

WHO are you being?

(The fastest path to power and production wrapped up in a single question.)

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The Hidden Chapter

“Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one’s favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way.”

— William Hutchison Murray

A small warning about this chapter: it's not business serious, it's philosophical and introspective. This isn't quick tips and tactics; this is about something more powerful: tapping into your fundamental way of being.

It's not a light read and it's certainly not for everyone. But if you're willing to ask the hard questions, the answers will set you free faster than anything else.

Shortcut to mastery

While I was a graduate student at the University of South Carolina, I had the opportunity to attend a violin recital by a guest teacher from a big name Ivy League music school like Eastman. On the recital program that evening was a notoriously difficult piece, the Bartok Sonata for Solo Violin. I didn't really like the piece, but out of respect for the guest artist I decided to stay through the whole recital. While he played the final piece (the one I didn't like) I noticed a few things. One, the piece was fiendishly difficult. And two, no matter how difficult the piece was, he played through with unstoppable confidence.

Really, no matter how difficult a note or passage was, he remained bold and courageous.

How interesting I mused. This guy is an amazing player. What power.

After the recital I was still feeling awake and energetic so I decided to descend to the lower levels of the music building for some practicing of my own. My own recital was coming up and I still had some work to do on one of the pieces.

That night I was working on several spots that were normally very difficult for me, and that I frequently couldn't play at all. I would have to stop, or play them slower, or crash and the middle and restart, or skip over entirely for another time when I was feeling up to the task.

But this night it was different. For the two hours that I practiced that night, I played like a million bucks. My "performance" in the practice room was flawless. I played better than I had ever played before. The difficult passages that I normally crashed in the middle of I sailed right through. The scary passages that I usually choked up going into I played with effortless mastery.

For two hours I was unstoppable.

Hmmmmm that experience seems eerily familiar, but it was a few days before I was able to put all the pieces together. "What was different?" I would ask myself. "Why haven't I played like that before?"

And then it dawned on me. While I was watching the guest artist, I was receiving a much deeper message. I "got" who he was being as an artist. Even though I did not like the piece he was playing, I received on a fundamental level who he was *being about it*. He was being courageous, and unstoppably so.

When it was my turn to play I took on *who* he was being as a player. For two hours I played with unstoppable confidence. I was not a violist, a music major, or a grad student.

I was not getting ready for a recital, or even trying to get better. Nope, for two hours that night I was just courageous, and unstoppably so.

The magic of the event was that it occurred subconsciously. I did not plan it, think about it, or reason with it. I just was. There was no fear or reason to interfere with it, just pure, unstoppable, and courageous action. My results weren't the result of hard work or endless practice. Remember, I was sailing right through passages that all of my best practicing efforts were not enough to conquer. It was almost as if I had acquired a new level of skill - without practicing.

It felt like cheating the system.

When I became courageous I started producing courageous results. I didn't become courageous because it made sense. I didn't do it because I had a history to support it. Heck, up until that point all I had was a bunch of wrong notes. I became courageous *despite* my previous failures.

Being doesn't need a reason.

On the contrary, *after* you take on a new way of being, *then* you start to find reasons to support it.

Who is writing on that hidden tablet?

At my TEDx talk in Hickory North Carolina, I illustrated the way our brain turns sound into emotion and showed how that process was buggy and prone to triggering self doubt WITH NO EVIDENCE at all!

One of the biggest lessons from that talk is that *we* are the creators of meaning. We determine with every sound we hear, what it means to us. And by doing so, we become the creators of our own emotional experiences. This is a pretty big distinction because it breaks through the illusion that the words we heard are the same thing as how we feel. It breaks the illusion that the words we heard CAUSED us to feel the way we did.

The trouble though, is that the meaning is created instantly and subconsciously. In the moment we don't consciously think through what it meant to us. But when the hidden meaning comes to light, yes, it is something that we would write.

How did that meaning get written down so fast and still be consistent with how we feel about things?

Well, just like emotion is a reflection of meaning. That hidden meaning that gets created is a reflection of who the person was "being" at the time they wrote it. Much like the wizard of OZ, we have someone else running the show behind the curtain. Your way of

being is always at work automatically creating meaning and making predictions. Being is always present, and everything in your life is a reflection of that way of being.

The good news and bad news

You might be frustrated with other people because *they* keep creating the same disempowering meaning in their lives, *no matter what* is said to them. It's like they are looking for a reason to feel bad. "Why do they keep doing that to themselves?" "Why can't they create better meaning?" Well, it's because even though technically they are the only ones who can write meaning on that blank slate in their mind, they can't write just *any* meaning. It has to be congruent with who they are being.

Even if you know you're doing it to yourself, you can't seem to stop.

Think of it this way, if someone is in a mental state of fear, are they going to be thinking about the reasons it will work or won't work? If they are being fearful, their mind won't even be able to recognize evidence that it will work out. Every piece of evidence for it working out will be discounted or negated to line up with the state of fear.

You can't both trust and fear at the same time, they are mutually exclusive, and every emotion boils down to one of those two.

Thankfully the sponsoring state can be changed. If you want unstoppable results in your playing, selling, or leading, you can have them – but first you must change your way of BEING around them. Action begets results but, thinking only leads to more thinking. This is why you can't reason your way into pure confidence. This is why you can't reason your way out of fear. It is not a linear progression, the brain finds reasons to support the new mindset, *after* that way of being is chosen.

The illusion is that we feel the way we do because of the reasons we have for feeling that way. But the way the brain is wired reveals that we FIRST pick a belief and *then* start gathering reasons to support it.

