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share the top five skills I've learned through coaching, skills that have greatly impacted my life. #1 Approach – Take yourself out of the Conversation – This might sound counter-intuitive and it's definitely counter-intuitive, but the biggest barrier to having effective and fruitful conversations is ourselves. How often do you speak to someone where you're off in your own head and can't remember that last two minutes of the conversation? We do this all the time. We're not focused and when we are focused we're thinking about what we want to say next and not paying enough attention to what the other person is sayin. Remove yourself from the conversation and just listen to the other person. If you find yourself driftin off in your thoughts, catch yourself and pull yourself back. If you find yourself wantin to cut in with 'your own experience' of what they're tellin you, do it. #2 Approach – Listen between the Lines: Coaching is all about askin questions, but it's hard to ask the right questions if you don't know what's really going on. People speak all the time, but we don't always say what's on our minds. The more you truly listen to someone, the more you'll pick up on what's not being said. Look for body language, patterns in what they're sayin, words they're using over again and themes they continuously go back to and ask questions that might lead to havin a deeper, more authentic chat. A talk that they might want to be havin but might not be sure how to bring up. #3 Approach – Let people come to the answers on their own: This is essentially the key ingredient to coaching. It's what differentiates coaching from consultn and other similar practices and it's why so many of us get it wrong at the start. Yet this approach is useful in every aspect of our lives because people are more committed, more productive and more invested in what they're doing, when it's their decision and when they've come to the answers on how to proceed, by themselves. What we can do, as the ones on the other side of the conversashon, is support them in gettin to those answers. How? By askin questions. Non-judgmental, non-leading questions where our only interest is in supportin that person to find answers and not tryin to steer them in one direction or another to do what we think is best. It's one of the hardest things to do, especially if it's someone close to you, but this is the MOST important approach we can take if we truly want to be supportiv of those in our lives and help them get to where they want and need to be. What other coach approach tactics have you found to be beneficial? Whether you're a coach or if you just use some of these methods, share your comments in the section below and let us know what works for you! For more great coaching and listenin articles check out: *Photo Credit for both pictures to Haywood Mann Page 17 by Nick McKenna When it comes to work-life balance, there is an old cliché: It's not a balance, it's a juggling act. So it's either a balance or a juggling act? It seems to me that the premise here is flawed. The premise is that there is a demarcation between work and life. I don't believe that there is or should be. When I think of those in history who have achieved great things, I do not think of people who strictly demarcate their time. In modern times, I think of people like Steve Jobs, Richard Branson, Bill Gates who live the work and work their lives rather than drawin a box around some aspect of their life and calling it "work". In days gone by, I think of old Leonardo, a man whose life and work were inseparable. His diary notes his visits to the bath houses of Italy to view the other patrons for both aesthetic reasons and to further his understanding of his work. The danger in drawin the strict line between work and life, especially in the current economic climate, is that it encourages a focus on clock watchin rather than **##Blending work and life into a harmonious blend is crucial for achieving great things. People often focus on what their employers can offer rather than finding balance. As the global economy becomes increasingly competitive, those who excel will be driven by a strong work ethic and dedication to their profession. It's challenging to achieve greatness in 35 hours of work per week. In my view, Western economies must adopt a stronger work ethic from their ancestors to remain competitive. I don't want to see a return to the exploitative work practices of the past. I'm not advocating for a Dickensian work ethic, but rather finding a balance between work and life. A blend or fusion is the way forward. For example, I take my dog with me to work. It's a simple yet effective way to combine work and life. We walk to the office every morning, have a lunchtime stroll in the nearby woods, and return home in the evening. My home office allows me to work comfortably outside of regular hours. I also recommend building your "work" thought processes into your daily life. I read technology blogs and watch developer videos on my tablet during downtime. This background thinking has significantly improved my working life. Non-work experiences, like reading Sapiens by Yuval Noah Harari, prompt