a little bit more about this whole concept of drop-shipping as a product sourcing. For myself, and a lot of my antiques and collectibles clients, we get our products that we sell on eBay by going out into people's homes and buying them directly from the owners who don't want them anymore, by going to garage sales and estate sales, auctions, and things like that.

That's something I'm pretty sure that one of the reasons I'm successful and the majority of my students who are successful with this succeed is because of the passion, the love for the antiques. I'm a toy collector, so I really enjoy having these toys and owning them. And I actually get kind of a little thrill at owning them, even if I own them for a week and then sell them on eBay, because that fits into the collector urge and, at the same time, it's cash flow.

But drop-shipping is different. I know a lot of people who have failed with drop-shipping, because they jump right in and they want to sell electronics, or they want to sell something that's...

Tim: They want to sell the hot item of the day.

Terry: Yeah. I don't see that there's any passion there. You said you got into it because it seemed like the right thing to do. I think a lot of people that go into it and then fail don't have the drive. It's like, "Hey, this is like a slot machine. I'm going to put these on there, and then I can brag to all of my friends that I'm selling big-screen TV's," and do it.

How do you recommend people look into this? How do you recommend people think about the drop-shipping and utilize it?

Tim: Let me just say this. You are 100% correct when you say, "If you do not have the passion for what you are doing, you will not do it very long."

For me, I'm an entrepreneur. My thrill is starting and building businesses, whether it be a software company or an eBay business or an information business. It really doesn't matter the topic. I get my rush and my passion from building these businesses.

And because of that, that's what I do. That's what I would rather do than anything else.

Now, the mistake a lot of people make, Terry, and you see these people all the time as well, they look for what I call "a desperate move." They're not happy in their job, they need some extra money, they really would like to start doing business. Well, they hear all about eBay, eBay is this huge marketplace with millions of customers ready-made, and they all of a sudden say, "Okay, I can make money on eBay." And they can make money on eBay if they go about it the right way.

The wrong way, what they'll do is they'll go on eBay, they'll click around, and they'll see that people are selling electronics, they're selling DVD's, they're selling this. They'll look at the most popular items. And then in somewhat of a warped logic, they'll say, "Okay, those are the hot items to sell. That's what I should be selling, too."

And the thing that they don't realize is that market, that hot item market is so crowded and so over-saturated, that the absolute wrong thing to do is jump on board that wagon. It's already full.

There's an old saying, "If you want to succeed in business, you find a pond with hungry fish and then you go figure out a bait to feed them."

That's the approach that you should take. You shouldn't go on and see what everyone else is doing – they call it following the herd – because you will get left in the dust.

And the same applies to drop-shipping. Let me just kind of give you a quick explanation of what drop-shipping is, just in case someone on the call doesn't know.

Drop-shipping basically means that you can sign on with a company who will provide you with a product that you can sell to someone. And when you sell it, the company will actually drop-ship the item, or ship the item, directly to your customer. Your customer will pay you, you pay the drop-ship company, the drop-ship company delivers the product. The difference between what you're paid and what you pay the drop-ship company is your profit.

Drop-shipping is a very valid, viable way to start a business, if you go about it correctly.

The thing that a lot of people do, Terry, is they forget to do their homework. When it comes to drop-shipping, there are 4 R's. There's research the market, research sources, have realistic expectations, and then repeat the process.

And just to kind of cover those one at a time, you want to research the market. That means you do want to spend time on eBay. You want to take a look at everything that's selling, everything that's being offered out there.

And Terry, this goes back to passion. I always tell people, "Sell things you like. Sell things that you're interested in."

I have a very good friend who is a retired golf pro, and he just eats, lives, breathes, sleeps golf. Well, as a result of being a pro for many years, he had a garage full of golf clubs. They were used clubs. His wife told him to clean out the garage, so Bill started selling these used clubs on eBay and found that there was a hungry market for good-quality used clubs.

Bill sold everything out of his garage, and then started calling all of his buddies at the various country clubs where he had spent time, and offered to buy their pro shop used equipment.

That was 3 years ago. And today, Bill has a thriving used golf club operation on eBay. He did over \$600,000 in sales last year, and it's because his passion was golf and he took the time to research the market thoroughly before he jumped in.

The next thing you should do with drop-shipping is research the sources. Once you have an idea of what you would like to sell, then you have to go out and find someone to provide you with that product.

What a lot of people do is they will go out and do a quick Google search on "drop-ship golf clubs" or what have you. They'll find a company and immediately sign up, and they won't research the company, they won't research the industry, they don't take the time to look at the different sources that they could use.

So that's the second R, research your sources. Make sure you know about the company you're doing business with. You want to make sure that they've always got product on hand.

One thing that will really bite you in the behind when it comes to drop-shipping is if you sell something only to find out that your distributor or your provider has it out of stock. That's very frustrating.

So always do that research. Research the sources. Research the companies. Make sure that they have an ample stock for you.

Next, have realistic expectations. Terry, I know you've got to deal with this. People who find a product to sell, they put it on eBay, they set their price, and then when it doesn't sell they're just devastated. They think that eBay is the magic bullet and they can just throw that up and they will immediately make money.

The truth is a fair majority of products that you put on eBay will never sell. Not every auction sells the first time. You've got to be repetitive. You've got to be persistent.

So have realistic expectations. That's one thing that I think is hard for a lot of people, because they want this to work so badly that when it doesn't work immediately, as you said, Terry, if that passion's not there, they get discouraged and go the other way.

And finally, you want to repeat the process. After you find your product that works, you've got the market, you've got your distributor, your store's set up, I always tell everyone, "Start small." Start with one or 2 products, get those out there. Make sure it's going to work. And then when they start selling, just repeat that process.

That's how you build a sustainable business, Terry. It's not a matter of onesies and twosies. Treat it like a business. Get all of the stuff in place. And then just repeat the process.

Does that answer your question?

Terry: Yeah. I want to comment on your statement, "Realistic expectations."

For myself, and I understand exactly what you're saying, for myself, I tend to have exaggerated expectations for everything that I do. I think it's going to go off and be more fantastic and more work than I expect.

Tim: Right.

