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Not Just Talk! – 2qtr2009

To view on-line: www.ggci.com/NotJustTalk

Hi All ~ Barry Zweibel, here. Your 2qtr2008 edition of "Not *Just* Talk!" - the quarterly newsletter from GottaGettaCoach! – follows:

We start off with something from the **Ask the Coach** grab bag, this one titled, "**Less of More or More of Less?**" where I address the following question: "Whenever I have a lot to do, I start off really motivated, but then I get overwhelmed by it all and accomplish far less than I wanted to. But whenever I try to purposefully limit what I'm doing (so that I can feel satisfied by completing everything on my list) I feel like I'm not trying hard enough. What's the right way?" Hmmm. Can't wait to see how I answer it!

Next up, a review of "**Problem Solving 101: A Simple Book for Smart People**", by Ken Wantanabe. A best seller in Japan, this McKinsey consultant/Harvard graduate originally wrote it for kids in Japan, but it quickly became a favorite of parents, teachers, and businesspersons, as well. It was released just last month in the States so I picked up a copy to see what all the buzz was about. I'm glad I did!

A set "**Notable Quotables**" follows; a half-dozen "**Great Things I Didn't Say (First)**" to tie together the lessons to be learned from the first two newsletter pieces. And to round things out, as usual, some highlighted titles (with links) to **some of my favorite posts at GottaGettaBLOG!**, in case you missed them, and some **GGCI News-of-Note**.

As always, your questions, comments, and suggestions, are welcomed!

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Not *Just* Talk!

2qtr2009 edition

www.ggci.com/NotJustTalk

Designed to help you better 'walk the talk' at work, and in life, Not Just Talk! is written and published by Barry Zweibel, noted master-certified executive and personal life coach, and president and founder of GottaGettaCoach!, Inc.

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Less of More or More of Less? - Ask the Coach

Question: Whenever I have a lot to do, I start off really motivated, but then I get overwhelmed by it all and accomplish far less than I wanted to. But whenever I try to purposefully limit what I'm doing (so that I can feel satisfied by completing everything on my list) I feel like I'm not trying hard enough. What's the right way?

Answer: Those infomercial disclaimers sort of have it right: But while they say, "Individual results may vary", I say, "Individual *preferences* may vary."

Indeed, some people are far more motivated and inspired by having FEWER items on their list daily list so that they work to DEFINITELY complete – let's call this a "DEFINITELY-DOABLE" list. To them, it's about the satisfaction (and self-respect) that comes from the COMPLETION of their daily assignments.

Others are more motivated and inspired by having MORE items on their daily list than they can possibly complete – a "SURELY-a-STRETCH" list, if you will. To them, it's about the satisfaction (and self-respect) that comes from the CHALLENGE of purposefully stretching themselves.

The converse of this is also true, too: Some people get more discouraged by NOT finishing what's on their list than they're pleased by having stretched themselves beyond what they might have achieved using a lesser list. And others are far more discouraged by not doing MORE on any given day, even if they accomplished everything they set their sights on.

And some people are the proverbial "all of the above"!

Which are you? Not sure? Then use the chart below to write down the feelings, positive or negative, that come up for you in each scenario and see for yourself:

	When it's a DEFINITELY-DOABLE list	When it's a SURELY-A-STRETCH list
A fully completed daily to do list makes me feel ...		
An unfinished daily to do list makes me feel ...		

Something also to keep in mind: Every day may not be the same. It's just like when you run – some days you can run miles without a problem; other days, just putting on your sneakers is a challenge. So don't make up a rule that says every day your to do list has to be exactly the same.

Maybe M/W/F are "doable" days, while T/T are "challenge" days. Maybe every day is a "doable" ... with an option. (Many take this approach when exercising – a minimum of 30 minutes on the elliptical or treadmill, but if they're feeling good, they'll continue on for another 15 or 20.) Or not.

The point is, you can be a rigid or flexible as you want AS LONG AS it serves you and your ultimate goal – to make good things happen sooner.

