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Wisdom From The (Not So Secret) Order of The Titanides: Vol. 2



Dear Titanides,

Many of you have heard me tell the story of the founding of the Titanides.

You've heard me talk about Brian Kurtz's legendary Titans of Direct Response event in 2014 and how there were no women on the stage.

You've heard me joke about how I then proceeded to hijack every single woman in the audience.

And you've heard me tell how we all gathered for dinner that night at the hotel to share our stories. And you've heard how that evening launched the Titanides.

But you've never heard me tell the story of what happened the next day...

You see, the third day of the event was a special mastermind day. Business owners could pay extra for a VIP hot seat session with direct response titans Brian Kurtz and David Deutsch where they could share a problem or struggle they were having in their business. Then Brian and David and the entire group would offer up possible solutions and feedback.

And because I could not afford to attend the event on my own, Brian and David had very generously offered me the opportunity to trade for my ticket.

They said, "Why don't you lead the hot seat sessions for us?" They asked me to introduce each business owner, summarize the business owner's challenge or problem, and then keep time as they led the group through the brainstorming exercise.

It seemed simple enough. Sort of like Vanna White without the supermodel body and the designer gowns. But Brian forgot to mention one tiny, tiny detail...

You see, there were so many industry legends present at the event, folks like Gary Bencivenga, Dan Kennedy, Ken McCarthy, and Joe Polish, that everyone wanted a

hot seat. Everyone.

And because Brian Kurtz, like me, has a hard time saying no, he had sold 30 hot seat sessions. THIRTY!

When I walked into that conference room the next morning, it was set up in a semi-circle the size of a football field. There had to be at least 50 people, because each VIP member was also allowed to bring a guest.

Then Brian handed me this stack of cards and he said, "So, here's the thing... we've got to get through all of these."

I'm doing the math and I'm like, "Okay. Even if we give each business owner 15 minutes each, there's no time for bathroom breaks. We can't take an hour for lunch. If we lose even five minutes on each one of them, we'll never finish on time."

And here's the thing. Each VIP member had paid a significant amount of money for that hot seat. So there was no skipping anyone or cutting anyone out.

In that moment, I was facing the very real possibility of an epic failure in front of some of the biggest names in the industry. And I had a choice...

Either I could stay small, play it safe, and be polite and differential to all the big guns in the room, men I love and respect who had trained me and mentored me for years...

Or I could take the reins and lead.

I was standing on the edge of a cliff looking down at the rocks with a herd of charging buffalo behind me.

I knew if I played it small... if I was my usual polite, nice Midwestern girl... if I didn't interrupt the "titans", cut them off, and move them on...

Then the last 10 or 15 people who paid for these hot seat sessions would never get them.

I also knew something else, something even more important. I knew I had nothing left to lose.

You see, the reason I could not afford to buy a ticket for the Titans event was because my husband Tom and I had spent everything we had trying to save our oldest son, Jake, from mental illness and addiction.

By May of 2014, I was so beaten down by trying and failing to save our son over and

over again, that I literally had nothing left to lose. My business was barely functioning at that point. All of our savings was gone. I was emotionally, mentally, and financially drained.

I thought, "What's the worst that could happen? I've faced down drug dealers in my living room, survived five suicide attempts with my son, and spent Christmas Day in the psych ward. What's a little public humiliation after all of that?"

So I flung myself off that cliff. And that moment changed everything in my business. EVERYTHING.

I went from barely paying the electric bill to making over half a million dollars a year. I went from never speaking on stages to being invited to speak multiple times a year and hosting my own conferences. I went from struggling to write a sentence because of all the trauma in my life to being awarded the AWAI Copywriter of the Year award.

And it all happened because I decided to stop playing small, stop playing it safe, stop waiting for someone else to give me permission to lead.

In that moment, I consciously... and I will never forget this... I consciously decided to play a bigger game.

That day I became this bigger, more outrageous version of myself.

I thought to myself, "Whether or not you've led companies as big as they have, whether or not you've written packages that generated as much as they have, you have to show up and believe you are their equal and behave accordingly. You're going to have to play up."

And if you want to grow as a person, if you want to build your business, if you want to skyrocket your career, then you too need to PLAY UP.

That day, I owned that room by embracing risk like I NEVER had before – certainly not in front of the "big boys" of copywriting.

Here's how I did it...

1. Let Your Freak Flag Fly.

The first thing I did was to take off my shoes. Because there's no way I could run that microphone back and forth across that huge room in high heels. I'm not a small woman, right? I'm a good 30 pounds overweight at this point.

But I decided I was going to have to run that microphone to save time. So I took off my shoes and ran. Thank God I had my good bra on!

Next, I remember at one point I gave everyone a bathroom break. But the timing was really tight. And these guys weren't back and they were all kind of hanging out in the John together. And I thought only women did that...