Terry: That, to me, is a big motivator. Thinking about my newfound riches, my newfound freedoms helps me get through all of the work.

I refer to this as an achievement plateau. It's getting out there and getting something done, so that you get some money in. I'm working with a friend of mine right now, and we're systemizing a sales path on eBay. He's got 10,000 of these emblems in his garage that he had molded about 15 years ago, and we're doing some testing in order to sell them on eBay.

He's got his first 2 auctions up there on eBay this week, neither one have sold. But the big thing is that they're there. He's got a picture, he's got some text, and now he's able to call me on the phone and say, "Terry, can you give me some advice about this?" And he's not looking for that big kill. He knows that over the course of 2 or 3 weeks or a couple of months, we'll dial it in so that he can sell these things.

What he's looking at is let's get it started, because he's been talking about doing it for 3 years now. And then a couple of weeks ago he said, "You know what? I'm going to do this."

So now, he's started. And speaking about the repeat the process, that's the big thing.

For me, when my eBay business was going gangbusters – a nice, polite word – I was doing 500 auctions a week and listing items 2 days a week, 2 days a week shipping or packing items, and it was a system that I literally lived and breathed eBay.

For me, it was exciting. And at the same time, it was work. And a lot of it was systems.

I was talking to a friend of mine the other day who lives back east. And his product sourcing involves going to antique sales, yard sales, flea markets, and auctions. He now has 2 employees doing all of his listing for him. He needs to keep 1,000 items a week going across eBay. So he is constantly out there, doing what he loves to do. He doesn't like to sit at the desk and list things on eBay. He likes to go out and buy things from people.

So his whole business has been designed around allowing him to do what he loves. And then he has women working for him that do all of the shipping and selling in order to keep the cash flow coming through.

Tim: Right. What he has done is he's learned a very valuable lesson in business. This is an old adage that you hear a lot: "If you're an entrepreneur, you need to be working on your business and not in your business."

Very simply, what that means is it's up to him and you and I, Terry. We're the ones driving this train. It's up to us to build the business, to go out and make things happen. And there are those processes like posting auctions on eBay and this sort of thing, that you can only do so much. You're one person. So you either have to automate those processes or you hire help.

I feel a lot of new entrepreneurs, not just the ones that are on eBay, but the ones that I consult with here locally, they seem to think that they have to do it all. If they don't do it, it won't get done and it won't get done correctly.

But the truth of the matter is if you spend the majority of your time working on those mundane tasks that you have to do to keep the doors open and not spend time actually building the business, looking for products, making the sales, you're not going to be in business very long.

So that's a very good point you make. You really have to automate those things. Like, for example in my business, everything we do is completely automated.

When I first started in this business, it was not that way. It was very manual. When someone would go to the website, they would place an order, I would get an email from the payment system and then I would manually send them an email with a link in it.

And that was fine when I first started out. But when we started processing a lot of orders, we automated the system with software. Where now, when someone goes and places an order, the system automatically takes the order, processes the payment, takes the money, emails them the product, does a follow-up. It's completely automated.

It's amazing how much that freed me up to do other things.

That's a great point. There are only so many hours in a day, as an entrepreneur, especially with eBay. Because you're having to do so much. You're having to look for products, you've having to post them, you're having to do auctions.

My friend Bill, who I mentioned the golf business, one of the very first things he did was to hire an assistant who did nothing but create the auctions on eBay. He found that he was spending 5, 6 hours a day.

Terry: That was why I wrote [*The Auction Revolution*](#). The first half of [*The Auction Revolution*](#) manual was actually the manual that I wrote so that I could turn over all of the listing and fulfillment or shipping chores of my eBay stuff and put myself in the same realm that my friend back east is in, where all I had to do was source the products.

At that time, I had my consignment business going really good. So I really needed to get someone else to do those things. So I actually wrote a whole manual that explains how I systemized everything, so that I could turn the stuff over to anybody and have them do it.

For me, it didn't work because I'm not a very good manager and I'm not very good at hiring people. Or maybe I didn't hire the right people. So I ended up saying, "I can't do this, and I need to make my business suit my personality, which is I don't want to be upset because somebody's not doing something right. I want the freedom and the lifestyle.

But the important fact that you just talked about is when people start their businesses, they need to design them for growth and keep an eye out on what's going on. And as we first get started, we don't really know. We don't know everything about the business. We don't know everything about ourselves.

When I first started my business, I wanted an empire. I wanted all of these employees sitting at desks, the receptionist and a building with my company name on it, and all of those things. And today, I don't want any of those things because that's not me.

Let's move on and talk a little bit more about things people should do when they start their own home-based business.

I think most of the listeners are past this point and already have their own business, but I want to cover it anyway because it's important.

You've gone from nothing to having a couple of successful businesses. What's the best way for people to make this transition?

Tim: One thing I tell everyone is don't quit your day job. When I started my first business 10 years ago, it was started as a part-time job that I did at night.

What I did was I was actually working for a large corporation and decided that I wanted to start a website design business.

So what I did was, first of all, I went out to everyone that I knew that were personal friends with, that I thought would need a website, and I made a deal with them. I said, "Look, I will build you a website for free." The reason I did that was because in that business, then as today, you had to have samples of your work.

So the best way to do that was for me to build a few websites that I could then go to paying customers and say, "Okay, here's a sample of my work."

If I had just waited until someone paid me to build a website, I probably would still be waiting.

So the first thing you want to do is while you are gainfully employed, while you have a salary, while you have insurance, start looking around at the kind of business you want to start. It doesn't matter if it's a brick-and-mortar business. It doesn't matter if it's an eBay business. But don't think that you have to quit your job and jump into this full-bore, because you will fail. You will fail. It's as simple as that.

One thing I always say, Terry, when it comes to business: "If it was easy, everybody would do it."

So start slowly, start part-time. And next, when you look at starting a business, try to get some experience in that field.

For example, if you are interested in selling on eBay, it's very simple to get experience in that field because you can easily become a seller.

You might also do something like find someone like Terry or find someone who has an eBay consignment business, and try and get a part-time job. Try to learn from that person.