Phobias and the future

Probably the best example of the futility of rationalizing a state of being, comes from the world of phobias. To the phobic, the very thought of a snake is enough to send them into a trip-to-the-hospital-panic-attack. Yet, they can be cured for life in less than 30 minutes.

Phobias are not a problem with reasoning or logic. They are a problem with future processing. To the person with the phobia, they imagine things as if they were happening to them right now. To the phobic, a snake bite isn't a future possibility. When you say snake, their mind conjures up an image of a snake gnawing on their leg right that very moment.

Freedom comes from separating what the mind is predicting from what is actually happening. Remember, fear is a lack of knowledge.

Thankfully, no matter how long they have had trained their brain to respond to the thought of snakes with panic, it can be permanently rewired in as little as 30 minutes if you take them through an experiential process. You can't reason them out of it. You can't lecture them out of it. But, you can easily take them through the experiences that shift their way of being – which in turn automatically shifts the meaning and predictions they make around snakes. This applies just the same to other phobias like public speaking or fear of heights.

This doesn't mean that they now *like* snakes; it just means that they have installed a new way of being around snakes that will allow them to write a more empowering meaning and make better predictions. The meaning and the prediction are ALWAYS a reflection of who the person was being at the time that they made them. You cannot change either the meaning or prediction without changing who that person is “being” first.

Being doesn't need a reason

You might have had the experience of conversing with someone of a different religion or political party and noticed that no amount of talking was going to change their mind. At first you might have thought they were being willfully prideful or stubborn. But after awhile you might have noticed that they simply weren't capable of seeing the situation through any other lens. It is as if there was something in their mind that would not let them come to a different conclusion. They weren't doing it on purpose; they simply couldn't see it any other way.

A person cannot contradict his or her own way of being. A person cannot create a meaning or predict a future that is inconsistent with their internal belief system.

We are all this way. It's just easier to spot it when someone else is doing it.

Imagine two children running towards the playground. They are both about 18 months old and neither of them has ever seen a swing before. One of them runs toward the swing and the other one stays away from it. What is driving this behavior? At such a young age they don't have enough life experience to really form an evidence based decision. Yet, in the absence of information, one of them embraces the new opportunity and the other keeps it at arms length. And no, at a year and a half this isn't an issue of how their parents raised them. If you have had enough kids you know that from birth some of them don't need any encouragement, and for others, no amount of encouragement will matter.

This is being in action. While it is a choice that we make, we do arrive on planet earth with a default way of being in place. From there it becomes a habit. Thankfully with the

right training a conscious awareness can be developed to allow the creation of a new and empowering way of being.

If you were to follow the kids later in life you would find the same scenario playing out. But as they get older, their reasons become more sophisticated. When they are twenty and their friends are going skydiving, one of them says yes and the other says no. Ask the person why they said yes and they have a list of reasons:

It sounds like fun
New things are always exciting
It will be challenging

If you were to ask the person who said no, they too would have a list of reasons:

You could get hurt
God isn't pleased when we willfully put ourselves in harms way
There are a lot of things that can go wrong

In their mind, they made the decision to go or not *because* of their reasons. The truth is that their fundamental way of being collected the reasons to support it and then presented them to the conscious mind. Reasons for and against are always available, but which ones are we going to notice?

We have subconsciously decided our response long before being posed the question. All the question does is give us another opportunity to demonstrate our *preexisting way of being* by listing some new reasons consistent with it.

This is what makes the creation of meaning and our future predictions so instant. There is nothing to think about. The events are all interpreted as a reflection of who we are being. The cool part, is that once you create a new way of being you now get new meanings and new emotional experiences *without even having to think about creating them*. This means that you get new results automatically. You start to perform at a much higher level right away. It is like cutting in line. This is the shortcut that allowed me to play so powerfully that night after the recital. This is the shortcut that will instantly make you a force to be reckoned with.

Being is the gatekeeper

This is one of the reasons many people are left unchanged by motivational seminars. On the outside they can stir up energy and fire up emotions. They can even chant and proclaim their new goals. But behind all of that is a predominant belief or way of being that is determining the outcome. Nothing changes until who they are “being” changes.

If someone is operating from a fundamental state or belief of lack, no matter how much action they take, they won't experience abundance. The way of being is present wherever they go. "Lack" shows up in the actions, conversations, and daily routine. No matter how well the steps worked from someone else, they won't produce the same results as long as "Lack" is doing them. Who would you rather do business with: someone who is hoping that you will believe in their product (because they aren't confident,) or someone who already believes in their own product?

The inner state of being is never wrong.

If you are coming from a state of being like "not good enough," then no amount of compliments will make a difference. It is like trying to fill up a bucket that has a hole in the bottom. No matter how much praise gets piled up, it all runs out. That way of being will even prevent you from recognizing praise because that would be inconsistent with how you see the world around you. A fundamental state like "not good enough" will only see criticism and reasons that support not being good enough. Should enough time lapse without hearing a criticism or finding any evidence, this way of being will start *creating* reasons.

If you are coming from a state of being like "but not me," then no matter how many courses you take or businesses you start, you will never succeed at them. Something will always slow them down or block them. It's like turning two magnets around so the poles face each other. No matter what you do to them, as long as the poles are facing they will keep pushing each other away.

The way of being cannot exist in the face of contrary evidence. One of them has to go and since the way of being was there first, guess who gets the boot? This is why facts don't make a difference when it comes to changing someone's mind. Until the fundamental beliefs change, nothing can change.

