

From D.E.S.P.A.I.R. To P.R.A.I.S.E.D.



By
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Table of Contents

- I About The Author
- II Introduction
- III Polarity
- IV Relationships
- V Activity
- VI Intensity
- VII Entertainment
- VIII Stability
- IX Direction
- X Example Profiles
- XI Personality Profile Instructions
- XII Personality Profile
- XIII Final Feelings
- XIV Suggested Reading

Terry Canfield



In my career as a paramedic and firefighter, I have worked with thousands of people. Some have been only inconvenienced by their illnesses or injuries while others have literally died in my arms. It is a humbling experience to be in the service of others in a way that cuts through all pretenses of society.

In 1981 I graduated from the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center in Portland, Oregon. I actually intended only to use my paramedic training for my own personal use. I enjoyed some risky sports such as scuba diving and snow skiing and thought it might come in handy.

After I graduated I was offered a position with the fire department I had volunteered with prior to school and so a career began. It has been the best... and worst occupation I could ever imagine.

As a result I have delivered three infants in the field, including my own daughter. I have watched my sister battle with cancer and lose. Other relatives have passed on as well and I am painfully aware of what others have gone through with similar diseases, even if I wasn't present at their deaths.

And yet, through it all I have gained an insight into life to which few others in America are privileged. I have listened as others share their words of wisdom. I have watched as they struggle against the current of time for just one more chance to feel alive. I have felt their urgency to make what time they have left, if any, count.

It has given me an appreciation that I hope has affected my life. We, my wife Jan, my three children Sarah, Kevin, and Tristen live in Eastern Washington State. We don't have the perfect relationship by far but I am at peace with where we are. Even so, I intend to keep trying to have ever deeper ties as life moves us along. It is the relationships in our lives that we will remember.

I am thankful for the many occupations I had prior to this one; school bus driver, laborer, truck driver and others. They have all added to my appreciation of here and now. It's been fun. God is good!

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This book is dedicated to my loving wife and children... Jan, Sarah, Kevin, and Tristen!

Introduction

From DESPAIR to PRAISED... sounds like a pretty tall order doesn't it? However, if you look closely at the words despair and praised, you'll see they have the exact same letters in them. Just by rearranging these building blocks we call letters, we create two completely different images in our minds

Know thyself

That's the way our personalities work. Our emotions combine to create our temperament. Each emotion has ingredients present in different amounts. These “ingredients” are the focus of this book. We are going to play around in the kitchen of our personality and concoct our own recipe for a successful spirit.

Attacks of the heart

To put things in perspective, let's start by saying we live in four different dimensions at the same time; physical, mental, emotional, and Spiritual. I chose to start with the emotional side of our lives because I see so many people having an attack of the heart and that is something all together different from a heart attack.

A big part of this pain is that far too many people have bought into the bumper sticker philosophy of “He who dies with the most toys wins.” Actually, as far as letters go this is pretty close... I believe “S/he who dies with the most JOYS wins!

We need to become “heart smart.” It's our emotions that really determine the quality of our lives. Our hearts are similar to a weather vane in a hurricane though. Left to themselves, they have no guidance except outside forces. That is why it is so important to channel the winds of want and the gusts of lusts. Our hearts are vulnerable and need our protection.

Content' vs. con' tent

It seems we confuse having content in our lives with being content. The accumulation of “stuff” doesn't make us happy. One is materialism to the max, the other is an emotional experience.

We can have all the wealth in the world but if we don't feel happy we won't consider ourselves winners. Winning is an emotional experience an attitude, not a physical act. If people were given only these two choices, “Would you rather be rich and wretched, or poor and peaceful?” they would choose poor and peaceful.

Anyone that says they'd rather be wretched is going to lie about other things too! Actually, what I hear when people choose wretched is that they believe wealth can make them happy but there are a lot of wealthy people that are extremely miserable.

Wealth can bring a lot of enjoyment but you don't have to be wealthy to be happy. You can do that all on your own; whether you're a prisoner of war or a puppy in love.

A state of heart

So if it's not wealth, and it's not our circumstances that make us happy, what is it? It's our state of heart; as opposed to our state of mind. Kenneth Wydro put it this way, “What's happening around you, or to you, is not as important as what's happening within you!”

Our emotions need exercising and practice just as our bodies do if we want to learn and apply new skills. This practice is designed to help you develop more control over just one aspect of your emotions at a time. One ingredient in the recipe to your proposed personality.

By focusing on just one item and changing it, sometimes gradually sometimes drastically, you become a better you! And that is our primary occupation, even our “preoccupation”... to be the best “us” we are capable of becoming.

About this book

This book will help you do just that. It takes our emotions and breaks them into seven building blocks. Each block will be covered separately. The chapter will start with a “Rule To Live By.”

Then, each emotional ingredient will be described. The seven building blocks are as follows:

Polarity
Relationship
Activity
Intensity
Stability
Entertainment
Direction

The first letters together spell PRAISED which is how we want to feel after we have accomplished a worthwhile goal. By using this approach you'll be able to assign a value for each of these to represent where you are now.

This is the bulk of the information in this book. I attempt to go into each component to give you an understanding of how each is characterized. Also, I'll describe how they relate to the other components.

Example Emotion Templates

I have included some examples of how an emotion could be profiled using several common descriptions of emotions. You can link directly to any of them at the end of this section. The emotions are profiled using what I consider to be the most likely range for each ingredient. You are not bound by these ranges when you profile your own emotions.

You might actually create a combination of ingredients difficult to recognize as an emotion that already has a label. That's OK too. It's not as important to know what to call the feelings you have as it is to be able to impact and change them if you need to. You may not know what to call where you are but you have an idea of what to call where you want to be.

There are actually four ways to use the D.E.S.P.A.I.R. To P.R.A.I.S.E.D Profiles. First you can use them by yourself and others to develop your own Personality Profile and map out your temperament. Secondly, you can analyze any emotional state you in which you find yourself to increase your awareness of what it is you're experiencing at the moment. The third way to benefit from the profiles is to design a “target” or ideal profile for you. If you have a clear understanding of what you're trying to achieve in terms of personal growth you'll be much more likely to get the results you want.

And lastly, you can profile others. You can use this as an assessment tool for coworkers, managers, production staff, etc. You can create a template profile for employees in these positions as a benchmark for desired qualities. Customers and clientele can also be evaluated to determine common traits needing to be leveraged for maximum benefit or to minimize friction and lost opportunity.

Again, part of this is to be able to develop a database for exploring and refining this concept. Please send any thoughts you have regarding the D.E.S.P.A.I.R. To P.R.A.I.S.E.D. Profile to terry@tcanfield.com

Surveying the emotional landscape

When you use the profile sheets it's suggested that you have at least three others rate you in these categories. One close family member, a friend, and a coworker should complete the survey. Ask each person to be as accurate as possible. Ask them to take the time to help you become a better person and thank them for their willingness to do so.

Then, using the PRAISED pattern, you will design a profile of your preferred personality. You'll create a profile using the seven ingredients in the proportions you prefer. This will give you an idea of how you and others see you now as opposed to where you want to be.

Once you know where you are and where you want to be it makes the journey a whole lot easier. Now all you need is a M.A.P. A Motivation Action Plan. That's where the activities come in.

Activities

Each chapter includes a list of activities. The activities are to help you refine your skills regarding the ingredient. Have fun with these activities, make them a game. After all, it's not like somebody's going to pay you huge sums of money for doing this. Make it kind of an inside secret, just between you and yourself.

Goal tending

Of course, if you wish to share your desire for self improvement that's OK too. Just be sure to share it with someone who's going to be supportive of your efforts. Now if it's something you are wanting help with, such as trying to stop being so critical of others, you can let everyone know; but be prepared to get tons of help!

Sunday morning breakfast

Constructing your own temperament is like preparing a big Sunday breakfast of bacon and eggs, biscuits, orange juice, and hash browns or whatever you would like to have. Each food is one of your emotions. Each food is made up of ingredients. You might prefer to use orange juice that has been concentrated rather than squeeze all those oranges by hand. When something has been concentrated it is made stronger.

Awareness

We want to concentrate our awareness of each ingredient in our emotional recipe. By strengthening our awareness we can make changes more easily. It's pretty difficult to change something you haven't even thought about. Yet as soon as you are aware of whatever it is you're doing, you can modify it.

Have you ever caught yourself doing something you wish you hadn't been doing? Something like chewing with your mouth open, or talking with food in your mouth. As soon as you become aware of it you stop, if you choose to do so. But until there is awareness, there can be no change.

Selected sayings

I'll finish each chapter with a few selected inspirational or motivational or just down right catchy sayings. I love to read the wit and wisdom of the ages and sometimes I agree and other times I disagree, like the bumper sticker I quoted before. I encourage you to explore the feelings and philosophies of the past.

It's what you do with who you know

You may be surprised at how much things stay the same the more they change. To give an example, Daniel Goleman wrote the book "Emotional Intelligence" in 1995 which describes several studies in progress regarding how much our personalities impact our ability to get ahead in life. It was stated decades ago in the saying, "It's not what you know but who you know."

I hope by the end of this book you will have a much better knowledge of you. And YOU are the most important person you can ever get to know! Not because you are the most important person in the world, but because your relationship with the most important person in the world and every other person in the world depends upon how well you know your self.

Enjoy!

Polarity

“Optimists see opportunities in their challenges... Pessimists see challenges in their opportunities!”

What's it all about

When you hear the term polarity, what does it bring to mind? the North and South Pole? Magnets? Perhaps electricity? It may even conjure up something like the bipolar emotional disorder known as manic/depressive.

All of these have two things in common, a positive and a negative state. The polarity aspect of your temperament describes how you look at the glass... as half full or half empty. Or is it filled completely... half with water and half with air?

You don't have to be positive about everything to have a positive attitude. Certainly it is difficult to think positively about certain crimes. Yet too often we get into the lazy habit of taking the easy way out and just complaining about the way things are, or at our circumstances in particular.

Our perceptions have a tremendous influence on our thinking. If you don't believe this just look at an optical illusion. You can only hold one perception of the illusion at a time.

If we go back and forth with our impressions we don't develop as strong of a connection with the image in our mind. The reason I think this is so important is if we spend about half of our time being positive and the other half being negative we don't develop possibility thinking. Rather we develop wishy washy thinking, ready to admit defeat at the first conflict.

My medical training has taught me a person can live weeks without food, even days without water. We can only survive for minutes without air but we won't live a second if we have no hope! That's what optimism is all about, hope. It's the desire for a favorable outcome in the face of unknown circumstances.

It's easy to be positive when the odds are in your favor. When you have resources, opportunities, lack of resistance and other factors supporting your success. The test of optimism is being able to remind your self the greatest factor determining the outcome of any situation is the human factory.

The power of positive thinking

Norman Vincent Peale wrote several books on this theme, “The Power of Positive Thinking” and “You Can if You Think You Can” are two of them. In his books he describes how we can develop an unshakable confidence in positive thinking.

There is a popular definition of insanity going around these days saying, ”Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and over... and expecting different results.” There is a danger to this philosophy because it squelches persistence.

The flip side of the coin is this, it is ignorance to do the same thing over and over and always expect the same results. There are only three possibilities as you pursue your goals. You'll either gain ground, lose ground or stand your ground.

The difference between being insane and indefatigable is a fine one. How much does the outcome depend on the one who is persevering? There's nothing wrong with changing your approach if the one you're using isn't working. Just make sure the one you're using isn't working.

An important lesson learned

In her book, “Light From Many Lamps” Lillian Eichler Watson (Simon and Schuster) describes an extraordinary encounter between author A. J. Cronin and a local farmer. I have condensed it here for illustration.

Dr. A. J. Cronin, was writing his first book while recuperating from a serious illness. During the long, agonizing process he became discouraged and threw the whole manuscript into the cold wood stove.

He went for a walk in the constant drizzle of Scotland. Along the way he ran into old Angus, a fossil of a farmer trying to carve a drainage ditch out of the unforgiving bog to make a pasture for his cattle. He admired A. J. or anyone for that matter that was “learned.” He asked the good doctor how his book was coming.

After Cronin described what he had done, Angus was silent for a long time, finally he spoke, “Aye Doctor for sure it is you who are right and I wrong. My grandfather dug this ditch all his life and couldn't make a pasture here. My father dug all his life and failed. And I've dug all my life. But I “cannaw” help but dig; for my grandfather knew, and my father knew, and I know that if you only dig long enough... a pasture can be made here.”

A. J. went back to his bungalow, fetched his dirty manuscript out of the ashes, cleaned them off. He poured himself back into his work, until at last, finished! He sent the manuscript off to a publisher and almost forgot about it as his thoughts turned to recovering his health.

It was at the time he was about to return to London when he received word that his book, “The Citadel” was to be published. It went on to be a huge success.

Sometimes the results of our efforts will be enjoyed by future generations. We'll get more into that in the next section. Let's talk about some of the things we can do to improve our optimism.

Activities

Smile

Smile more! Even if you don't feel like it. Let it become your default facial expression. The amazing thing is that even if you don't feel good, smiling will make you feel better! Smiling is a good place to start because it's good just to be alive.

And for those who might be saying, “You don't know what my life is like!” Let me say this. You're right! But neither of us know what death is like except it's permanent. As far as I'm concerned it will come soon enough and I have lot's of ideas I want to try out before that day arrives.

For situations especially challenging use an ironical smile and look for the irony. the movie “Treasure of the Sierra Madres” gives us a great example of irony. Three prospectors search for, find, and mine a small fortune in gold only to lose it to a band of outlaws. One of the prospectors loses his life as well and the “old timer” muses about how all they lost was a summer's work when they too could have lost their lives.

As we consider some of the other aspects of our personality we will have other perspectives making it easier to wear a smile almost constantly. I should tell you now some folks may be annoyed with this kind of attitude. But tell me, who has the problem; someone who wants to feel as good as or even better than the circumstances will allow or someone who thinks we should go around with a frown all the time?

The Glad Game

The movie “Pollyanna” gives another example of how we can look at life more positively. In the movie a poor girl whose Missionary parents have died comes to live with a wealthy aunt. She brings with her the “Glad Game.” This is an emotional exercise she learned from her father to look for and find something to be glad about in any situation.

As you start playing this game I think it's best to practice with situations that don't directly affect you. When you watch TV or a movie and the plot gets tense, ask yourself what things could you be “glad” about? Even if the “pros” don't seem to outweigh the “cons” at least you'll be developing your ability to fuel your optimism.

