



2022 Winter Olympics

SUSTAINING A COMEBACK

Don't let rejection, defeat or self-pity hold you back.

Many of you know I have been curling most of my life, and I am excited to watch John Shuster's curling team defend their 2018 gold medal. There are so many similarities between his story and what small business owners have to face to be successful. Maybe you will recognize pieces of your own story in his journey.

To compete at the Olympic level, or run a profitable business, requires hours of training, practice, and dedication. For businesses, much of the practice is in the marketplace with money on the line with each attempt. Success comes as one perfects their skills, creates efficient systems, and improves their execution. In the beginning, the goal is to have more successes than failures to create momentum and build confidence. As the consistency of execution improves, the more success one experiences.

A strong commitment is required to get through the ups and the downs. Shuster's Olympic experience is a great example of how challenging that can be. After winning the bronze in the 2006 Olympics as part of Pete Fenson's team, John Shuster made the gutsy move to form his own team. His team qualified for the 2010 and 2014 Olympics, but they performed poorly, placing last and second to the last respectively. It was so bad that when USA Curling selected candidates for their high-performance training program, Shuster and his team were not invited.

John was rejected by the Olympic Committee and fans twitted ruthless insults (kind of like a really bad Yelp review). While feeling defeated, John did not let self-pity prevent him from pursuing his dream. He knew he could compete and organized his team. When they started playing the fans coined them "The

Rejects". Then they began winning. They won the 2015 national championship, beating the Olympic Committee's high-performance team. When they place 5th in the World Championships USA Curling invited the team into their program. The Shuster team agreed only if they could play as a team. They continued to win the 2016 & 2017 national championships and earned the bronze in the 2016 World Championships.

As the 2018 Olympics approached, Shuster made some lifestyle changes and lost 35 pounds. Team Shuster was prepared. However, they lost four of their first six matches in pool play. One game away from elimination, John felt the pressure. Later that day John saw a post by Olympic speedskater Dan Jensen that gave him hope. Jensen performed poorly in two Olympics yet in the following Olympics he took the Gold. That gave Shuster the confidence he needed, and his team won their next five games to earn the gold medal. ♦

Lessons learned from Shuster's story.

1. Keep your focus. Know what you want to achieve and how you will get there.
2. Surround yourself with the right people who will lift you, encourage you, and keep you accountable.
3. Don't let pride prevent you from achieving your goals or getting the support you need.
4. Perfecting one's skills and systems is key to consistent success.
5. Persevere!

Team Shuster is still honing their skills at the 2022 Olympics. I hope you will cheer them on to victory and share any lessons you learn from them on our Facebook page!



It's Groundhog Day All Over Again.

Feeling stuck in a loop? Here's some tips to help you stop negative patterns in your life.

Growing up in the Midwest, Groundhog Day was fun folklore. Although I grew up in Illinois, my friends and I would hope Punxsutawney Phil would NOT see his shadow in Pennsylvania so we would all have an early spring. Of course, we knew the groundhog couldn't predict the weather any better than the weathermen, but it was fun to see if the folklore would ring true.

Since 1993, Groundhog Day has taken on the meaning of being caught in a continuous loop. Most of us can relate to the repeated efforts to improve skills or reach a goal only to fall short several times before we finally succeed. No one (other than producer, Harold Ramis, or the author, Danny Rubin) knows how Phil Connor (played by Bill Murray) was able to finally break the time loop. Many believe it's because he learned how to sincerely be a better person. That is a human victory most of us can relate to and appreciate!

As far as I know, none of us have been caught in a time loop, however many of us get caught in behavioral loops. When we work towards a goal and find our efforts do not produce the results we want, we tend to try to do what we were doing better instead of changing the behavior. A woman I know had a goal to run a marathon and place in the top 10% of her age group. She created a training program. As she got closer to race day, she would increase her running distances, but she kept having problems on race day. I was surprised, and she responded. "Yeah, you don't know what you don't know. When I asked a fellow runner about her training program, I learned I should have been backing off my training as I approached race day. It took me almost two years to correct my mistake." Now she regularly places in the top 10% of her age group and qualified for the Boston Marathon. That was quite an accomplishment! But what if she hadn't broken her behavioral (training) pattern? Would she have given up?

When business owners fall into unproductive behavioral loops it gets costly in both time and money. The business owner feels productive because they are busy, but their financial rewards tell them otherwise. Day in and day out it's the same thing with occasional incremental improvements. If that is you and it's déjà vu, STOP! The pattern needs to be broken! You know— "The definition

of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

How does someone break the behavioral loop? First, you must recognize something is preventing you from reaching your goals. Next, you need to review and analyze your existing skills, tasks, and systems in reference to your goals. Being objective can be problematic so seek help from a trusted friend or business advisor if necessary. Then work backward from

each specific goal. What needs to happen to reach the goal? How much time is needed? What resources or skills are needed? Who can do the task other than you? Next, create a system to ensure it gets done. Determine how and when you will monitor the progress and how often to "tweak" things that are NOT working.