A "victim" way of being can only write victim meanings.

A "discouraged" way of being can only make discouraging predictions.

Intellectually they acknowledge that what they heard is different from the meaning they attached to it, but they are unable to fathom what a different meaning could be. Your brain isn't stupid, it does things that make sense to you. You believe things *because* they make sense to you. You predict things will unfold a certain way *because* that way makes sense to you.

Here, we'll test it out, do you believe anything that doesn't make sense to you?

No, of course not. Now the question wasn't "that you don't understand." We believe lots of things that we don't necessarily understand. But everything we believe still seems

right to us. It seems right to us that electricity is making the light turn on, even though we might not necessarily understand how volts and amps and ohms work.

We can believe things that we don't understand, but do you believe anything that you think you're wrong about?

No, of course not. You might believe something while at the same time acknowledging the possibility that you *could* be wrong. But you cannot believe something while at the same time believe that you are wrong about it. Your brain doesn't work that way. It only collects reasons that are in alignment with your fundamental belief system.

If you want to know what your fundamental way of being is, simply follow the meanings you create and the predictions you make because they are the reflections, shadows, and footprints of the being that created them.

Self Esteem

Many people write books on "good self-esteem." As if the secret to life is thinking good thoughts about yourself. Many courses are taught with creative names around the theme of "self-esteem." Many well meaning schools aim to develop "good" self-esteem and save their kids from "bad" self-esteem. But they don't address the fundamental question of "who" is doing the esteeming. Who is determining the meaning to start with?

The best definition of self-esteem you can ever have is this:

valuing your own opinion of yourself over all others

There is never a time when you take someone else's opinion of you above your own opinion of you. The only way their opinion becomes your truth is if *you agree* with them. This is especially true when someone criticizes you or offends you. You aren't upset because *they* believe that. You are upset because *you already think that about yourself*. Of course it is too painful to admit what we are doing to ourselves, so our subconscious blocks that out and we blame the other person for the pain - the pain that we created for ourselves.

Crazy music students

When I was a student musician, recitals were a part of the required curriculum. In order to graduate, we had to attend piles of recitals and perform in piles of recitals. This revealed a very interesting phenomenon about the psyche of esteem.

A surprising but common ailment among music students is stage fright. It seems a bit strange, but people who love playing the most can become the most debilitated by performance anxiety. This is intriguing for me as a performance coach because the thing that creates the panic also reveals the solution.

When you ask a student how their solo performance was, they will tell you how bad it was. They missed a note, forgot a passage, or played some stuff out of tune. For them, it was a truly horrible performance. Of course many of these small mistakes are completely missed by the audience. And, in context they played over 1,000 notes very well. Yet, you can't "talk" them out of this state. No amount of reasoning will change it. In *their* mind it was a horrible performance.

At the same time every single person they talk to afterwards tells them what a good job they did. So, the people who were there specifically for listening say it was great but the one person who was distracted with all of the concentration required for performing says it was horrible. The people who were there for the purpose of receiving, say they are very happy with what they got. The one person who was there for the purpose of giving says it wasn't good and can't understand why anyone would like it. This is the nature of being. This is self-esteem at work.

Self-esteem is simply valuing your opinion of yourself over everyone else's. This is something that you are doing all of the time. And, it only works one way. You always value your opinion of yourself over everyone else's in every situation. It's just that occasionally the outcome is undesirable and so it is much easier to blame it on anyone but the person writing the meaning on that hidden tablet.

Remember the student with the "bad" performance? Everyone they talked to afterward says it was great, but whose opinion are they going to hang on to? Their own. This is the nature of being. It is impossible for the brain to process conflicting stimuli. If the being is operating from a state of "not good enough," then no amount of "good job" will change that. As a matter of fact all "good job" comments will be filtered out until a negative remark can be found to support the initial state of being. And, if a negative remark can't be found, then the brain will make one up.

Have you ever given someone a compliment and they rejected it? Maybe they deflected it, or downplayed it. But when they don't actually receive it, whose opinion are they valuing? Their own. When they downplay your compliment or reject its merit, what they are doing is saying your opinion of what happened is not valid, only their opinion of what happened is what matters.

What kind of a person would do this? Who are they being?

An easy fix

Who you are being is what determines the meaning that shows up on that tablet in your mind. No meaning that is contrary to the sponsoring state is allowed to show up. You could say that "being" is a bit selfish. It can only value its own opinion, *even if that opinion is a self-defeating one*. This helps to answer the nagging question "why would anyone in their right mind insist on clinging to disempowering meanings?" The answer

is that if they are in an insecure state, then by focusing on the negative, they are *validating* their insecure state. Their way of being gets to be “right.” In the world of the ego, being right is more important than air.

When the person changes, their meanings and predictions change. This is helpful, because who you are being can be easily changed.

A shift in being is like learning to ride a bicycle. You don’t understand balance and then ride, it’s the other way around: you ride, and then understand balance. A new way of being (which will produce new results) will only make sense *after* you step into it.

Being is a matter of decision and not logic. Being does not need evidence; it *creates* evidence. Being does not need reasons; it finds them. Have you ever been happy for no reason? Have you ever been sad for no reason? The reason your current mindset makes sense to you is because you have a lot of practice looking for reasons to support it. The good news is that once you take on a new mindset, your brain immediately goes to work looking for reasons to support it.

Following the clues

We tend to approach life as if there has to be a reason for it. We act as if you need a reason to be confident. The more positive experiences you have, the more you convince yourself to be confident. The more failure experiences you have, the more you convince yourself to doubt. When in reality, there is no connection between the two. Past experiences are not things that are *about* to happen. The future is a blank space of unlimited possibilities.