So I literally shouted with the microphone into the bathroom, "Gentlemen, back in your seats in one minute. If not, I'm coming in there and zipping it up for you."

Lee Bellinger, Chairman of American Lantern Press, was roaring with laughter. He said to me, "I think we should take up a collection and buy you a whip."

Ladies, if you want to play up, you've got to learn to embrace your own unique outrageous self. Let your freak flag fly.

2. Make Them Work For It.

Now at the event, Brian had all these little tchotchke gifts from Marty Edelston, the founder of Bottom Line. Marty used to give these little gifts to people every time they visited the Boardroom offices. I've got raincoats and pens and flashlights from Marty before he passed away that I treasure to this day.

Brian handed me this big box of stuff and he told me, "Here, I've cleaned out Marty's closet. You can use these little prizes however you want today." And everyone wanted a famous Marty prize. So I made them dance for it.

There was this great dude running the AV equipment who had the most beautiful huge crown of dreadlocks. He would play music at the breaks. Without ever saying a word to each other, the two of us started jamming off of each other. I would throw out a line and the next thing I knew there'd be a song on that would kind of match it.

So I started having dance contests at the break for "Marty prizes" to keep the energy up in the room.

I remember there was this very conservative gentleman who had flown in all the way from someplace in Asia I think. And I made him shake his hips to the Rolling Stones "Start Me Up" to get a special Boardroom pen with a flashlight on the end.

All my life, I've struggled with self-worth. I've given too much of myself away in so many ways. But if you want to play up, you have to stop giving your gifts away for free.

Don't be easy, ladies. Make them work for it.

3. Ask For What You Need.

Now as you know, I'm not the best with technology. So just keeping time that day was stroking me out.

I couldn't get the stupid timer on my phone to work and I was freaking out because the screen kept going dark while I was trying to keep time. Meanwhile, the great Joe Polish is sitting next to me.

Now I know Joe Polish is a legend in our industry. But I'd never met the man before in my life. Right then, though, I didn't care who he was. I threw my cellphone at him and I said, "Joe, fix my screen so that it doesn't keep going dark." He just looked at me and said, "Okay."

If you know Joe, you know he's just such a great guy, right? He just took my phone and fixed the settings and handed it back to me.

Lesson learned. If you want to play up, then don't be afraid to ask for what you need.

4. Demand That Everyone Else Play Up With You Too.

Another time, Joe got up to give a comment to someone, and even though it was great stuff, I was already thinking, "That person only has 12 minutes. We have to move on."

So I literally walked to the middle of the circle where Joe was giving this great content, put my arm around him and said, "Joe, this is a human hook." I gave him a kiss on the cheek and I led him right back to his seat. He didn't even know what hit him.

Every minute of that day, I was intensely aware that my duty was to make sure every single person received their full amount of time. But it was about so much more than just keeping time. I wanted to be sure that each business owner received the same quality of attention, energy, and drive from the group.

I was determined that the person who got the last hot seat at 5 p.m. received the

same value as the person who got the first hot seat at 8 a.m. And the only way that was going to happen was if everyone else played up with me

So I reminded all those industry titans of their obligation, their commitment to the room, to the community, to each other. I told them, "Look, I know you're tired. I know it's been a long day. But I need you to bring everything you've got because it's just the luck of the draw if you went at 8 a.m. instead of 5 p.m. Show up for your fellow members here and be generous."

I was protective and fierce about defending each and every business owner. If the conversation got off track, if we got too negative, if someone went on too long, I used my microphone like a cattle prod to get us back on track.

But I did it with love, with humor, with kindness, because that's how I want to show up in the world.

If you're going to play up, demand that everyone else play up with you!

5. Trust That If You Show Up Big, The Universe Will Deliver The Goods.

That entire day was like the miracle of the loaves and fishes. We actually got through every single hot seat session, provided great content, and we ended the day with 36 seconds to spare. As the timer went off at the end of the final hot seat session, the whole room erupted into spontaneous applause.

We actually had time for lunch. We had time for bathroom breaks. There was not a wasted second in that day. I can honestly say that the people who came at the end of the day got just as much value and feedback as those in the beginning. We kept the energy up. We danced. We shared.

Then, at the very end of the day, Joe Polish stood up and said to Brian Kurtz, "I'd like to end with an exercise I use in my group. It's called 'a give, an ask and a gratitude'." Those of you who were at the Titanides event or AWAI this year know I love to do this exercise too and that I learned it from Joe.

First, you share a resource that can benefit the whole group. Second, you can ask for something you need from the group. Maybe it's a recommendation, a suggestion, an introduction to someone. Finally, you express gratitude for something or someone in the group.

We went all the way around the room and people shared these amazing experiences

they'd had that day and over the whole course of the three-day event. Then, when we were about halfway around the circle, this impeccably well-dressed Frenchman known as "The French Marketer", took the microphone.

