



Sophia Associates



PERSONAL STATEMENT

“It is easy to be the person you have always been, for it requires no change, no self-reflection, and no growth. It may appear that changing yourself requires giving up something. In reality there is no need to give up anything – you simply add to what has been.” - Taro Gold in Open Your Mind, Open Your Life

This is a good description of the process of coaching. Coaching is about choosing to add to what has been, to grow, to reflect and eventually, through one's development, to inspire, to lead, to develop and to be an agent of change for oneself, one's community or one's organization.

Before I called myself a coach, I was coaching. My husband claims I was wired to be a coach. I believe that the word does not capture what is possible. I believe that what I am able to do is far more than coach. I challenge myself constantly to model for my clients and for my associates, a lifestyle that inspires others or at the very least, provokes others to question their comfort zones.

The Buddhists have a word – *prajna* – that means “wisdom-partner”. I believe that as a coach I am your “wisdom-partner”. I help individuals and organizations access their inherent wisdom in order to achieve real and lasting results. My role is to catalyze new learning for you that will cause a shift that expands WHO you are and who you are capable of being.

My philosophy is that my clients come to me as intelligent, whole, healthy people. I do not “fix” them. Whether it is the leader of an organization, a successful entrepreneur or a professional woman or man with a career and a family, each person has a desire to get somewhere they have realized they cannot get to on their own.

They are looking for a partner to ask the right questions,

... to challenge them to reach deeper,

... to provide a confidential, non-judgmental and consistent place to create, innovate, learn, strategize or voice their ideas, fears, thoughts, dreams and vision.

And they are looking for outcomes that support better job performance, higher-level thinking and a more fluid and joyful life.

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ON LEADERSHIP

They say that it is lonely at the top. As a coach to C-level and senior level executives I have been told by many of my clients that this is true. Clients, employees, shareholders and others look to them for direction and even answers that no one could realistically provide. In this position it is unlikely that they are able to share with others their doubts, to reflect on their own thinking processes and sometimes to manage their emotions and physical well-being. Yet, all of this comes into play in what is currently a volatile business environment where executives are faced with uncertainty and external obstacles. Primarily coaching reveals the silent internal obstacles that left unchecked will erode confidence and limit the capacity to execute strategic actions or hinder executives in their own learning and development. Typically areas for growth are in the ability to build lasting relationships with others, a necessary component in a connected world full of diversity and changing technology. Together, we build the ability to inspire even in difficult times through a firm grounding in what the individual stands for and the articulation of the organizational strategy and mission. Working with me, clients also increase resiliency, the ability to meet challenges and bounce back.

"No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge. The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and lovingness. If he is indeed wise, he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind." --Kahlil Gibran in The Prophet

Over the years, I have engaged in reflective and spiritually oriented development in addition to the traditional academic and business learning. Eastern thought and practices have influenced my work-style and life philosophy. I believe in the integration of body, mind and spirit, as all are essential to being fully alive and awake and provide their own unique avenues for learning and self-awareness.

ON CERTIFICATION

Through the rigorous program at [Georgetown University's Leadership Coaching Certification Program](#), I was challenged to re-evaluate traditional leadership models and their application to a changing global business environment. This training has led me to become a Certified Leadership Coach. I am aware of these shifts and adept at supporting, reflecting and challenging my clients. There is a new paradigm for leadership. Effective leadership includes the whole – the whole person, the whole organization, and the whole community. Genuine leadership is based on authenticity, vision, execution and accountability. Peter Koestenbaum claims that leadership is not a technique; it is risking oneself with a personal commitment to greatness that enlarges the capacity for responsible freedom. Leaders expand the capacity of others to learn, to engage and to be responsible and accountable for their own success and the success of the organization.

ON GENDER AND DIVERSITY IN ORGANIZATIONS

As a specialty, I coach female leaders and women of color, to take on leadership roles, without compromising their feminine experience or invalidating their toughness. My coaching specialization is derived from the academic background, research and training that I have conducted on gender and organizations. My specialty is coaching high performing, high achieving women, women already successful, but looking to enhance their skills and to tap into their “leadership presence”. I do coach both men and women and find that it is essential to balance both perspectives.

My Master’s Degree coursework combined learning in the areas of women’s studies, counseling psychology, and my other passion, writing. My research and thesis, based on the alternative moral development process called self-in-relation theory, provided the framework for coaching high performing women and allows me to hold the larger social and cultural context for their performance and evolution as well as their internal, reflective process.

As a working mother, I have experienced the joys and the conflicts of caring for children while managing a career. I can honestly say, “I understand”, from my own experience in making difficult choices and accommodations. As a Hispanic woman, I understand that inclusion is essential to community, whether it is a social community or a corporate environment. My work with the practice of Dialogue (based on David Bohm, and William Isaacs at *Dialogos* at MIT) and currently with [Riverspeak Dialogues](#), has included the embracing of multiple cultural and ethnic perspectives as a way to tap into a collective wisdom of groups and teams. It is transformative work that can be measured in terms of creativity, productivity, retention and recruitment. My personal commitment to the development of all women is reflected in my community work as a Board member with the local [YWCA](#) and as a member of the [Center for Gender in Organizations](#) at the Simmons School of Management in Boston, Mass.

IN CONCLUSION

In a rapidly changing environment, and with distrust and isolation looming as current symptoms of a lack of integrity and authenticity in business, the need to connect to one another on a more human level is greater than at any time in the past. Our next evolutionary step is one of “awakening” to our human and global connections; it is about raising the level of human consciousness. It is about looking at the “WHO” in business and leadership, not merely the “what” and “how”. And we need leaders that have the courage and vision to embrace this evolutionary process and to welcome the rest of us into the future.

If you are in a leadership position, others look to you to provide a compelling vision of the future and to model the leadership qualities that *inspire* those around you as you learn to provide both the freedom and the accountability for those in your organization.

He who knows others is learned. He who knows himself is wise. – Lao Tzu

If you are an entrepreneur, your challenge is to maintain your personal center, strategically using your energy to guide your business to success. You will need to create environments of innovation and teamwork to produce the results that will allow your business to move to the next level.

If you are a professional woman, having a *wisdom partner* who is also a wife, mother and woman, and who has extensive experience researching gender and diversity issues and coaching executive women, can help you hone your leadership and communications skills while maintaining your essential self.

In all cases, your learning starts with your self-knowledge about WHO YOU ARE. That comes from accessing your inherent wisdom and consistently applying what you discover about yourself in your life and work.

Allow me to partner with you on this very important journey.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia

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