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Why I Work With A Business Coach And Consultant....



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It is now clear to me that 2019 is when I first started getting restless about TCFP. We had had a great 5 years, but something felt a bit meh, there were personal things going on too.

I did not know it then, but I was reaching the limits of my own business development abilities. It took an epiphany in 2022 before I realised, more on that later.

At the start of 2019 it felt like more needed to be done and so we embarked on a "programme" of business development. Looking back now what we did was flap around with no clear strategy or hoped for outcome.

After the first couple of years business had always been good and profits strong. I could have just ignored my urges and expected that to continue. However, as I sit here today, I realise that the rot had started and was being treated palliatively with strong income flows. Cash in the door is seductive.

I was not ready to hear an outside perspective back then. I had tried before with one business consultant, who was greyer than grey, kept setting dull homework and expected us to know how to implement properly. Also, the team were resistant to his involvement, in many ways I was much more collegiate back then, not trusting in my "boss" position.

I do not know if Mr Grey was better or worse than the other consultant I also spoke to. Not that there was much of a conversation – he just spoke over me, did not give me the remotest feeling he was listening or interested and just wanted to pitch his programme. After my early 2022 epiphany, I spoke to him again, this time he seemed desperate for my business.

So, looking for outside help never occurred to me in 2019. I thought by clearing my desk and reading some books and blogs, that I could revamp

TCFP. What then ensued was three years of flapping. Lots of ideas, lists, chats, trying this, looking at this and that. It felt worthy and like progress but was not.

Today, comparing it to the last three months, it was all a bit embarrassing. The lack of focus, knowing what outcome was sought, the execution of ideas, all of it was off. It was entirely necessary though, part of the process that got me to early 2022.

We had achieved significant things up to 2022. We ditched our costly CRM, we simplified our financial planning process, beefed up our investment management and introduced a client portal. We outsourced more and I handed responsibilities to colleagues. Change was in progress.

But mixed in with all of that were numerous half-baked ideas, that led to half baked actions and distractions. The half-baked meant the good things had to fight to be heard and took longer than needed to implement. So to have had such a lack of focus, wasted so much effort and still be successful, is quite amazing.

An analogy occurs to me. Have you ever seen an elite athlete running? If you compare them to even the most competent amateur runners – the difference is startling. The amateurs are impressive, better than I ever will be, but it looks like effort. The elite athlete glides, no wasted energy, complete focus, everything aimed at propelling them forward. It looks effortless and that they look like they could go on forever.

We were amateurs who did not know it and had not yet seen elite.

So, on we went, flipping and flapping, with 100% sincerity, feeling like we were making good progress, our lap times were coming down. However, progress became stodgier, more effortful and less fun. Sometime towards the end of 2021 I was losing enthusiasm for “the project”, I thought I had done enough laps.

It only takes a single thought to change everything. And that single thought is available any time. It does not care where or when, it is just sitting there waiting for you. All you have to do is find genuine presence in the moment, a still mind and it will come to you. Some call it wisdom, others insight – it is the thought from nowhere, from deep in your bowels that you weren't expecting.

We get these thoughts all the time without recognising it – in the shower, doing the dishes, walking the dog. It is these insights that help us know what the right thing to say is in a tricky situation. They come to us smoothly, slowly, calmly.

My OMG moment came reading Steve Chandler's and Rich Litvin's “The Prosperous Coach”. There is a line in there that says something like “If you are a coach, and believe in the power of coaching, where is your coach?”. Bam.

For several days that single thought refused to leave me.

In early January I googled “business coach London” and found myself staring at hundreds of options. I was not put off. I had soon whittled it down to four or five. I knew I did not want quasi therapy, a cuddle, or fluffy words. I needed a person of action with commercial, practical experience, not theoretical knowledge. Surprisingly, few have these attributes. I spoke to three (including the coach from way back when, who was instantly disappointing), and chose one. It did not take long before I knew I had made a smart choice.

Mary's energy and no-nonsense approach has been transformative. We are clear on where we are heading and how to get there, roles have been redefined, wasted time, effort and money identified and eliminated. The financial benefits of our working together have been pleasing to say the least. However, the real payoff off is the different perspectives, extra

time and clarity of purpose I now have. They are invaluable to me.

I deliberately chose Mary as she has wide ranging experience as a magic circle solicitor, hedge fund advisor, setting up a boutique private bank and advising sovereign wealth funds and NGOs.

It has also been a lot of fun and that is equally important. Never in a month of Sundays would I have achieved such results myself. Having an intelligent outside voice, a critical friend and a sounding board has proved to be worth many multiples of the fees paid to Mary.

I had no idea just how good TCFP could be and, 8 years since I founded it, TCFP is fitter and better than ever, with a tremendously bright future. Results like these are simply are not possible without outside help – I tried for three years with limited success and no lack of frustration.

Cheap she is not, rewarding beyond my imagination and in all possible ways it is.


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