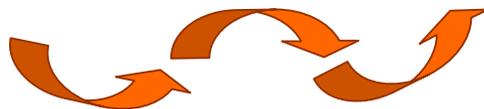


Chart Your Change



“Chart Your Change” is about knowing you’re ready for your life to take on another dimension of meaning and growth; trusting yourself to achieve what is possible without yet knowing.



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“What makes the desert beautiful is that somewhere it hides a well.”
-- Antoine de Saint-Exupery

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Welcome to Chart Your Change

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1. QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Adversity is like a strong wind. It tears away from us all but the things that cannot be torn, so that we see ourselves as we really are.”

-- Arthur Golden

2. USING ADVERSITY TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

(The Prizewinner of Defiance, Ohio)

It is not surprising that the workplace is commonly the source of conflict between workers, given the variety of communication styles, different cultures and generational gaps. And let’s be honest, there are difficult people out there too (not us, of course). The professional development folks (myself included) just can’t wait to open their full bag of tricks to improve the workplace. However, every now and then, you see a remarkable interaction between two people that challenges you to rethink the old paradigms.

I recently rented this gem of a movie, “The Prizewinner of Defiance, Ohio” and was completely humbled by the story of Evelyn Ryan, a wife and mother of 10, who endured a difficult life and an insensitive, alcoholic husband. She did it with humor, heart and grace in the 1950’s world of TV contests.

In one scene, Evelyn is sitting on the sofa with her 10 children watching a TV announcement about a jingles contest, while her husband, standing in the kitchen, is drunk and ranting. His character is portrayed as an obnoxious and sadly pathetic

persona. As a husband and father, while loving and caring when sober, is verbally offensive to his wife and kids when drunk. But, Evelyn, instead of reacting or feeling victimized, **chooses** to diffuse the situation by calmly and matter-of-factly responding to selected parts of his "communication." With genuine enthusiasm, she manages to keep her kids engaged in the contest instructions on the TV. She starts singing a jingle and allows herself to be totally absorbed in the contest. She is after all, a contest winner and does this with remarkable talent.

She is witty, bright, and has a gift for turning a phrase like no one else. Yet, her ability to remain calm, focused and graceful in the most daunting of situations is her greatest strength. Her internal compass always points north. She knows exactly who she is and despite her often dire circumstances, she is a happy person. She transcends all of the background "noise" in the kitchen through her love for entering contests – this allows for creative expression and single-mindedness. In the process, she is one happy winning camper.

What we learn from this valiant woman, is that getting upset or feeling victimized by a difficult person is a choice. Granted, there is also the choice to leave the husband, apply for public assistance and... But it was the 1950s, Evelyn lived just above the poverty line, she had 10 children and was traditionally entrenched in her Catholicism. Evelyn was **aware** of her emotions and managed them by deciding how to react to a given situation (great emotional intelligence). Her husband was a tormented man, with many unresolved issues and he repeatedly acted out his drama – but she knew it was never about her. In a sense, she was witnessing his struggle with his own private hell. Her happiness wasn't connected to her husband's behavior. She had control over her own actions and consistently pursued her dream of winning big – which she eventually did!

Now, of course, this was a movie and while Evelyn was "grace under fire," still, in everyday life, there are some seriously difficult people out there who require a different approach and even those who require immediate intervention.

In the workplace, you may be using up more emotional and psychic energy on "dealing" with difficult people than on being successful in your profession. How is one to manage his/her emotions and those of others who are difficult to work with?

From Evelyn, we learn that her tremendous focus on the "**prize,**" her **enthusiasm** for the game helped her transcend the hardships. In a real sense, it was her desperate situation that motivated her to redirect her creativity by entering contests and winning.

How are we building our endurance to sustain us through hard times? Here is what Evelyn did:

- *She found the courage to make hard choices*
- *She was aware of her emotions and managed them*
- *She had great enthusiasm which helped her transcend hardships*
- *She tapped into her remarkable creativity*
- *She had tremendous focus and constantly kept her eyes on the prize*
- *She was intentional and believed she was a winner*

How can you meet your challenges with difficult people and overcome adversity?

What limiting beliefs or attitudes do you need to let go of, to achieve your dream, your "prize?"

By making a mind shift you can tell yourself a different story about how you are judging others. Often, what we see in others are aspects of ourselves that we have rejected. Oddly enough, when we are around people we dislike, they are often a means for us to

make friends with ourselves. It is said that other people trigger the karma that we haven't worked out. They mirror us and give us the chance to befriend all of that ancient stuff that we carry around like a backpack full of lead balls. By reflecting on our own humanity, we can make peace with the people we dislike and empower ourselves in the process.

"When it's all said and done, the only person's happiness and well-being I can truly be responsible for is my own. If I believe my happiness depends on other people being different, then I will almost certainly find myself being disappointed."

-- Charlie Badenhop

3. ADVERSITY IN THE OFFICE (THE VALUE OF SUPPORT)

Client: My boss is an aggressive person and always in my face. When he wants something, he actually pokes me in the shoulder to make a point. How do I tell him off without losing my job?

Coach: This sounds like a challenging situation. I applaud you for dealing with and wanting to resolve this conflict. Have you had any conversations with your boss about how his actions are impacting you adversely?

Client: I finally did confront him. I told him it wasn't necessary to threaten me in order for me to perform my work and that I felt some of his remarks were hurtful. He said he was "just joking" and that "it was no big deal."

Coach: Your boss didn't seem to understand how upset you were about his behavior? Would you agree with that?

Client: Absolutely. It just didn't make any difference at all. Nothing changed.

