

Climb. Enhance. Upgrade

My last article resonated with many people, and I found myself coaching several of them as they felt inspired to refine their career directions. However, there were a few individuals who chose not to pursue coaching after I asked them, “Are you willing to do the hard work and better yet, work on yourself?”

Changing careers or jobs without examining ourselves or working on ourselves is like signing up for a new gym membership and believing that we will become fitter even though we aren't actually exercising there. Strangely, this mindset is common among both adults and children. Both in golf and badminton, I have encountered many who expect to play significantly better just because they bought a new golf club or racket while refusing to work on their fundamentals. Over the years, I watch these folks as they continue to enrich the equipment sellers with no noticeable difference in their performances. In fact, my son when he was eleven used to point out to me the ones on his team whom he calls ‘Cheating Themselves’ - boys who always sprint only three-quarters of the court when they are supposed to sprint for the full court, and they wonder why they don't win badminton matches.

Coaching that helps individuals get unstuck from their professional situations, into peak performance

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Refining and working on ourselves without cutting corners is not only a basic requirement but also a constant work we should be engaging in unless we live isolated lives or if we have decided that our status quo is 'Que Sera Sera, Whatever Will be, Will be'. A telltale sign that I should not continue coaching a client is if he or she refuses to solicit feedback from colleagues or former colleagues- because validation is important. I joke with some of my clients - "It doesn't matter how good I think my golf game is; it is the actual scores of the past ten games that count."

The 2016 Olympics Bronze medalist for badminton mixed doubles, Malaysian player Goh Liu Ying spoke about her playing partner in a December 2021 interview - "Thirteen years with him seems like a long time but to me it all passed in the blink of an eye. We went through so much - successes, disappointments, misunderstandings, big hopes, pressure, doubts, injuries and much more. In those years, he got married and had four children. To me he was the best badminton partner. I am grateful he stood by me through our ups and downs."

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She acknowledged that she and her partner were at opposite ends of the personality spectrum, and that they had gone through quarrels and cold wars before finding their sweet spot. When probed about their misunderstandings, Liu Ying said the pair worked with psychologists before the 2016 Olympic games and resolved their differences after expressing their innermost feelings.

In a separate interview, Liu Ying expressed the importance of adapting and moving away from stubbornness and always making room for another person's perspective. 'It's a valuable life skill', Liu Ying said.

I like what Liu Ying said about making room to consider someone else's view. It does not mean we always accept another person's ideas (we are not cult members). Rather, it requires us to hold and reflect on someone else's perspective rather than dismissing it right away. Have you tried to speak to someone who asks you for new ideas, but rejects them as soon as you introduce them? That is not a fun conversation to have!

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The task of refining a CV is one of the easiest parts of my work as a coach. Working over a 12-36 month period with individuals who are willing to embrace a contradiction, question their assumptions, shift their perspective, alter their habits, get uncomfortable in role plays, refine the words they use, and even amend their clothing, etc, all with the goal of achieving peak performance, offers the real thrill and challenge. Those are the heavy liftings and the fun stuff for my coaching career and my clients.

In a famous Chinese poem of the Tang Dynasty, the poet painted a beautiful scenery of the sun's glow on the majestic mountains. The author dangled a carrot to his readers that there are more; those willing to climb higher will be rewarded with lofty views and sights around a thousand miles.

It might mean adopting new habits, working with a therapist to mend the broken walls of communication within your family, getting outside help to mediate a dispute with your colleague, or partnering with an advisor to elevate your business. Are you ready to work on yourself for an upgrade? The climb might be uncomfortable, but beautiful views await. Don't let any potential lie around, pump it all out! Let's chat!

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