Watch some kids play some day and see what is possible without the adulteration of reason. They are simply happy, for no reason at all. Don’t they know about your successful job that ensures they will always have their needs met as long as they live at home, thus giving them a reason to be happy? No, they don’t, they simply choose to be happy.

Don’t they know that you just lost your job, which will jeopardize the security of their provisions, thus giving them a reason to not be happy? No, they don’t, they simply choose to be happy, no reason is needed.

Watch the confident ones. They are too young to have a series of successes of which to build a foundation of confidence. They have no history, they are just confident. Heck, most of them have failed more than they have succeeded. They have been hurt, bruised, and scratched, yet they remain confident. There is no reason for them to be confident. A “grown up” would reason that they don’t have enough successes to be confident. Another “grown up” would reason that they have too many bumps and bruises to be confident.

This is how we live our lives. We live as if you have to have a reason to feel a certain way. We live as if the reason we feel the way we do is because of what is in our past.

For a disturbing observation, watch the unconfident little ones. They have no reason to be fearful or hesitant. They aren't even old enough to have a track record of failures. But yet, they choose to hold back and worry. They don't have a "past," all they have is a way of interpreting their current experiences. All they have is a way of being.

Why does a child advance boldly despite a history of failures? It's who they are being. Why does a child hold back despite no history of failures? It's who they are being.

It isn't as if choices are made without *any* reason. There are always lots of reasons to support any belief we have chosen. But there are also just as many reasons to support the belief we didn't choose. Any reasons we use to support why we act, think, or believe the way that we do are not the "truth." They are just the ones our brain has carefully chosen to support our current way of thinking.

Making the switch

Before we can use this to create your breakthrough, we need to uncover your current way of being. You can't effectively install a new way of being on top of an old way of being. You can replace, but not layer because the bottom way of being will always bleed through. And, that fundamental way of being is what has you in the situation that you are in. Until we address it, there can't be any lasting change.

Let's take a look at a few tools for accessing your current way of being:

There is no substitute for a live event when it comes to accessing your current way of being. However, there are a few exercises that will help you get started.

THE BASELINE

Write down the following numbers:

1. How many days of vacation did you take last year?
2. How much do you currently weigh?
3. How much undivided time did you spend with your kids last week?
4. How much debt do you currently carry?
5. How would your *partner* rate your relationship currently? (1-10)
6. How much do you have in savings?
7. How much time did you spend last week in personal enrichment?
8. How much passive income do you have?
9. How much time have you spent with close friends in the past week?
10. How much have you given to charity in the last month?

Now I want you to go back and check your answers:

Vacation – being in Hawaii with your family while on the phone and computer every day for work doesn't count, neither does taking days off work, just to do work on your house. Only write down the number of days that you were genuinely engaged in rest and relaxation away from your normal routine.

Weight – not what you would have weighed had you gone to the gym. Don't write down a number that is close give or take a few pounds. Be honest with your self. Write the *real* number down. Real change begins with real honesty.

Kids – if you don't have kids, then you can replace “kids” with “partner.” If you have kids, driving them to school while talking on the phone with your friend doesn't count. Sitting on the couch together watching TV doesn't count either. Lecturing them why they are wrong about _____ doesn't count. Only write down the time you spent with them solely for the purpose of *enjoying* spending time with them.

Debt – yes, your car, student loans, medical bills, and house count.

Partner – if you are single, then this number reflects your level of satisfaction with being single. If you are in a relationship, then you might want to ask them or better yet, one of their friends. Get the “not afraid to tell you the truth” answer and write it down.

Savings – immediately accessible, cash in a jar, savings account, or money market

Personal – reading for pleasure, practicing piano just because, whatever that thing is that fills your soul and makes you feel alive. Attending a mandatory training course for work doesn't count, neither does going to see a counselor because your spouse is making you.

Passive – as in you don't have to get out of bed to create it. Stock dividends, spin off from a self-sustaining business you developed, sales from a online website you set up, real estate rental income, royalties, or any kind of “mailbox money.”

Friends – I don't mean people you are nice to because you work with them. I'm talking about people that make you feel at home, people that really get you, people that speak your language. This is your close inner circle of relationships.

Charity – your church, the Red Cross, the homeless guy at the bus stop

Ok, have you been real about your answers? Remember, how you do anything is how you do everything. Did you find yourself trying to fudge a few numbers at the last minute? Are you still reading and haven't even done the work yet?

<ahem>

Phase 2:

Move each number 50% towards the negative. 3 days of vacation becomes 1.5 days. 20 minutes becomes 10. Zero plus 50% is still Zero. Negative 2 plus 50% is negative 3.

Phase 3:

Close your eyes and imagine yourself waking up from a coma. The visiting doctor comes in to update you on the life you are about to step back into. They hand you these new answers to help you remember who you are. This is your new life, what is your first reaction?

Realize that there are people out there whose real life answers look just like what is on your 50% less card. At the same time there are people who, if they were given your original answers as their new life, wouldn't even make it out of the hospital before fixing half of them. You might complain about X but not do anything about it. However, should X deteriorate to Y you stop complaining about it and do something. Complaint and action cannot coexist.

This is a reflection of who you are being about each of these areas. What kind of things do you put up with? What kind of things do you allow? What kind of things do you quietly resent but aren't willing to take action about? Who are you *being* about life?

THE TAPE

Take an area of your life that isn't working. What is your complaint about that area?