You might be surprised at how often you can come up with something positive about any situation. If nothing else you can use the intensity of the situation as leverage for preventing future tragedies. Perhaps something was done to prevent the tragedy from being even worse than it was.

The idea is to find things about which you can be truly glad. Because gladness is positive; you want to go beyond simply neutralizing the negativity of the event. It gets easier the more we do it and we develop strategies so we can transfer to the situations directly involving us.

The Media Magnifying Glass

You know the media used to be a lot more straight-faced when reporting the events of the day. That is, until they made a discovery of commercial importance. Emotions sell! News that stimulated an emotional response kept viewers glued to the program as much as game shows, movie plots, or sporting events. It revolutionized the industry.

Unfortunately, shock value has a more intense effect (something we'll talk about later) than a “feel good” stimulus; at least as far as the news industry goes. Positive stimuli can have just as powerful of an effect on us. Rats having the pleasure centers of their brains stimulated by an electrode every time they push a button will push the button until they starve to death.

Unfortunately, we don't seem to get the same kind of boost to our feelings from watching someone do well or have some kind of blessing befall them. When we watch, hear, or read about some horrific event in the news we can easily relate, we think to ourselves, “What if it had been me?”

In the Media Magnifying game you hold a mirror up to the stories you read, hear, or see in the media and examine them as if you were Sherlock Holmes looking for clues. Looking for where and how the news industry is trying to generate conflict, confusion, or controversy.

You can use this as a preliminary to the “Glad Game.” Kind of a “one two punch” approach to generating an optimistic outlook regarding the predicament. Again, start with cases you have no vested interest in other than applying your skills at seeing the “silver lining” to the clouds in question.

Angel's Advocate

Have you ever heard someone take the role of Devil's Advocate? What this means is if some has an idea they're really excited about, the Devil's Advocate will try to point out reasons why the idea probably won't work. What we need to do more often is oppose the Devil's Advocate with the Angel's Advocate. Even if there is no Devil's Advocate we can do a little brainstorming with our friendly “energized Einstein” and maximize the potential for their idea at hand. I first read about this term in Daniel Goleman’s book “Emotional Intelligence.”

Ben Franklin had a technique for sizing up a situation. He would take out a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle of it and literally list the pros and cons of whatever was being considered. I think a more positive approach would be to list the benefits and challenges.

This is more than just word play. By identifying the undesirable aspects as challenges it reminds us, just as we saw in the “Glad Game” and “Media Magnifying”, what appear to be negatives can often have rewards only needing to be exposed.

It is important to be realistic about all this. At the time of this writing I'm 46 years old. I love tennis, but I think my chances of winning Wimbledon are fading fast. However I believe I have the physical potential to win it if I could maximize my potential. Unfortunately, just as we only utilize 10 - 12% of our mental abilities we seldom realize our full physical capacities as well. I won't lose any sleep over this. Even tennis at my level is great fun!

The idea is to accurately determine how much of the challenge depends on human effort and how much depends on human characteristics. It would be impossible for a blind person to be a sharpshooter if sound was not a factor or for any of us to hear what dogs hear. It just isn't something we should depend on under normal conditions.

My father has a great way of putting all of this in perspective and I'll close this section with it. He always says, "Plan for the worst and hope for the best!" Sound advice.

Selected Sayings

Develop success from failures. Discouragement and failure are two of the surest stepping stones to success. No other element can do so much for a man if he is willing to study them and make capital out of them. Look backward. Can't you see where your failures have helped you?

Dale Carnegie

I always tried to turn every disaster into an opportunity.

John D. Rockefeller

Problems are only opportunities in work clothes.

Henry J. Kaiser

Who has never tasted what is bitter, does not know what is sweet.

German Proverb

There is no education like adversity.

Benjamin Disraeli

The most important thing in life is not to capitalize on your gains. Any fool can do that. The really important thing is to profit from your losses. That requires intelligence; and it makes the difference between a man of sense and a fool.

William Bolitho

Conclusion

Polarity... optimism or pessimism, the way you look at things not only affects your moods but the moods of those around you. It's been said false hope is better than no hope at all. To lose hope is to despair. I'll close this vital section with a little poem that has lifted many spirits.

Don't Quit!

When things go wrong as they sometimes will
And the road you travel seems all uphill
When funds are low and debts are high
And you want to smile but you have to sigh
When care is pressing you down a bit...
Rest if you must, but don't you quit!

You see life is queer with it's twists and turns
As every one of us sometimes learns
And many a failure has turned about
When they might have won had they stuck it out
Don't give up though the pace seems slow
You might succeed with another blow

Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering man
And often the struggler has given up
When they might have captured the victor's cup
And they learned too late, when the night slipped down
How close they were to the golden crown

Success is failure turned inside out
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt
And you never can tell how close you are
It may be near when it seems afar
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit!

Anonymous

Relationship

*“If you want to be remembered by others...
Forget about yourself!”*

What's it all about?

Talking about the nature of family and friendships is like trying to describe the color of a chameleon. It really depends on the surroundings. There is an infinite number of variations. There are as many types of relationships as there are colors in the spectrum. More! In truth, each knot we tie with another human being is unique.

Although each relationship is different, we can consider similar characteristics common to groups of our interactions with others. One important thing to remember; no matter what color a chameleon is, it's still a chameleon. All of the relationships we develop are the result of a relationship we have with life itself.

Self Centeredness

Let me start off by saying there isn't anything wrong with being self centered... at times! I'll use my work as a paramedic/firefighter as an example. When we get dispatched to an emergency, we're thinking about what we will do when we get there. Our focus however is on getting there!

If we don't make sure we get there safely then two things happen. The person who needed help in the first place has to wait even longer for another unit to respond and we have actually made the situation worse if we injure someone else or become injured ourselves. In short, there are fewer resources to help our community and more need of those resources. This isn't a good way to provide community service!

So in spite of how it might appear we're only looking out for our own best interests sometimes, we want to ensure we will be able to complete the task we begin. Once we get to those who need our help we can assess the situation and provide whatever assistance we have to offer. In a medical emergency, it's all about the patient or patients. What they need and how we can help them.

Other relationships in our lives have a similar priority. Relationships are what life is all about. To use another movie example, "Castaway" had the star Tom Hanks stranded on a deserted island for four years. For four long years he didn't exist to anyone else except as a memory. When he was rescued he found the life he had couldn't survive with him as a ghost. While he was trapped on that tropical paradise he was so lonely he had to make himself a friend. The need to relate to something outside himself was overwhelming.

So is our need! Imagine for yourself what it would be like if it were you on that island. What would be your priorities? How would you deal with the isolation?

And yet, even though connectedness with others is how we can measure the depth of our lives; our relationship with ourselves must be one of the most intimate relationships we experience. Just keep in mind that in the top three it comes in third. In his book, "I Am Third" Gale Sayers writes about his place in the priorities of his life. First is God, second is his family, and then himself. That didn't prevent him from developing himself into the best athlete he could become. In fact, it made it possible to serve his God and family best.

As I'm writing this, I am in a coffee shop and sitting near me is a young college student wearing a T-shirt with "I love my attitude... problem!" I went over and asked her about what it meant. Much to my relief she didn't get all defensive, or worse, offended. She graciously shared how it was a kind of gag gift from her grandmother and she has a very definite personality. She added this, when she knows she's right she'll stick to her guns but she is willing to admit when she's wrong. My feelings are she isn't living "down" to the philosophy depicted on the shirt... THANK GOD!

The question to ask yourself in regard to your relationship with “you”, is this, “Why am I doing this?” If it's for developing yourself physically, mentally, emotionally, and/or Spiritually... good. But what is the end desire? If it's “All about me!” as so many of the home pages on AOL start out, then the effort is misdirected.

Family oriented

Now things get a little more complicated. There are two kinds of relationship involving family, primary and secondary. In a primary role you provide the bond keeping the family together. In a secondary role, the family would continue to exist without you. These roles can change over time or literally over night. In the event of the death of a primary member or divorce, the secondary members can become primary members of the relationship or they remain secondary members. As the secondary members mature and become self sufficient, the relationship with their former caregivers becomes more of a primary relationship. As long as each person wants the relationship to continue, it does.

It's a lot like the relationship of two magnets. The south pole of a magnet is very different from the north pole. Opposite poles attract, i.e. the north pole of one magnet will be drawn to the south pole of another magnet. Similar poles will repel each other. As a child is small and naive, their attraction is toward their very different, more experienced, caregiver. They physically cling to this person much of the time.

Then something happens, the child gets older, they mature, they “grow up.” Now the differences between them and their aging loved ones is not so great. In fact, they start thinking and acting more like their senior counterparts. The poles are more similar than they are different, the attraction that used to be so strong now pushes the two apart.

This is where people differ from magnets. When these two adults are no longer in the same family the attraction is no longer magnetic but more like gravity. The theory of gravity is mass attracts mass. People are attracted to other people. They share their dreams, desires, and ordeals. The bond is no longer one of need and obligation but of mutual respect and benefits.

This is the attraction bringing men and women together in a relationship... not opposites attracting but because of mutual respect and benefits. The underlying causes of this respect and these benefits can be similarities or differences.

This respect and these benefits can often be hindered or halted altogether for various reasons. The result is a weakened relationship. The attraction that binds is diluted. The focus blurs, and eventually becomes completely obscured, ceasing to exist except in the past tense. A relationship built on wants and needs is a “taking” relationship rather than a giving one.

Relationships are constantly moving and therefore need a source of energy. A form of fuel is needed to sustain this motion. Without this, the relationship coasts and eventually stops. This combustion creates the admiration and advantages keeping the relationship going. There is only one relationship in perpetual motion and it will be discussed later.

The best fuel is found in the relationship itself. When the source of energy comes from devotion to the others in the relationship, it's like the energy released when two chemicals react with each other. By themselves they only had potential but together they create a source of explosive power. Relationships have this explosive potential. But just as not all chemicals react with each other not all relationships behave this way.

Is blood thicker than water?

The distinctions between “friendships” are more dependent on the behavior than birthright. Many of us have blood relatives who are distant emotionally and acquaintances that become closer to us than siblings in many ways. The distinction of a friend is someone you have interactions with frequently but the mutual bond is more dependent on the person rather than on the circumstances. You see each other or get together because you enjoy being with each other.

This is the same type of bond adult family members develop as well as those in marriage. The difference being the intensity is slightly less for various reasons. We'll discuss intensity later but some examples could be the person is of the same sex, you already have a spouse, or you don't know the person well enough yet for the relationship to become family.

Pleased to make your acquaintance

Where friends are people we share circumstances with because of our connectedness to one another, acquaintances are people we share a connection to because of circumstances. We have less of an emotional connection personally but we share bonds of community. Because this knot is not as tight, it is more easily unraveled. But there is danger in thinking these relationships are less important!

This is why we have such things as road rage, muggings, war! When we think of someone as less of a person based on their relationship to us, we distort our relationship with our self. We distort their value as a person in their own right. It's called common courtesy and mutual respect.

As we make acquaintances, picture them as being on the outer most edge of a spiral. If we repeat our encounters often enough, and our experiences with this person are enjoyable, they move along the spiral and become closer to us. Circumstances, personal qualities, and the benefits we experience will determine if and when a person moves in or out on the spiral.

The humanity of it all

This is the relationship we have with everyone else sharing our planet. This is also the most distant relationship we can feel toward another human being. Although vast is the void between ourselves and someone we've never met, never heard of, and never will know personally, we can feel a bond with them in this mass of life called the human race.

Even though we don't have a direct contact with these people they effect us and we effect them. I have some reservation calling myself an "American" since there are twenty three countries and fourteen dependencies in North America, and twelve countries and two dependencies in South America. And since a relatively small percentage of the planetary population consumes a disproportionate amount of the resources. And since the short abbreviation for the United States is the U.S.; I think maybe we should call ourselves "USers."

At least to our credit, and our indebtedness, I don't think any other nation on Earth or in history has given and forgiven so much. We have canceled untold debts and donated much in the forms of foreign and humanitarian aid. Although this is not a license to exploit the rest of the world.

This is not a discussion on world affairs, however. To get specific, think of other individuals who have had great impact on civilization. Jesus Christ, Mother Teresa, Gandhi, Pasteur, Florence Nightengale, Bell, Edison, Einstein. You can look at those who have had negative effects on humanity as well, such as Hitler. The potential to have great impact, for "Good" or "Bad" resides within each of us and the passion with which we release it.

God

Moving from the least intimate horizontal kinship possible; we change direction 90 degrees to a vertical relationship. No discussion of relationships and how they impact our temperament would be complete without considering our connection to this thing called "Life" and is it just a fluke or is there a Creator?

Let me begin by saying everyone has faith. Well, I guess not everyone, you see there are three schools of thought. Creationism, the belief everything was created, is one. A second is Evolution, everything has always been here and life as we know it has just happened by chance. The third school says nothing really exists, and we're just imagining all this. I'm not going to discuss this group because you can't disagree with someone who doesn't think they, or you, exist.

Let's look at the other two for a minute. One says God has been around forever and ever and the other says the universe has been around forever and ever. Personally I can't fathom either one. I mean what was here 100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000² centuries before the "Big Bang?" And if everything was so stable for so long before, why did the Big Bang occur?

Some scientists admit they can't answer these questions and this is because they refuse to accept God as a possible answer. This is not good science! Pure science asks the question and then lets the answer stand for itself. Since science can't answer the question of when the clock started, when time began, we have this undefined concept of infinity.

Here's how I look at it. If I? = infinity, (time, it is a manmade convention but we can use it to mentally measure backward from the here and now.) R = reality the universe, the Earth, people, and this thing called life do exist. G = God the living Creator of everything in the universe including Spiritual life after physical death. Therefore, $I? + R + G > I + R$.

For me, it goes beyond just spending my time on Earth until I find the answer. I believe we are to develop a relationship with the Creator of everything the One who gave us life in the first place. This relationship, when it's given through free choice, is the most intimate relationship we can experience.

The Jewish people, Muslims, and Christians all believe in the same God. In the Judeo-Christian faith, the Trinity is considered to be God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament of The Holy Bible, the God of the Hebrews (Jews) was a living, visible, audible, Being. That stopped just about the time Jesus Christ began his ministry and preaching the redemptive sacrifice He was to make on behalf of all sinners. Afterward, the Holy Spirit came to reside inside each believer.

So I see a progression here. God came to live amongst His people to give them proof He exists. Jesus, fully God and fully man, came to show us how to live and relate to God the Father in practice. And finally, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us to confirm our faith, to make this relationship so real, we feel God inside of us.

