We live in a world where recycling is a norm in most communities. Frugality has been applauded as a trait in many societies. But are we really aware of what it means to conserve? Or whether what we are conserving is precious to us?

When was the last time you looked at a dry leaf and considered it precious?

Consider for a moment the effort expended to create a thing of such exquisite beauty. Consider also that nature eventually recycles every atom within that leaf, whether it happens in a matter of seasons or becomes fossilized over millennia.

It crossed my mind the other day, how much I take for granted. I recycle “stuff” because it is important to me as a citizen of the community in which I live, but do I honestly think of a paper bag or plastic bottle as precious?

So let’s take this one stage deeper. We will act to protect and conserve those things that we see as precious. As a nation we might protect areas of scenic majesty and beauty. We (UNESCO) might even designate such a place as a World Heritage Site, but even that is pretty far removed from me as a person and my own life.

So what exactly is ‘precious’ to me?


Where do I draw the lines and do my actions coincide with my affirmations?

Do we remember how precious things are in our lives? How much do we take the stuff of life for granted, like a paper bag or a plastic bottle or a career, or a friend, or a family?

Unless we take the time to savor what is precious, we fall into blindness and the precious falls into the realm of the secular and the mundane.

Not an hour’s drive from my door is some stunningly majestic beauty, but I have taken it for granted because, well, like most mountains, they are always there. Immutable. I will make time later.

But therein lies the trap. Here is NOW, not later. It is precious now, only when we choose it to be so.

It is easy to allow the precious to be subverted by the calling of what appears to claim importance in the moment.

If I have learned anything as a teacher, as a geologist, as a martial artist and now as an acupuncturist, it is that each contact is precious. Each contact is a once in a lifetime event...no matter how many iterations of that contact might occur in the future.

It is easy to forget, and it is easy to get consumed by living, so much so that we no longer see the precious in front of us. And so, we discard it, because it can be replaced and is not worthy of conserving. We live in a world of instant gratification and one of instant over-stimulation. We are all looking for the newest thrill.

It is good for me to reflect upon just how precious each moment of life is, and how precious each experience is as it floats by into the past.

It is an act of will to see the mundane as precious and it is an act of will to see something precious in each and every aspect of your life.

Take a moment to look at your life and all the aspects of living. Look at the things that flow into your life as things worthy of conserving.

How might it change what you do in the next moment? And the next? Might it not change how you perceive your existence?
Life seems ever forward. We cannot take back one word of what is said, one action of what is done. Each word, each act creates an immutable imprint on the cosmos.

Or does it?

Curiously, if you are standing on the surface of alpha centauri with a powerful-enough telescope looking down on me in this moment...it hasn’t happened yet. Given the speed of light, if you are on alpha centauri right now looking at my life, I am still in school and have not yet graduated. The outcome of that event is still in the future, even though for me, here, now, it is in the past.

Of course from that perspective, if I look at the night sky, I see alpha centauri as it was four-and-a-bit years ago, not as it is right this instant. I do so love relativity. It can really bend your mind.

Yeah...so why should you care?

No matter where you are in the journey of life, relativity notwithstanding and given our current awareness of existence, linear time continues forward, inexorably consuming the future and creating the past. ‘Now’ is merely the space-time bubble in which you live.

So where are you NOW? What are you doing? How will it affect the future? Do we even know?

Given all of that as a preamble, life is for living. Make a decision. Move on. Make the best decision you can in each moment. Be true to your internal compass and accept that you are not all-seeing, all-knowing.

It is a given that we will lack wisdom, insight and fore-knowledge. It is equally a given that we can be consumed by doubt, ignorance, guilt, shame and fear.

So what is a person to do?

Stop. Look within. Learn from without. Be still. Listen to your inner voice. Being true to the internal compass is asking yourself to invoke the skill of intuition.

Really? Actually, yes. There are moments when we seem to be at an impasse. There are situations that come to a close, relationships that end, careers that wind down, paths that seem to diverge. Equally there are moments when we seem to be dried up, uncertain because we seem to have reached our resource limit...regardless of whether that resource might seem to be physical, emotional, spiritual or economic.

When that happens, what do you do? Do you keel over and give up?

If you are a regular reader of my newsletter, I doubt that you keel over. Somehow you find a path forward, groping through your doubts and uncertainties to a new vista of assurance.

So what drives that ability to move forward in the face of uncertainty, doubt and failure?

I would posit that the trait that moves us forward in a positive direction is the trait of intuition.

Intuition is that quiet inner guide who speaks softly in our favour amid the chaos of doubt and fear.

When we allow our intuition to speak for us, our entire life can pivot on a single moment.

There are times when the power of intuition builds within until a pivotal decision is made and action taken. In a lot of ways our lives are not marked by how far we have come, but the lines and angles formed by the decisions that we have made.

