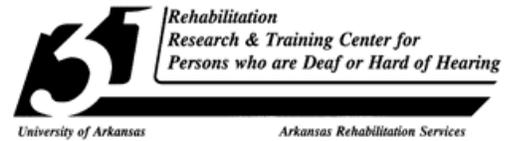




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LIFE COACHING

Presenters: NORMA SVEDOSH & HOMER MULLINS

HOMER MULLINS: You are probably asking yourselves, how did Homer and Norma get together?

We each made our independent decisions to get into coaching. We were colleagues in our ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) coaches training program. I've had ADHD all my life, though not in any sort of severe sense. Norma doesn't have it, but she has a family full of it. I began to realize that there really are a lot of common elements between attention deficit disorder, auditory processing disorder and hearing loss. Most importantly, we both have experienced late onset hearing loss and wear hearing aids, although my loss is more complex and severe than Norma's.

As we got involved in coach training, we decided to become business partners. We have a lot of things in common. We're both professionals and have recently retired from our original careers. Because we both experienced late onset hearing loss, we decided to focus our coaching practice on working with folks who have hearing loss, ADHD and other cognitive impairments.

Coaching. Coaching. That's the watch-word for the morning. Coaching.

For the next 90 minutes or so we are going to be talking to you about coaching. Some of you probably are familiar with the concept in the world in which you function. Most of you probably think of coaches as being football or other sports coaches. That is how the profession began with the ancient Greeks. They had coaches to work with them in the events.

I'm going to just give you a little thumbnail sketch about what we're going to talk about, what we're going to cover, and then come back with a second pass, and get into some detail.

Coaching, to try to get it down to the simplest terms, is an open, honest collaboration between a coach and his client. The coach occupies a totally nonjudgmental role and is there to help, not judge or fuss at people. One of the essential ingredients of good coaching is that your client has got to be motivated. If a client is not motivated, there is really not much I, or any other coach, can do with him. I've had to let people go for that reason. "You don't want it bad enough," is what I have to tell them. "Come back when you do."

The collaboration helps facilitate self awareness. We want to educate our clients as to what is going on inside them and how these things are working against them as far as their functionality goes. We also want to discuss with them other issues. I hesitate to call them impairing issues, but they may have other issues that they had all along that are made even worse by the hearing loss. We will work with those issues as well.

We want to work with them to set reasonable goals for themselves, to work with them in determining strategies and starting projects and bringing those projects to successful completion. You start with the small things and build up and pretty soon you're doing some pretty important stuff. The hoped for result is that the client realizes that they can make some significant changes. Of course that is very important.

Unlike psychotherapy, coaching is more action oriented. It's more performance oriented. It doesn't get beneath the surface. It doesn't go backstage and take years.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I think another term for it would be problem solving.

HOMER MULLINS: Right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That's what we use in psychosocial rehab, very similar to your approach.

HOMER MULLINS: Right. That's a good point. I want to just give you a sort of a menu of some of the issues that you might have that would be good coaching material. Obviously there are the issues connected with hearing loss involving denial. It's probably the biggest one.

Now, I've got some interesting figures for those of you who like to keep up with demographics. There are actually 32 and a half million people in this country who have a hearing loss of some kind. Eighty percent of these hearing-challenged people remain untreated. This may be, and frequently is, because of denial. It may be because the guy or gal thinks there is something wrong, but they don't think it's bad enough. So they don't want to do anything about it.

Another figure that Norma and I use a lot in our consulting work is that on average it takes six to nine years of continued hearing loss before people go to the doctor or some

other professional to find out what's going on. Think about that.

These people who wait the six to nine years, this is the population that Norma and I often work with. These are the busy professionals who don't have time to find out what's going on with them. So their hearing begins to decline, usually slowly, or sometimes, as you all know, very suddenly.

Over time a person becomes accustomed to that gradual hearing loss and doesn't realize that it's in decline. As more and more time passes, their hearing becomes much worse. They don't realize how poor their hearing has really become until some crisis comes along and things fall apart.

I was a lawyer for 30 years in Atlanta. Because of my declining hearing, I had to make a decision for the sake of my clients, my law firm, and for myself to leave an active practice which included some litigation. Litigation requires that I have enough sense about me to read the nuances in what a witness tells me on the stand and the clues I can derive from their body language, including such oral displays as strength and tone of voice, pauses, sighs, throat clearing and the timing of it all. The ability to observe and measure these things is absolutely indispensable to determine whether a witness is telling a lie and his motive for doing so.