Stories are told on both ends of the spectrum. To the good:

- Man pushes his limits and achieves what he wanted ... and more
- Woman takes a slow-and-steady route and completes her first marathon run

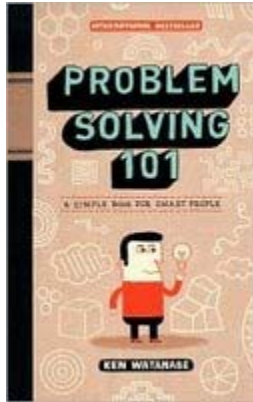
And to the not-so-good:

- Man over-exerts himself and tweaks a muscle thus derailing his exercise plan
- Woman gets frustrated with lack of progress and just gives up

So what's in your best interest right now – working a to do list that's DEFINITELY-DOABLE? Or working one that's SURELY-a-STRETCH?!

YOU decide.

Problem Solving 101 - Book Review



Title: Problem Solving 101: A Simple Book for Smart People

Author: Ken Watanabe

ISBN-13: 978-1-59174-242-2

Published: March 2009

What a fun little book!

Ken Watanabe, graduate of Yale and Harvard Business School, and management consultant at McKinsey & Company for six years, quit his job, moved to Tokyo, to teach schoolchildren critical thinking skills. As he wrote in the book's preface, "Although Japanese business leaders, educators, and politicians have long talked about the need for Japan to shift from "memorization-focused education" to "problem-solving-focused education," no one had figured out a concrete and effective way to make this happen. I hoped that [Problem Solving 101] would at least provide a starting point, one that would help shift the debate from whether we should teach problem solving to how we should go about teaching it."

It did much more.

The book soon became a huge success – not just with school kids, but with businesspeople, too. In fact, its first printing (in Japanese) became Japan's number one business best-seller in 2007. And that was before it spread to an even-wider general audience.

So, when I learned it was being translated into English, I thought, hey, let's take a look-see.

With adorable illustrations, and charts, and stories, Watanabe takes us through several cute examples to help us all become "Problem-Solving Kids" – "Whether the issue is big or small, we all set goals for ourselves, face challenges, and strive to overcome them. There's a fundamental approach to solving these real-life problems, one that can consistently lead you to effective and satisfying solutions.

And chances are, no one has ever bothered to show you.”

To help us “kids” learn, he offers several McKinsey-esque techniques – Logic Tree, Yes/No Tree, Problem-Solving Design Plan, Hypothesis Pyramid, Pros and Cons/Criteria and Evaluation, among others – which he includes in our “problem-solving tool boxes”. He then walks us through precisely how to use each of them and how they apply to the overall problem-solving process.

While the examples and explanations are definitely “kid-friendly,” don’t think that this is all just kid stuff – it’s decidedly more than that.

Here’s his Root Cause Methodology:

- **Step 1** – Diagnose the situation and identify the root cause.
 - **1a** – List all the potential root causes of the problem.
 - **1b** – Develop a hypotheses for the likely root cause.
 - **1c** – Determine the analysis and information required to test the hypothesis.
 - **1d** – analyze and identify the root cause.
- **Step 2** – Develop the solution.
 - **2a** – Develop a wide variety of solutions to solve the problem.
 - **2b** – Prioritize actions.
 - **2c** – Develop an implementation plan.

Here, too, is his Goals and Achievements Methodology:

- **Step 1** – Set a clear goal. (“What specifically do I want to achieve? When do I want to achieve it? What specific conditions do I have?”)
- **Step 2** – Determine the gap between the goal and the current situation.
- **Step 3** – Form a hypothesis about how to close the gap and achieve the goal. (“When you set a clear hypothesis and rationale you are more able to collect information and conduct analyses efficiently, and discover if your hypothesis is true.”)
 - **3a** – List as many options and ideas as possible.
 - **3b** – select the best ideas as the hypothesis.
- **Step 4** – Check the hypothesis. Go back to Step 3 if the hypothesis is disproved.
 - **4a** – Determine the analyses and information required to test the hypothesis.
 - **4b** – Analyze and develop action plan. (“Impact = plan effectiveness x quality of execution”)

He also includes a method to evaluate multiple options and select the best one, which is not unlike my Decision Matrix Tutorial e-book I sell at www.ggci.com/Store/#2, actually.

“Problem solving is easy,” concludes the author, “when you know how to set a clear goal, figure out how to reach it, and follow through while reviewing your progress and making changes to your plan as necessary. If you make problem solving a habit, you’ll be able to make the most of your talents and take control of your life. You can solve not only your own problems, but the problems of your school, your business, and your community – and maybe even the world.”

