

Wisdom Within

At forty-seven, Susan faced a disorienting dilemma. Over the years of her life negative comments made to her had taken root to become limiting beliefs that grew like weeds in the garden of who she wanted to become. The limbic system of her brain stored the messages received over time and then replayed the old tapes when it came time for her to step fully into who she has the potential to be; her true self, her best self.

A disorienting dilemma is a change that occurs in life, causing us to have to reexamine our beliefs, values, and identity, even to the point of deciding to change our mind completely. In Susan's case, her disorienting dilemma is around her own ability to trust her best judgment, to know what brings her fulfillment and pleasure. She had been so used to being in the service of others (as a mother, wife, daughter, friend, and co-worker) that thinking of herself and her needs first, felt wrong, selfish somehow, and foreign. It did bring her pleasure being-there for others. It fed her need to be needed. At the same time, she now realized a hollowness deep within. Something was missing in her life. Yet, she had no idea what it was, or where to find it.

In this case, there is nothing wrong with Susan. There is no reason for her to seek therapy or take anti-depressants. She is not feeling sad or depressed. It is a feeling of being unfulfilled. Susan is dealing with a human development aspect of growth toward self-actualization, which is the ability to reach our potential. It has to do with taking a look at her needs, values, and desires in moving forward.

As Susan's coach, my job is to help her see through the proverbial trees in order to get full view of the forest. Events and situations accumulate in our mind as thoughts we can choose to process, or not. If we chase down the path of every thought occurring to us, it *will* lead to confusion and overwhelm. (Imagine trying to watch and follow 100 different T.V. shows visible on 100 screens in front of you.) With the help of a coach, Susan is able to weed out the distracting parts to focus on and follow the voice of her own best knowing. (It's rather like having someone help discern which of those TV shows is speaking your signature truth.)

The first thing we did together was talk about experiences that have brought Susan joy and could be called a peek-experience. With my asking powerful questions that get to the source of her needs and values, Susan told stories of times from her childhood, right up through today. I noted what I was hearing and gave feedback, acknowledging my understanding and listening deeply for meaning between the words.

In the course of my coaches training and certification, as well as my master's study of Human Development, I learned to use curiosity, to trust my intuition, and to be completely present, in order to help Susan deepen her own learning, or forward her action.

By the end of our first session, Susan had a much clearer view of the path she wanted to take toward fulfillment. We made a plan to work together on this.

The coaching plan for Susan is unique, just as it is for every client of mine. Susan has her own best knowing, so she will know when she is 'complete.' Until then, she tells me she feels more confident, more joyful, and more fulfilled each time she is held accountable (as she designed) for achieving her dreams.

Her favorite part of the process was writing a new story of her life, a chapter that takes place in the future where she is living fully as her best self. It has become a sort of road map into a bright and sunny future. She sees herself deepening relationships, traveling to distant shores, and laughing more in the next five years than in the past fifteen! She has taken up a new hobby rewriting past hurts into rewarding stories of courage and faith. And for each step out of the darkness of self-doubt, she finds herself more fulfilled.