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CHAPTER 1

THE ROOT CHAKRA OF PR

Effective communication is 20 percent
what you know and 80 percent how
you feel about what you know.

— Jim Rohn, American businessman

Have you ever wondered why the words *public relations* and *marketing* have acquired such a harsh reputation? Why are people, especially those in creative fields, turned off by the mere mention of these words? Why are business owners so apprehensive to embark on a promotional campaign that could bring them the abundance and recognition they are yearning for?

I will attempt to address these questions, and provide answers and solutions—not only because of my own personal interest in this magical, mysterious process, but because I believe there are conscious and sensible ways to use public relations and marketing to grow our businesses, particularly when we approach them from a spiritual or holistic mindset.

Before I begin, however, I'd like to clarify the meaning of a few words and their relationship to this book. When the word *spiritual* is

used, I do not mean “religious” or religion in any way. *Spiritual*, in the context of this book, has to do with an internal awareness, a sacred connection to oneself and one’s work, a bond with the soul and the spirit that includes our relationship to ourselves and to the world. In the truest sense, spirituality is not “for” anything—not for marketing success, prosperity, good health, or fulfilling relationships. It is its own reward, as a consequence of connecting with *source*, wherever that source, that place of truth, exists within us. It also includes a conscious awareness, our moral compass regarding the products and services we offer—a compass without which the very concept of “spiritual marketing” becomes an oxymoron. Every contribution, every decision we make is so integrally connected with “the market”—consumption, lifestyle, manufacturing, buying, selling—that it’s naturally connected with marketing and PR.

This spiritual dimension of our outreach requires that we look not only at *how* we are promoting our business, but *what* we are promoting. This is where we probe our souls, question our intentions, explore the moral fiber in our approach toward our clients, the planet, and ourselves.

When I speak of *holistic marketing*, I’m talking about an integrated, multidimensional approach that doesn’t focus solely on the bottom line, but rather operates by synthesizing the whole picture. The key word here is *wholeness*. The wholeness of our intention, our message, our story, how we share our story, how other people share our story, and their feelings toward it. The wholeness of the person administering the business and the wholeness of what we offer those we serve will define our success.

Spiritual marketing is a *science* in the sense that it provides a rational understanding of an emerging worldview: the reuniting of science and spirituality. Science is a system of acquiring and organizing knowledge that reveals information about reality. In the same

way, this book attempts to share reliable, concrete predictions about the science of spiritual marketing, gained through my research.

So, let us begin.

TOO MUCH NOISE

From the moment we are born and alert enough to perceive information on any level, we are inundated with advertisements that promote some product or service. Our senses are flooded by blaring hype, propaganda, political spin, and advertising that scream at us from the radio, TV, newspapers, billboards, telemarketers—and now from the Internet.

Advertisements are showing up in elevators and at the gas pump. They jingle and jangle before us on TV and in grocery-store checkout lanes. They have even made an appearance in restroom stalls and over public urinals. After trying countless ways to tune out the noise, customarily without victory, our brains have become so saturated, so numb, that the thought of using any of these venues to promote ourselves has become, to say the least, unattractive.

It's a shame to think we must turn away from the channels of communication that bring us pleasure in our leisure and benefit to our work in order to escape this overkill. This problem has been, in fact, the catalyst for me to initiate my search for a holistic/spiritual approach. By delving into the base *chakra*, the root cause and true nature, of PR itself, perhaps we can understand how this dilemma came to be, and how we can move out of it.

IN THE BEGINNING . . . THERE WAS THE WORD

The “word of mouth.” The undeniable outpouring of expression that stimulates us to take notice, and buy into a myriad of products or services. This natural, spontaneous “technique” of *word of mouth* began, I suspect, as early as the days of the Neanderthal—possibly even

before. I can only imagine that when the first cave person developed a stone tool that could shape hand axes or scrape deerskins in half the time, he or she ran around gesticulating how the new instrument could do the job better, faster, easier. It didn't take long for the invention to spread to other cave dwellers. Soon, cave dwellers everywhere were developing similar tools of their own.