I will address this progression in another work dealing with Spiritual well-being. It is the most important of the four realms. It weaves throughout the other three realms and is the base for living in harmony. It is the only perpetual relationship... all that is required of us is to accept it.

I know as a firefighter, when I go into a smoke filled, burning building if I don't stay in touch with a wall or my fire hose leading to the outside I'll get lost. I can't see, and when you're on your hands and knees in unfamiliar surroundings you can get turned around easily. That's why we always stay connected to our "life line", our way out.

Our relationship with God is similar. That's what the Bible is, it's our lifeline, our connection back to God when He doesn't appear before us as a cloud of smoke. Or when we don't have a guide such as Jesus, we can use the Bible to see the way, to stay connected to our escape route.

Just take a look around at how so many people want to say the Bible is outdated and we shouldn't use it as the instruction manual of how to have a relationship with God. I see it as letting go of the wall and wandering around in a smoke filled, burning building. We will eventually lose all sense of right and wrong, which is already well under way.

If God isn't the same now as when He was in the Old Testament then He wouldn't be God. A look through history at how civilizations have sprung up with a solid moral or ethical base and then degenerated into ruin through erosion of their foundation tells us this doesn't work. Over and over it's pretty clear we need something to remain constant. As the historian points out, those who fail to heed the lessons learned from the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them.

Activities

Become your own best critic. Rather than ask your self, “Can I do better?” Ask, “How can I do better?” Be supportive and encouraging of yourself but at the same time raise the bar of expectation. It seems whenever we rest on our laurels they turn to poison ivy.

Activities such as this personality profile give you a reference point by which you can measure yourself. By repeating the profile and using it on a daily basis as an affirmation and goal setting tool you can mark your progress. You can create a visual “virtual you” to direct your aspirations.

Meditate

Take time to be with yourself. There are two forms of meditation. I'll get to the second one later; but for now, just spend some time getting to know you. Reflect on how you feel about yourself physically, mentally, emotionally, and Spiritually. This is different than the previous activity. One is like the day-to-day housekeeping chore while the other goes much deeper, like Spring cleaning only a lot more often. Daily if possible but any schedule you can put together is better than none.

Allow for enough time to get into the right state. Usually, you'll need to repeatedly “sweep” the distracting thoughts of obligations which will creep in. Make sure this is time for quieting yourself and seeking to see yourself as others see you. Eliminate the inconsistencies and clarify the characteristics on which to concentrate your energies.

With practice this experience becomes more intense and easier to accomplish. During a crisis or emergency, the emotions are high and one of our first priorities is to control our own feelings and the feelings of the crowd. To do this we slow things down by doing strategic planning. You want to control the “spot fires” in your life.

Keep with it and you'll be pleasantly surprised at how insight will come. Sometimes there isn't even a question at hand but impressions are unpredictable; sometimes they ask and at other times they answer. Sometimes they leave you wondering what they mean. Ask yourself what sticks out. Is it an unresolved conflict? Is it a memory from the past? Is it a desire for the future? Try to step back from it mentally and let it speak to you rather than you speak to it.

Solicit feedback from others

Many people are frightened to know what others think about them. They would rather go through life with their own hands over their eyes or ears. It's like flying a jet in the dark without radar. You know you're going to run into something, you just don't know when. And when you hit... it's going to be bad.

One way to get over this is to ask people who are supportive of you to be as critical of you as they can be. They are more likely to be tactful in their feedback. If their sensitivity is lacking, this can cause some hurt feelings because we just aren't aware of how some things we do bother others. Avoid getting defensive! Remember, you are only getting their opinion.

Accept the feedback, thank them for their honesty. Just remember, you have to evaluate the information based on their perspective and your intentions. Although I consider it extremely important to find out where my intentions are not the same as others' perceptions. One of the best pieces of advice came from a good friend, Roger Reser. "Your opinion of me is none of my business!" Unless, of course, you're talking business. Contrary to present sensitivity and antiharassment training we're not responsible another's perceptions if they are inconsistent with our intentions. If they are offended when we didn't intend offense that is their responsibility. We should be sensitive to their feelings but they are their feelings.

The customer or client's opinion is important, but the underlying philosophy here is what Eleanor Roosevelt meant when she said, "No one can make you feel inferior without your permission." If we give permission to others to be as critical as they wish, we also reserve the right to disregard any or all of the feedback we receive.

Don't disregard it without carefully considering whether there is a kernel of truth to what is being revealed. That kernel could be the seed to a whole new you. One which will blossom into an even more beautiful person for the whole world to enjoy.

Start a family and friends calendar

Something my mother has done recently is start a calendar of all the relatives' birthdays, anniversaries, and other important dates. This takes some effort to compile, but afterward it's pretty easy to maintain and update with new arrivals. I would like to expand my copy to include friends.

Many professional people maintain a database of this information because it's good for business. What is amazing to me is how much business relations rely on good personal relations. As consumers we've forgotten, or perhaps relinquished such a concept. We accept poor customer service as “the norm” or in lieu of convenience.

Successful business professionals go to extremes to maintain good customer relations. We could learn a lot from their examples because no matter what your paycheck may say, everyone of us works for ourselves. And we need to provide good customer support for our customers, the people who pay us for our efforts.

The personal equivalent to customer service is being interested in the lives of your family and friends. This is daunting from my personal experience. It requires prioritizing your discretionary time to include and involve the people who are important to you. The internet can help with this task as we'll see next.

Start a family and friends newsletter

This is a variation of the traditional annual letter to update the recipients on the family's events of the last year. So many people at least have e-mail now either at home or work or from their local library or university where they can have community access to the internet. A newsletter is the inverse to the friends and family calendar; rather than contacting each person separately on a particular day, everyone gets contact on a regular basis.

Software is available making the task extremely easy. It automates the whole process, all you have to do is provide the new version of the newsletter. When dealing with e-mail it is still most compatible to send text and use a hard return at 65 characters. HTML is coming fast and this may change in the not too distant future.

Celebrate Valentines' Day more often

I think the greeting card industry has been accused of taking advantage of the consumers' emotions. They exploit the market opportunities with high profit margins on personal holidays such as birthdays, Mother's Day, and the ultimate... Valentine's Day. We don't have to rely on commercial cards to make someone feel special.

Set one day a month aside to celebrate your own personal holiday and write letters, make a phone call or homemade card. Whatever would make the person receiving it feel extra special is fair game. Be creative, the more unique and personalized, the more intimate. And, assuming it's in good taste, the better received.

Volunteer locally to globally

Giving your money helps but giving your time and talent is more emotional. Look for local organizations you could support through your talents or time. The lives you touch will touch you in return. Andrew Carnegie said, "No man can truly be rich without enriching others." By blessing others you receive untold blessings yourself.

This is not a prosperity philosophy! The way this works is a lot like humility, as soon as you think you've got it, it's gone. The more you give of yourself to others with no strings attached, the more you gain in relationship and there is no greater wealth in the universe than that of relationship.

Be a mentor

Help someone to succeed or improve their performance. This could be a coworker or your teenager. Teach someone to read, how to balance their checkbook or make a spending plan, or help a new employee to learn the ropes. This is one-on-one volunteering through an organization or within your own family.

This activity requires a lot of patience so make sure you have your motivation right. It's about helping someone else. It's not about someone else meeting your expectations. Without the right attitude about this it will probably be a very frustrating and unfulfilling experience.

Again, the most important aspect of this relationship... is the relationship. the exchange of information, technique, or attitude is secondary to the bond that is developed. The act of helping someone become more than your equal develops a bond that goes way beyond the surface issues.

A coach works on the fundamentals of the game. The techniques needed to perform are drilled with repetition to perfection. The team captain (mentor) is the one who brings everyone together in spirit. They create that sense of camaraderie, the team effort, the synergy pulling individuals out of themselves and into something bigger than themselves.

Become a Big Brother or Big Sister

The most impressionable time in our lives is when we are young. Think of the learning going on, the imprinting of values, the forming of lifelong ideals. One wise saying goes like this, "Dig your well before you're thirsty." That's what we're doing when we help raise a child. We are preventing problems a generation away. This could be your own, your grandchildren, or one unfortunate enough to be without a parent or grandparent.

Every youth should have a childhood they can look back on with a smile. One preparing them to look ahead with hope and at themselves with the confidence they can achieve some measure of success. Childhood should be an opportunity to grow through, rather than groan through, no matter our conditions and circumstances.

The last activity is prayer. Prayer is conversation with God. In prayer we talk to God, in meditation we listen for God to speak to us. I like the format for prayer that uses the acrostic P.R.A.Y.

PRAISE God for being the Creator of the universe. Praise God for creating us in such a way that we are in His image and yet we have free choice. Praise God for loving us so much he sent Jesus Christ to pay for the sins cutting us off from His righteousness. Praise God He desires a relationship with us more than anything else.

REPENT of our sins. God's word is pretty explicit as to what is acceptable to God. Love God with all our strength, all our mind, and all our heart. Love others as we love ourselves is the minimum. Just following these two principles would make the world infinitely better. When we fall short of God's will, rather than make excuses, rather than argue with God's word, rather than say, "Oh well, that's how I am and that's how I'll always be." we should own up to our actions. God is always willing to forgive us if we humbly ask Him.

ASK God! We can ask for forgiveness and rest assured it will be granted because God said He would forgive if we only ask. We can ask God for the things to help us live as God wants us to live. Which, by the way, is how everyone else would like to see us live. We can ask God on the behalf of others. God is pleased when we show more genuine concern for others than for our self.

YIELD to God's will. Many people wonder why God allows so much suffering and sadness in the world. Yet they don't question the fact much of the pain is a result of actions far outside of what God has asked of us in His word. There is also an indirect result of living according to our own standards. Actions from generations ago impact us now. This is an important part of the Original Sin separating us from God. God will reunite us in His own time and in His own way.

The most important ingredient in the recipe of a pleasant life is to tend to our relationships. Imagine what it would be like if you didn't have one negative thought toward another person. Think of how much the most important person in your life means to you and realize God loves you in a way far exceeding anything you could experience from them.

Selected sayings

Do things for others and you'll find your self-consciousness evaporating like morning dew on Missouri corn field in July.

Dale Carnegie

To love and win is the best thing; to love and lose the next best.

William Makepeace Thackeray

Hating people is like burning down your own home to get rid of a rat.

Henry Emerson Fosdick

I told God that I had done all that I could and now the result was in His hands; that if the country was to be saved it was because He so willed it. The burden rolled off my shoulders. My intense anxiety was relieved and in it's place came a great trustfulness.

Abraham Lincoln

If you want to conquer fear, don't think about yourself. Try to help others, and your fears will vanish.

Dale Carnegie

Pray as if everything depended on God, and work as if everything depended upon man.

Cardinal Francis J. Spellman

Prayer does not change God, but changes him who prays.

Soren Kierkgaard

One kind word can warm three winter months.

Japanese Proverb

The art of acceptance is the art of making someone who has done you a small favor wish that he might have done you a greater one.

Russell Lynes

A little philosophy inclineth Man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion.

Francis Bacon

Kindness is a language the deaf can hear and the dumb can understand.

Anonymous

Strive not with your superiors in argument, but always submit your judgment to others with modesty.

George Washington

The wise man does not lay up treasure. The more he gives to others the more he has for his own.

William James

The man who trusts men will make fewer mistakes than he who distrusts them.

Camillo Di Cavour

It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely help another without helping himself.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Talk to a man about himself and he will listen for hours.

Benjamin Disraeli

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

Jesus Christ

One thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.

Albert Schweitzer

To miss an opportunity to do a kind thing, to give someone innocent pleasure or lend a helping hand where needed, if in your power to do so, may be to risk the loss of a happy memory that might sweeten and lighten your way later on.

John Wanamaker

Conclusion

So there you have my take on relationships. Unless you're stranded on a deserted isle, everything you do is affected by relationships. Intimacy is the essence of life. Begin to recognize how much of what you do is driven by a relationship. Examine the reasons behind the actions and you'll likely discover a need for affection, adventure, or acceptance.

Activity

“What's happening around you, or to you, is not as important as what's happening within you!”

What's it all about?

The two extremes on the P. R. A. I. S. E. D. Profile are opposites in a sense but not mutually exclusive. The idea is to figure out whether you are experiencing more than you are expressing or visa versa. Or, possibly, you are experiencing and expressing in approximately equal portions.

This is perhaps one of the most misunderstood aspects of our personality. For the most part, the majority of us are on “autopilot”. That is, we cruise from moment to moment without having to consciously coordinate our feelings and actions. We can just “be ourselves” and let others take us or leave us.

On occasion, such as during a job or promotional interview, when we are courting, or during negotiations for example, we put our best face on. An extra effort is made to act and react in carefully considered conduct. Most of us can only keep up this level of intensity for a short time, depending on the circumstances.

The extremes of expressiveness can literally be death to a ranting, raving, rage. It can be physical expression or mental in nature or emotional and perhaps even a Spiritual expression. It can be any combination of these.

The same can be said for experiencing life. These two aspects are in an almost constant state of change. and perhaps are best described using a few examples. Consider the following.

Think back to childhood, any holiday having a high degree of anticipation such as your birthday. As the day draws closer you have this expectancy, especially if there have been any hints this is going to be an extra special day like a birthday party! You can't wait for the day to get here.

The day arrives, your guests arrive, your gifts arrive. All systems are “go!” You play games, you have fun with your friends, you continually glance in the direction of presents piled high on the dining room table. Finally, I mean FINALLY, the time to open them is at hand. You sit down in the center of attention, trying to control the explosion of excitement inside you.

As you open each one, you experience an affirmation or disappointment depending on whether the gift matches your expectations. All of this is what you are feeling. This might be quite different than what you express.

Perhaps one of your dearest friends totally missed the mark. Thinking they found the perfect present, they excitedly await you opening, even enthusiastically asking you to open theirs first. You are deeply disappointed but at the same time torn between what you are experiencing and how you should express your reaction.

This dilemma can be overwhelming for some. These two factors are quite often the cumulative effect of the other ingredients in the P.R.A.I.S.E.D. Process. They are not totally dependent on them however. We have tendencies to be more introverted or extroverted, more shallow or somber.

Let's take another example, we are at work, nothing very serious is happening, in fact you're just chatting with your coworkers about nothing in particular but since you are extroverted by nature you really get into your palaver. You're accentuating your remarks with animation of your face, your voice, your hands. But, you're not talking world peace or rocket science. You just talk off the top of your head. Your expressiveness outweighs what you are experiencing at the moment.

