



Annette Estes
Columnist

Professional Development

Put me in, Coach!

I was at Bailey's on Friday, March 16, watching my Razorbacks lose to Southern Cal. The Florida-Jackson State game was on the big screen next to the one I was watching.

I asked a man sitting next to me what is it that makes Florida so good? He said, two things: the players have good genes/abilities. And they have a great coach. Of course, probably all the teams who made it to the NCAA Championships can say the same, but they don't all make it to the finals or win the championship game.

It got me to thinking about how what he said applies to all of us. We all have unlimited potential to be champions at what we do. So why do some succeed more than others? And what can we do to reach our full potential?

I'm biased, of course, but I agree that we can all accomplish more – as individuals and teams – by having a great coach.

Here are five areas in which a coach can help you achieve more of your potential in your work and personal life.

Goal Setting. Do you have so much you want to accomplish you don't know where to begin? Your coach can help you determine which goals are most important to you right now and guide you toward achieving them. She can help you visualize the outcome and determine what resources and actions you'll need to take to make your dreams a reality. I have my clients write down the goal in detail as if it had already happened, and include how they feel now that the goal has been reached. It's a powerful way to set things in motion and never fails to produce a result.

Decision making. It's difficult at times to make a decision when there are so many actions and outcomes to consider. Your coach is a great sounding board to help you determine a course of action. He won't make the decision for you, but he can give you advice based on his experience and help you decide what's best for you to do.

Prioritizing and Organizing. These are two different things, but they're so closely related I've combined them. This is an area in which my coach has been

especially helpful to me. As a solopreneur, I'm responsible for handling everything in my practice. That can get overwhelming at times. Also, I'm one of those people who wants to get everything done at once. In January, my coach helps me to list and prioritize my projects for the year. Then together we determine which I should do first and schedule those for the first quarter. Then I choose the projects for quarters two, three, and four and forget about them. Now I can concentrate on my first quarter projects and not fret because I'm not working on the others. It's a great relief and helps me to focus on what I'm working on at the moment.

Focus. Speaking of which, your coach can help you when you get off track or go off on a tangent, which is bound to happen sometimes. A coach often gives "homework" for you to do between coaching sessions. You determine if it's something you want to do. If you agree, your coach will ask if you've done it at the next session. You can say yes or no. You can decide to change the assignment if you feel it's in your best interest. You are always in charge of your coaching and your coach will support you. Sometimes he may ask uncomfortable questions or make observations you'd rather not hear, but it's always done kindly, with your best interest in mind.

Self-esteem. Sometimes we can have too much and other times too little. Either way your coach is there to help you work through those issues that undermine your self-image, or give you a reality check when you need to "get over yourself." When coaching clients, I like to begin with the "wins" the person has had since we last talked. It helps to begin on a positive note. Your coach is someone who is on your side, who genuinely cares about your success, and is always there for you.

The most beneficial service your coach provides is to **hold you accountable** for doing what you say you will do. She holds your feet to the fire in a supportive way to help you accomplish more than you thought possible.

Here's to your success and to having all your dreams come true. May you win the championships in the Game of Life!

Annette Estes is a Certified Professional Behavioral and Values Analyst, Coach, and Consultant. She is a professional speaker and author of the book, *Why Can't You See it My Way? Resolving Values Conflicts at Work and Home*. Annette won Matrix Awards in 2004-05 from Women in Communications for her columns in *The Easley Progress*. The Estes Group is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. Contact Annette through her website at www.CoachAnnette.com.

© Copyright 2007. Annette Estes. All rights reserved.