He turned to Brian and he said in this great French accent, "You know, I walked in here this morning and I'm thinking... Really, Brian? This many people? There is no way we can do this. Right away, I thought I should leave early for the airport so I can work and get some things done before I must fly home. Because this is ridiculous. This will never happen."

"And then," he said, pointing to me, "This crazy woman, she led us through this amazing day. We got through everybody. She did it. I cannot believe she did it. I'm grateful for her."

Everyone cheered and Lee Bellinger started shouting again that everyone should take up a collection for a whip for me. And I was laughing so hard my sides hurt.

Remember, you are so much bigger than you imagine.

That's when I actually got the lesson. That's when I finally understood that on the other side of fear, on the other side of "nothing left to lose" is something so big you cannot even imagine it.

I have always loved this quote by Marianne Williamson: "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be?"

That day in May of 2014, I decided to let my own brilliant, gorgeous, talented self out of the darkness. I decided to behave as if I was a peer with the giants. I may have been one before, but in my mind, I was not.

But when I played up, when I jumped off that cliff and owned my potential greatness, I became a peer with them in truth. That is what freedom from fear feels like to me.

I am incredibly grateful to Brian Kurtz and David Deutsch for pushing me off that cliff. I'm grateful for every single one of those 30 hot seat participants because they taught me how much bigger I could become. I'm grateful that I made the choice to play up, to go big, instead of staying small and safe.

Today I have more than enough money to pay the electric bill plus college tuition for my son who is in recovery and back in school. I'm teaching and training and leading copy teams. I'm writing for some of the top direct response companies in the

business. I'm letting my freak flag fly, probably more than I should at times... I'm playing up.

And I want YOU to PLAY UP too!

In the Titanides, we are all collectively playing up. We are all challenging each other and pushing each other beyond our boundaries. We are all forcing each other to become bigger than we ever imagined. We are all jumping off that cliff together.

You are pushing me to become bigger too. Because of you, the Titanides is growing and expanding. We are hosting events, meet-ups and retreats. We're building websites and launching newsletters and making videos. We're writing books and sharing fast writes and building a marketplace.

But I cannot do this alone. That's why I am asking you to join with me and to play up by becoming a sustaining member here. [Learn More](#)

Now I realize some of you may be where I was in 2014 right before that Titans event. You may not be able to afford to contribute right now. You may not be able to become a sustaining member at this point in your career. I have been there. And I understand.

That's why we created the one dollar, "pay it forward" membership. So that those of us on the other side can lend a helping hand just like Brian and David helped me. All you have to do is throw a dollar in the pot so that we know you really want to be here and that this community matters to you.

Donate a dollar and you will still get all of the amazing Titanides resources. We have a newsletter now. We have the vlog. We have the marketplace set up. The website is amazing. When you join, you get a log in and a password so you can see everything that's happening. Plus all our videos are saved there, so you can go back and see any from the beginning.

Now, if you are on the other side of want and you are experiencing generosity in your life, please become a senior sustaining member at \$49 per month. [Help us](#) build a bigger website, host more events, launch our book, lead our own conference again this year (which I would dearly love to do).

And if you're feeling particularly generous, throw in an extra donation and help us carry another woman forward this year.

If you were at the Titanides Gala and you've already joined, then please know how humbled and grateful I am for your support. Thank you. I'll continue to pay it forward

every day in every way I know how.

All of us are building this community together, and it can be as big as we possibly want. Right now, the Titanides is standing on the edge of that cliff looking at the vastness before us. I am saying, "Take your shoes off. Put on your good bra. Grab the microphone. Get on stage. Let's change the world, ladies!"

I hope you'll join with me. Again, to become a sustaining member [Click Here](#). Put in a dollar, \$49, or even \$500 in the pot. Let's ALL play a bigger game in 2019.

I cannot even imagine the remarkable abundance that's on the other side of this moment.

Love,
Marcella

P.S. It was fellow Titanides and body whisperer, Erin Burch, who physically held me together that day. She sat next to me, helped me organize the cards, brought me food, put her hand on my shoulder and grounded me when I needed it.

The next day when I woke up and I couldn't walk after having run non-stop for 8 hours on that concrete conference room floor, I called her and begged her to help me. She showed up at my hotel door with her table and worked on me for over an hour until I could walk again.

P.P.S. And it was fellow Titanide and soon-to-be lawyer, Leah Carson, who helped me organize all those hot seats by theme so we could move faster and group like-minded problems. Leah also coordinated the first Titanides dinner with the hotel and took care of all the details for us.

Never forget, we all leap and rise together.

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If you were not at the event this year and you would like more information about becoming a Sustaining Member, again, please contact us at support@titanides.com and let us know the best way to reach you.

