

Balance with Grace

A monthly newsletter by Grace Durfee, personal coach

Volume 11, Issue #6, *Late Summer Must be Present to Win*

I came so close, but I missed a golden opportunity. Billie Jean King, one of my long-time tennis idols, was a speaker at the USANA convention I attended last week. At the end of her presentation she pulled out her racquet and hit a bucket full of autographed tennis balls into the audience. Everyone had remained standing after giving her a standing ovation and watched with anticipation to see where her next shot would land. My seat was quite a distance from the stage, and I felt it would literally be a long shot for one to reach me. I had a notebook and pen tucked under one arm, so when a ball came straight to me, I only had one hand free to catch it. Even at that distance, the ball had some pace on it, and all I managed to do was block it. The ball bounced off of my hand, and a woman several rows in front of me, who had both hands free, became the lucky recipient. As disappointed as I was, I wryly chuckled to myself about having the message to focus on one thing at a time driven home in such a clear way.

Although many of us (myself included) pride ourselves on our multi-tasking abilities, we kid ourselves to think that we can give full attention to more than one thing at a time. A recent news special cited the terrible Union Pacific/Metrolink train collision of 2008 as an instance of multi-tasking with deadly consequences. Twenty-five deaths resulted from this accident which was attributed to the driver texting while driving and failing to notice a signal to switch tracks because of an oncoming train. Driving a car while texting, using a hand-held cell phone, or punching in a new destination into GPS can be equally dangerous. Some U.S. states have banned texting and using cell phones (here in MA it's limited to teen drivers), but ultimately it comes down to self-determination.

When we think we are multi-tasking, we are actually zig-zagging—shifting our attention back and forth between multiple activities. This is really not the most efficient or effective way to get things done. Full engagement produces the best and speediest results. Productivity experts have found that depending on the complexity of the task and other variables, it can take 4-15 minutes to recover and refocus after an interruption. Some interruptions can be easily managed by using a “do not disturb” sign, turning off the ringer of a phone or the chime that alerts you to an incoming email or text, or escaping to a conference room or library for work that require intense concentration. Others may require changing others expectations of your response and setting and managing your boundaries around them. For example, a number of my clients discipline themselves to check and answer email one to three times during the workday. A fellow coaching colleague uses an email autoresponder to inform people that she is taking her own coaching advice and limiting her relationship with email. She shares the two days a week that she responds to email and requests that people call her or her assistant if they require a more immediate response.

Where do you attempt to do too much at once?

What are you willing to do to become more present?

What might you win by choosing to be fully engaged?

Upcoming Programs and Events

Now What? 90 Days to a New Direction Coaching Group

Wednesdays 12-1 p.m. Eastern

September 7, 14, 21, October 5, 12, 19, and November 2, 9, 16

Cost: \$200 a month with a one-time \$25 materials fee. All participants must also purchase a copy of *[Now What? Ninety Days to a New Life Direction](#)*, by Laura Berman Fortgang. Group size is limited. Contact me soon to reserve your spot.

Mentor Coaching Group

Start date and times will be coordinated with participants, but will most likely be late morning, three Thursdays a month from September-December. Cost and commitment: \$200 a month for a minimum of three months with a one-time \$25 materials fee for *Success with Grace: Grow a Profitable and Fulfilling Coaching Business*, a 97-page practice-building workbook. Group size is limited. Contact me soon to reserve your spot.

Ridgefest 2011

Stop by my table at this event to learn more about coaching, Reiki, and USANA products.

Sunday, September 25th - 12 noon until 4PM

Rolling Ridge Conference and Retreat Center

660 Great Pond Road

North Andover, MA

See www.rollingridge.org for more information

Reiki Trainings

I'll be scheduling Reiki I, Reiki II, and Reiki Master trainings this fall. As these are small classes, I'm happy to take your scheduling preferences into consideration. To learn more and check back for upcoming dates, visit www.coachingwithreiki.com.

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