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inner wisdom coaching and retreats

Ready for a New Perspective? Try Expressive Arts Coaching

by Tamara Herl

Picture this: to your left and right are tall buildings and a brick wall is at your back. You look down the road and see a steamroller coming right at you. What do you do? Get a new perspective.

Get a new what? When you use expressive arts coaching practices to explore your personal growth, you can get a new perspective. By tapping into your creativity, you can make conscious choices in determining how to respond to a challenging situation. When a person becomes too involved in a problem she is facing, she can lose perspective. The process of Expressive Arts Coaching can create distance and new points of view to consider. For example, one client came to me feeling completely overwhelmed and unable to continue her work as an attorney. Similar to the image I described earlier, this woman painted a picture of a steamroller to portray the relentless and intense pressure she was feeling. In the next session, we searched for meaning in the first painting she had made, and she created a second image to show how she would like her life to be instead. This image showed the steamroller from a different perspective: as a bird flying overhead and looking down it might see it. Tall weeds had grown up around the machine, which was obviously no longer in use. In the process of exploring these two images, she discovered that, for some reason, she had not been delegating her caseload, even though she had other partners in her firm. Creating the images had helped her to gain this new perspective, amazingly, after only two sessions.

In the course of an expressive arts coaching session, I help women and organizations use different perspectives and viewpoints as tools for choosing how to respond to the challenges they face. Will they choose to be a spectator, responding to the events of their life as if observing things from a distance? Sometimes this is helpful, as in the case described above. Observing things from a distance helped the woman see the bigger picture of what was happening in her career. Yet, there are times when I encourage people to get off the sidelines and become an active player in the “game” of life.

Becoming an active player is a perspective I encourage people to take when they are facing any challenge they face. “Picture your challenge as something from nature or

something humans have made,” I might suggest in a session. Then I encourage them to experiences the sensations they will have when they have overcome their challenge. One of my goals is to help my clients realize that by focusing the positive and on what they want, they will attract and move quickly towards what they are wanting.

Who is expressive arts coaching for? A better question might be, who is it *not* for. At one time or another in life, everyone encounters difficult situations. Expressive Arts Coaching is for anyone who is ready to move forward with their life, and who is ready to commit time and energy to making their biggest dreams come true. My ideal clients are women who want to live their values and manifest their potential. They are ready to find new perspectives in dealing with challenges they face in their work, in their personal life, or in seeking spiritual growth.

So, picture this: you have a job that you used to love, but you feel restless and sense that you are more than what you have become. Or, you are a nurse who feels burned out and you want to make a career change but you have no idea where to begin. As the parent of an adolescent, you find yourself constantly battling with your child and you can't seem to break out of this cycle. What can you do? When you are ready for a new perspective, I will be honored to walk with you on the path.

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