I have a very good friend who owns a restaurant, and he knew nothing about the restaurant business but he always wanted to have his own restaurant. He was a very successful accountant. He actually took a part-time job washing dishes in a restaurant, and then he moved up to waiting tables. This is what he would do at night, after he would leave his practice.

For about a year, he performed every job in that restaurant until he knew everything there was to know about running that restaurant. He quit that job and started his own restaurant, and he's very successful today.

And he'll tell you, if he hadn't taken the time to do that homework, to actually get in there and get his hands dirty, he wouldn't be as successful as he is today.

So whatever business you're thinking about, look for ways that you can get involved on a part-time basis and learn all that you can. Then, try to start it part-time.

I didn't quit my day job, Terry, until my business was making me the exact amount of money that I was making in salary. And I knew then, that I could quit the day job and my lifestyle would not change.

One mistake that I see a lot – and again, I work with a lot of entrepreneurs on a consulting basis – is they are so eager to get started, they don't take the time to really look at the business or learn the business they're jumping into, and they will go in.

The number one reason businesses fail is because they are under-funded. The second reason is because management does not have the experience to make the business work.

Again, that doesn't matter if it's a restaurant, a software business or an eBay business.

So I guess my best advice, Terry, to everybody, is start slowly. Look at what you like to do. This is another question that we get a lot. "I don't know what business to start." What do you like to do? What are your hobbies? What are you good at?

One reason I started a website design company was because I was really good at doing computer graphics. So it was just a natural progression for me.

So look for them. Look at what you like to do. Look at the hobbies. How can you take your hobby and turn it into a paying business?

But above all, take your time. Do your homework. Don't go so full-bore ahead that you actually forget to do the stuff that's important.

Terry: When I started the business that I have now, which is not the same business as what I designed 6 years ago, but it's really close, I actually found a diagram that I drew in 1996 of what the business that I was going to build looks like. And the products are different, but the business is the same, which is really interesting because it's taken me 9 years – or 8, because I actually hit that last year – to get to this point where I had the assortment of skills that I needed where I built the relationships with the people outside of myself, with the contractors that I need to get things done. I really came into my own.

Tim: You said something a few minutes ago, Terry, that I think was a very important point. You have to be flexible.

When I started in business, I was like you. I envisioned having my own building, the Knox Building, and my office was going to be on the top floor, in the corner. And it was going to be wall-to-wall windows, and I was going to have a nice secretary who brought me coffee, and I was going to have hundreds of employees and I was going to be written up in *Forbes* magazine.

I had all of these wonderful dreams of grandeur that I think every new entrepreneur has. And that was my driving force. For the first few years, every decision I made was based on getting me into that corner office in that high-rise.

I got to a point where the business, we were doing well over a million dollars a year. I had 10 employees, everything was going very well. And one day, I stopped and I went, "This is just not any fun. I am spending so much time managing these employees, trying to do sales, trying to do marketing." It got to the point where it wasn't fun anymore.

And I actually started scaling back. I went from 10 employees down to 5, and then down to 3. We were outsourcing things.

You know what? From that high-rise corner office, I now work out of a 2-room office on the grounds of my home. I've moved my operation back to the house, as we say.

So it's funny how things change. You'll start out thinking one thing, and then you may get there and then take another direction.

So I think you were talking about the realistic expectations. I think it's really great to have those big dreams. You've got to have the goals. That's what drives us. But you've got to be flexible.

My mom always said, "Be careful what you wish for, because you might get it. And when you get it, you might not want it." I think that's a very important point.

You mentioned, right out of the gate, Terry, you were talking about passion. One thing that people have to have in business – again, it doesn't matter if it's an eBay business or a restaurant or whatever – you have to want it.

To be a success in business, you have to seriously want it. You have to live it and breath it. It has to be your desire. It has to be your passion. It's hard. It really is. Terry, I think you'll agree, starting a business and building a business is not easy. And if you don't have that passion, that persistence, that desire, chances are you're going to end up being someone else's employee. Just my experience.

Terry: That's great stuff. I'd cover the expectations a little more, and then we'll jump into some actual strategies for overcoming chaos in your business.

One of the big realizations I had about expectations is also related to goals. In economics, which that's my background, there's a concept called "adaptive expectations." It's used in the foreign exchange markets, in order to predict price fluctuations.

When I apply this to my life, the way it works is that I have this expectation, call it the "big eyes expectation," going back to the phrase that my mom used to say, "Your eyes are bigger than your stomach." So I have this big-eyes expectation and I start moving forward towards that. That's the desire and the drive and all of those things.

As I move forward, I start to change what I want. And that's how the adaptive expectations is, that every few days or weeks or years, I stop what I'm doing and I look if I'm still moving toward my goal or if I've veered off toward a new goal. And I make a decision which one of these 2 goals do I want.

For me, I realized that the gangbusters eBay stuff that I was doing was a tangent. It was taking me away from where I wanted to go.

I was running an enterprise, and it wasn't what I wanted. What I wanted was to be important. That's low self-esteem.

Let me put this a different way. I think I had low self-esteem, and I wanted to be important. And I saw the way to be important was to have the big building and have all of the employees and have all of this chaos going on.

As I got all of this stuff, I realized, "I'm miserable." I was making good money, but I made a decision that I needed to change. I veered off. I needed to go back and say, "What are my goals?" And my goal is to have the freedom. I don't work Mondays, because it's my day off.

So let's talk about the importance of desire and moving forward. You mentioned that a little earlier.

One of the things that has really helped me in my business has been a concept of ownership. What I mean by this is I made a decision that I was running a business, and I started to act like it. I incorporated, I got a business checking account and kept all of the business activity separate, put myself on salary, started setting growth targets, and really started moving forward, acting like a real business.

Let's talk about structuring a business and the importance of all of this stuff.

Tim: Sure. I think it always kind of cracks me up, because I do get a lot of emails from people who say they want to have their own business and they're willing to do this and this and this. And at the same time they'll go, "I don't have to get a business license, do I? I don't need a tax ID, do I? Do I have to go to all of that trouble?"

The answer is, "Yes, yes, and probably yes."