The real danger for lawyers like me with a serious hearing loss is not being aware of what I don't know. I could be at a meeting and hear topics discussed and then say to myself that I knew he talked about so and so. I didn't hear it exactly, but I knew he talked about it. Then later in the hall after the meeting, ask my buddy, "What did he say about the liability issue," or something like that? That would be fine. Happens all the time. My buddy can fill me in whenever I am unsure. But what about the things I don't hear at all. Things like, toward the end of a long discourse about the case and its importance to the client and the novel issues in play, the lead case counsel, head buried in his notes, says, "Homer, the Motion to Dismiss and Supporting Brief are due by Friday and I need it on my desk by noon on Thursday." That information wasn't taken in and processed because , among other possible causes, my brain was still busy processing the information about the novel issues (often described in unfamiliar terms). Hence, I don't even know to ask the question. That's what will cook your goose. It has considerable malpractice implications and it really is a serious matter for lawyers, dentists, medical people, for just about any professional, or any ordinary person, for that matter.

One of the important reasons for getting people to accept their condition is that until they have accepted it, they don't really have any motivation to change. That makes it hard for the coach if the client is really just going through the motion, dead set against admitting that they have any kind of problem.

When a client answers my usual opening question, "What problem brings you in today," with an answer like, "My wife told me I had to," you know right away that the client is

likely in denial. Before the coach can make any progress on the hearing loss issue, he will first have to work with his client on self-awareness and self-acceptance before there can be any possibility of an effective long-term solution.

Communication problems. This is just another bucket of problems that coaches typically deal with. We all know that hearing loss changes things. It changes the dynamics in family relationships. It changes the way we communicate with family members and with law partners and business people, and adjustments have to be made to stabilize the group. If you can't communicate with folks in the old way, you've got to come up with a new way. Otherwise it will be hard to continue in whatever line of work you are in. I guess that is the choice. Do you want to stay in the business that you're in? Sometimes you can't and you have to accept that, too. That doesn't mean there aren't other things out there that are just as rewarding that you can get into.

I'm coming back again to what Norma and I work with a good bit. Some people even with a mild hearing loss can misunderstand or altogether miss parts of a conversation. These hearing gaps can interfere with effective communication at home and in your career. If you didn't hear what somebody said, you've got a problem.

This phenomenon is often associated with "untreated hearing loss." The sound signal that a long untreated hearing loss client gets is like what a colleague of mine compares to a piece of Swiss cheese. It has holes in it. Volume is not the only ingredient that makes up a sound signal. Hearing challenged persons often say they can hear sound but don't understand what the words are. That's often because the brain has lost its ability to recognize some pitches within the human voice. If the signal received has some pockets of unrecognized sound (like the Swiss Cheese), the brain will ignore them and try to make sense of that which it can interpret. So the signal one gets may be sufficiently loud, but distorted to the point where its not understandable. Or, if the brain no longer recognizes the sound and ignores it, the listener may not hear it at all. On the other hand, the client may be lucky that day and have enough clues from context and the environment to make all the correct assumptions and be right in his interpretation of those points.

Then we have identity issues. Before you had your hearing loss, how did you see yourself in the world? What kind of a person were you? Were you a teacher? Did you have a lot of good feelings attached to that because you were able to help so many people to become successful?

Now, with your hearing loss, how has all that changed? People often have a hard time getting beyond that step. They ask themselves, "What can I do now? How do I now view myself in the world and how do others perceive me?" All those things are key to self-image and hence, very important. Coaching can help you reframe this critical issue.

Then, there are the psychosocial concerns, the stuff of the psychotherapists, the frequently co-existing conditions of depression and anxiety. That is not hard to

understand when you are adrift in a boat without a paddle or a map and in unfamiliar territory. You don't feel like you have any control over your health or what happens next or how you're going to be tomorrow. A lot of that may be true. It just makes you feel real low that you don't believe you have control over anything.

There are some things that we can do to work on that. And there are some issues beyond our expertise and at that point we refer the client to the appropriate professional for help.

Then, anxiety surfaces, "How am I going to continue to support my family? I'm really afraid that I'm going to have to abandon this lifestyle I've become accustomed to." We can help people through our work with their behavior, to develop a confidence, that they do have some control over a lot of things, and they can control their destiny. They have an important role to play in the world, in their own lives, in the lives of others, their grandkids, their clients and whomever.

Relationship difficulties. Let's say the man has always been the bread-winner. The wife or the significant other has always stayed at home. All of a sudden, at least for a while, there has got to be a shift in those roles. How do you get through that? It's not just you, as the hearing-challenged person, it's the other people in your home as well. Are they going to have to be caregivers and devote the rest of their lives and careers to the care and nurture of this other person? Become prisoners in their own home? That's very hard for some people to accept. Understandably.

There can be feelings of anger and guilt, and abandonment by people who are left in the wake of a person with hearing loss. They sometimes become angry at the challenged person for taking away their freedom and independence. On the other hand, the challenged person sometimes feels abandoned by friends and relatives who don't understand him. And anger can develop against some of those friends and relatives who don't appear willing to make any effort to understand them. Most everyone placed in this situation has these feelings at one time or another, especially during the early stages of hearing loss. Coaching helps you realize that you're not alone in the world as you struggle to find balance.