So let's look at some examples of expression and experience in the four realms of living. This is far from a complete list. Hopefully it will give you an idea of how to monitor your own style. Striking the right balance between depth and demonstration is a very personal priority. I used to tell myself, "I don't want to work at life too hard." Then one day I made a "Forest Gump" revelation.

Forest wasn't sure if life was like a box of chocolates (you never know what you're going to get) or if each person has a destiny. But this I do know, it's no deposit, no return. To paraphrase the familiar saying... "I shall pass this way only once; therefore whatever kindness I can do let me do it now."

Physical

"Papa, watch what I can do!" I'm happy to say I've heard those words many times in my life, not only from my children but my grandchildren. It's natural for a child to want to "perform" for the adults in their world. If it's not stifled by indifference or downright rejection, this self confidence is invaluable in the grown up world. The stakes seem to be higher as we get older, but when you think about the dangers to our safety from activities such as climbing 100' up a tree or riding our bikes without any hands, it's a wonder so many of us survived.

Our society seems to encourage risk taking. Movies and television show action "heroes" who seem to get away with death defying deeds. This in turn raises the bar in the minds of our youth and as an example we see extreme expressions of good and bad. From the cold blooded murder at Columbine High School to the record breaking dramas on display in each Olympics.

Some people refuse to make the jump. They would rather sit quietly on the sidelines, hoping life's spotlight never shines on them. We call them underachievers because they don't seem to live up to their potential. For whatever reason they are content to put less into life and as a result get less out of life. This may not be by their choice but for whatever reason they can't break out of the holding pattern.

Most of us are somewhere in between. We are motivated to act by something whether it's the requirements of our job, our family life, or our recreational activities. We choose to be more involved in some areas than others based on our dreams, our duties, and our debts.

Mentally

Mental activity can coexist with physical performance or paralyze the person altogether. The fascination for learning facts, figures, and formulas has been the underlying force driving the perpetual pursuit of scientific knowledge.

On the other hand, if we do some comparative shopping these days we can be so inundated with features and options we give up and choose based purely on emotion. We fall prey to merchants who have more knowledge of how we function than we do.

The goal is to be able to make an informed decision regarding the subject on the table. The most important resources for making those decisions are thinking skills. The three R's of mental activity are Research, Reasoning, and Remembering. With them, we can acquire information, analyze and apply it.

Emotional

The world of feelings has a tremendous influence on how we express ourselves and what we experience. We have preferences, perspectives, and phobias. This entire work you are reading is attempting to shed light on these valued vapors.

Spiritual

Our Spirituality will impact our internal and external actions. As an example, look at how sex and sin in our society confuses people.

We have a confusion between our separateness and our Spirituality. Our national motto is “In God we trust!” and yet we try to remove God from just about everything we do except Sunday worship.

Our Spirituality is often at odds with the physical, mental, and emotional portions of our personalities, especially where sex is concerned. At odds with, but not contrary. Spirituality narrows the acceptability of our physical, mental, and emotional actions and affairs. It defines the conditions that allow us to experience life with the proper balance.

Life is full of checks and balances and our perception that there is more to life than meets the eye will influence our actions, thoughts, and feelings. That any afterlife will be affected by what we do on this side of the wall of death gives more meaning to this life. Be careful not to sell Spirituality short. It could be the biggest mistake of your life!

Activities

Read out loud

Read out loud, to anyone. If you have children or grandchildren read them stories. But here's the twist, make the stories become real. Get into them, use your voice to change characters, create suspense, or add to the drama. Listen to other narrators to hear how they use their voices. Disney movies like “Charlotte's Web” have excellent narration to study.

If you don't have children you read to your neighbor's kids, at the library, at the children's ward of the hospital, in your local schools. The whole idea of this is for you to be able to express the excitement, danger, sadness, or whatever that is written on the page in living emotion through your voice and storytelling. Don't expect to sound like a pro, but with practice you will get better.

Read the classics as well, “Little Women”, “Huckleberry Finn”, “Tom Sawyer”, and “Anne of Green Gables”, and “Heidi”. Read positive, uplifting stories, read from the Bible, draw from a variety of sources. The list is vast of the material you could read and it doesn't have to be in one sitting. You could read a chapter a day and watch the anticipation build in the hearts of your listeners.

Until I became a father I had not seen many of the popular movies that came out when I was young. Now I have an opportunity to go back and catch up on what I've missed. The same thing happened with books. My younger daughter is an avid reader and I know the time we spent reading to her as a baby and child had a big impact on her love of reading. And again, I got to catch up on some of the stories I had only heard about.

Toastmasters

Toastmaster International is the largest nonprofit educational association in the world. With clubs in most modern societies it helps people develop better verbal communication skills. Through emphasis on speaking and listening Toastmasters provides a friendly, supportive atmosphere for folks to overcome one of the most paralyzing of fears, speaking in public.

Most clubs have at least three speaking roles during a weekly meeting. The scheduled speakers have an opportunity to prepare and deliver a speech with specific communication goals in mind. These goals are listed in various manuals and focus on such aspects as vocal variety, word choice, body language and many others. Toastmasters never suggests what you speak about but rather they challenge you to deliver your presentation in a manner that applies the tips provided in the manual.

Another aspect of a Toastmasters meeting is the speech evaluation portion of the program. Here, designated members gently analyze the speaker's delivery and praise what the speaker did to achieve their goals. The evaluator also offers feedback in a positive, supportive manner to help the speaker improve.

The third benefit of attending a Toastmasters meeting is the impromptu speaking. Those who do not have a speaking assignment can participate in an exercise for thinking on your feet. In the “Table Topics” you are given a subject on which to speak; usually with only a minute or two to organize your thoughts.

In addition to these speaking occasions, the meeting is run under “Robert's Rules of Order” and parliamentary procedure is followed so you can improve your knowledge of meeting procedure and protocol.

Acting

There are numerous avenues open to us “little people” to do some acting outside of Hollywood. We can join the drama team at church. If you have no experience you might want to start out behind the scenes and just help with lights, sound, and backstage.

Most communities have some acting group within commuting distance that offer a wealth of experience. If there isn't one handy, you could organize one. Schools have drama clubs and classes and teachers that would probably at least be willing to offer their knowledge on the subject. Maybe a student could help for extra credit.

I recently signed up with a talent agency in my area and have already performed in one TV commercial and have had the opportunity to audition for several other parts. The only real acting I've done is at work where I have to “play a part” dealing with other people. We all do that.

Maybe you don't feel well on a particular day but you have an important meeting with the boss or a client and you need to shine. You draw on your reserves, your inner resources, your hope of rewards to overcome a temporary handicap. Somewhere within you, you find the strength to pull it all together and no one was ever aware of your deficit.

As with anything else this personal, be gentle with yourself. Expect a steep learning curve and give yourself permission to be lousy to a degree. That is, being too critical of yourself, or taking other's criticism too personally will hinder rather than help you grow. One of my mottoes is that if I'm not making \$100,000/year doing this than it's not worth getting upset.

That's not to say you shouldn't give it your best shot. But if we had ever given it a second thought as babies we probably wouldn't have learned to walk. The trials and lack of success would have discouraged us for sure. My definition of failure is when you stop trying to achieve your goal. Just do yourself a favor and don't list winning an Oscar as one of your goals too early.

Meditation

We've talked about meditation before and so I won't go into it much more other than to say this, meditation is almost pure experience. You quiet your actions and rather than express yourself, you are feeling, sensing the world around you in a different way. Using your senses to perhaps hear, smell, feel the world around you or listening for that voice from within that connects you with the Creator of the universe.

Affirmations

Affirmations take advantage of the power of positive thinking in that they express your qualities in a way that internalizes them. It imprints in our hearts and impresses on our minds the values we wish to keep or develop to a higher level.

The subconscious mind is a powerful and little understood component of our mental make up. One thing evident about the subconscious is it does not distinguish fact from fiction. If we believe something to be true in our subconscious then it is as real to us as if it were genuine. Affirmations take advantage of this phenomena to change disbelief into dignity.

Affirmations have three essential parts to their make up. The first is clearly stating ownership of the affirmation. Since the affirmations we are talking about here are all personal, your affirmations should be worded in the first person. That is they should begin with I, _____ (which is whatever name you go by.) Then you can proceed to the second aspect of the affirmation.

The affirmation is always phrased in present tense. You have the sprout of whatever special strength you seek. Claim it as your own! Now! Watch it grow and nurture it as you would any other living thing. Care for it, smile upon it, and it will smile back at you.

The third portion is where you declare the quality, characteristic, or attribute describing you. It is always worded in the positive. It is specific and powerful. You want it to make an impact on your subconscious.

For example if you wanted to confirm your integrity, you might construct an affirmation such as this:

I ____ (your name here) _____ am honest in all my activities. I speak the truth and my intentions are pure. My dealings with others are completely sincere. My honor is a precious possession.

Affirmations are a lifelong process, a modified version of this is just tuning into your “self talk.” When you are thinking and carrying on a conversation inside your head, what is the tone of the talk? Are you supportive of yourself, able to chuckle at your mistakes but confident in your ability to do better? Or do you beat yourself up; choosing to focus on the negative?

You should be the best friend you have, and from there others will be your friend as well. This is important for more than just your self esteem. It's very hard to love others if you don't care much for yourself. The balance comes in liking yourself enough to know the gifts you give to others, yourself, your time, your talents, are valuable gems.

Politics

Nothing will force you to express yourself quite like politics. This is actually a blending of ingredients in the P.R.A.I.S.E.D. Process. It combines expressing yourself verbally and in writing with concern for your companions and community. Getting involved in community affairs provides us with a rich field of opportunity to have a positive impact on our world in a larger sense than most of us can accomplish on our own.

Joining forces with an organization provides the mechanism to eventually have the chance to steer that vehicle down a path of service for humanity, or at least your neighborhood. It's really pretty simple, you want to become part of the solution because if you're not, well then, you're part of the problem.

Volunteer

Another activity that will require a lot of expression on your part is to volunteer. Volunteering has many possibilities and if you're somewhat timid about exerting your own personality at first, you can become involved in a secondary or support role. But don't stop there! If you are to grow that means you have to expand beyond your comfort zone, you have to enlarge your circle of life. Take in new territory. Extend your limits. Remember, the more you can do, the more you can do for others.

Volunteer options are all around us. I have already mentioned a few. Take a quick inventory of your talents and ask yourself where they might be put to good use. From this list, pick a worthy cause and contact them. Do it today!

Visitations

If you want to really experience life through the eyes of others, become and visitor and a listener. There are many people who pine for companionship. The elderly have so much to offer our us and yet we shut them out of our sight and shut them in... to "extended care facilities." A polite way of saying the "Old folks home." Many are no longer capable of self sufficiency but they have a vast storehouse of knowledge, experience, and ideas.

We're not sure how the "Wonders of the World" were built with the materials and resources of the day. We've lost that information because it wasn't passed down through the ages. We are still doing the same thing today. And nursing homes aren't the only place we're throwing away valuable lessons of life.

You can visit prisons and count your blessings as well as gain a completely different perspective about the world around us. There are people who are house bound for one reason or another, visit them. Even those who are recuperating from an injury or illness love to get visitors.

Sometimes you'll talk, but you have two ears and only one mouth. Try to do twice as much listening as talking and you'll gain and give at the same time. People love to talk about themselves and most are not real vain. They want to share things that have happened in their lives, rejoicings as well as regrets.

Pray

I'll close this section with another activity that has already been discussed, prayer. But this one bears repeating often. it is another one of those things we can do that provides multiple benefits. We express ourselves to God and at the same time we ask to experience God's presence in our lives.

Faith gives us hope and hope is positive expectation. It provides us with the ultimate relationship, to be connected with our Creator. As we'll see, it meets every need we have. It will continue to be an integral ingredient for our temperament. It is our link to the greatest source of power and peace in the universe.

Activity! Without it, life ceases to be an experience. There are times when we should experience more than we express; but even when we are expressing much we should be experiencing much. Experience life as deeply as you can and prepare yourself to express your feelings. Express them as they deserve to be expressed.

Selected sayings

Don't try to saw sawdust!

Dale Carnegie

It is not how much we have but how much we enjoy that makes us happy.

Charles H. Spurgeon

Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance but to do what lies clearly at hand.

Thomas Carlyle

S/he who dies with the most joys wins!

Terry Canfield

Preparedness

For all your days prepare

And meet them ever alike

When you are the anvil, bear--

When you are the hammer, strike.

Edwin Markham

Doing is better than stewing.

Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear, don't sit at home and think about it. Go out and get busy.

Dale Carnegie

You can't write a song out of thin air. You have to know and feel what you are writing about.

Irving Berlin

The world bestows its big prizes in money and honors for but one thing.
And that is initiative. And what is initiative? I'll tell you: It is doing the right
thing at the right time.

Elbert Hubbard

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change
The courage to change the things I can
And the wisdom to know the difference

Reinhold Niebuhr

Conclusion

Expression and experience are not mutually exclusive but they are closely
linked. The thing I feel is important here is that when you are expressing
yourself, what are you experiencing? And when you are experiencing
something, how are you expressing yourself?

Intensity

“The gap between enthusiasm and indifference is filled with failure!”

What's it all about?

Intensity is more difficult to measure than other attributes of our emotions. For one thing, the level of intensity for any given event is dependent on other factors. And what is extremely important to one person may be inconsequential to another.

For this reason, it is better to discuss the things influencing intensity rather than try to define what is or isn't intense. Although it is important to assign a value as to the magnitude of the feeling being experienced or expressed.

This will at least allow us to look at the issue with a critical perspective to see if the cause of the intensity warrants the amount of energy invested and/or expended.

There are three main ingredients that determine how intense we feel about anything. They are V.I.P.s, Very Important Players in the game of Life. That's also an easy way to remember them because the three players are: Value, Incentive, and Perception. Let's take a look at them.

Value is an absolute. As mere mortals we can seldom comprehend absolutes. Whether we recognize the value of something or not does not change the value.

Russell Cronwell gave a speech numerous times to finance the building of Temple University. The speech was called “Acres of Diamonds” and tells of a poor farmer who left his farm in search of great wealth only to die destitute. It was later discovered his ranch had one of the largest sources of diamonds on the continent.

The farmer being unaware of the diamonds didn't change the fact that they were there. Let me give you another example. I can remember people describing the value of the human body as somewhere around \$37.00 worth of chemicals. Not very expensive considering we're mostly water.

