

Who's Better at Catching a Frisbee?

Posted on [September 12, 2012](#) by [SeattleCoach](#)

My clients demonstrate to me every day that human beings love accomplishment. And that along with accomplishment, we love acknowledgment. In this morning's Wall Street Journal an article used the Frisbee metaphor to explain that as rules and analysis become more complex and voluminous (in politics, in managing people and goals, in running a business), we become less effective at making great things happen—and at giving and receiving acknowledgment when we see great character or great behavior in action.

The point of the Frisbee metaphor is that border collies usually catch Frisbees way better than people do, because they by necessity keep it simple. "The impulse of regulators, if asked to catch a Frisbee, would be to encourage the construction of long equations related to wind speed and Frisbee rotation that they likely wouldn't understand or be able to measure."

As a coach, I help people and teams to get reacquainted with both accomplishment and acknowledgment. After years of doing this, I believe that most people are starved for both. Along the way, these are my personal Frisbees as I work with my partners:

- 1. I help people and teams to figure out what's in their way, maybe what hurts. Mostly I think we just get afraid (of trying, not trying, of getting embarrassed, of not knowing, of saying the wrong thing—even the wrong word! of not being good enough, of disappointing or creating conflict, of getting sued or in trouble with HR, or of losing control, or of not being unique—or being too unique).*
- 2. Then I help them to identify their strengths and abilities and assets and restlessness and passions. (Those things can so easily get foggy.)*
- 3. Then I help them figure out what they want, what success would actually look like: We've all got our Mt. Everests and our basecamps to think about. And then crucially,*
- 4. In our partnership, we negotiate what needs to happen this week. What can each team member be counted on to do? My goal is for each client to leave each meeting with a next-step so clear and measurable that they could explain it to their grandmother and she'd get it.*

So how about you today? What do you want to accomplish? How about your team? What's your Frisbee?

Read the full article here: <http://on.wsj.com/Q0JngF>