I want you to think about this presentation today as a kind of an exposition. We want to tell you what coaching is and a little bit about what it's not. We have a smorgasbord here. We want you to have a taste of what it's like to be the client and have a coach to help you. Norma and I are students in a brand new program at Gallaudet, in something they are calling "peer mentoring." It is a project funded by the US Department of Education, to fill in the gaps that may be left by audiologists who become very preoccupied with all the science in the hearing aids. Peer mentoring, in some way, can fill that gap by offering a kind of hand holding for the person as they go through this whole process. For example, we don't want people to get frustrated with using their expensive new hearing aids and wind up leaving them in a drawer somewhere. We want people to use them. So we coach these folks and may actually go out to their

homes and do whatever it takes to get them comfortable in their situation.

Now, Norma is going to involve you in some coaching scenarios.

NORMA SVEDOSH: One of the things that Homer talked to you about in coaching is understanding yourself, becoming aware of who you are, becoming aware of your strengths, of your weaknesses, of your identity. So, we want you go through some of the exercises that, as coaches, we do with our clients. This is private exercise, for your own benefit, that you don't have to share with our group.

The first thing I would like you to do is jot down on a piece of paper how you see yourself. What is your identity? Who are you? What are your roles in life? Come up with 10 roles. They could be one word descriptions, mother, father, whatever. But ten words that you use or can use to describe who you are. They could be anything from roles that you have in the world, in your family, to physical descriptions of yourself. Anything that, for you, is important in describing yourself.

For example, when I have done this exercise, the words that come to me when I think of myself is mother, grandmother, wife, social worker, coach, senior citizen, since I'm now in my 60s, just all kinds of things that I can describe myself.

The next thing I want you to do is to think about your strengths and your weaknesses. See if you can write down, again, just for yourselves, you don't need to share this with anyone, five strengths that you see in yourself. And five weaknesses, things that you recognize that you probably could work on, that could use some improvement.

Homer, I'm going to put you on the spot as an example. Can you mention one or two of your strengths and weaknesses to the group so they can get to see how we go into this?

HOMER MULLINS: Okay. Well, I would have to say that I'm probably real strong on my people skills. I really care a lot about people. I think that probably comes through. And I really, really like to help people. So this is an advantage to people, that people know that I care about them. And I'm a strategic thinker, and I think I'm pretty good at that.

I am not a detail man by any stretch. And so the hearing loss and the ADD and all of those things have made that infinitely worse. So that would be a very weak point. Shall I go on?

NORMA SVEDOSH: No. That's fine. What I would like to do now, and this is just a warm up, because if you think we're making you work, we're really going to make you work with this next exercise. What we're passing out to everyone is a really nifty kind of instrument that we use in coaching, and it's called the Wheel of Life [appended as Attachment 1]. It is essentially a pie with different slices, pointing out the different areas of a person's life.

So as you can see around the Wheel, we look at your health, your physical environment, your personal growth, friends and family, career, money, fun and recreation, and significant other, your intimate relationships with others, your partners.

And if you can turn to the second page of this handout, we will go through how we use this exercise in coaching. And I think it will be helpful if we can all just sort of work through this now.

The eight sections of the Wheel purport to represent the balance in a person's life. Now, we'd like you to take a few minutes and rate your own life and your own experience on all of these eight dimensions, from a zero to a 10, from very dissatisfied to extremely satisfied, in terms of the level of satisfaction that you have in your life in each of these different dimensions.

You will see while doing this that your life, like the lives of many others, may not be in balance. There are going to be some aspects of your life that are very satisfying for you. And some that can stand some improvement. The Wheel is one of the strongest tools we have in coaching, particularly in the beginning, because it helps us understand the clients and it helps the clients understand who they are, where they are, and what they would like to do to improve things.

Once we get past this, then we're able to help the client identify the areas much more clearly that they want to work on, and come up with strategies to do it.

So, now please just take a few minutes and fill out your Wheel of Life.

NORMA SVEDOSH: For this exercise, let's say for the significant other, just look at your relationship with your wife and how satisfying that is for you. And then look at family and friends and the other people in your life.

Of course there is some overlapping between the sections of the pie. This is not a perfect way of looking at life. It's just a tool to help people focus on these areas of their life. So there are overlaps and there are some conflicts.

Have most of you had a chance to go through this? What we would like to do now is to demonstrate to you, using this Wheel of Life, how a coaching situation could work. Homer, let me call you up first to work on one of your areas. Then, if there is anyone here in the audience who would like to volunteer, now that you have rated these areas on a scale of zero to ten, I'd like you to think about one area that you would like to work on, that you feel that you could take steps to improve.

