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HEALTH & WELLNESS

Making difficult decisions all about perspective

This was my first coaching appointment with Margie, whom I had met in yoga practice.

She had approached me after class with questions about life coaching. Margie filled out the Wheel of Life exercise from my Web site, which is a quick way to visually see what areas of life may be out of balance.



SHERI FISHER

From the exercise, I could easily see what was out of balance: her physical environment. "Tell me what's going on with your physical environment," I said. "There are a couple of home maintenance projects that may need to be done soon, but I'm not sure I'm going to stay in the house. With economy the way it is, however, it may not be the best time to move. So I keep NOT deciding, and I stay in the house."

"What's pressing you now to make a decision?" I asked. "My friend, who is a Realtor, says the market is at the perfect point to buy a house. Prices have dropped, and because of the price range that my house is in, she thinks it would sell quickly," Margie said. "But I also like where I live ... and so I'm stuck."

"Can you do a headstand?" I asked out of the blue.

Margie gave me a look that asked, "what does that have to do with anything?"

I responded by saying, "I know an exercise that might help you to gain clarity on your decision."

"Do I need to be able to do a headstand?" she asked.

"No, but if you have a reference of what it feels like to be upside-down, it might help. If you'd like to go into a headstand, I'm all for that," I said. "It sounds like if you could make a decision about moving, then you'd have more information about doing the maintenance on your house, right?"

She nodded.

"Let's take a look at your decision to move from different perspectives," I suggested. "Imagining you're in a headstand, what does this decision look like from an upside-down perspective?"

"An upside-down view reminds me that moving can make me feel like my whole world is turned upside-down. I don't like that much chaos," Margie said.

We talked more about what upside-down meant to her, helping her step into that perspective.

Margie explored various perspectives as I asked questions such as:

- What would your mother/father/brother do and/or what advice would he or she give you?
- How would a 5-year-old see this situation?
- What would your dog do in this situation?
- What will this look like a year in the future?
- What would it look like to jump in with both feet?

By exploring these perspectives, Margie was able to see her decision from a variety of viewpoints. We then talked about which one held the most energy for her: Margie decided she should move.

Her action steps focused on what she needed to do to get her house on the market.

She said her action steps and the accountability would help her to keep from getting stuck.

Coaching challenge: When stuck in indecision, seek other perspectives. Answer the questions above or make up ones that are relevant and eye-opening for you.

Sometimes our inability to make a decision is because we are working with the same set of facts.

By varying your perspective, you may discover new facts and add new dimensions to your decision-making process.

Sheri Fisher is an intuitive life coach living in Grand Junction. The situations and characters in her column are fictional to maintain client confidentiality. For more information, go to: www.coachwithsheri.com.

Sneeze squeeze

Is working from home the new calling in sick?

By LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press Writer

Jeremy Lesniak owns a small Web design firm in Randolph, Vt. He has 10 employees and hundreds of clients. Sick isn't an option.

"I have two cell phones and a pager," he said. "I have taken partial sick days or just worked from home, but I haven't had a real one in over six years."

The swine flu epidemic had employers desperately trying to keep sick workers at bay, calling into question companies that didn't. But the economic meltdown has stepped up pressure on worker bees and bosses alike to produce from home rather than heal in bed, said Dave Couper, a career coach and corporate human resources consultant in Los Angeles.

"There's an implicit requirement to be at work — partly because of the fear of losing your job if you're not there," he said. "Before, companies were OK about people being out sick. Now, I don't see that as much. I've known people who have e-mailed from their hospital room or been on conference calls where they can hardly speak they're so sick. The recession has made it worse."

The self-employed — those with access to technology and connectivity anyway — and employees in small companies with fewer prospective subs really feel the squeeze with the sneeze.

Ashleigh Harris gives her San Francisco



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JEREMY LESNIAK HASN'T taken a full sick day in more than six years. When he's sick, the owner of a small Web design firm works from his Montpelier, Vt., home. He's never out of touch. His two cell phones and pager are always nearby. The economic meltdown has stepped up pressure on worker bees and bosses alike to produce from home rather than heal in bed.

startup, which makes a new type of training wheel for kid bicycles, high marks for flex time. But with only three full-time positions, herself and the chief executive officer included, calling in sick means work languishes.

"Things need to get done when they need to get done when it comes to building a successful startup," said Harris, the marketing director. "So if that means hopping on a conference call from my cell when I'm in bed, or sending a few key e-mails to hit deadlines, I'm more than happy to do it."

Some workers fear demerit systems for calling in sick — or they're up against policies that allow no sick pay at all. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 39 percent of private-sector employees fall into the latter category, including many millions in the service industry.

A survey of U.S. workers conducted in 2008 by the Families and Work Institute, a nonprofit research group that monitors

See SNEEZE, facing page

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