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## EDITOR'S NOTE
### -- By Raj Narayan

Browsing through an article by Dr.Susan R.Meyers, President of the International Association of Coaching (IAC),I was stuck by the perspective that a support network was not limited to the family or the community that one belonged to.The article (read it here) suggests that such a network is more about "an organized way of thinking about which of my friends supports me in what ways."

The author actually suggests the creation of a four-square grid to place the four types of people in one's support network. Dr. Meyers defines them as (a) cheerleaders (b) comforters (c) clarifiers (d) confronters.While cheerleaders help me regain my self-esteem, the comforters shower me with sympathy.The clarifiers find me solutions and the confronters keep me on the straight.

In the Indian context, this idea appears to violently disagree with our norm of using the much vaunted joint family system where the elders often set the pace of our lives. With joint families becoming passé these days, the support network too appears to be disintegrating at a frenetic pace, leaving most of us to fend for ourselves in our time of need.

At a recent conclave of ISEC coaches, my colleagues took the view that the increasing marital discord and professional crises could well be a result of the missing support system. Are we sure of knocking on the right door for advice?

Maybe, it is time we created the four-square grid that Dr. Meyers refers to.

## MENTOR'S MUSINGS: — WHEN DREAMS ARE BORN!
### -- By Krishna Kumar, ISEC Founder Director

Do goals translate into dreams?

Last week, a bunch of teenagers badgered me with a question. They wanted to know why an alumnus of India's Ivy League institutions would decide to chuck up a corporate job to take up tennis and coaching as a career. I was stumped for an answer as the teens did not really seem interested in the concept of coaching as a way of helping others perform to their potential.

Since many of these teenagers were possibly preparing to write entrance examinations for entering these very Ivy League institutions, I thought it fit to refrain from delving into the reasons behind my decision and merely pointed out that sometimes goals do translate into dreams in our lives!

On my way back home, I pondered some more on the questions I faced. It was more about setting and achieving short-term goals through our lives while working towards that one mega dream that makes the wheels turn within us. When I started off as a high school student, I was given to understand that a strong university education alone is a key to our success. And, success itself is defined as the compensation we take home and the heights in a corporate hierarchy that we reach.

It is around the 20-year mark in our careers that realization dawns about our pre-conceived ideas of success. In my case, I realized that there's more to life than corporate success – I began analyzing my past achievements and started seeking more meaningful future goals.

Sometimes we seek to tread a completely new path by setting ourselves a totally new bunch of goals. A better option is usually to take time to reflect on our dreams for the future and work backwards by setting short-term goals for ourselves that ultimately lead to that dream.

Olympic shooter Abhinav Bindra admitted in his biography that he was "lost" for close to a year as he drifted in and out of one felicitation ceremony after another. Having achieved all that he set out to from a young age, Bindra says he now needs to discover another dream before he can set himself some goals.

In my case, the investment I made by gathering knowledge from the Ivy League institutions helped me integrate my passion with my profession – a combination that has consistently helped me position our Institution ahead of competition. Maybe, this is what I should have communicated to the teenagers who attempted to pick my brain on my career choice.

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## GUEST ARTICLE: A PLACE CALLED "HOME"
*--By Sr. Joan Chittister*

In each of us there is a place where we go in the middle of chaos to escape from the fray. It is that "home" place, that hiding place, that soft place where no memories of it come with ragged edges and no thought of it is tinged with fear. It's an empty beach, perhaps. Or a hidden place on the bluff above town where we remember being able to see everything while no one could see us.

It is the place of our dreams and the hope of our hopes.

It's that place to which we return in our minds to change life in the middle of too much life for us to take just then.

It's that natural place within us where the roar of the water or the silence of the mountains or the warmth of the desert or the moss of the swamp soothes our souls and makes us feel human again, at one with the universe again, in control again.

Whatever it is, wherever it is, it calms us and makes us new again.



