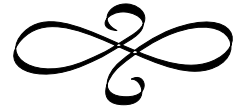


**\* Please Post or Route Throughout Your Team \***



# Strong's Insight



Success Commentary by Duane.

Fall / Winter 2008-2009

## *Woulda, Shoulda, Coulda*

There is no doubt that at some point you have muttered "I would of, should of or could of..."

These words have different meanings:

Would of: decisions made with poor or little information

Should of: opinion that a decision was in fact ill made

Could of: improving or altering the past decision using hind sight and full information

Roll those words around in your head and see how they erode and affect your psyche. "I woulda never gone for that drive if I only knew..." or "You shoulda listened to your gut..." or "We coulda hung on a little longer and..." or "I wish I woulda sold those stocks in June..." Wow, I already feel lousy.

We can talk to ourselves that way, and we can also talk to others that way. So, there are two general ways we use those words: Externally - we apply them to others.

Internally - we apply them to ourselves.

Externally applying these words (are they really words?) to others is a very dangerous practice. Unless your rapport level is enormous or the other person has asked for your opinion, as soon as you mutter "**You** woulda, shoulda or coulda...", what happens? Feeling judged, most people stop hearing with the intention of listening and start shutting you out so they can think of ways to combat your statement.

Internally applying these words is equally dangerous. "I woulda, shoulda or coulda..." Generally you trap yourself in the past, forcing yourself to relive past events that you cannot change.

There is a thing called "Crazy Eight" thinking: We want to change but we get stuck in our old thought processes, those thought processes get us repeating the same feelings and choices. Then we want to change but we get stuck

in poor thought processes...etc. This endless loop of repetitive unproductive or destructive behaviour consumes a large percentage of many people's lives. Leaving them years later muttering "woulda, shoulda, coulda".

If you are consciously making the best new decisions you can, with the best information at hand at the time, then you should never have regrets.

Avoiding the traps those words create means giving yourself and others the permission to consider, weigh and decide among past, present and future alternatives without guilt or anger.

Giving yourself some forgiveness will give you permission to make mistakes, learn from them and grow. We all wish we had a crystal ball or mirror on the wall that could tell us what to do...but that's just fairy tale stuff, right?

Your negative past controls you only if you live there.

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P: 1-888-735-6275

E: [info@stronginnovations.com](mailto:info@stronginnovations.com)

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