HOMER MULLINS: May I make an opening statement?

NORMA SVEDOSH: Of course.

HOMER MULLINS: We encourage you to use real life issues that you're dealing with. They don't have to be real personal. I'm going to use an issue that I've already been through and I'll use it here only because we feel like there is some instructional value there for you.

NORMA SVEDOSH: OK Homer, on your Wheel of Life, can you tell us one area that you would like to talk about and how do you rate it on a scale of zero to ten?

HOMER MULLINS: Subject to my earlier comment about the currency of this situation, my area would have to be my career, and it is down close to zero and partially as a result, my support system is eroding. So I'm feeling pretty lonely right now.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Can you tell us a little bit of what that means at zero? How does it look to you? Is there any career there or is it just totally gone now that you have the hearing loss and the impairment that you're dealing with?

HOMER MULLINS: Well, I don't know for sure. I have some issues I'm dealing with concerning my health which go beyond my present career and whether I can prudently continue to practice. I know that I have lost a substantial part of my hearing to such an extent that under certain circumstances I can partially or entirely miss the substance of things that are told to me in conversation; have been steadily losing the ability to hold more than a few things at a time in short-term memory; lost a significant amount of speed in processing auditory information; have problems of attention and distractibility. The implications of all that are very unsettling given rise to a considerable level of anxiety and some depression. So I will probably need to be making some important decisions about my career. In addition, I'm not sure that the medical folks really know what's driving these manifestations internally. I'm beginning to think about going on sick leave and doing my own investigation about myself and my condition. Eventually, I hope to be able to draw some conclusions I can use as a basis for deciding whether to continue in my present line of work or look for something else to do.

NORMA SVEDOSH: It sounds like you've got a lot of major decisions that you will have to make over time. Let's see if we can try and break this down. You are at zero now with your career. Think for a minute about what it would take to bring that up to a 1. Just to make a little step and to get you started on improving your job situation.

HOMER MULLINS: Well, I think if I could just see in my mind's eye how I could continue to use the skills that I've developed as a lawyer over the last 30 years, in some role... It doesn't necessarily have to be a practice role at the level I've been practicing. But something where I can continue working in the legal profession. It would be a shame to abandon a career field and related experience which has kept me mentally challenged and living comfortably these last 35 years.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Tell me if I'm understanding you correctly. This role doesn't have

to be in law, necessarily, in terms of being a practicing attorney. But you would like it to use some of those skills that you have developed during your law career.

HOMER MULLINS: Well, I would prefer to be involved in law. You asked me what it would take at this point to move myself up one notch in terms of career satisfaction. I think if I could find something in the legal profession where I could continue to use those skills in a less stressful environment, that would get me pretty close. Now, I may have to back away from that and settle for a little less. It may not be law practice, but some other career field where I can do work that matters to someone, is reasonably challenging and helps me maintain the lifestyle to which I've become accustomed.

NORMA SVEDOSH: What if we brainstorm and just take a look at what else might be out there for you to do. Maybe before we brainstorm, you can share with me what some of those skills are that you've developed, that you really would like to use and continue.

HOMER MULLINS: I guess the skill that I've always had and been able to rely on is the ability to keep a lot of balls in the air at one time, "multi-tasking" as the cyber pundits might call it. And I just don't have that going for me at all anymore. I can barely keep two ideas in my head long enough to work with. So in the work I do as a trial defense attorney, I've got what seems to me like millions of documents and other things to keep track of. But even with a computer, it's too stress laden. I wouldn't even want to go back and try it. I've become distrustful of my mind's ability to correctly locate and interpret sound signals from the environment, especially speech. I'm constantly in fear of giving bad advice to a client based on information that my mind either mishears or doesn't hear altogether.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Okay. So it sounds as though being in a very high-paced competitive environment is not going to work, and you don't want that. What has worked? What have been the best parts and experiences in your law career? What role have you had over the years that you have enjoyed and that you can see yourself continuing?

HOMER MULLINS: Well, that one is easy. I love to mentor younger lawyers. I think I do a good job of it because they keep coming back to my door. I thought about it, and that could be a good thing for me. I think I have a natural talent for it and I don't have a lot of people to deal with at one time. I'm mostly using long-term, rather than short-term, memory to tap into my "database" of personal experience, so something like that might work very well.

NORMA SVEDOSH: So, you really seem to...Oh, a question from the audience?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have a son-in-law who is a retired attorney. He has tinnitus. He doesn't have a hearing loss, but he has that. He has become a volunteer fireman in his small community and he also writes a column for the newspaper. It's called "Against the Flow." He enjoys both of those jobs. He is looked up to in the Fire Department, you

see, because he has this knowledge.