innovative ideas. There are many ways to blend work and life, such as taking a chocolate Labrador as your office companion or setting up a dedicated workspace at home. Practicing gratitude can have a profound impact on our well-being. Saying "thank you" is an automatic response for many of us, but it's not always genuine. Science has shown that practicing gratitude can lower blood pressure, improve immune function, and facilitate better sleep. Sharing gratitude with others can create positive feedback loops and make us happier. As a manager, gratitude is essential. It makes you a better leader and colleague. Our parents taught us to say "thank you," but it's not just about societal protocol – it's about adopting the right attitude. Encouraging employees to express gratitude can boost job satisfaction and overall well-being. Portfolio careers have become the new norm, and for good reason. They offer huge benefits, including the acquisition of transferrable skills that can be applied across multiple industries. One person who has found success in this approach is a serial career changer, someone who doesn't just change jobs but switches industries. This individual learns about their chosen field, delves into it, and earns a living from it for a period before moving on to the next one. For instance, I ran my tour business while launching my coaching company. The key to this type of career is starting something completely different, which can be done on the side or full-time, even in conjunction with another venture. Anyone can benefit from portfolio careers, particularly those who are interested in multiple pursuits and willing to reinvent themselves regularly. If you're considering a portfolio career, there are several challenges to overcome: - #1 OWN IT: You need to fully back your choices and how you're going about them. - Challenge #2 - Recognize your transferrable skills; most jobs have skills that can be applied across industries. - Challenge #3 – Speak to someone doing it and find out how they started their careers and what advice they have. - Know how financially stable you need to be before making a change. - Give new industries a test run before diving in. Being open to being surprised is also crucial, as something unexpected might pop up that changes your trajectory. paraphrased text here The key to a successful candidate interview lies in asking the right questions, crafting behavioral questions using the STAR method, and providing a practical trial through workshops. You can't rely solely on online tests or CVs. During the interview, start by asking about their accomplishments over the last year, which will help you gauge their ability to explain complex situations. Then, move on to behavioral questions that focus on real-life experiences. These should be specific, ask for examples, and use the STAR format. Situation, Task, Action, Result. You can also explore a candidate's motivation by using Moving Motivators cards or asking them to create their Personal Map. This will give you an idea of what drives them and whether they're a good fit for your company culture. The final stage is the workshop, where candidates get to showcase their skills in a practical setting. This could be as simple as presenting a plan or breaking down a project into smaller tasks. Some organizations even invite candidates to work together with the team for an extended period. Make sure to provide a comprehensive and engaging experience for both the candidate and your organization. Avoid putting them in isolation, as this can lead to misunderstandings. Instead, use the workshop as an opportunity for mutual learning. Don't rely solely on psychological tests; instead, use them as a starting point for discussion. Ensure that everyone involved in the hiring process attends training on how to interpret test results. When it comes to making a final decision, remember that there are only two possible outcomes: hire or don't hire. Don't compromise on quality, even if the role seems urgent. This will ultimately benefit your team and prevent turnover. In hindsight, looking back at our childhood dreams can be revealing. What drove us as kids? Was it a desire to explore space, keep others safe, or build towering structures? My own journey began with an interest in management and teamwork. I realized that teams often struggle with communication and problem-solving. It was this realization that sparked my passion for facilitating connections between unique perspectives. As I navigated the world of software development, I discovered autonomy, mastery, and purpose – values that have shaped me into the person I am today. In our pursuit of greatness, we often start with wide eyes and narrow views. We apply what we know to solve problems, but sometimes this leads us down a path of mediocrity. Life's simplicity is motivating enough to pursue one's passions, but for those who feel stuck, it leaves room for questions and a desire to explore new horizons. I noticed that technical solutions alone couldn't replicate the success achieved through effective communication among team members. Collective code ownership, adherence to high standards, and negotiation with business stakeholders were crucial