

Relationship Report Card

For many people January is a time for New Years Resolutions. I am not one of those people. I prefer to set goals throughout the year and check in often to see how I'm progressing, alter them if needed, or kick myself in the butt if I'm not moving towards them. However, I do like the idea of a January Report Card. I look at the following areas of my life over the previous year and grade myself an A,B,C,or D.

- Work
- Health
- Relationships
- Recreation
- Money
- Personal Growth

This month I'm going to dive into the Relationship Report Card but the process we go through would be similar for each area. It's all about reflecting on the past year and looking deeply at what is working and what's not. This isn't about wallowing in the mistakes of the past but simply highlighting those things that are stopping you from getting more of what you want in life. And on the other side, when we grade ourselves an A or B we want to highlight the behaviour or actions that brought us joy, happiness, and fulfillment and make sure we do more of that.

It's important to remember that relationships come in many forms, not just the lovey kind. I like to grade myself separately using these categories:

- Friendships
- Work relationships
- Mentors
- Family
- Neighbours
- Strangers
- Romantic relationships

It may seem odd to include Strangers but I know the huge impact my interaction with strangers can have on my life. When I act my "best self" with the woman that is ringing through my purchase, or the couple on the elevator, or the man sitting next to me at the doctor's office, I know the result may not be **amazing** but it most likely won't be negative. Who needs more of that?

As a little shout out to St.Valentine's Day around the corner I'm going to concentrate on our romantic entanglements but I encourage you to reflect on all the different kinds of relationships you have in your life. We often check-in on work relationships during year end reviews, etc. or even with our spouses (probably because we end each evening climbing into bed next to them) but we rarely check in with friends or family. If you want to know what kind of a friend/mom/sister you are...ask.

So, grab a pen (or crayon), a cup of coffee (or glass of wine) and let's get started:

Grade your Romantic Relationship an A,B,C,or D. No pluses or minuses...those are wishy washy grades for people that can't take a stand. What? Too harsh?

Now grade your Effort in your relationship as Excellent, Good, Satisfactory, or Needs Improvement. This is important as you may give yourself an Excellent for effort but your grade may be a C which usually indicates you are working really hard at the wrong thing. And if your grade is a B but your Effort is Needs Improvement, just imagine the possibilities if you tried a little harder.

If you gave yourself an A or B (good for you!):

- What do you love about your relationship? Your spouse? Yourself in this relationship?
- What actions over this past year helped to create such a strong relationship?
What behaviours?
- What values did you honour this past year in your relationship (ie: connection, passion)?
- What gifts did you help bring out in your spouse?
- If you gave yourself a B...why? What area (s) do you need to concentrate on for 2011?
What can you do differently to create the result you want? Who do you need to be?

If you gave yourself a C or D (congratulations for taking the time to go through this process to get the relationship you've always dreamed of):

- What are the qualities of a great relationship? Where did you fall short?
- What actions over this past year helped to create the relationship you are in?
What behaviours?
- What values did you not honour in your relationship over this past year?
- What gifts can you help to bring out in your spouse? How?
- Ask your spouse what three things you could do differently to help your relationship (if you ask this brave question...you must do the brave thing. Don't get mad, just try it).

Please note one critical, deliberate omission in these questions. I have not asked, even once, for you to describe the shortcomings of your spouse (you'd need another bottle of wine for that). I know this isn't the first time you've heard it but this time I want you to really get your Gandhi on and "be the change you wish to see in the world." I am asking, for one full month, that you concentrate solely on the actions and behaviours **you** can alter to get the relationship you desire.

As with many exercises in previous Coach's Corner articles, this process is designed to get the juices flowing. Without the benefit of one on one coaching I am asking you to start with the questions above but then probe deeper, ask yourself what truly needs to be asked. And finally, many of us suffer from paralysis with analysis so the final step is to take ACTION.

"Your relationship with others reflects your relationship with yourself"
~Oprah