

Reinvigoration Strategies

By Kay L. Cross, MEd

Crawl Out of Your Comfort Zone

It's easy if you learn new skills and create a goal strategy.

One of our greatest challenges as fitness professionals is to keep our passion alive. We give, encourage, inspire, motivate and challenge our clients and then desperately need to recharge and refuel ourselves so that we can continue to Inspire the World to Fitness®. The secret to long-term success is to prevent job burnout by embracing change and diversity.

Learn a New Skill

The more I travel and meet new people, the more I realize how much there is to experience in life. When we are seasoned fitness professionals, we are often so good at what we do that we can do it with our hands tied behind our backs and our eyes closed. Unfortunately, that ease can lead to incredible boredom and burnout as the years pass. Learning a new skill is a wonderful strategy for rejuvenating our zest for life and quenching our hunger for learning.

When choosing a new skill to learn, make sure you look at both your professional and your personal life.

Professional Skills

One way that I crawled out of my own professional comfort zone was by adding speaking and writing to my profit centers. Has it been scary? Yes. However, the rewards far outweigh the risks. I can now see my business expanding in these new areas, even as my one-on-one training sessions decline. I am forging an evolving and exciting vision for my future that keeps me inspired and growing. By learning new skills, you increase the likelihood that you will survive and thrive in the fitness industry as you grow older.

Here are a few new skills you might want to add to your professional repertoire.

Speaking

- * Create a speech outline for a topic on which you are an “expert” (make sure it is of interest to the public).
- * Choose one to three main points for a 30- to 60-minute speech.
- * Underscore each point by sharing a personal or client story that adds humor and interest.
- * Practice your speech 7–10 times on friends and family before offering it to a small group.
- * Start small by offering free 30-minute talks or lectures to local organizations.
- * Don't charge for your presentations until you feel confident.
- * Hire a speaking coach if you want to pursue speaking as a main income producer.

Writing

- * Use the same skills for writing an article as you would for creating a speech outline.
- * Start out by creating your own monthly one-page fitness newsletter for clients.
- * Contact your local small-city newspapers and offer to write a free monthly fitness column (250–350 words) that targets consumers.
- * Once you have been published in smaller publications, send article queries to IDEA and other larger media outlets.

Coaching

- * Take a lifestyle coaching session at the next IDEA conference to see if this is an area that interests you.
- * Hire your own coach to work on re-

fining your business and creating new and meaningful life goals.

- * Check into training and licensing opportunities through CoachU (www.coachu.com) or the American College of Sports Medicine (www.wellcoaches.com).
- * Incorporate your new coaching skills into your existing personal training sessions, or add phone coaching sessions as a new profit stream.

Mentoring

- * Create a mentoring program that benefits both you and the person you are mentoring.
- * Contact local fitness centers and colleges to inform them of your availability as a mentor.
- * Refer to the March 2003 issue of *IDEA Personal Trainer* magazine for additional mentoring resources for personal trainers.

Personal Skills

When considering skills to add to your life, be creative. Some of the actions you think are menial can be so liberating! For example, I experienced my first real “girlfriend” trip this year and had an incredible time. We talked, laughed, relaxed and returned home refreshed. I was astonished by how much positive energy that trip added to my life.

Do any of the following ideas generate excitement for you? If so, commit to pursuing one of these new skills as soon as possible:

- * Learn a foreign language.
- * Take a painting/drawing class.
- * Join a singing group.
- * Take a dance class.
- * Start a garden.
- * Learn woodworking or carpentry.
- * Earn your pilot's license.
- * Learn a new sport like golf, skiing, tennis or surfing.

Create a Goal Strategy

While we all may aspire to learn new skills, it's easy to get overwhelmed when determining where to start. A simple tool

I use when coaching clients or speaking to groups on life balance is the “Life Wheel.” Picture a pie divided into nine segments, each representing a different area of your life. The nine segments are personal matters; physical environment; career; money; fun & recreation; family & friends; fitness & health; spouse; and spiritual growth.

Create a goal strategy using the following steps:

1. Score each segment of the Life Wheel on a scale of 1–10, with 10 being “totally satisfied” with that area of your life.
2. To begin creating your goal strategy, identify the three segments with the lowest scores.
3. For each of these segments, list three specific actions you can take to improve your score in that area.
4. Define goals that are SMART (spe-

cific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time oriented). For example, “I will start taking weekly ballroom dancing classes in January for 6 weeks.”

5. Keep in mind that you may need to borrow time and energy from your strongest areas to improve your weakest areas.
6. A perfect 10 in each area is not expected. Find a balance you are happy with.

Comfort Zoning Out

Earlier this year, as I was writing a speech for a local organization, I evaluated my own Life Wheel and found two areas surprisingly lacking: “fun & recreation” and “family & friends.” I immediately took steps to add more fun and girlfriend time into my weekly schedule by planning outings to concerts, restaurants and local events.

In life, we often miss out on great experiences by not planning in advance. We get so caught up in our old habits and ingrained ways of doing things that later we find ourselves hemmed into a comfort zone that has become suffocating.

Rejuvenation requires creating and maintaining balance in *all* aspects of your life. Venture out into the glorious unknown by learning new skills and creating a goal strategy that generates a life you will be able to look back on with great satisfaction.

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