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Innovation is Like Shooting a Hole-in-One

Three days to go to shoot my second hole-in-one during the same year! It's possible. I know. Two golfers at my golf club each shot two hole-in-ones this year.

I've been surprised at the innovation lessons learned from this thrilling experience. Let me share three with you.

1. "Lynda, you must be thrilled." "I'm thrilled for you." "How thrilling." I was congratulated over and over again by people who used these words--thrilled or thrilling. And, it was thrilling. I believe this describes exactly the spontaneous response we should get from team members, colleagues, customers, friends, and family when we finally get a new idea to work! There's a level of genuine enthusiasm for the accomplishment. It's one way to measure success.
2. While I was enjoying lunch at the club a few months later, a fine young man at another table got up, came over to our table and introduced himself. He asked me if I was the lady who shot the hole-in-one. He wanted to meet me and discuss what that experience was like. I was surprised. My lesson--we need to make sure we foster creative environments that support approaching innovators on a personal level. You never know who is going to be inspired by what you have to share and what it will lead to next.
3. I realize shooting a hole-in-one is a fluke. It didn't happen because I'm a talented and skilled golfer. However, I have been motivated to keep working on improving my game--10 shot improvement so far. It occurred to me it's no different than learning to be an effective creative and innovative thinker. Sometimes ideas seem to come out of nowhere--like a fluke. Other times ideas come from the skilled application of the creative process. To be a better golfer or skilled with the creative process it takes lessons, practice and coaching. Learn tools--practice using the tools--apply the tools--get better and better--work with a coach to keep pushing you to do even better. My golf coach is part of my game plan. Who is your innovation coach?

My go-to poet, Steve Kaye, suggests "*Success brings us more interesting problems to work on.*" The better my golf game gets, I find myself encountering more interesting golf problems. This is such a great motivator to improve. May your work with innovation continue to improve and your problems become more interesting.

Until next time.

Lynda Curtin

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