



Seeing True to Break Through

Thoughts from Ron Chapman

April 2010

Hola alla!

Just to be clear, the above greeting is at best very bad Spanglish! Then again, it does have a fun feel to it, which is reason enough to use it!

Actually, I might have started with another greeting co-created by a good friend ... Hola Oompa Uffdah! (Try it for yourself in a steady rap cadence!) That allows me to take the risk of making a complete ass of myself right off the bat. And that would set the scene for some feedback from last month's newsletter.

Lorrie wrote to tell me of her recent decision to embrace a new professional direction that involved new opportunities, taking risks and being willing to change. These are never small matters even though our culture attempts to minimize them with adages like: "Don't sweat the small stuff ... it's all small stuff." In fact, as a woman in her fifties, embarking on a new path is a very big deal for Lorrie, and no doubt filled with perceived risk.

Everything in our human wiring has evolved to minimize the experience of apparent risk. It matters not whether the risk is real, but whether or not it feels risky. And we all know that anything outside our own personal and usual norm always feels at least slightly exposed, therefore risky. So we are built at the emotional and psychological level to be risk averse and to simply stay the course.

Contrast that with the nature of life itself, which is nothing but change. Thus the simple act of living forces us daily into confronting the apparent instability of an evolving reality with an ego structure that seeks only steadiness and recognizable terrain.

No wonder Lorrie's choice is a big deal, as it is for each of us who chooses to try a new path. It flies in the face of everything our evolution has nurtured in us as a species.

So first ... congratulations to Lorrie on her willingness to risk!

Second, lets turn to one of my favorite books, *Transforming Work: The Five Keys to Achieving Trust, Commitment and Passion in the Workplace* by Michael Kroth and Patricia Boverie. Don't let the title fool you. I think of it as a guide to finding

and following our passion with all the benefits it brings. Simply put, we are happiest when we are working and playing in the areas of our passions.

And you guessed it ... most of us are NOT playing in our passions! That's why the percentage of people unhappy with their work and lives is disturbingly high.

And you may have guessed it again ... most of us are averse to changing our less than fulfilled lives because it's risky. So we settle, though we rarely see it that way. That's because that trickster the ego has evolved to provide an endless list of rational explanations why playing it safe makes sense.

So what are we to do if we are trapped by the tendencies of our own evolution and psychology?

I found the secret many years ago when learning to rock climb. My guide took me out of the safety of a secure rock chimney and onto an exposed ledge three hundred feet above the valley below. He told me to feel what it feels like to be exposed. And believe me, I could feel it in every fiber of my being! Then he told me to breathe, and keep breathing. To make peace with the feeling because once I did, I would be free to act despite feelings of risk.

The great secret is to knowingly put ourselves at risk. To fully feel it. And then to breathe into it. To make friends with the exposure. After all ... it's only a feeling. Then to press onward ... outward ... upward ... and beyond. Feeling and breathing our way forward, step by step, moment by moment. Trusting ourselves and life's design. Pursuing our passions and our fulfillment. Constantly risking ... living ... feeling ... growing.

Enjoy it! Let me know how it feels! And try not to look down!

Ron

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