

AmeriCoach News

Watching the Rainbow

The rainbow won't wait while you do the work; the work will wait while you watch the rainbow.

—Hawaiian saying

I've been thinking about this quote a lot lately, and asking my clients to think about it too. Whether you consider June the end of the year or not, there is something about the spring that can feel rushed and overwhelming. Graduations, end of school, getting things ready for summer, making plans so that *this* summer lives up to expectations, AmeriCorps programs completing or shifting focus. It's easy to get so caught up in the day to day that we forget the beauty and joy around us as spring explodes.

Ok, so this isn't exactly a new thought, is it? We know we should appreciate the rainbows in life more and work less, but how? My friend Lorin and I recently had a long conversation about this—what does it actually

mean to watch the rainbow? Here are a few of our thoughts:

Rainbows come from the connection of sun and rain (light and dark). The rainbow is about appreciating *everything* we have, not just the sunny moments. Maybe watching the rainbow means being grateful for all the crazy drama and joy that makes up our lives. Maybe this ability to feel gratitude is the pot of gold we are actually looking for.

In the biblical story, God showed Noah the rainbow

as a sign that the people would never again be forsaken. Perhaps the rainbow is there to remind us to trust. To know that we are part of an abundant universe where there is nothing to fear. To be still and calm and present, because when we are present—really present—to right now, the worries of the future and the regrets of the past have no room to exist.

And maybe the rainbow also wants to remind us that we are working too hard and in the wrong way. That to dance in the

moment *is* the work we are here for. If work is nothing but drudgery, struggle and effort, there will be no rainbows and therefore no gold. The rainbow needs the dark of the rain, but also the light of the sun. Does the light of the sun shine through your work? If your work feels hard or impossible, maybe you're just not dancing enough!

One last thought: Don't look for the rainbow in the ground. Lift your eyes a little higher....

—Ann Betz

AmeriCoach Update

Well, it's almost June and we are complete with all of our 2003-2004 programs. We owe huge thanks to everyone who participated this year: our two overly large groups who taught us that this kind of work needs safety and intimacy; our gung-ho participants who taught us that they could go anywhere we wanted to take them; our more reluctant corps members who taught us that some people simply need more time and space for learning; the members who gave us tough feedback just when we needed it and taught us that we needed to be more collaborative with them in the learning; and all of the participants who stuck it out and taught us that it is a process that takes time. We thank you for an amazing year!



FOLLOWERSHIP – THE MISSING LEADERSHIP COMPONENT

By AmeriCoach volunteer coach Matthew Rochte

Leadership is not about leadership.

Leadership books, business school, and coach training always talk about the leadership skills, the attitudes, and the motivations to get people to do things. They call this leadership. These "leadership skills" are good things that leaders need to know. However, having successfully run a small manufacturing firm for 7 years as owner and coach and having been in leadership positions since age 11, I have discovered an interesting phenomenon about leadership – something we don't talk about in leadership books nor in coach training and certainly not in business school, but we all are aware of on some level. Leadership, ultimately isn't about leadership.

Leadership is about Followership.

Who is going to follow you and why?

This missing piece ultimately will determine a leader's success and continued success. We have become myopic in our dissecting of leadership that we have missed the whole point of leadership. We have focused on the content and the image of leadership rather than the substance. So instead of asking "What makes a good leader?," let's be coach-like and turn this question 90 degrees and ask – "Who do people want to follow?" or "Who would you follow?"

Think about it.

Who do we most admire and want to be around?

Who do we want to or are willing to follow?

We want to follow people of integrity and people in alignment. We all know when people are out of alignment. Do we want to follow them?

We have twisted our understanding of integrity to mean an image rather than its core substance. And our leadership training programs tend to mold the "leader" in a way to attract the most number of people rather than alignment of the leader with themselves and their community. These programs therefore create leaders who are attractive but lack integrity, because they lack alignment. They lead for a while, because they look right, but eventually we followers start to see inconsistencies, misalignments, and lack of integrity. We become disenchanted, uneasy and stop following them.

We stop following them because of a breakdown and/or exposure of the misalignment and thereby showing the lack of integrity within the individual..

Be-Say-Do:

So now it is time to look at what we mean by integrity. Integrity is a matter of alignment.

Integrity is an alignment between one's actions, words, and thoughts.

Be-Say-Do Being in alignment with one's being, saying, and doing.

In authentic leadership there is integration and consistent alignment with who you are,



Matthew Rochte

what you say, and what you do as a leader. An authentic leader's actions are consistently aligned with who they are, what they say, and what they believe.

This alignment ultimately makes up who you are. People see it, people know it, and people sense it - because it is REAL. When all these elements are in alignment you are a leader, a natural leader, an authentic leader, and a magnet for followers.

Some Questions To Ponder:

What do you believe? What thoughts guide you? Are you true to yourself? Do you betray yourself? Do you say what needs to be said or do you say what is safe? Do your actions/ behaviors align with who you are? Align with what you believe? Does what you do reflect who YOU are?

What kind of leader do you want to be?

By Matthew Egan Rochte, Professional Thought Provoker who coaches leaders and 2003-04 AmeriCoach pro bono coach. Check out Matthew's website at www.WorkingIntentionally.com.



AmeriCorps Promise Fellow Mindy Newquist was Matthew Rochte's client in 2003-04



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AmeriCoach is the soulful training ground where leadership emerges for the good of all, learns to live from hope and possibility instead of fear, and finds fulfillment through meaningful work without sacrifice.

Look for the article about AmeriCoach in the latest issue of *Choice*, the new magazine of the Coaching industry

Metaphors

We recently asked some of our participants for a metaphor that would describe their experience in AmeriCoach. Here's what they said:

- ◆ AmeriCoach was like a moped because it's really fun to ride but you wouldn't want your friends to see you doing it.
- ◆ AmeriCoach was like a red-winged blackbird, because at first you think it's just an ordinary black crow, but then you realize it's actually really special. Plus red-winged blackbirds copy other birds' songs, and that reminded me of the trainings because you were adaptable to what we wanted and needed.
- ◆ AmeriCoach was like the Grand Canyon, because at first you think "well, that's cool, but I don't really need to go and see it for myself," but then when you do you see how amazing it actually is. It's also like the Grand Canyon because you can just stay up at the rim and look or you can go way down and explore.
- ◆ AmeriCoach was like a pet rat because at first you think "What is this thing?" but then you come to like it.
- ◆ AmeriCoach was like grass - if you just sit and watch it grow it takes a really long time. But you have a choice to do something with it yourself, like fertilizing or watering, and then it grows more quickly.
- ◆ AmeriCoach was like an electric blanket. Maybe it's not actually *necessary*, but when you look back over a long, dark, cold winter you're really glad you had it.
- ◆ AmeriCoach was like chocolate. Rich, sweet, and a selfish indulgence!
- ◆ AmeriCoach was like a light saber—a powerful extension of ones' self and inner focus.

Coaching Opportunities 2004-05

Please stay tuned for information on upcoming programs for the 2004-05 AmeriCoach year. We will once again be looking for experienced pro-bono coaches for approximately 120-150 AmeriCorps members and staff. Our program will be changing slightly and the expectations for coaches will be somewhat changed as a result. Watch for more information in June!