

Passion for Life Coaching

Making Deliberate Choices for a Fulfilling Life

Newsletter by Suzette Langley, Life Coach and MSW

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Assumptions – An Enemy to Learning

Last month I had the opportunity to participate in a class taught by a coaching peer as part of her education and certification. I decided to attend because I love to learn and develop my skills. Additionally, I wanted to meet like-minded individuals and expand my coaching network. I arrived without any expectations, my mind a clean slate and ready to learn. After introductions, we began the topic – Enemies of Learning. How interesting given that we were attending to learn.

Sixteen enemies of learning were presented. One of those enemies resonated with me – assuming you know when you don't know. Huh? Let's look at it like this. When we do an activity for the first time, we tend to be cautious and observe more. We attend to details and seek information so that we can learn. However, when we acquire necessary skills or become familiar with a pattern, we tend to assume we know what will happen and when. Then, we slip into autopilot and observe less. We know what we know and that's all there is to it.

What if our assumptions cloud our ability to see what is really happening or to be open to possibilities? Instead of knowledge opening doors, it can close off learning because we become caught in our habits and patterns.

Assumptions can interfere in many ways in our daily lives. For example, our communications can suffer. A friend and I recently had a miscommunication. She assumed she would know how I would respond to a request. In making her assumption, she communicated her request in a more defensive, self-justifying way. Unfortunately, because of the tone in her voice, her assumption about my response was correct. I was responding to her tone of voice and attitude, not the request itself. We cleared up the misunderstanding quickly but the situation crystallized the issue that assuming you know what you know may not lead to success.

Assumptions can cloud our interpretation of others' actions and behaviors. A friend once shared a story with me about a little boy on a playground who, seemingly unprovoked, hit a little girl. The little girl started crying. My friend and another teacher went over to the children. The other teacher launched into scolding the little boy and was deciding on a punishment when my friend observed that the boy looked crestfallen. Observing the boy's response, my friend asked why he hit the little girl. The boy responded that there was a bee on her and he did not want his friend to be stung. Time stood still while everyone took in this information. Having the facts changes the response, doesn't it?

What if when we assume, we create our own reality? Working with people trying to create a healthier lifestyle, I repeatedly witness how assumptions about ourselves and our abilities create reality. A statement like "I have always been a sugar addict. Changing after all these years would be impossible." sets up a barrier to learning and behavior change. Or, clients limit their physical abilities by believing they are too old, too heavy, or too uncoordinated to try an activity. With these assumptions in place, motivation and willingness decrease and progress halts.

Since my class, my awareness about my assumptions has increased. I have caught myself several times responding from an assumption or acting like I know something and realizing I am only guessing. I have achieved a new level of clarity and mindfulness in my daily actions.

Try to be more aware of your assumptions about yourself, others, and situations. What would happen if you stepped back and viewed an experience as brand new instead of as a routine? What beliefs would you be able to challenge? Give it a try, even for a day, and see what you notice and learn. Honestly, it has been a relief to not know everything, to be more curious, and to be open to information. I would love to hear what you discover from this exercise.

Thank you to all who have logged on and completed my survey! The responses are amazing and very helpful. I would love to have more information. If you have a moment, please follow this link <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=706082017828>. The survey is about the struggle to lose weight and the role your emotions play in that struggle. All responses are confidential. I appreciate your help in moving my business forward!!

Upcoming Events at Big Vanilla Athletic Club

What's Stopping You?

You promised yourself to be in shape for the summer season again this year. However, you are still not where you would like to be. What's stopping you? Discover 3 ways your emotions may be sabotaging your fitness and nutrition goals in this 1-hour workshop.

Monday, May 15th at 7:30pm. Cost: \$20 per person

Summer Fun

The weather is nice and you want to be outside having fun. Somehow you cannot seem to find the time in your busy schedule. In this 1-hour workshop, learn 9 ways to help you have the time you want!

Tuesday, June 13 at 6:00pm. Cost: \$20 per person

Resolution Check-Up

The year is half over. Chances are you made a New Year Resolution. Have you kept that resolution? Are you satisfied with the progress you have made? If not, this 6-week group will help you refocus your attention, set attainable goals, and remove roadblocks to success. Make 2006 your year!

Group begins Wednesday, June 14 at 6:00pm. Cost: \$150 for the 6 weeks

For all workshops and groups, call 410-544-2525 to register. Space is limited.

Please forward this newsletter to others you believe would enjoy it. I welcome new subscribers! To subscribe/unsubscribe, please send an email to passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net. I also welcome feedback and ideas for future topics.

For more information, visit www.passion-for-life-coaching.com.

Want to learn how to overcome the emotional roadblocks to living a healthy lifestyle? To create your success plan for emotional fitness, contact Suzette Langley, at passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net or at 410-757-7326.

Schedule a complimentary 30-minute session. Coaching sessions are generally conducted by telephone so you do not need to reside in the same area as the coach.