



## **A Personal Note from Single Steps Strategies Founder Mary Grace Musuneggi**

### **I AM A PINK PRINCESS TELEPHONE**

When I was 16 years old, all I wanted for my birthday was a Pink Princess Telephone. I was reminded of that the other day when my 10 year old niece asked for a cell phone for her birthday. Back in “my day” the Princess Telephone was the height of electronics. Today it is a relic of a time past. But I paused to think of how much different communication was back then, before we had the menagerie of equipment that surrounds us today.

As a business owner, I applaud the efficiency with which electronics has helped us to be able to service our clients. We provide information quickly. We can contact them anytime day or night. We can share ideas and proposals with them while they never have to leave their offices; and we don’t have to leave ours. We have been able to expand our territory out of state and even out of the country because of email, fax, scanning.

And although I think this is a great way to run a business, I wonder if constantly being attached to a communication devise is a great way to run a life

To use my Princess telephone it was necessary to be confined to my bedroom. But it also meant that I had privacy and shared my conversation with just the person on the other end of the line. It required that I focus totally on them; and we were able to share our most intimate “teenage girl” thoughts.

Today, with cell phones and Blackberrys, conversations that should stay in the bedroom or the office find their way to restaurants, malls, and grocery stores. In just the last week, I have been party to one-sided discussions where a husband was arguing with his wife, a man was revealing his financial problems to a friend, and a teenage boy was having a romantic interlude with his girlfriend; all while I sat having lunch at a local restaurant.

And the husband arguing with his wife was having lunch with a co-worker who was obviously being ignored, and was noticeably embarrassed by being part of this scenario.

We interrupt conversations to answer the phones; we ignore those who are with us to talk to someone who is not; and we delay whatever activity we are part of to concentrate on our cell phone conversation, often to the detriment of others around us.

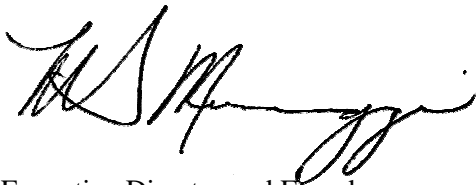
This also makes me wonder if the constant connection with others will create a generation of people who don’t understand or enjoy time alone. Who won’t experience quiet or silence. Who will not have ever enjoyed moments of meditation. In a hectic world these are pleasures that are worth nurturing.

As I look around my offices, I begin to notice that my partners and our interns, who are all years younger than I am are all “well connected”. They have speakerphones, and cell phones, and wireless computers. They have Blackberrys and Bluetooths and gadgets and gizmos. They do text messaging at the speed of light. And I wonder what a day would be like for them without all of this. Peaceful and serene? Or disconnected and frustrated? What would they do if all they had was a Pink Princess telephone?

The newest devices they have added are wireless headphones for their telephones. Because they are aware that I am always the last one to buy into the newest piece of equipment, no one ordered a headphone for me. And so when I ask them why, they are even a bit surprised that I would think of having one. I tell them, “It’s because you think I am just a Pink Princess telephone”. And with that they look confused as they respond in unison, “What is a Pink Princess telephone?”

As I return to my office, I wonder if there is an electronic devise that could close the “generation gap”. Probably not.

Mary Grace Musuneggi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Musuneggi', written in a cursive style.

Executive Director and Founder

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This month Single Steps Strategies invites you to join us for workshops on building better relationships, forming stronger friendships and prospering in your business and personal life. Visit our site and learn from our Resources as you enjoy the days of summer. And don’t forget to mark your calendar for our Day of Empowerment coming on October 6. More details to follow