

STORY | LEADERSHIP

Donna Johnson – How You Do Anything is How You Do Everything

“I just love the choices I have and the freedom.”

from **The Greatest Networkers in the World** by John Milton Fogg

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Donna Johnson grew up in Appleton, Wisconsin. Her dad ran a printing press and a paper mill. He left the family when Donna was 13, moved to California, opened up print shops there and became a millionaire. He never sent any money back to Donna’s mother.

Donna’s father was a misogynist (a man who hates women). He thought her brothers were “awesome,” but believed Donna and her mother were not good people and he treated them both badly. Donna learned a lot about how not to act or behave as a parent from that. She watched her mother have a nervous breakdown, because she had no skills to support the family. They were forced to go on welfare. Donna and her brothers started working as preteens to bring in money. Donna remembers thinking to herself...

“I never, ever want to be in a position where I’m so helpless.”

Growing up, Donna could’ve gone either way: She could’ve been a really bad girl and proven her father right, or she could have become an overachiever to prove him wrong. Donna chose the achiever.

She poured herself into her goals as a competitive swimmer. She would be up at five going to the Y to work out. “In the middle of January, it’s pretty darn cold in Appleton, Wisconsin,” she remembers. By the time she was 18 she competed and was ranked on a national level for two years. Donna didn’t go on to college. She became a swimming coach instead.

She was only 19 when one of her friends invited her to a makeup party. Donna watched the woman demonstrating the cosmetics and she thought, "Wow, what a great way to supplement my income. I could be coaching and doing this to make some money. Maybe buy some clothes. Maybe travel."

It just looked like a fun way to earn extra income to Donna: Go out, have these parties and meet people. All she knew about the business then was that there was a commission you could earn from selling the products. The more she got into the business the more she realized that you could generate significant residual income by building a team and the more excited she became.

Donna was married at 20 and she began her family right away. First was Nathaniel (now 31 years old), then Nicole (now 29), and Joe (27). Three more reasons she had a passion to succeed in her business. (Later she would add the twins Alex and Livi who are now 17 for a total of five great reasons.)

Donna was really eager to achieve the top position in the company and earn a car. One night, a corporate leader was doing a training session on goal-setting and she wanted everybody to share their goals for the year. She knew about Donna's goal and handed her the microphone first. Donna was seven months pregnant (with Joe). She stood up and said, *"I'm so excited. I am going to qualify for district director."*

Donna was just oozing enthusiasm about achieving that position and all that was happening in her life and business. But as the microphone went around the room, one by one the other women said, "Well, my family is number one. They're what's most important. I'm not going for that position. I'm happy where I am, because my children come first."

The gist of it was that Donna was not a good mom, because she wasn't putting her family first.

Donna felt like someone stuck a knife in her. "What?" She thought. "I'm doing this business *because* my family is the most important thing," "My family is number one to me."

“No, I’m not going to listen to any that,” she told herself. “I’m going forward *for* my children. I’m going to press on and reach this position—and more, much more!”

Donna never looked back. She remembers that as a defining moment. She could’ve easily succumbed to the peer pressure. But she made the choice to take action, knowing in her heart and her gut that she was doing the right thing.

Ever the achiever, Donna did very well in that company. By her early 20’s, she already reached the very top position. Then, she became a student of the profession. She started learning about all the Network Marketing opportunities that were out there. She was 29 years old when, based on her research, she changed companies. Donna has now been with her company for 20 years. She is #1 income earner averaging \$2 million a year.

“What I always did right was connecting with people,” Donna says. “I love building relationships and knowing that something positive might come of it. Something might not, but that’s my job, to make friends regardless of the outcome.”

Donna emphasizes the importance of being authentic— connecting with people in a way that they know you, like you and trust you. Letting them know you’re not perfect and you’re comfortable sharing your struggles as well as your successes. “You know,” she says. “I’ve been there. I know how you feel. I felt that way too, and here’s what I found helped me.” So that people feel...”

“Hey, you did it, I can do it too.”

One of Donna’s keys to success is that she’s been very, very diligent about her calendar and daily activities— something that has not changed over the 30 years that she’s been in the profession.

“I always share with people, ‘If you handed someone your calendar, would there be evidence that you’re committed and that you’re actually in this business? Or are you working your business in your head? Are you doing it as a hobby when you really want to be making an income? Hobbies cost money. Businesses make money.’”

Donna believes you have to do your due diligence so that you truly understand what it is you’re really doing, the opportunity that you have,

because, “That’s when this business is going to really get in your blood and in your heart.”

“When you really believe in what you’re doing,” she says, “you’re going to actually do the activity. And when somebody tries to, you know, steal your dream or make fun of you or whatever; you’re going to be able to overcome that. You’ve got to do the due.” And...

“You have got to get in front of people and tell them the story about your business.”

“I believe in leading with the opportunity along with your product,” Donna says. “Of course, your product is a big piece of that opportunity, because you get to market a great product as *part* of the opportunity. You’ve got to get in front of people. Lots of people. This truly is a numbers game. If you want to go quickly up the ranks in your company, you’ve got to get in front of more people to tell the story.”