Now, how long has this been your complaint? How long have you had a tape playing in your head that says the same thing about this issue? "I need to ..." "I should probably ..." "I hate it that ..." If you have had the same complaint as long as this area hasn't been working for you – that is a huge clue as to who you are *being* about the issue.

If you have indeed had the same tape playing that complaint in your head for an extended period of time, there is a good chance that there are other areas in your life where you have a similar complaint.

This is a reflection into who you are being about the game of life.

COIN TOSS

What is an area of your life where you keep your word? I mean without qualifications or reasons or excuses. You might stay up all night 2 days straight to get it done, but you will not lose integrity with your word. Really, what is that area? What is the thing that no matter what you will NEVER let slide.

Do you have it? Do you have more than one?

What is an area of your life that isn't working? Do you have integrity with your word in this area? Do you keep your promises regarding this area that doesn't work for you? Do you fulfill what other party expects of you? Do you keep your unspoken commitments to yourself? When you speak about this issue to the other party are you 1000% honest about your desires?

If you have anything like that, it's not wrong and you aren't a bad person. I just want you to notice that there is a relationship between the things that don't work for you and how you "are" about them.

This is a reflection into who you are being about your life.

PUSHBACK

What is an area of your life that works really well for you? Now, don't be bashful, what are you consistently doing to create that? Why does that work for you and what can other people learn from that? If I wanted to be doing as well as you are in that area, what would I need to do?

Now, what is an area of your life that isn't working for you? And, what have you been consistently doing (or not doing) to keep that area in its unworkable state? If I wanted to also have that area not work for me, what would I need to do or not do? The second question we need to look at is *why* you act the way you do about that issue. What are your reasons for doing what you do or not doing what you do?

This last question is pretty tough. Of all the reasons you could have given for why that area remains unworkable to you, why did you pick those? With a unlimited number of possible reasons for or against, why are you using the reasons that you are?

This is a reflection of who you are being.

Whew

These exercises cannot define your current way of being, they only serve as a backdrop for its shadow to be reflected against. You won't be able to see it clearly. Other people can see it in you. But you won't be able to see it in yourself. These exercises are designed to help you to spot its existence. From there we can begin to clear the slate and make room for the being that you have always wanted.

The big catch

No thought lives in your head rent-free.

Have you ever wondered why someone would continue to do something that they KNOW is bad for them? Maybe you have experienced the same thing yourself. There have certainly been times in my life where I caught myself doing something that I knew was bad for me (usually eating candy to excess). But I wasn't stopping. I was even watching myself continue wondering "what's with this guy?"

Or maybe it isn't something you do to yourself, but to other people. You know it only drives them away, but you can't seem to stop doing it. This latter situation is almost impossible to spot in ourselves, but it is painfully obvious for us to see in others. It's not that we don't have the same tendencies, it's just that it is so much harder for us to see the water we swim in.

Whether it's you or another, it is an equally baffling situation. Why would someone keep doing something that only produces the opposite of what they really want? They might even acknowledge it is bad for them. They might even want to quit. But they keep doing it.

The answer is found in the hidden benefit that action has for us. No way of being is in operation without a cost. Usually we don't mind getting rid of the costs, but those benefits can be very hard to let go of.

Benefit might be a strong word for negative behavior, maybe payoff, tradeoff, or exchange might be better words. Here are some examples of "benefits"

Being right
Avoiding risk
Looking good

I don't know why, but being "right" is to the ego what air is to the lungs. The ego doesn't even think twice about killing off every relationship that has a different opinion. To the ego, it isn't just a different opinion, it is a threat. The ego is like the Highlander, in the end, there can be only one opinion.

Lecturing, nagging, proving, berating, dragging around, and dredging up are all life-killing behaviors. They destroy our relationship with ourselves and with others. And yes, if it hasn't been stated before - you *do* have a relationship with yourself. But despite the carnage they create, the tradeoff feels sooo good. It is a drug, the addiction is validation, the dealer is the ego, and the cost is vitality of life.

You know that _____ leads to _____ but you can't stop because a part of you needs to say "see I told you I was _____." A part of you needs to be right about how wrong you are.

You know that _____ isn't what you really want. But it feels so good you can't stop. Even though authentic relationship is what your soul craves, you keep doing _____ because your ego needs another hit.

You don't do it consciously. You don't do it on purpose. You aren't even really thinking when you do it. You are arguably out of your mind. But your subconscious is running errands for your ego to keep it satisfied until the next fix is available. Your subconscious is out looking for situations that can be turned into the next hit.

This is a clue into how you are "Being" about the business of life.

Breakthrough to high performance

Here is how to use "being" as a shortcut to success:

1. Take an area in your life where you want better results.
2. Find someone who is getting the results you want.
3. Look for aspects of being in their craft.

How do they approach the subject? Are they playful? Are they proactive? Do they stay present? Are they confident?

This isn't an exercise in *why* they are that way. Your job, should you choose to accept it (but this message won't self destruct in 10 seconds if you don't,) is to simply notice *who* they are being. Do this without reason. Do this without logic.

"Being" is the doorway to ultimate performance. No matter what level you are currently playing on, changing *who you are being* about it is the key to experiencing breakthrough performance. What is so amazing about this principal is that the results are almost instant. It isn't always a matter of putting in hundreds of hours of practice. Many times, the secret is simply choosing to play FULL out. But, then again getting in the habit of playing full out might take some practice. And, playing full out comes with the risk of failing, missing, or looking bad. Funny, so does playing mediocre.