NORMA SVEDOSH: That's a great transition. Sounds like he has effectively made a move that satisfies him and helps other people as well.

Let's get back to Homer for a second. If you're talking about a mentoring role, working one-on-one with younger attorneys, maybe the next step would be to think about other kinds of jobs, other kinds of things that you can do which may involve getting more training, or making a shift, but will give you that type of mentoring relationship with other attorneys or even with people in the general population.

I'm going to just sort of fast forward now, because in coaching, this discussion would be done over a longer period of time. But once Homer has identified this as a potential for opportunity and said that, yes, mentoring and working with other attorneys would be a good thing, what we would try to do in coaching him would be to have him break it down into a number of tasks or something that he can work with over a set period of time. And the two of us would agree on this. So it may be that over the next two weeks Homer looks into other fields, other areas where he could use his mentoring skills with attorneys.

One of the main concepts in coaching is the notion of accountability; that is, holding the client accountable for what he or she has promised to do toward accomplishing the goal. We will have an informal agreement to "check-in" by phone or e-mail to see how the client is coming along in completing the tasks he promised to do before the next session.

HOMER MULLINS: And that leads me to the next step: after considering several alternatives, the client decides to focus on one particular opportunity. Then the two decide on the best medium to use for communicating at check-ins. For me it's usually by e-mail. Let's say they decide on Wednesday? Under the procedure we use, the client would send the coach an email reporting briefly on his progress. And if the coach doesn't hear from the client, he will call and ask about his progress and try to learn why the client failed to check-in, not to mete out punishment but to make sure the client's not avoiding his responsibility. Unlike the sports coach, the ADD coach doesn't usually get in his client's face absent unusual circumstances which would have to include his insistence that the coach respond aggressively. This doesn't mean that the coach will pass up any opportunity to point out inconsistencies and ask for explanations, if appropriate, as to what the client has said about a problem and promised to do about it, versus what he has managed to do in fact. If the client has made little or no progress, the coach will ask enough questions to find out what's gotten in the way. Based on the client's answers, the coach might change the homework assignment and ask the client to prepare an alternative plan for the next session. The client will also make any recommendations he has to redesign his approach to the problem, or revisit the issue and discuss whether the goal is worthwhile and whether he really wants to do it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was going to say that I found your presentation really interesting, because it made me think about the approaches I use myself, you know. I think that mentoring others, other lawyers, younger ones and less experienced ones, is really an ideal example of this, because you're passing on your experience.

Now, you also mentioned that you're good at strategic thinking. This is a skill that many people wish they had. So if you could teach strategic thinking to other people, that would be helpful.

Since lawyers have to know how to do research, and you could also still do research. That's one place where I'm valuable because I know how to do research. Many people who don't have hearing problems don't have a clue about doing research.

Then in your case you have to be aware of the effect of the ADHD in the place there and how to overcome that. I have a coworker with ADHD and a client. We have to help them overcome the deficit caused by the ADHD. I don't have it myself, but it's going to help me a lot to gain more knowledge about ADHD.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Now, is there any brave soul here who would like to just try coaching? Is there any aspect that perhaps, whether it's hearing related or not hearing related, that you have that you might like to talk to us about and we can just sort of brainstorm how to do it?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'll try.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Can you come up here? I think that would make it easier. So, you are Margaret. Can you tell us what area...

MARGARET: Well, it's also in the career area. It's a zero. I was a College English teacher, slowly going deaf. I retired in '98. I went back to graduate school, got another degree, because I like schools. Then I became deaf. Then I had some brain surgery. I've been deaf five years. I just got an implant, so I'm beginning to hear, but I'm not good at that yet. But I don't know where to go. I don't know what to do anymore.

NORMA SVEDOSH: When you were an English teacher, did you enjoy that experience? Did you like the teaching?

MARGARET: I love teaching, but I couldn't with my hearing loss. It got worse and worse. The kind of teaching I did was teaching writing, and that's very private. It's very hard to ask a student who shares something to say, "What? Read that again?" I mean, that's... so, losing my hearing interfered with my teaching style.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Are there any other types of teaching that you can think of that you might be able to do with your hearing loss?

MARGARET: I don't know. I don't know.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Okay. Why don't we open this up and everyone brainstorm. Maybe come up with some ideas for how she may be able to use these great teaching skills and continue them, now, with her hearing loss. Anybody have any suggestions or thoughts?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Just speaking hypothetically, what if I wrote a story and sent it to her over the Internet, and she evaluated it for me and made suggestions, and sent it back to me in e-mail.

