



John E. Long Career Coach

John is a Global Career Development Facilitator and Professional Career Coach. He works with a broad range of clients seeking assistance with career exploration, career development and career transition. John has specialty training in the interpretation of personality and career assessments, such as the MBTI®, Strong® and WPI®. He also focuses on work-life balance, time and stress management, and examining life roles.

John offers customized services to identify what motivates each client and to clarify aspirations the client can pursue with passion. Coaching is about support, encouragement, and action to meet the client's needs and achieve meaningful results.

SERVICES OFFERED

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A NEWSLETTER OF PERSONAL
AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH
FROM JOHN E. LONG, GCDF, CPCC



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Designing the Alliance Empower Your Relationships in Advance

Zoe is happy that Suki sends business her way, but it annoys her when Suki waits until the last minute to give her the work, causing Zoe to have to scramble to get it done in less time than has been promised.

Tom and Sarah recently began living together. Sarah wishes Tom would just "get it" that she doesn't like to talk in the morning, or at least not until she has her coffee.

Brian bemoans the fact that his boss practically watches over his shoulder while he's working. Can't she just give him space and trust that Brian knows what he's doing?

All of these people—in fact, just about anybody in any kind of relationship—can benefit by learning to "design the alliance" with the person with whom they're in relationship.

The concept of *designed alliance* is often used in coaching to set the stage for a relationship that empowers clients to be most successful as they make changes in their work and personal lives. For example, a client might suggest the most effective ways for his coach to support him when he's feeling scared, resistant or stuck. Once the alliance has been designed, it's important to update the alliance as individual needs and desires change.

This concept is highly applicable to all kinds of relationships—romantic or business partnerships, friends, parent-child, and more. Imagine a world, in fact, where all relationships begin with a consciously designed alliance, the purpose of which is to create a mutually successful experience!

How might things be different in the scenarios above if alliances had been designed from the start?

Perhaps Sarah and Tom could have taken time before they began living together to talk about what kinds of support they would want from each other. They could have saved themselves quite a bit of discomfort by designing it so that Sarah could have her quiet time in the morning without Tom feeling rejected. Likewise, Tom could make his own requests. Together, they could bring greater clarity and ease to their relationship.

Imagine what life at work would be like if Brian and his boss had designed an alliance at the beginning of Brian's employment. Brian might have let his boss know that he is most effective when given space to carry out assignments independently. His boss might have asked for a trial run at this way of working together. Although this communication didn't happen when Brian was first hired, there's no reason it can't happen now.

And what if Zoe designed it with Suki that, unless she has proper turn-around time, Suki will have to do the work herself? That might actually inspire Suki to keep to her original schedule, or perhaps even get the work done early! In either case, clear boundaries will make for a much happier working relationship.

Bringing conscious communication and the willingness to listen to and meet each other's needs is a wonderful way to empower relationships to serve each person. The notion of creating an "alliance" instills the understanding that "we are in this together," working to consciously design a successful experience for both individuals. What could be better than that? ●

Top 10 Ways to Keep Your New Year's Resolutions

Had trouble keeping your New Year's Resolutions? You're not alone. Most people who make resolutions fail to keep them. Here are 10 ways to make and keep your New Year's Resolutions.

1. Make resolutions you care about. Be certain the change you want to make really matters to you, not just something you think you "should" do.

2. Be specific and concrete. Not "Do more marketing" but "Spend six hours each Monday marketing." State your goals in incremental, measurable, attainable terms.

3. Make the time. If you want to exercise three times a week, write the dates and times in your calendar.

4. Easy does it. Start slowly. Don't expect to run a marathon by February if you can't make six miles now.

5. Do it differently. If you've made the same old tired

resolution for 10 years and have never been able to keep it, do something different this time.

6. Accentuate the positive. Say what you can do, not what you can't. Instead of "No procrastination," say "Complete projects in a timely, stress-free manner."

7. Start over if you need to. Don't let a slip cause you to quit the whole program.

8. Share your resolutions with a buddy. It's easier to exercise with a friend, join a networking club with a colleague, quit smoking in a supportive group.

9. Believe in yourself. Use positive self-talk, affirmations, encouraging notes on your computer screen.

10. Celebrate your successes. Keep a success journal. Give yourself rewards for succeeding. ●

Self-Quiz The People-Pleasing Syndrome

Pleasing other people—who could find fault with that? Isn't it a good thing to consider the needs of others, to be gracious, to be nice? By all means! But for many, the desire to please becomes an addictive need to please others, even at the expense of their own health and happiness. It takes a toll on health, relationships and quality of life, and it drowns out the inner voice that may be trying to protect us from overdoing it. "As a people-pleaser, you feel controlled by your need to please others and addicted to their approval," writes Harriet B. Braiker, Ph.D., in *The Disease to Please*. "At the same time, you feel out of control over the pressures and demands on your life that these needs have created." Take this quiz to see whether you can benefit from learning to say no to others more often—and yes to yourself.