Each decision is a major or minor course adjustment. We can, however, draw upon our previous experiences to create a trajectory for the future. Course corrections represent the angles between the lines that lead us to our goals.

So if life is ever forward, why do we go back and seemingly repeat the lessons of the past? Curiously, it is much easier to create recursive actions that repeat some lesson of the past until we figure out how to move forward in a new way.

I might now suggest to you that when recursive iterations of past decisions and actions occur in your life, you are not listening to your inner voice that knows the best path.

I might also argue that you have become a prisoner of the doubts, failures and guilts of your life and have become blind and deaf to the liberating power of intuition.

Intuition liberates because it sees the truth as it is, not as we think it might or should be.

Of course, that’s a tall order for living. It is easy also to mistake intuition for the allure of habituated response.

Intuition is that still small voice that can be heard when we quiet the mind and calm the spirit, when we truly open ourselves to possibility and embrace the lessons of the unknown.

Intuition can be as simple as telling you that you have the resources and courage to take the next step, even in the face of fear and doubt.

Trusting to your inner compass is not always the easiest path, but it is the path that will lead you to your own truth, regardless of what anyone else might say on the matter.

After all it is your life to live...isn't it? 😊

“*The wise person possesses humility. He knows that his small island of knowledge is surrounded by a vast sea of the unknown*”

*Harold Chase*
Where You Stand

So, bouncing off of the last article, let’s talk about location, destiny and trajectory. Destiny can be seen as the pattern of your life as it unfolds. We can get mired in all sorts of philosophical discussions about predestination and free will, but that is not something with which I am particularly concerned. We could also take Shakespeare’s tack on the trajectory of a life that: “[Life] a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”, but let us suppose for a moment that there is more to it than that.

Let us look at location. I currently live in Wyoming. I was born in England, have lived in Canada, Mississippi and Texas. I have travelled a bit and seen different places, each of which has changed both my perspective and those changes in perspective changed my trajectory. My life has been irrevocably altered by each change in location. There are no comparisons possible for me in this existence. I cannot compare what my life might have looked like had I made different choices. What if I had made a different career choice when I was just twelve years old? Suppose that I had not followed that prompting wherever it led me for more than forty years? What if I had chosen not to listen to the other voice that told me it was time to embrace a broader, different path when I went to Oriental Medical School? How much would my life have changed?

By way of example, when I left England to do my Doctorate in Newfoundland, it was not my only choice. I had an offer from Johns Hopkins, but circumstances unfolded in such a way as to make Newfoundland the location of choice. The same could be said for many choices in life. There were options, but often circumstances ‘conspired’ in such a way as to leave me a clear choice amongst several. Or was I predisposed to a particular set of choices because of my previous experiences?

At each stage, life trajectories changed, doors closed on one path, and opened along another. I cannot see what the other paths might have entailed. I cannot go back and make a different choice. From that perspective then, life is a journey of the blind. I don’t get to make comparative choice. I get to make a choice on the basis of limited data and live with the unfolding consequences for the remainder of my life.

Location then, is not just about Geography or a physical space. For sure physical location changes our perceptions and insights, so it follows then, that our inner landscape is changed by our physical experiences. As my inner landscape changes, my choices will likewise change. I remember when I was a young faculty member, I was told by one of my mentors that there is a huge difference between twenty years of experience and having the same experience for twenty years. He was so right.

The point is simple here: Destiny is defined by how we respond to our perceptions of our physical experiences or the geography of our seemingly outer world. Each choice changes us, irrevocably. It is my choice to be here in this specific moment, doing this. Would I have written a different newsletter had I done it at another time? It might seem like a small thing, I will never know, but life has changed as a consequence of this decision. Some choices create little ripples in the ocean of life. Some choices have huge ramifications, even if we can’t see them as we make the decision. The twelve-year-old who wanted to be a geologist had not the slightest clue that the sixty-year-old would be an acupuncturist. Who knew?

When we are younger we lack wisdom and perhaps, have not yet learned to listen to the inner voice of intuition. Sometimes, when we are young we can be guided by intuition even if we do not recognize it at work in our lives and decisions. We might be driven by passion. Is that any different? What fuels the passion other than a sense that what we are doing is the right thing for us?

As we get older perhaps we become too cautious because we see how easy it is to mis-step or cause harm to those we love.

Learning to flow with the tides and eddies of life is about sensing the flow of events and trusting the inner navigator. Perhaps we become able to float along, making course corrections as we go, laughing at the imponderable consequences and yet, at the same time being awed by the possibilities inherent in each decision. Perhaps we become humble enough to recognize that life isn’t always about me and that the choices I make affect everyone I have ever touched or will ever touch.

“The universe is full of magical things patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper.”

Eden Phillpotts

Special thanks to Amy for showing me that one.
Heart of Being

Collected Poems By
CHRIS DEWEY

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