For me, ironically, that special place was right in the center of the city. In the very shadows of the city buildings lay a world beyond the world. It was the public dock on the bay of one of the Great Lakes, where tourists came to fish and sail and ride on a water taxi from the mainland over to the peninsula. Nothing more than a hotdog was ever sold there. There were no bands, no arcade games, no skate-board parks.

It was commercially non-commercial. And yet it was my own small planet. There in that place everyone walked more slowly than usual, talked in more measured tones, dared to sit alone on the breakwall in total silence. There

you could simply be yourself, no airs, no deadlines, no pressure, nothing false to serve or adore. Nothing that required us to bow down before it. There we just all melted into nature.

It is that kind of place of which the Flemish artist, Pieter Bruegel, the Elder, paints. His work, called genre painting, is a call to us to understand the relationships we build between who we are and where we are. He reminds us of our place in the universe, small, simple and sustained by the world around us.

In our own day, when technology has trumped nature, we would do well to sink into Bruegel's work and remember who we are. We would do well to realize that those "home" places we all need and seek out in a time of the mechanical, the digital, the virtual and the plastic are calling us to the center of our real selves. We must remember that it is the self for which we are seeking when we leave our worlds of glitz and glamour and sink into the real world. It is environment that shapes us and it is the natural to which we must, like Bruegel, cling when everyone else abandons it or lose the very soul of our lives.

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## COACHING NOTES: FOUR STEPS TO MAKING A COMPLEX DECISION

-- By Kevin Eikenberry

If your Mom was like mine when you were a kid and had to make a tough decision, like who to invite to your birthday sleepover, she told you to sleep on it and decide in the morning.

When President Barack Obama was considering what action to take before the capture of Osama bin Laden, he decided to sleep on it.

While these two decisions are quite different in size and impact, and are different from the decisions you need to make as a leader, Mom's advice and the President's action is based on science.

Recently published research in The Journal of Consumer Psychology, Maarten Bos and his co-authors found that during periods when the mind is "distracted" or not consciously focused on an issue (times like sleep), there is an active process that accurately weighs the pros and cons of the components of a decision. Without going into the details of the research, the bottom line is that sleeping on a decision helps us determine between the vital and the irrelevant components, therefore leading to higher quality decisions.

This is a way of engaging our ultra powerful subconscious minds which can process huge amounts of information, if given time.

So how can we apply that idea to help us make complex decisions?

Consider your principles and values. The starting point for all decisions should be our guiding principles and values. While we all know that, don't let that get lost when grappling with a difficult decision. Often bringing the decision through the filter of your values and principles will make the decision far easier.

Collect all the information. Assemble the relevant and pertinent facts. Gather both data and opinions, and review it before taking the next step. Sleep on it. Whether a short daytime nap, or letting your thoughts simmer in your sleep overnight, if you review the collected facts before heading to dreamland and ask yourself the pertinent questions, your subconscious will work on the decision as you sleep.

Check the facts. When you awake see what you are thinking and how you feel about the decision. While you aren't quite done yet, you may be close! Run your decision back through the facts to make sure your subconscious decision didn't leave anything out, and of course double-check against your values.

When you do these four steps, if you don‚t have a clear decision you will at a minimum have more clarity on what your next steps could or should be.

Obviously, literally going to sleep isn't always an option in the middle of the workday (although I have been known

to do it with great success in the past), but you can achieve a similar effect by going running, listening to music, or doing any other task that distracts you from the decision. After a period of distraction, one option usually feels better than the other(s). After you've gone through the three steps above, that's the option you should choose.

So sleeping on it while perhaps not your first thought, is a great strategy. Once more proving than Mother often knows best.

*Kevin Eikenberry, a two-time bestselling author, is the Chief Potential Officer of The Kevin Eikenberry Group, a leadership and learning consulting company www.kevineikenberry.com*

**With warm regards,**
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**Executive Coach & Founder-Director, ISEC**