



Colorado
Charter Chapter

Are You Smelling the Flowers On Your Way to the Top of the Mountain?

By Helle Hegelund
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I attended the ICF conference at Red Rocks in Colorado in October. Driving down from this beautiful red mountain I reflected on my learning from the inspiring conference. Whether it was the spiritual environment that nature and mountains created or the presentations during the day about connectedness, your life's summit, or a current client and her challenges, I do not know. Anyway, in the midst of the stream of thoughts and emotions, the book "Way of the peaceful warrior" by Dan Millman appeared and reminded me of the significant impact this book had years ago on one of my coaching clients and his leadership development. I can still recall his puzzled expression when I introduced him to this "not very typical management book." ☺

What makes this book a useful source for coaching?

One of the central lessons of the book is learning how to live in the moment. I found this a valuable source for coaching as the book in a very skillful and engaging way makes you reflect on your own life, your own goals and whether you are actually being fully present. I have met many managers and leaders who are so focused on the outcomes and the results that they neglect to register and be mindful of the process and to celebrate the steps that are necessary to meet the goals. The negative consequences may be disengaged and unmotivated employees, increased turnover, and decreased performance.

The story that is based on Dan Millman's own experience follows a college gymnast who has great potential, but whose desire for success is one of the main obstacles standing in the way of fulfilling that potential. In his mindless pursuit of a goal, he becomes sucked into the deep dark hole of life-is-what-happens-while-you're-making-other-plans. In its simplest message, our hero's real challenge is to find happiness by being present and finding interest and love for what's right in front of him. During his junior year at the University of California Berkeley, Dan Millman first met his mentor (Socrates) one night at a gas station. At the time, Millman hoped to become a world-champion gymnast. "To survive the lessons ahead, you're going to need far more energy than ever before," Socrates warned him that night. "You must cleanse your body of tension, free your mind of stagnant knowledge, and open your heart to the energy of true emotion." From there, the unpredictable Socrates proceeded to teach Millman the "way of the peaceful warrior."

The book is full of insightful reading and many provocative questions and messages. One of the powerful lessons I wanted to share – a lesson that became particularly clear to me when I was driving down the mountain - is when Socrates decides to take Dan on a hike. On the way up the mountain, Dan is excited and really loving the hike, anticipating what Socrates is going to show him. When at the top, Dan asks, "What did you want to show me?" and Socrates points to a rock. Dan is then disappointed and says, "This is it? This is what you wanted to show me??" Socrates then invites Dan on "the journey of wisdom" with the powerful lesson:

"The journey is what brings us happiness not the destination."



Helle Hegelund, Certified Integral Coach and Education Director of ICF Colorado has an international coaching and consulting practice committed to helping individuals and organizations in finding and cultivating their strengths and developing areas of competence that can support them in reaching their goals. With more than 15 years of working with international training and leadership development programs she brings extensive wisdom, knowledge and experience into her practice. From 2002 to 2008 she was an International Human Resources Development Consultant responsible for Leadership Development programs in a large Engineering company in Denmark where she also had a role as a Coach, facilitator and trainer on many of the programs. In addition, she is certified in a number of test and assessment tools including Emotional Intelligence and MBTI. In 2008 she moved from Denmark to Colorado with her family and started her own consulting and coaching practice.

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