

Book Club for a Better You

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As a professional, regardless of your discipline, you are required sharpen your saw. This means preserving and enhancing your greatest asset – yourself and your practice. When was the last time you asked a peer what they were reading? I want to challenge the members of this group to share something that isn't in a white paper, that allows us to grow or reengage a physical, social/emotional, mental, or spiritual area of life.

Why Read?

I think this question is best answered with one of my favorite quotes:

“You will be the same person in five years as you are today except for the people you meet and the books you read. Leaders are readers.” ~ Charlie “Tremendous” Jones

Reading is important to reengage, and when applied helps keep your work interesting, getting out of the hum drum, and into working ON your work instead of IN your work. Work is exciting, or at least the right work is exciting. Have you ever built something, took a step back, and realized how impressed you were with yourself? Trying something new for the first time and accomplishing it gives me this sense of self-worth. This is the kind of passion and challenge that keeps your work interesting.

In this spirit, and as a new member of the COAFCC board, I am eager to meet and greet all of you to impact the person I am in five years with what I will learn from you and how that will impact my work. In return, I hope sharing a book I am reading will equally affect you and the better you five years from now.

The book I'm reading right now has had a remarkable impact on both my Mental Health practice, but also my family life and negotiating a recent car purchase. I hope it gives you some new perspective that will allow your practice to morph into something more fun and exciting.

The Book

It should come as no surprise that the book I am recommending has some mental health components to it, but it really focuses on negotiation in communication. The book is *NEVER SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE: Negotiation As If Your Life Depended On It* by Chriss Voss. Who better to learn negotiation skills from than a former FBI Crisis negotiator? The book centers around the idea that in a negotiation, you can employ emotional intelligence in addition to the normal logic we leverage in negotiations to not only 'win' the negotiation, but to keep the other party happy enough in 'losing' that they will continue to come back to you in the future.

The book guides you through the study of negotiation from the perspective of a hostage negotiator but applies it to more simple business and economic scenarios. It sharpens the professional saw by educating you how to use empathy and the ability to walk in the other person's shoes to turn a negotiation in your favor and to further the ability to bargain.

The Application

When you apply the techniques within this book, you take traditional negotiation techniques and add a layer of psychology. The net effect is that when the opposite party feels understood, they become less defensive and more willing to contribute to a mutually beneficial agreement by listening to others, a tactic we use in the therapy office all the time. This empathy tactic and attention to your own emotional intelligence to understand and coordinate with the other person's mind can lead to some interesting outcomes. I don't want to give away the author's secrets, but imagine the impact of this on your practice. What if you could take what seemed like irrational and emotional argument, develop it into something understandable, and use psychological techniques to empathically change someone's perspective? I can tell you it comes in very handy using these techniques in my Reunification Therapy practice. I wonder what the impact will be on your practice.

Finally, what will you learn about yourself and how others work with you? Negotiation isn't just a divorce settlement, or transaction, it is also used every day in relationships. Can you imagine the impact this would have on negotiating with your spouse where you vacation? Can you imagine how this would affect negotiations in an aggressively oppositional case? Can you imagine the impact this would have in communicating with your teenagers and getting them to clean their rooms? Now THAT would be SOMETHING!