“And not everybody is going to be interested,” Donna admits, “but you’re going to make friends, you’re going to find out if they know someone that is looking to diversify their income, and you’re going to be able to offer them something else if they’re not interested in the business. Maybe they want to be a preferred customer. Maybe they want to use the product. Maybe they want to host a get-together for you and help expose other people to what you’re doing. “

The most important thing Donna wants everyone to know— whether you are entry level consultant/distributor in the early ranks of your business, or you’ve made it to the top— is that you need to get out there and make friends and tell the story and schedule appointments— whether in a group, one-on-one, or a combination of both, or networking, or through social media.

“A lot of people start this business alongside their primary job.” she says. “You can do that. You’re going to be real busy, but you’re also changing your life and you’re going to give yourself options so that you can raise your income to the level of your job.”

And then Donna says you make choices: “Maybe you want to walk away from that job. Maybe you want to lower your hours. No matter what

choice you make,” she advises, “you have to be committed to your goals and see them through. You are going to have rejection. You are going to have doubts. You have to discipline yourself to work through them.”

Donna says most people definitely overestimate what they can accomplish in their first year and underestimate what they can make in five years. She personally knows a number of people that, if they would have simply stayed involved would be millionaires today. The only way you can fail in this business, she says, is quit.

Donna Johnson has made a fortune in Network Marketing. She never has to work another day in her life.

So, why is she still doing it?

“It’s great to get there,” she says, “but when you lead people there with you, the satisfaction of that, knowing that you’ve made such a difference. Wow!”

“I mean, it’s like watching your kids graduate,” she said. “You know, when you graduated it was like, okay, ho hum. But when your kids graduate, you’re in the audience sobbing, right? That’s how it is with this business.”

One of Donna’s neighbors, Dianne, decided to do the business. Her husband Dave was not real thrilled. He said, “She just wants you to be successful, because she’ll make more money.” He did not like Donna or the business at all.

Dave got promoted and moved the family to Portland, Oregon. He eventually softened and told Dianne, “Okay, honey, if you’re going to do this, then *really do it*. Tuesday and Thursday night, go out, do your business, I’ll be home with the boys.”

Today Dianne is at the very top of the company and doing very, very well. One day last year, Dave called Donna and he literally had her in tears. He said, “You know, I can’t begin to thank you for the difference you’ve made in our family. My bride is so amazing. To see the growth that she’s had, and the financial contribution she’s made, and the pressure that has taken off of me. We won the trip, too.” (It was to Italy and Greece.) It...

I'm... We're going, and it's my 50th birthday, and I have a sister that lives in Rome and a sister that lives in Switzerland."

"Because of you, we're going to be able to celebrate my birthday together. They're flying down; we're going to see each other for the first time in years."

"Thank you Donna. Thank you for sharing this. And thank you for never giving up on my wife and believing in her even when I didn't believe in this, and I was trying to protect her from you and I thought you were the 'evil woman.' I'm so, so grateful, I can never thank you enough."

“Those are the kind of phone calls that rock my world,” Donna says.

Donna loves the person she's become and continues becoming. She's a student, learning and getting better every day. "One of the greatest gifts you can give your children is the gift of having *them watch you* build a business from home," Donna says, "manage your expectations and disappointments, setting goals, and connecting with people."

"I love the lifestyle of being able to live my day and week and month the way I choose," she says. "I choose my travel schedule. I don't do alarm clocks very well, so I get up when I'm done sleeping. I just love the choices I have and the freedom."

"And what I love most," she says, "is when I'm mentoring someone, an up-and-coming leader, I tell them that I'm mentoring them to become one of *my* mentors. Every single person on your team brings something different to the party, like the different parts of the body have different functions. I mentor people to be my mentors and I think that's why I've got such an amazing team."

"I mean, they're rock stars. I'm blown away. It just brings tears to my eyes when I look at our convention arena and most of the people are from my team. It's humbling, and then you see the leaders that speak on stage and... I'm like a proud mama."

From [***The Greatest Networkers in the World***](#)



John Milton Fogg is an author, editor, speaker and coach. His books and audios have sold over three million copies worldwide.

He is the founder and former Editor-in-Chief of the highly regarded publication Upline®... was a Contributing Editor to SUCCESS magazine... the founder and former Editor-in-Chief of Network Marketing Lifestyles magazine... founding editor of Networking Times... the founder of GreatestNetworker .com... co-founder of TheNetworkMarketing Magazine.com and is the creative force behind TransformingMLM.com. You can connect with his writings on a regular basis at TheFoggBlog.com and learn more about what he is up to by going to <http://JohnMiltonFogg.com>

John is the author of the best-selling industry classic *The Greatest Networker in the World*, which has been read by more than two and a-half million people around the world and he has edited and contributed to far too many books to be mentioned here.

He has spoken around the globe, through out Canada and the United States, in Australia, China, Costa Rica, Crete, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, Trinidad and the Ukraine.

John is married to Jekaterina (Katyusha), has a daughter Rachel 28, son Johnny 23, daughter Eleonora Milena (Ele) who's 7 and Anais Polina (his 'last child') was born in March, 2006.