



## Acceptance

November 2010

As the year speeds ahead with only two months left, many of us find disappointments in how 2010 has unfolded. Undoubtedly, some goals haven't been achieved, relationships still struggle, cherished dreams remain unfulfilled and important projects have been delayed. Our natural reaction is often to rage in protest against what is. Our proverbial fists are clenched and our hearts stuck in what should have been.

Coaching people in the workplace, I find that resistance to "what is" can be a powerful barrier that limits thinking and suppresses positive action. The same is true in my own life. Too often I pummel myself with the "shoulda, coulda, woulda" thought process. Focusing on what I think should have happened stops me from fully embracing what IS happening and how to respond creatively and resourcefully.

Acceptance is not resignation. Resignation is a submissive and passive stand toward a situation. Acceptance is "the act of receiving or taking something offered; the receiving of an act or gift." It is an "open palm" receptivity toward the unfolding of life's circumstances and situations...receiving even difficult circumstances as the proverbial gift. It explores what is to move towards what is next. It opens us to learning and possibility.

Author Donald Miller tells a story about a successful lawyer friend who litigates in highly charged environments. The lawyer, named Bob, carefully coaches his clients to place their hand palms up and open on their knees. For years Bob has found that this successfully serves to relax and release tension inside his clients. Their whole body posture, tone of voice and visual demeanor shifts in their court appearances, especially on the witness stand. They become more relaxed and less defensive. So it is with us. Clenched hands reveal our clenched hearts. Resistance creates strain and struggle. Acceptance creates release and receptivity.

What are you holding onto today? Where are you stuck in "shoulda, woulda, coulda?" By embracing vs. resisting reality, how could an open palm posture help you shift your thinking to learning and possibility?



To reinforce these thoughts with a different medium, [here's a link](#) to a thoughtful song entitled "If You Were," by singer/song writer who happens to live here in the NW. And she happens to be my daughter.

Rachael wrote these lyrics expressing her journey towards acceptance after a painful personal loss. I think she has captured how acceptance can truly be a gift, enabling us to embrace what is, so we can move towards what's next.