



December 2009 ([pdf - available within 24 hours of this email](#))

By Donna Zajonc



Coaching Opportunity

Beginning in January, I have room for two new coaching clients. The New Year is a powerful time to take stock of your work and personal life. If you are interested in kicking off the New Year (and the new decade!) with a clear focus, then let's talk about how a coaching plan will help you become the leader and person you want to be. I look forward to [hearing from you](#).

Catch and Correct

There's a wonderful story of twin boys and their grandfather on a walk through the woods when they come upon an old barn. They step inside to explore and one of the boys immediately starts complaining, "Grandpa, let's get out of here. This old barn stinks like horse manure."

The boy stands next to the door, angry because he now has manure on his new shoes. Before grandpa can respond, he sees his other grandson running happily through the barn in and out of the many stalls. "What are you looking for?" he asks of his second twin grandson. "Why are you so happy?"

The boy looks up and says to his grandpa, "With all the horse manure in here there must be a pony somewhere."

How easy it is to see only the manure when we are standing in the middle of the pile. Learning to **catch** ourselves and see the possibilities even when things smell bad is a core skill-set of gifted leaders.

I call this ability to reset: "Catch and Correct". Learning to **catch** our thinking when we only see the problems and not the potential that lies beneath the surface is the first step. The second step is to **correct** your thinking that may be preventing you from seeing or acting in a new way.

Adopting the **catch and correct** motto can help us break an old habit and develop a new, more productive pattern. When we observe ourselves falling back into the old habit, **catch** yourself and say, "Oops, there I go again." In

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Movie of the Month

Joyeux Noel

(Merry Christmas in French)



[Buy online at Amazon.com](#)

"This 2005 film is based on a true story of one Christmas Eve in 1914 during WWI. Soldiers on the Western Front called a truce, buried their dead and played football together - a powerful story of Christmas

other words, just notice.

Let go of any tendency to judge or criticize yourself or you will not **catch** the old habit as often. It is only human nature to unconsciously suppress your desire to **catch** an old habit if we know we're going to be self-critical.

Once we see the old habit surfacing and we **catch** ourselves, we're almost there. The next step is to **correct** and build the new habit. This new habit may be a new golf swing or listening more deeply to those you supervise. The process works the same for whatever new behavior you want to develop.

Utilizing the **catch and correct** mindset will accelerate the more you practice it. Any great athlete or musician knows the secret to greatness is practice. As you practice catching and correcting you will be amazed at how quickly you integrate your new behavior.

If you are part of a team or group and constantly notice the problems rather than the strengths of the group, you can bet others get very tired of hearing your complaining. Do you see the manure rather than the pony? **Catch** yourself. I can guarantee you will have a lot more fun in life and be more effective if you look for the pony.

Testimonials

"My work with Donna has helped me to better understand myself and how I am perceived by others, which is essential to my continued and sustainable leadership development. As an objective third party, she has helped provide me with the focus and confidence to address some difficult issues."

Brenda Sedlacek Gunn
City Administrator
City of La Vista, NE

Considering a Staff Retreat?

Give me a call (206) 780-9300 for your next City Council or agency planning session. ([read more](#))

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and what it means to be human in the midst of war."

~Donna

Favorite Videos of the Month!

Watch this YouTube video called "Piano Stairs" to see the impact fun can have on our personal choices.

[Watch Piano Stairs Video](#)

If you ever doubt the role of technology on our lives, this video will convince you. Using iPhones, engineers at Stanford have created a symphony of sound.

[Watch Stanford iPhone Orchestra](#)

Quote of the Month

*"Walker there is no path.
You make the path as you walk."*

Antonio Machado
Spanish Poet

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