MARGARET: Yes. That's a neat idea. Because I'm good at coaching writing.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Do you know how to use a computer?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have some friends who are teachers via Internet classes. They are both retired and teach several classes online. So, when they are on vacation or wherever they are, they have their students' papers sent to them and they take time out by the pool or wherever they are to grade papers. They send the papers back to them and they have a lot of input. It works out quite well.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm still working full time, even though I'm 70 years old now. I have found over the years a lot of my coworkers would bring papers to me, memos they are writing or they're going to school and have to write a research paper, and they ask me for suggestions on how to improve their writing. Now, I could do this face-to-face, one-on-one, and it's different from a group situation. So, if I don't understand the person, I can ask them to repeat.

So we have one-on-one. You can ask people. That is how I learned sign language. I would evaluate deaf or hard-of-hearing people who signed. And I asked them how to sign this or that, you see. So one-on-one.

Coaching on creative writing is really helpful to many people, because they get so much from it. My coworkers just get so happy and they learn so much doing this. It's really very satisfying work.

NORMA SVEDOSH: And, really, a great suggestion. Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: This is like totally off in a different way. But another option, since you're already a teacher, a certified teacher, licensed teacher, is maybe going into special education, where you deal with nonverbal autistic kids, something like that. It would take a lot of energy, but be very fulfilling.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Great. Any other thoughts? Margaret, you had several people give you ideas or suggestions.

MARGARET: They are all wonderful suggestions.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Margaret, do any of these suggestions sound like something you could follow-up on?

MARGARET: Yes, I could. I could find out how to do somehow writing coaching over the Internet. I don't know how that works, but I could explore where that would take place.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Right.

MARGARET: I did teach at Empire State College for a while, which is a non-residential arrangement in New York state for students who don't go to class, but we send things through the mail and discuss things on the Internet. So that would be interesting to do that.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Margaret, if we were to just look at the following up on the Internet, and maybe looking into where you could teach or learn about teaching courses on the Internet, would you be willing to let me know in let's say two weeks what you have accomplished? Would you be willing to send me an e-mail and tell me about your progress?

MARGARET: Okay. So the idea is I do some research on this topic in the next couple weeks and get back to you about what I'm finding?

NORMA SVEDOSH: That's right.

MARGARET: Or what I'm thinking about what I'm finding?

NORMA SVEDOSH: Exactly. And whether this sounds like a good fit for you doing this. Or not.

MARGARET: I'll try it. I'll try anything at this point because I don't know where to go.

NORMA SVEDOSH: So two weeks from today, today is the 10th...

MARGARET: I'm motivated.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Good. Two weeks from today, that is the 24th, all right? I'll give you my e-mail address, and I really would love to hear from you.

MARGARET: You want me to really do it?

NORMA SVEDOSH: Yes, I do. I do.

MARGARET: Okay. Thank you.

NORMA SVEDOSH: I would love to find out how you're doing.

(Applause.)

NORMA SVEDOSH: Is there anyone else who has something that they would like to do, or should we move on? There are a few other things about coaching that we would both like to share with you and let you know. One thing that we want to share with you, is called "gremlins." This is a coaching concept but it's also in other fields. I don't know if any of you have any idea what a gremlin is. Okay? You're nodding your head. Can you share with us?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I very well remember learning about gremlins. When I was a child during the Second World War, they talked about gremlins a lot. They are unseen creatures that foul things up for you and other people. That's what gremlins are, they are like little evil, invisible creatures.

NORMA SVEDOSH: That's great. That's exactly what gremlins are. And we all have gremlins. We are all fighting our gremlins. The gremlins can be the "shoulds," the negatives, all the things that stop you from going ahead, taking a risk, making a change. The naysayer in the back of your mind that is going to stop you. "Oh, I can't do this. I've never done this before. It's not going to work. Why should I try it?"

I have always found it helpful, when I talk about gremlins, I think about my gremlins. I imagine this little creature sitting on my shoulder, whispering into my ear, telling me that I can't do something. Once you identify the gremlins in your life, the things that hold you back, then you can get rid of them. Once you can figure out what it is and why it is keeping you from making change and making progress.

Homer, I'm going to call on you again. I want to ask you if you wouldn't mind sharing with this group one of your gremlins.

HOMER MULLINS: Well, I was born and reared in the deep South. That's not necessarily a gremlin. But my family was very, very conservative. There were a lot of "could have, should have, would have" kinds of statements being made. I guess one of the gremlins has to do with the puritan work ethic. You have to get out there, work up a sweat and get dirty shoveling dirt. I've always had a problem getting paid for what I know and what I can think of strategically. I feel like I need to be out there building the widget or whatever it is they make.

And so when I'm considering something different to go into, I think is that really going to satisfy me? And that is a gremlin, because a guy comes up and sits on my shoulder and says you can't be doing nothing, you're just holding somebody up for their money. But

you can't look at it that way.

So I identified the gremlin, and I realized or I imagined where that gremlin came from, and what that fantasy was all about. He didn't go away; he still comes back. But I just say: "Get away from me. I know who you are. You know, you're not fooling me." Then there are other gremlins that come up. But you only asked for one.

