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Where our very best is only the beginning...!

What if there were no box? How Coaching can help you break out of the box...

Every now and again I have the wonderful opportunity to meet someone who says something that sets me right back on my heels. That happened for me last year when I was asked the question which is the subject of this article.

I've lost count of the number of times I've been in meetings and someone has said "We need to think outside the box". What fascinates me now is to think back to what happened immediately after that statement was made. Often there was a flurry of animated conversation looking to take the meeting in a whole new direction. Occasionally there really would be a fundamental shift in direction. More often than not, all that would happen is that everyone would be lulled into thinking they had indeed "...thought outside the box" while nothing substantive had changed.

So let's look at that box for a moment. What do you normally think of when someone asks *you* to think outside the box? Do you question what the box really is? Do you wonder whether the box is the same for everyone in the room? Do you wonder why, if you know there's a box, you aren't already thinking outside it? Maybe you'd like to think about that now.

So what is that box? LIMITATIONS - that's what the box represents – our own personal limitations formed out of the unique combination of beliefs, values, attitudes and experience acquired throughout our lives. Another important thing to realize is that those limitations are patterns of thinking mostly operating outside our conscious awareness, i.e. they are habitual.

Do we all have the same box? Let's think about that for a moment too. How many people do you know who have EXACTLY the same experiences and upbringing as you? Not even your closest family members have that. We are each unique and we view the world through our own unique lenses developed throughout our lifetime. Wherever you go and whatever you do, you take with you the accumulation of all your own, completely unique beliefs, values, attitudes and experiences. And guess what? Everyone else is doing exactly the same! Like you, they are doing the very best they can with the resources they have – it's just that their resources are unlikely to be the same as yours.

If you want to make a fundamental shift in your thinking the first thing to do is to get "present" and pay attention to your thoughts. If you are unaware that you are in a particular pattern of thought how can you expect to change it?

I'm sure there are many of you who have had the experience of driving in another country where they drive on the opposite side of the road. Can you think back to what it was like the very first time you did that? You had to *remember to forget* what you'd already learned in order to drive in this different way. That new experience meant you had to bring the driving techniques that had become habitual into your conscious awareness in order to

modify those habits. It's the same with any kind of thinking. You have to bring those thoughts into your conscious awareness in order to change them.

In my first coaching sessions with clients I almost always give them the homework of "paying attention" to their own thoughts. What my clients often find is that paying attention to their own thoughts is more difficult than they realized. In addition to that, many of us can't resist the temptation - once we start paying attention - to judge ourselves. I ask my clients instead to CELEBRATE that they noticed! It's the first step towards a new life and when they learn how to pay attention to their own thoughts they open up whole new vistas for themselves. And that is the very essence of coaching – to offer new perspectives.

So, are you ready to break out of YOUR box?

Graham J. Wiseman is a Life Coach. He is also a Certified LifeLine Technique™ Practitioner, Reiki Master, and Quantum Touch Practitioner. Graham is a certified WEL-Systems® NLP Practitioner, Quantum TLC™ Facilitator and Master Facilitator. Contact Graham at 613-601-4103 or graham@masteryunlimited.ca to see how coaching can help you break out of your box.