

# Pathways

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**I grease the wheels of  
my own life  
Carolyn Dear**

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## Making Change

I'd like to pick up on something I wrote about last month. Well, really something I've been writing about for years.

If you really want to see change in your life, then you must be willing to take on the difficult, do the challenging, and face your fears and doubts.

I have trained a couple of national-level competitors in my time and if there was one thing that I noticed that made them successful...it was the willingness to do near-mindless numbers of repetitions, when everyone else quit and went home.

But there's more to it than that. Not only were my would-be elite competitors willing to do the repetitions, they were willing to tear apart each move into the finest details to improve each and every part of the move. Additionally, they were willing to do the repetitions even when they'd rather be doing something else.

So three things emerge immediately:

1. Doing the repetitions
2. Dissecting the repetitions
3. Delaying gratification

There's a really important point here: The willingness and the discipline to do something not because it is fun, but because you see the eventual reward inherent in the activity. This holds true regardless of whether we are talking about national-level martial arts competitors, or corporate sales personnel, or college students...

So what does this get us? Once again it gets us a series of almost guaranteed events:

1. Set an intent
2. Do the mental visioning and rehearsal..in detail

3. Do the necessary work
4. Keep doing it
5. Keep doing it
6. And, well...keep doing it
7. Learn from your failures, mistakes and errors
8. Dissect, evaluate, reconstruct
9. Keep doing it
10. Revisit #1 and repeat!

Unfortunately, we live in a world where this is frequently an unpopular message. All too often we want the rewards and not so much the effort of getting to the result. We don't much like facing challenges, all too often it is easy to fall into the trap of stopping just before success appears.

I suspect that much of it has to do with our internal dialogue...."I need" combined with "I should", "I must" and "I ought to" versus "I want."

Let's think about this for a moment. You have two members of a corporate sales team or two competitors training for a tournament, one of them has an internal dialog that stems from a place of "I want to make the cold calls" or "I want to do the repetitions", the other comes from a place of "I need to make the calls" or "I need to do the reps."

Now you tell me...who is going to stick with it when everyone else has gone home? Who is coming from a place of passion, dedication, devotion and inner drive?

Who will you be when you show up at your next challenge? Who do you want to be and what are you willing to do to be that person?



## FREE GIFT...REALLY!

I am currently certifying as a personal coach with the Institute of Professional Excellence in Coaching.

As part of the learning process, I want to complete 50 pre-certification complimentary coaching sessions.

Consequently, I want to offer to each of you...a **FREE**, yes **FREE** coaching session, via telephone, or face-to-face (if you wish it and live in the Mississippi Golden Triangle area).

I have only a couple of rules:

- You want to move forward with your life.
- You accept the possibility that you are greater and wiser than you think you are.

If you are interested, I invite you to send me an e mail or call (see below).

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

[smaa@starkvillemartialarts.com](mailto:smaa@starkvillemartialarts.com)

## Four Seas

Actually, it's really four C's, but the title didn't look as compelling.

Let's start with a question:

When you see someone who is competent, confident, comfortable with who they are and who is caring of others...what do you think?

Now think of this as a personal goal..how would it feel to live these traits in your life? What would you want to do to become these things, such that those around you saw you are competent, confident, comfortable and caring?

So let's chew this a little finer.

Competent: Competent people inspire trust, respect and admiration. We look at someone who is competent and we admire their accomplishments. Sometimes we may harbor jealousy and envy, but when we are coming from a position of our best, highest self, we admire the effort that is revealed by high levels of competence. It doesn't matter whether the competence is in some area of career or personal performance, or in social interaction or personal awareness, we admire people who take the effort to achieve excellence in some area of life performance...even if it is self-mastery...which of course, it always is. After all, in order for any of us to achieve high levels of competence at what we choose to do, we must first achieve a level of self-mastery.

Confident: Tricky one. We like confident people, they inspire trust and respect, but if confidence becomes cockiness, pride, or arrogance, then we lose respect. Quiet, self-assured, confidence is a matter of great value to us. We are automatically drawn to people who are confident (but not overly showy or boastful) about what they do. People who exude confidence move gracefully through their in-

teractions because they know who they are. It is not, therefore, the confidence that we admire and respect, it is the level of self-knowledge that is reflected as confidence. Confidence comes from experience, from learning hard lessons on the anvil of life and not getting beaten down by those same lessons.

