



Seeing True to Break Through

Thoughts from Ron Chapman

April 2007

Hola!

Last month's newsletter generated more commentary than any in the past two years. Mostly the responses were appreciative, especially expressing gratitude for the reminder about the long-term nature of our efforts and the incredible value of persistence. A few validated the many distractions of the world around us that continue to insist on immediate results. And one offered the anchoring observation that there is indeed a time when one should walk away from a venture, that in some cases no amount of persistence can win the day.

So despite the value of persistence, how do we know when the time has come to cease? That question calls for a personal story.

Sometime in my early life, I adopted a primary strategy for living. Or perhaps I was born with it and simply grew into it. Regardless, I was certainly not aware of it for many years. The purpose of my life has been to perform, not to be on stage, but to show up and to produce results, no matter what. So for me, persistence was second nature, a necessary ingredient in my pursuit of performance.

I have been much rewarded for the efforts that performance produced. By most standards I'm very accomplished, and I am often well compensated for what I produce. But such performance comes with two substantial negatives, it is very difficult to say 'no' and it is even more challenging to walk away from a venture to which I have already committed myself. Indeed, it's amusing to note that I am capable of great self-delusion at times in order to stay the course, which conveniently allows me to avoid dealing with these matters.

Yet I have learned a valuable approach to assist me in assessing whether persistence remains useful.

- The first action is to honestly assess the situation, and to review it with someone I can trust to tell me the truth. One approach is to simply list the pros and cons of the situation. In order to make a difficult decision, I must have information.
- Then I must ask myself, "If I am to persist, what will be the cost to me financially, personally, emotionally and psychologically?"
- Next is the most challenging question. "If I am still committed to staying the course, is there a payoff I would be uncomfortable admitting?" For

example, I might not want to admit I worry what others might think, or I'm afraid of making a mistake, or I can't walk away from my sunk costs, or I will feel foolish. It helps to include your trusted advisor in answering this question.

- There is one last question I ask myself. "Am I having fun with it?"

After this exercise, I often have clarity. Usually, that is sufficient to produce the willingness to take action. There is just something about Seeing True™ that produces outcomes. In fact, I almost always find that an unwillingness to act in my own apparent best interests means I haven't really seen it clearly yet. I must return to the questions noted above. Typically the crux lies in revealing something I really don't want to admit.

That said, now I need to admit that I have a trusted friend who with regular frequency reminds me, "Just say 'no,' Ron!" Actually, that's not the part I'm reluctant to admit. Truth be told, I'm uncomfortable that an educated, capable, accomplished guy like me needs someone to remind me. It sounds like a performance failure. Now that would be hard for a guy who likes to perform, wouldn't it?

Keep me posted! I love to hear your stories and adventures!

Ron

p.s. If you'd like to learn about some very interesting underpinnings of the American value of manifest destiny, tune in to KUNM radio on Friday, April 20th at 8:00 a.m. MDT/10:00 a.m. EDT. I'll be chatting with contemporary historian Hampton Sides on Straight to the Heart. You can hear it at 89.9 FM, or on the web at www.kunm.org.

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