

IN THIS EDITION:

- Sometimes success comes from an empty cup
- Live Your Strengths monthly challenge
- Special coaching update

“It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers.”
~ James Thurber

“The important thing is not to stop questioning.”
~ Albert Einstein

Sometimes Success Comes From An Empty Cup

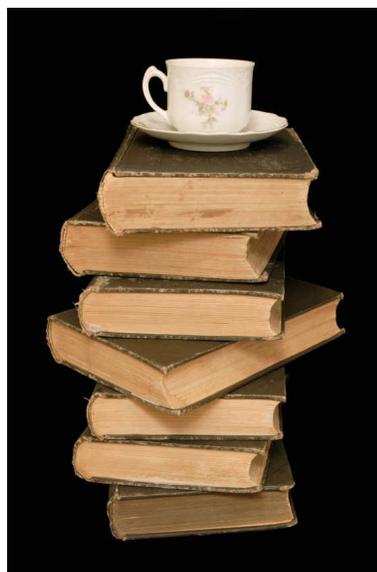
This month, I would like to share one of my favourite stories with you. It's an old Zen fable that I have heard in many versions, but it always hits home for me.

There was once a scholar who wanted to learn about ancient wisdom from an old Zen master. The Zen master agreed to meet and share the information he possessed. However when the day came for them to meet, the scholar spoke so much about his own ideas that he didn't give the wise old man any opportunity to share his knowledge.

After a while, the Zen master arose and offered the scholar some tea. The scholar accepted the offer and the Zen master began pouring the tea into his cup. He poured until the cup was full and tea began overflowing and running down the sides of the cup. The scholar cried out “Stop! The cup is full, there's no room for any more!” The Zen master replied “Yes – just as your mind is full of your own ideas. You will not learn anything new unless you are willing to empty your cup.”

Have you noticed that some

of the greatest discoveries in our lives are the result of asking a question and being open to learning something new? This rule applies in ‘small’ matters, such as opening up a fascinating conversation with a stranger, and to ‘large’ things such as major scientific discoveries. The common factor is that the process starts with having a *beginner's mind*.



The best inventions and ideas have come, not from people who found the right answer, but from people who asked the right questions. For example, how would the world be different if Mary

Kay Ash had simply asked the question “How do I start a cosmetics company?” rather than “How can I build a business that will change the lives of women?” Likewise, what if Henry Ford had asked “How can I build great cars?” rather than “How can my company democratize the automobile?”

Many of us approach our work as if we have all the answers, especially if we have been doing the same job for a while – we are the ‘experts’ in our fields and know the ‘right’ way to do things. We may also take this approach in our relationships – have you ever asked your spouse or child a question and then tuned out when they began to answer because you thought you already knew what they would say?

What would happen if we approached each aspect of our lives and businesses with the curiosity of a child? Instead of trying to rush to the solution, what if we just spent some time playing with the questions we asked? For example, the next time you are assisting a customer, rather than asking yourself (continued on page 2)

~ Special Coaching Update ~

I am excited to share with you my decision to continue with advanced coach training! In September, I will begin Coach U's Advanced Corporate Coach training program. This program is currently the only corporate business coach training program accredited by the International Coaching Federation.

I want to say a special thanks to my clients who have been so supportive of my decision. This will be a period of great learning opportunities for me as I am also currently completing my Master of Adult Education. I am very excited about this new challenge and am looking forward to sharing new tips and resources with you throughout this journey!

"Judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers."

~ Voltaire

Sometimes Success Comes from an Empty Cup (cont'd from page 1)

"How could I provide good customer service for this person today?" you could ask yourself "How could I delight this person today?" Do you think your interaction would be different as a result of this changed question?

As a species, we are blessed with an unlimited capacity to learn new things. By approaching each situation with a beginner's mind, we not only learn new information to help us develop better businesses and relationships; we also regain a fascination and passion about life in general.

Are there areas in your life where you have stopped asking questions? If you are ready to 'empty your cup,' join me in taking this month's *Live Your Strengths* challenge.



Live Your Strengths Monthly Challenge

As you start to approach life with a beginner's mind, notice the questions that you ask yourself and others as you move through your day. Then try asking some different questions and watch for the change in response from others. Here are some questions you may want to begin with:

Questions to ask yourself:

- How else could I view this situation?
- What is fascinating about this person I'm speaking to?
- Why do we do it this way? (hint: 'because it's always been done this way' is *not* the answer you're looking for!)

Questions to ask your customers/clients:

- What did you like best about your experience today?

- Imagine that we could deliver/make the *perfect* service/product – what would it look like? How could we build on the strengths of our existing service/product to produce this ideal?

Questions to ask the special people in your life:

- Tell me about the best part of your day.
- What is the best way I can support you right now?
- You certainly think differently than I do about this issue. I want to really understand your point of view – can you tell me more about why you believe....?

Could you use some guidance with this month's challenge? Call Denise for a free 30-minute coaching session. Start living *your* strengths!

"In all affairs it's a healthy thing now and then to hang a question mark on the things you have long taken for granted."

~ Bertrand Russell

Do you have suggestions for upcoming newsletters or success stories you want to share?

Contact Denise denise@insearchofexcellence.ca