factors in our success. When these aspects were absent, we faced significant challenges. **##ARTICLE**Enhance team productivity with wellness initiatives that boost employee physical and mental health. Multiply your support staff's creativity by their number, resulting in substantial brainpower at your disposal. Imagine how effective teamwork can be with members who consistently perform well and are firing on all cylinders! Regular exercise not only enhances cognition but also strengthens the body against injury. Supportive muscle tone, flexible tendons, and limber reflexes protect team members from accidental falls and office-related injuries. Unlike the flu or a stomach virus, stress isn't immediately recognized and may take time to manifest, leading to delays in diagnosis and treatment that can result in more severe health issues such as depression, anxiety, and heart disease. Implementing a company-wide Wellness Program is beneficial for both your team members and the bottom-line. Programs can be designed to meet the goals of both staff and the firm. Some examples include: * Designating an on-site workout center with certified trainers who tailor one-on-one exercise programs and provide instruction for small groups * Reimbursement for gym membership and fitness class fees elsewhere, encouraging employees to form exercise groups for support and camaraderie * Offering on-site flu shots and fully stocked first aid boxes throughout workflow space areas, openly encouraging employees to take sick days rather than putting team members at risk * Creating a Wellness Room with fresh juice, water, and comfy chairs where employees can go for quiet rest, complete with a massage chair and staff hours for on-site hand, foot, or full-body massage These initiatives promote a positive work environment, reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction. Employees who report greater happiness at work – and in life – regularly practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and yoga, foster positive social relationships, and engage in volunteer work that releases pain-absorbing endorphins and reduces stress. When he realized it wasn't delivering the enjoyment and fulfillment he craved at work, As Michael often put it: "Leaving my corporate job meant I also gave up the monotony and I sought the big excitement. I always wanted to avoid feeling like a wage slave." Michael faced two pivotal moments in his career that made him realize he needed to adjust his network to achieve his goals. The first happened when he moved from finance to marketing within the same company. With a substantial marketing budget, he focused intensely on securing top collaborators. One such partner was the renowned Belgian marketing professor Steven van Belleghem. This collaboration helped Michael grasp the core of his new challenge and deliver the results. After six years in marketing, Michael felt prepared to launch his own marketing firm. But becoming an entrepreneur required him to adapt his network again. This time, he included smaller and midsize companies to offer short-term consultancy projects, allowing him to build a credible portfolio in under a year. Over the past seven years, I've hired Michael twice as a database consultant. Once in the Netherlands, once in Germany. While managing my career and personal life, Michael's consulting business was progressing well. However, he noticed his consultancy lacked essential long-term aspects like a customer base and financial credibility. "Unconsciously, I reached a point where my consultancy career became inconvenient. I realized the shortcomings for the long term. As a self-employed consultant, every year starts at zero," he explained. When a friend shared her frustration with a survey tool she used in her consultancy, they decided to create a better software solution. This idea led to the founding of a new software company called CEO Lab. Alongside marketing and sales, Michael also took on legal and financial responsibilities in this venture. After significant product development, Michael and his three new business partners are ready to expand their business next year. This will again require Michael to build new networks and acquire new skills to serve new markets. Currently, Michael runs both a marketing consultancy and a software company. But what's next? Michael has many ideas for new careers to add to his portfolio. Becoming an investor in crowd sourcing is one possibility, though he acknowledges that as he approaches his mid-40s, he'll eventually pass his portfolio ideas to the next generation. Where has your portfolio career taken you? We'd love to hear about your unique journey in the comments below! Photo: Branko Stancevic, Unsplash Photo courtesy of Eye for Ebony Recognizing your value is crucial for your happiness and success in life. From birth, society conditions us to link our worth to achievements like education level, relationship status, net worth, physical appearance, and more. Yet, as individuals, we are far deeper than our accomplishments. Clinical mental health counselor Kendra Surmitis states, "Knowing your worth means believing in your intrinsic value as a human being and understanding you are worthy of