Recently, I have heard that dollar amount increased to billions based on the cost of energy that could be produced with the same molecular components. That value was always there but no one had considered the human body in those terms before. Even these estimations are still relative. If you consider the potential impact each life has on future generations the value grows exponentially.

We really don't have any control over value except whether or not we become involved or connected to this value in some way. Sometimes we have a choice and sometimes we don't. That's where incentive comes in.

Incentive is what determines whether we pursue a value. Remember, just because we don't choose to pursue a value doesn't mean we aren't connected to it. The farmer chose to look for diamonds elsewhere; that didn't change the fact that he owned a fortune.

Incentive is motivation, and motivation has two basic forms, positive and negative. Positive motivation is more of a desired thing or less of a despised thing. Negative motivation is the exact opposite, that is, less of a desired thing or more of a despised thing.

The quantities and qualities involved determine the motivation or intensity we experience associated with the situation. For example if we want a suntan we may sunbathe on a warm day. If we have a fear of skin cancer we would load up with sun block and stay in the shade.

The sunbather knows that staying in the sun too long will not produce more of a tan but actually a dangerous sunburn. The increased quantity of sunshine did not provide a corresponding increase in quality in sun tan.

Quantity and quality have a kind of inverse relationship to each other. That is, the more desirable the quality the less quantity is needed to provide intensity and visa versa. The two are separate however, you can have a little of low quality or a lot of high quality and anything in between.

Both forms of motivation can be extremely effective depending on the quantities and qualities involved. Positive motivation gets people doing things because they want to. Where as negative motivation gets people doing things because they have to.

The difference between prospection and perfection is perception. What I mean is although everything has an absolute value, we assign worth to something based on how we feel about the item of value. We calculate that assigned value based on our knowledge and experiences of the past along with our plans and hopes for the future.

The circumstances in our lives change. Our priorities change with them. Some conditions remain constant such as our need for oxygen, water, food, comfort, etc. If the situation changes that supplies those needs our priorities adjust accordingly.

The goal of life is happiness. We all strive to be happy. We will do things that make us happy and try to avoid things that make us unhappy. I have never met anyone that said their goal in life was to be miserable. And yet, everyone's perception of happiness is different.

For the purposes of this book let me clarify something; pleasure is an emotional experience. Happiness is a state that is affected by our physical, mental, and Spiritual living as well. Life is about balance and when we focus on physical, mental, or emotional needs at the expense of the others our happiness will suffer.

There are a couple of situations that can obstruct our pursuit of happiness. Addictions and, to a lesser degree, conflicts, rob more from Peter than they pay Paul. This is different from compromise and congruence. I'll talk about these shortly.

Some things are swift to enslave such as crack cocaine or pornography. The intensity with which these values dictate our actions is out of proportion to the benefit toward our happiness. Addiction is a cycle of doing things that have a greater harm than good physically, mentally, emotionally, or Spiritually.

Perhaps the damage is not immediately evident. Gaining a few pounds every year (as I have done), or being a workaholic will not kill you on the spot but it will shorten your life. We are creatures of habit and so we should pick our habits carefully.

As a Hazardous Materials Technician I learned no matter what the danger, there are three things determining the intensity of the situation. They are time, distance, and shielding. Using these three principles properly will help control the crisis.

For the most part, time works on our side to lower the stress level. The faster things move the more they resemble an explosion, which is pretty intense. Time has a way of slowing things down and cooling them off unless there is something creating energy that isn't being released. Like a pressure cooker on a hot stove top.

So I couple this concept of time as a factor with something I use in emergency medicine. My patients can only do one of three things... they can get better, stay the same, or get worse. It's important that I figure out which they are doing but in order to do that I have to determine where they are as soon as possible and then recheck after a period of time.

After comparing the second, third, and any other status checks with the ones before I can plot the direction of the emergency I'm dealing with. If things are getting better, great! If they're worse, I have to increase the intensity of my efforts to try and change them.

It's really no different in whatever situation you find yourself. Things will either get better, stay the same, or get worse. Stay alert to what is going on around you and try to pick up on which one is happening. This is especially true regarding what is going on inside you and in your immediate vicinity but applies to local, regional, national and even global events as well.

If we don't actively monitor ourselves and our environment we will boil like the bull frog. If you put a bull frog in a pan of water and heat it up slowly the frog will literally cook to death. It's response to the changing conditions is too slow. The frog could jump out of the pan and therefore provide a measure of safety between itself and the danger, distance.

Distance can affect intensity. Usually, distance helps reduce intensity but for every rule there is an exception. If you put distance between a toddler and their mother the intensity will probably go up for both. Let me use another story from my medical background.

In his book "The House of God" Dr. Samuel Shem wrote some commandments and one of them is as follows. "In the event of a cardiac arrest, the first pulse you check is your own!" What this means is that when we're dealing with a life threatening emergency, getting all stressed out ourselves doesn't usually help much.

One fear a paramedic has is that of developing "tunnel vision." Tunnel vision usually occurs when we get too wrapped up in the situation and lose perspective because we're too close emotionally. We try to maintain a professional distance, but not because we don't care. On the contrary, when you are trying to save someone's life the pressure is unbearable if you stop to think about it. Distance keeps the pressure from smothering us and helps us keep someone else breathing as well.

We rely on our education, experience, and equipment to give us the confidence to succeed under very uncontrolled circumstances. Education, experience, and equipment are all examples of shielding. They put something between us and the emergency that can have a positive impact on the situation. This is the third measure of protection against unwanted intensity.

Shielding can be something tangible, like the gloves, goggles, and gowns we sometimes wear. Or it can be a technique that helps prevent the damage from occurring such as talking about the things bothering us so the stress doesn't build up. It might require some kind of an intervention just as if we gave the patient some medication.

All of these things put some kind of protection between the danger and us. The danger still exists and the closer we are to the danger, the greater our risk that we could be hurt. So it pays to reevaluate the time, distance, and shielding available to us.

As an example, if we feel ourselves getting to the boiling point with someone else, we could call for a time-out, take a break from each other, and/or seek the help of a third party to settle the differences. Time, distance, and shielding can be strife savers as well as life savers.

The difference between hazardous materials and emotional danger is this, conflict is the usual source of negative emotions. Conflict causes friction, going back and forth between competing needs or wants. It's like trying to pull a travel trailer with the parking brake on. Friction can bring us to a screeching halt and create enough heat to burn us up. Compromise is one of the lubricants allowing us to function in the midst of friction.

Compromising is giving up gratification in one area for a greater gain. Compromise is the art of making a bad situation better. That is, being one among billions of people, each vying for their share of happiness through interaction with others. However, it's not the best solution to stress.

Where compromise seeks to open an umbrella on a rainy day, congruence transplants tulips and sows seeds. Congruence makes the most of bad situation by realizing no one ever makes it on their own. The best congruence creates synergism.

Synergism is when everything works together better than everything working separately. Take a car for example, if you laid all the parts out on the pavement you'd never drive anywhere. Put them all together and you can travel farther in one day than our ancestors moved in months.

Sir Ernest Shackleton knew there would be no opportunity to make modifications after the Endurance weighed anchor for the South Pole. If the expedition was to succeed at all, he needed synergism from the very beginning. His ad in the London Times reflects the first step in forging fear with fame to produce congruence.

It read: “Men wanted for Hazardous Journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.

Responses came from all over England.

Intensity is the management of motivation. It's been said when Cicero spoke in ancient Athens the people applauded; but when Demosthenes spoke, the people marched! Be very clear about, and in control of, your motivations. The alternative is being chained and changed by chance.

Activities

Become a coach/mentor

Coaches, more than mentors seem to be inspirational leaders. That doesn't have to be. As a mentor your role is a guide but that doesn't mean you can't be an enthusiastic guide.

Harness the wisdom of the past and search for inspirational tidbits to titillate your trainee. Show them they are part of the “Big Team.” Pump them up as an athlete before the big game for their short range goals and foster that devotion to duty during the day-to-day.

Use the P.R.A.I.S.E.D personality profile to point out strengths and areas for support. You can also use it to identify where effort would be put to best use. A coach is one who helps prepare an athlete to extract their best performance. The competition isn't against the other team it is against ourselves.

Become a cheerleader

When I was going to school there was a parent who would show up at almost every basketball game and shout over the crowd, “Don't guard these T-birds too close!” His constant cheering and example of enthusiastic spectating was always felt on those rare occasions when he wasn't there. It was as if half the crowd was gone.

I challenge you to do the same. Adopt some team of kids and become their cheerleader. Stand up in front of the crowd, shout words of encouragement, exude enthusiasm to the extent anyone around you gets short of breath just listening to you. Experience how enthusiasm can become as epidemic.

See for yourself how exceptional performance can come from people, even young children, when they are being encouraged even when their game is off. No false praise, no put downs of the opposition, just encouragement to give their best effort at all times! The results will amaze you.

Approach this assignment somewhat as an actor or actress gets into their part. Rehearse your lines, shout with your body language as well as your voice, develop your “act” if you will. Create an alter ego, “Super fan” that comes out during game time. See if your Dr. Jekyll isn't admired, complimented, to some extent envied for the seeming magical effect on others.

Anticipation modification

This exercise is pretty challenging and can be done in several ways. Benjamin Franklin would get out a piece of paper whenever he was trying to make a decision about an issue. He would list the pros and cons and simply tally the good and the bad. This would help take the emotion out of the equation.

I kind of favor the grade point average method myself. When you figure out a grade point average in college the grades have numerical values such as 4.0 for an A. There is another dimension to the equation, a class that is daily carries more weight than a class that is taken only once a week.

If you have four classes that are one hour a week and you get an A (4.0 points) in them but you have a daily class in which you received a D (1.0 point) you would figure it this way: $(4 \times 4) + (5 \times 1) / 9$ or $(16 + 5) / 9$ or $21/9$ which equals a 2.3 Grade Point Average.

I like the idea of assigning a weight to the items on Ben's list. But the weight, or value should be arrived at by an objective method such as a “blue book” for the worth of a car or an appraisal by a recognized professional. There can be a separate item to represent desires or dreads but it shouldn't influence the value of everything or the list won't be valid.

Practice gambling

I say “practice” gambling because gambling is addictive and should be approached with caution. The old adage, “Don't gamble more than you can afford to lose!” sounds like common sense. The problem with common sense is that it is rare in practice. But gambling is a concentrated atmosphere of intensity and is useful for purposes of raising our awareness.

An example here would be to make friendly wagers offering your service to community or comrade in the event you lose. Set a goal for yourself and make the challenge that if you are unsuccessful by a certain timeline you will “pay off” on your bet. So in this case maybe you have decided to lose 10 pounds by the first of next month and if you don't then you will do the grocery shopping (or whatever incentive is appropriate here) for the next month.

By upping the ante you can feel the energy of enthusiasm driving you toward your goal. This can be done in so many ways and with so many activities in our lives that we can literally be living an adventure every day!

Athletic competition

In it's least expensive form, any competition is gambling. You're wagering your skill and preparation against those of another. A title or trophy might be on the line but no money. Image is an important possession we risk with great care. As you compete, pay attention to the intensity level; the more assertive the competition becomes, the greater the intensity.

You can do this just watching a sporting event at any local hang out. Watch the crowd, especially if there is a favored local team competing. Watch how the closer attachment increases the interest level. It also decreases the objectivity, the refs are always wrong when they penalize the home team and incompetent for not seeing the fouls of the visitors.

One more thing to look for... urgency! As the race flashes toward the finish line, assuming the outcome hasn't already been decided, the adrenaline level rises. Heart rates rev, blood pressure red lines, and respirations are as shorter than a pit stop. Just consider the last two minutes of every period in a sporting event.

The ultimate distraction

If you ever want to change the direction of intensity, and so your focus, do this. Hold your breath. The longer you hold it the less and less you will be interested in anything else. Time will come to a stand still. At first the intensity is not on breathing but sooner than later you will become completely absorbed in this task. It isn't something you can do in just any situation but it is effective!

Up the stakes

A more usable modification of this is something you can do for any occasion. Up the stakes! You want your kids to clean their room? Up the stakes! You want to lose a certain amount of weight? Up the stakes! You want to change jobs? Up the stakes!

Similar to practice gambling, this activity just moves the bar higher until the sense of urgency is there. It's better when you can control the stakes rather than the stakes control you. Which is what happened to Nicholas Stephen Alkamade. Here's his story.

Nicholas was just an average young Brit trying to do his part during WWII. He would go to the office and shoot off memos to the Germans. His "memos" came from the pen of four 303 Enfield machine guns. Nicholas was the tail gunner on a Lancaster bomber.

On the morning of March 24, 1944 Nicholas was returning from a mission when he felt the plane shudder from anti-aircraft fire. Then they were hit from the German fighter. Nicholas fought him off but not before the Lancaster was mortally wounded.

The ship was on fire and the captain advised all on board to bail out. Nicholas made his way to his parachute which was through two doors and fastened to the side of the fuselage, there was no room in the plexiglass turret.

By the time he got there, the chute was flaring as each fold fell out and ignited. Nicholas made his way back to the shattered Plexiglas, part of which punctured his leg. Nicholas considered his options.

The plane was doomed and he was still 18,000 feet in the air. Nicholas had the decision of a lifetime, how to die. Burn up with the plane or on reentry if he jumped. From my experience in the fire service I think I know what happened up there on that cold March morning. Nicholas stayed in the plane until the heat was so bad he had to jump.

Maybe he was hoping the plane would explode and put him out of his misery instantaneously. Maybe he was making peace with his Master. Maybe he was hoping for a miracle. At some point hope incinerated and he jumped. He fell 18,000 feet... and lived! He awoke three hours later in dense forest, snow covered brush, and excruciating pain.

He wrote the account of that incident later and stated that he became unconscious shortly after jumping. Probably from lack of oxygen. I think I would have died of fright. Nicholas knew he had nothing to lose.

I don't recommend setting the stakes that high, at first. But you may find yourself in a situation similar to Nicholas Stephen Alkamade. If you do, you may be just a little more composed when the stakes are 18,000 feet high.

Selected sayings

Do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.

Benjamin Franklin

How insignificant this will appear a twelve month hence.

Samual Johnson

Enthusiasm is like having two right hands.

Elbert Hubbard

When a man dies, if he can pass enthusiasm along to his children he has left them an estate of incalculable value.

Thomas A. Edison

A man can succeed at almost anything for which he has unlimited enthusiasm.

Charles Schwab

The very first step toward success in any occupation is to become interested in it.

