

SHINE Podcast – October 2020

Sylvie:

Welcome to the Gerry Lewis: Shine Podcast. Shine was first published in 2014 and was honored with best small business book of 2015 by Small Business Trends. Since then, the author, Gerry Lewis, has worked with an extensive list of international and non-profit organizations, as well as universities, to help them understand the powerful combination of voice, message, and audience. Gerry coined the phrase, "Better leads to breakthroughs". He believes that communication is an art, not a science, and by crafting your ability to communicate better, you'll achieve your personal best, the breakthrough, and you'll shine through the noise that seems to deafen and, at times, drown so many voices that are worthy of hearing. In May of this year, 2020, Shine was honored again, this time halfway across the globe. It was selected by renowned publisher, Beijing Mediatime Books Co. Ltd, to translate Shine into simplified Mandarin and distribute it throughout Asia.

Sylvie:

Gerry Lewis is also the founder and CEO of Gerry Lewis Inc., a change communications company that focuses on empowering organizations and their employees by developing communication that creates trust, action, and passion. Gerry's company helps sustain change from the inside out. In conversation with Gerry Lewis, we talked about how Shine was inspired, his process for getting this book out, and why, especially today in a time of unprecedented change, communicating well is the true measure of a great leader.

Sylvie:

Gerry, it's really great to be sitting down with you today, and to talk about Shine and the big launch in Asia. Congratulations.

Gerry Lewis:

Thanks very much, Sylvie. It's a pleasure to be here and it's always good seeing you again.

Sylvie:

So, the book's been out for a few years now. Now during this time, what's the most common question you get about Shine?

Gerry Lewis:

Well, for sure over the years there's been a lot of questions about Shine, and many of them about the book itself. But it's interesting, you're asking about the most common question that I get, and it's not so much about what's in the book, but how the book came to be. That's been the common question. So in other words, people ask, "What made you write this book?" That's the question I get all the time, and I think the reason for that, Sylvie, is that I think everyone has a book in them, I really believe that. And when you talk to people, and when you say, "I've written a book," and they always say something like, "Oh, I've always wanted to write a book." I think everyone wants to write a book, but it's how do you start, what compelled you to do it? And what was the thing that made you go, yes, this is going to happen? But there's a story behind it, Sylvie, and I want to be able to tell you the story of what was the turning point of what made me write the book. Are you ready?

Sylvie:

I'm ready, go for it.

Gerry Lewis:

So it started back in 20 ... I think it was the early part of 2013. I was MC-ing or hosting a live conference ... Gosh I miss live conferences. But I was hosting a live conference and one of the presenters who I've worked with for many years, we'll call her Brenda, just for the sake of putting a name to this individual, that's not her real name. Brenda was one of the presenters, I worked with her for over 10 years, I have huge respect for her because she really is, she's passionate about everything she does and what she delivers is always really good projects, and she's great at it. And she came up to me before she presented and she says, "Gerry, I worked with you for a long time, I feel I can share this with you. This initiative that I'm about to present on, I am on the short-list to get a promotion for this." So it's a vice president role that she was being looked at, and she was on the short-list. And in fact, the people who were going to make that decision were in the audience that day.

Gerry Lewis:

And I said, "Oh, Brenda," I said, "Fantastic." Seriously, I've seen the presentation in its PowerPoint format. I know that she's passionate about it and I thought, "This is going to be her time." So she went up to present and honestly, I'm not sure what happened, but within probably the five minutes into the presentation I could feel that she just started getting very nervous and it began-

Sylvie:

Oh, no. Unraveling.

Gerry Lewis:

Yeah, it began to unravel. Exactly, it began to unravel and it began to snowball. So long story short, the presentation was not as effective as it could have been, in fact, it wasn't very good. I later found out that a day or so later, from Brenda, that she was quite disappointed because she did not get that promotion. So even though she was on-

Sylvie:

Oh, no.