respect and acceptance from others." Psychotherapist Tameka Brewington adds that people who know their worth are clear about how they present themselves in the world—they don't base their worth on societal expectations or beliefs about them. According to experts, here's why knowing your worth is important, how it affects us in the workplace, and seven ways to improve on knowing (and showing) our self-worth. Read more: 17 Bestselling Books on Confidence to Boost Self-Worth & Change Your Mindset Why it's important to know your worth Surmitis says, "When an individual knows their worth, they have an unshakable sense of being valuable and good enough, allowing them to sustain a sense of innate worthiness even when mistakes occur or hardships arise." Additionally, self-worth is directly connected to self-esteem. Brewington explains, "A person with low self-esteem has a distorted self-view and how others perceive them. Their self-worth and value are diminished by feeling less than or insufficient." Conversely, those who believe in their worth and value are more likely to view their attributes, achievements, and qualities positively. "Self-worth and self-esteem are vital for strong mental health, and together, they support important skills like self-advocacy and continued pursuit of fulfillment," Surmitis says. It's also essential to know your worth so you aren't basing your happiness on others' opinions or their reactions to you. Brewington notes, For example, people who don't know their worth often seek happiness through people-pleasing. However, they end up spending all their time and energy knowing your worth is essential for true happiness and personal growth. It starts with understanding your own self-worth and extending it to others. True happiness comes from within first, then radiates outward. Know Your Worth: A Life-Changing Realization for Personal Growth Changing in your life for the better starts with understanding your own value as an individual. This realization can bring numerous positive transformations, including improved relationships, increased self-confidence, and a deeper connection to your passions. 1) Enhanced Relationships Through Self-Acceptance As you learn to accept yourself, others may respond differently, fostering more meaningful connections. By recognizing that we deserve better treatment, we attract people who respect and appreciate us for who we are. 2) Freedom from Worrying About Others' Opinions Self-acceptance allows you to stop worrying about what others think, freeing you from the weight of their opinions. This newfound confidence lets you be yourself without fear or hesitation. 3) Increased Self-Assurance Through Acceptance Embracing your true self leads to improved self-confidence, as you've accepted and loved every aspect of yourself. This acceptance is key to unlocking your full potential and pursuing your dreams. 4) Pursuing Your Passions with Clarity and Confidence Recognizing your worth allows you to pursue your passions with purpose and confidence. By focusing on what truly matters to you, you'll attract like-minded individuals who support and uplift you. 5) Attracting Positive Energy and People into Your Life As you radiate self-awareness and confidence, you begin to attract positive energy and people into your life. This is because those drawn to confident and self-assured individuals are more likely to share similar qualities. 6) Embracing Your Autonomy and Making Informed Decisions With a deep understanding of your worth, you'll feel in control of your life and make informed decisions that align with your values and goals. 7) Increased Happiness Through Authenticity Self-love and acceptance bring about a sense of freedom and happiness. By being true to yourself, you'll find joy in living authentically without the burden of others' expectations. 8) The Power of Self-Approval Embracing self-worth means that your approval is no longer dependent on external validation. You'll learn to love and accept yourself, allowing you to move forward with purpose and confidence. 9) A Life Abundant with Purpose and Fulfillment As you focus on your own growth and development, you'll experience a life filled with purpose, happiness, and fulfillment. Your worth becomes the foundation upon which all else is built. 10) The Ultimate Freedom: Self-Love The key to unlocking this freedom lies in self-love. By embracing your true self, you'll discover that your worth is not defined by external validation but rather by your own inner understanding and acceptance. Knowing your self-worth is about first assessing how much you value yourself (or how little) and then realizing that in fact you deserve everything that is good. To have high self-worth is to believe that you are worthy of and truly deserve a joyful life—a life in which you are loved, accepted and respected and in which you deserve to receive and experience all that is good. Many people are unaware of their self-worth and have never stopped to consider if they believe they deserve what they desire to create in their lives. Ask yourself if you deserve what you desire and if the answer isn't somewhere along the lines of 'of course I do' then you either do not know your self-worth or you