If you want to build a real business, you need to act like a real business. Nobody ever makes money from hobbies, unless they turn that hobby into a real business. And this applies, again, to if you're selling on eBay, if you are not approaching it with the mindset that this is a real business, you really are not going to do very well at it.

I'm a teacher. I know a lot of people who will dive into eBay, but they treat it as a hobby. They don't take it seriously.

If you're going to do this as a business, number one, you need a business name. Give it a name. Validate what you're doing by giving your business a name. Get a business checking account. Get a business license.

For some reason, Terry, I don't know about you, but I get a lot of email from people who think that getting a business license is just going to be a horrific experience. It's very simple. It's a form and a check. And usually, it's a very small check.

So go down and get a business license. If you're an eBay seller, go down, they'll have whatever code you fall into in that licensing arena. They'll sell you a

business license. You can take that business license to the bank and then open a business checking account.

Now, at least everything I've heard and where I'm from, Terry, if you do not have a business license they will not let you open this account.

So what you want to do is you can do what's called a d/b/a account. It's doing business as. And basically, it's just a checking account that, for example, mine would be Tim Knox d/b/a DropShipWholesale.net. So that validates it. It gives me a business account that I can actually put money into.

The next thing you want to do, when you make sales, you want to run the money through your business account. Too many people "operate a business," but they run the money through their personal checking account. It's a very big mistake, because if the IRS catches you doing that, there are going to be taxes, penalties and this sort of thing.

So you want to do everything legitimately. If you're doing this as a business and you're making sales as a business, make sure you deposit the money in your business account.

Another question I get a lot, Terry is, "Do I have to pay taxes on things that I sell on eBay? Do I have to pay taxes on my eBay income?" Well, the legal answer is yes, you do. If you have a product or you sell something on eBay and you can show a profit, Uncle Sam really appreciates it if you would claim that on your taxes as income.

Does everyone do it? I'll let someone else answer that question.

But when you have a business and you're selling on eBay, that income is taxable.

But when you're a business, you have a lot of deductions. For example, I deduct my home office, my business pays for my car because it's for business use, lunches I go to are all deductible.

Terry, when it comes to eBay, you can help me rattle off some things here. Your eBay filing fees, all of your auction fees.

Terry: Shipping.

Tim: All of them. You've probably got a huge list of things that are deductible.

But the bottom line is you have to treat this like a business. Because if you don't treat it like a business, you and your mind will not see it as a business and you'll have a very hard time being successful.

Terry: For me, this is something that I didn't even realize until about a year ago. I made money. I had the separate checking account and actually incorporated years ago because I wanted to set up a SEP, which is a fantastic deal, if you're not familiar with that.

A SEP is a small employer pension plan. Basically, it means that I can take money right out of my business, shove it into an investment vehicle, and not pay tax on it, just like an IRA. That's why I incorporated, was to get that benefit. And then once I'd done that, I started saying, "Hey, the company can buy me a car," and started doing other things. But I still had, whenever I needed money, I just wrote myself a check out of the business account.

About a year ago, I said, "I've got to stop doing this." Actually, the accountant said that. He said, "Look, write yourself a check every 2 weeks for the same amount, and then give yourself a quarterly bonus when you fund the SEP and your IRA and all of that, with the excess profits building the business."

So I put myself on a salary, where I get a check every 2 weeks. Then, over the past 6 months, I've given myself a couple of raises because that wasn't enough.

But the change in my mindset, as a result of doing that, was really fantastic. Because all of a sudden, I've got to meet payroll. It changes my whole attitude from, "I'm having fun, I'm selling stuff and, look, I just made some money," to "I've got to make payroll."

Tim: Right. You hit the nail right on the head. It's all about mindset. It really comes down to how serious are you about starting this business. If you're just a dabbler, you just like to sell things on eBay every now and then and make a few dollars, great, more power to you.

But if you're going to build a business like Terry has done and like I have done, you really have to approach it with the mindset that this is a real business.

And I'm amazed at how much we have in common. When I first started, I operated out of my checking account and I wrote myself a check whenever I needed money. And let me say this: I don't mean to preach, because I have committed every sin that I talk about. I was the one that didn't have a business license.

Finally, one day I woke up and said, "Okay, I really do need to make this official. I need to do things." It was when I started hiring employees. I put myself on a salary. I didn't touch money out of the account unless it was my payroll or a bonus. And that really did validate everything for me that, "Hey, this is a real business."

Even today, 10 years later, we have a 401(k) investment plan set up for the people, and this sort of thing, and it is just 100% pure real business. Even if you're just a one-person shop doing this part-time, you have to adapt that business mindset. Very important.

Terry: One of the other things, in your talking about this whole attitude change with the salary, both of us went through that. And I think, looking back at myself over the years, I've always had these self-esteem problems because I grew up and my dad was an entrepreneur and his businesses went through these feast-or-famine cycles. We either had lots of money and were running around eating good food and buying all kinds of stuff, or we didn't have any and the shades were dark because the bill collectors were knocking on the door.

Tim: Been there.

Terry: When I started my own business, I went at it the same way. I had to break away from that and start to do things in different ways, in order to avoid that.

As a result of growing up like that, my dad has been a very strong advocate of me going out and being in the corporate world.

Tim: Really?

Terry: I have a degree in economics. I don't want to work in a bank. That's not me. But my dad thinks that I should go work in a bank, so he has spent a lot of time and energy over the years pounding that into my head. And it seeped down in there. And I got this idea in my head that I was doing something wrong, because I was not the corporate wage slave.

An interesting thing happened when I put myself on a salary. It did something internally with my self-esteem. So, all of a sudden, I'm getting a check every month. Before I was doing an organized or structured payroll thing, I was still getting checks, pretty much whenever I needed them, and making good money, but it wasn't organized.

Once I started getting those checks I could say, "I'm making this much money a month." My dad's telling me that I should go get a job, like his friend whose son works for Microsoft. And I'm thinking, "I don't want to do that, I make more than that guy. I've got all of this freedom. I take Mondays off."

That was a big change in that attitude. It was the whole deal of I'm doing this for me, this is mine. That's the ownership. This business is mine. I don't have to justify to anybody that I'm not working for the bank or I'm not doing that, I'm not doing what I went to school to learn how to do.