Gerry Lewis:

Yeah. Even though she was on the shortlist, I guess, maybe it was that moment that kind of changed things for her. And so that evening that she told me, I remember because I couldn't sleep. I couldn't sleep because I kept thinking about partially how unfair it was, because she really did deserve the role, but also because I thought, "That could have been changed." And what I mean by that is, I've always believed in anything that I do when I'm in front of an audience, I can never control what the audience is thinking. I can never do that. You know, I maybe presenting what I think is great, but the audience might think, "Ah, not so great."

Sylvie:

Sure.

Gerry Lewis:

But what I can control is how I bring my content to life. I can control how I feel. I can control my excitement. I can control my energy. I can control my enthusiasm. So I thought, "You know what? I'm

going to write about, not about changing people's minds, not about controlling what they think, but controlling your own. How can you control the moment?" So in a way I owe this book to Brenda.

Sylvie:

I'm really glad you kicked off with this story because I think it really gets to the core of what the book is about. It occurs to me that some of the people listening haven't read the book yet, so before we go on and I ask you some more questions about what you've just explained to us, tell us just in a nutshell what the book is about?

Gerry Lewis:

Yeah, okay. So, if you take that moment, so the moment where Brenda was presenting and it kind of fell apart. So if we take that moment and then you were to say, "Well, I thought about what other moments are there where you're in front of an audience, whether it's a one-on-one, or one to 100,000, or one to 1,000,000, what are those moments that if you don't control, could change everything?" So remember, the impetus is from that particular presentation that I saw of Brenda's. So I basically laid out the book in terms of the moments that make a difference. So there are five, those are five core chapters in the book. So the number one is presentations, and I think that is the biggest hurdle for many people, that is a moment. Another moment where you can control it and really shine, are at meetings. So, how do you conduct meetings? How do you hold yourself in meetings?

Gerry Lewis:

The third one is how you lead change. And when I say, lead, I don't necessarily mean you need to be a leader of change, but I think we're all leaders. I think especially in the change that we're going through now, we are all able to demonstrate how we let change affect us, or what we're going to do to control change. So when it comes to change, that is a moment as well where you have an opportunity to shine. The fourth chapter is about networking because again, you're in front of someone, you haven't met them before, this is your first time. We've all heard of the saying, "You don't get a second chance at a first impression." I think we all know that, and how long it takes to make an impression. So what is it that when we're networking with people, that we can control that moment and we can shine?

Gerry Lewis:

The final chapter is perhaps one of my favorite ones. It's a moment where we face our biggest critic, our biggest judge, and unfortunately that individual is ourselves. So the final chapter deals with the moment where your inner voice can make that difference between you saying, "I've got this," or "It got me." And so those are the five chapters of Shine, and they are all based on moments where you can hopefully control it and make that difference.

Sylvie:

What I find about these moments, as you described them, is that all of them, or most of them seem to have an element of performance, I guess you could say?

Gerry Lewis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sylvie:

SHINE Podcast – October 2020

I don't know if that's the right word, but of certain, like being on. You're being watched, you're being ... you're performing in a certain sense.

Gerry Lewis:

Yes.

Sylvie:

And I know even just for me personally, presentations, networking even, it's really hard to make it feel genuine. Does your book talk a little bit about that, about making it not so much a formula, but doing those things, addressing those five areas in a very fluid, natural fashion?

Gerry Lewis:

Absolutely. And I think you're talking about authenticity? You're talking about-

Sylvie:

Yep, exactly.

Gerry Lewis:

Yeah, you're talking about is it a step one, step two? And in some cases, and when we go a little bit more into the book, there are many instances where you can follow a process. But I believe when we're talking about what you can control, we all have the power within us to be able to feel as though we add value. And I think the minute you start believing that your voice counts, you have something important to say, you have value, that authenticity comes out. So it's not about, oh, what do I need to do to be authentic? I don't think that's the way to approach it. I think authenticity comes from within, it just comes out of you. My book talks about, how you control that noise, that outside noise? Or in chapter five, that inside voice that could deter you from that feeling of, "I've got this". So authenticity does come out, absolutely.

