

Who are you Trying to Convince?

In *Supercoach*, Michael Neill summarizes a brilliant but little-recognized principle:

**The number of reasons you have for doing something
is inversely proportional to how much you want to do it.**

The more you have to convince yourself to do something, the more likely it is that you do not want to do it, and the more likely it is not aligned with your joy and well-being. On the other hand, when you are highly motivated to do something, the excitement and intention to do it is a sufficient motivational force, and you do not have to go looking for reasons to justify your action.

This principle serves as a good tip-off if you are laboring over a decision. If you keep looking for reasons to do it, it's probably a sign that you would be better off not doing it. The more you have to convince yourself, the more likely you are better off not convincing yourself. At this point the best coaching question you could ask yourself or a client is the good old standard, "What would you *like* to do?" Not "What *should* you do?" or "What do others *want* you to do?" and so on.

Another tip-off is to notice if you are arguing with someone else such as a spouse, family member, or business associate over the decision. Arguing with anyone else means you are arguing with yourself. That person is playing out the subconscious part of your mind that sees itself in conflict with your conscious expression. When you are clear with yourself and aligned with your intentions, arguments with other people don't show up in your experience.

When I moved to Hawaii I saw an ad for a house for sale. I went to see it and fell in love with it. I made an offer that was accepted, got a mortgage, and several months later moved in. While my mind did have some doubts and fears during the process (this was my first home ownership), the deepest, strongest, and most inspiring current was "Yes!" I did not have to talk myself into it.

More recently Dee and I were considering purchasing a property that we liked, but it wasn't a total "yes." We kept telling each other, "It's not perfect but it's good

enough,” and “Maybe this will lead to something even better.” We kept finding reasons to purchase it because we wanted to want it more than we wanted it. Ultimately we decided not to purchase, and when we did we felt a huge sense of relief. We were glad we didn’t talk ourselves into it.

When coaching a client, keep your antenna up for how much she is trying to convince herself to do something, in contrast to how much she wants to do it. You can say directly, “It sounds like you are trying to talk yourself into it.” This reflection might serve as a valuable entrée for the client to talk about her true feelings about the path she is considering rather than the intellectual reasons for it.

This is not to say that healthy reasoning should be discounted or overlooked when making a decision. In many cases there are indeed good reasons. Some people, for example, are trying to decide whether to stay in a job a few more years to get retirement benefits. If a client explores all the alternatives and still feels that the most reasonable option is their best choice, of course support him to go with that.

This lesson refers more to situations in which clients are clearly attempting to convince themselves to do something rather than admitting to themselves or others that they would rather not do it. Remember that one of the highest goals of coaching is to support the client to live as authentically as possible rather than compromising or allowing others to choose options for them that they would not choose for themselves.

One other factor to examine when working with a client is their energy level when announcing their reasons. It is possible that they have a list of reasons to make a choice about which they are truly enthusiastic. This is a different scenario than a client who is mumbling reasons, or bored, or clearly not excited about the reasons she is finding. Good coaches read energy more than listen to words, and reflect to the client the energy (or absence thereof) of which the client may be unaware.

Exercise:

1. Do you have any decisions before you that you are finding reasons to convince yourself to do?

If so, what would you like to do, regardless of the reasons for or against?

2. Describe a decision you have made (any time in your life) that was motivated by pure enthusiasm and intention, regardless of any reasons you found or didn't find:

How did that decision ultimately work out for you?

3. Describe a decision you have made (any time in your life) that you had to talk yourself into doing:

How did that decision ultimately work out for you?

4. Do you have a client who is trying to talk him/herself into doing something that you sense he/she does not really want to do?

If so, what might you say to your client that might raise his/her self-awareness to make a decision in harmony with joy and true choice rather than faux self-convincing?

Affirm:

**I choose in harmony with my true inner choices.
I do not need to talk myself into doing something
I would rather not do.
I support my clients to choose in harmony
with their true inner choices.**