

Pathways

THE CHRIS DEWEY PROFESSIONAL SERVICES LLC. NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 19 ISSUE 4

JULY 2015



CONTENTS

What if every noun were a verb?. 1	
continued	2
Intention, Action, Outcome	3



“When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change”

Wayne Dwyer

© 2015 Chris Dewey
Professional Services LLC.

What if every noun were a verb?

So with respect to all my English teachers since kindergarten...what if we were missing the point? What I am going to suggest follows hard on the idea that thoughts are actions from my last newsletter.

I'm actually doing y'all a favor here because I almost ran on with the last article about thoughts and actions straight into this one, then I realized that I was running down a couple of different pathways at the same time, so I decided to start this month's newsletter with the idea that nouns are actions not things.

Let's start with something simple: When is a plant?

Notice I didn't say, *what* is a plant. Trees, mountains, wombats, bandicoots, people...we are all transient events. Heck, from that perspective, if you are willing to cast the net of time wide enough even stars and planets are transient events. The thing of it is that we see change according to our own frame of temporal reference.

As humans, we live for about eighty years and we judge change accordingly. O.K. so I was trained as a geologist, which means to me that mountains and continents, and indeed all of life are merely transient events on the surface of a dynamic and changing planet. Most of us shuffle through life with a perspective of change that can take in the history of mankind and perhaps even drop back

into the realms of Archaeology, but beyond those time frames time gets murky and a lot more intangible.

But here's the issue, in all of our perspectives nouns are static-in-the-moment sort of things.

Think about it. Think about a person or a place you have not seen in a while (say a year or more). What does your memory tell you?

The memory is a frozen picture of what was, not what is. And that's the trap. When we meet someone or see some new place we see it as we think it is, because that is how we meet and engage with it. When we engage with a person whom we have not seen in several years, however, we meet them from the perspective of our memory of them, not who they are in the moment of the meeting.

What we so very rarely do is see a new place or a person as an action. We forget to see the something or someone as dynamic, changing, evolving, moving, learning and growing. We generally see place and people in terms of our memory of them or our frames of reference about them.

But consider this for a moment: When you look up at the stars you see them as they *were*, not as they are. There is a deeply profound and stunningly beautiful message here. When I look up at the stars I see them as I think they are, because that is how I meet them. It is a mind-expanding and heart

What if...contd.

-opening event to see in the stars cosmic events that no longer exist in the forms in which I am meeting them. In a very real sense I am looking into the deep past, as it is presented to me in the moment of observation. Seeing the stars occurs now for me, but the actions that I am witnessing happened millions and billions of years previously.

Let's bring this thing down to earth a bit.

Whump!

So I lived a good deal of my life as an academic working in a university. Not that it would be obvious from the foregoing...! Curiously, I worked at the same university for nigh-on thirty years. So what is a university? It's not the faculty or the administrators, they come and go, get hired, retired and fired. It's not the students, (to quote a dear friend) they are just cattle going down the chute...O.K. I'll grant that they are much more than that, but you get the point, students are both the clients and also the operational product of the system. It's not the buildings; my years at Mississippi State showed me that. Buildings were constantly being torn down, put up, renovated. Even the land was being altered, expanded, acquired and sold. Lastly, you are left with the degree programs and the research efforts. Even those are tran-

sient things. I joined the faculty as an assistant professor in the Department of Geology and Geography, I retired from the Department of Geosciences. We didn't even offer the same degrees or the same classes that were on offer when I joined the faculty.

So what is a university? It seems to me that the word university is not a noun with any real meaning, it is an idea that is kept alive by the sum total of the people who pass through the institution over time. If you have ever had the opportunity to study at any of the older (think established in the 1500's or earlier) universities in Europe and you will immediately get a sense of what I mean here. It's like walking into one of the great Gothic Cathedrals of Europe and being hit by the millions of voices and hearts that must have been raised there in prayer over the centuries.

Then, when I get more secular and mundane about things, I wonder whether the same things could be said about any business enterprise, from an entrepreneurial event to a multinational corporation.

So what?

Well, where that all takes me is that none of the things that I think I know, the things to which I can give labels, are actually static, fixed, unchanging, immutable things.

Every *thing* is in fact an *event*, an ☺

action seen in a moment.

More than that, when I engage with "anything" I am doing it from the perspective of my previous interactions with my perception of reality. What I see, feel, and experience is therefore going to be colored by the filters that sift and sort my previous experiences and also be dramatically affected by the quality of my memory.

It is a rare event therefore, to see with an uncluttered mind and an unfiltered perspective. To a degree of course, this makes perfect sense, after all I am a learning creature and if I experience a particular thing or person in a particular way then I expect a similar experience the next time I meet it.

