



MARKETING 101

It All Starts With a Conversation

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As I walked into a Williams-Sonoma store in Northern California, I saw one of the sales associates was fanning herself. Now, keep in mind I am not a licensed acupuncturist, but in looking at her, I concluded she was experiencing a hot flash. She just kept sending me signals to that effect as she showed me different merchandise and pointed out the food samples.

As we continued to look and talk, I decided I'd better ask her if she was having a hot flash. The answer was a resounding yes. My reply was also in the form of a question: "Have you ever tried acupuncture?" Her reply was no, but she mentioned that one of her friends had suggested acupuncture.

I made my purchases and as I began to leave, she said, "Please come back and see me, you were so interesting to talk to ... and thank you for telling me about acupuncture."

This little encounter reminds me (and not for the first time) that everyone we meet needs acupuncture. But that doesn't mean your entire community is just going to walk through your clinic doors. You have to reach out and touch them with information that resonates.

I believe if I withhold information that could help people, I am not doing my part to help heal our planet one person at a time. I hope you feel the same way.

You are trained and the medicine works. This is the first step in a public education campaign to spread our reach and give more people the healing they need. Each one of us has to step up and speak out.

Your job, your mission, has to go beyond waiting for patients to come to you; that's not what will grow your practice and the profession, much less give more people the medicine they need. You need to "get out there" into your community and look for opportunities to let people know what acupuncture can do.

It is important to listen first; then find a place in the conversation – trust me, it will come. It may be because the person reveals something about their health; or it may be as simple as the opportunity to tell them what you do for a living. Regardless, *that is your moment*; your chance to help the person understand what you do and how this great medicine can help them.

It is an incredible feeling to know you have helped people with their health issues on their life paths. It is an equally profound feeling to recognize that in doing so, you are also helping your beloved profession grow. Remember, it all starts with a conversation.

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