Sylvie:

Gerry, I'm sure people tell you this all the time, but it's clear from listening to you speak that you have that innate ability to communicate authentically. You know, you clearly have a genuine understanding of the subject matter, obviously, which lead you to write this book. So tell us, where do you get it? Who taught you how to communicate?

Gerry Lewis:

That's a great question. I do a lot of communication presentations on, "how do we communicate better", and I always start with this. We were not taught how to communicate in school. We were taught in school how to read, how to write. We were taught in many ways, maybe even how to think, but we weren't taught how to communicate well. So communication is something, I think, that comes from life experiences. So I will start off by saying, how do I get it? I would say, I think life is the best teacher. In every success, in every failure, in every problem we go through, there are lessons. Now some people, I believe, just wash past those lessons and really not see them as lessons, they're just situations that happen. I take a lot of mental notes. When something great happens, I don't just say, "Hey, that's great." I say, "Why did that happen? How did that happen?" And I ask the same questions when something not so good happens.

Gerry Lewis:

So in a way, when it comes to communication, I learn from the experience itself, but I hold it as mental notes to myself of what works, what doesn't work, and how can I make it better? That's what leads to the, "Better leads to breakthrough." But there's another one too, I love listening to people. Despite the fact that I'm doing most of the talking today, I really like listening to people because I believe you learn far more from listening than you certainly do by talking. And I have had the benefit of having traveled to over 70 countries in presenting or workshops, where I have met so many incredible people. And I'm not even talking about executive leaders or senior people, I'm talking about day-to-day frontline, people who really do a lot of the frontline work. You learn so much from their life experiences that you can't help but understand, okay, this is what works for them when it comes to communication. This is what they listen to. This is what they don't like.

Gerry Lewis:

I have the fortunate instance of being able to be in front of so many people and really learning from them. So, that's number two. Take a lot of mental notes, I listen a lot to people. The third one, which I think most people are not great at because it's tough, not because they don't want to do it, is to ask for feedback. I'm one of these people that I really believe that no matter how good I think I was, I would say, "What did you think? What could have been better? If there was one thing you would change, what would that be?" I believe that asking for honest feedback, and finding people who will give you that honest feedback, not everyone will, so I think it's really important to stress that. Find the people you trust who will actually tell you what they really think, I think that is the key to becoming better. And I think if you apply them, you will get better.

Gerry Lewis:

So that's why I live the mantra, "Better leads to breakthrough," because no matter what it is, whether you're presenting and your nervous, the better you get at it at one moment in time, that presentation will suddenly get easier. Why? Because you've improved each time. That's what I call the breakthrough, and I think that's the moment. You feel so great when that happens.

Sylvie:

The mental analysis that you're talking about, and sort of dissecting different occurrences and learning from them, is it possible to take that too far? I'm thinking, have you ever come across someone who is highly, highly self critical and where they're almost analyzing maybe a little too much, and it becomes sort of analysis paralysis? You know, and the feedback, they're dwelling on the feedback from one person, and it's ... Have you ever encountered a case where that's actually what's preventing them from moving forward?

Gerry Lewis:

I think that is definitely possible. I love the term, "Analysis paralysis," I think there are people who fall into that trap as well. I think the most important thing to keep in mind is that ... and that's where the feedback comes in, is that you do find people who will not just give you feedback, but give you the encouragement. I think there's a nice balance between asking for feedback, and also as you are the provider of feedback, to also provide some guidance as well. So if someone were to come to me, let's just put that situation you just mentioned, and said to me, "Oh, you know what? I've been thinking about it, I talked to 10 people, and 10 people told me 10 different things. And now I'm not sure anymore." I think if they ask me for feedback I will say, "One of the things you should really think about

SHINE Podcast – October 2020

is, how do you feel when you present? How do you feel? What energy do you draw from?" I think that sense of encouragement from people, from the right people, will help that situation.

Gerry Lewis:

I think, like I always say, it's like editing a movie. If people were trying to perfect that movie before it goes airing into the cinemas, they could be editing it for years before it actually shows.

Sylvie:

Yeah, true.