Comfortable: When people who are confident move in their field of expertise, they are comfortable; when you drop them into an unknown area of performance they may look and behave like a fish out of water. Ask me to do Ju Jitsu and I can look graceful and elegant; ask me to dance and I feel awkward and un-gainly. Now isn't that strange? Both types of movement rely upon timing, body awareness and kinesthetic ability. People who are comfortable, truly comfortable, are aware of who they are...warts and all. After all, we can all be comfortable at home; it is not so easy to be comfortable under stress.

People who are truly comfortable have a presence about them. They are not perturbed by events in life, they are unflappable. Equally, we can tell when it is a show and when true self-awareness has matured into a deep sense of comfort. If we are honest, we know very, very few people who are comfortable. Again, people who are truly comfortable are at ease with who they are because they have experience of life and have learned to flow with the events of their world. People who are truly comfortable with themselves do not look to the outside for validation, they are self-affirmed, and self-validated. And we know it.

Caring: We all know caring people, we probably like to think of ourselves as caring. In this instance, however, I am talking about those people who are

deeply considerate and truly compassionate. People who are compassionate come from a place of empathy, not sympathy. And, when we are in the presence of someone who is empathic we feel incredibly affirmed, accepted and loved. Such levels of caring transcend our daily view of caring. Deep caring such as this comes from seeing the wonderful person inside every person we meet...even those people who, at first, second or even third sight, we don't like! Caring isn't about 'like', it is about 'accept and love.' Caring people see us for who we are, accept us and love us anyway.

Conclusion: We are each of us a work in progress, each of us is on our own personal journey to wisdom and understanding.

That said, however, we can each aspire to competence, confidence, high levels of personal comfort regardless of exterior conditions and deep levels of caring. And what if we did? What if we each made those traits personal action principles at the beginning of each day? What then?

I'm not saying that any of this is easy, but I am saying that from my perspective, these things are worthy of attainment. When I allow the four C's to manifest in my life, I know I am at my best. They are fleeting moments to be sure, but they illuminate the path and validate the purpose of the journey. When I get in my own way, I have the ability to be fearful, doubtful, arrogant, prideful, selfish and manipulative and I am massively uncomfortable.

The thing about any journey is that you can only travel on your own path and navigate one path at a time.

So....my advice to me....let's sail on the High C's. ☺ ☹

*"Become the change you wish to see in the world."*

**Mohandas Gandhi**

## For Peace

Actually, it's really four P's, but the title didn't look as compelling.

Wait...I'm sensing a theme here.

O.K., so indulge me for a minute. In the last article I gave you four C's: Competence, confidence, comfort and caring. In this article I wish to extend the idea a bit and give you four P's.

Passion + Potential = Personal Power.

Let's start in the middle and go from there. Nelson Mandela tells us that the thing that we are most afraid of is our own power, and although it is only my opinion, I happen to think he is right.

How many of us truly live to our potential? No, *really* live to our potential? What does that mean anyway? What is my true potential?

Each of us can answer the question in our own way, but underneath all of that is something much deeper and embracing. From my perspective as a martial artist, or a university professor, or a business owner, I might answer the question in different ways. As a martial artist, I could then subdivide the question into coach, competitor, student, teacher, or referee and answer the question again. But I would argue that in all cases I am missing the point, I am using specific cases to answer a more important question and by doing so, I am deluding myself that I am answering the question at all. What IS my true potential?...This is not a question about one aspect of my talents, abilities or life journey...it IS my life journey.

To live at our full potential is to accept that every single nuance and every moment of our lives is greeted with a powerful sense of presence and purpose.

Quite frankly, that's scary isn't it?

What does it say about the level of personal responsibility that is required?

O.K. let's leave that alone for a moment and visit passion.

We often talk about passion, being passionate and doing work about which you are passionate. But again, that's a subset of a larger call to action.

What if we change the question a bit and refocus it? What if, instead of doing something about which I am passionate, I live with passion...not quite the same thing is it?

By way of example, when I look at my faculty reviews at the end of each semester, it is not unusual for me to read that some of my students see me as being passionate as a teacher, or passionate about my subject...but there is always a qualifier (teacher, subject).

What if we're missing the point when we add the qualifier? What if we are hiding from ourselves? What if I am hiding from myself when I say I am passionate about 'whatever'?

Passion + Potential = Personal Power.

When we subdivide passion into some area of our lives like our career or our loves, we can say that we have met the goal of being passionate about something. When we achieve excellence in our chosen area of passion, we can say that we have mastery in something and are therefore living to our potential...but...just suppose for one tiny instant that this is just a call to action? Just suppose that achieving mastery and living from passion in one area of our lives is only showing us how to get started? What then?

Suddenly, living a life *with* passion is not the same thing as living a life *of* passion.

