

“Got Goals?”

Posted on [August 31, 2009](#) by [SeattleCoach](#)

*It’s September tomorrow, a time when a lot of us think about what comes next—of what we want to create, invent, launch or instigate. I know it’s a theme I share with my favorite clients: **I’m always thinking about where the next place is to grow and learn and course-correct.***

Here’s one of mine in a nutshell: It’s been twenty years since the Berlin Wall “came down” in November 1989. I was working at the time with students at the University of Leningrad when one of them, Andrei, ran up to me on Thursday, November 9 to tell me the news he’d heard on the BBC. Now, I’m a natural optimist, but after years of travel to and hassle from the former Soviet Union, I smiled condescendingly at sweet Andrei, just not believing his English was that good. You were right Andrei. By the next day, the whole world felt different.

So, fast-forward to a few weeks ago. I think, I’ve got to go back. I called my favorite traveling companion from those days, a comedienne named Mary (never visit a police state without one) and proposed a quick trip in November 2009. She instantly agreed and we are in the process of working through the required Russian red-tape (some things never change).

You know how some goals become engines that energize other goals? I think this trip is one of those.

Got Goals? Part II

Posted on [October 3, 2009](#) by [SeattleCoach](#)

*Last month I wondered about what (this fall) you want to create, invent, launch or instigate. I know it’s a theme I share with my favorite clients: **I’m always thinking about where the next place is to grow and learn and course-correct.***

Here’s some of what I’ve heard:

- *This fall I want to use my career transition time to build my business, but also feed my passions and activities.*
- *It always amazes me how relevant and timely your topics are for me. (This fall I’m thinking about) transformation and the art of letting concepts, habits, and ideas go that no longer serve us.*
- *My big goal for the fall is to get organized! Financially, physically, and mentally! I have made huge progress in all of these areas thanks to you Patty!! Thank you so much for believing in me*

As for me, [Russia Revisited](#) is on. And it has inspired me to remember a lifelong lesson I learned twenty years ago from Russians—and with them:

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Men and women, even with a long history of suffering, and control (from their own and other governments) have an almost gravitational pull toward curiosity, optimism and even faith and freedom.

How the Soviets made me a better coach

Posted on [October 26, 2009](#) by [SeattleCoach](#)

In the 1980s, I made several trips into the former Soviet Union to meet and work with students and professional people, and I was there in 1989 when, unbelievably, the Berlin Wall fell. The lessons and observations I absorbed in those days shaped my convictions as a coach of leaders and entrepreneurs. Next week an old friend and I will go back.

Here are six of my enduring lessons from that time:

- 1. Innovation happens when possibility or technique meet a market. Smart entrepreneurs seek advantages that they know to be mutually beneficial—usually with personal creativity and resourcefulness. The most vigorous and light-hearted people I met on the street in the 1980s were trying to buy my jeans and my shoes—and to sell me fur hats and Soviet paratrooper watches.*
- 2. Affirm, acknowledge and reward what you want more of. The Soviets rewarded compliance and obedience. It's even more powerful when the reward from a boss or a coach or a friend is an affirmation of your competence and dreams.*
- 3. The search for meaning, contribution and satisfaction is steady and ultimately irresistible. The one and only time I was arrested in Russia, the interpreter whispered an urgent question when my interrogators weren't listening, "Do you believe in God?"*
- 4. Freedom, having options, connects to personal courage. Where there is possibility, encouragement, and a bit of risk, people explore and grow and get better. Two days after the fall of the Berlin Wall, I was scheduled to speak at the University of Leningrad. Instead of a discreet dozen students, a newly emboldened 200 showed up. We talked and debated for over three hours.*
- 5. Too much of a good thing (in this case, government direction and control) connects to dependence, atrophy and resistance. A Russian political cartoon appeared a few weeks later. It said, "Workers of the world . . . we apologize".*
- 6. Choose colleagues that you laugh with. Especially when living in or even visiting a police state.*

The Russians helped me to learn the difference between compliance and transformation. I'll be twittering the lessons they still have for me during this twentieth anniversary return trip to what used to be Leningrad.

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The most important thing is what you do next . . .

Posted on [November 8, 2009](#) by [SeattleCoach](#)

So I'm waiting for the shuttle to get me to the airport for our fabulous return visit to the Motherland and the phone rings. It's my traveling companion Mary with the mother of all visa problems and within moments it's clear: We're not going to Russia today.

I've told countless clients through the years, "The most important thing is what you do next." I'm happy to report that in the moment, I sat down, paid attention to my breath and energy, made a decision not to yell at Mary and started thinking about what we could do next.

Thirty-six hours later Mary and I are having breakfast and visiting with Dr. Kari's sister Michele in a little town near Berlin. Michele lives here and will get us on the train to Berlin in a little while. Turns out they are observing the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Wall there too.

The learnings continue . . .

Posted on [November 12, 2009](#) by [SeattleCoach](#)

My return to Russia was put on hold last week, and an unplanned trip to very hip, very poignant Berlin took its place. Still a great week with an old friend, and a chance to join the crowds at the site of the former Wall to experience the excitement and to hear the whump-whump-whump of 1000 giant dominoes falling. But it was different that what I'd envisioned for months.

Check out this great little reflection. Not that it's anything like the small magnitude of our adjustments this week, but I appreciate the heart of one who understands resilience. Maybe you will too. [Enjoy](#).