have diminished it, which really amounts to the same thing. A Self-Evaluation of Self-Worth To truly know your self-worth is challenging because society as a whole tends to determine someone's value or worth based more on what that person has on the outside than what they have on the inside—far more. Indeed, society places excessive value on how someone appears to be on the outside rather than who that person is on the inside, mainly because the former is visible and the latter invisible. This means that a person's success is also defined by outside achievements and possessions—and the more you have, the more successful you are, which goes hand-in-hand with how worthy you think you are of having more, while the opposite holds equally true. Refuse to Use Society's Worthiness Scale Society tends to weigh a person's value on the scale of physical assets such as money, material possessions, physical beauty, marital status, career status and so on. And the more you have of all these outside things, the more valuable you are to society and so, the more successful you are deemed in its eyes. Society seldom, if ever, weighs someone's value on the scale of virtues such as love, integrity, kindness, emotional intelligence, justice and so on. These inner qualities are often ignored altogether when determining someone's success, and in the same way you, ignore them about yourself, which makes it even more difficult to truly know your self-worth. A Distorted Sense of Success If you consider yourself unsuccessful and not very valuable it's probably because you've been using the 'outer scale' and not the 'inner scale' in an attempt to know your self-worth. If you believe your value is low, whether consciously or not, your self-worth follows suit. Society's obsession with outwardly appearances and possessions has created a distorted definition of success that has resulted in a distorted sense of self-worth for many people and they don't even know it and so have never taken the steps to correct it. Money has hi-jacked the earth's wheel. We're told money makes the world go round whereas it's love—love has always made the world go round not money, not power—only love. The Problem of Comparing Your Worth You are likely to find that specific outwardly appearances automatically trigger a tendency within you to compare yourself to others, whether it is how much money someone else has or is making, how physically attractive they are, their relationship status or what material possessions they have and so on. Dig a little deeper and you will find that you have unwittingly placed an undue value on these outward appearances and are using them to determine your self-worth. In other words, when wanting to know your self-worth you mistakenly look at how much money you have, how attractive you are and so on, as the determining factors of your self-worth, and usually in isolation of all your other qualities, virtues and achievements. Such specific comparisons leave you temporarily feeling either better or worse about yourself, depending on where you rank yourself on society's scale of success, albeit a distorted scale. Knowing Your Worth Is Not About Being Good Enough, But About Understanding Your True Nature As a Divine Spark Of The Absolute Love. You are a part of the larger whole, connected to everything and everyone through the thread of love. Your true self is absolute love, unchanging and untainted by external validation. It is this understanding that sets you free from the shackles of self-doubt and unworthy feelings, allowing you to soar on the wings of your higher self. As you vibrate at your highest frequency, you magnetize positive experiences and people into your life. You're too busy cultivating a life of gratitude and abundance to entertain those who drain your energy. Mistakes are inevitable, but it's what we learn from them that truly matters. Taking ownership of past choices empowers you to move forward with confidence. You don't settle for mediocrity, so you'll never regret not pursuing your dreams. Unshakable self-assurance propels you through life's challenges. Every morning, you awaken with an unbridled enthusiasm for life's possibilities. When focus is on personal growth, the universe conspires to align everything in your favor. Relationships flourish as they mirror the love and radiance within you. Recognize that only you hold the power to shape your destiny – don't wait for external forces to intervene. Healthy relationships are built upon mutual respect and admiration, reflecting the beauty of who you truly are. You demand nothing less than what you deserve from others. Mindful choice of thoughts and words fuels a positive, empowering narrative. When adversity arises, instead of self-doubt, draw strength from your inner resilience. Acknowledge your worthiness to receive life's best experiences, and actively pursue them. Your inner dialogue is a symphony of positivity, acknowledging your strengths rather than weaknesses. Surround yourself with people who elevate you, as you do the same for others. It's time to break free from the shackles of fear and start living an authentic, empowered existence – starting now!**

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