



The Personal Coach BULLETIN

balance through partnership

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COACHING POINT

THE PARADOXICAL WAY WE LIVE

By: JAMES LADD

Life Coach



How is it that we have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more medical experts but less wellness.



We have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways but narrower viewpoints. We spend more but enjoy less.

I mean just what is it that we have created here anyway! What have we been thinking or perhaps we haven't been thinking, at least not enough about what really counts, what really is important in our lives. If the paradoxes we find all around us are an indication of how effective we have become at living happy, fulfilling lives, we are in real trouble.

We drink to much, smoke to much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

A paradox is a person, thing or situation that is strange because it has features or qualities that do not normally exist together. Or it is a statement consisting of two things that seem to mean the opposite of each other.

Dare I say that in our rush to *(pause)* 'nowhere,' we have lost sight of what is truly important, we have lost sight of who we are, perhaps have never really known who we are? Maybe that is why we surround ourselves with what in the end for the most part is meaningless but only meaningless when we stop long enough to take the time to ask ourselves so!

Is it possible that the source of happiness or the secret to living fulfilling lives actually lies in an idea so simple that at first we are likely to dismiss it as utterly inconsequential? Is it possible that what we are really trying to find in our lives is actually found when we begin to treat life as a journey and not a series of disconnected destinations, conquests, purchases or possessions?

Well, I believe that truly is or can be if, yes if, we can slow down long enough to care about the quality of our lives and the lives of those who mean

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something to us. Begin to examine how we got here by tracing our journey to this place in time in order to find out who we are now and then to chart a course that incorporates a balance between our; physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual self.

A PARADOX



A small crowd: alone together

Still don't believe we have lost our way, perhaps a few more examples.....

we've learned to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life but not life to years.

We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbour.

We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things. We're cleaning up the air (*well sort of*), but polluted the soul.

We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice.

We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less.

We've learned to rush, but not to wait.

We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more

copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast foods and two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes.

These are the days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill.

It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom. It is a time when technology can bring this bulletin to you and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete.

Making the effort to find out who you are once done, gives you the opportunity to create a mission statement for your life; not just your personal life but also for your professional or work life. And why create a mission statement? Well, a mission statement is your essential reason for existence, or why you are alive! And believe me when I say it has nothing at all to do with the accumulation of "stuff," material possessions sometimes misinterpreted as the trappings of success. Once you have a mission or reason for living, you have a direction for your life. I mean how profound can that be!

Now maybe you found yourself sitting on the deck at a cottage or by a camp fire this summer and during a quiet moment found yourself reflecting back

over your life thinking about who you are, where you have come from, what you have accomplished and where you are going with the rest of your life. Perhaps you have even come to some conclusions about those very critical questions or perhaps **NOT?**

For others the cottage or camp fire may not be enough to stimulate this kind of introspection. Perhaps you have had to face some kind of traumatic event or some kind of life altering experience in your life or in the life of someone very close to you before considering these questions.



Either way, if you came away wanting to actually do something about this reflection no matter what precipitated it but were just not sure where to begin or how to approach it, well perhaps we can begin right here and right now!

Answering these questions is fundamentally an inward journey of discovery that if done correctly must be approached strategically for the full benefit that can be realized.

However, there are a couple of ground rules necessary before starting. First, one must take full responsibility for their lives. For some this means stopping the blame game;





"I am not responsible, it is beyond my control, others are to blame for my lot in life." In other words it is now on you, no more making or hiding behind excuses. Secondly, it also requires that you be absolutely honest with yourself, painfully so if necessary, telling yourself the truth when answering these questions even though some of the answers you find may be pretty scary or seemingly overwhelming or difficult to deal with at first.

Know too that conducting a strategic examination of your life is also a journey, one that takes you away from all the distractions or paradoxes that we create in our lives to keep us from facing the truth, that strip us of our very essence, our true selves.



Now we begin by identifying your personality style or communication type. In doing this you get a clearer picture of how you perceive the world

and everything in it as well as why you behave the way you do. With this insight among other things, you can better choose a career path congruent with your style strengths. I mean have you ever wondered why some people are unhappy in their jobs. Well, it is often associated with a poor style match.

From styles we move to core values and ask ourselves what we are prepared to stand up and fight for, not bargain away, even if necessary put our lives on the line for.....in other words our guiding principles of living. Now understand whatever methods you use to identify values know that you cannot expect to lead a fulfilling, purposeful life if you compromise them in any way, in other words step outside of congruence with them.



In looking at the many paradoxes mentioned here, leads us to the next step that of identifying needs. Most of the examples sited actually represent **wants** and not **needs**. The difference quite literally is that wants represent things that you absolutely do not require. Needs on the other hand, represent absolute requirements for living (i.e. food, shelter, clothing). It of course was Abraham Maslow who I have mentioned numerous times in my

bulletins who gave us the; "**Hierarchy of Needs**" and coined the phrase "**need tension.**" Unlike your personality and values, needs can change, depending upon life's circumstances. The trick or challenge is to stay consciously aware of the need tension you are experiencing at different times in your life and then work toward reducing that tension.

