

# Pathways

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The mind conceives, the  
heart believes, the body  
achieves

Unknown

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## Learning Becomes Being

As many of you are no doubt aware, I am a great proponent of the notion that we have within ourselves the ability to rewrite the way we think. More than that, I believe that it is possible for us to re-wire our brains, and in simple terms we do this every time we commit to something that draws us out of our comfort zones.

So let's see if I can chew it a little finer for you. The way I see it, change in our character state and our behavior patterns comes after awareness and desire. The crucial steps are that we feel something needs to change, and that we *want* to do something about it. Once we become aware that change is necessary for growth, we begin to acquire knowledge. We embark on the learning journey. At some point in the learning journey we can say that we know a thing. In the world of academics, we can reproduce the information in a test. In the martial arts, we can perform a named technique. In our habits, we can stop ourselves from purchasing the extra latte at Starbucks. The step from learning to doing is a natural step for most of us. We don't just think about something, we do something with it...we use it.

By way of example, I can be aware that my finances are a little tight and I can think about saving money all I want, but unless I DO something about it, nothing changes. So learning without action creates little change.

But it doesn't stop there, does it? One of the great aphorisms in our dojo is that *repetition is the mother of skill*. There is no substitute.

Eventually, once we have practiced a thing enough times we can say we

have mastered it.

The true test of mastery, however, is that action moves beyond the realm of the conscious mind. True mastery is an unconscious action. In fact, if you think about the action, you are more likely to impair your performance. A true master acts without thinking.

In a sense, the body of a true master has become the mind.

So, let's recap. In the early stages of the process we become aware of a need that we would like to address. Secondly, we move into the realm of fore-brain conscious learning, which is closely followed by taking action. After innumerable repetitions (and inevitable failures) we master the skill and move into unconscious ability.

There is a flow from awareness > knowledge (learning) > doing (taking action) > being (acquiring mastery).

Now, my point here is that in a very real sense when you move through this sequence you are literally re-mapping your brain and its neural connections. You are creating new electrical pathways and literally rewiring your own brain. The trickle-down (literally) effect is that you also affect your hormonal message system and therefore change the way you feel about a thing. Thinking and feeling are intimately tied to each other.

This is powerful stuff. Imagine what you could do with this information if you took it to heart.

The only things you need are awareness, desire, commitment and practice...over time, nature will do the rest inside your own brain for you.

So...what would you like to master?



**A wonderful **FREE** offer:**

**I am currently certifying as a personal coach with iPEC (<http://www.ipeccoaching.com>) and would like to offer you...yes **YOU**, a complimentary coaching session, via telephone, Skype, or face-to-face (if you wish it and if you live in the Mississippi Golden Triangle area).**

**If you are interested, send me an e mail or call.**

**I have only a couple of rules:**

- 1.You must want to move forward with your life.**
- 2. You must be willing to accept the possibility that you are greater and wiser than you think you are.**

**For information about personal coaching opportunities, martial arts classes, reiki classes, books and seminars contact us at:**

**662 323 5522 either [chris@cdmapathways.com](mailto:chris@cdmapathways.com) or**

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## Pain and Loss

For those of you, who have been close to me in the last few months, you will understand why this article appears now.

I want to talk about both pain and loss and the fears that we associate with them both.

As a starting point, I will put in your mind the notion that we forget physical pain, but we never forget emotional pain. Isn't that interesting? If you have ever experienced the physical pain from a broken bone, or surgery, or childbirth (not me), do you re-feel the pain when you think about it? I can't remember the physical pain associated with any injury. Curious isn't it?

Now think about something that embarrassed you as a child, or a heated argument you have had as an adult...I'll almost guarantee you can still feel the same emotions, because you still trigger the same hormone dump into your blood when you trigger the memory. The reason that this happens is because your brain doesn't deal with past and future, it only deals with present.

Your mind plays back the memory as though it were happening again.

So where do I want to go with this?

When we experience emotional trauma, such as a major change in a relationship, or we lose someone or something dear to us we feel acute emotional pain. The pain is associated with the things that we will not have anymore, or the opportunities that are gone. Ultimately the loss is also associated with a fear of change...The thought process goes something like this: this is what was, and now this is what is, and I haven't adjusted to it yet, but I don't like the implications.

I know that my words here are a simplistic way of looking at things, but stay with me for a moment.

Over time we adjust and adapt to loss and the emotions soften. The sharp emo-

tions associated with our loss ameliorate, and we learn to live with the new state of affairs and we can continue with our daily world. The human mind and heart have an amazing capacity to repair and to adapt.

