



Underpromise---Overdeliver

I recently read this on a blog on the internet. "It just drives me NUTS when people make commitments to friends or business associates/customers that they either are: (a) unable to meet, (b) unwilling to meet, (c) or don't follow through in order to meet. How inconsiderate."

If you develop the habit of *promising less while delivering more*, you will fulfill much more of your potential, and people will value you more. So, learn to underpromise and overdeliver.

I first heard of this principle when I was in "coaching school" from Thomas Leonard, the "father of coaching." It did not take me long to figure out that I make promises to others because I want to be valued and liked. OK, I am a "people pleaser." So I would make promises and then hustle to carry out those promises. And I would often run out of time to get them done or end up doing them poorly. Have you ever been there?

But my life changed when I realized I was focusing on making and keeping promises rather than on the gifts I had to give. I found I could live without promises much of the time. I could give value to my clients by still helping them find solutions and resources etc. without the promises. It was wonderful to give to my clients and know it would be a surprise. I realized my friends and family care about me just as much, promise-free.

The key is to promise far less than you know you can deliver which allows you wiggle room. You can deliver something different and better than that person was expecting because the pressure to perform is off. You can be more open to your intuitive self-listening to that inner voice that can do surprising and amazing things.

Here is a fun thought and maybe a good way to practice this principle: Rather than offering to help or telling folks what you can do for them, just do it! Say, someone just had surgery; you could bring over a meal. People love surprises, and the worst that can happen is that they would need to freeze your meal. Maybe you have an elderly woman living next door. Just mow her lawn. You may miss the mark sometimes, but in both of these cases there is no promise, just delivery. You may not be able to entirely stop making promises, but I think you will enjoy the space and freedom that comes from promising less while delivering more.

Coaching Question: Why do you need to make promises at all? Aren't there other options...a better way?

Coaching Tip: Be serious and careful when giving your word. Most of us are too quick to give our word and forget the cost of keeping it.

Homework: Commit to making absolutely no promises for 1 week or longer. Explore the question "Why ARE you making promises?" While promising less, be creative in delivering value to others.

Quotes: "Do-so" is more important than "say so". *-Pete Seeger*

"I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everyone" *--Bill Cosby*

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