

Week 3 Focus – What is your theme?

Focus Question: What's your theme for this year?

DESCRIPTION

Like the name of a book or TV show or movie, themes provide an overarching focus. A tag line for a year, or a program, helps to cut into the “essence of it”. Like a metaphor, a theme will often capture many layers of ideas in just a few words.

As we wound down the year, I asked all the group members I worked with what their metaphor or theme was for the new year. Metaphors help us move to the bigger picture, 30,000-foot view, or what some coaching models call the Meta-View. In times of change and turbulence, leaning into our metaphors become extremely powerful. Spend some time thinking about what you want your theme or metaphor to be for the year.

RESEARCH/STORY

There can be many ways of exploring and identifying themes. Many times, I like to go and select a card, or roll the “story cubes” and see what comes up.

One of the three annual programs I run is called the Learning Lab and Design Studio and focuses on support to professionals wanting to create their own learning programs (on-demand, coaching programs, webinars, retreats).

Here are the nine icons which were rolled early last year, creating the following story around the LLDS 2018:

The apple – As the first cube selected, I take the apple as a representation of Knowledge – very appropriate for us at the Learning Lab and Design Studio where the lens is about all things learning and creating engaging learning and growth experiences for the groups and teams we work with as coaches, trainers and facilitators.

Magnifying glass – Every month in my annual programs (the Learning Lab and Design Studio (LLDS), the Coaching Biz Growth Lab (CGBL) and the Leadership Lab (Teams365 LL), a different theme gets put under the magnifying glass. As a facilitator myself, it encourages me to continue my pursuit of learning, keeping abreast of new trends in our field, and exploring topics I can bring in my own work to my clients.

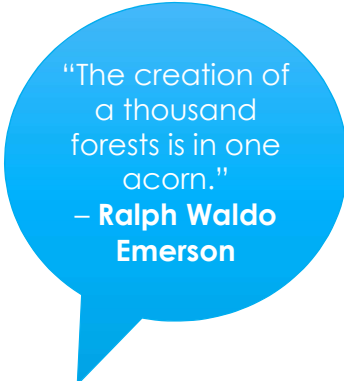
The Flower – As an avid gardener in the warmer months I was pleasantly surprised to see this come up. It got me to researching to see if different flower symbols have different meanings – and in fact they do – here's a cool list - <https://www.almanac.com/content/flower-meanings-language-flowers> . For this story, I'm taking the flower as a representation of the importance of building up your garden bed and taking time to appreciate the beauty they exist. I think that for many of us doing a lot of work with groups and teams we are moving so fast (like our clients are) that it's quite rare to have a quick pause to take stock of what we have, and what we can do. The LLDS creates one of these important pauses.

Footprints – The LLDS is also about taking action and leaving your mark. Once a quarter I host a 4-hour virtual retreat afternoon, geared to get you into action around your own work. This year I'll also be hosting quarterly program hacks so you can do some real-time design work in a compressed timeframe.

Lightening Bolt – One of the two calls each month is a facilitation lab. In establishing this program in January 2016, I felt that it was really important to create a place where we as facilitators could try out different tools, and experience them as learners ourselves, before taking them into work with our clients.

Book - There is an abundance of topics we cover throughout the year, and I've loved how there are now more than 24 sets of templates, articles, and almost 50 recordings for LLDS members to explore when they have time.

Conversation – One of my favorite symbols (the conversation bubble which is also on the title of my newest book, Effective Virtual Conversations) was next in the storyline. The other element I love at the LLDS is the conversations that ensue. It is a small group conversation experience, and unlike larger group webinars where everything might be chat only, we engage every week in rich conversation.



“The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.”
– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Fountain – The fountain to me represents the fact that there will always be a myriad of topics left to explore. Our work and professional field is not static. It's ever changing and evolving. The LLDS provides a regular reminder to keep learning.

Tree – For the last three or four years now I have been returning back to my roots as an environmental scientist in different ways, particularly as I speak and write about ecosystems. My work has always been very multi-disciplinary, and the tree symbolizes how at the LLDS many of our conversations span the different disciplines of coaching, training, learning, education, e-learning, facilitation, social change....

Source: <http://groupcoaching.blogspot.com/2018/01/setting-new-year-intentions-at-learning.html>

If you work with a favorite card deck pull it out now and select a number of cards randomly. If you have a set of Story Cubes, consider rolling these to get your theme for the month (or year!).

Share it with us using the hashtag #dscam2019 (Daily Steps + Consistent Action = Momentum)

CONNECTION TO THE WORKBOOK AND PLANNER

Every month you are invited to start your month with a blank page entitled "Monthly Plan for ____". See page 147 (CBB) or page 151 (PlanDoTrack) for the first one in the series.

When I run the month-end planning sessions, note that I make sure to ask the question, "What's your theme?". Like I have just shared, monthly themes can continue to pull us forward, particularly through the ups and downs experienced over the course of a month.

Include your monthly theme on your Monthly Plan page.

You'll also note these theme boxes scattered throughout at the bottom of other pages - Monthly To Dos, trackers and others.

Themes take us back to the bigger picture of business and can "infuse" the activities we undertake.

What theme have you set for your work this month?