All I have to do is stand up and say, "This is mine, I like it, and I'm proud of it."

So let's talk about this. My greatest growth came when I started managing my time by doing specific tasks at the same time, on the same day. For example, every Wednesday, I list items on eBay. How do you recommend people get the most out of their time?

Tim: This has always been kind of a sore spot with me, because I'm pretty organized now but I wasn't always. I used to be just the most disorganized person you'd ever met in your life. I was what I call a "wing it." I would come in every morning and I would just wing it. I would wing the day. I was kind of totally unprepared, really didn't have a clue what to do. I would put out fires as they came.

But over the years, as my business has grown and I got busy, busier, I really learned the value of organization.

So, what I try to do is I try to organize my day at least a day ahead. I'm a very big list builder. When I come in, in the morning, if I haven't already made out my list the night before, the very first thing I do is sit down with my coffee and my pen and pad and go, "Okay, what do I have to do today?" And I'll make a list.

I know that a lot of things are going to come in and mess up my list for the day. I'll get off on tangents, but at least I have a guideline for that day of what needs to be done. And then I prioritize. What is the most important thing that I need to do today? What has to be done now, instead of later? I keep that list in front of me all day long, and as I do things, as I accomplish things, I mark them off.

Terry, nothing gives me greater pleasure than marking something off that list because I've accomplished something that day.

But a lot of days, by the end of the day, especially after a week like this one, I will look at my list and realize, "I didn't really do much today, but I did accomplish these things." Or there are those days, Terry, you know, when you don't accomplish anything.

But I look at what I didn't accomplish today, and those things will carry over to my list the next day.

Another thing that I had to learn how to do, and this was very hard for me in the beginning, was learning to delegate to other people. When I first started as an entrepreneur I thought, "I've got to do it or it's not going to get done, or it's not going to get done correctly. I've got to do it."

Well, I've learned that you can effectively delegate tasks.

I guess, Terry, it's a matter of trust. You have to trust that the people you hire can carry out that task.

Once I learned how to delegate, it got very easier for me. I learned that just by doing this delegation, I had suddenly freed up 3 or 4 hours of my day. And those were things that I could knock off my list.

Are you a big list builder? Do you do everything by a list?

Terry: Actually, my whole deal is very different to what you do. I almost never have lists. I have notebooks, spiral notebooks with different words written on them. For me, I sit down to work or sit down at the computer, and this is my rule, is that I have to spend 6 hours sitting in front of the computer every day and I can do anything I want.

So I can sit there and I can spend the whole 6-hour period surfing eBay, going to discussion boards, and just chatting with other people and doing whatever I want. Or I can pick up whatever project that that I'm working on and start to work on it.

What happened when I first started doing that, I would spend 4 or 5 hours surfing eBay and sending emails back and forth to my friends and doing the social activities and things like that. And later, it got less. I couldn't do it. Today, I might search eBay for 2 to 3 hours a week, compared with 5 years ago, where I was spending 25 hours a week looking at stuff on eBay.

The big change is, and I think what caused that, is I just got bored with it. I'm seeing the same stuff over and over on eBay. I'm seeing the same topics over and over again on the discussion boards. I got this – we talked earlier about – passion. I have this passion for my project.

For me, everything I do has a deadline. Because I've learned that if I don't set a deadline, I'll work on it, it will get set aside, and then maybe I'll pick it up again, maybe I won't.

So everything has a deadline. The things that are repetitive that I do, like my eBay listing chores, they're structured. I always list things on Wednesday nights. If I'm doing 2 batches of auctions a week, I'll list on Wednesdays and Fridays, and those are always structured so that I know I'm doing those activities.

For the other stuff, where I get to choose what I'm working on, it's based on you talked about priorities. For me, I don't have priorities, I have urgencies. I know that I have a deadline for something coming up next week, so I better work on it this week. I know that I have to get this item finished, so I can send it over to the contractor, who can finalize everything and get it back to me. And he needs this much time, so that creates a deadline.

That's the whole thing about managing my time.

One other thing, my dad used to say this all the time about the structure, is about keeping your eye on the ball. My dad used to say, "Keep your eye on the ball." And he was talking about cash flow and the concentration on what's important. Because when I ran my dad's waterproofing business, which we had operations in like 40 states and had crews all over the country, it was a mess. And it was really easy to get caught up in solving the problems. As a matter of fact, looking back on it, I think in many respects I was a chaos creator because I really liked to solve the problems. And if there wasn't a problem, I created one so that I could solve one.

Tim: Right.

Terry: Luckily, I've moved past that. But the whole concept of keeping my eye on the ball, the cash flow, and knowing that I've got to keep this money coming in because it's got to go out, too, that creates that sense of urgency. I need to get this done. I need to list these items on eBay, so that I can get the money back into the train account so that I can pay for the ads that I'm running and so that I can cover the next calls. I need to get this done, because if I don't I don't get paid for it.

It's not the same on the salary. I don't run my toy train business with a salary. It's all separate, in its own account. But it's run on a cash flow basis. And the whole purpose of that is to generate trains for my collection. So it's a little different, but it's the same focus on cash flow.

Tim: Right. In listening to you talk, I think the difference between us is I physically write out a list but you have lists in your head. And I think the key – and this was a great point, Terry – you have to have structure and you have to have a schedule.

I agree with you 100%. What I have to do is I have to put a timeline on myself, when I say, "Okay, I've got to do this task, and this task has to be done by this time or this date." Because if you don't attach a time limit to it, I'm like you, I'll forget it. I'll swat it back. It will never get done.

And I think the thing about cash flow is the old saying, "Always keep your eye on the bottom line." When you're in business, you always have to know how much money's in your bank account. How much do you have coming in? How much do you have going out?

If you know that on Friday I have to pay this bill for advertising and it's going to take \$1,000, how is that \$1,000 going to come into my account? What do I have to do?

You always have to keep your eye on the dollar figure. So that was very good advice.

Terry: Ok, now let's talk about one other thing that I think is important. We're talking about structure and home business and all of this.