NORMA SVEDOSH: That's right. Is there anyone here who has a gremlin that may be a little different that they would like to share with us? Tell us what is holding you back?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, I kind of hate to say this, but I have some gremlins and they're my family. They are very supportive of me, but they are always telling me: "You can't do that, Shannan. No, look, you're deaf now. You just have to accept that fact. You can't do that."

One of the things I truly can't do is I can't drive anymore. I was responsible for two wrecks over a period of years. After the last one just about two years ago, my family decided that I shouldn't be out on the road. If I had another wreck I might kill myself or kill somebody else. That kind of holds me back, because I feel like I don't want to work again, but I would like to go out and help other people volunteer in groups like Habitat or the Food Bank, you know. Like in Atlanta, where I'm from, they have a Food Bank and people go in and serve food to the homeless and the poor on the streets. I feel like that would be what I really want to do.

Now, if I look back, I wish I had finished college and I wish I had known what I really wanted to do. But it's too late now for that. I feel my main purpose would be to help others, either little children or very old people. So the access is my gremlin, my main gremlin, just getting there or finding somebody to take me.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Have you contacted any of these groups that you would like to volunteer in? Have you let them know that you would like to give your time and your energy to them?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have to admit I haven't.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Okay. I'm guessing that there may be people involved with these groups who could help you with the transportation piece and bring you to wherever you could go to do these volunteer efforts, so that you wouldn't have to rely on your family, the gremlins, to be doing this.

The people who you are going to help, they may be able to do this. I would just suggest maybe contacting some of these groups, the Food Bank or some other groups where you could volunteer, and let them know you'd love to give them your time and your effort, but you need help getting there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Wonderful. Thank you.

NORMA SVEDOSH: You're welcome.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have a comment on that. I have transportation problems myself. I gave up driving because I have a sleep disorder and I don't want to fall asleep while driving.

Now, I live in the city of Chicago. I have taken buses when I need to. But I find it difficult to stand and everything, waiting for buses, so I use cabs. However, I realize that people who live out in the suburban areas must have cars in order to get from one place to another. So, one factor would be whether she is in the city itself or out in the suburban area, where it's much harder to get public transportation. So that is another thing that would have to be worked out.

But your suggestion about finding whether there was someone that would be able to pick her up, I think, for example, some agencies have vans, and they pick up clients. So maybe they could pick her up just like they do the clients.

NORMA SVEDOSH: That's a great idea.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: So there are a lot of possibilities like that.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Another comment?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I don't know what they have where she lives. But in Florida, in Miami, they have something called STS, which is special transportation service. And it's very inexpensive. It's like \$2. You call them at least 24 hours in advance and tell them what time. They will pick you up at your door, take you to the place, and you tell them what time you want to leave. Then, they come back and get you.

So that is another option if the city has something like that.

NORMA SVEDOSH: I think that's a terrific idea. Many cities do have a similar service. That will probably be a big help if they have that in Atlanta. Homer, do you know if they do?

HOMER MULLINS: Yes. I have at least two clients I can think of off the top of my head who use this service. It really is a good gauge in another sense for me to determine how motivated folks are. You've got to go through a little work, a little trouble, to figure all this transportation out. The law behind it is that big metropolitan areas get money from the Federal Government for public transportation projects. The Federal Government makes the local transportation authority promise that it will provide some inexpensive means of getting the handicapped folks around. So cities have got a means for you to get around. I would suggest that you call MARTA.

I'm almost positive that these agencies are required to provide assistance as part of the service for helping passengers get on board the van. They have hydraulic lifts for wheelchairs and usually do a good job of getting folks on and off the van.

You fill out a sheet in the very beginning with your name and limitations. For example, "I get dizzy. I lose my balance. I can't cross the street so if the bus has to pick me up on the opposite side of the street, it'll have to come get me". So when the transportation agencies come to pick you up, the driver can check your record from an on-board computer and know in an instant about your situation, including your limitations and any special needs. It's in their computer, and they have all the data on you right there in front of them irrespective of who's on duty that day.

NORMA SVEDOSH: Well, thank you all. It looks like our time is up and we are going to have to end the workshop. We really, really appreciate your coming and participating and hope that you found this helpful.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I don't think life coaching is too big here in Utah. But I got some questions about it, if you wanted to get into that type of field, if you're already a trained therapist. I mean, does insurance ever cover this or is this just people with money that want to pay their own money?

