

THOUGHTS FOR THE

good life

PUBLISHED BY SUSAN SPRITZ MYERS, CPCC PROFESSIONAL COACH 847.242.0351

Are you enjoying the sweetness of the summer? I long for the lazy summer days of my youth when a fun library book and bag of cookies on the back porch made a favorite day. Slowing down to that pace seems out of reach. Yet, I hold the dream of it as a way to spend a summer day and make space for those moments whenever possible. How about you? How do you want your summer days to feel when you get some down time?



Be well and enjoy,

Setting Goals Works!

At the end of each calendar year, I provide coaching clients with an exercise to review their successes, disappointments and lessons learned from the previous year. Based on those findings, they define ten key goals for their professional and personal life for the coming year. Many find the exercise invigorating as they look back over what they did or didn't accomplish. This, in turn creates new excitement to create a strong plan for the coming year.

The level of attention to goal management throughout the year is the client's choice. I encourage them to check in quarterly to ensure that they are on target. Some clients enjoy the structure, while others ignore it. Some choose to hold the goals as a conceptual blueprint without using a structured process during the year. At the end of the year, they are amazed by how much of their plan they have achieved – whatever works.

This year, one young, determined client is actively managing his annual goals on a monthly basis. He put his goals onto 3 by 5 cards, which he reviews often with focus and vigor. This structure works beautifully for him. As we talked through his goals at the mid-year point, it was impressive to see the tremendous progress he had made in almost every area.

One of his goals was to redefine his role in his nuclear family. He was developing his own business in a field that the family already ran a successful business. The family invested in his projects and, conversely, he had concerns about the direction the family business was taking. In the coaching work, he was working on issues of independence, and, at the same time, he wanted to be included in the decisions of the complex family business. As a result of his goal to reshape his role in the family, he began initiating conversations about the family dynamics and making contributions in the family business affairs. He moved himself from a bystander to a contributor.

This year is more than half over. Are there things you wanted to address and have yet to think about? Make a list of what you want to address before it is time to look back at 2005. Then pick one or two things you can address this week from your list. As Nike says, "Just do it™!"

a client's experience

“A coach sees what's amazing about you that you can't see!”

Henry Kimsey-House

RELATIONSHIP SYSTEMS COACHING

Coaching is not just for individuals anymore! The ability to improve performance and communications is now available for teams, partnerships or any working relationship.

Group coaching helps the team align itself, learn how to manage challenges and breakdowns and produce greater results!

Relationship coaching can be used for individuals who work together and want to improve their working relationships. It can also be used to support teams in aligning their goals and improving communications.

This type of coaching is done either on the telephone or in team settings.

Call Susan to learn more about how group coaching might support your team's success.

What's Unique About You?

So often, we take our talents and abilities for granted. We believe because a particular skill or way of interacting with people comes easily, it must be equally easy for others. I often find the acknowledgment of a client's strengths can be surprising to him. When individuals really understand their talents, they can leverage them to an even greater extent. Confidence increases as they face their challenges.

Can you describe your greatest strengths in one or two sentences? Be objective. Think about what makes you unique and helps you solve the challenges of your day with the greatest ease. A fun coaching assignment is to ask a few trusted colleagues or family members what they see as your unique talents. Try it. You will be intrigued with what you hear. It may give you some new thoughts on how you might capitalize on your strengths in ways you have not done before. And, be sure to enjoy the feedback you get. Don't discount it. Breathe it in deeply. And simply thank your observer for the feedback!

A COACHING TALE

What Are Your Stress Points?

Often clients come to their coaching sessions and report they feel so overwhelmed they are having trouble focusing on the things they need to accomplish. Amanda, a professional at an electronics firm, came to her coaching session in this sort of mood last month. We spent the session defining those things she called her "stress points." The list included concerns about her newly hired boss, challenging conversations she needed to have at work and was avoiding, and – on the home front – incomplete conversations with her husband and challenges with her small child. Amanda wanted to use the coaching process to help her make decisions about the next steps in career and family life. However, the stress points were so draining, she couldn't think about anything else.

For homework, Amanda focused on her stress points, one item at a time. During the next coaching session, Amanda reported she was much calmer. She had started with the challenging conversations at work. She felt they were much easier than she thought and she was pleased with how she had handled them. Her new boss had started his job and she was cautiously optimistic that he would be good for the organization and her own career development.

Amanda recognized that she had made good headway on her list of stressors. There were still more conversations and actions to take. Yet, the overwhelming feeling had subsided and she was energized enough to handle more on her list including beginning to think about the longer term and what's next for her.

KOLBE

Kolbe measures how individuals innately problem-solve. Each one of us is wired a certain way which does not change over a lifetime. Those problem-solving patterns emerge in us as children as we begin to play with blocks and remain with us as we move through school, work and even into our adult relationships.

There are four problem-solving action modes and we each have some mental energy in each mode. The amount of energy in each action mode defines how we will act when striving. The modes are:

Fact Finder—how we gather information. The degree of detail we require.

Follow Through—how we organize information. The degree of order we require.

Quick Start—how we deal with unknowns. The inclination towards risk, change or innovation.

Implementor—how we handle tangibles, tools or technological equipment.

When we teach teams the Kolbe concept, we select a few individuals and ask them to leave the room. Then the facilitator explains a three minute team task that will be given to the individuals. At the same time, the facilitator predicts what types of action will be seen from each individual when they all return to the workshop. When the "volunteers" return and begin the task, the spectators break into spontaneous giggles as they watch the predicted action take shape by the volunteers.

The workshop experience is great fun and a huge learning opportunity for the team members – how they work best independently and as a group. Just think of what your team can achieve once you learn the dynamics of how each team member innately operates. You can also use the Kolbe tools to add the right mental energy to the team when making significant hires.

How do you innately operate on the job and how well do your team members innately operate together? Call Susan to learn more about how Kolbe teams can increase your success.

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

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Susan Spritz Myers, LLC phone: 847.242.0351 fax: 847.242.0352 e-mail: coach@susanspritzmyers.com

P.O. BOX 383 GLENCOE, IL 60022

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