

Pathways

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“We live in the Present, we dream of the Future, and we learn eternal truths from the Past”

Madame Chiang Kai-Shek

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A Window for Joe & Harry

In the landscape of emotional intelligence and self-awareness is an interesting tool known as the Johari Window. If you don't know about it, do an online search and you will see that it is named from its authors...but that's not important right now. What is important is: Who are you? Or, better yet, *what* defines what you know about you?

According to the Johari model there are four windows of knowledge:

1. What I know about me and am willing to share with others.
2. What I know about me and am unwilling to share.
3. What others know about me that I don't know about myself
4. What I don't know about me and what others don't know about me either.

In the world of life experience, the journey of self-discovery will tend to increase the size of box #1, and decrease the size of boxes #3 & #4.

So how is it that you discover things about yourself that were previously hidden from your view?

There are a few options. 1. You can open an honest dialogue with others whom you trust, place yourself in a vulnerable space and be willing to open your heart to honest, non-judgment-based listening. 2. You can put yourself into previously unexplored experiences. Do something new, 'out of character,' live at the

edge of your knowledge and expand your horizons. 3. Process either deeply moving or deeply traumatic experiences and allow them to transform you through compassion and understanding. 4. Increase your level of self-awareness through becoming a witness to self-in-action. 5. Basically, step outside of what currently you define as your comfort zone.

In all these settings, something that comes to the fore is the requirement that we relinquish the oh-so-natural need to judge things as good or bad when we see, hear, or experience them.

As we learn to suspend judgment, we begin to embrace equanimity, and with it comes a degree of liberation...a freedom to step outside of self if you wish it, and to see self from the outside. After all, in some ways, it is a form of hubris to think that I can see all outcomes from any event that occurs in my life (and therefore, by extension, to label it as good or bad).

So to wrap up, that the more I can see of myself, the more of my potential I can unleash, and the less likely I am to be tripped up or thwarted by my energetic blocks. I invite you then to look into the window that contains those things that neither you nor others know about you..

You might be pleasantly surprised. You might find a whole new aspect of self waiting to be discovered. 😊

Pieces of Peace

I was chatting with my coach the other day. Yes, I have a personal coach too...for the last seven years.

We were discussing some of my recent experiences, looking at strategies and tactics for my next steps forward and exploring some of the reasons for why I have made some of the decisions that I have made.

What emerged at the end of our session was a view of how peace becomes a factor in the midst of uncertainty and change.

After all, as we have said so many times in this newsletter, life is all about change, all about learning and growing, and all about letting go of older, worn out truths in order to embrace larger, more accurate truths.

So how did this lead to a discussion of peace?

Well, it seems to me that peace comes from three interlaced reactions to events in our lives.

First, there is acceptance that what is occurring in life is rich with opportunities to learn and to grow. Second, there is a letting go of the need to judge things as right or wrong, good or bad, after all...what do I know about what the future holds? Thirdly, there is wisdom. Wisdom is born out of experience and compassion, and compassion begins at home. Be gentle with yourself, you are after all, just a student of life, an unfinished product, an explorer of what life has to offer...there is much that you/I/we still don't know.

When I have faced the deep experiences of my life in the last few years, I have noticed that the navigation of those experiences has been easier when tempered by acceptance, non-judgment, and wisdom. Not that I am saying I am wise, far from it. What I am saying is that experiences have taught me to cut myself a little slack (and hopefully, by extension, others also).

What emerges is a degree of peace. Even when things are not going as I might wish, I can accept that I cannot see all outcomes and that there are lessons within the experience that I can learn, and that can enrich my life. Like I have said before, I can watch myself going through the experiences and have compassion for self in pain, exalt with self in moments of awe-inspiring joy, and nurture self in moments of profound sadness. All the while, I still feel what I feel in the moment, experience it, but not let it define me for all time.

Think of a little boat on a stormy sea. You can ride the waves, flow with their energy, be awed by their power to compel our acceptance of the situation in which we find ourselves, but so long as we flow with the energy of the waves we remain afloat. Only when we resist and fight, or even deny the existence of the waves do we get overcome by the waters.

