

# Pathways

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*"Our thoughts, or in other words, our state of mind is ever fixing up things good or bad in advance."*

Prentice Mulford

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## Habit Energy

It's nearing the end of the academic year. Students are getting ready to graduate, grades are being finalized and careers are beginning, so let's talk about life energies....no, really.

We are all aware that the things we do on a regular basis (habits) can leave us feeling energized and motivated or leave us feeling drained. We all have 'positive' and 'negative' habits. Some of our habits build us up; some of them drag us down. So is it any real stretch to think that the careers, families and relationships we build will reflect our habits? If the answer to that question is 'no', then it should not come as a surprise to us that our levels of personal success will also reflect the energy that our habits create.

Habit energy is the energy that we create when we fall into a routine with respect to how we act and react. Every thought, emotion, impulse and action generates its own energy, which will reflect in our lives. Over time, those actions will translate into beliefs and practices and our lives will begin to acquire energy levels that are commensurate with those practices.

Now let's take a practical example. Let's say you are interviewing for a job. When you interview, you will be reflecting your habit energy in your qualifications, how you dress, how you talk, what you say, your body language and even the in nature of the job for which you are applying. The interviewers will get a sense of whether you are the sort of person they want to hire and with whom they would like to work. Whether or not you recognize it, they are picking up on the habit energy you produce.

Now take it to a relationship with a friend or perhaps one of the most significant relationships you'll ever have....your marriage. Could we say the same things? Does the energy created by my habits come across without me having to say anything?

So, if there is an aspect of your life that does not seem to be going the way you'd like, think deeply about the changes you might want to make in your beliefs and practices that would reflect more accurately what it is that you aspire to in that area of your life.

Change your thought patterns and begin to create habitual actions that resonate with a higher level of energy. After all, there is always room for improvement.

The point here is that as the husband of my wife and the father of my child, a teacher and advisor to my students and the owner/chief instructor of my martial arts school, I am responsible for the energy generated in all these areas and all my habitual actions will affect that energy. If I am not willing to look at what I am doing, why I am doing it or the results that I am creating, then I am going to be trapped where I am. If I am willing to face some difficult questions and change some things, then I am placing myself and my career and my relationships in a situation where higher levels of energy and positive change become possible.

Positive change can only bring greater good to our lives and therefore, by extension, the communities of which we are a part. Isn't that why we are here in the first place? ☺

## Responsibility

It seems like I am always going on about responsibility in one form or another, but bouncing off of the last article, I want to discuss fear and responsibility....again.

As I have said countless times, training in the martial arts is about facing our fears and phobias. Whether it is fear of having your personal space invaded, or fear of falling, or fear of being hit, or fear of competition, is largely irrelevant....we each know our own fears and we can fill in our own blanks.

The other night I was having dinner with one of my black belts and we were talking about career paths, risk aversion and success.

I made the comment that it is often fear that prevents us from taking responsibility for our own potential in life.

Let's look at this for a moment. Individual potential could be seen as all the things we could do, but perhaps have not yet done. I could argue that I have the potential to play the piano, but I've never learned, so it is an unknown in my life.

By extension I would say that we almost all undersell our own potential in the quiet corners of our own hearts and minds.

We all know what we could do, if we put in the effort, or committed ourselves to the enterprise. How many of us really do achieve all that we could?

So, if we are honest we all know that there are areas of our lives in which we are capable of doing more or being better than we currently are.

For sure, there are also areas of our lives in which we are near peak performers and we more accurately re-

flect our true potential in that area. Now that's not to imply that we are elite performers in the eyes of society, it is merely saying that given our potential in that area, we are performing at peak levels...for us.

By way of example, while it is probably true that I have the potential to learn to play the piano, I probably don't have the potential to become a concert pianist at this stage in my life....but I don't know for sure....I've never explored my potential in that area of life.

Do you being to see where I am going?

The way I see it, all I have to do is to have the courage to take responsibility for my own potential. My life is full of unknowns, there are all sorts of things I don't know about with regards to my true abilities. Unless I am willing to take responsibility for the possibility that I can do, or be, more than I already am, then I am not going to be moving forward in life.

