

THOUGHTS FOR THE

good life

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I am looking at you from an older and hopefully wiser perspective! It was time for me to update my photo, since the last one was taken in 2000.

I remember when newspapers had columnists update photos every five years, so they would be recognized in person. For those of you who I haven't met yet, I hope this photo and the newsletter convey the genuine joy and fun I bring to the coaching work.



Be well and enjoy,

Your Part In Challenging Relationships

In coaching, the focus is about taking responsibility for yourself and your actions, not blaming others for what happens to you. At various times, everyone has to interact with challenging people and difficult events. The goal of coaching is to increase our awareness of how to be a better contributor when those situations arise without defaulting to blame others.

I was working with a young new manager, Becky, who works in a fast-paced business. Becky and her first direct report, Molly, were having a challenging time handling tight deadlines.

They weren't getting along and there had been some behind the scenes one-on-one conversations between Becky's boss and Molly, and then between Becky and her boss. Becky was frustrated with everyone, because things weren't playing out as she would have liked. She was driven to do a great job and couldn't understand how to get Molly on her team and perform at the level Becky expected.

We reviewed Becky's interactions with Molly and brainstormed ways Becky could set expectations in a way that would be respectful of Molly's time and input. Becky began to have insights about her part of the conversation breakdowns.

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

Becky used coaching to express her frustration with the situation, specifically her direct report's attitude and actions. Then we approached the leadership questions of "what is my part in these

exchanges?" and "how can I develop my leadership abilities when managing others?" Becky chose the question, "how can I be a better boss for Molly?" for her coaching homework.

Can you be objective about your part in difficult relationships or conversations and then challenge yourself to participate in different ways?

WELL SPENT TIME

Time continues to march quickly along. Are you making the most of your time? Several of my good friends and clients are turning 50 this year and it has been a rich time of reflection. Are you where you want to be? Are there significant changes you want to make?

This summer marks ten years since I left my corporate job and became a coach. I can't tell you how much time I spent agonizing over that decision to leave a comfortable job and start an undefined new chapter. Today, it is a distant memory and the thoughts of the future are already spinning around in my head.

Are you ready for the next chapter? Maybe it involves a shift in how you come to the work you already do. Or maybe there are significant changes in your daily relationships with children leaving the nest or for other reasons. Time is marching, use it wisely.

Changes for *Thoughts for the Good Life*

I have produced this quarterly newsletter for over five years. My goal was to explain the benefits of coaching, share client success stories, plus provoke readers with thoughts for their own good life, and, of course, attract new clients. Through the process, I learned that I truly love to write and on many days it comes to me as effortlessly as breathing and on others it is a struggle to create content of interest.

For the last few years, I have slipped from producing four issues to three. I have decided to write less frequently due to my daily demands. My business continues to grow, my kids' schedules get more demanding and I travel to visit my aging parents more regularly. I am truly living the sandwich generation challenge.

As I would coach a client, a change is required for me to stay on top of the demands of my hectic life. And, it is important for me not to give up something that gives me great joy. I have received wonderful feedback from readers and business opportunities over the years, for which I am grateful.

Please continue to let me know your thoughts. I would love to hear about subjects of which you would like to learn more or stories of interest from the world of coaching, personal and professional growth.

Thank you for your readership and kind words over the years.

WHAT CLIENTS ARE SAYING

"Since I started working with Susan, I've experienced quite a shift in a short time. Thanks to her insight, thoughtful questions, and the valuable tools she provides, I know better now what I'm about and the values I bring to my organization."

— June A. Keszeg, CompTIA,
IT Professional Membership Program Manager

"In working with Susan over the last year and a half, she has conducted a variety of assessments and many coaching sessions. The results of these sessions have allowed me to become more aware of how I will react to various

situations and manage myself to limit both the emotional drain and stress. Peers and family have commented on how I seem to be more relaxed and in control."

— Bill Finn, Sr. Vice President, National City Bank

"Susan's unique approach combines original thinking from both psychology and business consulting. Susan shows through powerful management psychology and real world business sense, that leaders can break through and reach the next level!"

— Lynn Crim, Controller, Freedman Seating Company

"Vision without action is a daydream. And action without vision is a nightmare." JAPANESE PROVERB

How Well Does Your Job Fit You?

The Kolbe A™ Index quantifies a person's mental energy. When we work with that mental energy we thrive and produce our greatest work with joy and ease because we are working from our strengths. Conversely, when we work against that mental energy we become mentally exhausted and produce inferior results.

The Kolbe B™ Index gives individuals the opportunity to review what type of mental energy they need to do their current job – their self expectations. The closer the results between an individual's Index A and B, the better fit the job is for that person's innate needs.

FINDING A NATURAL BALANCE

Scott, a new coaching client found that he had a large disparity between his Index A and B results, representing the deep mental exhaustion he was experiencing at work. Index A showed his natural way of working – thriving when he collects information and then uses the data to quickly create innovative approaches. He needs in-depth challenges. However, his Index B results told us he was trying to do his job very differently. He was trying to work at a much slower pace, avoiding risks and creating deeply researched systematized solutions.

Scott put the Kolbe Concept™ to work the next day. He explained to his bosses that he would need more challenge on the job to make it work for him and that it may include leaving the job at the end of the year.

Scott immediately understood why he had been feeling so depleted and that his happiness, fulfillment and life's success were critical to ensuring that he had a powerful outlet for natural mental energy everyday. He responded using his innate energy and is thrilled to have gotten himself back on a path that ignites him.

How about you? Does your job fit how you naturally operate? Not sure? Call Susan to learn more about Kolbe and how you use your mental energy on the job.

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.

TRANSFORMATION OF A LEADER

Coaching can create amazing transformations in people; it happens in tiny increments and gigantic leaps.

I had the pleasure of looking back with a client, Jonathan, who has made tremendous strides in the last year. Today, he is a top performer in his organization. He is creating programs for his team that the company is asking him to replicate for others. He just earned his largest bonus and loves his life.

Flip back to a year ago. He quit his job out of complete frustration. He felt overwhelmed and under appreciated. The company didn't want to lose him. He was offered a salary increase and an executive coach to support him.

When we started, he was furious that he had below average players on his team and felt that he had to do all the selling to make their numbers. He was trying to carry four additional salespeople on his own back! He regularly went to meetings with his boss with a list of complaints, demanding solutions to his problems. Today, he comes prepared for those same meetings with a list of the programs he is implementing to support and motivate his team. He has moved many of his accounts to his direct reports who are beginning to thrive under his leadership and new direction.

RELY ON YOUR STRENGTHS

Jonathan's evolution into an excited, engaged leader has happened over many months. The key to his transformation is that Jonathan realized that his happiness, productivity and success are his responsibility. He learned to operate from his strengths and experimented with new ways to communicate with his boss, direct reports and clients.

How did coaching work for Jonathan? He came with an open mind and a willingness to learn and try new ways of operating on the job. Jonathan's commitment to himself and the coaching process get the credit for his wonderful success.

Some days the old patterns come roaring back. However, now he has a new awareness of what triggers his challenges and has developed strategies to get back on track as quickly as possible.

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