
The Examined Life, January 2004

A free, monthly electronic newsletter brought to you by:

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Examine, Explore and Excel!
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WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT

Sometimes the timing just has to be right. For example, years ago I met a woman, Nory, who inspired me to walk a marathon. Now, it's no easy feat to inspire a non-athlete like me. What appealed was the combination of the physical challenge and the chance to raise funds for a great cause. I followed along with great interest as Nory prepared to walk a marathon for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS). I decided that I, too, would walk a marathon. But not right then.

Luckily my inner wisdom kicked in and made me realize that the time was not right. I had other, higher priorities then. Well, now the time is right. I walked into the LLS office and signed up with immense satisfaction and a sense that this was the perfect time for this activity in my life.

Have you ever received a gift that had a big impact on your life — even though you ignored it for years? When I was 18, someone gave me a copy of the book *Psycho-Cybernetics*. For some reason, I didn't get around to reading it until I was 27. What would have happened if I'd read it at 18? Who knows? It might have had a profound impact on my life. But I suspect that the timing wasn't right. I hadn't lived enough yet to be ready for the message. At 27, I was ready.

Most of us have many different tasks and activities competing for our time. How can we make wise choices? How can we allow ourselves times when we choose to do nothing? And, maybe most importantly, how can we rest easy at the end of the day and say, I've done enough!

The key steps involve being clear about our priorities, listening to our inner wisdom and learning to quiet the negative self-talk. As Andrea Van Steenhouse writes, in *A Woman's Guide to a Simpler Life*:

When we go to the optometrist to have our eyes examined, she flips a host of images before us and asks:

Clearer or fuzzier?

Clearer or fuzzier?

Clearer or fuzzier?

Being ready for a simpler life implies that we are willing to hold up every choice, past and present, and consider whether it grows clearer or fuzzier when viewed in the light of what we hold most dear.

TIP OF THE MONTH

One of my favorite expressions is “Procrastination pays off...sometimes!” Seems an odd thing for a coach to say. But in this quickly changing world, some things just go away and cease to be a priority before we get around to doing them. Voila! The project gets canceled and we’re now glad we didn’t get started on it as early as we’d planned.

One of my favorite newsletter authors (not to mention friend, speaker, author, consultant) is Naomi Karten. With her permission I am reprinting her delightful piece on procrastination for your enjoyment!

Procrastination-Inspired Productivity
From Perceptions and Realities, Vol 9 No. 1, by Naomi Karten

The ability to procrastinate effectively is vastly underrated. I rarely get as much done as when I’m putting off doing something I don’t want to do. When the deadline looms and I can stall no longer, I complete the task faster than if I’d started sooner. So for me, putting things off actually saves time. (Do you like this reasoning?)

One trick for converting a putting-it-off mentality into a getting-it-done reality is to divide the task into small chunklets. Then spend a mere 10 minutes on one chunklet. Any chunklet will do.

After 10 minutes, put it away, and later (or tomorrow, if you’re an experienced procrastinator), spend another 10 minutes. Or work on another chunklet. Some chunklets won’t seem so bad once you’ve gotten started and you’ll see them to completion. Before you know it, the terrible task will be done.

If you’re reading this newsletter as a way to put off tackling your own dreaded do-its, let me not discourage you. In fact, if you’d like to continue procrastinating after you finish it, you’ll find more newsletters and numerous articles on my website (<http://www.nkarten.com>) on such topics as customer service, measurement, persuasion skills, and service level agreements. You’ll be excelling as a Procrastination Pro.

So, if the time is right for procrastinating, have at it. If, on the other hand, you have been procrastinating on tasks that are draining your energy, why not schedule an Anti-Procrastination day? On that day, look at the thing that’s been on your list the longest, undone. Is it still worth doing? If so, this is the day for it!

LLS MARATHON UPDATE

In 1988, volunteer Bruce Cleland started the Leukemia Lymphoma Society’s Team in Training program. Talk about leaving a legacy! It is an ingenious program that now trains approximately 35,000 participants each year to walk or run established marathons around the world. There are also events for bicyclists and triathlons. Since the program began, 160,000 individuals have raised more than \$385 million. At least 76% of the funds go to research and patient service programs, while the balance covers the expenses of the training program, including travel to the event.

Each participant has a minimum that they must raise. For example, I must raise \$4,300 to participate in the Midnight Sun marathon in Anchorage, AK in June. My goal is to raise \$10,000.

The marathon is 26.2 miles and the training schedule includes walking 4-6 days per week, about 2-4 miles most days with at least one long walk per week, starting with 6 miles and working up to 18-20 miles. Since signing up on January 9th, I've walked 46 miles and have raised \$ 986.60! I had great fun in coming up with suggested donation categories such as \$113, one dollar for every day that I will be training for the marathon or \$23.20, ten cents for each person in the Philly Multiple Myeloma Networking Group that I co-lead. Anyone who donates \$250 or more can choose to receive a free 30-minute massage (in Delaware) and/or one month of free coaching.

If you're looking for a great way to jump-start your fitness program and to make a valuable contribution, check out the Team in Training website teamintraining.org. Maybe I'll see you in Alaska!

COMING EVENTS

Sunday, February 8, at noon

Walk, Run or Cycle

Do you want an interesting and fun way to get in shape? Do you want to make a difference in the lives of people with leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma? Looking for a unique way to travel? Join us as we discuss the terrific Leukemia Lymphoma Society's Team In Training program. Vessa will be back from running a marathon at Disney, Debbie Exner will be preparing to walk at the Mayor's Midnight Sun Marathon in Alaska, and Cindi Romanelli will fill us in on the details of this inventive program, and the important work of LLS.

Guests: Debbie Exner, Vessa, Cindi Romanelli

Host: Tony Maxwell

Tune in to Radio Alchemy on WVUD, 91.3 or online at <http://www.wvud.org/>

SPREAD THE WORD

If you are ready to make changes in your business and personal life or know someone who is, I'm looking for you. Curious? Email me at DEXner@ExnerAssociates.com or call 302-478-5919 to schedule a complimentary half-hour coaching session.

If you are enjoying this newsletter, please forward it to your friends and colleagues! Or direct them to the subscription form and past issues at exnerassociates.com

Thanks,

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The strength of any plan is in the timing.

— Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu, French philosopher

Please let me know if you'd rather not receive these messages.