Now you might say (despite the previous paragraphs) "of course they are confident, look at how good they are." But if you will track their progression you will notice that they were always that confident. Back when they had a high golf score, they were confident. When they were playing on a level that you could easily whip with no preparation at all they were still confident.

There is no connection between how you are and why you are. There is a strong illusion that they are connected, but we choose something first and then reason it later. You are free to be anyway you want, you don't need a reason. Whatever way of being that you

take on ... you will find a reason to back it up – I promise. So why not take on a way of being that propels you forward?

I find it interesting that the ways of being that propel us forward (playfulness, outgoing, adventuresome, confident) have the added bonus of giving you far greater enjoyment in the mean time. The ways of being that hold us back (doubtful, hesitant, fearful) have the added weight of completely sapping all joy in the moment. We become the way of being that we take on – with all of the pros and cons.

Play the role of an actor in taking on the way of being of your role model. Convince me. Walk, talk, joke, and move like them. If you want their results, you have to take on their way being. Take it from Mr. Leach:

Archibald Alexander Leach was at the time the number one leading man in Hollywood. He was sophisticated, suave, romantic, etc. Women wanted him and men wanted to be him. In his own words “I pretended to be someone until I finally became him, or he became me.” Archibald was not Cary Grant, he *became* Cary Grant.

Daniel Day Lewis, a highly awarded actor *knows* character preparation. He has trained as a fighter for two years, lived on a movie set without electricity or running water, built his house with 17th century tools, caught pneumonia, and eaten nothing but prison rations all in the name of getting in character. Consequentially he *knows* Oscar and Academy awards.

Your job is to get in the “character” of your role model, and your measure of success is how convincingly you can stay in character. Notice I did not say that your measure of success is the results you get. Nope, when you are taking on being, you must do it with abandon. Become the being, give up all other pursuits to focus on that. You aren’t doing it because you think it will give you better results. You are doing it to get into their mind and think like they think. You are doing it to see like they see. You are doing it to experience (interpret) the world they way they do. Only from there will your body be able to translate your newfound energy into results. But you can’t get there by trying to get the results at the same time. Remember, that’s what you’ve been trying to do up until now and its not working.

This is a great challenge. You have to be willing to look bad. You have to be willing to perform worse for a while. But on the other side of mastering a new way of being is a new world of possibilities. If you can stay in character while missing shots, you are on the right road to a breakthrough in possibilities. What most people do is get bold or playful, miss, and then go back to their original victim way of being. It’s not about making the shots, it’s about being the person. Michael Jordan won titles because he was *being* Michael Jordan.

This is a conundrum for sure. But like balance on a bicycle, your mind can't possibly understand it until *after* experiencing it.

Your being follows you everywhere

Sharon just took up tennis. But she also just took on a new way of being. Well, maybe it is better stated that she "found a new way to express an old way of being." You see, at work Sharon is powerful, but on the court she is insecure. At work she is confident, but on the court she is clumsy. Not uncoordinated clumsy, more like confused clumsy. If you saw her play you would be able to see what I'm talking about. It isn't a coordination issue, it's more of a brain fog issue.

Is she a different person on the court than she is at work? Not really. Wherever you go, there you are. And, how you do anything is how you do everything. Sharon's fundamental way of being is the same, it is just dressed in sophistication at work. Power becomes a safe cover for the fear of not measuring up. Confidence becomes an act, which distracts from the fear of being exposed. Strengths are not always pure, sometimes they are contrived cover ups. Authentic strengths are another story, but they arise only after we are authentic with ourselves.

If you asked her what was going on with her tennis game she might say things like "it's too hard" or "I don't know what to do." It doesn't take many reasons before her way of being on the court starts to become clear. She isn't playing tennis per se, the court is just another stage, on it she is playing the role of clumsy. Why not just play tennis? That would be too risky. What if she didn't do it "right?" What if she looked "stupid?" If she is playing clumsy then missing the shot is expected. She's a beginner after all. But if she actually gets present and commits .. what if she fails? Ah, then there wouldn't be anything to hide behind; no more excuses. Thus playing clumsy is much *safer* than playing tennis.

She got some clarity around this in the training session we were doing for her company. Once we had brought some clarity around the role she was assuming on the court, we could then begin to look at the benefits that role was bringing her. Your brain isn't stupid. It doesn't do things without a good reason.

Way of being on the court: Clumsy

Benefits / Payoffs:

- "I get extra attention and help"
- "It keeps the game light hearted"
- "It reminds me of when I was a kid"

It isn't just a benefit, it does something for you in exchange. Sometimes it gives you that false high of being "right." But more often than not, it protects you. At least, it creates

the illusion that it is protecting you. Her wheels started to stall out a bit when we started getting closer to the things being clumsy was protecting her from.

Way of being on the court: Clumsy

Protection from:

“It keeps me from messing up, if I don’t really try, then I can’t really fail.”

“It keeps me from looking bad, it’s expected that a beginner messes up.”

“It keeps me from quitting, if I really failed I might not keep trying.”

Ah, we were getting closer to the thing this act on the court was protecting her from, but we weren’t there yet. With a bit of coaching we fleshed out these last two by uncovering why it would be so bad to “look bad” and why “really failing” was worse than just sorta failing. So I asked, what do you mean by *really* failed?

“If I really tried ...”

yes, go on

“If I really put myself out there. If I gave it all I got. If I went all in and failed .. then I would KNOW that I wasn’t good enough. If I failed then I would know for sure that I didn’t measure up.”

