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Coaching Power Tool: Wants vs. Musts

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Reading

Case Study:

Dora wanted to start her own coaching business. She began exploring various niches and business models; however, she had a difficult time making decisions and moving forward. Dora was excited when she talked about the possibility of her business but rarely made the time to work on growing her business. After all, Dora already had a full plate. She was married with two small children and worked a full-time job.

Eventually, Dora started asking others whether or not she should start her own businesses. She told them it was important to her but also talked a lot about her concerns: the lack of clients, lack of experience and lack of money.

One Friday afternoon while Dora was at work, she was called into her supervisor's office. Dora's supervisor told her that the company was struggling financially and was in the process of downsizing. Dora was told that her position was being eliminated and she only had five more days of employment.

Dora felt shocked and confused. She had worked hard and put in long hours. She had given up time with her family and herself to help build the company. How could they do this to her? Dora left work early that day and went home to do some serious contemplation.

That evening after putting the kids to bed, Dora and her husband put her coaching business plan into action. As a family, they committed to downsizing their home budget so Dora could invest some of their finances into growing her businesses. They could only live on her husband's paycheck and their small savings for a short time, so Dora had to make money with her coaching practice within six months.

Dora woke the next morning with a new sense of relief. She was let go from her job, which was a challenge. However, within this challenge she saw an opportunity. Losing her job helped her shift from wanting her own business to needing her own business. Building a successful business became a must for her.

Dora wondered why it had taken such a dramatic life event to change her mind and her actions. Why didn't she consider her coaching practice as an absolute must while she was employed? The family could have created a plan for her businesses while she was working as well. Dora chose not to dwell on the past but focused on her future. After all, she was now committed to building a thriving coaching firm!

Self Application:

It is important for people to clarify wants from musts. Wants are not necessarily musts. Wants may be desirable and thought about a great deal; however, people may not necessarily take action on them. Many people say they want a new job but never turn in any applications. People also talk about starting businesses but never take steps to grow their enterprises. Individuals talk about wanting to break old habits but never dedicate anything but thought to it.

Typically, people do not take action on their wants. They act on their musts (Robbins, 2001). Action is required to turn wants into musts. One of the first actions steps is clarifying musts and making them essential. Musts need to become critical for survival, success and well-being. Turning a want into a must ensures that time and other resources are dedicated to making a must happen.

In 1965, Dr. Abraham Maslow presented a paper, "Self-Actualization and Beyond" during the Conference on the Training of Counselors of Adults. In this talk, he defined self-actualizing individuals:

Self-actualizing people are, without one single exception, involved in a cause outside their own skin, in something outside of

themselves. They are devoted, working at something, something which is very precious to them—some calling or vocation in the old sense, the priestly sense. They are working at something which fate has called them to somehow and which they work at and which they love, so that the work-joy dichotomy there disappears. (p. 110)

Self-actualization can lead to “peak experiences” characterized by individuals dedicated to achieving their true musts. When focused and dedicated to achieving their must, individuals experience a sense of overall well-being, purpose, creativity and personal innovation.

In order for true self-actualization to occur, individuals must listen to themselves, be honest with themselves, look within for answers and ultimately take personal responsibility for their actions. In order for wants to turn into musts, individuals must be willing to take calculated risks with courage and conviction.

The path of self-actualization will help separate wants from musts while providing individuals with new experiences and opportunities. The journey will be characterized by ups and down as well as opportunities and challenges.

Because people take action on their musts, challenges will inevitably occur and are part of the process. Research (Webber, 2010) has shown that challenges and struggles can lead to joy and personal epiphanies that lead to greater self-actualization and more peak experiences. Expect challenges along the road to clarifying musts. Individuals must take the time to process challenges, learn from them and move forward with greater understanding and clarity about the “musts” they want to experience during life. Individuals must also realize that musts are fluid. As life changes and epiphanies occur, musts will change as well. Self-actualized individuals are comfortable with making necessary changes in direction and realize that life is in a constant state of flux. They grow as they change their musts. The ability to be fluid and change direction leads to heightened awareness, new challenges and new opportunities.

The opposite of a must is a want. People generally do not act on wants. They may talk about them and intuitively feel them; however, they do not take action and make them a must. Without action, there is no risk, no learning and no opportunity to get into flow and have peak experiences. Wants are desires. Desires are thoughts, which manifest themselves only if the individual takes action.

People tend to have internal conflict when they do not pursue a want. They may think they want something or listen to the voices of others who tell them what they should want. Clarity is needed to resolve the internal conflict. Individuals must become very aware of the reasons behind turning wants into musts. Questions individuals should consider:

- Is it their own voice? Are they speaking and living their truth?
- Are they letting others or external forces influence their lives and not truly committed to the want; therefore, it never truly becomes a must for them?
- Do they have limiting beliefs that keep them from turning their want into a must?

Coaching Application:

Identifying and Clarifying Wants and Musts

Our actions do not always reflect what we say we want. This power tool is designed to clarify what you want vs. what you must have and/or do. And I mean really, really must have and/or experience. The deep down, gut-wrenching things that you just can't live without.

The trick here is to block out all those annoying little distractions and voices that get in the way. So again, when doing these Innovation Actions, I encourage you to find a quiet space and a block of uninterrupted time so you can focus.

Clarifying Wants and Musts:

Look at the two columns in the **My Wants vs. Musts Chart** below. In the first column, write down all of the things you tell yourself and others that you want out of life.

Guiding Questions to Clarify Wants:

- What do you tell other people you want?
- What do you tell yourself that you want?
- What do you feel compelled to do or achieve because of pressures from others, society or even yourself?
- What do you say you want because you feel compelled to conform?

After you feel complete around the first column, move to the second. Now, write down what you really, really want out of life.

Guiding Questions to Clarify Musts:

- What is your intuition or gut feeling telling you? What are your dreams and ambitions?
- What have you always wanted to do or achieve...no matter how big or small? Write it down.
- Write down the things that come from the depths of your soul. Physical, spiritual, educational...it's all fair game and should be included. Do not worry about anyone seeing this. Let your mind and heart guide your thoughts.
- What do you truly desire to achieve and experience in life?

My Wants vs. Musts Chart

What You Say You Want	Your Musts

Reflection:

Review your lists and reflect on the following questions:

What do you notice when you review the **My Wants vs. Musts Chart**? Do the answers in both columns match? Or, are they out of sync?

Are you doing the things in life that it takes to accomplish your wants (be brutally honest)?

Yes or No

If Yes, what are you committed to do more of to achieve and experience your wants?

If No, what are you willing to do to change? (Be brutally honest!)

Coaching Application:

As coaches, we can help clients clarify their wants and musts. They must be very honest with themselves during this process and dare to be different than they were in the past.

Good coaching can help clients learn to listen to themselves while strengthening confidence and self-esteem. In the end, answers must always come from the clients. The clients must also be willing to take responsibility for their actions and non-actions alike. We can hold them accountable as coaches; however, we should be careful not to influence the process with our own bias or judgment. We have to hold ourselves in a neutral position, which can be a challenge when clients get into a place where they appear to be struggling. Clients must work through their challenges and their own life lessons. The process is part of their journey towards the self-realization of wants vs. musts.

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Note from the author-

This Coaching Power Tool: Wants vs. Musts was submitted to the International Coach Academy to satisfy graduation requirements for their Certified Professional Coach Program.

Whether you are a fellow coach or someone in need of coaching, I sincerely hope this tool is something you can use for personal innovation and change.

Go Wild with Your Musts!

-Dr. Connie

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