Gerry Lewis:

At some point in time you have to say, "Listen, this is it. This is as good as I can get it right now. Let's get it out." I think we should think like that sometimes. And you know what? The other thing too, just a final point on that, failing is a great teacher, don't be afraid to fail. And if you feel like, hey, I didn't do so great, don't knock yourself down, just think, "What will I try different next time?" That's it.

Sylvie:

Yep. Yep. That's great. That's great. Now Gerry, think about your baby. Think about the book.

Gerry Lewis:

I thought you were talking about my cat. Okay, I'll think about the book. Okay.

Sylvie:

Not that baby, the book baby for now. Which part are you most proud of? And maybe it's a part in the book, or maybe it's a part of the process, I don't know? But reflecting back on the whole experience of writing the book and the final product, what are you most proud about it?

Gerry Lewis:

There are two parts. I think the easiest part that I'm most proud of is probably the epilogue. And I say that-

Sylvie:

Epilogue.

Gerry Lewis:

... because the epilogue ... Yeah, the epilogue is about my mom and I pay tribute to her because she has been my guiding light in life in general, and still continues to be. And I think the book was very much inspired by her, on how she taught me what was important in terms of value, and in turn taught me how to communicate well. So, that's an easy part. In terms of the technical question of, which part of the book do I love most? I would have to say, presentations, because I really think that that's one of the biggest hurdles for people. I don't know if it's still the number one, but any survey you look at on the net, what's the number one fear? It's not death, number one fear they still put as presentations, which I often find-

Sylvie:

SHINE Podcast – October 2020

I've heard that, yep.

Gerry Lewis:

Yeah, I find it interesting, but it's on the internet, it must be real, right? So-

Sylvie:

It's got to be true.

Gerry Lewis:

So for me, presentations is my favorite because when I started presenting I was very nervous as well. I've got a very short story. I had to-

Sylvie:

Not you?

Gerry Lewis:

Yeah, a very short story. So yeah, it's true. In university, I belonged to an association, anyway, my job in this association was to help raise funds and marketing funds for an event we were doing. And so I had to have a little presentation at the corporations that I was assigned, and to basically pitch them on why they should help donate to our event. So long story short, I did a presentation, it was over a phone call. I remember this as clear as it was half an hour ago. So I did this phone call, it was to Calvin Klein Canada, I spoke to the individual in charge of fundraising or whatever it was, and I did my spiel, I presented. When I was done, do you know what he said to me?

Gerry Lewis:

He said, "Gerry, I'm going to give you the sponsorship, but not because you presented really well."

Sylvie:

Ouch.

Gerry Lewis:

He says, "I couldn't believe you spoke so fast and didn't breathe throughout the entire presentation. I had no idea what you were saying, but I was so impressed by just that and your facts." Of course at that point I was happy, but devastated at the time, but I also knew that that was ... You know, everyone's nervous when they present, so that was my first official presentation.

Sylvie:

So, you got it because you were a freak show basically? Yeah.

Gerry Lewis:

I was a bit of a freak. I failed. But since then, I think what I've been able to do and why I love this chapter, is I deconstructed the fear of presentations. So I took a presentation from the point of thinking about it, preparing it, writing it, practicing it, presenting it, following up for feedback. I basically deconstructed all the parts where that sort of awful feeling in your stomach could happen, and I

SHINE Podcast – October 2020

basically worked with those moments and said, "Okay, what would I do here?" So for example, in one part of presentations I do a bit of a countdown. So the night before, before you go to bed, when you wake up in the morning, when you get ready, five minutes before you present, what are the things you do to just get yourself into that zone?

Gerry Lewis:

And just to jump back to an earlier point you made, it is about performance. It is about being on. And not that we're saying we're all actors, but there is a certain part of us when you bring energy on, it is about bringing your best game forward. So what do we need to do, to do that? So what I've done is, I deconstruct the presentations to knock out any part that could create those scary moments, so that when you're ready to be on, you're on.