Sir William Osler

Every great and commanding moment in the annals of the world is the triumph of some enthusiasm.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Conclusion

“Where there's heat, there's fire!” That's an old saying probably from the fire service. But it serves to remind us that as the proverbial temperature rises, intensity increases. And when intensity is high, the power of fire is released. The power to do good... or to destroy.

Intensity is the workhorse of the temperament. It can create the enthusiasm of an adolescent in love, an artist captured by the moment of inspiration, or the athlete going for the Olympic gold medal. The fuel can be almost anything, but intensity is the tachometer of our emotional motor.

Learn to harness the power of intensity and you have at your control the greatest source of energy civilization has ever known!

Stability

“The gamble of business looks down with disdain on the business of gambling!”

What's it all about

Stability... where intensity is motivation management, stability is all about risk and reward management. Taking risks is a daily task that requires awareness, analysis, and action in order to be the most successful in dealing with them. On the reward side, the “ends” don't always justify the means!

Something so many of us don't realize, broadly speaking, is this; what we risk is also what we hope to gain. In it's basic form risk management is nothing more than wagering, gambling, playing the odds. Let's look at this process.

First of all, we desire stability in all four realms of living, that is physical, mental, emotional, and Spiritual. In this book we are going to concentrate on what it takes to experience emotional stability. Risk will be the subject of a separate book I have planned for the future.

The following represent some steps in the search for stability. The relationship between them will vary from person to person. Together they embody our D.E.S.I.R.E. for stability.

- Destination**
- Expectation**
- Strategy**
- Investment**
- Results**
- Employment**

Destination: The most dramatic account of a group of people without a destination is the nation of Israel after Moses brought them out of Egypt. For forty years they wandered living day-to-day and completely dependent on what God gave them in the way of food and water.

By some estimates there were approximately two million people in the Exodus. And even though they had a visible, tangible manifestation of God, they often acted as if they didn't know where they were going.

Without a journey's end we have fears and doubts that we won't recognize our own arrival. We have a product vs. process mentality; we think there should always be an end point rather than a continuous cycle. In reality, life is a combination of both. It is a successive series of goal oriented activities.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs for self actualization is one model used to describe the destinations in our lives.

Not knowing where we're going is extremely unsettling for most of us. To put our trust in someone else is not impossible but very challenging. We grew up trying to develop our own independence and we only begrudgingly give that up.

Expectations: Our expectation of any given situation varies with several factors. Do we have control of the outcome, or is it in someone else's hands? What resources are available to us for achieving our goal? How much opposition to our goal are we likely to encounter?

Climbing a mountain is a good example of expectation formation. A mountain climb has very predictable aspects. There's the mountain, the weather, and climber interacting with each other. These variables can be described in terms of their attributes.

These characteristics can be weighed. To the extent that all (or the most likely) possibilities have been considered, we can compensate accordingly. The confidence we have in our knowledge of the conditions and countermeasures determines our expectation.

Our expectations can be full of faith or fraught with fear. In some cases our expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies. In others, they spark a determination to overcome the odds. If we never gamble when the odds are not in our favor the casinos would be empty (not a bad idea here.)

That's exactly why the “house” is in the business of gambling. Not only do they use skillful players on their behalf they charge every other player a fee on frequent intervals for playing. They have the upper hand. Their expectation is of making profit and the odds are in their favor. The only opposition is the skill of the other players and even if they break even the house collects the rent from the others.

Strategy: If you know your destination and you have any idea of where you are you can usually find a way to get there. Strategy is the process of identifying what needs to happen for a successful journey.

The ability to look ahead, anticipate significant milestones, and then connect the dots with a plan of action provides the traveler with a sense of stability that comes from being proactive rather than reactive. And everyone has this ability to some degree.

The more effort put into researching the steps to take and the pitfalls to avoid, the more likely that a path will appear through the forest. To go back to our mountain climbing expedition for a moment, the hardest mountains to climb have guides who are familiar with the terrain. They help others successfully navigate to the top.

Investment: But what's it going to cost? In terms of talents, treasures, and time, how much will you need to devote to this cause? If the expectations don't outweigh the investment than the stability is going to suffer in some way.

This can be as global as men and women risking their lives to oppose some tyrant or as simple as determining which car you're going to buy for your family. The relative value of the pros and cons will determine the bottom line. As was mentioned in the last chapter, this changes the intensity.

Results: Few things in life can be planned to the Nth degree. Life is analog not digital. There are numerous unforeseeable details that can have big or small effects on the outcome. Comparing the results with the expectations gives a measurement of progress.

Sometimes the results are different than those anticipated. Not just in amount but in type of results as well. When I went to paramedic training I actually had no intention of working as a paramedic.

I took the training because I thought it would be of personal benefit. After finishing however, I needed to payback some loans and was able to get a very good job as a result of my training. The experiences I've gained have been invaluable and actually have changed the direction of my life altogether.

In addition, I still have the benefits I originally sought. Many times have I used my training on a personal basis. My family has gained also. I could not have envisioned the rewards of working in the field of emergency medicine.

Sometimes the results are less than anticipated. Ingenuity, creativity, and endurance can often minimize the "loss". As the saying goes, "When life gives you lemons... make lemonade!"

Employment: Now, what are you going to do with all that lemonade? I know, open a lemonade stand! Even if life is a bed of roses you're going to want to do something with those roses. The last part of our desire for stability is being a productive member of society.

See we're constantly giving and taking from life. If we take more than we give we feel like a parasite. If we give more than we take we feel much better about ourselves. Most of the time we don't consciously think about it because the balance is pretty close. This is one of those times where you can compare apples to oranges because we don't always give in the same ways we take.

The reason people can be so unstable in the face of fame or the grace of gain is that they do not let go. They fail to realize the harder they try to hold on the tighter they are held. Therefore that fame becomes a facade and that grace becomes a grip that hides and holds the person prisoner. They haven't balanced the riches and recognition they receive with generosity and gentleness toward others.

Possessions and positions are meant to be used for the good of others. Otherwise they become trophies on a shelf, symbols for self admiration. If not constantly replenished, destined to fade with the passage of time instead of grow and blossom into something beautiful for generations to come.

The power of Hollywood to create superstars is the casual contact of millions of people to one person. We can do the same thing on a smaller scale. But the advantage we have over the movies is that we actually interact with our “public.” Develop your celebrity status by giving more than taking. Employ your blessings for the benefit of others.

Activities

Stewardship

Stewardship is a very old concept that does wonders for providing stability. Stewardship says you don't own anything but it is your responsibility to do the best with whatever is in your charge. Parents should be able to easily relate to this concept. We don't own our children... they are placed in our trust and we are responsible for developing them into people who will continue to grow after they are on their own.

The concept is really pretty similar to anything we don't have clear title to such as our relationships, our jobs, our bodies! Our mission, should we decide to accept it, is to do the best we can.

We don't always realize the same principle holds true for things to which we do hold clear title. Our homes, our vehicles or anything else for that matter. The problem often becomes that we get so spread out and the quantity of our possessions affects the quality of our stewardship.

Pros and cons again

This is another one of those activities from which you can reap multiple rewards. Emotional stability comes from creating a reasonable amount of steadiness in our situation. When something happens to cause concern we can run through a mental checklist of what factors favor the situation staying the same and any conditions that can cause catastrophe.

This can be a proactive or reactive process where the activity following this one is more proactive. It can be helpful to apply the same incremental approach as in the Pollyanna game. Start by analyzing situations that don't have a high personal intensity attached to them.

We are very visual in our nature. Being able to see a list written out will help calm the nerves if the list is in our favor or at least help with our strategy development. This will diffuse some of the associated intensity.

What if

Where you were dealing with making a list of existing events or attributes, this “game” speculates what could happen. This can be very enlightening and sometimes amusing. You can take almost any set of circumstances and ask yourself what would change if this happened, or didn't happen. Your imagination can be as realistic or outlandish as you wish.

The game of chess is especially suited for this kind of thinking because your view of the game board is very different from your opponent's. Often, the better player can correctly anticipate the other's moves and actually set up a sequence of events that lead the adversary to the point of checkmate.

When you're predicting human behavior it is often best to keep your premonitions to yourself. Nobody likes to hear, “I told you so.” Especially when you're telling them so, and you actually contaminate the scenario because your prophecy may become self fulfilling.

The trauma of drama

Performing on stage adds another dimension to the Toastmasters exercise in the Activity chapter. Stage fright is such a powerful phenomenon that many people experience it far from the stage. Reputation or image is often just too much of a risk for us.

Remember my friend Roger Reser's philosophy regarding this? His motto is, "Your opinion of me is none of my business!" There is freedom in that as long as it's used with judgment. Performing in public is perhaps one of the best opportunities to stretch your stability.

It's also a great lesson in how preparation helps reduce the instability of the situation. Remember this; education, experience, and equipment influence confidence. In acting, these three come together nicely in the rehearsal process. Getting comfortable with the movements, the lines, the sets and props all prepare the performers for their opening night.

Opening night adds the experience of a live crowd watching as the story unfolds. It's a rare exception that the first performance is better than any other because that audience experience adds to the database and becomes part of the performance. Pauses for laughter, applause, and awareness all get adjusted to the audience, not the director, not the producer, but to those who are there to experience the performance.

Case studies

This is another version of the news media critic. Look for stories in the media and examine them to see how the D.E.S.I.R.E. for stability affected the outcome. This will give you an interesting insight into the motives of others. Which will, in turn, raise your awareness of your own motives.

We can learn a lot more from others than we are willing to admit. All too often we're like Mark Twain's cat and a hot stove. Twain said that once a cat sat on a hot stove it would never sit on a hot stove again... but it would never sit on a cold one either!

It is so much easier to look at another's situation and see what needs to be done. In fact we take advantage of this in emergency medicine. Usually, as paramedics, we work in teams of two. One of the reasons for this is to have another perspective on the situation. I am always amazed at how often (when my partner is not the one taking care of the patient) they can get an impression of what is going on that I had not considered. Perhaps it's a mild form of tunnel vision because I notice when the roles are reversed I see things in a different way too.

Amateur night

Give yourself permission to be more animated. Have more fun with your day-to-day drudgery. Develop a sense of humor. Even if it's a poor one; believe me it will get better. Humor is one of the best tools we have for dealing with the instabilities we deal with in emergency services.

Our version of gallows humor could be more accurately described as morgue humor. I mean after all, we have to die of something, right? We see a lot of things that don't seem to make much sense and without a sense of humor we'd get pretty depressed by them.

Abraham Lincoln was perhaps one of the best examples of an amateur night artist under the worst of conditions. He was chastised once for his habit of making light of the situation regarding results of various battles and conditions during the Civil War. He replied, "Gentlemen, if I did not laugh I would surely die!" Perhaps we owe the preservation of "government of the people, by the people and for the people" to Lincoln's sense of humor.

On a lighter note, and with no disrespect intended... I think even Abe would appreciate the humorous twist his assassination has provided to cheer up many a depressed soul. "Other than that Mrs. Lincoln, how did you like the play?" is asked when the general atmosphere is just too somber. That's turning a bad situation into something positive when done at the right time, in the right place.

Selected sayings

Next to knowing when to seize an opportunity, the most important thing in life is to know when to forgo an advantage.

Benjamin Disraeli

It cannot be denied that outward accidents conduce much to fortune; favor, opportunity, death of others, occasion fitting virtue; but chiefly, the mold of man's fortune is in his own hands.

Francis Bacon

When we have accepted the worst, we have nothing more to lose. And that automatically means-- we have everything to gain.

Dale Carnegie

He who fears he will suffer, already suffers because of his fear.

Michel Eyquem De Montaigne

Our greatest glory is not in never falling but in rising each time we fall.

Confucius

Use the Law of Averages to outlaw your worries. Ask yourself, "What are the odds against this thing's happening at all?"

Dale Carnegie

Do the thing you fear and the death of fear is certain.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Our fears are always more numerous than our dangers.

Seneca

Fear doesn't exist anywhere except the mind.

Dale Carnegie

Conclusion

If intensity is the source of heat in our lives, stability is the fireplace. The hearth where we can relax and be comfortable on a cold winter's night. We can enjoy watching the firelight dance across the walls of our cozy cabin of contentment.

If we keep that fire burning within us and fuel it from afar we are more apt to feel safe and secure. The more stability we place on things in the world the more likely we are to feel insecure. When the fuel that feeds the fire of your heart is eternal in nature, nothing on this side of death can put it out.

Entertainment

*“Why not learn to enjoy the little things...
there are so many of them!”*

What's it all about

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “If you would rule the world quietly, you must keep it amused.” Personally, I'd settle for ruling myself, being a strong influence on my family and letting the world fend for itself until can I do more.

Think about how much emphasis we place on entertainment over education! We'll pack concert halls and movie theaters and football stadiums with tens of thousands every weekend yet when the last time you saw a lecturer draw a crowd of even one thousand?

Chances are if you have ever seen something like that it was at a conference or a convention that was more festive than formal. I don't think there's anything wrong with pursuing entertainment. In fact, as the survey indicates, you can see this is more a measurement of our amusement or apathy.

I feel that television is a good example of the importance of entertainment. first of all, most of the programming today is based on entertainment of some kind. Even the news develops their own theme song and persona atmosphere. This was particularly evident during Desert Storm. The logos, theme music, and expert interviews reminded me more of a sporting event than an incident of worldwide calamity.

The entertainment industry is a multi-billion dollar per year machine that knows full well the power of emotion. It has always tapped into a sort of voyeuristic desire to experience life vicariously through others. Whether reading about Tom Sawyer or some other alter ego or watching the latest trend in shock value TV with the Survivor series people tune in to identify with someone else.

“Misery loves company” even if it's from long distance. In the old days cruel merchants in the bizarre would travel around with human curiosities. They would advertise their affliction and profit from their pain. Unfortunately, this was often the only way these individuals could make a living wage. Entertainment was no fun for them as they were often mistreated and lived in squalor.

There's also a lot of positive entertainment and even what I have heard called “edutainment.” A mix of education and entertainment because the truth is that without a certain amount of excitement even the most valuable information is easily forgotten. And, although the hottest entertainers are main attractions, their content leaves a lot to be desired.

Some of the most popular professional speakers today provide a message with a mental massage. We walk away feeling content with the content. These edutainers such as Zig Ziglar, Tony Robbins, and many others are in constant demand because they help us feel good about life, ourselves, and getting the results we want.

With the sensory overload and the MTV generation attention span, we have lost some of the ability to flex our funny bone. We're too dependent on the big budget areas of entertainment so that almost everything else seems kind of boring in comparison.

