

Dear Master Coach

By Patricia Burgin, MA, MCC

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Dear Master Coach:

I'm ready for a full practice. How'd you do that? I mean, you're well-respected, you're not smarmy, I've heard you talk about how really good work keeps finding you and doggone it, people like you.

*Yours truly,
Ready to Serve*

Summer 2017

Dear Ready:

I know. Wouldn't it be nice if after all the work of getting the ICF seal of approval you just started getting email from people who were desperate to work with you?

There are ten things I started doing 20 years ago. Here are the first five (I'll tell you about the second five next time):

1. Keep your day job while you feed your passion. Don't follow your bliss--but keep it in sight. If you load a bunch of financial pressure onto your young coaching practice you might smush it. Worse, you might say "yes" to the wrong kind of work.
2. Make sure your biggest fans and referrers (family, friends, colleagues, strategic alliances) know about your new work so they can help you. They already want to be in your corner—you just need to help them know how to be. For me this involves email and web presence that educates people about what I do. It also involves lunches, walks, complimentary sample sessions, Rotary presentations, auctions and hand-written thank you notes. Make people proud and grateful to know you. They'll jump onto your bandwagon. Then they'll tell their friends because you're going to make them look good.
3. Coach a lot. All comers. Get really good at both the craft of coaching and in your coaching presence. And along the way, start to notice which clients you look forward to working with. Study their outcomes and concerns, their sector and their vocabulary. What do they want to work on/get better at? Then develop things that will delight them. This must include stuff you find fun and interesting and compelling. Without that, the 10,000 hours rule won't make you a better professional, just an older one. If it's fun, you'll be more likely to create services, resources, workshops and groups that will delight these people (this is way more fun than "finding clients").

4. I know, I know. In coach training, your mentor coaches nagged you about not teaching, telling, advising, consulting, propping up and rescuing. At SeattleCoach, we nag too. But rather than telling coaches to just "STOP THAT!" we ask them to mentally bookmark what they find themselves wanting to tell or teach their clients. The stuff you want to teach might end up energizing your workshops and articles and web presence. Coaching is highly customized, highly personalized, just-in-time adult learning, and I know for sure that learning becomes more sustainable when we offer coaching before, during and following a well-designed and presented workshop.
5. Keep refining your visibility and your brand, making sure that, in addition to your wisdom and professionalism, your ideal clients are also able to see themselves and their concerns in the way you talk about your work: *"Wow! I think she gets me!"*

Start doing these five things this summer. I'll give you five more next time.

You can do this!

PEB, MC

Listen to Patricia Burgin's "Dear Master Coach" quarterly 4 minute answers at:

<http://www.seattlecoach.com/dear-master-coach-blog>