

## A Look Back

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## AJA 2012 Convention Update

In a meeting between the boards of Alabama and Georgia during the August SJTA show, it was decided that the 2012 convention would take place either the 3rd or 4th weekend of March, 2012. While we do not have location details to share at the time of publication, we encourage you to mark both of these weekends on your calendar until further notice.

For those of you who have had the pleasure of learning and exchanging ideas with fellow jewelers from both Alabama and Georgia, be assured that we expect the 2012 convention to be better than this year, and that will be a challenge! Nevertheless, we are confident that you will not want to miss this awesome opportunity to grow and learn from your peers.

For AJA members who've not been with us in a while or ever, we strongly encourage you to attend. We promise that you will see the true value of membership in this fun and informative environment. Please plan to join us, and if you have any questions, contact any of our board of directors, or the AJA office. We hope to see you there!



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## President's Message

Greetings Fellow Jewelers,

I truly hope everyone had a wonderful summer. Now it's back to school and back to navigating the treacherous waters of our current economy, to bring your business pattern on final approach for a smooth landing this upcoming holiday season. From the spring convention educational programs at Eufaula with Georgia Jewelers Association to the Saltwater Seminar in Orange Beach, everyone is more focused on the tools for success more than ever before. The point most discussed was the use of social media, building an online community of fans and friends. The goal is to expand our influences, and when properly used, these tools will keep a steady stream of new and current customers coming through the doors. I'm very excited about this holiday season to come. This years' SJTA show and the Atlanta Gift Show both had tremendous turnouts, which leads me to believe that everyone is going to have a great holiday season. Be positive...Don't be afraid to get out of the box and try some new techniques to build those sales!!!



- Security-Always know what is going on and pass it along.
  - Social Media-Use these networks to your advantage. It's free advertising!!!
  - Direct Mail-Gets out to those customers who may not have access to the online world.
  - Current Websites-Show your new product to spark that "Wish List".
  - Thank You Cards-The personal touch showing you appreciate their patriotism.
  - Referral Plan-Give extra rewards to those customers who help put your business ahead of your competitors.
- EX: Free batteries, Buffing, Cleaning...anything to express your gratitude for their efforts.

The most successful retailers are good friendly citizens, those who will get on the personal level and be more than just that person behind the counter. I hope everyone has a record breaking holiday season.

Sincerely,  
Nick Sanders  
AJA President

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" This course has helped me greatly, mainly because I am new to the jewelry industry and had a lot to learn. Thank you for giving me the information, it taught me everything I needed to know to jumpstart my career. I am looking forward to starting the colored gemstones course."

**-Katie McCarthy,**  
Robbins Diamonds

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## Our Condolences



To Debbie Sanders and family. Mrs. Evelyn Young of Young Jewelers in Jasper, passed away in July.

To Joe Duck (AJA Past President) who lost his wife, Betty, earlier this year.

To the family of Sperry Snow of Barton-Clay Jewelers in Mountain Brook.

## AJA 2011 Associate of the Year

Life has a funny way of judging a person. When we get to full of ourselves, life will send something or someone to knock us to our knees. That being said, life also has a way of lifting you up off of your knees. That is why being chosen as Associate of the Year has been so special to me. Not only does it let me know what a wonderful family I have in the jewelry industry, but how thoughtful and caring are the people involved in the Alabama Jewelers Association. I know that there are others more worthy than me to receive this award, but I am so very thankful that you chose me to be this year's recipient. Words truly cannot describe how much this award has touched me and I thank you for the honor.



Sincerely,  
Gene Callaway



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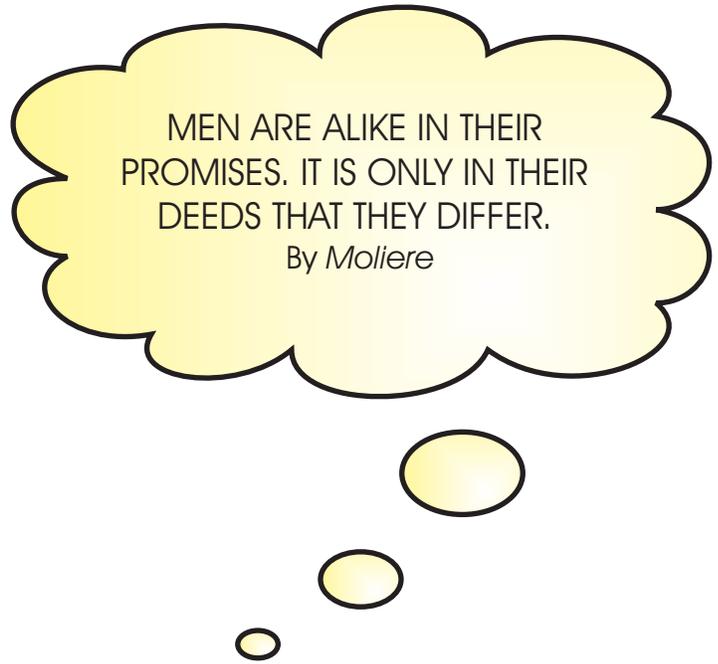


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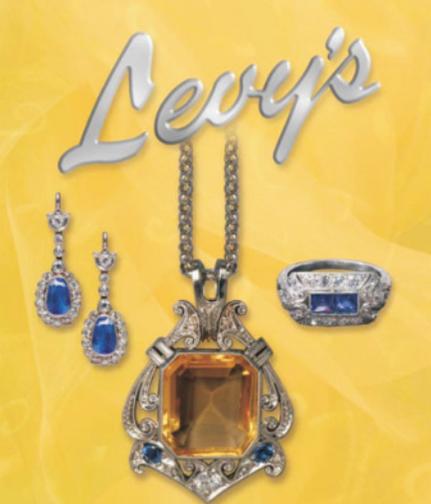
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## What a disaster! Are you prepared?