I have some tapes of radio broadcasts made by Will Rogers during the Great Depression that I have to admit don't sound real funny to me. And this is from a man touted as one of the greatest entertainers of all time. When he died the nation mourned more than for the passing of many a President.

I have an idea much of Will's popularity was in the mind set of the nation. His observations and illustrations struck a chord of chagrin and the country could finally start laughing at itself again. Will's good natured jabs were often a soothing salve that helped heal the wounds of the America.

Will could find fascination in some of the most mundane topics. I have a book of his title “Me and Ether” describing his encounter with anesthesia. In another tome of his, he gave a speech about the garment industry in New York. One of the best things to do when you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation is to do something familiar. Will found the familiar funny and that helped the rest of the country.

The point is, it seems when there are a lot of distractions it is harder to keep our attention. It doesn't have to be that way. The ancient Greeks had a great society with many activities yet there was an emphasis in staying fascinated with exploring life. They had open forums for individuals to discuss a variety of subjects.

This is called the “Information Age” and it will remain to be seen if it was useful data or just busy work. With the internet we have access to more information from more sources with less restraint than ever before. The responsibility will be on us to glean from the harvest and separate the pea from the pod.

To me that is an easier task than assuming the role of being charged with developing our own sense of humor. By sense of humor I mean our faculty for fascination. To never be bored no matter how limited our surroundings. This takes more desire or willingness than practice.

Our amusement level is a matter of preference, of pondering, of appreciation. It's the ability to choose, at any given moment, to feel gratitude about the world around us. To perhaps muse about colored lights, music, the smell of hot spiced cider, or the chill of a crisp country morning.

In the movie “The Shawshank Redemption” Morgan Freeman's character described how a man becomes “institutionalized”. That is, he can't function outside of the confines of the prison anymore. I think maybe we are all in a prison of our own making. And we get institutionalized in our own way.

The beautiful thing is, just like Morgan Freeman, we can all be paroled and learn how to live free again. How to look at things in a new light. How to appreciate the little things we have taken for granted so long that we aren't even aware of their existence anymore.

One of my many mottoes is “Any day above ground is a good day!” I feel truly blessed to have had a career being in the service of others in need. When I went to paramedic school in Portland, Oregon many years ago it was the first time I had lived in a big city. I call a city “big” if is large enough to have a skid row and soup kitchens.

I rode the bus through the heart of downtown five days a week and was intrigued by the people I saw that apparently lived on the street. I wanted to know what a soup kitchen dining experience was like. So I let my beard grow for a few days and wore blue jeans and an old fatigue jacket and fit right in.

The sermon was dry, the bread stale, the koolaid thin and the beans watered down. It was an atmosphere of helplessness, hopelessness, and hollowness. It reminded me of a book I had read years earlier called “Black Like Me.” Jonathan Griffin took chemicals and ultraviolet light treatments to turn his skin very black. He traveled the deep South incognito to see just how life was for the black in the sixties.

He had to abort the experience early to end the despair tearing at his soul. His experience, though painful, was entertaining in the sense it raised his consciousness. He grew as a person and wrote his book in the face of many threats. He had to move his family and make many other changes in his life.

I hope conditions are drastically different now. But whatever the situation is I hope in the face of adversity and oppression I could find, as Mr. Griffin did, a hint of happiness.

Another example of counting your blessings rather than concentrating on your bad “luck” is Helen Keller. Blind and deaf from an early illness, she was lost, free floating for a few years until Anne Sullivan, her governess and teacher, was able to penetrate her prison. Helen was remarkably bright and shared her thoughts and feelings with a world that could not easily relate to her life. Following is one of Helen's shared insights.

“My story is now told, and I hope, kind reader, you are convinced of how little able I was to write it. I live in my own way the life that you do, and I am as happy as you are. The outward circumstances of our lives are but a shell of things. My life is pervaded by love as a cloud by light. Deafness is a barrier against intrusion, and blindness makes us oblivious to much that is ugly and revolting in the world. In the midst of unpleasant things, I move as one who wears an invisible cap.

Sometimes, it is true, a sense of isolation infolds me like a cold, white mist as I sit alone and wait at life's shut gate. beyond their is light and music and sweet companionship; but I may not enter. Fate, silent, pitiless, inexorable, bars the way. Fain would I question His imperial decree; for my heart is still undisciplined and passionate; but my tongue will not utter the bitter futile words that rise to my lips, and they fall back into my heart like unshed tears. Silence sits immense upon my soul. Then comes hope with sweet, sad smile and whispers, “There is joy in self-forgetfulness.” So I try to make the light in others' eyes my sun, the music in others' ears my symphony, the smile on others' lips my happiness.

Helen Keller

Entertainment is what the apostle Paul wrote about when he said in all things be content. We have been given a free ticket into the real Greatest Show On Earth! A front row seat to watch our lives unfold and maybe muse to ourselves, “Hmmm, I wonder what's going to happen next?”

Activities

Laugh more!

It starts with smiling more as we did in chapter one. Then a smile becomes a grin and before you know it, you're laughing at the littlest of things. Like a baby's concentration at picking up a piece of dirt off the floor.

Laughing has been proven to provide positive physiological effects. It's a tremendous stress reliever and it is very contagious. Look for the humor in a situation. Ask others to see the humor in a situation. Start an AA group, that's Apathy Anonymous.

Get in touch with your type of humor. Fuel it frequently. Become a closet comedian. Just remember there is a right time and place for humor. The time is now and the place is here. If you get fired it's because you used the wrong kind of humor! Look at Judge Judy... she has taken the philosophy that the courts don't deal in trifles to a new depth.

Laugh at yourself more often

Before you find humor in the antics of others you should watch yourself for awhile. The ability to take ourselves lightly has to be one of the greatest indicators of future success I have seen. Studies on emotional intelligence have shown that people who can't get along with others have less job security than others who are not so uptight.

Laughing at yourself gives other permission if not an outright invitation to laugh at you too. Thick skin is an asset here. The fire service is second to none in practical jokes and good natured ribbing. We even rate each other on our abilities to “pitch” and “catch.” Those that pitch better than they catch are the favorite targets.

Laugh at yourself more often

No, this isn't a misprint. It just bears repeating!

Study humor

An excellent book on the topic is “The Healing Power of Humor” by Allen Klein. It's full of activities to strengthen your sense of humor as well. It also describes various forms of humor such as irony which is an appreciation of conflicting circumstances. An example would be hitting the lottery the day after you file for bankruptcy.

Studying humor raises your awareness of it and that makes it easier to recognize and respond to it. There are many wonderful sources of good, healthy, humor. The kind that cleanses instead of contaminates.

Grow an attitude of gratitude

Gain an appreciation of the little things. Look for something everyday that is a blessing, no matter how small. The more we count our blessings the more blessings we'll find to count.

Gratitude is being thankful... for anything... and everything. We usually make some kind of comparison to establish gratitude or grumbling. Choose your comparisons carefully. No matter how bad things seem to be I have enough imagination to see how they can always be worse.

Role playing games

Games like Charades, Pictionary, Cranium and other games where you perform as well as compete will give you ample opportunities to laugh at yourself and others in an atmosphere of fun and freedom. It also is an event where you can do some acting or performing in other ways, singing or dancing.

You might discover stepping out of yourself is actually stepping into a part of you that has been asleep for a long long time. In all of your appreciation remember to appreciate yourself for having the desire to have a happier, more harmonious life.

Your local game store can probably give you more ideas as to what kind of games provide a role playing experience. You can even create your own game maybe and become as rich and famous as Milton Bradley.

Selected sayings

It is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy that makes happiness.
Spurgeon

People are generally about as happy as they've made up their minds to be.
Mark Twain

I never did a day's work in my life. It was all fun.
Thomas A. Edison

Happiness is a perfume which you can't pour on someone else without getting some on yourself.

Two men look through the same bars; one sees mud and one sees stars....
Frederick Langbridge

All the animals except man know that the principal business of life is to enjoy it.
Samuel Butler

A bit of fragrance always clings to the hand that gives you roses.
Chinese proverb

The secret of life is not in doing what one likes, but in liking what one has to do.
James M. Barrie

The mind is its own place, and in itself it can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
John Milton

If you want to sing, you will find a song.
Anonymous

True contentment is the power of getting out of any situation all that there is in it.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton

Action may not always bring happiness; but there is no happiness without action.

Benjamin Disraeli

Conclusion

My folks used to tell my siblings and me, “Laugh and the world laughs with you, cry and you cry alone!” To be easily entertained is worth every fortune in the world. Children are like that... The simple things in life bring them so much pleasure. Maybe that's the secret... grow, keep on growing, but never grow up.

I've seen those bumper stickers that read, “Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.” And yet, even a wise old sage can play at the game of life. A grandparent can become young again through the young of their young. It can be done at any age and any maturity... so, are we having fun yet?

Direction

“Choice and chance... determine our destiny!”

What's it all about

Leon Brown and his brother Loren “Dale” grew up in Kansas. They were poor as white folks go. It was 1968 and the Viet Nam War was just heating up. They didn't like their environment and they had a choice to make. Because of their upbringing, escaping from their poverty didn't include crime. They were prime targets for the draft and they needed to make a decision.

They could have fled to Canada as so many others had done. But Leon and Dale took a different route, they signed up together with the agreement they could stay in the same regiment. It wasn't their first choice of training, but because of the high number of casualties coming, in the Navy needed corpsmen.

So, packing upwards of 150 pounds of equipment, sometimes including mortar rounds and other ammunition, Leon and Dale spent about 3 1/2 months with a Medical Battalion and 8 months in the bush. Being raised by their dad, they were pretty independent but nothing could have prepared them for what they experienced.

The difference between military regulations and “Combat Zone Etiquette” was like the difference between home and that hell hole. The lies about not going in to Cambodia or Laos. Nothing seemed real anymore. Nothing except for two things... here and now! Bad officers died quickly... but heroism in the face of grave danger was just as common.

They would get “care” packages from an aunt who kept in touch. The eyes of the platoon were on them whenever one arrived. Privacy was nonexistent. Adaptability was the first rule of the jungle and all of the other rules that really mattered were unwritten as well.

Alcohol, pot, and other drugs were frequently used to escape the realities of the war. Morphine was routinely stolen from the medics. Beer, pop, cigarettes, candy, socks, and c-rations were bartered for all kinds of goods.

Leon lost a lot of weight, he was scared 24/7 (24 hours a day/7 days a week) and his rest was completely disrupted. His reflexes were always in high gear, jumping at the slightest sound. He remembers eating moss, bark, and bugs while in the field. He still smells the dead of the Med. Battalion. Ten Marines died talking to him, asking him for help, wanting nothing more than to just go home.

Dale had dysentery. Jungle rot and immersion foot weren't uncommon either. He remembers having 32 bowel movements in 2 hours but the platoon was under heavy fire and so he kept on working. He was using the same needle to give shots to anyone. Functioning with the runs and vomiting was just part of the duty of a medic who was taking care of soldiers wounded far worse.

Dale estimates that he watched more than forty Marines die in battle. He received a minor wound himself by mortar fire. Some of the mortar fire they took was friendly fire. Along with his Purple Heart, Dale received two commendations!

The insanity of Viet Nam affected people differently. Some would intentionally get wounded or sick for a trip home. Leon and Dale stuck it out. They finished their tour and came home... changed forever.

Dale says no pressure here will ever match what he experienced over "there." He felt old after 6 months but his youth came back after he got out. Today he works at a state mental institution and, from our brief encounter seems pretty normal.

I work with Leon and am amazed at how this happy-go-lucky guy could have gone through so much. He always wears a smile and perhaps here is why... He says when he got home he had a greater appreciation for EVERYTHING! Especially freedom, patriotism, the little things in life. His whole outlook was changed... by choice and chance!

I never went to Viet Nam. Just having to sign up for the draft and having a low lottery number was bad enough. I have been in some fairly dangerous situations and I had a lot more control over them than any enlisted man in 1968. I wouldn't wish that experience on my worst enemy!

This final segment is all about the direction we're headed and why. Are you headed toward something or running from something? Are you the driving force or is something driving you? Maybe a little of both?

Military operations, especially in war time, give a stark example of this whole concept. Soldiers are “drilled” in basic training mainly in how to fight and follow orders. Civic pride and blind obedience prepare young men and women to go against their instincts in combat.

The ideas of “Charge” and “Retreat”... advance or fall back is exactly what this chapter is about. Are we being purposeful about our actions or withdrawing because of the circumstances. Another way of looking at it is do we “respond” or do we “react?”

As we examine our feelings to determine the direction we're headed we can learn a great deal about ourselves. Sometimes the direction helps clarify what the motive really is. Sometimes it's painfully obvious we don't have much choice but are more influenced by chance at the time.

Another war time example of this is during Nazi Germany in the 1940s. The Jewish people were being persecuted. They had little refuge and less sanctuary. They were being systematically hunted and exterminated. They didn't have the means or the manner to retaliate. All they could do was run, and hide, and hope for God to deliver them.

No doubt this was powerful motivation for them. But it's negative motivation. When you are being driven by events then you are doing what you have to do to avoid the consequences. When you are being drawn to something you are acting out of desire. Out of a positive motivation.

Extreme poverty might seem like another example of being driven by your surroundings. When all hope is gone it's easy to feel like a pawn in the game of life. To give up all responsibility for our actions and absolve ourselves of ownership. This is not true. Many have used the desire to give their children a better life as motivation to move toward prosperity rather than escape poverty.

Whether in warfare or welfare we have the ability to choose how we respond to our surroundings. Elie Wiesel survived extreme inhumanity in a Nazi concentration camp. Through his ordeal he resolved that although they could take his clothes, they could take his family, they could take his very body... his dignity belonged to him. And the only way they could get it was if he gave it to them.

When we find ourselves in an environment challenging us to react rather than respond we can still look for something to move toward while we withdraw from something else. That's part of making the most of our situation.

Fortunately, most of the time the direction of our emotions is not nearly as extreme as these examples. But even so, to know why we're going in the direction we're headed isn't always so obvious. Or sometimes we choose not to realize we are giving up control of our actions.

Just as Leon and Dale had to get on with their lives after Viet Nam, like a plane in a tailspin, we need to grab the controls of our lives and plot a course. It is better to move toward something than away from it.

That is the challenge for survivors of the Holocaust, Viet Nam, or any others who have suffered personal catastrophe... to move backward and live in the past? To live today in fear or flight from a memory? Or maybe, just maybe, to bury the past, turn your back and walk toward tomorrow with your head held high.

