

Make Your Mark Graphic Facilitation & Coaching



Christina Merkley
Publisher



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A Note From Christina

Dear Christina,

The last few weeks have been nicely balanced with facilitating Strategic Visioning sessions for groups in Victoria and Winnipeg with other work soon to come in Seattle. Thankfully it has been a very mild winter in the Pacific Northwest and throughout Canada, making travel efficient and pretty enjoyable. Winnipeg, where it is not unusual for temperatures to be in the -20s or -30s was a balmy +3 – above freezing! Scary what global warming is doing to our weather patterns – but I appreciate not having to lug around winter coats.

I used to live in Winnipeg when I was a kid, so I asked the taxi driver to swing by my old house. Everything looks exactly

SELF CARE, TOXIC ENVIRONMENTs and BEING 'SELFISH'

Time and again I encounter clients who sacrifice their own health, mental outlook and well being for work and others. Over time, they have developed unhealthy patterns and habits that accumulate in shocking ways. As entrepreneurs or employees (internal managers and leaders) they don't eat well, don't sleep well, don't take proper time off ---- bit by bit they gain weight (or drastically lose it), burn themselves out from constant stress and adrenaline rushes, and develop lifestyles that are unhealthy and unsustainable.

I speak about this topic from personal experience too – for far too many years I let stress, deadlines and other people needs and agendas drive my life and choices (old habits learnt early in life). Instead of putting myself first and organizing my time and schedule accordingly, and, ultimately, doing the inner and outer work to create a life that truly worked.

It Is Not Selfish to Look After Yourself First:
Many people are programmed to believe that looking after themselves and their own needs is

the same even though it has been 30+ years (although a little smaller – funny how everything is big through the eyes of a child, a bit sadly sweet that).

In addition, I've had the pleasure of spending Saturday mornings with our current SHIFT-IT Coaching Group – kind of the 'cherry on top' for each week. A great group of people spilling into my studio with coffees, post-yoga class glows, etc --- moving into our fifth week together we are bonding really nicely and Personal Visions, Actions Plans and plenty of 'flippin' work' (belief / attitude / thought work) is getting done. Ahhas, insights and recognitions are happening all over.

Inspired by the S-I Coaching Group, I've decided to write a series of articles focused on the types of issues, concerns, and areas that people focus their SHIFT-IT process on. The "IT" in SHIFT-IT is different for different people. Some people choose to focus their work on business/career, money, right livelihood, others on weight, lifestyle, balance, and others on relationship, family and community --- and unique combinations of all those topics. I've chosen to begin this series, which will be run over the next few issues, on what I think is a foundational area for coaching and personal development work - -- dealing with basic health,

unrealistic or selfish. That they are 'bad' people, husbands, wives, parents, partners, employees, employers, etc if they think this way. Or, to another extreme, that it is impossible for them to really look after themselves first, as the world just doesn't work that way. There are just too many other important things that must get done and their basic health, happiness and stability needs come a distant third, fourth, fifth --- twentieth on the list of more supposedly pressing concerns.

Our basic health is our most primary asset. It is a foundational building block for the rest of life. Everything else is built upon it. If your health and self-care is shaky, your life is shaky. You cannot accomplish your long-term goals or help others in life if you neglect your basic needs. In airplane drills we are advised to put on our own oxygen mask before assisting others. That rule is a great metaphor for life overall. Look after your own needs first, and then help others. If you don't, it is game over for both of you before you even begin.

Toxic Environments: Many people who are attracted to SHIFT-IT work are in or have created toxic environments for themselves. They have unconsciously attracted places, people, events that treat them poorly --- it is a vibration that is familiar to them and becomes their norm. They either enter environments that are already toxic, or they make them toxic by how they operate. Bringing their habits, patterns and ways of being with them.

These people are not victims. This is not something that is done to them. As freewill adults they have willingly chosen these environments or been complicit in their creation. By not having proper self-boundaries they have allowed the quality of their lives to be eroded. By putting work before life --- by putting others needs before their own needs --- by believing the prevalent beliefs about how things just are the way they are, that they have no power to

self-care and boundary issues. Because one's life is built on pretty shaky ground if the physical and emotional basics aren't in place in a healthy way.

Happy Shifting,

Christina Merkley, The
SHIFT-IT Coach

Coaching Services



Ready to finally take some action?! To bust through your internal and external obstacles to create a life that really works?

Identify what you really want. Eliminate negative patterns, beliefs and habits that muddle your intentions. Cut through the inertia and get moving with renewed energy and commitment.