The hardest behavioral loops to overcome are those caused by our subconscious beliefs and mindset. The cause of these loops can be elusive and hard to identify. If left ignored, this "head-trash" causes us to question our self-worth and can inhibit our ability to succeed. Tackling these behaviors requires us to dig deep into the reasons why we are working towards a goal and why it is important to us. Write down these reasons in detail. It will improve your clarity and conviction and help you deal with these subconscious roadblocks. It will take time to break these behavioral loops as there may be years of negative "talk" or habits to unlearn, so be patient.

There is no reason to be stuck in a behavioral loop for years as Phil Conner experienced. Your breakthroughs will come as you overcome the behavioral patterns that are holding you back! ♦

WHY IS EVERYONE WEARING RED?

February has been designated National Heart month to increase the awareness of America's number one killer of men and women. For years heart disease was considered a man's disease. However, heart disease has no gender bias.

As cases increased in women, the American Heart Association decided to create a program in 2004 to get women's attention regarding their risks. The program, Go Red for Women, is held the first Friday of February, and women across the country will be wearing red.

Heart disease strikes the active, the sedentary, the young, and the old. It's surprising how people in their 30s and 40s have experienced a heart attack. Equally surprising, is how often it is not diagnosed at emergency rooms. The key to one's survival is recognizing the symptoms and understanding it can happen to anyone.

Denial or disbelief are common reactions of many who succumbed to heart disease. One story of a 41-year-old nurse who was training for her first triathlon seemed to sum up what many survivors' experience. For this mother of four, her first symptoms of fatigue and left arm pain, she attributed to her training regimen. She started to experience shorten of breath but rationalized that as merely a result of her asthma. Within 3 days she was so weak she struggled to pull herself out of the pool after only one length. She managed to shower and go to work only to have a co-worker insist she goes to the hospital after taking her blood pressure. She was still unaware of what was going on with her heart as she drove herself to the hospital. All she knew was the pain in her arm was relentless and was moving into her jaw.

She was examined in the ER and her EKG came back normal. The ER dismissed her symptoms as a "panic attack." Her concern with the unbearable pain in her arm had her insist on an ultrasound to check for a blood clot. Instead, the hospital sent her home with anti-anxiety medication. Four hours later she collapsed on the floor of her home. She was taken by



ambulance back to the ER. Blood tests revealed she had a heart attack. She was immediately taken in for surgery where the doctors found 4 blockages, 2 of which were 90% blocked.

When she awoke, she did not know she had surgery or what her recovery would entail. After several months of Cardiac Rehab and numerous setbacks, she finally got back to her pre-heart attack fitness level. Two years later she crossed the finish line of her first triathlon. Now eleven triathlons and one century ride later, she is doing well. She considers herself a living testimony that it can happen to anyone.

For more information go to www.heart.org. Don't ignore the signs! ♦

The Good News

"Whenever you feel unloved, unimportant or insecure, remember to whom you belong."

— Ephesians 2:19-21

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Olympics - Don't Let Rejection Hold You Back

Groundhog Day - How to Stop Feeling Like You are Stuck in a Loop

Getting ready for Tax Season Checklist

Why Is Everyone Wearing Red? Know the Signs of a Heart Attack

We are proud to announce our new newsletter format. We would LOVE to hear your feedback. Email us at: office@designlifesjourney.com

HERE COMES... TAX SEASON!

The tax filing season is upon us, and you should be receiving all the necessary forms to complete your 2021 tax return in the next few weeks. It is important to have everything together before meeting with a tax professional or preparing your own return. If you are not certain what forms or documents you should be looking for, download our tax preparation checklist at www.designlifesjourney.com/2021taxchecklist. Not every item applies to everyone, but it should help you determine what forms and documents you need.

When you receive your tax documents by mail, download, or email, they should be clearly marked as "important tax documents." Don't disregard or throw them away. Common forms include W-2, 1099-MISC, 1099-NEC or K-1. Some of you will receive 1099-R for retirement plan distributions or SSA-1099 for social security benefits. If you have earned interest or dividends, be on the lookout for your 1099-INT and 1099-DIV respectively. If you sold any stocks over the past year, you should receive a 1099-B that

includes the gross proceeds. Make certain it includes your cost basis, otherwise, you will pay taxes on the total amount.

Other common forms or documents are the mortgage loan statements, a receipt for property taxes paid, medical expenses, and charitable contributions. If you don't itemize you may be able to take a \$300 above-the-line deduction (\$600 for married couples). If you have an office in your home, don't forget to gather the documents detailing those expenses.

Stimulus credit recipients received a Notice 1444 or Notice 1444-B. You need this notice to file your return. Lastly, tax returns are due April 18th, 2022. If you have questions about taxes, or need help preparing your tax return, contact us at (920) 944-6020, (678) 491-9744, office@designlifesjourney.com, or go to our website at www.designlifesjourney.com. Click on the "Prepare my taxes" button at the top of the page. This will lead you to the tax questionnaire where you can upload your documents to our secure portal. ♦