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This then is a sampling of what you can do to get closer to your authentic self and represents some of the strategic work I do with my clients. There is considerably more that is done in the areas of; **how we got here, who we are now and where we need to go**, and once complete, this insight into your personal and professional life enables you to bring your life into sharper focus by developing your own personal mission statement and actioning to achieve it through a process of goal setting and action planning, leading to the achievement of those goals.

Abraham Maslow is credited with saying; "what a man can be, he must be." Just remember that it is never to late to start again, particularly if you believe that life is a journey and not a destination, even if you think that you may be running out of time.

My thanks to Dr. Bob Moorhead for his examples of paradox in our lives.



COURAGE WITH GRACE

**By: Sybil Stokoloff,
Coordinator
Transplant Manitoba**

When I started working at Transplant Manitoba fifteen years ago, I had absolutely no idea that this job would be filled with so much joy and so much sorrow – and how much it would change my life.



I had worked in the communications industry for about fifteen years when I became the first Communications Coordinator for Transplant Manitoba. I had been in both the for-profit and not-for-profit worlds, so I was used to my share of highs and lows on the job. I knew that the world of transplantation and organ donation would be interesting and exciting, but I certainly was not prepared for the emotional side of the job or how personal it would become.



Martin Keding Liver Recipient

When I started, in addition to my communication duties, I followed the donor coordinators around night and day whenever they received a call for a potential donor. This could be at 2 in

the afternoon or 2 in the morning. I thought I should see and come to know every aspect of the donation



Cynthia Nazar Kidney Recipient and her living donor brother Doug Ross

process so that when I spoke with the media or the general public, I would do so from a very informed place. I met so many courageous people during that time, all incredibly brave during their time of grief to think of others by allowing their loved ones to become organ donors. It is heart wrenching to watch a mother say goodbye to her child; you want to take her in your own arms and shield her from any more pain; so much sorrow and so much hope all at the same time. These donor families have taught me to be a better listener. They have taught me how to have grace under fire; they have shown me that heroes aren't just on the big screen; and I've learned the difference between sympathy and empathy.

Fifteen years later, I am still in awe of these people and I am fortunate to witness the effects of their gifts – I get to meet the people whose lives have been changed by organ donation. I

have met recipients who have waited six months for a transplant and I have met those who have waited eighteen years. The length of time varies, but the appreciation of this "second chance at life" is always the same. Some were babies when they received their transplant; some went on to have babies after their transplant! When I think about quality of life, these people are my examples to live by.

I also work with recipients who have received their kidney, liver or lung transplant from a living donor. Living donors, in their own right, deserve a medal. These people have taught me what sacrifice really means – that true love is giving of yourself, not just figuratively, but literally.



David Proven Heart Recipient

My family loves to tease me that I go to work to cry. Sometimes they are so right! I am always moved beyond words when I meet families whose loved one became a donor, and I am always thrilled to see someone do well after transplant. So, tears of compassion and tears of joy are definitely part of the job. I am humbled when a donor family



or a transplant recipient allows me to tell their story to the media. These stories put a human face to a concept that is often difficult to explain.



Sara Tait Double Lung Recipient

When it comes to crying, it isn't just me. I have seen hard-nosed journalists moved to tears when they have interviewed a donor family or a transplant recipient. I have watched seasoned politicians completely lose their composure when these individuals tell them their personal story.

These are real people whose real lives have been changed. I met a woman who was widowed at a young age. Her second husband was in need of a kidney transplant and she became his living kidney donor. Her story was compelling and, at a speaking engagement, she had the audience wrapped around her finger. When someone asked why she decided to give her husband a kidney, her answer was, "I had already buried one husband, and I had no intention of doing it again!" Needless to say, she received a standing ovation.

One of my volunteers received his kidney transplant more than 30 years ago from a deceased donor. He believes that if he can live a worthy and useful life, he is somehow repaying his donor's family for their extraordinary generosity and compassion. He not only volunteers his time and talent to my organization, but to others as well, and he is a willing resource for anyone who is on a waiting list for transplant. His is a life well lived in tribute to someone who gave him a second chance at life.

A truly inspiring woman I have met waited a very long time for her transplant. Her first transplant rejected and she spent the next 19 years on dialysis, waiting for another chance. During that time, she had to travel from her small town to Winnipeg to dialyze, sometimes pushing snow at 6 a.m. so that she could be in the city by 7:30. While she waited, she and her husband adopted and raised three special needs children and fostered another three siblings with FAS. She finally got her transplant a few years ago and refers to her donor as her guardian angel. I think she is an angel on earth.

These stories and so many more have taught me that I have the personal power to take control of my life and my health in a very positive way.

It is very hard not to be humbled by the people I have met. So many of us live every day thinking we must be important people because of our job,

our wealth, or our possessions. Thanks to my experiences at Transplant Manitoba, it is very easy for me to feel not quite as self-important; my self-worth is not measured in monetary gifts but in gifts that carry a much higher value.



Danilo Gomez Kidney Recipient

So what have I learned? I know for sure that organ donation is a gift of love. I believe that living donors and donor families are the unsung heroes of our day and that we would all be better off if we got to know one. I believe that recipients are incredibly grateful individuals who live every single day to the fullest. These are the things that truly matter. I have seen how quickly a person's life can change – for worse or for better – and I try to find my own personal rainbow every day.