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"I started my work

change the economic and workplace systems or society. Unfortunately they tend to go along with the status quo, no matter how harmful it is, to avoid the challenge and work of creating a more healthy circumstance.

Aren't You Are Worth It? If any of the above rings bells for you, I have a question for you: aren't you worth a more peaceful existence? Aren't you worth having a life that is enjoyable, fun and operates at a humane pace? Aren't your kids, spouse, and family members worth having a healthy you? I hear many male and single earner clients say that they are working so hard and have to in this way, to provide for their families. And female clients saying they have no time to look after themselves or they feel bad, guilty and 'selfish' when they take time for themselves. Isn't it worth it to figure a way out of an unhealthy dynamic, even if it requires some inner and outer effort on your part – perhaps even significant effort in some cases? I find that once clients make the inner commitment to changing their circumstances, the outer shifts happen much more quickly and easily than they ever imagined.

How to start the process of creating a healthy existence for yourself:

- Challenge your beliefs about what IS possible
- Find examples of balanced living (they are out there!)
- Collect ideas, images & concepts of what you WANT
- Associate with yaysayers not naysayers
- Exercise self care: fitness, proper food, sleep & calm
- Address weight, food and 'self medication' issues
- Have boundaries: say no, preserve time for self
- Purge guilt: realize it is essential, not selfish,

with Christina by going for a half day SHIFT-IT Retreat and I emerged over a year later as a mentee and apprentice. Having witnessed the power of Graphic Facilitation in my past corporate work, I was thrilled to have this insightful methodology used on just me and my life --- my life's story mapped out in all its glory right in front of me with my newly emerging dreams and aspirations. Christina coached me as I transitioned from leaving a hierarchical, toxic corporate job into self employment ... and through the journey of reaccrediting as a nurse. I've also been lucky enough to shadow and assist in her corporate work and workshops and regularly recommend her to business colleagues and friends alike. I am hooked on graphics!" **Terry Ogilvie, Facilitator, Registered Nurse and Independent Consultant,**

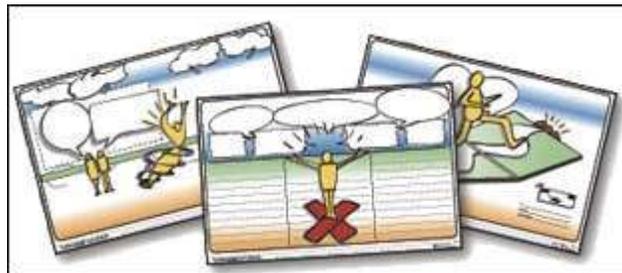
to look after self first

Begin Now:To quote a cliché, life is not a dress rehearsal. Your time here is limited and precious. Don't waste it by not looking after yourself and putting up with circumstances you do have the power to change. You can create a life that works for you --- in all aspects, not just a few. The journey of a thousand miles begins with just one step – take yours. Be selfish!

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WANT TO USE THIS ARTICLE IN YOUR E-ZINE OR WEB SITE? You can, as long as you include this blurb with it: Christina Merkley, "The SHIFT-IT Coach" is creator of the SHIFT-IT Graphic Coaching Process. To learn more about SHIFT-IT, Graphic Coaching and Personal Visioning and Planning, visit <http://www.make mark.com>

CALLING ALL PRODUCT TESTERS



Have you tried any of the maps I've been sharing in the last year? Since February '05 I've been using this ezine as a forum to share the emerging line of SHIFT-IT Graphic Tools. My draft writing process is nearing completion ... so I'm eager to hear back from those of you who have tried the tools.

If you haven't already, please drop me a line about how you found the templates and worksheets. How was your experience in using them? What did you

Victoria, B.C.

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like? Wishes? Any feedback you'd care to share to help me improve them. And, of course, any accolades you like to pass on --- testimonials blurbs are very welcomed!

Looking forward to hearing your thoughts and comments. All feedback welcomed.

Email Christina My Comments About the Graphic Tools:

About Christina, The SHIFT-IT Coach:

Christina Merkley, M.A. is a Graphic Facilitator and Coach specializing in strategic planning and visioning. She uses interactive, visual thinking processes to literally draw your answers out of you. Creator of the SHIFT-IT Graphic Coaching Process, she helps individuals and organizations get what they really want.

PAST E-ZINE ISSUES:

New subscriber? Missed past issues? Previous issues of The SHIFT-IT e-Zine are posted on the website.