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Coach's Corner: Don't always take the easy way out

By Sharon Pahlka

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You may feel like your life is whizzing by before you have really lived and been who you want to be. That's the time to let your life open up to new possibilities. Don't take the easy way out!

Sitting on the airplane last week, I just felt tired. Life seemed difficult. Normally, I love to travel and do well, but having had the flu and not sleeping enough, I thought, "Why do I try so hard and go through all this? Is it worth it? Is there an easier way?"

I thought of a friend who seems to choose the easier way more often. She does a lot of hanging out and talking — making choices where little effort is involved. I have rarely seen this person go the extra mile, if ever. I struggle to accept some of her choices.

Don't get me wrong in thinking I like to make things hard for myself. After all, we have just so much time and energy, and we all need shortcuts — but just not a pattern of all shortcuts. There is great value in trying harder and doing your best, even when you don't feel like it, or you don't know how or you are afraid. Overcoming a little resistance can strengthen you in the long run.

If you are like most folks, you want to make a difference in the world. I think this can only be done by giving life your best shot ... not taking the easy way out. What can this look like?

- Having that neighbor for dinner even though you are not in the mood.
- Helping someone with a job assignment although it costs you time.
- Traveling to your niece's graduation, even though it will likely put you behind in your work.

You can add to the list. I am not talking about ramping everything to 100 percent and burning yourself out or trying so hard there is no "you" left. Each day confronts us with many choices. We will not always make the best ones, but having an attitude of not taking the easy way out when that is appropriate can pay high dividends.

While still on that plane, it dawned on me: Asking, "Why is this so hard?" is a silly question. What matters is that I continue to do my best in life, being aware of not always taking the easy way out in making my choices. It will help me make my life count.

Coaching Question: Do you want your life to make an impact for others and our world in a bigger way?

Coaching Tip: Remember the times you have purposely chosen the harder path, the road-less-traveled, and the results.

Quotes:

– “People who want milk shouldn’t sit on a stool in the middle of a field in hopes that a cow will back up to them.”

– Curtis Grant

– “Oh Lord, thou givest us everything, at the price of an effort.”

– Leonardo da Vinci.

Sharon Pahlka is a life coach and speaker. In her coaching, she helps her clients live well and meaningfully, especially those with chronic health challenges. Sharon’s column, Coach’s Corner, offers helpful tips from her work.

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