

Food for Thought

Form and Function: Educate, Empower and Inspire Your Spa for WHAT's NEXT!

PART ONE IN A THREE PART SERIES

by Colleen Dunn Smith

There are three things that I know for certain...

1. **Education** is vital for improvement. For centuries, people have traditionally come to spas to feel better physically and mentally. They have come to spas as an **educational center**, to learn about the spa lifestyle and the four components to total well being: healthy nutrition, regular physical exercise, care of the face and body (naturally, with spa products), and psychological well being. People seek to feel connected by a sense of community and spa can give that to them as well.
2. **Empowerment** “helps people master the core elements of human nature that determine our entire ‘life experience’ as well as the fundamental principles behind all human achievement, prosperity and well being.” ~ Mark Fournier, Emmy award winning author of *A Course of Action and Self Help Me!*
3. **We seek inspiration** through tough times. Financially speaking, these are tough times for individuals and businesses alike. No two ways around it, no sugar coating it. Many seek long or short term solutions, in or out-of-the-box. People want and need to feel better about themselves, their lives and the choices they have before them; they want to be **inspired** to make a difference for themselves and for others.

“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” It confers the idea that there is ‘magic in the mix’ and that some things have more meaning or power when combined. My love for body-and-soul nourishing food finds its expression with this in contemporary culinary arts. This magic also applies when philosophical principles (Form) meet physical practicality (Function). In this three part series I will show you how the above items represented through Education, Empowerment and Inspiration *could* stand on their own, each as fulfilling entrées. Yet ultimately, once you taste the new blend, it will be difficult for you to think of them as separate in the future.

Empowerment principles teach us that life is about choices, and the choices I see on most spa menus today haven’t changed or evolved much in the last 5 - 10 years. Most fall into one of the three basic categories of Body Treatment, Facial or Hydrotherapy. Treatments play a vital role in our health and well being...but as an industry we’ve not ventured much beyond the standards. Now it is time for us to imbue our spa menus with treatments tinged with meditational messages centering on self discovery, peace and serenity, and offer classes in personal empowerment. Technology gives us the advantage of continuing the relationship and personal touch established with phone conferences, webinars, and on- and offsite seminars.

Spas are ripe to be the cornerstone or hub of this new development toward human understanding of how we become self actualized and how we can change the world, one empowered person at a time.

I am asking you to **co-create with me** the next generation of spa facilities, treatments, and offerings that will then create the next generation of spa-goers: Self actualized, empowered citizens of the world that believe challenges such as world peace, global education and ending hunger are the daily fare on which empowered people feed.

As an industry, we’ve already brought about a change in society and spas continue to become more and more entrenched as a lifestyle choice for many. Embracing empowerment ideals will take us to the next evolutionary level.

*Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. ~
Chinese proverb*

Challenge, whether economic or personal, dredges up our deepest desire to know what we are made of, and we want to know that our core values still sing strong within us. We begin to reexamine what makes us tick. It is the time when cultural change can occur.

In American culture, the pursuit of ‘happiness’ holds reign as an inalienable right, as illustrated in one of our countries most celebrated and essential documents, the Declaration of Independence. I think it is time we pursue what we can do to enhance spa’s offerings in this area, and understanding what makes us happy is key to knowing what to offer.

Spas as Educational Centers

In the hundreds of classes and seminars I have taught over the last 14 years around the globe, there is one axiom that I stressed over and over again: spas are educational centers. For centuries, people have traditionally come to spas to learn about the spa lifestyle and the four components to total wellbeing: healthy nutrition, regular physical exercise, care of the face and body (naturally, with spa products), and psychological well being.

I would say that spas have the Body component pretty well covered. The Body + Mind + Spirit triad is a universal spa industry standard as to how we view ourselves as an integrated being. However, as an educational center, what are we offering our guests with the psychological or Spirit component in mind? It's time we pay more attention to the other two-thirds of the total well being pie to see where we stand.

How can Empowerment help us?

