

Coaching Works Newsletter
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Choosing Good People For You

Choose Your People Well

One of the landmarks of success is having good people around you. Whether it is colleagues, friends, employers, business partners or employees, it is crucial that you choose good people for you! People are either with you or against you – and sometimes they vacillate between each them. You can't afford the luxury of having people in your life who are not supportive, encouraging and validating. We have enough stress in our lives, we have enough self-criticizing – we simply cannot take on any more, especially from people in our lives.

The power of a support system cannot be emphasized enough. One only has to watch the “Academy Awards” and the celebrities who have climbed to the top of their profession (no easy feat!), and listen to their acceptance speeches. Rarely will they mention the difficulties, the processes, how they overcame their own sabotages and adversities -- rather they spend their few moments thanking the people who supported them -- and they all have them. Thanking people *in advance* for their support, validation and encouragement goes a long way in helping you achieve your goals.

When highly successful people are asked how they achieved their success they will almost always say something like, “I couldn't have done it without so-and-so.” Do not underestimate the power of role models, coaches and mentors. This is why it is so important to choose your people well. The people in your life are either lifting you up or bringing you down. People can help make you or break you. You cannot afford the luxury of negative, counter, or limiting people around you. You must do everything you can to find people who are “possibility thinkers” to surround yourself with. The people around you must support you, validate you and encourage you. I recently heard Angelina Jolie on a talk show say how important it is to her to have people in her life who “elevate” her. Find people with an attitude of “abundance” rather than an attitude of “deficit.” Failure to choose good people in your life can sabotage every goal you have.

----Do not allow anyone to cause you to lower your reach.

-----Lyn Kelley

Fly in “V” Formation

Research shows that we are shaped largely by our interactions with others. Whether we have a long conversation with a friend or simply place an order at a restaurant, every interaction makes a difference. The results of our encounters are rarely neutral; they are almost always positive or negative. Motivation is based mostly on “VEE” – *Values, Enjoyment and Empowerment*. When I think of “VEE” I think of a flock of geese flying into their traditional “V” formation. Engineers have learned that each bird, by flapping its wings, creates an uplift for the bird that follows. Together the whole flock gains about 70 percent greater flying range than if they were journeying alone.

If you feel someone is not giving you the support you would like in pursuit of your new goals, you should first assess whether their doubts are valid. Is it possible that these doubts are legitimate and that your goals are either too rushed, problematic or unrealistic? If this is not the case, and you feel that they are not being supportive due to other reasons, you should discuss this with them, but you should not allow their discomfort to stand in the way of you achieving your goals.

This being said, you need to know that the people who are close to you usually do want to support you but don’t know how. You need to teach them how. You may need to give them the exact step-by-step process to use. Above all, I ask the people closest to me to be supportive, validating and encouraging. If they slip into negativity, I simply imagine I have a mirror in front of me and their words bounce off me and reflect back onto them. I state, “I only hear positives.”

It is imperative for your success that you surround yourself with positive thinkers. It is difficult enough to be a positive thinker, so without encouragement and validation from others your progress will be impeded. Ask others in your life to “catch” you when you slip into negative thinking and self doubt. Ask them to force you to restate your words into a more positive statement. Ask them to remind you of how far you’ve come and how much you have already accomplished.

---Once you've done the mental work, there comes a point you have to throw yourself into the action and put your heart on the line. That means not only being brave, but being passionate towards yourself, your teammates and your opponents.

---Phil Jackson

Role Models

As we discussed previously, role models can be an integral part of developing confidence with respect to new goals. For instance, a Latina student who will be the first person in her family to go to college will have a greater sense of confidence about her ability to succeed if she is introduced to a supportive Latina who comes from a similar background, has successfully completed college, and has embarked on a rewarding career based on her academic success in college.

Doing research for role models can help with your motivation. If you know of someone personally who you admire and who has achieved something similar to what you are striving for, ask them how they did it. What techniques did they employ? What were their challenges along the way? How did they overcome obstacles or fears? You'll be surprised at how receptive most people are to discussing their success with you.

Role models are extremely powerful motivators. They are worth their weight in gold. However, as with all human beings, they are imperfect. They are fallible, and may mess up their lives at times. Many professional athletes have let down their young idols by getting involved in drugs, adultery, and other criminal or unethical behaviors. If your role models let you down in some way, learn from their mistakes and move on. Find role models who have learned from their own past mistakes as well as the past mistakes of their own peers and role models.

A good coach can be a role model for you. Coaches have taken years of training to learn how to best validate, support and encourage people to do their very best and achieve their highest goals. Choose a coach who you admire and would like to emulate. One of the most valuable support people to have in your life is a good coach!

---Strange is our situation here on earth--we are here for a short visit--why? I don't know. I sense a divine calling that I am here for the sake of other humans and unknown soldiers whose fate is connected by a bond of sympathy.

---Albert Einstein