



Seeing True to Break Through

Thoughts from Ron Chapman

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Hola!

Last month I began a process of transferring this newsletter to a new platform, beginning with some technological changes that were mostly transparent. If you be more changes to increase the value to those who have requested it, while still committing to be minimally e-invasive to those who are averse to too much e-material. Thanks to all those who have provided suggestions and requests.

Somewhere, sometime, someone said the only constant is change. And the greatest response to last month's material was agreement that many of us desire a change and can even see the change we wish for, but need to grant ourselves permission to create or allow it.

That takes us to an idea a friend surfaced many years ago. Tobias Flatow told me that humans are extremely well suited to play, which he described as action without purpose.

At the time, I understood his point from two perspectives. On the one hand, some of the most fulfilling times in my life have been when I was engaged in an activity that was interesting or pleasant though without an expressed purpose. For example, for many years I have journaled as a way of capturing whatever seems of note in the moment. Not only has it been deeply satisfying, but some of my best ideas have emerged from playful writing.

On the other hand, many of my most productive times have been when there is a particular goal or outcome in mind. It provides a kind of guidance or container in which my ideas and activities can freewheel, sometimes producing great solutions. Think of the classic inventor's story, Thomas Edison seeking to create what we know as the light bulb. Apparently he had countless ideas emerge from that goal, many of which proved to be fruitless, but all of which led inexorably to success.

So let me propose an idea for your consideration, even if it is a clunky phrase. How might you use "outcome inspired playfulness?" In other words, how might you establish a clear enough outcome or goal, then relinquish our typical linear way of thinking and acting in order to allow play to take over?

Okay ... the pragmatists are asking, "Why would we want to do that?"

Let's be practical. If we are indeed well suited to play, and if successes in fact emerge from experimentation that eventually leads to the desired outcomes, shouldn't we take advantage of both?

Here's a personal example. For three years I have been seeking to design an innovative approach to leadership development. (Truth be told, I didn't know it but I've been pointed toward it for about a decade. Sometimes we're the last to know what's really going on in our lives!) I've had about ten false starts, and a surprising number of apparent epiphanies. Yet none could gain the kind of traction needed to produce an outcome.

Regardless, I never let go of the idea, and I continued to talk to people, and to collect articles, references and materials. The files were unwieldy, but there was something cooking all the while. I was playing.

Recently, through yet another apparent moment of breakthrough, I had a vision emerge that drew from a surprisingly large number of ideas in my archives. And it was clear enough for reality testing, which is nearing completion. As one mentor said, "There appears to be a there there."

It is that vision which will now begin to fuel changes to this newsletter, but in a larger context I'm currently calling leadership development. Soon we'll begin to see the "there" that is "there."

What's the payoff? I've been having the time of my life. Playfulness is a great treat. An outcome is extremely satisfying. And perhaps it will even prove to be a contribution to others, which has been a part of the vision all along.

So ... how can you create outcome inspired playfulness in your life? And for you pragmatists, to what end?

Somewhere, sometime, someone said that answers require questions. You now have the latter. Let me know about the answers.

Playfully,

Ron

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