At any given point along my path of life, I can see what I have achieved and I might even have an inkling of what I might yet be able to achieve. I can have dreams, I can create visions, I can turn those visions into actionable goals and I can take action. As I do things I am taking a step into the unknown, I am exploring an uncharted area of my potential.

With every step forward, I could soar or I could fall flat on my face. In either case I have learned something about my potential....haven't I?

Is it possible that if I fall flat on my face I simply didn't take responsibility for what I might be capable of achieving? Is it possible that I simply didn't

believe in myself? Is it possible that I lacked the courage to take responsibility for my own potential? Is it possible that I sabotaged myself?

Ouch!

Those questions hurt.

Writing them hurt.

My life is my mirror.

How many times I have been my own worst enemy in life? How many times did I lack the courage to take responsibility for my own potential in some area. How many times have other people paid for my lack of courage?

This is a very tough question for me as a business owner, because both my career and my business are about serving others. Both are about providing a quality product that can help other people change their own lives for the better.

But....am I some special case? Is my life so very different to yours?

Each of us has unknown potential. Each of us can reach out to that potential and have the courage to act upon a vision of who and what we might be. Each of us, by reaching our true potential makes the world around us a better place, whether it is simply from creating better relationships, or providing better opportunities or services to others.

I don't know my own true potential. I can only see what I have done with my life thus far. But if I can have the courage to take responsibility for the possibility that my life is not an accurate representation of my true potential and take action on that knowledge....then more of my potential will be revealed. I will learn more about what I can do or be. I will be living UP to my potential. ☺

Believing involves acting, speaking, and thinking as though you already received what you've asked for.

Rhonda Byrne

## Leaving the Past

Well, you know where this one's going don't you?

How could I possibly write the last two articles without next making some reference to who and what we have been in the past.

If you invest in stocks in any way or make any financial investment, you have probably run up against the statement that "past performance is not an indicator of future behavior." That's financial planner-speak for saying that they have no idea what the stock market will do, but based on what it's done in the past they think they can predict what will happen, but that they won't guarantee the prediction.

There are possibilities and probabilities.

My past life leaves a footprint and my next step in life is likely to leave another, similar footprint to those that I have already made....unless I change my footwear or how I am moving.

The *possibility* of change is always there. All it takes is a desire, a decision tree, and an action.

The *probability* of change is going to be influenced by my past desires, my past decision trees, and my past actions. Unless I change!

The problem is that the more we see the past as a reflection of who we truly are, the more we are likely to continue upon the same path. Like I said in the first article, our habits have energies, they create a life energy.

If I believe that who I have been is all I will ever be, then those energies have a rigid, unchangeable quality about them and I will probably prove myself to be right.

If I believe that there were choices that I made in the past that lacked wisdom and that I am free to make different choices in the future, then the energy I create will have a more plastic nature and I will probably prove myself to be right there also.

At some point, if any of us want to become something we were not, we must put the past behind us and embrace change.

We can learn from our past mistakes, we can learn from the times we fell flat on our faces or made the wrong choice and we can move on. The key here is the 'moving on' part. It is very easy to learn something, it is a different thing to apply it.

Moving forward is learning in action.

I think that part of this goes to how we deal with ourselves when we make mistakes or fall flat on our faces. If we indulge in positive reinforcement we are more likely to go at it again and achieve a different outcome. If we indulge in negative criticism and beat ourselves up, we are only going to get more frustrated and continue the pattern that is already established.

As I was driving home tonight, I was thinking about some of my negative habits, some of the things that get in the way. I was also thinking about some of the good things I do and some of my positive traits. I asked myself the question: Do these things represent me at my truest core self?

The answer came back: No!

I am not the best that I have ever been, nor am I the worst I have ever been. I am better than all of that.

So as I sat at the traffic lights I was

thinking that this was a rather arrogant statement, but then I realized that this was simply an outgrowth of one of my core beliefs in life.

I believe in success. I believe in new beginnings. One of my students asked me this morning why I do what I do on campus, and I told her that I love to see people succeed. I've said it here plenty of times. Her follow-up question was the gem though: "Yes, but how do YOU succeed?"

I know that I have been successful every time I see a student take a new step and achieve something they didn't think was possible. Every time I see my students succeed, I know I am being successful.

