

COACHING TIP

From Rex C. Houze

GETTING INTO YOUR ZONE

You can probably remember times when you were in a zone. You were operating at maximum effectiveness with a minimum amount of energy. You lost all track of time. You accomplished more than you ever dreamed possible. You were excited.

Simply put, you are in a zone when your abilities match your challenges. The bigger the challenges, the bigger your abilities need to be. Likewise, if you have tremendous ability, you need to get in situations where you have tremendous challenges and opportunities. Here are some things you can do to get into your zone and stay there most of the time:

Have a written, and specific, goals program. Written goals are important because writing crystallizes thought and crystallized thought motivates action. Your goals program needs to include goals in every area of your life including career, family, financial, mental, physical, social, and spiritual. Having goals in every area of your life will give you balance and you'll use more of your potential.

Develop and protect your attitude. It's easy to get swept up into the environment and influence of negative people. To offset this tendency, you can listen to positive CDs, read positive books, and use visualization to push out the negative thoughts that creep into your conscious and subconscious mind.

Use leverage. You can gain leverage through the influence of other people. Tap into their influence, credibility, and knowledge to help you reach your goals. You can develop leverage by becoming an expert in your chosen field; be a specialist rather than a generalist. You can also use systems and scripts that allow you to replicate your best efforts with the least amount of energy.

Be persistent. Ninety per cent of all failure comes from quitting too soon. When you're focused on a goal that's important to you and you encounter obstacles, do whatever it takes to go over, under, around, or through the obstacles.

Embrace continuous improvement. One of my favorite examples of embracing continuous improvement involves the 10-year-old daughter of my long time tennis partner. She was playing first base on a girls' softball team. In a game where her team was getting defeated soundly, she was called in to pitch even though it wasn't normal in that league for 10-year-olds to pitch. The coach had used all of his 11 and 12-year-old pitchers to no avail.

After she took a few warm-up pitches, she faced her first batter. Her first three pitches were not even close to the strike zone. At that point, she walked off the mound and headed toward the dugout. My first reaction was that she was discouraged and wanted the coach to take her out. Instead, she stopped at the first base line and said to the coach in a loud voice, "What can I do to improve?" The coach gave her a few tips, she applied them, and her results improved dramatically.

When was the last time you asked yourself, "What can I do to improve?" When was the last time you asked your business coach or mentor, "What can I do to improve?" When you have a written specific goals program, a positive mental attitude, leverage, and persistence, then take daily action on your goals and constantly look for ways to improve, you'll be operating in your zone a high percentage of the time.