So what?

It's the adaptation bit that I want to focus upon.

It seems to me that when we face the pain of loss, the heart has several paths that it might travel.

First there is the path of acceptance and release. Along this path we recognize the pain of grief, acknowledge that it is an important part of 'letting go' and that it is a necessary step in the process of self-healing. As the grief diminishes, we can open our hearts to the option of thankfulness. With gratitude and thankfulness come the space for new energy and new growth. This is not to say that we forget. We don't. We remember with a heart of thankfulness, and although the loss creates a rock in our heart, it is a treasured jewel, rather than a burden. An additional benefit of this path is that it opens the heart to compassion and empathy for others.

Another path is the path that clings to grief. Sometimes we run into people who cling to their grief and will not let it go. It becomes a burden to them, and although the grief subsides over time, the loss is always there, it is as though it becomes a definition of life.

Another path is the path of anger. Loss can make us angry and we can become enmeshed by the anger, which can ultimately get buried deep within us, only to surface in another way, later.

There are other paths, for instance the path of victimhood, or the path of blame or the path of depression, the path of fatalism and the path of hopelessness.

I am sure that you can see other paths.

I wish to dwell on the idea of release and re-growth.

When we are confronted by deep loss, I believe it is a healthy thing to see it for what it is and to allow grieving to occur. Grieving washes the heart and opens the soul...perhaps it is in the tear-soaked soil of our hearts that the new growth begins. The growth can only occur fully, however, if we can see the fear that lurks within our loss.

More often than not, the fear associated with loss is based solely on what we know of the past and has nothing to do with what might come to pass in the future. Fears are specters that we create about assumptions we make about what the future will be like. Unless you have some clairvoyant skill that I lack, tomorrow is a blank page.

True, I can influence how the hand will write upon that page by reliving my past, but that is (at least to some degree) a choice. In order for the fear of loss not to trap me, it is necessary to see it for what it is and to face it.

So, just like the last article, I see a sequence here:

Loss > pain and grief > gratitude and thankfulness > release > space for new (anabolic) energy > new growth.

Obviously, all of this is simply my take on things.

I am no different to any of you, we all know loss. Whether it be the loss of a loved one, the loss of a career, or any other sort of loss, how you deal with it is your choice.

It is sometimes hard to say thank you in the face of loss. It is sometimes hard to turn around and face your fears. It is sometimes hard to let go. I do not deny any of that, but it is a choice over which you can exercise a good deal of control. And that, in itself, can be a comforting thing to know. ☺

**"Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact."**

**William Jones**

## Re-invention of Self

Perhaps one of the hardest tasks in life is to re-invent yourself!

Why the heck would I want to do *that*?

Is it possible that there are potentials hidden within me, that the current version of me is holding back? Now there's a disturbing question....Could it be that I truly *am* my own worst enemy? Could it be that if *I* get out of my own way, I might actually reach my true potential?

And...if any of that is true...do I owe it to the world to do exactly that? Do I have a responsibility to constantly challenge myself to reach beyond my current state of being?

It is comfortable to live within the confines of the known list of possibilities for my life...very comfortable indeed, but in a very tragic sense every time I buy into that position I am nailing my own coffin shut.

O.K., maybe that was a tad dramatic; but consider the oft-quoted comment that a rut is merely a coffin with the ends kicked out. A rut offers a very limited location from which to vision (rather than simply view) the world.

If you go back to the first article for a moment, then it becomes apparent that by taking on new things and questing after new experiences I am changing my brain structure and body chemistry. One of my favorite lines of all time comes from Frank Herbert's book 'Dune': "without new experiences, something within us sleeps and seldom awakens."

It is a very evocative line to me. It is a call to action.

So let's add the second article about loss for a moment. Loss often causes us to re-invent ourselves.

Life seldom cruises along without knocking us about a good bit during the process. Each time we face a sea change due to the storms of life, we are faced with several choices....Do I keep the same course? Do I trim my sails and run before the wind? Do I change course and make for a new destination? Do I turn back and seek a safe harbor?

I am told in my readings about business ownership that since the time of the Baby Boomer generation, almost every working adult will have more than one career. The days of staying with one employer for your entire career are over. So once again, in your work life, you will probably re-invent yourself, in fact, it is almost a requirement that each of us acquires the facility to re-invent ourselves in a changing workplace.

So if we take that as a given for a moment...how do you re-invent yourself? I might argue that I have already given you the answer...first comes awareness, then comes desire, then comes choice, then comes learning and action. And then comes mastery of the new self.

