

Can Reality TV Change your Reality?

By Beth Veenkamp - May 2005

I have to admit I am a fan of Reality TV, good Reality TV. Shows about spoiled people acting more desperate than they really are, are not for me, but Survivor, Amazing Race, and I will even admit the Apprentice I watch regularly.

Perhaps that is why when I first saw an episode of "Starting Over", I became immediately hooked. The premise of this Day Time Reality Series is six women, living in one house, supporting each other as they confront their "stuff" by working daily with Life Coaches. Over a period of weeks, usually 8 or more, you watch as the women in the house identify all the excuses that are preventing them from reaching their goals. They work through them sometimes kicking and screaming and as they grow, so does their intention, the intention of breaking through all the things that have been holding them back. When they get through it all they graduate, and before the bed gets cold in to the Starting Over house, in enters another woman, wanting something more than her life is presently offering her.

I was so hooked on this show that I actually went to the Website to find out a little bit more about this "Life Coaching" thing. What I found there put me on a path that has changed my life.

What I discovered was that Life Coach Rhonda Britton from the show Starting Over is the author of several books including "Fearless Living". I got her book and it spoke to me like no other "self help" book has ever done. After reading the book, I decided that I was ready to take it to the next level. I was stuck in my rut and I wanted something more. I decided to take the plunge and start working with a Coach who is certified Fearless Living Coach, trained in the philosophy of coaching as developed by Life Coach Rhonda Britton.

If you have ever wondered if working with a Coach via telephone can actually work, I am here to tell you that it can. I liken it to getting your own Jiminy Cricket to sit on your shoulder. Being that I have only ever communicated with my Coach via telephone and e-mail, all I have to go by is her voice. The voice that I hear in my head when I know that I am slipping into old patterns of behaviour that keep me believing that I am less than what I truly am. These limiting beliefs are the ones that play on that track in your head when you encounter situations where you are afraid to let yourself shine. These come up in many different ways, for me it is things like agreeing to do things because I feel that I should, - even though every fibre of my being is screaming no! It shows up when I decide that it is more important to scrub the toilet and feel sorry for myself than spend time witnessing the miracle of my daughter learning to climb the steps on the backyard slide, or blowing my top and screaming like a banshee at the poor unsuspecting dog rather than ask my husband for help.

The hardest time that I have had in working with a Coach is keeping the accountability thing in check. I easily use my coach as a reason for why I take the next step. Coaches can be great at assigning “homework” that needs to be worked on before the next session. I still catch myself being accountable to her assignment to me, rather than accountable to myself. Keeping the perspective that getting through the work is going to help me get to my next level of awareness is hard, because it makes me accountable to myself. I have found that I want to be accountable to anything other than myself. That in itself is a great awareness.

Awareness is the key to my coaching experience. Knowing that I am reacting in a certain way and why has been the most gratifying part of getting Coached. Being able to catch myself repeating old behaviours without the Coaches help, and then relaying that experience to my Coach has assisted me in knowing, deep down, that I am getting it. Those are the moments that I know that taking the time and money to go through this process is worth it. I have become aware of what my limits are and have started giving myself credit for what I do achieve. I have learned what my excuses are that have held me back, and the unspoken expectations that I have had of others. Finally I am aware of when I am choosing to complain and wallow rather than choose and act. All of these things were my default behaviour patterns that I relied on to get me where I am today. The question that I have had to ask myself is whether these things support and empower me, or if I can choose to practice a different way of walking through this world.

“Confidence does not happen once in your life and then you have it for good. Confidence must be exercised just like any other muscle on your body. Confidence must be nurtured in order for it to grow.” Rhonda Britton.

One of my assignments was to ask people if they have noticed a difference in me since I started my Coaching journey. I don’t know why I was surprised that I got the answer yes. Those close to me have told me that I am more positive and focused, that I have enthusiasm and am more willing to listen, without telling them how to fix their problem. I guess that I was surprised by the answer because even though I feel such an internal shift I thought I had done such a good job at presenting exactly what I wanted to, to the outside world. That is such a good lesson to take from this experience. The awareness that it all shows up, the good, the bad and the ugly, and doesn’t matter how good of an actress you are, it still shows up.

What have I noticed since I started my Coaching process? I am calmer, I am more content, I feel more satisfied and I am grateful for all the things that I have in my life. And I am aware. I can no longer say that I didn’t know, because I know that I can’t avoid myself. I know my stuff, I know what is in there, and for the most part I know where it came from. Does that mean that I am enlightened and can stop now? Heck no! I am just beginning. I look forward to practicing more, and discovering what else this life has in store for me. This is my journey and I am choosing to live it Fearlessly with clear intent for myself and what my goals are. I have a vision, and it is not out of my reach. I am Starting Over, with a new outlook. Reality TV did change my life!