Now, I don't have kids, but many home business owners I talk to have problems with their kids being distractions. So, how do you deal with the constant access of your kids to you?

Tim: Well, my situation now is different from what it was years ago. Back when I started my business, I literally started from a corner of the bedroom. I had a little desk with my computer, and that was daddy's business. That was daddy's office.

My kids knew that if daddy was sitting at that desk, he wasn't there playing, he was there doing business.

My kids, from a very early age, knew that that's what I did. And when I was in that space, they could come over, they could talk to me, but they couldn't bother me. You know what I mean? They couldn't sit there, "Daddy, can I play Barney," this sort of thing.

So right away, what I did was I set up these boundaries. And I said, "Okay, I've got a desk in the corner of the bedroom. I don't have an office that I can go into and shut the door. But when daddy is in there, in that corner, sitting at that desk, daddy is working. So, please don't bother me."

And sometimes, it's very hard to do. I know people who can't do it. You have to block that off. I would always close the bedroom door, and that became my office and that became my respected space.

Now, when I moved my office out of the house and I had an office outside the house for about 7 years, it wasn't an issue. But now, I have a big place here and I had a spare 2-car garage that I converted to office space. So this is where me and my employees come every day to work. And now, my daughter, who is now 9, she knows this is the office. She'll come in and she'll hang out and she'll sit, but she realizes that when I'm doing something, when I'm on the phone or if I'm concentrating on the computer or what have you, she knows to respect that.

So I think the key is you have to sit down with your children and say, "Look guys, mommy and daddy are starting a little business here. When we're working, it's okay to come over and talk to us for just a minute, but you have to remember that we're doing business. So you have to respect that space."

Is that always easy to do? No. There were times when my daughter, when she was little, she was like 2, she would want to come up and sit in daddy's lap. And

you know, Terry, I would have to drop everything going on just to hold this child because that was my priority. I was a daddy. There was really no way I could look down at those giant blue eyes and say, "Get on out of here, kid."

But I would stop, I would give her a few minutes. We would have that connection. Because to me, nothing is more important than your family. Your business, nothing is more important than your family.

Terry: Let me interrupt here and ask you a question real quick.

Tim: Yes?

Terry: I learned something years ago, about people. That if I paid attention to them and gave them my attention, it gave them a sense of validation. So I'm looking right in their eyes, I'm listening to what they say. I'm not sitting and waiting for them to shut up so that I can talk.

Once I started doing that, paying attention to people, I noticed that people were more willing to come in, say things to me, and then turn around and leave. It was almost as if I'm giving them the validation.

Now, that's what you're saying with your kids. When they come in, you give them that focus. A couple of minutes of giving them the focus, they feel good about whatever's going on and then they leave again.

Tim: Exactly. It's all about acknowledgement. A lot of times, a kid will come around. I love children. I've got 2 daughters. My oldest is now 17 and taller than her dad, and my youngest is now 9.

But when they were little, when they would come around, usually they weren't there for a purpose they were just there to see dad. And all they were looking for, they weren't looking for an hour of my time, they were just looking for acknowledgement.

So I would stop, I would spend a couple of minutes talking to them, giving them a hug, and just acknowledging the fact that I know they're there and I love them.

That was it. I can't remember a single time where any of my kids would say, "No, daddy, I want you to do this and this." Again, it's all about you have to set those boundaries. I told my children upfront, when they were very little, "This is daddy's business. When daddy is sitting at this desk or on the phone, daddy is doing business. I will acknowledge you, I'll give you a hug, I'll tell you I love you, but I can only take a break for a minute or 2 and then I'm back to business." And that worked out wonderfully. I think they just like that acknowledgement.

Terry: That's killer.

Tim: You have to set those boundaries, and then don't be so rigid that you can't acknowledge them when they come around.

Terry: One of my contractors, I talk to him on the phone. He's got a 3-year-old and a 5-year-old. And they come into the room, which is off his front door, and the kids can come in through the kitchen and sit there with him. And they come in and they start saying, "Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!" And he says, "Not now, I'm on the phone! Not now, I'm on the phone! Not now, I'm on the phone!"

And listening on the phone to him saying this, the kids get louder and louder and louder, because they're looking for attention.

So what you're suggesting or what we're talking about, if he just turned to the kid and said, "Come here," and gave him a hug and took care of it, then the kid wouldn't go into that loud tantrum and he could get back to work faster.

Tim: Again, I think that it is a 2-step process. Kids are a lot smarter than people think. People tend to think that you can't really have a conversation with a 3-year-old when, in fact, at that age they're soaking up knowledge.

So it's a simple thing of sitting down and setting those boundaries. "When daddy is on the phone, you have to respect daddy and not come in and say, 'Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!' But as soon as daddy gets off the phone, daddy will be more than willing and happy to acknowledge you."

So I think you have to set rules. Kids live by rules. You can say, "Look, if you come in and daddy's on the phone, you just sit quietly until daddy's off the phone." Or if it's something important and they just have to "Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!" the easiest thing to do is just..."

And you can do this. People know that people have kids. I've been on the phone and my daughter come in and she had to tell me something right that second. It was that important to her. And I just simply said to the person I was on the phone with, "Can you hang on one second?" And I just gave my daughter a minute of my time to find out what was so urgent, and then she was on her way.

I think you have to really set the limits. You have to set the rules and the boundaries. And kids, they will respect that. Kids are a lot smarter than people give them credit for.

Terry: When I was growing up with my dad having his business, which he started his own business when I was 10 and he didn't have an office at the house, he had an office that he rented, the rule was that we were not allowed to

call him at the office unless somebody was dying or there was a fire. That was the deal and we learned it.

You mentioned keeping your business time and family time separate. Let's talk about the benefits of keeping everything in the business separate from our personal lives.

Tim: Okay.

Terry: I know that for me, the biggest thing is it allows me to measure my results. I can see if I spend 6 hours working, I can see that I actually got 2 hours of work done. Whereas if I'm running around and doing all kinds of stuff and just letting anybody come in, for example sometimes my friends, who know that I work out of my home, they'll show up and say, "Hey, let's go play pool." I'm like, "It's not Monday. It's not my day off. I'm working." That whole separation, I can see that I'm doing something.

