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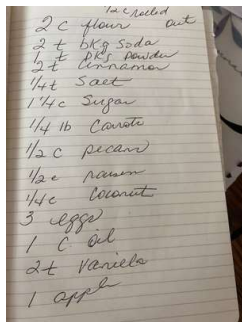
The Unexpected Entrepreneur

A little bit of my story was featured in a book called "The Unexpected Entrepreneur" by Noreen Music. Here's the excerpt she included in the book:

It is common for those that have suffered a concussion and have persistent symptoms to have cognitive challenges. These include trouble with memory, reading, doing math and our thinking becomes quite linear. Patients are often referred to an occupational therapist to assist them with relearning how to manage these day-to-day activities.

One of the best tricks learned was to incorporate different coloured pens and markers into planning and notetaking. While planning out my week, blocks of time are coloured coded. Green for client time, blue for marketing, and yellow for planning and admin. As my business is mobile, transit time between appointments is required and that is orange. While writing in my notebooks, the same philosophy is used as notes related to marketing are written in blue ink, admin is red, and educational notes are in purple. This supports my business in two ways:

1. See at a glance what my day looks like, no reading is required,
2. Flipping through notebooks, easily locate notes taken on a specific item as the ink is a unique colour.
3. Personally, this requires less brain power which allows me to have more energy for the things I love at the end of the day.



Prior to recovery, wanting to bake a cake for our family, I retrieved the recipe book and all the ingredients needed, and well as the utensils. While holding the measuring spoon, my memory wasn't long enough to read the recipe and recall which of the ingredients needed to go into the bowl. Determined, I wrote out the recipe in large letters thinking it was a size problem. It wasn't It was on that day that I knew just how bad things were.

Writing down important to-do's from appointments in a book wasn't help as my brain would tire quickly when looking for the information at later date.

If you're not familiar with occupational therapists, my doctor says they are magic makers. This was the solution she had for me that worked beautifully. Actually, the system is still used today.

1. A different coloured workbook for work and for home
2. Different coloured pens for different purposes. Blue for notes and red for action.

This allowed my brain to quickly scan the pages to find the correct coloured ink. It reduced my stress which allowed the brain to function more effectively.

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What does a corporate governance professional and a personal trainer have in common? **Me.**



As corporate governance professional with a tri-listed international oil and gas company, there were lots of challenges such as working with teams world-wide, different cultures, unique laws, time zones, and work schedules. Working with legal counsel around the globe developing governance programs to ensure the Company could operate with a high standard of governance where ever it worked was my work. I worked in conjunction with the executive leadership team and the board of directors. My role was gatekeeper of the corporation's governance and responsible for ensuring that it was at the highest standard possible. For someone that enjoys learning, it was the perfect job.

My day started at 5:00 am, up for breakfast and out the door to be at gym for 6:00. I was in my office chair by 7:45. Respond to emails that had come in overnight from banks and counsel in other countries. Due to the time differences, there was a short window of opportunity to speak with those in Egypt and London. As the company was listed on three stock exchanges, the list of regulations to follow was sometimes strangling. There was always board materials to prepare, news releases to get out, stock exchanges to answer to, staff looking for constating documentation, resolutions to draft, of course trying to get legal counsel from the various countries to agree. Often my work day ended around 7:00 pm.

At the age of 58, a simple slip and fall resulted in a concussion that forever changed my life. Following two separate sessions on disability, it was obvious to me that I was unable to return to my career. The screen time, stress, and long hours reignited post-concussion symptoms, each time worse than the time before. My position was not an eight-hour-a-day job, it was eleven at least. When it was deemed that I was well enough to return to work, it was for an eight-hour-a-day job with little stress. I knew deep down that there was no returning to my career, so I walked away with no immediate plan other than to continue recovery.

The career change was out of need. Returning to school and completing three certifications in personal training and exercise therapy allowed me to switch careers.

Fitness has been a big part of my life for a long time. I lost 30 pounds and went from having terrible posture to being a competitive powerlifter. The various personal trainers that I worked with understood the body and how it moved. They knew how to build the program to help me reach my goals and they knew how to motivate me.

Leaving my corporate role to become a personal trainer had crossed my mind four years prior to commencing my education. It seemed irresponsible to leave the nice income, the benefits, and the senior position held.

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There is a saying that life provides you with what you need. If not for the fall I would not have had the courage to start.

The courses focused on anatomy, assessments, measurements, correctives, cardio training, muscular training, and program modifications for clients with special consideration and, ethics. Studying was difficult at that point, as reading was still difficult. The days consisted of reading the texts, and trying to participate in the classes but my mind couldn't keep up. The instructors provided me with other resources on the web that might help learn the content.

A fellow powerlifter once asked how I had prepared myself for failure. I truly believed that a record would be set as I had worked hard. Although a personal record was set, I didn't accomplish what I had set out to do. Disappointment set in. The lesson had been learned, prepare NOT to win. That same advice was incorporated into writing the exams. I was prepared to not pass.

When that first passing grade came in, I was overjoyed. Preparations for winning and losing served me well.

A very wise man says, "Failure is corrective info that helps us be wiser and better in the future".

Remember in my first blog post "Recovery" where I described how valuable I felt as a human in my corporate role? That was nothing compared to watching a client achieve a goal that changes their life.

Following my concussion my memory was impaired such that I was unable to read as I would forget what the last sentence was about. There was no continuity in my reading. I couldn't even remember what it was vaguely about. How would I memorize anatomy, the muscular system and how the muscles interact? I created flashcards, built puzzles, built quizzes. I tried writing out the muscles, the movements of each. None of them worked. I would get close, fail and then get stressed out. My brain would stop working due to the stress. So I broke it down into smaller bits. Every muscle. Where did it attach, what did it move, which direction do the muscle fibers run. Trying to recall the information later, and it would be gone. I scoured the web looking for resources. At one time I was registered in three personal training programs and medical school anatomy websites as each taught the information a little differently. Finally there was progress and eventually success. It was when I passed my exam that I knew my concussion might have changed much about me, but I was still capable. It simply takes me longer.

I have a client who shall be named Sally to protect her privacy. She was in an accident three years prior that resulted in a brain injury. She lost her career, her ability to participate fully in her family's lives. The list of what she lost is long. Despite all her losses, what she wanted to accomplish was to pick up her children.

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In the beginning, our sessions started with small movements to build strength in her lower body. We broke down every exercise into small movements, identifying the weaknesses and building. She was laser precise and dedicated to improving every movement. She would ask for progressions and I would laughingly tell her "not yet, you're not quite ready". She progressed to doing pushups against the wall. As her strength improved, so did her outlook. She progressed again to doing pushups on a lower incline. She would try to do push-ups from her knees now and then. And then one sunny day, as I stepped out of my vehicle she excitedly exclaimed, "I did it, I picked up my kids and threw them in the air and caught them".

I was proud of her. All the studying, the tears, the exams, at that moment were worthwhile. There was never a time during my corporate career that made a difference like this did. I didn't need to see it happen, I could see it in her eyes. She believed in herself. She went on to accomplish her other goal as well, do a full "on the toes pushup". I cried when she did it. Sally may be the most amazing woman I've ever met. I tell people that after training her if I never train another client in my lifetime, that will be all right because I've made a difference. I care deeply for my clients and hold their aspirations as closely as I hold my own.