Indeed. And not just for schoolchildren, but for ALL you problem solving “kids” out there, right?!

Notable Quotables: Great Things I Didn't Say (First)

- **Theodore Rubin:** "The problem is not that there are problems. The problem is expecting otherwise and thinking that having problems is a problem."
- **Voltaire:** "No problem can stand the assault of sustained thinking."
- **Edward de Bono:** "It is well known that "problem avoidance" is an important part of problem solving. Instead of solving the problem you go upstream and alter the system so that the problem does not occur in the first place."
- **Herm Albright:** "A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort."
- **William Inge:** "Nobody is bored when he is trying to make something that is beautiful, or to discover something that is true."
- **Tom Bodett:** "They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world: someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for."

GottaGettaBLOG! Highlights from 2009qtr1

I've been using [GottaGettaBLOG!](#) as a vehicle to capture news, notes, and musings about coaching, mentoring, and getting more from YOUR Untapped Potential – along with whatever else I happen to find amusing or thought-provoking – since June of 2003.

Some highlighted blog postings from last quarter are listed below – just follow the links:

January 2009

- "**Developing Your Leadership Development Plan**" - There are five *key* leadership domains ... learn what they are and how to work more effectively within each one.
- "**Simple Checklists Work!**" - If, as research now proves, simple checklists can help reduce surgical deaths and complications by more than a third, what might they do for you and your work?
- "**Fall Down Five Times; Get up Six**" - Remember the last time you composed a Haiku?! Me neither. But here's one I wrote to inspire a dear friend of mine.

February 2009

- "**The Heart of Effective Personal Management**" - A primer (albeit a rather lengthy one) on Stephen Covey's Time Management Matrix that differentiates urgent activities from important ones, their various combinations, and how they affect our short- and long-term success.
- "**Is This You?!**" - The more you complain, the better ... NOT!
- "**Put the Big Rocks First**" - While some might conclude that if you work at it, you can always fit more into your life, that's really not the point of this charming little anecdote.

March 2009

- "**Fast, Happy, Thinking**" - Scientific American Mind magazine reports on a new study that shows *accelerated thinking* can improve your mood." Quick, read all about it!
- "**Demons of Effective Goal Setting**" - Ever try to get something started ... only to not?! Ever start with the best intentions ... and then nothing?! Effective goal-setting is a tricky wicket ... especially when the demons start looking you in the eye. This post looks at five such demons.
- "**Petition for Equal Access to Music Education**" - A call to action about making music education be a requirement for all public school students.

As always, your on-line comments are welcomed and encouraged.

GottaGettaCoach! News from 2009qtr1

- The Better Business Bureau[®] of Chicago and Northern Illinois, Inc. commended GottaGettaCoach!, Inc. in having earned its Better Business Bureau Complaint Free Award for 2008. Per Steve J. Bernas, BBB President and CEO, "We are pleased to recognize your firm for superior performance."
- Barry was interviewed for an article in Crain's Chicago Business on how the economy is changing how people job-search.
- GottaGettaCoach!, Inc. conducts its first-ever GGCI Executive Coaching Client Survey. Both quantitative and qualitative feedback was gathered, tabulated, and reported, including Return on Investment (ROI) data.
- Barry Zweibel was interviewed by Don Morris of the New Coach Connection for a podcast about the possible downsides of new coaches prematurely selecting their coaching niches.

How YOU Can Help GGCI Continue To Grow

At some point, even the smartest, most capable, people know it's time to improve their leadership, management, and communications skills. And that will be *your* cue to say,

.....
"Wow! Sounds like you GottaGettaCoach!"
.....

GottaGettaCoach! provides **executive coaching** and **leadership development** support to executives interested in:

1. Upgrading their executive presence and organizational influence
2. Thinking more strategically more of the time
3. Communicating more effectively, up, down, and across the organization
4. Leveraging their time, effort, and personnel resources more effectively
5. Being ready willing, and able to have difficult conversations, when needed
6. Driving key business results without being a jerk!

GGCI also provides **life coaching** and related **products and services** that help make good things happen sooner for people at work – and in life!

“Thank you for your continued interest in, and support of, what I do. The number of prospective clients you continue to refer my way is both gratifying and delightful!”
– Barry Zweibel

Additional products and services are available at the GGCI on-line Store – www.ggci.com/Store.

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