

INTEGRATIVE LEADERSHIP INTERNATIONAL

“Helping individuals and organizations become integrated.”

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Integrative, Intuitive and Inspirational Coaching

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OBSERVATION/REFLECTION:

I have been coaching people for over 15 years. The way I began coaching was much more performance, strategic and goal oriented coaching that focused on modifying behaviors, and accomplishing goals.

Eight years ago, I began to co-develop the process, model and framework of integration. The integrative life and leadership paradigm allowed me to create a more wholistic framework in which to help my coaching clients and awaken and develop more of their innate potential – heart, body, mind and soul. An important part of the process of integration is learning to live a reflective life, formulating an Ideal of ourselves, and then striving to live that Ideal Self every moment of every day.

Three years ago, two significant events helped me solidify this process of integration for myself and others. The first was graduating as a Yoga/Meditation Teacher in February 2005 where I learned at a very deep level that the inner journey towards self discovery was as important to my life and leadership as the outer journey of achievement. I had been a dedicated practitioner of yoga and meditation for the prior 6 years, but the shift to teaching was another step in my development. The second event was completing the Destination Coach Program, in March 2005, where I learned a powerful inspirational coaching model, many tools that I could use with my coaching clients, and the phrase “you can only coach to your own level of awareness” resonated with me at a profound level.

As I progressed as a coach, I truly understood at a deep personal level what that phrase “you can only coach to your own level of awareness” really means.

If the coach is externally and materially conscious only, then your perspective will be on changing behaviors that are observable and measurable. If you are mentally focused, you will work on changing the beliefs one has about themselves or others. If you are emotionally focused, you will seek to be empathetic and to understand how the coaching client’s attitudes and feelings play a role in preventing or attaining their goals. If you are spiritually focused as a coach, then intention and purpose behind the thoughts, feelings or behaviors of your client is paramount, with the mental thoughts, emotional feelings and physical behaviors following and shaped by this intention.

The integrative approach utilizes all these levels and perspectives in a coaching session. The question is, how do you obtain the wisdom to know when to use which approach at what time? So I found that unless the coach places themselves in the highest level of awareness they can attain, they cannot be of greatest service to their coaching clients. To be an integrative, intuitive and inspirational coach you must be in a spiritual place yourself.

So I have strived to elevate my own inner and external awareness in my development as a coach these past three years. In this process, I found I trust my own insights, intuitions and inspirations more and more. I find I can hold the space of trust and compassion for the coaching conversation so that the highest and best for the situation can arise. I find that the right questions, the right comments, at exactly the right time come effortlessly into our dialogue. Clients suggest that after a coaching session, the questions stimulated new thoughts, perspectives and approaches to their challenges; gave them more energy; and was pragmatic in providing concrete steps towards co-creating a better more hopeful future for themselves.

Today, I am more confident as a coach. I look forward to coaching sessions. And my coaching practice is growing and evolving naturally. One of the contributing factors is the integration of the deep inner journey I learned as a Yoga/Meditation Teacher and Practitioner into my coaching practice.

Here are five steps I use to elevate my level of awareness and maintain it during a coaching session:

- **Preparation:** I sit quietly and ground myself for five or ten minutes before each coaching session. My feet are firmly planted on the floor, my spine is tall, and I roll my shoulders up, back and down a few times. I close my eyes. Then I focus for a few minutes on yogic breathing; inhaling to the diaphragm, lower ribs, upper chest, slight pause, and then a long slow exhale. This relaxes the body, stills the mind, calms the emotion and helps me to connect with the alpha state of restful alertness
- **Invocation:** Next I invite in the pure white loving light to move through my body and to totally wash away any of my projections, judgments, “my stuff” or anything which might get in the way of good coaching, whatever the form it may take.
- **Affirming Intention:** I set my intention to hold the loving and trusting space and ask to be of service - that this coaching session is for the highest good of all concerned by being truthful, compassionate, and wise in helping the coaching client to help themselves.
- **Empathic Connection:** Being grounded and fully present, I focus on my heart center and make a heart connection with my coaching client, visualizing a beam of a naturally loving light between us. I believe that the sharing of hard and soft

truths, challenging questions that may arise during the coaching session are better shared in a loving and caring way that is helpful and hopeful.

I am now ready for the coaching conversation.

- **Gratitude & Appreciation:** After the coaching session, I disconnect the heart connect and I silently give thanks for being of service to the Divine, my coaching client, and myself.

Great coaching and great leadership is about being conscious and acting thoughtfully from the stirrings of our hearts and the promptings of our souls. Taking a few minutes of preparation, invitation and invocation, setting the intention, making a connection, and showing our appreciation are processes that will help you do just that!

APPLICATION: Great coaching and great leadership is about being conscious and acting thoughtfully from the stirrings of our hearts and the promptings of our souls. Taking a few minutes of preparation, invitation and invocation, setting the intention, making a connection, and showing our appreciation are processes that will help you do just that!

INSPIRATION: Coaching others and yourself leads to this: “When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, and all your thoughts break their bonds, your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties and talents become alive and your discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be.” Patanjali (c.1st to 3rd century BC)

INFORMATION: Integrative Leadership: building a foundation for personal, interpersonal and organizational success (2005) has two coaching stories weaving through this foundational book, **plus** the **new** interactive **Integrative Leadership Study Guide: let spirit be the lead of your life (2008)** will help you self coach! Both books are available on Amazon or from our website www.integrativeleadership.ca.

UPCOMING PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

Integrative Leadership: taking your leadership to the next level

Feb 11 – 13, 2009, Holiday Inn Express, Saskatoon

April 28-30, 2009, location tba , Regina

For more information and to register contact: Business and Leadership Programs, CCDE, University of Saskatchewan at 306 - 966-5523 or www.learntolead.usask.ca

University Leadership Development panel presentation, The Leadership Challenge Forum, Aug 8&9, 2008, Denver, Colorado. For more information and to register contact: www.leadershipchallenge.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-310884.html

Integrative Leadership: building a foundation for personal, interpersonal and organizational success. Conversation with the author and book signing. International Leadership Association, Nov 12 -15, 2009, Los Angeles, California. For more information and to register contact: www.ila-net.org/conferences.

The Yoga of Leadership, March 28 – April 1, Sivananda Ashram, Paradise Island, Nassau, The Bahamas. For more information and to register contact: www.sivananda.org/nassau

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