Sylvie:

We'll return to our Shine episode right after this message. Gerry Lewis Inc. or GLINC for short, is pleased to welcome you to a new podcast series called, GLINC outside the box. In this new series, Gerry and his team speak with businesses, practitioners, and experts in the areas of corporate strategy, learning and development, and change communication. You could say, we get inside the minds of diverse, innovative and unconventional thinkers, to expand our understanding of what is, to what it could be. Subscribe to our podcast channel, GLINC, that's G-L-I-N-C, on Spotify and Apple Podcasts. It's time to explore new ways of thinking, it's time to GLINC outside the box. We'll now return to our Shine episode with Gerry Lewis.

Sylvie:

Now, I'm going to say it, I'm going to say what probably every podcast produced in 2020 mentions sooner or later, COVID-19. But I think it's important for us to bring it up in the context of this podcast and this book, because there's something really important and really practical that your book and your insights can bring, as we go through this unprecedented, this historical event that is the COVID-19 pandemic. What would you say has been, or will be, the biggest change to the way we communicate, as a result of COVID-19? How does all this fit in with what we're going through right now?

Gerry Lewis:

Sure. And I think it's a fantastic question and is very timely because the way we communicate, the channels by which we communicate, have completely changed. So even us today, so we're online, we're cameras to each other, and if you think about it, prior to COVID, not that this didn't happen, but the majority of way in which we presented was live. You know, short of a conference call, most of our interactions were face-to-face. So now I'm presenting throughout the day on video camera. So the part that's the most challenging or interesting because of COVID, is now you're actually seeing yourself speak while you're communicating. Right?

Sylvie:

Yeah.

Gerry Lewis:

But it's something I had to think about because it's sort of like, now imagine this, I'm going to take you out of communication for a second. Imagine you had to eat a meal in front of a mirror. Okay? How self conscious is that, you're watching yourself eat? Now, the same principle applies. I'm watching myself

SHINE Podcast – October 2020

speak in front of me as I'm delivering whatever I'm doing, and in some ways, that can be very intimidating because in a way it could be distracting.

Sylvie:

Absolutely. I mean, I've felt myself spiral down that hole in Zoom calls, forgetting about what I'm talking about and focusing on how my mascara's not on right. And so I totally get it, yeah.

Gerry Lewis:

I have the same problem with my mascara, Sylvie.

Gerry Lewis:

So it's, I think that's the most challenging part is because we're trying to communicate, we're trying to get a message across, and yet we're seeing ourselves delivering that message. And I think that that can be a distraction, but I also think we need to be able to manage that because this is going to be like this for quite some time. And to be honest, even post-COVID I think this method of communication is a very effective one.

Sylvie:

Yeah.

Gerry Lewis:

There's no travel, I don't need to take a train, plane, bus, automobile anywhere to see you, I can just connect and here we are, we can have a conversation. So that number one challenge is the distraction of that. The second one, I think it also is related to seeing yourself on screen and that is, how do you present in a compelling way on video? Now when you're live, when I'm doing a presentation in front of a large audience, or even in a meeting, my entire body gives non-verbal language. You know, the way I walk, the way I move, the way I point, but now they're mostly restricted, really, to a headshot. So the challenge there is, okay, if I'm trying to compel someone, how do I do that when it's just my head? I don't have my legs moving, my arms moving. I don't have props I can hold up as much. So I think the second challenge is, how do we use our other tool to project that way forward?

Sylvie:

Well, why don't you give us some quick tips on how we can project ourselves better?

Gerry Lewis:

Sure. Yeah. There's a rule I've always believed in, whether it's in person or on camera, when I'm meeting a group of people. I always believe that your energy level should be at least 25% higher than your audience. Now, it's hard to gauge the 25%, like what's 25%? I use 25% because ... instead of 100. So for example, if I came out on a stage and I was 100% more excited than you, I would probably freak you out, I'd probably scare you. So-

Sylvie:

Yeah, little intense. Yeah.