But herein lies the trap of perceived reality, based upon experience and expectation. When my expectations do not allow room for the unexpected the world takes on a rigid appearance that is often out of step with reality in the moment.

So consider this: How many times have you met someone who, in the moment...did not live up to your expectations? What are you really saying here?

Just something to consider the next time you bump into a noun and forget that it might just be an event.

***“Live as if you were to die tomorrow.
Learn as if you were to live forever”***

Gandhi

Intention, Action, Outcome, Thoughts and Feelings

Really? In one page or less? Who am I kidding?

So I was chatting with one of my clients the other day and we got into a discussion about changing how we might feel about an event, and it got me to thinking whether we were attacking the wrong end of the learning opportunity.

Thoughts and feelings are responses to events in our lives. I think that we can probably all agree to that one. After all, one of the great questions of therapy is “How do you feel about that?” Or “How does that make you feel?” On the surface these questions invite us to check in with ourselves and take a look at our thoughts and emotions with a higher degree of clarity. Questions like this are an invitation to investigate the quality and depth of our Emotional Intelligence.

Since life is generally an interactive process, thoughts and feelings are results of the process of living. I will grant you that thoughts and feelings are also progenitors of more events and continuing interactions, but I wonder if perhaps we might be missing something here.

You see, it doesn't matter whether I am sitting alone in my living room, or with a group of friends hiking in nature, or in a crowd of strangers on a bustling city street, I am interacting with time and am generating thoughts and feelings about the process of interaction and how I wish it to continue or change.

It seems to me, that ultimately I cannot change my thoughts and feelings without changing my actions, which lead to some set of outcomes. The problem with that though, is that my thoughts and feelings often dictate my next action and the subsequent set of outcomes.

So perhaps an example might be useful:

Let's say I'm driving along and getting

frustrated because the traffic is crawling along and I am running late for a meeting. I can feel the frustration building inside me, and assuming I have the presence of mind to resist the desire to engage in some well-deserved road rage, I arrive at my meeting and am definitely late. I get berated by my boss, and not wanting to get fired I suck that one up and go into the meeting where one of my reports gives a less than stellar presentation, which is obviously going to be seen as a failing on my part, because the person giving the presentation is clearly a member of my department, so it's my responsibility.

Time for all that frustration to come out and be funneled into a well-deserving underling! My poor staff member gets totally blind-sided by my attack, and I go away feeling better, for a little while...then I feel bad.

Now let's interject the idea of intention into the equation.

Let's now say that it is my intention to be early to my meeting and I know that traffic can be an issue...so I leave earlier than I might otherwise do, avoid the traffic and get to the meeting on time. No one gets frustrated on the drive, berated by their boss or feels a need to vent frustration on an underling.

Now let's step back a little further into intention. Let's go back a couple of days to the point where my colleague gets assigned the presentation. I want my colleague to be successful, so we arrange some time when the two of us can go over the facts and figures and make sure that there are no areas of mis-communication or mis-understanding. Then we meet the afternoon before the presentation and see what my colleague has come up with, fine tune things and go home, prepared for a great meeting in the morning.

In all three cases the events are essentially the same, the people and places with which I must interact are essentially the same, but the outcomes become radically different...*because the intention behind the actions changed.*

The key thing to note here, isn't that I changed my thoughts and feelings, but that my thoughts and feelings were automatically changed by setting a different intention *before* the event.

The cool thing about this is that I don't get to go through all those less than pleasing thoughts and feelings that continue to manifest in my life with continued actions and outcomes. In effect, by changing the intention, I change the outcome and by changing the outcome I create a different set of thoughts and feelings. Those very same thoughts and feelings act as a positive feedback loop into my intentions.

So what does all this mean?

Ultimately, it means nothing more than this: if I focus on my thoughts and feelings I am operating at the wrong end of the loop. If I focus on my intentions then I change the nature of the loop and therefore the resultant thoughts and feelings, because the outcome has changed.

In short: When you choose to focus on intention you create an arbiter of impending action, which alters outcomes and changes our thoughts and feelings.

Intention sets the stage for what happens and how we end up feeling about it all.

Finally, different intentions may lead to the same action, but will generate a different outcomes...and this is where the internal compass of personal integrity comes into play.

When all is said and done only you know what your intention was for taking a particular action...or do you?

See you next month., and thank you.

“We enter relationships in hope and trust, and we end up discovering who we are.”

Anonymous

What's the point of Coaching?

My intention is to help you to unleash your potential, because from resonant actions flow synergistic outcomes.



**For a 10% discount on a three-month coaching package
contact Chris at:
662 769 5522
or send an e-mail to: chris@thirdpathway.com**