



INSIDE JOBS

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Focusing on Your Success

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Welcome to *FOCUSING ON YOUR SUCCESS*, the eZine for [Inside Jobs Coaching Company](#). The eZine is published once a month, and contains tips, articles, answers to questions and reader feedback, all pertaining to ways for you to function most effectively in your business and personal life.

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Favorite Quotes

“If we keep doing what we’ve always done, we’ll get what we’ve always gotten.”
Anonymous

“The most damaging phrase in the language is: We’ve always done it this way.”
Rear Admiral Grace Hooper

“It takes a lot of courage to release the familiar and seemingly secure, to embrace the new. But there is no real security in what is no longer meaningful.” Alan Cohen

Letting Go To Grow

Last week I was talking with Sam, a new client who hired me to help him streamline his office procedures. The chore that requires much of his time is his bookkeeping, which he does by hand! He said that it's time consuming, but works for him because he knows how to do it this way and feels comfortable with it.

Sam's father initiated this accounting method when he opened the business 30 years ago, and since then they've 'always done it this way'. In the early days they were a small company with only 4 employees, and this was the best way available to keep track of finances. When Sam took over 5 years ago, the firm employed 37 people, and they were still doing finances by hand!

Sam explained that he'd thought about switching to a computer accounting program because he knows it will save time, give him access to all kinds of reports and tax information, and streamline his entire bookkeeping operation. However, he was having trouble letting go of how it had always been done.

IS THIS YOU?

Does any of this sound familiar to you? Are there areas in your business or personal life where you are still doing things as they've always been done, even though it's no longer efficient? Places where it's probably time to make changes and grow, but for some reason you are reluctant to actually do it? If so, you are definitely not alone. There are many reasons why people are hesitant to let go of doing things the way they have always done them.

COMFORT ZONE

One of the main reasons is that doing something the way you've always done it keeps you in your comfort zone. Your comfort zone is a very nice place in which you are a capable, competent person who understands what is going on and feels in control of it all. It's a pleasant, cozy, safe place to be. Why would you want to let go of that?

However, the down side of your comfort zone is that it keeps you stuck and stops your growth. It reinforces using procedures that may be outdated or inefficient, and makes your business vulnerable to your competition. It is also a boring place to be, and robs you of the opportunity to grow, learn new things and become the best you can be.

FEAR OF CHANGE

Another reason people stay in their comfort zone is the fear of change. Change often represents uncertainty, and the unknown is a scary place. You don't know for sure how things will turn out. It's a place where, for a time, you feel inadequate and confused instead of competent and capable. There is also the fear that you may

not be smart, good or clever enough to master the new thing.

Many people spend their lives doing everything they can to avoid fear. However, the reality is that every change, anything new, will involve some fear. The way to deal with fear is to confront and move through it. Feel the fear and **do it anyway!**

FROM MASTER TO NOVICE

Another part of change is that you go from being a master at something to being a novice. When something is new you begin the learning curve all over again. In this situation the fear of not being able to master the new thing is often very present and can be a huge deterrent to making a change.

When you look at your life you can see that you've already mastered this process many times. As a child you probably moved through the school system, which is set up so children reach a level of mastery and then become novices again. You started elementary school in kindergarten, new to the idea of school. You learned and adapted to the process and place, to the point where you were comfortable and proficient in functioning within the system. Then you moved to junior high school, with a whole new set of rules and systems, and were suddenly a novice again. You learned and grew into junior high, and then repeated the process again when moving to high school, college, into a job, etc. With each step you expanded your comfort zone. A process that was initially uncomfortable but eventually empowering. Stretching your comfort zone is one way you learn you are a capable competent person.

In Sam's case, in order to update his accounting he will have to go from being totally proficient with the system, to being new and temporarily confused. From being the person who knows how to handle it all to being the person who has to rely on others while he's in the learning process. Growth always involves a period of being new, and new is always uncomfortable.

WHY HAVE I ALWAYS DONE IT THAT WAY?

Have you asked yourself why it's always been done that way? Often systems are implemented because they are the best available at the time. However, as time passes and new ways of doing things are created, what was once state-of-the-art may become outdated and inefficient.