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If the part of town where your store is located lost electricity for an extended period of time, would you have your employees' cell phone numbers so you could contact them? If a fire occurred at your store, would you have easy access to vendor and customer contact information?

A disaster can happen anytime, anywhere. That's why creating a business continuity plan now can help your business survive a crisis later. Assess how your business functions, both internally and externally, to determine which staff, materials, procedures and equipment are absolutely necessary to keep the business operating. You'll want to ask yourself several key questions. If you can answer them confidently, you've got a great start! For example:

- Which operations are critical to the survival and recovery of your business?
- How will you handle payroll?
- Who will make financial decisions and track costs?
- What is your management succession plan?
- Which employees have skills necessary to provide key business functions?
- If your current location is not accessible, do you have an alternate facility?
- How will you communicate with your customers?

Answering these questions will help you get started creating your business continuity plan. In addition, don't underestimate the value of good records. It's a good idea to store copies the following materials in a safe place, preferably away from your business:

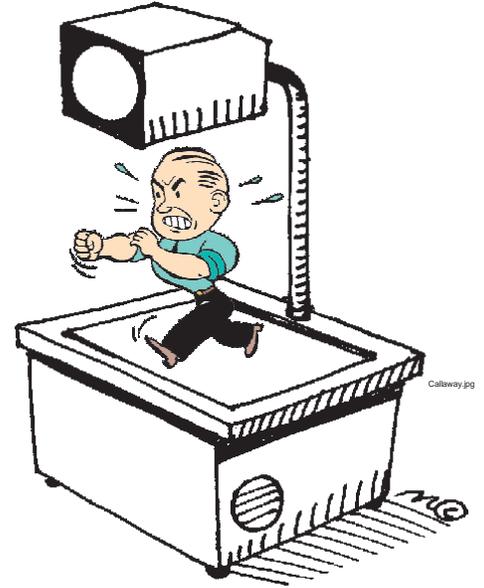
- Back-up for everything on your computer
- A copy of your latest physical inventory and year-to-date printouts of sales, purchases, etc.
- A vendor list with complete mail, telephone, and e-mail information
- An updated list of merchandise on memo and the vendor(s)
- An inventory of your business personal property (showcases, desks, chairs, computers, equipment, etc.), including a video of your store contents
- Security information, including the name, phone, and address of your alarm service company and vendor for safes or vaults
- Insurance information, including the name, phone, and address of your agent and insurance carrier and a copy of your insurance policies
- Current income tax records, including tax returns for the last two years
- A copy of your lease agreement
- Monthly or quarterly sales tax returns for at least the last two years
- Your business's customer list with phone numbers and addresses

You should review and update this plan at least once per year. Some of the information should be updated daily, weekly or monthly. While this may sound like a lot of work, once you have a procedure in place, your disaster recovery plan should be just a routine part of your business operations.

No one expects a disaster, but you can prepare for it. To create a comprehensive disaster plan, download a free copy of Jewelers Mutual's Business Continuity Plan template at [JewelersMutual.com](http://JewelersMutual.com) (simply click on Safety & Security located under the Business section of the homepage and select Catastrophe Preparedness). The template helps you identify critical information that should be included in your plan, including emergency contacts, vital records, vendors and suppliers, evaluation procedures and post-disaster action plans.

## What Is Unconscious Is Projected

Emotions and feelings for many are usually unconscious and are therefore projected onto others. For example, if you are mad at yourself for blowing a sales call, you may yell at your assistant when you return to the office for not providing you with the right information for this client. It's about blaming others for your short comings but you don't know you're doing it because it's all done subconsciously. You project false accusations or false information onto another in order to maintain your self-image of a "great sales person." By doing this, you aren't as anxious or angry at yourself and it essentially takes the monkey off your back and puts it on another. This is the verbal part of the communication.



When we are aware of our feelings, know that we might have messed up, instead of projecting false information or accusations onto another, we may be polite to them but our body language "leaks" our true feelings. So when we return to the office and our assistant asks how the meeting went, we might say "fine" but our hands on our hips, our lack of eye contact, our lowered voice tone all show indications of anger, upset and frustration. The assistant will pick up on this and not know what's wrong. If you do this quite often, s/he may have your "number" but many times people don't know what to think because we are sending a double message. Do you tell your employees that you are always available for them and then when they ask for a minute, you give them the time but you act anxious and nervous and keep looking away or towards the door? What happens when you send a double message to your client? You might say: "I am here to serve you" but you haven't called them back with a status of their watch repair.

The key is to become aware of your double messages and stop them by creating congruence—what you say and what you do is the same. Assess any double messages as soon as you become aware of them. You can always go back to the employee or client and realign your statements and your nonverbal communication. This is how trust and credibility are created.

Watch what your body is saying as you voice your verbal message and see if both agree. If not, work to eliminate the incongruence, conflicting signals. Because the cost of gold and diamonds are increasing, you may have attended a seminar to teach you how to sell this increase. The problem is that they might not have mentioned that your body will always leak the truth about how you feel (nervous, anxious). You may have the words that are reassuring for clients but if you don't believe it, your body will betray you to your clients and staff. You can control this incongruence, but you first have to be aware of it.

Double or mixed messages are deadly as they leave the receiver (employee or client) confused, angry and/or upset and it creates conflict for you. Make certain that what you think, say and do are congruent. Becoming aware and resolving these conflicting signals and statements will increase your emotional intelligence which will improve your relationships with employees and clients and will lead to better business results.

**Linda Talley is a nonverbal communication scientist, speaker and coach from Houston, TX. Visit her web site [www.lindatalley.com](http://www.lindatalley.com).**