Gerry Lewis:

SHINE Podcast – October 2020

A little bit intense to jump out like that. So when I say, 25%, what I'm saying is, you need to just gauge your audience a bit and then you bring that sort of energy up. Now, what do I mean by energy? So the energy is projected by when you say, "Hello." When you smile. When you welcome everyone on screen or in a meeting, whatever that channel is. Your voice is probably the least used tool that you're aware of. Your voice can ... you can sound like this, hi, hi everyone. Or, hi everyone, it's great to see you. That's why they say, with telemarketers or call centres, you know when someone's smiling. You know when someone's indifferent to your concern, you can hear it, you're not seeing them. Your voice is such a powerful tool that so many people disregard it, "Oh, that's just my voice." No it's not, make it work for you.

Gerry Lewis:

So these are the things that I would say, in COVID, don't be distracted by seeing yourself, number one, on screen. Number two, when you need to project yourself, use the tools you already have, you don't need props. You've got your best tools, your voice, your smile, your energy level, that comes across loud and clear.

Sylvie:

Gerry, do you ever have days where the energy level, it just isn't there? And you woke up and you feel like crap, and maybe it's because there's something else going on in your life that's really hard to get away from, or who knows, but we all have these days where we-

Gerry Lewis:

Yeah.

Sylvie:

... we're just not feeling it. What do you do? Do you fake it till you make it, or what do you do personally to get over humps like that?

Gerry Lewis:

Well the reality is, I think even in this pandemic, I think those days are more frequent for sure because we're very isolated and we don't have the outlets to really regain or recharge that energy. So a couple of things, one, I think you need to always remember as best as you can, if it's work-related, if it's something you need to do, you need to bring it on. That is the number one rule, they say in Broadway, "The show must go on," right?

Sylvie:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Gerry Lewis:

So in many respects, you've got to bring it on. So I know it's going to be tough, but you've got to park something to the side and bring it on. Number two, I do believe, and it's not so much fake it till you make it, I believe that sometimes how you look, how your posture, your self talk, can actually help you gain that energy that you feel you don't have. So by sitting up, by opening up, getting some fresh air, by smelling a fresh cup of coffee, all those things are instances where it can actually pick you up, so find them. Find what are the things that pick you up. For me, honestly, this is so silly, I love roses. I like

flowers. When I smell a rose, I feel incredible. Now I'm not saying that I have roses around me all the time that I can smell them, I wish I could. I wish I could. I wish someone would bring me roses every day. But I'm just saying I know my trigger. I know what can get me up, I also know what can get me down. So, that's number two.

Gerry Lewis:

The third one is, I really believe, you know what? We all have those days, but I think we can leverage on each other. I believe that energy begets energy. So when you're in a meeting, whether it's a conference call and hopefully someone else has that energy, you can pick up from that as well. So I do believe that we can really leverage off other people in terms of helping regain on those days or those moments we don't feel as sharp as we could be.

Sylvie:

And I would imagine for you, I can just imagine your work environment and your team, and how you guys bounce off each other in this way because you're not only a writer, you also have your own communications company, Gerry Lewis Inc., where you've led your own teams since 2004. So that's 16 years of working with this team, or some members of this team, and working with all kinds of organizations. Over the years, what would you say is the most common mistake organizations make when it comes to communicating change to employees, because you talk about change a lot in the book? What's the thing that people usually get wrong?

Gerry Lewis:

Well first of all, I'm still stuck on the fact that the company's 16 years old. I feel much older right now-

Sylvie:

You're old now? Yeah.

Gerry Lewis:

... and I should. Wow. Okay. It's interesting that you ask what companies get wrong, and I say, it's interesting, because in many instances they still get it wrong. And what I mean by that, the number one challenge in communication of anyone communicating change, is that the group or the people, doesn't matter whether it's a few people or a large team, who are creating this communication that needs to change, they've been working on it usually for some time, so they're quite aware of this change. And yet when they communicate it, after a communication or two, they say, "Well, I don't understand. Why aren't people getting it? Why haven't they bought in? You know, we communicated it already!" I think what people fail to realize is that change is a process. And those who are communicating, those who are creating the communication, have lived in this change for a period of time already.