What kind of advice and benefits can you talk about or mention?

Tim: I think you very clearly have to separate. There's a time for business, there's a time for play. Are you here for business or pleasure? You very rarely hear someone say, "I'm here for business and pleasure."

What you have to do is you have to set your priorities. Now, I'm very fortunate that my schedule is pretty much my own. So if someone stops by and wants to do something, if I don't have something pressing I will take off and do it.

However, if I have a schedule to meet or I have a deadline, I have to say, "No, I'm working, this is not a good time."

But I think you have to set the priorities, then you have to set your schedule.

I know a lot of people who have a really hard time being flexible. I have a friend who's in business and he's at his office from 8:00 to 5:00 Monday through Friday, like clockwork. He takes one hour for lunch and he's there 8:00 to 5:00.

And you know, that sounds an awful lot like a job to me. It really doesn't sound like a business.

I enjoy the flexibility. But again, I've got my priorities. I know what needs to be done, when it needs to be done. And that's how I operate. If someone comes by and calls me on the phone and wants to have lunch, if I can break away and it's not going to hamper business and it's something that gives me pleasure, I will go do it.

That's another thing, Terry, I think we need to point out. You've got to have fun. A lot of days, business is not fun. You and I were talking earlier, both of us have had days where business is just not fun.

So I think that it's important to allow yourself, as a businessperson, the time to go out and have a little fun. The guys who work for me, we enjoy going to the shooting range. So if we're having a particular tough day, the next day we'll take off at lunch and go to the gun range and release our aggressions on paper targets. And it's fun, and it immediately relieves the stress. And then we can come back to work and actually, in my opinion, do a better job than when we left.

So I think you've got to give yourself that time. You've got to be structured, but you've got to be flexible as well.

Terry: I have, in my business, I mentioned that I sit in front of the computer for 6 hours a day. Every day, I actually get up and leave and I go to the coffee shop and sit at the coffee shop. Some of my friends that are also home businesspeople, they come down. And we get together and sit around and read *The Wall Street Journal*, talk about the day's events, things that are going on in our lives.

You mentioned earlier that we had talked before we started the tape about some frustrating things that you and I had this week. We talk about those things.

So for me, that hour that I go and sit in the coffee shop for the afternoon, or every afternoon, that is the time for me to socialize. It's a time for me to complain about things that are going on in my business with people who understand the things I'm going through.

Tim: Good point.

Terry: So what happens is, like yesterday was a really bad day for me, I'm in over my head with the stuff I'm doing, which is actually good because it's exhilarating to learn more and push out the boundaries, but I'm also frustrated and I was a little bit sick.

So all of a sudden, it's 4:00 and I'm going to go sit and have a cup of coffee and then come home and it's a chance for me to restart.

So basically, my day, no matter how bad the first half is, I always get to start it over again with that break.

Tim: Yeah, you recharge your batteries.

Terry: And another thing, and we're going to talk about this a little more, when I first started my business I didn't read the paper when I went to the coffee shop in

the afternoon. I actually was working. That was when I had the job. And every afternoon, when I got off work, I went to the coffee shop and I read a book about marketing or about sales, about self-esteem and success, and all of these things.

So every day, that hour sitting in the coffee shop was a little bit of socializing and a lot of building my skills.

Tim: Those are great points. I did this when I first started my business and I went into it full-time. I was working 12-, 14-, 16-hour days. And usually, I was working by myself. I had no contact with anyone else, especially anyone else who was doing what I was doing. I didn't really have a circle of entrepreneurial friends then.

I can remember, you can get very lonely. If you're an entrepreneur and you know that your financial world rests on your shoulders and you're responsible for feeding your family, and you're sitting here at a computer 16 hours a day, it can get incredibly lonely and incredibly discouraging.

So I'm like you. One thing I love to do is get on the telephone with people like you, Terry, like Jim Cocrum, like Mike Enos, people that I know that do what I do and understand what I'm going through. And that is such great therapy.

This phone call, I've been having just a terrible day. I won't go into that. But the phone call just talking to you now, Terry, has relaxed me. It's gotten me excited about business. It's got my brain going. And that's just so important when you are a business owner. You've got to have that break.

And you going to the coffee shop is a perfect example of taking the time to get out of the office and go recharge your batteries. And I think that's just so important. Get out and go to the coffee shop. Drink a cup of coffee, read the paper for an hour, and it just rejuvenates you.

These are all great points.

Terry: Actually, I tried setting a goal that I'm going to get this much stuff done before I go to the coffee shop. If I don't get this done, I can't go; because it's a reward. That didn't work. It didn't have the same benefit to me as just, "It's 4:00, it's time to go to the coffee shop."

And it's not a reward. It's a part of my life. It's a part of the whole thing.

You mentioned a circle of entrepreneurs. I call it the circle of support. I have about 6 or 7 people and they're all in different businesses. Most of them don't even know each other. The only thing they have in common is they all run their own businesses and they all know me.

So all of those people, I reach out to them and I say, “Hey, I’m doing this. Can you give me some advice?” And that’s the whole concept of the circle of support. It’s kind of like a one-on-one mastermind group.

So instead of a mastermind group, the circle of support is a one-on-one talking and sharing ideas with one person.

Back when I started selling on eBay in the late 90’s, there were no e-books about eBay. There was really no way to learn, except to call somebody on the phone or go to somebody’s house and have them show you how to do it.

It was basically a group of about 6 of us, 2 or 3 here in Arizona, a guy in Pennsylvania, 2 guys in California, and we actually emailed each other and called each other on the phone, figuring out how to do all of this stuff.

Now, as far as eBay goes, it’s not that difficult to build the eBay skills. You can buy videos, you can buy e-books, things like that. And I do not think the discussion boards are a substitute for that face-to-face or we’re talking on the phone, that voice-to-voice. It’s very different, because there’s a sense of validation. It’s like, “Hey, today sucked but I’m doing what I like to do, and he got through this.”

So let’s talk about skills. I just mentioned all of these ways that I improve my skills as I was going on, about reading the books at the coffee shops and the things that I do. How do you improve your skills?