For example, when I was a child I would stand holding the refrigerator door open while deciding on a snack. My mother would always tell me to close the door because all the cold air was escaping. Since she did that with me, I did the same with my children (we'd always done it that way). Until one day my son asked "why"? He pointed out that the refrigerator was electric and constantly made more cold air, so it escaping wasn't really a problem. Of course, he was right! I'd never thought about why I was delivering this message, so I asked my mother where it came from. She said that her mother always said it to her, so she believed it and passed it along. However, when my mother was a small child, refrigerators were

actual iceboxes, which were cooled by large blocks of ice. When the door was opened the ice melted faster and they really did run out of cold air.

When my grandmother told her children to close the door, it was the right message for the situation. As the message was passed on from generation to generation, the situation changed and the fridge no longer ran out of cold air. (I do understand it takes electricity to generate more). However, nobody looked at the reason for the message. We just kept doing it as we'd always done it.

In Sam's case the accounting system his father implemented was right for the time, but changes in technology have refined the most effective way to track finances. It's important to understand why the system was created, what need it was designed to fill. Look at it and see if it is still the most efficient way to fill this need, or if a more effective way is now available. This applies to how you run your personal as well as your business life.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE STUCK?

Sometimes you may not consciously realize that you're stuck and that it's time to make a change. When something becomes a struggle, takes too much time, or feels like a huge chore, it may be an indication that you are doing it the way it's always been done rather than the more efficient and effective way. You can often identify what may have outlived its usefulness by noting the things that are difficult, and asking yourself why you do them the way you do.

WHAT TO DO

Once you have identified things that may need a change, ask yourself:

Where did this procedure originate?

What was its original purpose?

Does this still apply?

Is there an easier way to accomplish the same goal?

What are the consequences of continuing to do things the way we've always done them?

What will be the results of implementing a new process?

What is stopping me from implementing this new process?

What will I do about this?

Once you've answered these questions, it's time to move. Change the procedure, buy and learn the new program, delegate to whomever can do the job, or completely let go of the procedure if it no longer applies.

After going through this process Sam decided to take a leap of faith and implement a computer accounting program for his business. He expanded his personal and business comfort zone by hiring a professional to help him become proficient in the new software. He endured a brief period of feeling totally lost, and soon became as skilled with the new system as he was with the old. The new system has accomplished his goal of his accounting and providing him with more time to focus

on other aspects of his business. Sam has also renewed his sense of being even more empowered, capable and competent.

So you may want to ask yourself, where in my life do I feel stuck or like I'm doing something just because it's always been done that way? What things might need to change, but I'm hesitant because I'm fearful of where it will take me? What would I like to do about it?

It's something to think about.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS – Listening To Myself

Yesterday I was talking with a client who asked my opinion about something he was dealing with. As I shared my thoughts I realized that what I was saying was something that I, also, needed to hear. His situation and mine were different, but the solution was similar. I was surprised and pleased to listen to myself and pay attention to what I had to say.

I realized that there are many times when I don't pay attention to what I know. I get so caught up in consciously thinking about and solving things, that I don't allow my inner wisdom to be heard.

We all have this inner wisdom. It's our subconscious, which is often a quiet voice inside our head that seems to know a lot of things our conscious mind can't access. The inner wisdom is easy to ignore because the volume of words from our conscious mind gets in the way.

In order to access my subconscious I need to stop, be quiet, and listen to that quiet voice inside my head. In today's busy, loud world this isn't easy to do. I have to focus on it.

So this month I'm reflecting on the importance of paying attention to what is in my head and comes out of my mouth. It just might be the wisdom I need to hear.

How about you?

To Reach Sandy

I welcome any and all comments and suggestions. You can contact me to comment on this eZine, or for additional issues of Focusing on Your Success. To do this please visit our website at www.insidejobscoach.com or email me at sandy@insidejobscoach.com. If you would like information on Coaching for yourself or your staff, please email us at sandy@insidejobscoach.com or call us at 1-541-772-3470

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