

# The “Kei” to a Thriving Business

## Dallas Travers, CEC

*Featured in the USA Books 2008 award winning anthology, Conscious Entrepreneurs*

After more than six years as the president of my own company, I’ve learned a lot about what it takes to create a thriving business. I’ve learned how to manage budgets, train personnel, sell effectively, and invest wisely. The most valuable lesson I’ve learned has nothing to do with the numbers, the staff, or the nuts and bolts of business activity. Instead, it simply involves the power of perspective.

In Chinese, the word crisis is composed of two characters. One character (Wei) represents danger and the other (Kei) represents opportunity. A crisis is a turning point or a pivotal moment in time. Entrepreneurs face these turning points daily, especially during the start-up phases of the company. When operating your business, do you choose danger or do you choose opportunity?

My good friend Sean loves to play poker. He participates in tournaments regularly and loves studying the game as well as its players, many of whom play professionally. Sean believes that there are two kinds of poker players: the ones who play to win and the ones who play to not lose. Those who play to win, focus more on opportunity. They are committed to learning, improving, and winning big. They understand that part of winning big means losing at times. They even treat their losses as learning opportunities that will translate into future wins. The poker players, who play to not lose, seem to be so afraid they will run out of chips that their primary focus becomes about avoiding zero. Distracted by their fear of losing, these players rarely win in the end. When your only goal is hanging on to one chip, you’ll most likely end up with just one chip.

Winning poker players trust their instincts, design a strategy, embrace bold decisions, and ultimately take home the big bucks because of it. The same is possible in business when you maintain a Kei perspective.

Focusing on opportunity offers endless possibility. By embracing a crisis as an opportunity, you can focus on growth, experience and forward motion. Operating from this place, you can clearly distinguish fact from fiction.

Conversely, focusing on danger or fear, your primary concern becomes about survival - the danger controls you. Fear motivates you to avoid harm and to simply get by. When operating from a danger-consciousness, your options are limited to those alternatives connected to the fear itself, which in turn only create more fear. Your actions become motivated by emotions or ideas about what might happen rather than what is actually true. This leaves you stuck in a state of contemplation or avoidance, preventing you from taking positive action.

Author and philosopher, Florence Scovel Shinn once wrote, “Nothing but fear and doubt stands between a man and his highest ideals and every desire of his

heart. When a man can wish without worrying every desire will be instantly fulfilled. We must substitute faith for fear, for fear is only inverted faith; it is faith in evil instead of good.”

My business turned around overnight when I moved away from fear and into faith. I started my own company at the ripe-old-age of 24. I secured a business loan, created a business plan and set up shop over a period of about 30 days. For the first two years in business, fear was calling all of the shots. My fear of failure paralyzed me. Afraid of not having enough money, I worried everyday about money. I avoided investing in the business in order to hang on to what little money I had. Afraid of being judged or rejected, I avoided advertising and spreading the word about the service I provided. Afraid of overcharging, I offered services at a significantly lower rate or even for free. By charging these low rates, I was essentially telling my clients that I did not value my own business and they in turn did not value the service I provided.

My fear of failure paralyzed me and prevented me from taking any action. When I focused on failure, rejection, or lack of resources, all of my decisions originated from those fearful places. As a result, my business didn't grow, I couldn't pay the rent, and I was miserable.

I continued to struggle and worry, but eventually grew tired of being afraid. I realized that if my business was going to survive, I had to change my perspective. With nothing to lose, I decided to try an experiment. For thirty days, I ignored my problems and fears and only focused on positive possibilities. I decided to switch from fear to faith (which I later came to understand to be choosing a Kei rather than a Wei perspective). I rejected all fear-based thoughts and operated my current business as though it already was successful, thriving, and expanding every day. I took risks. I played to win.

Immediately, new and exciting opportunities presented themselves. I said yes to every opportunity. Then I took action, with the faith that my business would benefit, and it did. I doubled my client base and doubled my income in less than thirty days. My company has grown more than I ever expected since I replaced fear with faith and embraced a Kei perspective. Now, I confidently take risks, commit to learning every day, and enjoy helping my clients achieve their greatest goals. With a Kei perspective, I no longer allow a fear of failure to overshadow my potential and the possibilities for my business.

I eliminated my fears by focusing on my love for my clients, my passion for the service I provided, and my faith in the opportunities ahead of me. These values meant more to me than any perceived fears I felt, and by focusing on these values, the Wei seemed no longer an option.

### **Making the shift**

Shifting from a fear-based Wei perspective to a passionate Kei perspective involves three steps.

**Step One:** Identify what values or commitments matter most to you and to your business. What motivates you? How would you like your work to impact your world and the world around you?

You may value education or service to others. You may value money, freedom, adventure, philanthropy, or personal growth. As an entrepreneur, your commitments might include success or achievement, contributing to your community, or excelling in the marketplace. It's important to identify what matters most to you and your business so that you can hold those values in mind when making crucial decisions.

**Step Two:** Set your fears aside. They may feel very real, but focusing on them does not serve your business. Focus on your values and commitments, and identify what you value most. What is possible? What opportunities do your commitments present? Brainstorm with others as often as you can and see what new opportunities arise.

If you value freedom and flexibility most, you may realize that the best way to expand your business is to align yourself with other synergistic businesses, so that you can rely on others to spread the word about what you do. If you value education and personal growth, perhaps you will see how investing in continued education will allow you to take your business to the next level.

**Step Three:** Focus only on these opportunities. Write them down and read them daily. What action can you take to step into a Kei perspective? Do not worry about developing the perfect plan. Just take consistent action and trust in your values.

By setting your fears aside, identifying your core values, and taking consistent action, you cannot lose with a Kei perspective. You will notice that by utilizing your values and commitments to seize opportunities, fears immediately dissipate. Replace your fears with your passions and watch the opportunities unfold.

---

*Dallas Travers is the president and founder of Sage Creative Inc., an innovative consulting company for actors, artists and other creative professionals. A certified Creative Career Coach, Dallas infuses practical knowledge with inspired ideas that motivate entrepreneurs to blaze bold paths and positively impact the lives of others.*