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Hi Everyone

Almost November and Christmas just around the corner, so how are you preparing for the inevitable onslaught of shopping, cooking, parties and rounds of joyous revelry?

In sessions with my clients I always start by asking them what has gone well since the previous session, a checklist of all the good things that they have done to move them closer to their overall goal.

It seems to be a natural reaction of my clients to focus on what they have not done rather than what they have done or achieved since the last time we met. Quite often they will tell me that they have had no positive experiences since the last session but a bit of careful questioning uncovers a wealth of positive actions!

That may be as simple as them having made a "To-do" list and then actually doing something that is on the list! A goal without a list of actions will always be a goal but once it is accompanied by a "To-do" list, inevitably the goal moves one step nearer with every step taken towards that goal.

My next question is always, "What did you intend to do but didn't accomplish since our last session?". This is where the things we discussed at the last session, but the client was not totally committed to, come up. Inevitably there will be the stock answers, "I didn't have time", "The cat got sick", etc. In real terms this is where the session can really begin as we start to look at the real reasons behind the lack of action.

At this point of the session there is usually an indication of some reluctance on the part the client to engage with the coaching process. This is the point in the diet when one simply gives up and this is the point in the coaching where the coach steps up to the mark and asks, "So, what is the real reason for the lack of action on this point?" The ensuing discussion usually identifies hidden values about the client's feelings of self worth, or the voice of the "shitty committee" in the head telling you that this action will either:

- not work;
- be too hard;
- be not what you really wanted to do anyway.

At this point, my job as coach is to help the client identify the inner voice and try to establish whatever the conflict is that is going on, address the issue and help the client move forward in a positive vane to achieve their goal.

So, as December looms and we all start the preparations for the best Christmas ever, are you going to allow yourself to exceed your expectations or will you put up with less in terms of the things you know you and your loved ones deserve and desire?

Happy Christmas preparation time!

Barbara