

THOUGHTS FOR THE

good life

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As we move closer to the Thanksgiving holiday, we are coming into what I call the "holiday slide." How do you keep your focus and continue moving forward when everyone else wants to delay decisions? Have you accomplished everything you want to do this year? You have time to make things happen before the calendar rolls into 2006. Keep your focus and enjoy the season!



Be well and enjoy,

Reunion Coaching Homework

I recently had the pleasure of attending my 30th high school reunion. The conversations were sweet and magical. I left wondering why I so love to connect with the pals of my youth. I suppose because it was a time of innocence, self-exploration and learning. We were witness to each other's trials and tribulations of growing up. Stepping out of my hectic life to reminisce about our early crushes and playground disappointments was a true treat.

I mentioned the reunion to a client who said he had never attended one of his own. He confessed high school had been socially difficult for him and he had no desire to return. It dawned on me that stepping way back in time could be a great coaching assignment, whether or not you actually choose to return to your reunion.

Coaching questions that come to mind regarding my client are — How did his awkward teenage years contribute to who he is today? How did he manage his insecurities and disappointments in those years? And, how can those insights aid him with today's challenges?

Take a moment to think about who you are, today, and how your past contributed to what you like and dislike about yourself.

Lessons Learned

Do we learn from our mistakes and successes? How often do we stop and really think about where we have been? Coaching is one opportunity when you get to completely focus on yourself. Do you sometimes succeed with complete ease? Do certain situations or people continue to baffle you? Are you repeatedly presented with the same challenges in different situations? Give yourself the gift of coaching to bring your best self to more of your life.



LISTENING WITH RESPECT

"I listen to you and you listen to me, then our feelings won't get hurt."

Sarah Myers — age 4

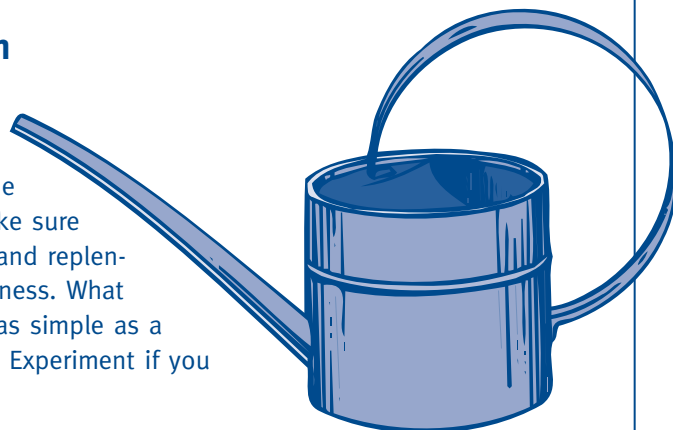
This statement rolled off my young daughter's tongue the other day. I stopped and smiled at her wisdom, hoping this will be foundational thinking for an emotionally mature adult.

It brings me to the question of why is it simple for some adults to develop strong interpersonal skills and easily adapt to challenges in a business arena, while others struggle. Coaching often focuses on an individual's interpersonal agility — do their interpersonal skills support their goals or are they deterrents? Coaching brings awareness to these skills and gives clients an opportunity to understand their impact and then experiment with approaches that do not come naturally.

Listening with respect and empathy are critical skills of a successful professional and personal life. Could your skills use some fine-tuning? Pay attention as you go through your days. Ask those around you for feedback. You might hear some interesting insights.

Watering Your Inner Garden

How does your inner garden grow? What nourishes you on the inside? Keeping life interesting and full can take focus and intention. It is easy to fall into the pattern of going to work, coming home and letting TV provide our entertainment. What's important is to make sure we spend our non-working time in pursuit of activities that nourish and replenish us. It is easy to forget and fill our days with "shoulds" and busyness. What activities help you to feel like your true, grounded self? It might be as simple as a walk in nature, connecting with an old friend or taking a yoga class. Experiment if you don't know. It could surprise you.



A COACHING TALE

Business Coaching — Everything is In!

When coaching is most successful it involves a holistic process that includes both professional and personal topics. Surprisingly to new clients, what is happening outside of the job gets included in a coaching session. On the simplest level, distractions in your personal life can limit your ability to focus on the job. If the distraction can be handled quickly and easily, you are back in the game. Additionally, if chronic issues like the lack of self-care are dragging you out of your zone, some focus in this area can make a significant difference in your well-being and ability to handle a full load.

However, for less obvious reasons, some people have handled issues well in their personal life, yet have not made the same leap with a similar issue in the workplace — lessons can be transferred into the work arena.

I heard an interesting story at a coaching conference some years back and couldn't recite the specifics. However, the point was that a coaching company was hired to deliver a six-month coaching assignment in the U.S. and in England. For the American clients, the coaches were only allowed to discuss topics relevant to the client's work agenda, nothing personal. In the English assignment, the coaching work was holistic. Work and personal agendas were included. At the end of the assignment, the American clients found the coaching to be satisfactory but chose not to continue. Conversely, the English clients were significantly more positive about the results of the work, citing significant improvements in their business performance and continued the contract.

In most cases, keeping one's personal and professional lives separate makes sense. However, when it comes to powerful, effective coaching everything can be in play. So don't be surprised if a coach wants to discuss how you handle conflict on the home front or asks if you have met your weekly exercise goals. It's all important.

KOLBE

Job Expectations Out of Control

Nathan is a senior executive. Kolbe A™ Index results indicate that he has the natural talents of a Designer. He is organized, thorough and has an intense need to complete whatever he starts. What's more, he is committed to doing a perfect job. Coaching has revealed that Nathan always delivers an A+ for whatever he undertakes. Interestingly enough, his boss would be thrilled with a B from Nathan. He also recognizes that Nathan is so thorough and overly prepared that on most days he pushes himself beyond his physical limitations. He is concerned about Nathan's welfare and his ability to continue at his intense pace.

Nathan was shocked, yet relieved, to hear that his boss would be pleased with less from him. He is appreciative to learn that his need to complete is innate and, combined with his learned behavior of being a perfectionist, is pushing him to unreasonable levels of commitments. Nathan is consciously working on a more reasonable workday for himself. It isn't easy, but he recognizes that his happiness and physical well-being are on the line.

Kolbe A™ Index is an assessment tool that measures an individual's innate problem-solving abilities. If you are interested in an individual assessment or in learning how the Kolbe System™ can support a business team striving to be more successful, call Susan at 847.242.0351 for more information.

Sweet Moments

Cherish the moments you have with the ones you love. We all know the saying, yet often rush through the day without really savoring our family and friends. My Mother's health is declining, so I especially want to enjoy the sweetness in each of our visits and phone calls. I hope to learn to cherish all of my important relationships before I am faced with their loss.

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