So by playing small, you’re protecting yourself from seeing what you’re really capable of? <she nodded hesitantly> And the assumption is that what you’re really capable of isn’t much at all? <again she nodded hesitantly> Sharon, do you remember the TEDx Hickory talk on audiation? Do you remember that part about meaning? If you commit and miss, what does it mean?

Any other student would have fallen right into this one, but not Sharon. She did very well in the earlier classes. She took on the work and faced the truth. She grew as a leader by leaps and bounds.

She paused briefly before stating “it just means that I missed, that is all.” <she started to chuckle when she saw the cycle>

So, let me get this straight, you are playing clumsy to protect yourself from a meaning that you created?

This was a business seminar so we didn’t get in to all the ramifications of playing all out on the tennis court. We didn’t talk about the rapid growth that playing all out makes possible. We didn’t talk about the illusions and lies that playing full out exposes. What we did was step directly into her role at work.

She wasn't powerful; she was having others do things so she didn't have to risk being exposed as unable to. She wasn't confident; she was purposely deciding faster than she could process so that she didn't have to face how she really felt. She was faking big because she believed that playing true was riskier, which was a meaning she had created. She realized that she wasn't being powerful or confident at all, she was being fearful.

There were a few exercises we went through as a group to solidify this. In the end what she got was that playing true was her only option to being effective at work. She saw that she was actually accomplishing less by hiding. She saw that she was disregarding what she knew was possible. She saw that avoiding how powerful she really was didn't just cost her, it was costing her coworkers as well.

Then came the fun part, after exposing her old way of being and then clearing the slate, we could now create her new way of being. When we create a new way of being it is expressed in the present continuous tense. The tense of the word needs to imply that it is happening now and will continue to happen. She couldn't create herself as authentic because that is past tense. However, she could recreate herself as an expression of authenticity.

For some reason that didn't really stir her. She chose playful as her new way of being. For her, authentic was real, and real was safe. From the place of safe, playful seemed the most inviting.

It took a few days for her to get comfortable in her real skin, but once she did she was promoted immediately and broke two long-standing records in her new division. By being playful, she was finally making the contribution that she had always wanted. It's pretty easy to see how that would happen. When the hidden meaning is exposed, and the payoffs from the old way of being are revealed, then there is no more fear. When there is nothing to fear, then some amazing new results are possible.

This isn't some kind of fluffy unicorns and fairies talk either. This is about your bottom line. This is where mediocrity dies and excellence becomes a way of life *for an entire company*. This is where concrete limitations vanish overnight and industry-shaking breakthroughs arise in the morning. If you are looking to bring that level of transformation to a division at your company, and if you want it done overnight, then being is where it happens.

Who sells more, the irresponsible playful agent or the engaging playful agent?
Who produces more, the head in the clouds or the focused one?
Who persuades more investors, the stressed one or the tranquil one?

These are ways of being. These are not long to-do lists. These are not 47 step processes. These are not the result of 10,000 hours of practice. These high performance

requirements are found in being, not doing or having. Some people don't want to deal with this. They keep chasing results while not knowing that it is their way of being that is pushing them away. Many people don't want to deal with this. It seems fluffy. It seems unnecessarily introspective. And so, for them nothing ever changes. You can't have breakthrough performance without a way of being that makes it possible.

This isn't easy; but it's worth it. Better performance is something few experience for a reason.

Kudos to Sharon.

You are always right

Here's the rub. We are going to have reasons for whatever we do. And we are going to get to be right about our reasons. So why not pick something that is life giving? Remember the confident kids? They simply chose to be confident. Now it's your turn. Choose an empowering way of being and the reasons to support it will appear.

In sales we know that a certain number of cold calls translates into a certain number of sales. For this example let's set that number at 4%. Out of 100 calls, 4 of them turn into sales. The confident person will tell you that they know it is only a matter of time before they get their next sale, 4 out of 100 calls results in victory, it is proven, all they have to do is make 100 calls to get 4 sales, the numbers are in their favor. They will also tell you that they are scheming of ways to make 200 calls or 300 calls because the numbers are in their favor.

The sales person who is not confident has reasons too. If you ask them they will tell you things like: "If I make 100 calls only four of them result in sales, out of 100 calls I get rejected 96 times, about 23 people tell me no for every 1 that tells me yes, that's 23 no's for every sale." They will also confide in you that they are looking to work for another company.

The facts are the same for both sales people. One of them has chosen to be confident and backed it with solid facts. One of them has chosen to be fearful and backed it with solid facts. Both of them get to be right. Both of them get a payoff for keeping their reasons around. If you were to ask either one of them they would be convinced that their reasons were right, reasonable, justifiable, and what anyone else would do.

Crazy huh? You get to pick how you are going to be and you get to pick why you are that way. If you notice that you are hanging onto a certain way of being that is holding you back, notice how tightly you cling to your reasons for being that way and know that you can just as easily pick up a new set of reasons to justify a new way of being, get to be right about them, and cling to them.

The difference is the results the new way of being will produce, which are what you really want.

On the other side of the deception is the truth.... You can have your cake (get what you want) and eat it too (get to be right about why you are that way).

Installing the new way

As an assignment, I want you to write out your new way of being, then start gathering evidence to support it. Each time you encounter more evidence to justify that way of being, write that down too. It won't be long before your new way of being has been permanently installed.

