



Seeing True to Break Through

Thoughts from Ron Chapman

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Greetings once again!

With all the opportunities over the last few months to explore fully embracing life as well as last month's suggestion to try some new things in 2008, it's probably time to examine a common human response.

"But ..." we begin, promptly adding one of any number of potential limiting factors, everything from financial constraints to unnamed or unnamable fears. Interestingly enough, the reasons we usually cite are only symptoms of a curious inner phenomenon.

For those who correspond with me, you may notice that my responses sometimes include a tag line after my signature. It says, "Any action can only be as effective as the inner state from which it comes. To change anything externally, start within."

Once again, we are drawn to our inner state as the primary contributor to our outer experience. And the most frequent truth about failure to change is nothing more than a matter of our own inner values.

The human being is wired at the deepest levels to always act in what is perceived to be the most personally advantageous way. Mother Teresa, who acted so charitably to so many, was doing so because she perceived it to be in her best interests ... serving others is what she most wanted to do, for her own unique reasons. Donald Trump is driven in his pursuit of mega-deals by the same simple process ... he believes it to be in his best interests. Every human being has the same utterly logical inner dynamic regardless of the differences in our most privately held values.

Now, it must be said that any number of forms of mischief can creep into our innermost values. We might be mentally ill, in denial, ignorant, or even misinformed. Regardless, we will act logically based on those values, even if it is irrational or just plain wrong.

Let's shift our focus back to the "but" that is all so common in response to the desire to change. And let me tell you about Jerry.

For decades people told Jerry he was making bad choices. He drank too much, even managing to kill someone while driving drunk. Jerry smoked like the proverbial chimney, mostly while consuming large quantities of beer and chips. Even when not in his usual place on the couch, a position which made him quite inactive, his food choices were awful. And everyone from his wife to his physician pointed these matters out to him over and over again.

When Jerry was sixty-five years old, he almost died from multiple chronic diseases, all of which were discovered at the same time he had a heart attack. After surgery, even while still recovering, everything changed. He is nearing eighty years old now. He hasn't smoked or drunk alcohol for fifteen years. He lost sixty pounds and has maintained the weight loss. He walks seven miles a day, six days a week. And rarely does junk food sneak into his diet.

Jerry told me his secret. "Almost dieing got my attention. The day before that heart attack, I really didn't understand. But then I saw the truth. I really was killing myself. And in an instant, it was all different."

In some strange way, Jerry believed his behaviors were at least okay, somehow in his best interests. Then he saw they ran counter to his well being. At that moment it all changed, and seemingly without effort.

What lies beneath your variation of "but?" Rest assured you are behaving completely consistent with your deepest values. And if something isn't changing despite your best efforts and intentions, you might want to ask why.

It is said, we teach what we need to learn. Having seen my words, I realize I have work to do. I wonder what I'll find.

There is no shortage of curious things, both within and without. Enjoy the search!

Ron

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