America is, after all, the land of word of mouth. Word of mouth brought our forebears to this new world. Word of mouth populated the first sparse settlements on the eastern shore, and then drew everyone westward. Word of mouth settled the frontier. In the late nineteenth century, as industries and cities grew, word spread to the farms and rural towns that jobs were available and that fortunes could be made by moving to the big cities. As a result, thousands of families moved away from their country settings hoping to improve their families' future. There were no TV or radio announcements made to inform these farmers about this opportunity. Still, the news spread.

Historically, word of mouth was, and still is, a powerful way to disseminate information. It is that face-to-face relationship with someone you know that establishes authenticity and credibility. Of course, if the object of the buzz is not authentic or doesn't live up to its expectation, the buzz will quickly die and bad press will take its place.

I am not proposing that word of mouth is the only way to create an outreach, or that advertising through traditional media can't be effective. I am purely sharing some thoughts about the word-of-mouth phenomenon. Both *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell and *The Anatomy of Buzz* by Emanuel Rosen are books that extrapolate the word-of-mouth trend in greater detail and are, without question, books I highly recommend you add to your marketing library. We'll take a more detailed look at how to enhance our use of "word of mouth" in Chapter 10, Building Bridges.

So, how did we move from this simple, uncomplicated form of marketing to the media explosion and misuse we currently endure?

MEDIA PROPAGANDA

It is clear that a quantum shift, a watershed of demarcation, took place in how the media was used—manipulated, if you will—in 1924 during the administration of President Coolidge.

During this era, radios and automobiles emerged as the top-selling consumer products. For the first time, advertisers were able to mass-market their products, and the public had the resources to purchase them.

The widespread prosperity that followed World War I had catapulted the nation into a mass consumer economy, and President Coolidge set out to capitalize on the innovations. After an arduous search, he found and hired just the man to help him accomplish his new agenda: Edward Bernays, regarded as the founder of the field of public relations.

It is interesting to note that Bernays was the nephew of Sigmund Freud (double indemnity, as it were: his mother was Freud's sister; his father was Freud's wife's brother). We can only imagine the psychological edge he must have had. Bernays would come to orchestrate elaborate advertising and consumer spectacles for his corporate clients: the Dodge Brothers, Procter & Gamble, the American Tobacco Company, the General Electric Corporation, and many more.¹

For instance, while working for the American Tobacco Company, Bernays mastered the link between corporate sales campaigns and popular social causes. He did this by persuading prominent women in New York City to hold up Lucky Strike cigarettes at a public event as symbolic "torches of freedom." Another clever global media event Bernays originated was the "Light's Golden Jubilee," a worldwide celebration commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of

the electric light bulb, sponsored (behind-the-scenes) by the General Electric Corporation.

Needless to say, his corporate sponsors thought Bernays was the best thing to come along since sliced bread. Word spread quickly and, as a result, Bernays became the first public-relations consultant to work on behalf of a United States president when he was hired to improve Coolidge's image for the 1924 presidential election.²

Out of concern that he was using advertising techniques to aid his political candidate, Bernays was accused of crossing the line between advertising and propaganda—in other words, selling the politician to voters as if Coolidge were toothpaste. Bernays defended his position and insisted that truth seeking and advertising need not be incompatible; he believed that the mass promotion of ideas was necessary to change society in beneficial directions.

And thus began the merchandising of politics in a whole new way.

THE MARKETING OF GOODS AND SERVICES

In the 1950s, television gained national popularity. Consumers could now *see* the products that they had previously only heard about. Corporations that could afford to advertise, did, and for the most part monopolized the commercial airwaves. Through aggressive and subliminal messages, advertisers directed millions of people toward the purchase of goods and services that, in the end, may not have led to their advancement or betterment.

Commercial advertising promoted cigarettes as a “cool” thing to do on a summer day; only later did we discover the deadly effects of nicotine and inhaled carcinogens. Milk manufacturers are still promoting dairy products as the best source of calcium for our bones, yet naturopathic and allopathic doctors alike are finding that dairy products do not necessarily do the body good and can trigger severe