It "helps people master the core elements of human nature that determine our entire 'life experience' as well as the fundamental principles behind all human achievement, prosperity and well being." ~ Mark Fournier, Emmy award winning author of A Course of Action and Self Help Me!

It addresses all areas of our life (Body-MIND-Spirit) because it addresses the core of who we are: our perceived reality (reality as seen through our own filters) and the habits or programs that power our day to day existence.

THOUGHTS ⇔ FEELINGS ⇔ ACTIONS ⇔ RESULTS

Understanding this mechanism, we use Empowerment principles to help us get more of what we want out of life: more control over our life and a greater sense of freedom and fulfillment. Ultimately, we are responsible for everything that happens in our life...well, for how we feel about it, anyway. But here's the kicker...We make choices according to those feelings, and subsequently take action, and as a consequence, the creation of our character, and hence our destiny is in the offing and most of us are obliviously that such monumental doings are afoot.

Why can't they do it on their own? It is not for lack of available information that we don't see truck loads of empowered people walking around affecting the world around us for the greater good. So why don't we see more people walking about leading happy, fulfilled and effective lives? Because clearly, as Mr. Fournier states, "Knowledge isn't Power: It is the consistent application of knowledge..." that creates powerful living or empowered lives. What I'm saying here is we can't do it alone. No man is an island. We need help – a support system – and that's where the spa comes in as the cornerstone or rock on which people can rely.

The bottom line (I bet you thought I'd never get here) is this: if you want to BE empowered, you must live according to empowering principles, and you won't consistently live those principles (such as acting with integrity, honor, compassion and effectiveness or always looking for what is great in life), unless they are converted into habits.

Why am I talking to you about this now? Because people are looking for *what's next* from us. They get and understand the benefits of massages and facials; they understand the need to relax, rejuvenate and renew in this stress-inducing, cyber-speed world of technology and competition in which we live. In the last 14 years that I've been involved with the spa industry, I have seen basic consumer knowledge about spa go from "Spa? You mean a Jacuzzi?" to "I can't make it on Wednesday...I'm booked at the spa for a massage after my workout." Spas have come into their own; it is no longer a question of if they will stay, the question on everyone's newly exfoliated lips is WHAT'S NEXT? Now that consumer's have tried what's been on the menu for the last few years, savvy spa-goers are looking for a new offering...and I believe self actualization is the entrée they will order. Even within our industry, people are ready for a change or evolution of sorts...I've overheard one experienced, knowledgeable spa writer reveal that if she has to write about "one more lavender or hot stone massage, I'll shoot myself!"

From 2008 ISPA Global Consumer Study

38% of the total sample surveyed within the United States said that complimentary products or bonus services would motivate them to visit a spa and only 12% said an advertised sale would motivate them to visit. When preparing a local media advertisement, a spa would likely take this information and promote a special that offers a bonus service (value-added) instead of using "sale" within the advertisement.

If we offer simple upgrades to current services as an introduction to this new ideal, what would more valuable than feeling good physically, relaxed and pampered? Feeling good, healthy, relaxed, pampered and POWERFUL...now that's added value! **If you knew you would leave a treatment feeling more mentally powerful than when you went in, wouldn't you want to try it?** If you knew you would feel better about your life or relationships than before you went in, wouldn't you want to at least try it? Confidence in your choices, happier with your relationships, understanding what it is that you really want out of life...these are truly valuable additions that every client would look favorably upon as a "value added" to any treatment...or what if they were offered as "treatments" on their own?

What if we could devise a way to offer group or individual classes so that clients would walk away feeling more in charge of their life than when they came in? Wouldn't that be great? **Education – Empowerment – Inspiration:** Wouldn't those be the best things we could ultimately offer the spa guest? And these treatments or classes could be enjoyed a la carte or in a series...just like people sign up for a series of glycolic facials, they would sign up for a series of empowerment treatments. Each building on the previous, just like a pyramid is built, brick by brick, layer by layer, from solid foundation to the highest point, or apex of achievement...until an enduring edifice of substance and quality appears...and empowered life in the making!