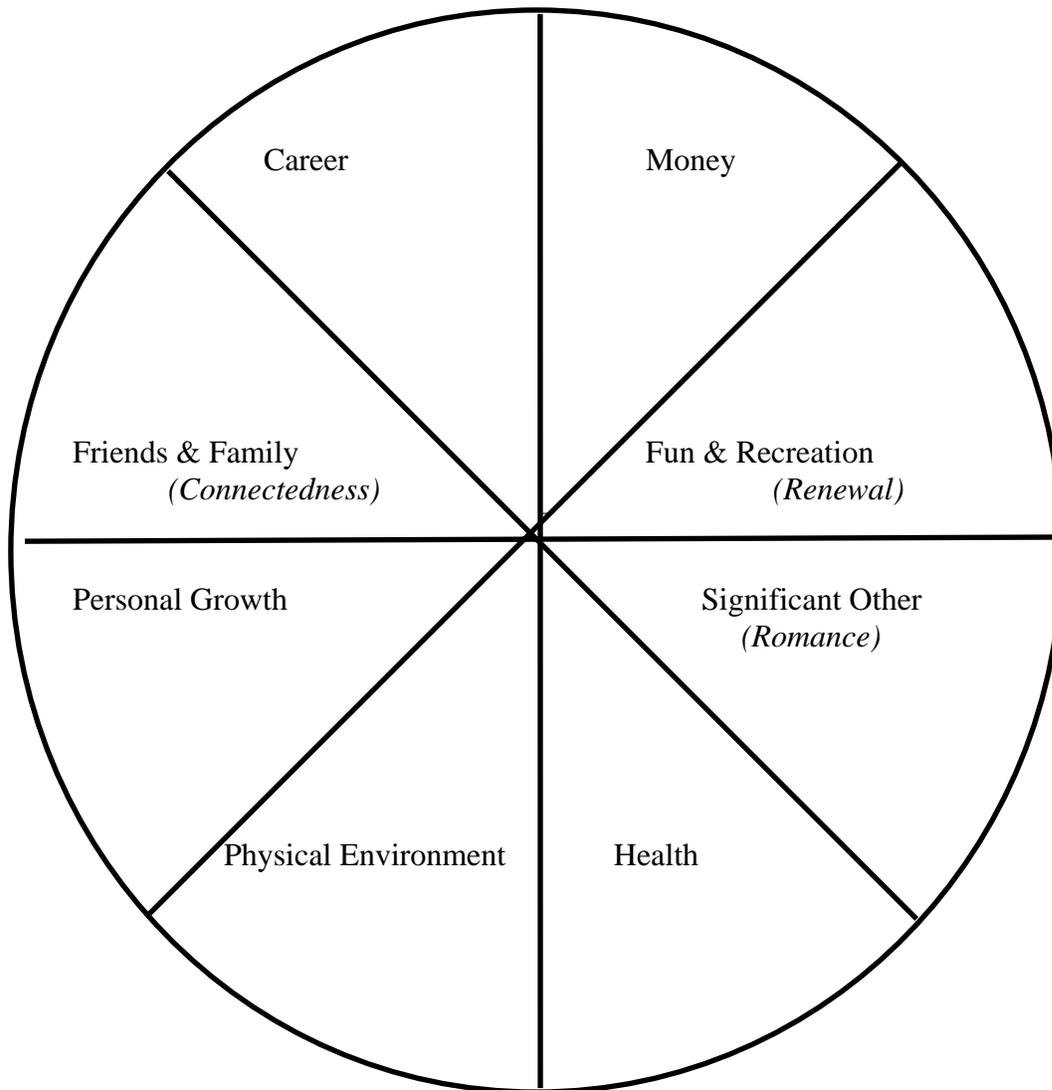
NORMA SVEDOSH: Unfortunately, insurance does not cover coaching at this time. But I'd be happy to talk to you and tell you about training programs and what is out there for people who might be interested in pursuing coaching.

(End of session.)

Homer Mullins, JD, a practicing Atlanta attorney for 30 years, has trained as a personal life coach. He graduated from the AD/HD Comprehensive Coach Training Program at the American Coaching Association in Philadelphia. Homer brings to his coaching practice the unique perspective of having lived successfully with the complications of his own moderate to severe hearing loss, auditory processing disorder and AD/HD challenges. He has a special interest in professionals whose livelihoods are threatened at mid-career by the complications of hearing loss and other coexisting conditions.

Norma Svedosh, Ph.D. is a licensed social worker and professional coach. She is a graduate of Mentorcoach, a coach training program for mental health professionals and the AD/HD Comprehensive Coach Training Program at the American Coaching Association in Philadelphia. Norma has a special interest in issues relating to hearing impairment due to her own late onset of hearing loss.

Wheel of Life



DIRECTIONS: The eight sections in the Wheel of Life represent balance. Regarding the center of the wheel as 0 and the outer edge as 10, rank your level of satisfaction with each life area by drawing a straight or curved line to create a new outer edge. The new perimeter of the circle represents the Wheel of Life. How bumpy would the ride be if this were a real wheel?