True False

- 1. I put others' needs before my own, even when the cost to me and my own happiness is great.
- 2. If someone needs my help, I often can't say no. And when I do, I feel guilty.
- 3. To avoid reactions I'm afraid of, I often try to be who others want me to be, to agree with them, to fit in.
- 4. I keep my own needs and problems to myself; I don't want to burden others with them.
- 5. It's my job to make sure everyone else is happy.
- 6. I always have a smile on my face and an upbeat attitude, even if I feel sad or angry or hurt.
- 7. I go out of my way to avoid conflict and confrontation; it's better just to keep the peace.
- 8. I'm often on the go, rushing to get things done. When I take a minute for myself, I feel self-indulgent and selfish.
- 9. I should always be nice and never hurt others' feelings.
- 10. I'll do whatever it takes to get someone to stop being mad at me.
- 11. I hold back from saying what I really think or from asking for what I want if I think someone will be upset with me for it.
- 12. I want everyone to like me...all the time.
- 13. I feel like a failure if I've displeased anyone.
- 14. If I don't make others happy, I worry that I'll be alone and unloved forever.
- 15. I will change my behavior, at my own expense, to make others happy.
- 16. I spend a lot of time doing things for others, but almost never ask anyone to do things for me.
- 17. If I ask people for help and they agree, I'm sure they must be giving out of obligation; if they really wanted to help, they would have offered without my asking.

The motivations for being a people-pleaser are varied and usually quite unconscious. If you recognize yourself in any of these questions and would like to explore how this holds you back from living the life you want, please don't hesitate to call. ●

If you die today, what dreams, abilities, talents and gifts will die with you, unexpressed?



Inspiring public speaker
Start a nonprofit to benefit children
Beautiful singing voice
Gifted teen mentor
Open an Italian cooking school

Relevant Reading

- The Innovation Killer: How What We Know Limits What We Can Imagine—And What Smart Companies Are Doing About It*, by Cynthia Rabe
- Get Out of Your Own Way at Work...and Help Others Do the Same: Conquering Self-Defeating Behavior on the Job*, by Mark Goulston
- Winning Without Losing Your Way: Character-Centered Leadership*, by Rebecca Barnett
- Making Your Company Human: Inspiring Others to Reach Their Potential*, by Le Herron
- QBQ! The Question Behind the Question: Practicing Personal Accountability in Work and in Life*, by John G. Miller

"The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it."
—Chinese Proverb

Marketing Lessons for Everyone

Modern marketing is less than 60 years old, but in that fairly brief time, it has become a pervasive factor in our lives. Researchers estimate we see around 3,000 advertising messages a day—all of them the result of someone's effort to market to us. In the process, marketing has become increasingly sophisticated and targeted in its ability to identify who it wants to reach, and increasingly sophisticated in its ability to do so.

But for all those advances, the notion of marketing remains largely foreign to our daily lives. The area of "personal branding" is an example of this kind of thinking, but there are many other ways in which we might apply the principles of marketing outside of business, yet we rarely think that way. We might talk about "selling" a project to our boss or "selling" an idea to our spouse, but we would rarely talk about "marketing" to them. Yet sales, if it is to be predictably successful, must be preceded by marketing.

We don't think this way because "marketing" tends to be about communicating to broad groups of people, yet in our personal lives we are "marketing" to individuals or very small groups of people whom we know (or think we know) very well. But the Internet is radically changing that conventional meaning of marketing, and with it, the principles of marketing can take on even more relevance to the business of daily life.

So what does it look like to "market" a project to your boss? Or "market" a proposal to a client? Or "market" doing the dishes to your kids? This exercise is more about mindset than technique: You don't need to conduct a focus group to find out what to fix for dinner. But you'll be surprised at what you might discover if you let go of what you already "know" about any of the "customers" in your life—spouse, children, poker club, business associates, whatever—and apply some of the principles of marketing to get what you want out of those relationships.

Personas Gratis

The rage in marketing today is developing composite customer identities, called *personas*, that are equipped with mythical names, birthdays, pets, spouses, kids, cars, houses, etc., in order to help make them as "real" to you as possible. *Personas* are the new version of the old standbys, "segmentation" and "targeting." By developing these fully fleshed identities, you can come to "know" these proto customers so you can accurately engage that "person" on an emotional level with your marketing.

