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Monthly Features

Coach's Corner; Will it be faith or fear?

By: Sharon Pahlka, Journal Newspapers 10/02/2007

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Today was a difficult day. Ever been in a situation where you felt overwhelmed, out of your expertise and yes...afraid? We all react differently but the underlying cause is the same-fear.

How did Coach Sharon react? I started complaining. A good friend called and I had my platform-he was a good listener.

I spewed forth the challenges and hard place I felt I was in. He listened patiently and then had this advice for me. "If you have accepted something, then don't complain."

For example:

Relatives come for a surprise visit and ask to spend the night, and you say "no problem" even though you are cringing inside. Don't complain.

A co-worker asks you to work their shift, and you accept. Don't complain.

A friend asks to borrow money, and you accept. Don't complain.

You get the idea. I knew he was exactly right, and that I was doing myself a disservice and increasing my fear by rehashing the things I was uncertain about, replaying them back in my mind, without taking action. It was making me tired too.

Within an hour of this helpful call I talked to a beloved friend who also listened and was helpful in a different way. She talked about all the things I could "do" (rather than complain, although she didn't say that). It made me feel empowered and ready to take action to get out of my fear-driven uncomfortable place. I then spent the day doing all the things I knew to do. My difficult day changed! My burden lifted. I realized I was not doing what I tell others around the country to do when I have speaking engagements: Take charge of your life by doing all that you can "do" and then have faith that the rest will work out. This has been a good motto my whole life, but somehow I forgot.

What is the lesson? If you have accepted something, don't complain. Instead, think of all the things you can do and then have faith that the rest will work out. Let me add an interesting note. I oddly remembered a greeting card that I have had for many years that I have never found a recipient for. It said: "What shall I carry today? Will it be faith or fear?"

Now I know who I bought that card for-me! I still have so many lessons to learn-even lessons I tell others they need to learn. When I catch myself complaining (not too soon I hope), I will remember that card and will choose to carry faith rather than fear.

Coaching Question: What shall you carry today? Will it be faith or fear?

Coaching Tip: Take action rather than complain.

Homework: Practice saying "no" several times each day for a week. When you do say "yes" and accept a situation, be aware and don't complain.

Quotes: "Excessive fear is always powerless."

Aeschylus "When thinking won't cure fear, action will." *W. Clement Stone*

Resources: *Boundaries When to say Yes, When to say NO to take control of your life*, by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend.

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.

Contact Sharon Pahlka via her Web site, www.lifeisagift.com.

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