

Create your living legacy and “come alive”



Brandi Karlstedt - Executive Coach at CoachDynamix

Photo: Romain Schanck

(CS) Figuring out what you want your living legacy to be can bring fulfilment, purpose and a sense of pride to your life, said Brandi Karlstedt of **CoachDynamix** at a Monday lunch event hosted by the **American Chamber of Commerce**. The challenge is taking the right steps to achieve this goal.

The new year brings new opportunities to reflect on your life,

Karlstedt said, explaining that legacies are not just about wills and laws. “It's about making an impact,” she said.

But what impact do we have on the people in our lives or even the world in a wider context? Making a difference seems like a hard task to tackle, especially in the hubbub of lives already busy with work, hobbies, families and friends.

Karlstedt said that it's easy to drop such a seemingly enormous task off the to-do list. “Who has time for that,” she asked. “Like little mice we keep the wheel spinning.”

Finding out what you really want

Taking a time-out to reconsider our choices, can, however, be a positive exercise and beneficial to focusing the limited time and energy we have, the Executive Coach at CoachDynamix explained. It allows us to analyse our strengths, and how we use them to make the impact we want to make, she said.

“You are going to have a legacy. It's inevitable,” Karlstedt added, so you might as well make this legacy what you want it to be and experience it while you're alive.

Where to start though? You might want to seek inspiration from people who have created a living legacy that is sure to outlive them for a long time. Contemporary icons such as Aung San Suu Kyi have shown what can be achieved through strength and determination. A historical figure like Alfred Nobel shows how a legacy can change – as the inventor of dynamite and the founder of the Nobel Prize, he went from being the “Merchant of Death” to the champion of peace.

However, there's no need to reach for the stars straight away. Rather, Karlstedt recommends to really think about what it is that you want. “Very few people know what they really want,” she commented. “It's hard to know what you really want.”

Smart goals to make you come alive

Whether you want to become a better leader in your company or contribute more to the community, setting a goal is important, because it provides motivation. Once you know what you want, you can start figuring out how to get there.

Karlstedt recommended five guiding principles when putting together a legacy plan. Goals needs to be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely – or S.M.A.R.T. The “grand” idea of legacy needs to be brought to a personal level, the coach said.

Creating your living legacy is not just a way to have an impact on the world around you, but also to have more influence on your own life. Decision-making becomes easier, Karlstedt said, because you are no longer blocked, not knowing what you want or where to start.

At the same time, Karlstedt said that as our lives change, our ambitions and legacies can too. Our living legacy is not (yet) set in stone.

Or, in the words of American author, philosopher and civil rights leader Howard Thurman: “Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”