Coach: Have you considered other alternatives to resolve this predicament?

Client: Well I have thought of going to HR but I'm concerned that they'll think I'm oversensitive or get into a dreaded "he said/she said" situation and then they'll take his side anyway.

Coach: Would it help you to write in careful detail just the facts of how your boss behaves and cite specific incidences of actual behavior without any judgments?

Client: Yeah, that would really help me not to overreact. Then I can feel prepared when I have a conversation with HR. Now that I think about it, there are several incidences that I can describe in much detail. But I still worry about whether they'll believe me.

Coach: What would make HR believe you?

Client: Short of them seeing my boss in action, they would probably want some proof.

Coach: Is there anyone you know – a coworker, a colleague, who was present during any of the incidences and can give you feedback about what they saw?

Client: I actually mentioned this problem to a colleague, who also saw how my boss behaved with me and then there's a team member who is aware of it, too.

Coach: I'd like to make an observation and offer a suggestion. Getting feedback from these two individuals will help you get a real feel for your degree of sensitivity. If they don't see a problem with the behavior, you might want to rethink your relationship with your boss – in which case it's important to make a clear distinction between emotional reactions and actual behaviors and we can talk further on this after the feedback. However, if they agree with your perceptions and say something like "that was a horrible way to treat you," then ask them for their support.

Client: That makes me feel more confident about getting feedback and actually having them confirm what I experienced. Maybe there's a chance HR can really intervene on my behalf.

- Coach: It sounds like you feel you can now approach HR and that they will find you believable. What will you do next?
- Client: I can see that it's important to carefully describe my observation of the incidences without bringing my emotions into it and getting the support of others who have also observed this behavior. I intend to approach HR, stick to the facts as I see them and also show that my co-workers have recognized the same thing.
- Coach: I want to acknowledge you for taking a courageous stand in a difficult situation when the outcome or repercussions are not known. Being treated respectfully is an absolutely appropriate expectation. Good for you that you are not willing to settle for less.

Note:
Settling for less is disempowering. Ideally, we can teach others how to treat us. Learning how to set boundaries is an essential process of gaining self-respect and the respect of others.

In terms of the above scenario, taking a factual, logical approach always wins over emotional allegations. HR will have a more precise and logical starting place from which to find the story of "abuse" as believable and will also have a stronger stance from which to give the abusive manager specific feedback along with advice as to what will be permissible in the future.

This script is designed to give you an idea of how a coaching session might start and where it might lead. If you're thinking about being coached and want a sense of it, call me at flomauir@aol.com to arrange for a complimentary consultation.

4. COACH'S TIP # 16 - IS IT A BLIP, CLASH OR CRISIS?

Evaluate Level of Severity in a Conflict

- Blip
 - anger is mild and passes quickly
 - Not much at stake
 - No continuing pattern of feeling annoyed with same person
 - Able to maintain sufficient trust, liking and openness
- Clash
 - Distancing or coercion are frequently used
 - Routine strategies for handling conflict are walk-aways or power-plays
 - Feel tension, stress, or anger when interacting with the other person
- Crisis
 - The relationship is on the verge of being terminated
 - There is a risk of physical violence or other extreme retaliation/reaction

Notice if you engaged in a conflict this week. Describe whether it was a blip, a clash or a crisis.

Observe yours and the other person's responses:

1. What are you both perceiving about each other?
2. What are the emotions?
3. What behaviors are being used to act out emotions?
4. If triggers are activating the emotions, what are they?
5. Are these triggers repetitive (occurring again and again)?

5. TELECLASS NEWS

Difficult People - Positive Approaches

Whether in the workplace or in our personal lives, we encounter people, who frustrate us, make us angry, and impact on our energy reserves. When this happens in the workplace, we lose our focus and become less productive.

Difficult people may actually be the gift to challenge us to grow and learn new coping and interpersonal skills. In this **introductory teleclass**, participants will learn to counter the defenses and undesirable behaviors of others.

- Identify the most common difficult "characters" and learn how to cope effectively with each one
- Explore road maps to positive outcomes

For more information on this free introductory class and to register, go to:
www.ThinkingWellConsulting.com/registration2.html

The full "*Difficult People - Positive Approaches*" program can be customized as a workshop or group coaching format to address specific workplace situations and bring about exceptional results.

Call or email me to discuss the advantages of coaching your employees to productively handle difficult people and situations.

Have a Joyful Month!



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Request Flo for your next event. In addition to being the founder of Thinking Well Consulting, Ms. Mauri is an Executive Coach and Educator at NYU, teaching Organizational Behavior, Emotionally Intelligent Leadership and Management Styles. She is certified in Conflict Resolution and Organization Development. Ms. Mauri specializes in assessment tools and self-awareness techniques for maximizing human potential. Are you getting in your own way toward advancing your true aspirations and talents? Are you experiencing challenges in your business relationships and want to breakthrough repetitive no-win cycles? Are you ready to define and lead with your strengths? A coach can help you take action to achieve your goals. Contact Flo today for a conversation.

Chart Your Change is your select source for inspiration, coaching tips and personal development. We share the very best of essays, research studies and success tools for taking your human potential to the top of Maslow's pyramid: self-actualization and transformation.

If you enjoyed this issue we'd love it if you'd spread the word. If you receive this newsletter as a forwarded message and would like to opt-in on the list, send an email to: flo@thinkingwellconsulting.com and type "Add me in," in the subject line. If this email address has been mistakenly added to our list and you want to be removed, please type "unsubscribe." Your e-mail address is never shared with anyone without your permission.

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