

STOP
YOURSELF...
STOPPING
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“Imagine you are driving down the road, your car is struggling, and you want to go a bit faster. There are two ways of achieving this. You could press a bit more on the accelerator. This would cause more stress to the transmission but would result in a little more speed. Or... you could release the handbrake... then you go a lot faster...”

Trying to change...

This is a great analogy to the predicament many people face when they attempt to change their behaviour and do something different or new.

As an example, you may have considered *coaching* because you are looking to overcome a particular behaviour that is no longer supporting you or you want to change your performance and your life in some way.

Let's assume that you are looking to increase your earnings by learning a new skill such as taking advantage of a network marketing opportunity. This can be an effective way of adding to your income whilst carrying on in your present job. However, this article is relevant no matter how you want to change your life: **You may want to have more time, be more productive, be more relaxed... this article will help you.**

In the example outlined above, you have probably thought through all the pluses in achieving more income, such as:

- No longer worrying about bills dropping through your letterbox with no money to pay them.
- Easily meeting your mortgage payments or paying off your whole mortgage.
- Providing security for you and your family.
- No longer working at a job you hate.
- Having the car, house, holidays that you really want.
- Spending each day doing what you want, when you want.

However, this is only part of the story... thinking these through is like pressing the accelerator...

To be successful in achieving any behaviour change, you need to address what is stopping you... what is holding you back... what is the equivalent of your handbrake?

Here are some ideas that may apply to you. These ideas are ones that I have come across when coaching many people to make changes in their life. The combination and impact of these will be unique to you but these will give you a clue. The way to approach this is to read each block and take notice of your reaction. You may well find that one or two really chime with you... those are the ones to think about in more depth and to focus on sorting out...

Patterns that can stop you...

- **Fear of failure.** This is a very common fear that will push back all the benefits you may have thought about in changing your behaviour. Do you spend time thinking about failing at whatever you want to do? If you spend time imagining how you might fail, what people will say about you and how failing will feel, then it is very likely that you will find an amazing number of excuses (no time, no spare cash to invest, whatever) to avoid making the change you want.

How to combat this? It is sensible to think through what could happen if your course of action fails. It is sensible to think through what you would do if taking that new job did not work out, for example. Could you go back to your old job? Would you be able to survive for sufficient time to secure another job, if that is what you decide to do? I often coach people to work out what their emergency fund should be. Usually it is three to six months living expenses in the bank. Save this and then they can contemplate taking a risk.

All these aspects are worth thinking through in order to plan your change. This is not what I mean by “fear of failing”. This fear shows up when you have done all the planning and you still cannot bring yourself to move forward. There may be a voice in your head saying that you just cannot succeed.

To combat this fear effectively is a three-stage process:

- Work out what is the (realistic) worse that can happen if you fail
- Accept that this risk is OK and you will survive if it happens
- Commit to the change you want

Then you can start to **enjoy** working towards the change you want!

- **Fear of success.** Most people have heard of the previous fear, the fear of failing. In my experience, the fear of success is even more limiting because it operates at an unconscious level.

When you begin to be successful at anything; particularly if that success brings material rewards; then people will change how they treat you. Even friends you may have known for many, many years may resent your success and do everything they can to get you back to being the same as you were. They won't be doing this consciously, of course, but it will still feel the same to you.

Think about this. Are you worried that something will change for the worse when you are successful?

- **Present benefits.** What you are doing right now, will be bringing you several advantages or benefits. Maybe you have a job you hate but your boss is away a lot of the time so he or she does not bother you. Maybe you have been at your present job for so long that you have become the "go to" person who can deal with any issue that comes up and this gives you a great feeling of self-worth. There has to be many powerful benefits of what you have now, or you would not stay in that situation.

In thinking about making a change, it is vital that you think through any benefits you have now and ensure they are present when you have made the change. Say you are considering learning a new skill. This will require several hours of your time to learn and implement. You also feel it is important for you to have time to relax. It is vital that you convince yourself that you can still have that time and learn your new skill. If you don't, you will face continual conflict and end up stressed and you will take none of the actions needed to achieve your goal.