Try using this approach in your "personal marketing" by applying *personas* in reverse. Since you

generally already know the person you are dealing with, look beyond their "persona" and see them in the abstract. Or, pretend it is only the persona you know and ask yourself how you would deliver a message that would make sense to that "persona." You will often find that your assumptions get in the way of delivering the right message.

Listen to Your "Customers"

Listening in some sense is the foundation of marketing. It was the notion of listening to customers that created the watershed in marketing a few decades ago, and it is still done with mixed results, even by the best marketers. So how well do you listen? When your boss loads on one more assignment, do you hear the "customer" speaking, giving you the ammunition to suggest another approach? Or do you just hear the frustration in your own head?

Build the Buzz...

Another current megatrend in marketing is word-of-mouth. Many consumers, particularly younger ones, are so saturated with advertising messages that they no longer

take them in. But they are more likely to respond to someone "independent" who gives a personal testimonial for a product. A related process is endorsements and testimonials. So, for example, if you want the nonprofit you volunteer for to heed your fundraising advice, give the director some written comments from clients, work colleagues or a previous nonprofit—any of whom can testify to your knowledge and experience in raising money.

...Then Build Trust

One of the ways the Internet has forever changed marketing is by introducing the notion of "permission" marketing, which is really about building an ongoing, two-way communication that is based on, and built upon, trust. While we are still trying to weather the waves of spammers (who somehow skipped this lesson), permission marketing has a unique application in our personal lives. If good marketing depends upon listening, then great marketing depends upon listening over and over again. Demonstrate that you can be trusted with the "permission to market" to those with whom you have a personal relationship by consistently paying attention to what they say and then communicating honestly in exchange. ●



BEYOND the Box

The following questions are designed to broaden perspectives, to open vistas, to widen the lens. There is no one right way to approach them. You can journal about them, talk to friends, create art, ponder them while driving or working out, dance them—whatever helps you explore "outside the box."

1. What's the opposite of "designed alliance?"
2. Who's responsible for the success of my relationships?
3. What is a successful relationship to me?
4. Who or what am I protecting when I don't ask for what I want?
5. For the sake of what am I making these resolutions?
6. What is it to be "resolved?"
7. What's my next step?
8. What do I want to celebrate now—and by the end of 2007?
9. What if I were to put me first?
10. What do I make up about saying no? What does it cost me?
11. If I'm not liked, what will happen?
12. What is the relationship between obligation and authenticity?
13. Who and what are my "nibblers"? How can I better handle them?
14. What's my next action?
15. What am I planning for?

Getting Things Done—On Time!

There is a well-known axiom in business that “failure to plan is planning to fail.” Well-known, and, all too often, honored in the breach. It is planning, in its many guises, that ultimately has the greatest impact on whether you finish a task or project on time.

But for many of the tasks thrown our way at work, planning seems to be an unthinkable luxury. Assaulted by emails, barraged by phone calls, sliced and diced by meetings and interruptions, the idea of planning a day, let alone a longer-term project, is almost laughable. And if someone else isn't imposing unrealistic deadlines on us, we'll commit to them ourselves, agreeing to be somewhere or accomplish something in impossible time frames.

While a lot of this comes with the territory of modern life, there are some things you can do to help increase the odds of getting your projects done on time.

Protect your calendar

Your calendar isn't your to-do list. Loading up your planner with the 19 things you *want* to accomplish each day just creates frustration, not productivity. Instead, separate the functions of your calendar and your to-do list, and use the calendar *only* for events that are time-specific.

“But the Nibblers ate my day”

Julie Morgenstern, author of *Never Check E-Mail in the Morning*, calls them the “nibblers”—interruptions, procrastination, perfectionism and meetings—because they will definitely consume your workday. Meet-

ings and interruptions can be managed with a variety of tactics, starting with controlling your email habit, as the title of her book suggests. Procrastination and perfectionism are best fought, she says, with the ultimate weapon for expanding your day: planning.

Always identify the next action

Trying to finish tasks on time can often fall victim to the “urgency vs. importance” dichotomy that stresses working on the important over the merely urgent. But in addition, to finish a project, every step is critical, even the “unimportant” ones. If you are building a boat, caulking the hull so it doesn't leak may seem more important than buying the anchor. But both tasks have to be done if you are going to put to sea.

According to productivity guru David Allen, what's really critical is to determine the *next action*, the next physical thing you have to do to move your project forward. “Finish Phase II” isn't an action. “Email Bill in accounting to release the funds for Phase II” is an action. By always keeping track of the next task for each of your open projects, you can always be productive without wasting time figuring out what to do next, which will help keep your project on track. ●



—Dawn Markova

“I choose to risk my significance; to live so that which came to me as seed goes to the next as blossom and that which came to me as blossom, goes on as fruit.”

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