In some ways it goes back to the line in the movie 'Kingdom of Heaven': "What kind of man is he, who does not make the world a better place?"

Who indeed?

If I truly want to succeed in life, I must put the past and all its lies in the past and move forward into an uncertain future with faith in my eventual success. Say what?

Yes, I must put the past and all its lies in the past. If I have not yet reached my potential, then anything the past tells me about who I am, is an inaccurate image at best it is a lie at worst... I am better than that.

So it comes down to a very simple choice: 1. I am my past and I have reached my potential or 2. I have not yet reached my potential and therefore my past only tells me what lessons I have learned or have yet to learn, not what I can with those lessons. ☺

**Create your day in advance by thinking the way you want it to go, and you will create your life intentionally.**

**Rhonda Byrne**

## Falling out of the plane

Years ago my wife and I were sitting around with one of my graduate students and his wife, one evening talking about risk.

Mark said, and I quote: "I'd rather die falling out of an airplane than in some senseless tragedy." When we all stopped holding our sides and crying from the laughter, the line went down in history as one of the great one liners. You would have had to be there to have seen just how uproariously funny the line was. But he did have a point.

Let's look at the line in the light of the last three articles.

Skydiving is a risky undertaking. Some people would tell you that it's just plain stupid. Some people will tell you that it is an amazing rush.

One of my other friends, curiously also by the name of Marc, does skydive. When he first started skydiving he used to use the joke that skydiving was good to the last drop. He had a point too.

Now let's rub these points together.

1. *Id' rather die falling out of an airplane than in some senseless tragedy.* Life is about risk. Life is about having the courage to step boldly into the future and do something you've never done before. Life is about going places and doing things you have never done. Conversely, life can be about staying in the plane and flying over the terrain and never actually doing anything but looking out of the windows.

A life that ends without ever reaching its full potential could be argued to have been a senseless tragedy. If I take my last breath without having done my very best to discover my very best; if I die having lived a life of settling for average, when excellence was possible, then to me that would be a waste of my life. You see, I look at it from the perspective that my greatest potential will bring the greatest good to the greatest number of people. To do anything else is to undersell my life.

That's not to say I am not going to

mistakes along the way. What it does say, is that I feel an obligation to overcome my negative habits and create positive energies from my life habits, no matter how hard that task might be for me, no matter how many times I fail and yet also knowing that success is possible. I'd rather fall out of the airplane than die as a senseless waste of my potential.

### 2. *It's good to the last drop.*

This is merely a perspective observation. We will all die. You can't change that. What you can change, however, is how you see what you see, from the moment that you open your eyes as a baby, to the moment that they close for the last time.

Life is either good or not, it's your choice. It's either good to the last drop or it's intermittently good, or it's mostly all bad. It's your choice. If you don't like that, then I recommend that you watch the movie "The Pursuit of Happiness."

I honestly believe that how we view life has a lot to do with what we get out of living. We can choose to see life as a series of opportunities or we can see life as a dangerous, risky business. We can either sit in our chairs and watch the world go by, afraid to truly live; or we can embrace it fully and feel the wind of change on our cheeks as we fly. But having said that; to a person for whom it's all good...even if it's bad from someone else's perspective, it's still ALL good. So maybe it's more than a perspective after all, maybe it's all GOOD.

Both Mark and Marc have been inspirations to me. In good times and in bad, both of them have an irrepressible optimism about them. I cannot see either of them without smiling and feeling good about life. They have *that* sort of quality about them. They infect the world around them with huge amounts of positive energy. Thanks guys. I owe you more than you'll ever know. ☺

April						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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29	30					

May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- ◆ Akayama clinic, Charlotte, NC. April 14th., 2007
- ◆ Mel ton's Judo Tournament, Jackson, MS, April 28th, 2007
- ◆ Peachtree City Judo Tournament, Atlanta, GA, April 28th, 2007
- ◆ Reiki I class, Starkville, MS, may 5th, 2007
- ◆ Shingitai Ju Jitsu clinic, St Louis, MO, may 19th, 2007.
- ◆ Akayama Ju Jitsu, Summer camp. Jacksonville University, Jacksonville, AL, July, 2007
- ◆ Akayama Ju Jitsu, Fall Clinic, SMAA, Starkville, MS, October, 2007

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