- **Doesn't excite you.** To overcome some (or all) of these resistors to change, it is important that when you think about achieving your goal, you feel excited inside. Thinking about your change does not have to produce the effect of you punching the air (although it would be good if it did) but it does need to produce a shift of physiology. If you don't get excited when you think about the change you want, then, in my experience, you need to think carefully about whether you really want it and maybe be prepared to let it go.
- **Too big a gap or, too small a gap.** Here we are talking about the gap between where you are now and where you are aiming to be. This holds true, for example, for any increase in earning power you are targeting. By analysing people who are successful and unsuccessful in securing new jobs, research shows that the most motivating gap in income for most people is 50% extra. So, if you are currently earning £20,000 per year, you will be very motivated to go for £30,000 per year but not so motivated by the offer of £50,000 per year.

When planning your change; when setting you goals, it is vital that the gap is neither too small nor too big but is just right... for you.

- **The power of habit.** If you ever doubt the power of habit, then move the bin in your kitchen and be amazed at how many times you throw rubbish on the floor where the bin used to be! The power of habit can be overwhelming and foil any change you want to make. This operates at many different levels. For example, I have worked with people who make a change and begin to earn much more money than they had previously. They then make every effort to get back to the level of debt they are comfortable with... Amazing but true!

The way to overcome a habit is to replace it with another one. If you are replacing being a couch potato with going to the Gym, then you will need to go repeatedly until this becomes the new habit. As a rule of thumb, people talk about having to do the new behaviour 21 times until it becomes a habit. In my experience, this does vary a bit depending on the person involved and the habit you are replacing but that is about the right sort of number needed.

- **I am not worth it.** I am still continually amazed at how some people undervalue themselves. Whether it is the salary they think they are worth, the income they are aiming for or the day rate they are planning to charge clients. This is a bigger issue that we have time to consider here but let's just say that on the whole you determine your own worth.

Not too long ago, I was interested in setting up a joint venture with a coaching company in Acton, West London. I noticed that the rate charged by the coaches involved in the business varied markedly. In fact, the rate charged by the most expensive coach was three times the rate charged by the lowest.

I asked if the difference was due to the experience or effectiveness of the individual coach and the MD told me "No. All the coaches are experienced; highly effective and regularly supervised to ensure they are great at their job. The rate is solely dependent on what they believe they are worth."

- **The myth of hope.** The final resistor I am going to cover in this article is the myth of hope. We have come across this many times with people who want to take advantage of a business opportunity but never actually do enough to make progress. Their thinking seems to be "If I wanted to, I could join this organisation and earn a life-changing amount of money but if I don't try, then I can imagine I'll do it without trying and potentially failing and without overcoming any obstacles that may present themselves."

The last statement might seem a little complicated at first, so go back now and read it again another couple of times...

Now that you have, you will see it is a bit like buying a lottery ticket and then not checking it for several days after the draw has taken place and thinking that you could have the winning ticket in your wallet or purse. Your behaviour over that period will not be consistent with where you really are and that is a dangerous trait, a dangerous "Myth of Hope."

Just being aware of this problem gives you the power to overcome it and drive forward.

**So, did any of these hit the right note with you?
As you read them, which one(s) made an impact on you?**

I hope that, in this short article, I have given you something to think about and a clue about what part, if any, of your thinking may be holding you back. To give you even more clues about your own thinking and behaviour, I strongly recommend that you find around 20 minutes a day and write your thoughts out as a journal.

Over the years, I have found that this technique really helps clients sort out their thinking and move on. There are several tips on how to journal successfully... that is for another day, another article.

Obviously, I think that coaching is a great way to help you move forward and I recommend that you find a coach you have rapport with and invest some time in your most important asset... **you**.

Whatever you decide to do, I wish you the very best of luck with the goals that you set yourself, and that they bring about lasting change.

All the best

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allan".

Allan Smith

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ABOUT ME

Through coaching, I get a real kick from seeing people overcome their challenges, create more choices and gain more control over their lives. Typically, the result is less stress, better performance, and more joy for the person concerned.

So how are you likely to benefit from working with me? Typical issues I help to resolve include:

- Dealing with stress more effectively
- Making better use of your time
- Re-engaging with your job... or
- Getting really clear on the job/business you want
- Being more motivated and relaxed
- Becoming much more productive
- Overcoming specific difficulties with public speaking, making calls etc.

FEEL FREE TO GET IN TOUCH.

**You can connect with me on LinkedIn, or email me at
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