

The Coach Approach

By Benita Stafford-Smith

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“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.” – Mark Twain

The beginning of another year, a time to reflect the journey to date and a time to craft the next leg of our journey. How does Mr Twain’s quote speak to you today?

Here are five tips to ensure smooth sailing on the next leg of your journey:

1. Establish a theme for the upcoming year
 - a. Year of Adventure
 - b. Year to Simplify
 - c. Year of Challenge
 - d. Developing Year
 - e. Year of Vacations
 - f. Year of Promotion
 - g. Year of Writing
 - h. Year of Balance
 - i. Year of Relationship
 - j. Choose your own unique theme
2. Pick a goal for the first ninety days.
3. Achieve that goal.
4. Pick a six month goal.
5. Achieve this goal.

You’re well on you way now, enjoy achieving the rest of your goals effortlessly!

Goals are interesting things. Sometimes we set goals that box us in, stifle our natural joy and creativity. They are what we should do. Note the word should, this means it is not your goal. Sometimes we set goals that we are not really interested in; we make the same goal every year but never achieve it. Let it go. Some examples: this year I will quit smoking, I will lose ten pounds, I will exercise every day, etc. etc. Repeat goals because they never got done.

Here’s an approach to goal setting that is fun: set goals that appeal to your sense of adventure and draw you to a larger self.

If you want new answers you must ask new questions – Bob Gorman

So instead of setting a goal to exercise, lose weight and quit smoking, spend a little time discovering what it would feel like to be in good shape and have excellent health. What difference would that make in your life? What would that allow you to do that you cannot do today? If the answer is nothing then drop the goal.

Look for something else that makes your blood run faster in your veins, gives you a new source of energy and enthusiasm.

An example of this would be to mark one day each month on your calendar to try a new sport, take a dance lesson, go bowling, take a sailing lesson, book a canoe trip, go skiing, go hiking, explore a new parkland, take some swimming lessons, some lessons in a martial art, a few yoga classes. All these activities are oriented around exercise and help contribute to your well being.

How about your mental health? Use the same approach. Mark one day a month on your calendar to learn something new, read a book on a subject you know nothing about, register for a seminar or a weekend conference, check with your local university to see what lecture series are coming up, take a course to improve an existing knowledge base or skill or explore a new one, visit your local science centre or museum. Stimulate your mind and your curiosity.

What about your emotional health? Had any fun lately? If you don't even know what fun is anymore I suggest you take some time off and get in touch with your playful self again, even if it's just a day or a weekend. Start waking up your sense of light-hearted enjoyment with life!

Perhaps this is the year to explore your spirituality. Visit different spiritual centres in your city, find out what they have to offer. Take a class or attend a discussion group, learn a new approach to your spirituality.

Look for a new project at work, something you haven't tackled before, something that challenges you. Engage in that project even if it means not getting any extra pay for it, do it just for the fun of it.

– *What would you do if you were ten times bolder?*

As you set your goals for the upcoming year ask yourself:

- what you learned in the past year that will help you achieve these goals
- what strengths need to be developed further
- what weaknesses in the past have stopped you from achieving your goals
- what can you do to overcome these weaknesses this time

Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Take a risk today

Post your theme, your goals, your action steps and your timelines in place where you see them every day. Celebrate your successes as you journey

What's new at Life Matters?

- Watch for the launch of The New Old, a Retirement Success planning program.
- Watch for "Expert Women Who Speak, Vol IV", coming February/04
Benita's chapter – Living Out Loud: Making Room for Passion in Your Life.

We continue our exploration of the Personal Path program this issue with Spiritual Bliss.

The Personal Path

The Personal Path is a coaching assessment developed by CoachU that looks at ten areas of your life – inner peace, personal power, happiness & joy, spiritual bliss, grace and love, full satisfaction, natural balance, personal passion, vitality and wellness and fulfillment.

SPIRITUAL BLISS

Spiritual bliss comes from being totally connected with yourself, your soul, your body and a Higher Power (meaning everyone). It is a high experience of life, rich with the subtleties and details that open one up to a quality of life unmatched by the trappings of the material or linear world.

When experiencing spiritual bliss, a person is:

- Glowing with energy, love and caring, but not high
- Light, contributory and being, yet fully responsible
- A part of a higher plane of existence
- Touching others in a profound way, measurable or not

What happens until a person gets here?

- Disconnected from healthy energy; chemically high
- Burdened by life's challenges, alone
- Fearful of possible consequences, defensive, right
- Trying too hard to project or create

The 10 Steps To Have Spiritual Bliss

- Identify the distinction between Self vs. Ego
- Take the path of least resistance vs. force, fight, win
- Develop a relationship with your Self, Higher Power
- Respond vs. react to circumstances, others
- Keep yourself toxin-free (chemical, energy, stress)
- Intuitively choose vs. logically or linearly decide
- Honor your inklings vs. explaining, rationalizing, proving
- Clean out your Contact List
- Dance with vs. control others
- Take extreme self-care of every part of yourself

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