



Stay Present

As a coach I see many themes that run between clients. One of these themes is the art of staying in the present moment. For some this idea sounds like a walk down meditation lane and in many ways it is. Don't get nervous, it is an idea that, with a little work, can have a tremendous impact on your professional life and improve the quality of your personal life.

There are three key strategies that help you stay present. These strategies are:

1. Focus on the task you want to affect.
2. Organize your thoughts, tasks and appointments in a way that will allow you to track your progress.
3. Follow up with clients, colleagues and social networks to get the answers to questions and bring closure to projects you are working on.

Sounds pretty simple; focus, organize and follow-up. For many these ideas are not just spoken by a coach but also by managers, significant others and even family or friends.

The real question is... "If I am aware that these strategies exist then how do I maintain or begin implementing them in a way that works for me." The answer is in knowing yourself well enough to understand what organizing systems work best for you.

To learn more about you and certain behaviors that you experience many people consider taking a personality assessment. Most coaches and HR departments have access to such tools and can act as a great resource for getting started on this path of self-awareness. Coaches, both internal and external, work with the client and their assessment to create awareness around specific behaviors and patterns that may be keeping the client from implementing a change in their professional or personal lives. Coaches are there to help keep their client focused on the present moment and to help create a plan that will ultimately be successful for their client.

When coaches are surveyed about why clients have a hard time experiencing change a key outcome is usually that clients lack the ability to stay in the present moment. Often times, the client is thinking about what is going to happen three or six months from now and not attending at all to today's needs. The result is low performance and dissatisfaction.

Some personality assessments can help a client identify their innate ability to stay present. One such tool is the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The MBTI, which is based on Jungian theory, measures or assesses four key areas that help identify an individual's preference for a personality type. The perceiving /judging area helps clients better understand their ability to stay in the present moment. If you have a

preference for perceiving you enjoy flexibility, spontaneity in your life rather than control. Detailed plans and final decisions feel confining. If you have a judging preference you enjoy have structure and deadlines in your life and like having things organized.

The problem of staying present can be seen in both the judging and perceiving preference. Traditional forms of staying present; like planners, journals and even filing systems, are designed for the judging preference. If you feel that these systems don't work for you then you may want to explore different forms or ways of staying present.

Regardless of your preference, learning to stay present is a manageable process. As with any new initiative, you have to identify the approach that works best for you. That may mean that the tools listed above need to take on different forms. You may have to think out of the box in terms of how you will follow-up or stay focused on a specific task. Here are a few tips to consider:

1. Work with others with whom you can be accountable in a developmental way.
2. Utilize natural filing systems like your in-box from your email server.
3. Find a home for everything even if may seem disorganized. At least you know where to start looking (shoe boxes are wonderful for this).
4. Slow down enough to observe your progress.
5. Set deadlines for following up. This may mean sending out an email or thank you card for someone's efforts with in 12 hours of the event.

These are just a few of the many ways in which you can get focused, stay organized and ensure proper follow-up. By developing a strategy for staying present you will not only find that you have more time to do more but your performance will improve, your stress will decrease and people will enjoy having you on their team.

Eric Lutzo earned his Masters of Business Administration from Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management. Eric is the founder of Forward Thought, a coaching and leadership development practice. (www.forwardthought.net)

Email: Eric@ForwardThought.net