

The Next Step: Beyond Financial Success Ron Mann, Ph.D.

I have everything I ever wanted, house, cars, clothes, money, and relationship: but I still feel like something is missing! Sound familiar? There are thousands of people looking for something intangible, but they intuitively know it is there. Typically, they are looking outside themselves for the elusive treasures of happiness, but it seems to slip away so quickly, even after great worldly success.

We are raised and fed on the belief that worldly success will bring us happiness. We strive to excel at work, find the "perfect" mate, and raise bright and healthy children. We obtain our goals and yet, there often still remains a feeling of emptiness, a sense that something is missing. This empty space is a signal that it is time to attend to the inner needs of the soul! This shift in values can result in a new sense of balance and integration between external material accomplishments and an inner personal sense of meaning and fulfillment.

Mainstream Executive Coaching typically offers assistance for performance based issues within the business environment. Whether it be instrument based coaching or reflective coaching, the focus is often upon obtaining personal clarity for problem solving. "How can I meet my goals?" "What are my objectives?" "How can I become more effective in my job?" "What is the right decision for my company?" These are very legitimate and typical concerns for the Executive Coach and his or her client.

However, once an individual has moved up the developmental scale of maximum performance, new issues often emerge. This can be the doorway to the Next Step. This step is often seen in very successful executives in their forties and fifties who are wondering, "What am I doing with my life?" "Now that I have made my fortune, how can I contribute to humanity?" The spiritually minded Executive Coach can play an invaluable role in helping a client explore and clarify these eternal questions that take us into the heart of our deepest values. I suggest that knowing our life's purpose can provide a clarity and inner peace that will dramatically affect every aspect of our life.

These higher level matters come from the domain of the soul and require a different methodology for investigation. The conventional worldly problems are often successfully resolved with a left brain, rational approach. The spiritual questions call for a right brain, heart centered, intuitive approach that allows for a deeper listening to the inner wisdom of the soul. Quiet contemplation, dream work, art, journal writing, meditation, and communion with nature provide more direct access to the soul's terrain and result in profound shifts in one's view of life and one's place in the world.

As is true with all helping professions, your ability to help is largely determined by your personal level of experience. This "next step" requires some personal degree of familiarity with the inner terrain and the methods for spiritual exploration. A comfort with feelings, emotions, confusion, and the unknown are very helpful. A well developed sense of intuition, an ease with silence and an ability to let go of being in control will open new dimensions of insight and understanding.

The athletic coaches are very familiar with The Zone; a state of consciousness that allows for an incredible, effortless, peak athletic performance. The Zone is not limited to physical performance. All of life can be lived from this state of presence and awareness. Shifts in consciousness will open an inner domain filled with personal meaning, wisdom, a sense of purpose, and an experience of our universal interconnectedness; all of which will result in a life filled with peak performance and greater creative expression.

We are all interested in the bottom line. Richard Barrett, former Values Coordinator at the World Bank, suggests that knowing one's life purpose is vital to establishing a values based organization. Robert Haas, CEO of Levi Strauss, has said, "In the next century, a company will stand or fall on its values." Our deeper values come from the depth of our being and a good coach can help you get there.

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