So I would suggest to you that you already know how to re-invent yourself. During the coaching classes that I am currently taking, we are being taught over and over again that the client has the answers and that we are greater and wiser than we think we are. What I am telling you here is so

amazingly and frighteningly powerful that it can shake the very foundations about what you think you know about yourself. Imagine the possibility that you do, in fact, have all the answers within you.

How amazing would that be?

But seriously though...look at your life.

How many times have you already re-invented yourself, just to get through school? For those of you who went through university, how many times did you have to re-invent what you thought you knew about yourself? And for those of you who have become managers or leaders or entrepreneurs...how many time did you have to re-invent yourself to become successful? Then look at your relationships...how many times did you re-invent yourself? When you got married? When you got divorced? When you had kids? When your kids left home? When you retired?

Do you see? We already do it...we already re-invent ourselves, time and time again through life.

The tricky part to it though, is the bit where we ask ourselves whether we really re-invented ourselves or whether we just slapped a new coat of paint on the walls and called it good.

The real challenge here is to find within yourself your true potential and not to sell yourself short....remember, you are greater and wiser than you think you are.

Now, what would you like to do with that very liberating and challenging piece of information?☺

**"In the midst of winter, I finally learned that there was within me  
an invincible summer"**

**Albert Camus**

## Go ahead, laugh

Ever find yourself spinning your wheels?

Ever find yourself getting huge amounts of stuff done, but are going nowhere and have nothing to show for your effort?

I want to look at what's going on here for a while. The title of the article is simply to give you permission to laugh, at me, or yourself, I don't much mind.

I figured that if I titled the article something to do with procrastination, you'd probably read it later (just kidding). But it really isn't about procrastination, well yes it is, in part, but there's more going on here than simply putting things off till later.

The first thing to notice is that you are actually doing it...you know, wasting your time in the name of something seemingly important. Once you can see yourself very efficiently doing stuff that doesn't really need to get done, you are in a position to ask yourself 'why?'

"Why" is the question of a scientist, so I might suggest to you that a better question might be: "What are you attempting to avoid?" or perhaps "What are you hiding from?" Either of these questions can make you squirm. Squirming is good...it means that we are uncomfortable, and uncomfortable means that the possibility of change is in the air.

I can't speak for you, but there are generally three times in my life when I go about doing huge amounts of stuff, but am really just spinning my wheels.

If I am honest with myself, what occurs during these times is that I am doing a lot of things very effectively that really don't need to be done. No, really.

O.K., so I said that there were three times in my life when I do this...see if any of them resonate for you:

1. **I am gestating.** I am getting ready to do something big, and need both space and time for my mind to work on the project in the background. I do this a lot when I write...I fiddle about, organizing things or cleaning....and then when the gestating is done, I write...like now. I have spent the last few days waiting for this newsletter to write itself in my head. I made a list of mundane things that needed to be done, but which weren't exactly earth-shattering and got on with them. Oh, and I watched a movie, and did my e mails (twice this morning). Then, when it was time, I started to write...I haven't stopped writing (apart from phone and potty breaks) for the last three hours.

2. **I am uncertain of the path ahead.** Sometimes I lose my way and am uncertain what path to take. I feel lost and temporarily lack (or I doubt that I have) the intuitive insight or the necessary knowledge to make a decision, so I don't. I wait. I will not wait for a long time though, I will be sorting things out in my sub (or super)

conscious mind, and looking for an answer to emerge. In reality I have set an intent and then I distract myself so that I can get out of my own way and let the answer appear in its own time.

3. **I am afraid.** Sometimes I know exactly what it is I am supposed to be doing, but the task ahead is daunting or unpalatable, so I just plain procrastinate. It doesn't happen often, but if I am honest it does happen. When I procrastinate, I am either afraid of facing some fear, or the consequence of taking action. It is so easy to get caught by this one. The problem though, is that by not taking direct action, I am taking action. By procrastinating, I am refusing to take responsibility and/or control of (and for) my own life.

There is a hidden message here: Know what is important and put your effort there (whether it be conscious or sub-conscious or super-conscious). Do it to the exclusion of the lesser things, but also be aware that your priorities can change over time and therefore your effort must also flow with your priorities.

Finally then, see yourself when you are being really effective at doing something that could be delegated or remain undone. Understand the underlying reasons for your actions. Know what it is that really demands your effort. And do it...Move forward.

**"The shell must break before the bird can fly"**

**Alfred Tennyson**