Tim: I’m a lot like you. I am an avid reader. But I also listen to a lot of audio; not just like books on tape, but I love these teleseminars and these audio files that a lot of our peers do.

I’m of the mindset that you never stop learning. As my mom always said, “You always have to keep your head full.” And I think that meant you always have to be learning.” At least, that’s the way I use it. But I am an avid reader. At any given time, I’m probably reading a dozen different books. And what I do is I leave them all over my office and all over my house. So wherever I happen to be, no matter what room I’m in, there’s a book. If I’m in my basement sitting down, there’s a book. If I’m in my office, there’s a book.

So I love to read. I always think that you should be learning. You never will learn all there is to know.

So I think you always have to continue to grow. Terry, not just from a business standpoint, but I think it’s also important that you continue to grow spiritually and, again, go back and have some fun. You always have to keep learning. It’s a character-building thing.

I learn something new every week. I really do. There's always something coming down the pike that I didn't know.

Terry: Actually, it sounds like it's a process of you surround yourself with information and then take from it as you find time?

Tim: Yeah. What I will do is I will buy books that interest me. For example, my big interest is business. I'm a business junky. I write a weekly newspaper column on small business. I write for Entrepreneur.com. So it's very important for me to keep up with trends in business and the latest strategies in sales.

So every time a new book comes out that is on my radar screen, I will go buy that book and I'll bring it in and I'll lay it down. And my wife knows don't mess with my books. If there's a book here, leave it there.

So the reason that is, is it's all about availability. If I'm sitting in my den watching TV, and I look over and there's a book there, I'm such a bookworm that I'll actually pick up the book, I'll turn off the TV and start reading the book.

Terry: I get emails from my friends saying, "Hey, you need to get this book." Or I'll be reading a book and it will mention something, another book, so I'll write that down.

And then I go to Amazon and I add it to the shopping cart. And once every month or 6 weeks, when I'm adding books to the cart, I'll look at the cart.

So, for example, 2 weeks ago I got a box in and it had 6 books that I'd added to the cart over the past month, month and a half. And then I have that box with all of these books, and I get free shipping because it's over \$25. And it's a tax-deductible expense, so I can buy them with my business credit card.

And then the books come in and I just throw them all in a pile. So there's a couple of them I haven't even looked at yet, because they don't seem interesting. When somebody told me to buy them, they sounded interesting. And they'll just sit here.

And other ones, I'll immediately say, "I've got to read this now," and I'll run off and read it.

For example, I just read *The War Of Art* by Steven Pressfield, which I found to be very good about actually getting things done. It talks about resistance and a lot of the stuff we've been talking about on this call.

Maybe there's some divine force that causes me to end up reading that book the week before you and I do this call. I don't know. I just know that it happens that way, and it seems to happen that way a lot.

Also, I tend to follow a program of study. For example, for the past 3 months, I've really been studying the art of body language in order to improve my negotiating skills.

What's interesting is that while it helps in my business, in my going out and buying things from people, it's also helping in my personal life.

So it's basically me. We talked about keeping the business and the personal life separate, but I'm in both of those areas. Anything that I do or improve in either of them benefits me.

Tim: I think you're right. You're a lot like me, Terry. Our business and our personal lives are so closely parallel. We only have one life, but we spend part of it in business and part of it in personal.

A lot of the skills that we use, and the body language is a great, great example of that, a lot of the skills that we use pertain to business and to our personal lives, to our relationships.

I know I learn a lot from the business books, especially books that deal with human nature and sales strategies and this sort of thing, that it applies to the personal life, as well.

Have you ever read Dale Carnegie?

Terry: Years ago.

Tim: *How To Win Friends And Influence People?*

Terry: Yeah, I read that years ago.

Tim: It was one of the early books that I read, but it was such a great book because the principles that it taught really could be applied to business as well as personal relationships.

Terry: One of the other things that I do is I listen to a lot of audio stuff. I actually buy a lot of audio packages about sales, about self-esteem, all kinds of stuff, even seminar packages.

I don't like going to seminars, because I'm not really into big crowds. And I find myself easily distracted, sitting in a seminar room with hundreds of other people. So I'll buy them on audiotape.

And that's something that has really helped me over the years with all of these different aspects of my life. And I think the people that are listening in on this call are getting a real good idea about how to go ahead and improve themselves.

We're about out of time, because we need to jam these into the CD, which only gives us 76 minutes. So we're going to finish up now.

Terry: On IWantCollectibles.com there is a wide range of articles about antiques, collectibles and eBay. And if you haven't gotten a copy of my eBay manual, [The Auction Revolution](#), you should get a copy of that too.

Thank you for being on the call, Tim. This was very good.

I've learned some stuff, I've actually got 2 pages of notes here for things that I want to test out and start doing in my own business.

Tim: Great, Terry. I appreciate the invitation. Always love to talk to you.

You were talking about the articles on my website. If folks on the call have never read your articles, I highly encourage them to do so because I use Terry's articles in my newsletter a lot. I think I sneak you in there once a month, at least.

Terry's articles are always among the most read articles that we run. I think that says a lot.

There are a lot of experts out there, supposed experts who do write. But Terry's articles are always dead-on. They are always on-topic. I was one of the first to read your [Auction Revolution](#) book. You let me have an advanced copy. Let me tell you, that is probably one of the best eBay books I've read. And I've read them all.

So if you folks on the call haven't read that, you do need to check it out. Very good material.

Terry: Thank you for that endorsement. I actually really enjoy writing my newsletter.

Tim: I do, too. I'm an old writer. Actually, my goal in life, one of the reasons I started a business was to make enough money to where I could spend my days writing. I haven't quite gotten there yet, but I'm working on it.

Terry: Thank you for being on this discussion, Tim. It's been a lot of fun.

Tim: Terry, I've enjoyed it. I appreciate the invitation.

Terry: Alright. The discussion you just heard is part of a series of interviews designed to help eBay sellers and entrepreneurs improve their skills and increase their productivity, while making more money.

If you are not a subscriber, go to www.IWantCollectibles.com, and click on the eBay Mastermind link.

Thank you for listening to this call.