Activities

The action/reason game

In this “game” you make up a scenario or you can use examples from history to examine the decisions made and assign one of four possibilities to each action. The four possibilities are that the person in question did the right thing for the right reason. They did the right thing for the wrong reason. Maybe they did the wrong thing for the right reason. Or, lastly, they did the wrong thing for the wrong reason.

This is a great game to play with preteen children or even adolescent and adult children. It will surprise you how seldom we think about the dynamics of a particular situation. To give an example, let's say the scenario at hand is a husband buying an anniversary present.

If he bought an acceptable gift... he did the right thing for the right reason. If he bought a gift that he wanted for her to give him... he did the wrong thing for the right reason. If he bought her something he wanted... he did the right thing for the wrong reason. If he bought himself a present... he did the wrong thing for the wrong reason!

Things are not always black and white and you may not have all the details. When you have played the game for awhile you can actually give several answers based on possible motives. The process offers an opportunity for discussion that is deeper than most.

Determine the direction of people in the news

Watch news stories that are somewhat unfolding and use the same process as the action/reason game. Ask why the person at the center of the controversy is doing what they're doing. The president is usually under some kind of controversial examination by someone. Celebrities are other prime candidates for this activity.

The television, radio, and paper media are full of starting points for this type of discussion. You can even take characters from history, fiction, and biographies or other books.

Determine the direction of others around you

This is best done in silence. As you get more adept at seeing whether others are in the driver's seat or if they are being taken for a ride you may be tempted to share your observations. I would recommend just working on your own direction unless approached by others requesting feedback.

Of course, your supportive focus on others will be of value whenever you give your perspective. You can use the P.R.A.I.S.E.D. Profile to help formulate a supportive perspective from which to offer your impression of the situation.

Determine the direction of your own actions

Same as before but you can be more assertive here. Ask yourself the tough questions, “Why am I doing what I'm doing?” Are you moving toward something or away? From where are you departing or what is the destination? Why? Is it the right thing for the right reason?

“Know thyself!” Sound advice but not in the least bit easy to do. Our temperament is only a part of our makeup. As I have written these observations and activities I have gained in my view of myself. I have areas to work on just as we all do. No one has all the answers but we get a new chance to work on them every morning!

Selected sayings

Firmness of purpose is one of the most necessary sinews of character, and one of the best instruments of success. Without it genius wastes its efforts in a maze of inconsistencies.

Lord Chesterfield

No man is worth his salt who is not ready at all times to risk his body, to risk his well-being, to risk his life, in a great cause.

Theodore Roosevelt

A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds.

Francis Bacon

You will never “find” time for anything. If you want time you must make it.

Charles Buxton

The great thing in this world is not so much where we are, but in which direction we are moving.

Oliver Wendall Holmes

Conclusion

In the movie “Mr. Holland's Opus” Mr. Holland, a first year teacher is challenged by the principal, Mrs. Jacobs to do just two things as a teacher, “Fill young minds with knowledge... but more importantly, give them direction!”

Mr. Holland had just told Mrs. Jacobs he had “fallen back on his teaching degree.” Mrs. Jacobs explained she didn't see teaching as a “fall back” profession and she was uncomfortable around people who did. Mrs. Jacobs' advice was just as necessary for Mr. Holland as for the kids he was teaching.

How about you? Do you know where you're going or are you just trying to get away from here? In one case you're looking ahead, in the other you're looking back. Think about it!

Profile Explanation

The example profiles breakdown common feelings or emotions into their basic ingredients. Because there is some latitude as to how much of each ingredient any person may experience at a given time, a range has been displayed **strictly for demonstration purposes**. The main idea is to map out how an emotion relates to the seven ingredients. Then you can adjust various aspects of that feeling to make changes.

This is not to say you have to stay strictly within the bounds demonstrated. There are feelings that we experience that don't have a clear cut name to them. If you broke each ingredient into 100 parts for a percentage reference you would have a possibility of 10^{14} number of emotions. That's one with fourteen zeros behind it! 100,000,000,000,000... talk about being emotional!

The purpose of these examples is to give someone who is to fill out a profile an idea of how to use it. This is not going to be absolutely accurate as everyone is going to weigh each ingredient with a different scale. However, repetitive surveys done by the same person will give a method of plotting change. In areas that have X's across the board, any variation is possible.

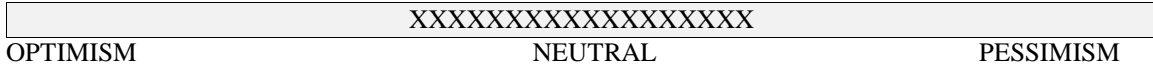
Also, if you get consistent measurements from the majority of people filling out a profile (the more the better) the reliability of that perception is increased. One place I worked had a set of values which stated in part... "Customer perception is reality!" This isn't true. The customer may have the impression we rendered them great service but only because they were ignorant of just how poorly we treated them.

So if you are rated as someone who is outgoing by all of your evaluators and you think to yourself, "They really don't know me, I'm much more reflective than I seem." you are partially right. For no one knows you like you do. On the other hand, We don't always know ourselves as well as we think.

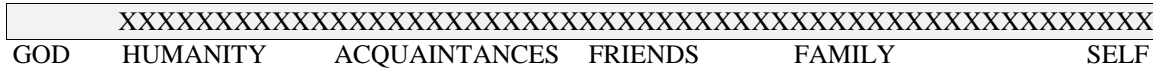
So use the profiles as they were intended to be used, as a way of gaining information about yourself with a method provided to change what you see. To improve, to grow, to live more fully.

MELANCHOLY

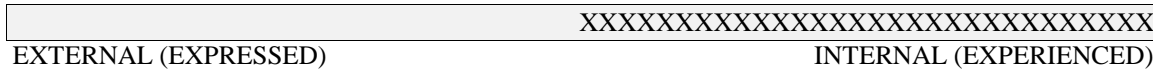
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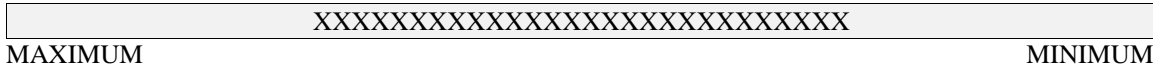
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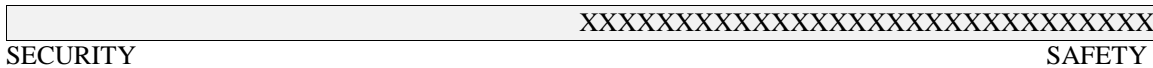
ACTIVITY



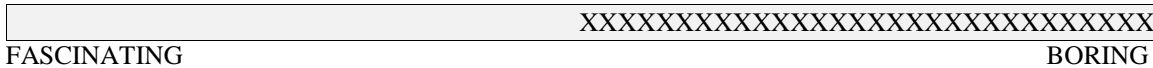
INTENSITY



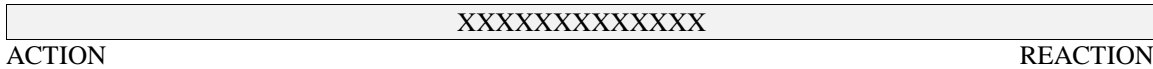
STABILITY



ENTERTAINMENT



DIRECTION



P.R.A.I.S.E.D. Profile Instructions

Have at least three other people provide you with feedback regarding these seven areas of your personality. I recommend having one person be a family member, one be a coworker or someone of similar status, and one person should be a friend. All of whom should be asked with the most sincerity you can muster to give you their honest opinion with no fear of hurting your feelings, making you angry, or losing your love. Write in percentages to indicate your current status. Under the Relationships section you can indicate a percentage for each category. Remember, this is your overall or average personality. Individual emotions can be examined with this as well but only you will fill those out.

Each area will have a brief explanation of how to rate your temperament.

POLARITY

Does the person look at a situation and see the positive or the negative? Do they offer enthusiastic support for ideas or do they have a “That won't work!” attitude? You can use this to give the person a percentage of the time they seem positive, neutral, and negative.

RELATIONSHIP

Can you tell who or what is the focus of the person's concern? Are they always looking out for others, sacrificing their own well-being? Are they devoted to family or fiercely loyal to friends? Maybe they are pretty even across the board or even have a desire to serve humanity. How visible is their relationship with God? In this section you can write in what percentage you give to each type of relationship. A relationship might seem to be with an inanimate object or an organization, or something that is not human; look to see what the reason is for that relationship. If the person is getting more than they're giving count it as more of a self relationship.

ACTIVITY

Is the person very outgoing and loud? Are they quiet and shy? Do they go from one to the other depending on their environment? Do they “wear their heart on their sleeve?” leaving no doubt as to what they are feeling? Are they so shallow you wouldn't get your feet wet if they were a wading pool? In this evaluation you are also rating them on both qualities. They can be both 100% expressive and experiencing or almost 0% for both (give them some benefit of the doubt.)

INTENSITY

Do you have an irresistible urge to ask the person to “Chill out” or calm down all the time? Do you have to draw chalk marks on the floor to see if they're moving? Intensity is a tough call but after all this isn't an exact science. Try to make a comparison to what your exposure to humanity has been. Are they always traveling at the speed of light or do they need someone to light their fuse?

STABILITY

This one really hits home. How serene do they seem to be? Are they always looking for something else to make them happy? Or can they go on a two week vacation in their own backyard with just themselves? Is their security eternal? Or do they look to themselves for assuredness. What is the danger level of the situation? Is there reason to believe that physical harm could be expected? The only people who are completely stable aren't breathing anymore.

ENTERTAINMENT

I think one of the most frequently used phrases of the younger generation is, “I'm bored.” I used it a lot when I was young anyway. So, can this person keep busy on a rainy day? Or do they start climbing the walls in fifteen minutes? Creativity counts! I can even visualize that some people in straight jackets would rate higher than a lot of folks. Maybe people are afraid of being sent to the Funny Farm. Maybe that's why they call it the Funny Farm!

DIRECTION

“When you get to the fork in the road, take it.”, as Yogi Berra used to say. Actually this road has no fork but it has either a destination or an origin... or both... or neither. Is this person goal oriented, always dreaming of what they want to do or where they want to go? Are they pursuing those dreams? Or do they always seem pushed into a decision or action because of circumstances? As with the other characteristics you can give the person a percentage for each item. That is, you could say they are goal seeking 75% of the time and yet on occasion, about 10% of the time they try to escape from their reality, and the other 15% they are standing still, so to speak.

If you have any questions regarding this survey, it is a living document and by using the e-mail link you can send a request for clarification. I'll use the questions and suggestions to modify the survey and hopefully improve on the user friendliness and effectiveness of this tool. Please let me know what you think and any insights for improvement. Contact me at terry@tcanfield.com

From D.E.S.P.A.I.R. To P.R.A.I.S.E.D.

POLARITY



RELATIONSHIP



ACTIVITY



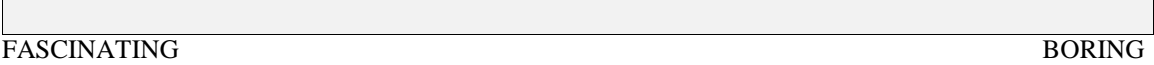
INTENSITY



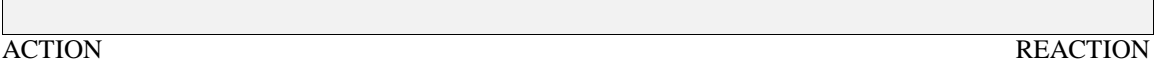
STABILITY



ENTERTAINMENT



DIRECTION



Final Feelings

“We start out walking and learn to run!”

Perhaps one of the most touching conclusions to this time together would be to revisit a tragedy. A life full of promise and purpose that was cut short by emotional erosion. The life of singer Karen Carpenter.

Karen's voice was filled with a tone, a quality that struck a chord on the heart strings of her listeners. A lilt in her voice that lifted spirits and lightened the loads of many.

Karen was a Carpenter in more than name. Her songs helped others construct a happier life. With picture window songs of life and love, she portrayed amazing architectural design of all that is good. An example is the song “Bless the Beasts and the Children.”

Karen had everything it seemed, success in a very competitive industry, influence possible through wealth, an adoring multitude of fans. She also had one other thing, Anorexia nervosa, an emotional condition that controlled her perception of herself and the world around her.

And so, in the midst of an environment that should have seen her flourish personally, Karen starved herself emotionally; and eventually physically. This led to complications which took her young life due to her weakened state.

How often do we allow our emotions to weaken us? How often do we passively respond to our perception of our self rather than proactively reach for the “us” inside? The one that needs a little tender loving care. The one, like a beautiful flower, needing just a little water, the right food, and a lot of sunshine, blossoms to bless the whole world.

As I said in the introduction, this is not a textbook. It is not a doctoral thesis that has been published for posterity. The idea of this book is to hopefully help change the lives of the very people who read it. It is born of numerous experiences dealing with a multitude of crises.

It is also a work in progress. Your feedback, suggestions, stories are welcome! Perhaps there are more ingredients that should be included. Perhaps there is more to this concept than I have written here. Please feel free to share your thoughts, your revelations, and, most importantly, your feelings.

It is my gift to humanity. As I was writing it struck me as contradictory to make this a commercial project. I have other material that is a fair value. Therefore, it is free of charge and no strings attached. If anyone should wish to give me a gift in return, please accept my thanks in advance.

You can use the contact information in this book. Or you can use this link...
mailto: terry@tcanfield.com

In closing, let me leave you with the words to one of Karen Carpenter's songs, "We've Only Just Begun!"

Suggested Readings

“Reading means borrowing!”

Here are a few volumes I have found useful. There are many others and I strongly urge you to start your own library. You can borrow books and check them out but owning books is not only a pleasure, it is a treasure!

The Bible

Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman

The New Dictionary of Thought by Tryon Edwards D.D.

14,000 Quips and Quotes by E. C. McKenzie

Leo Rosten’s Treasury of Jewish Quotations by Leo Rosten

The Forbes Book of Business Quotations

Dale Carnegie’s Scrapbook

Webster’s Dictionary of Quotations

Aesop’s Fables

The Viking Book of Aphorisms by W.H. Auden and Louis Kronenberger

The Speaker’s Desk Book

These volumes will open doors to hallways of great thinking! Take a stroll through them and see if you don’t find yourself absorbing a new insight from words spoken long ago. Don’t take this life too seriously... but don’t ever take it for granted!