Suddenly being a stunning performer in one area of my life is not living to my true potential...it is living to my potential in one area of my life. Not the same thing at

all.

So the question becomes: How do I show up in the rest of my life? Where else do I live my passion? Where else do I reach my potential?

Alright, enough of this...what's the point?

The point is really very simple: What is my gift to life? What is my gift to here, now, and to this world in which I move and breathe?

If I show up as anything less than my fullest, best self, I am offering half a gift.

When I show up as my absolute best, (or at least strive to achieve that, knowing that there is always more that I can learn), then I am taking an enormous risk. I am actually taking a perceived risk, which is not the same thing at all.

When I take the risk of living a life of passion and striving to discover my true potential, I am moving towards a position of personal power. Personal power is not about control and achievements, it is about deep internal peace. Personal power is about deep, abiding self awareness and self acceptance...compassion for self if you wish.

Again, just like the last article, there are fleeting moments when each of us knows truly profound inner peace, and then we fall back into the process of living and lose our grip on our potential and our passion.

This is not an easy path, which is why, I suspect, that in eastern philosophies it is often described as the Razor's Edge.

On the other hand, to set this intent: To live a life of personal power, is to set the intent of facing doubts and fears and finding peace within yourself, no matter where the path leads you.

So..it was for peace after all. ☺ ☹

*"If you want to awaken all of humanity, then awaken yourself.  
Truly, the greatest gift you have to give is your own transformation"*

Lao Tzu

## Knowledge

Time to wrap things up for this issue. In this article I would like to draw the threads together a bit.

There are three things here:

Knowledge, Understanding and Wisdom...they are not the same thing...we all know this.

Do we?

We can all acquire knowledge...we can all memorize facts. I watch students do this every semester. Some of my students, however, move beyond flash cards and take the next step, which is to work on understanding what they learn.

To acquire knowledge is to collect information. To understand what we learn is to have the ability to apply the information in some context of our lives.

Knowledge, therefore is about acquisition, whereas understanding is about application.

Understanding though, is both contingent and amorphous. It is contingent upon experience and it is amorphous as a function of perspective.

Let me see if I can explain: We can learn something and we can apply it and therefore think we understand it, but then something happens that refocuses our perspective and we learn something new about our understanding...in that moment of learning we have a new context.

Let's take an example from the martial arts. I can learn a hip throw. I can do stack loads of repetitions until I am pretty darned good at doing hip throws. I have knowledge, I have

learned a thing.

I then practice my hip throws for use in a competitive Judo environment. I now have an intended application, but have not yet proven the skill in the environment of intended use.

It is not, therefore, until I compete using the technique of 'hip throw' that I begin to truly understand what it means to use a hip throw. Let's say I get pretty good at using hip throws in tournaments, so good in fact that I win a lot of matches and can effectively and successfully compete from the local all the way up to the national level. At each level of competitive performance I deepen my understanding of the application of hip throws in a competitive environment...All of which is a single application context.

Then, one night, walking down an unfamiliar street in an unfamiliar city, I get attacked and after overcoming the initial shock, I attempt to use a hip throw to defuse the confrontation, but it doesn't quite work the same way as it did in tournament because there is no referee there to score it, and my assailant won't play by the same set of rules that I learned for tournament. I have just acquired a new context for my understanding of hip throws.

After this event, I will never practice the technique of 'hip throw', or go to tournament with the same understanding of hip throws ever again.

In this example, the knowledge itself didn't change. The hip throw is still a hip throw, the principles that govern its execution have not changed. The

understanding of tournament applications didn't change, but my understanding of 'hip throw' in a previously unknown area of performance gave me a new perspective *across my entire range of understanding*.

Here is the beginning of wisdom.

Wisdom is a fruit of experience in the school of hard knocks. Wisdom comes from doing and 'failing' and learning and doing again. Wisdom comes from re-contextualizing (ugh!) what we know for new environments and applying what we understand through the acquisition of different experience-based perspectives.

As we acquire wisdom, we change who we are across a broad range of performance environments. It's not local anymore, wisdom affects the whole person. Knowledge might be segmental and discrete, wisdom is holistic and all-encompassing.

Consequently, wisdom allows us to develop empathy, compassion and insight.

So I come to this...I see the thing as a process...we can all acquire knowledge, we do it every day. We can all acquire understanding through the application of our knowledge. We can all acquire wisdom, however, through the experiences that we gain in broadening our understanding across different platforms of performance over time.

Knowledge is a great starting point. Wisdom is the fruit of the journey.

*"Life just is. You have to flow with it.  
Give yourself to the moment. Let it happen"*

**Jerry Brown**