



SPEAKING OF SUCCESS

Exploring the Power of Your Inner Voice

by Barbara Somma

Just when you've developed a crystal clear picture of what you need to do, you hear a small inner voice chanting "you can't do this, you don't know how, you don't have time, it's too much...."

The feeling of overwhelm starts to encompass you. You try to fight it off with a flurry of activity but the harder you work, the stronger the feeling, the louder the voice.

Whether you're starting a new job, organizing a charity event or expanding your business there comes a time when you understand the magnitude of the task and begin to doubt your abilities.

Rather than succumbing to doubts, recognize them as valuable insights worth considering. Perhaps your little voice is saying:

- "You can't do this alone." So where will you find help?
- "You don't know how." But who does?
- "You don't have time to do everything." What will you delegate? What will you put aside for now?
- It's too much to do all at once." What is the progression of activities?

These important points should be included in developing an action plan and identifying necessary resources. Perhaps it's time to explore the power of your inner voice.

Our inner voice develops over time for a variety of reasons, often initiated by well meaning adults to keep children out of harm's way. As children we're unable to comprehend the nature of the danger so we only remember the "can't" and "don't." Teenagers often re-

ject limitations, reinforcing the "can't" and "don't" message. No wonder as adults our inner voice can only express snippets of doubt and fear.

Actively applying your inner voice to the present will enable you to transform it into a powerful problem solving tool. Start by exploring its triggers. Look for similarities in the what, when, why and who of its most vocal moments. Think about the challenges you ultimately faced in these situations. Had you ignored your own early warning system? What lessons can you draw from this experience? How might you address similar challenges in the future? Next, consider a current challenge. Let your inner voice fully express all of its concerns. Sort these concerns into those you know how to address and those that need further attention. Develop action steps for moving forward for both categories. Using your inner voice as a sounding board you'll be able to recognize potential alternatives or seek

timely guidance.

Proactively asking yourself if there are any issues that need clarification or have been overlooked will enable you to build the confidence and capabilities to take on significant endeavors. You instinctively will be able to use your inner voice as it was intended to be; an early warning system to keep you out of harm's way.

Ms. Somma's monthly column is a composite look at the challenges faced by her clients. If you would like more information about changing your approach to work or life contact

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