So it seems to me that humans have come up with three strategies for dealing with similar events:

1. We fight.
2. We deny
3. We flow.

There are of course times to do each of these things, so it is timing that becomes crucial. So too is having an awareness of why we have chosen a particular response. How honest am I with myself? Do I fight because I am afraid to face the consequences? Do I deny because I doubt my own strength or the strength of my faith? Do I flow because it is the easy way to do nothing and thereby not have to take responsibility.

Like I said last month, it is not what we do that is so critical, but the reasons (intention) behind the action that are so important.

When you act from right intention, no matter what the outcome there will be a sense of peace.

Equally, few of us are so enlightened that we always act from right intention, or are even aware enough to know our real intentions at all (see last article)...so cut yourself some slack. Be willing to laugh at yourself, be willing to cry, be willing to let go of an outdated self to embrace a wiser, more compassionate, more accepting and therefore more peaceful version of self.

Life will continue to happen, the waves will still crash over your little boat from time to time, but at least you will be able to weather the storms with a greater degree of inner peace.

“Nothing is a waste of time, if you use experience wisely”

Auguste Rodin

A Moment of Truth

So how many times have I said in this newsletter that life is about change? Silly question.

Now here's the thing...no matter how much we say we want change, how much do we really believe that?

Each of us has built a story of life about ourselves. Our stories define us, become the boxes within which we move.

Each of us has, to a degree created exactly the life we want...whether we admit to that or not.

My story is **my** story, I am jealous of it and protect it, like it were some prized possession...mine and no-one else's.

Yet my story is a fabrication built from my perceived reactions to experiences of life. ALL of my past reactions, however, were those of a person who was younger and less experienced than the one who writes these words.

If, however, I accept that my story is the truth, then it limits my options for the future. If I accept that my story is simply that...a narrative of past events as I experienced them in a less aware state, then new possibilities appear in the face of ongoing experiences.

When my narrative limits my options, I will simply relive the story through each new experience of life. When I was a young professor, I had an irascible colleague who commented once that some of his colleagues had not

had forty years of experience, so much as the same experience for forty years. While a harsh judgment of his peers, the statement holds an element of truth. If we are wedded to our story, then we simply re-act the narrative with each passing year.

So where am I going with this?

One of the things I have begun to ask myself in recent months is how much we are willing to re-write our stories.

One of the things about coaching is that often people come to coaching looking for one thing, but underneath it is something entirely different.

The clients who have truly embraced the notion of change, of disassembling a lifetime of energetic barriers are the ones who move furthest in the process, fastest. Not to say that there are any prizes for moving further or faster, after all we are each on our own journey and will face things as we become ready to do so.

The point is simply this: The sooner you/I/we can come to a point where we can see that the stories we tell ourselves are actually holding us back, the sooner we can embrace more of our potential.

Yeah, I know, I can hear some of you saying that your story doesn't hold you back, and that you are embracing your potential for all its worth.

Bravo!

Check in with that narrative and be certain it is your truth with a capital T.

It is easy to tell ourselves things that we think are true, but which, in reality are just part of the story.

Well then, how is that we step outside of the story, or write a new one?

That depends upon what you are willing to do, and how willing you are to go deep into your self in search of the answers to questions like:

What motivates my actions, feelings and thoughts?

What am I capable of being, if I were to truly live to my fullest potential?

How willing am I to do that?

What barriers have I built that stand between me and what I can achieve in life?

How much do I want to keep those barriers?

How much comfort do I generate by looking out from behind my barriers?

How willing am I to feel the vulnerability (or liberation) of living without those same barriers?

It's all a question of risk? Or is it?

Could it simply be a question of embracing opportunity?

Could it be a question of fearing to face the power within?

What if it were the greater risk to keep the story?

What then?

What would be the price that you would pay...or...if you want to think more globally, what is the price that others would pay if you keep the story?

“Wise men, though all laws were abolished, would lead the same life”

Aristophanes

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**