

Scare yourself at least once a month. This is a tip I have given to CTI course students when they ask me how to be the best Co-Active coach possible. “Do the thing or things that you know will make your toenails shudder.”

Why? Do I want you to raise your blood pressure to dangerous levels? No. Do I think that terror is a useful strategy with which to coach people? No. Do I think you coach better when you are trembling? No, no, a thousand times no!

Here’s why I think it’s a great tip. Co-active coaching works best when coaches are fully alive themselves, and believe that anything is possible for their clients. Now I don’t know many people who would argue with what I just wrote. But doing it is easier said than done.

Have you ever noticed your own propensity to talk about something when you could be out there doing it? I believe that this is what makes us a little stale as coaches. Remember that silly pain reliever commercial where the man says, “Hi, I’m not a doctor, but I play one on TV.” HELLO?!?! We were supposed to believe that he had good advice on medication because he could memorize a script and looked like Charlton Heston?

If you end up talking a lot and doing very little about your own exciting life, you too come across like that actor. “Hi, I’m not a real risk-taker but I play one when I’m coaching my clients.” You get stale, and more than a little removed from your own life and what really awakens you to its bounty. That can’t help but spill over into your own coaching. I know it does in mine.

Case in point: for quite some time I had been “working on my writing.” I sort of pretended that I had a writing practice, when in truth I couldn’t even call it a hobby. This began to interfere with my coaching ability. My clients wanted to do big things in their lives, and I was good at asking them lots of powerful questions and creating accountability. But because I kept avoiding my own real writing that wanted to emerge, I began to lose my edge with my clients. I was becoming more like an automaton and less like a vibrant guy who could pierce through the flotsam and jetsam of their lives and help them see what truly mattered.

What helped my coaching get unstuck? When I finally decided to get serious about writing. I hired a writing coach/director to help me convert some of my essays into monologues, and I booked a theater date so that I could perform my first ever one-man show.

The idea scared the hooties out of me. Who was I to do a one-man show? Did I have an acting background? No. Did I think I knew what audiences liked? No. Did I do it anyway? You can bet your sweet self I did. The year of writing and editing and memorizing and finally putting the show on stage yanked me out of the numb, stale rut that I had been in. It also helped me believe in myself more, which transferred over into believing in my clients more too.

Alas, the thrill of the solo show faded, and things got a bit stale a few months ago. I knew it was time to scare myself again. My boyfriend and I went to a spa, and while there we got pedicures. He decided to have his toenails painted pink and turquoise and electric blue. I was ready to run to the hills in fear. Instead, I opted for the pretty brick red. Now this may not seem like a stretch to some of you pedicurists out there, but for me, whew, what a scary thrill!

But I didn't stop there. I also joined a network marketing company with two of my good friends. Do I think I have what it takes to make huge sales and become the darling of the multi-level marketing world? I have no idea. Am I afraid that all my family and friends will want to flee from me the minute I walk into a room? Yep. But the possibility of seeing if I can do it is so exciting So get out there and scare yourself. Do that wild thing that you think of when your mind is wandering, before the Voice of Reason sends in the storm troopers to bark orders and take prisoners. Rent that castle in Italy that you've been dreaming about. Ask the attractive clerk at the local grocery store out on a date. Take the class on Skydiving for Dummies. Doing something like this will spice up your own life, and will give you just the right amount of edge so that you can scare your clients too.

As for this month for me? I am this close to going to a pedicure salon and having them put press-on daisies on each toenail, after touching up the red polish, of course. What?! Should I do it? But I...but...but...of course I should! ☺

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