Gerry Lewis:

So when they communicate it, they have to have that understanding that people are hearing it for the very first time. Give them some room. Give them some time to reflect, adjust, question, debate, for them to actually understand the change. So the biggest mistake organizations make when it comes to change communication, is that they number one, think that it's already communicated because the memo went out already, when in reality, change communication is an ongoing process. And I think that more and more organizations are getting better at it by what we call, reinforcing the change

SHINE Podcast – October 2020

communication, so they're getting much better. But I still see instances where they are challenged with, I don't understand why they don't get this change?

Sylvie:

Yeah, they seem to be confusing communication with information delivery. You know?

Gerry Lewis:

Exactly.

Sylvie:

Just because they gave a memo, doesn't mean it's done, that it's been communicated, it's just information that's been delivered. Yep.

Gerry Lewis:

That's right. They say, communication is not only the sender giving out the message, it's the receiver understanding and applying that message. That is when communication works. Otherwise, it's just information one way.

Sylvie:

Yeah. Yeah. Okay, let's switch gears. We've been talking about the past and making you feel old, so let's rejuvenate you and look forward. Let's look forward to the new normal, we talked about COVID a little bit. What's your advice to employers and employees about how to communicate better in the future? Near future, far future, looking forward?

Gerry Lewis:

Okay. I'm going to take the context of COVID and the pandemic into account, because I think that this is really the world we live in right now. So when COVID happened, I think every company, every employee, every employer did their best to make things work. And when I say, make things work, it's like, what do we need to do to make sure this project continues? What do we need to do to finish this particular initiative that we set out to do? So I've been calling this past period as sort of like businesses trying to create that, business as usual, and that's what we've been doing in terms of the way we communicate with each other. And as much as it has worked, so if you talk to anyone right now they'll say, "How is remote-working working for you?" And most of the time you hear, "It's working well. It is working." I do see some challenges though, despite the fact that I would agree that it is working well, and I think people are generally as efficient, if not more efficient, by remote working.

Gerry Lewis:

But one of the things we are missing, and I think this comes back down to good communication between employers and employees, is that whole when they're in the office, when employees are in the office, there is that sort of what I call, general, how are things going type of discussion. How was your weekend? Oh, how was that surprise party? How's your dog doing after surgery? There's all that stuff that happens where you get to understand the bigger picture of this individual's life. And I'm not talking about prying, I'm not talking about getting into their details of their life, but you have a better sense of how their life is going generally. I find that we've been so task focused on the way we communicate now with video, on the phone, it's very difficult to see the broader picture of their life. And I think that that

needs to be addressed. I think we need to understand how that person is doing, before it gets to a situation where something begins to crack.

Gerry Lewis:

So I think in terms of communicating better in this environment, is taking the time to do those types of conversations, and you can. You know, "Before we start, how was your weekend everyone?" Or, "Before we end, what's everyone doing on the weekend? How are things going?" Or when you have your one-on-one touch base, "Let's not talk about work for a sec, how are things going? How are you finding this? What do you love best about it?" Good communication is about understanding people. And I think this pandemic has created us to be very task oriented and we haven't had enough time to connect the way we should with people. We just need to bring that back. That's what I would encourage all employers and employees, to have that type of discussion.

Sylvie:

Now Gerry, would you say that these tips and these principles are universal and that they cross cultural boundaries?

Sylvie:

And the reason I ask is obviously because of the launch of your book in Asia. I mean, how did you feel when you found out that a Chinese publisher wanted to purchase the rights to publish Shine in Mandarin, and distribute it in Asia? And how do you think it's going to be received?

Gerry Lewis:

Well, for the longest time, I've known about this a few months back, that they were thinking of doing it. I couldn't believe it. I still didn't believe it for the longest time, and I wasn't until I actually saw the cover of the book and I was provided with a link to a site that actually had reviews. Only then did I realize, wow, this is really happening. So-

Sylvie:

Fantastic.

