

COACH *Notes*



Volume III, No. 10

Newsletter

Split Personality? Living with Our Competing Selves

What happens when we come face to face with our own inconsistencies? It may happen when broken New Year's resolutions become far too apparent to ignore. Or, it hits us when we say one thing to our children, and an inner voice reminds us that we don't walk our talk. At work, we make a bold statement to our peers and feel a twinge of guilty conscience and hypocrisy inside.

Most of the time we kid ourselves with a system of delusions and denial. We say we are one kind of person, while doing things that are contrary to our desired image.

Psychologists call it "cognitive dissonance," a state of discomfort when we say one thing but do another. We will go to any lengths to avoid that feeling, hence we construct an elaborate system of delusions, denial, and some behaviors we don't even notice.

To face the fact that we aren't acting like the person we believe we should be is painful and unpleasant. We don't have time for that. Negative emotions get in the way of our being productive and focusing on the tasks and goals at hand.

So we live with incongruities and denial, and our battling inner selves seem to be just part of who we are. We find a way to excuse ourselves. We are forgiving of our inconsistencies. We're only human, after all.

The Price of Self-Ignorance

The price we pay by not facing these paradoxes is fatigue, irritability, and lack of energy. It takes a tremendous amount of energy to maintain the different sides of our personality in some sort of harmony.

Most people don't recognize the extent of their inner complexity. We grow up with ideas of who we are or who we should be that are given to us by our parents and teachers. "Oh, you are such an extravert, you just love being with people" is a message that doesn't recognize your desire to be by

UNLIMITED POTENTIAL



**HERDLINGER
ASSOCIATES**

"Turning potential into performance"

Dreamers Welcome

At Herdlinger Associates, I encourage people to dream. And the positive results have been astounding!

When individuals pursue their dreams, their lives percolate with purpose, passion, success, and fulfillment.

As a coach, I don't try to make my clients' dreams come true. That's their privilege...and responsibility.

My role – and my joy – is to stand by their side to encourage, guide, challenge, and cheer them on.

Are your dreams big enough? Let me help you unleash your potential and accomplish more than you ever dreamed possible.

...David Herdlinger

HERDLINGER ASSOCIATES has helped thousands of professionals at all levels in all types of organizations achieve extraordinary success and satisfaction.

We serve clients in North America, Europe, and Asia, ranging in size from individuals and very small businesses to corporations with annual sales in excess of \$40 billion.

Learn more about HerdlingerAssociates at our website:

www.TheCoach.biz

P.O. Box 20389
St. Simons Island, GA 31522
912.634.9300
877.626.2960 (toll-free)
David@TheCoach.biz

yourself. So we think we are one way and don't pay attention to our other side.

The truth is that we may have a preference for a certain set of behaviors, but that doesn't mean that we don't act out of preference, depending on the situation.

We run into trouble when we set goals that do not take into account the differing sides of our personalities. We say we are health conscious and set a goal of eating healthily at least 80 percent of the time and working out 5 days a week.

When we fail to maintain our healthy lifestyle, we get down on ourselves, blaming our lack of willpower and discipline. But there may be another explanation.

Competing Values

We have competing selves and competing commitments. On the one hand, we may truly be health conscious and want to maintain a set of healthy standards. On the other hand, we may also be committed to having fun and enjoying life. These two values may compete for attention, and usually the goal of immediate pleasure will win out over delayed satisfaction.

We may value family life and work hard to give our family things that provide pleasure and comfort. But what happens when our commitment to work and financial success interferes with spending time with children and spouses?

What about our sense of orderliness? What happens when our focus on getting things done overrides *getting the most important things done*? In order to pay attention to what really matters, we may have to let organizational chores go.

16 Basic Drives

One way of becoming more aware of the things that motivate us – and their competing forces – is to work with a coach. A personal coach can help acquaint you with self-assessment tools to increase your knowledge of what really drives you.

There are many such tools available, and all lend increased awareness of our individual personalities and drivers. A look at the Reiss Desires Profile of common desires will shed some light on our basic drives. According to Stephen Reiss, Ph.D., there are 16 basic desires. They are listed here:

Acceptance	Honor	Order	Social Contact
Curiosity	Idealism	Physical Activity	Status
Eating	Independence	Romance	Tranquility
Family	Leadership	Saving	Competitiveness

Everybody is motivated to a certain degree by these values or desires. People have high, medium, or low motivation in each area. We are motivated to express our values. Knowing what motivates us is an important element to being able to commit and prioritize our energies.

Success-oriented people tend to be high in Status and Leadership desires. What is interesting is to look at how the desires that motivate us can compete for our attention. The desire to maintain order and tranquility may conflict with a strong desire for family activities. It is difficult to have both. Similarly, it may be difficult to satisfy a desire for competitiveness when one also has a strong desire for honor or idealism.

Identifying Competing Values

Human beings are complex animals, with competing drives and a multitude of values. It is not easy to know oneself well. How do you honor core values without self-knowledge and the ability to juggle more than one competing value?

How do you gain self-awareness so that appropriate goals and priorities can be set?

Try to identify 3-5 areas that motivate you strongly. Then identify any competing values that also must be satisfied. Working with your coach will make this process easier.

Once you identify your strongest desires, and the competing drives that vie for your attention and focus, revise your goals and priorities to honor both sides of your personality.

Both sides of you will love you for it!