

A DAY OFF AND THE LESSONS IT PROVIDED

A recent article in Business Week magazine states that effective leaders often have coaches. Not only am I coach, but also I have one myself. He emphasizes that once we leave our normal environments we're better able to learn and see things from a different perspective. He was the reason I recently took a day off to spend time at Cannon Beach, Oregon.

After weeks of constant rain in our area, I was thrilled to wake up to bright sunshine. In the distance, I spotted Haystack Rock, a famous Oregon coast landmark. After breakfast, I thought to myself, "I am going to walk on the beach and go up there". Quietly, a goal was set.

Before setting off I entered a restaurant and noted that a couple I had met the night before was having coffee and reading the paper in the corner. They suggested I join them. Eagerly I did so, for a group of us had learned that the man had defected from Russia 12 years ago. His stories about how and why he left were fascinating. Walking away, I realized how fortunate we are to live in the United States all of our lives.

Not forgetting my goal, I bundled up and headed for the beach. There it was, stretching out in front of me in all of its glory, huge waves crashing in the brilliant sunshine. My journey was just beginning.

Going down the stairs, I noticed all the trash that had washed up during the night. One wonders how people can let this happen -- but that's a whole other article. This one is about my journey to meet my goal.

At first, the beach stretched out before me and walking was easy on the flat and compacted sand. The water quickly rushed up and then back into the ocean. Before long, I came across a very wide channel about one foot deep that the water had cut into the sand. There was no way directly through it but I could see a way around. I took the time to go way up to the source where rocks were strategically placed. By being very careful with my footing, I was able to navigate to reach the other side. The beach once again became flat and my journey continued.

There, suddenly, another channel of deep water appeared. I stood there and thought that I might as well go back. Yet, through the corner of my eye, I noticed an object quite a distance up toward the bank. Taking the detour was a really good move for there across the channel lay a plank someone had placed earlier.

I had two choices. I could either turn around and go back, or do a balancing act and traverse the plank and keep heading toward my "quiet goal". Deciding to keep moving toward my goal proved to be the right decision. I easily kept my balance as I crossed the plank and soon found myself on the other side. I knew, of course, that if I did it once I could do it again on the return trip.

My journey continued as my mind cleared. The brilliant sun beat down upon me. My coach was right --I was already feeling renewed.

Suddenly there appeared still another channel of water flowing back to the sea. I smiled, for this time the channel was not very deep. There were numerous areas of sand high enough to stay out of the water. Gingerly I leaped from one dry spot to another. When I looked up, I found myself standing in front of Haystack Rock. One cannot but feel in awe when standing there -- its majesty is something very hard to describe.

After about an hour it was time to retrace my steps back to my room. The “quiet goal” was met and along the way, a number of things were reinforced:

1. Set a goal.
2. Realize that sometimes the goal may take you through rocky times.
3. Realize that sometimes the goal may require a balancing act.
4. Realize that sometimes the goal may have you leaping from one place to another.
5. During the accomplishment of any goal, a number of decisions need to be made.

Yes, I highly recommend you stop what you are doing and go someplace where you cannot be interrupted by telephones, emails, or people needing something immediately. When I got home, nothing had happened that couldn't wait until my return. The next day I accomplished far more than I normally do and new ideas flourished -- including the storyline for this article.

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An Executive Coach certified in Performance Coaching, Kathy Condon travels the world inspiring others as an international speaker and trainer. A published author, she is driven by a distinct purpose to motivate others to achieve their full potential. Her popular E-zine “*Weekly Wisdom*” offers insights and thought-provoking comments about current events, business communication and career issues is emailed to hundreds of people each week.

Kathy's book “*It Doesn't Hurt to Ask: It's all about Communication*” was released in March of this year. The book stresses the need for the use of simple tools to increase your ability to communicate more effectively with anyone. Even the technology inclined will learn small things that make a big difference in communicating and connecting with others.

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