

Stuart Showalter
Child Custody Life Coaching

Monthly Motivation 15 - What are you doing for yourself?

Last month I asked you what you were doing for others as a way of advancing your well-being. The companion prescription which is equally important is serving yourself. Serving yourself is not a selfish act but a means to serve others. By serving yourself I am not suggesting that you simply take for your benefit, as that is selfish and will not promote your well-being. Rather, to serve yourself is to first tend to your needs.

An old proverbial tale relates the story of a cup of water being left upon the water well head. It was there to prime the pump. The pump first has to receive an investment of water in itself before it could serve water for others. But what happened when the cup wasn't filled? The pump wasn't first served and was then unable to serve others.

Often I find clients who are neglecting their needs in favour of others much to the detriment of all. Employers, family members, friends, various civic groups and the community at large are often given supremacy over our personal long-term well-being. Not tending to one's needs for sufficient rest, exercise, food, and emotional wellness first can have a negative cascading effect on everyone else.

Lack of sufficient rest can result in decreased production for an employer. Family members may find him or her to be short-tempered. The mind of a depleted person may wander and be disengaged from obligations. Similarly an improper diet can have a substantial effect on emotional well-being, energy level, mental acuity, and of course one's physical health.

The premise of Child Custody Life Coaching is that all aspects of your life are integrated. Your child custody battle is not just a legal matter. It is a truism that people involved in custody litigation are more likely to gain weight, suffer illness, and experience depression, all of which will have an adverse effect on the children. Neglecting any one domain of your life will allow that deficiency to invade the realm of the others. This is why it is essential to service all of your needs first. Doing so will take a strategy and a commitment to yourself. Serving yourself first takes discipline.

Each day for me, as much as possible, begins with stretching followed by a period of exercise. In the winter months it is a 5 mile walk on the treadmill in one hour. This may require awakening before 0500 hours to accomplish it and stay on schedule but I am compelled. My body demands it. The day prior to writing this I awoke from a night of being up multiple times clearing my nose from the effects of some virus I had acquired. My initial thought was to not do my morning workout. I instead opted to walk 5 miles in 65 minutes and started at that pace. By one mile into the workout I was up to the one hour pace, but begrudgingly so. It was at nearly four miles into the exercise that I *wanted* to be doing it. That was because the body *wants* to maintain stasis. That is, we are resistant to change. Thus, the very act of performing a habitual act will produce in

the body a desire to fulfill the act.

This is where discipline is effective *and* built. When seeking to serve yourself you must view the act not in isolation but in conformity to wholeness of being. I have no desire to walk 5 miles in one hour per day. My desire is for longevity, fitness of mind and body, elevated productivity, and a sense of elation. These will be achieved, in part, through that daily walk. The euphoric feeling induced by a serotonin release helps.

While it may appear that I have achieved superior discipline by performing this daily ritual regardless of feelings or other demands I am far from mastery. Performing the ritual act is not the discipline but merely habitual. My objective was to walk 5 miles in one hour at the onset of each day. I started at 4.51 miles in one hour and worked my way up to 4.7. Then it was 5 miles in 64:13. I quickly worked my way down to 61:30. Then when making an error setting the speed I achieved a time of 58:55, beyond goal by 1:05. I was tempted to exceed this speed but matched it exactly two days later and then held off for three more days before breaking 58:00. I am driven to go faster, I am a competitor whether with self or others. In the few days following that day I have built upon my discipline to walk exactly one hour while the distances have dropped; 5.10, 5.04, and 5.01. Mastery of discipline will have been achieved if I can continue to maintain 5.0 miles until I set a different goal.

To best tend to your needs you must first determine what actions take precedent over those and then habitually place those below your needs. Upon determining your greater goals set up the actions that will facilitate those and perform them regardless. You will soon find – it may be a month, possibly three months – that you will want to perform those tasks and become agitated if you don't. In the end those whom you would like to or have committed to serve will benefit more by you having first served yourself.

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