Gerry Lewis:

Yeah. So to say, how do I feel, I am incredibly honored. I was born in Hong Kong, I'm Chinese, and that added to the fact that it's being distributed in Asia, makes me very proud. To address your question of, do you think this crosses cultural boundaries and ... I totally believe that while having traveled in 70 countries, certainly there are different cultures. There are certain practices, protocols, in which we must adhere to when we're in the country. I also learned that there are certain things that are universal. The universal feeling that I am respected, that my voice counts, that I have a safe environment to be able to share a thought or a feeling. Those are universal, regardless of country or culture. So I do hope, and I do believe that Shine certainly cuts through those barriers because it is about believing in your own voice, and believing that what you present, how you hold yourself in a meeting, how you connect with people, is something that is within your control and you can bring out the best in yourself.

Sylvie:

So, what's next then for Gerry Lewis Inc.? Where will you go from here?

SHINE Podcast – October 2020

Gerry Lewis:

Well, you already told me that I'm old, so I'm trying to think maybe I do ... Maybe I should just retire.

Gerry Lewis:

Well I think, what's next for Gerry Lewis Inc.? Gosh, I think these past six months have taught us that anything can change quickly, that's number one. I think COVID has put the entire world on pause, and we're trying to figure out how to put it back on play. So in terms of what's next for Gerry Lewis Inc., and I talk about this in terms of as a business, I'm responding to you as a business, I think that in the past six months, and you can speak to any entrepreneur, or small company, large companies, huge companies, I'm talking about thinking about even the airline industry, we've all lost revenue. No doubt, we have all lost revenue, big or small. I think the way forward isn't about making that revenue back, I think that that's revenue that's gone. That's the downside of the COVID, there was a lot of plus sides of it in terms of taking time to reflect, and spending more time with those people that matter, but that's money that's lost.

Gerry Lewis:

I think for businesses, for myself especially, going forward, it's about finding a way to become what I call, a solution provider. And what I mean by that is, I think COVID has created a lot of problems for companies and I think that those who will survive COVID will be companies that find solutions that fix these problems. So as I look at my company, 16 years of evolution, we've done some amazing projects, my focus now is to say, as a change communication company, what problems can I solve for other companies? And I think it's with that lens that we will get business back on track, and because I do believe that when you come across as a solution provider, you no longer come across as someone who just wants to make a buck. That's certainly not what we're about, it's about saying, how can I help, how can we help?

Gerry Lewis:

If we all take that perspective, companies will regenerate, they'll innovate, which is a big part coming out of COVID and to be able to get back on track, which is what we're after. And in fact, one of things we're doing, I'll just share with you, don't tell anyone. I'm kidding.

Sylvie:

It's just you and I.

Gerry Lewis:

One of the ways we're providing solutions is, podcasts was huge before COVID. You know, COVID just augmented the time for people to listen to podcasts. So one of the things we're doing as part of being a solution is we're launching a series. We call our company, the formal name is Gerry Lewis Inc., it seems very long. So we shortened it to GLINC, which is just G-L-I-N-C-

Sylvie:

Okay.

Gerry Lewis:

SHINE Podcast – October 2020

... but we call it GLINC. A lot of our clients refer to us as GLINC and I love it, it's a GLINC. And so we're coming up with a new podcast series called, GLINC Outside the Box. And what that podcast series is about is, as part of innovating, as part of learning from people and what they're doing, or how to improve on a situation, or how to find a solution to a problem, we do need to think outside the box right now because the way things were, will not be the way things are going to be, we know that. How do we get there? We need to think out of the box. And what better way to think out of the box than talking to people who are either going through, have gone through, similar things. So I'm really looking forward to launching this podcast. I like the name, GLINC Outside the Box.

Sylvie:

It's great.

Gerry Lewis:

They're like, Think outside the box, right?

Sylvie:

Yep. Yep.

Gerry Lewis:

So that's something that I'm quite excited about, and that will be coming soon. So that's what's next for Gerry Lewis Inc.

Sylvie:

Excellent. Well listen, we'll be watching and listening. Lots of interesting material for future podcasts. Gerry, thank you again for talking with us.

Gerry Lewis:

I really, I enjoyed this. As you know, I love the ability to talk communication. And how to control the situation so you can become a better communicator. I can talk about this forever, and I hope I will. So thank you very much. It's always great seeing you, and let's do this again soon.

Sylvie:

You are listening to the Gerry Lewis: Shine Podcast.