At first installing a new way of being seems ridiculous. Your brain might be screaming reasons why that is NOT the case. You might find yourself feeling sick or unmotivated. For now, place your new way of being in the future, there is no resistance there. You can be, do, or have anything in the future and there is nothing your brain can say about it. After all, there is nothing in the future except what you put there. During my live seminars we take you through a series of powerful exercises, which reprogram your brain to operate from the new way of being. At the end of the training you are literally thinking and feeling like a new person. Image your sales force as unstoppable zombies immune to rejection. Imagine your management as inspiring leaders who create synergy wherever they went. These are just some of the things that are possible when you have experienced the live training.

But for now, place your new way of being in the future. Declare it out loud "I am _____." As you say it acknowledge that this is who you are in the future. The cement this even further, visualize yourself even farther in the future looking back on the future self you just created. From there, your new way of being is in the past!

Begin a daily collection of evidence that lines up with your new way of being.

If you created yourself as a rainmaker, then start writing down every time you pick a penny off the street, or get a unexpected check in the mail. The more you focus on the proof, the more proof you will start to see. Before long you can't *not* see yourself as a rainmaker.

If you created yourself as contagious leader, then start writing down every time you hear someone else use one of your euphemisms. Start writing down every time you picked the location for lunch or the color of the next shipment. The more evidence you pay attention to, the more evidence you will have to pay attention to.

In any given moment there are unlimited possibilities. It is just a matter of which ones you are going to pay attention to. The ones you put your focus on are the ones that will

become real for you. But you can just as easily pick a new set of possibilities, focus on them, and they will become your supporting reasons for your new way of being.

1000% responsibility

Many years ago a masterclass was held in New York City that was led by the Concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic. To be the Concertmaster of one of the best orchestras in the world meant that you were one of the best violinists in the world.

A masterclass is a large, group learning format. Usually there is a guest artist who is the “master,” a few students who will be taught, and an audience who will watch and learn. It can be a pretty stressful affair to perform in front of your peers and be graded in front of them as well.

At this particular class the teacher was being really hard on a student for his intonation. The teacher kept criticizing the student harshly for this. After some time it was apparent that the audience was sympathetic towards the student. This was a *student* who was here to *learn*. Doesn't it seem reasonable that a student would play out of tune on occasion?

The teacher sensed the state of the audience and turned to play for them. He played the opening phrase from the famous Bach Ciaccona for solo violin. It sounded great with a wonderful tone and perfect intonation. It was a real masterpiece. The audience however was not impressed.

He asked them “are you not impressed? There was not much of a reply.

He then turned around and made some adjustments on his violin. After his adjustments he turned back to face the audience and played the same passage equally beautifully.

He asked again “are you not impressed?”

This time a reply came from the audience “you are the Concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic, we *expect you* to play that well.”

The concertmaster then played the four open strings of the violin and the audience was stunned. His violin was terribly out of tune!

He had played the first time with a violin in tune and of course his playing was perfectly in tune and with a wonderful tone. The second time he played, he altered the tension on all of the pegs making the violin terribly out of tune. But when he played the second time, the passage was every bit as in tune and with a rich sound as the first time.

Now the audience understood why he was so hard on the student. Intonation comes from the player, not the instrument. Regardless of the state of the instrument, it is the player's

responsibility to make it sound proper. Some players blame their instrument. Some players take responsibility and actually cause the sound to be on pitch.

By taking responsibility for the situation you actually end up with more power and control. Even though the situation seems out of your control, by taking responsibility, you end up with more control over the situation. If the instrument is out of tune, but you have to play anyways, your job is to adjust your playing and continue to adjust your playing to keep the music beautiful. It does require a lot more work to play in tune on an out of tune instrument. But the right player can make any instrument sound good.

That is why we admire them so much. And that is why the Concertmaster regained the respect of the audience after being so hard on the student. There was a greater lesson. Intonation is not a function of the instrument or the music, it is a function of the player.

... and so is leadership.

It is very easy to blame company results on the employees. It sounds very reasonable to do so. After all if you had better workers doesn't it seem logical that your company would be producing better results? Ah, this is the great distraction. If only this, if only that our mind says. We might even catch ourselves complaining about it to a friend "if it weren't for my accounting department we would really be growing right now."

It is a distraction.

You don't have different employees. You have the ones you have right now. Even if you did have different ones, it wouldn't matter. What kind of score would Tiger Woods be shooting with your clubs? And for the rub - what kind of score would you be shooting with his clubs?

This is why new employees aren't necessarily the solution to your problem. After all they are *your* employees. You attracted them or hired the person who did. You interviewed them or hired the person who did. You trained them or hired the person who did. You failed to fire them 4 years ago or hired the person who did. It is uncomfortable. It is painful. But taking 1000% responsibility is the only path to effective leadership.

Blaming and complaining might make you feel good in the present moment, but they don't actually change anything. Being "right" about why it is "their" fault may win you some ego points with yourself, but it leaves you powerless. As long as the problem is outside of you then there isn't anything you can do about it. By definition you can only change what is *your* problem.

Be the concertmaster. Take responsibility and get results.

Oops, it was me

While I was getting my Master's degree there was a really good violinist at my school named Tim Baker. He was working on his undergraduate degree, but he played the violin like a consummate professional. One day, he got a new violin.

Tim sounded great on his old violin. He had this huge sound that sort of permeated your being and got your attention. The color was rich. The tone was sweet. It was the kind of thing that made you stop and really appreciate it. Tim was amazing. But when he got his new violin Tim was unstoppable. His tone took on super human qualities. He had by far the biggest, richest, deepest and most colorful sound of anyone I knew.

When you are a music student you spend all of your college experience in the music building. You eat there, you go to class there, you hang out with your friends there, you practice your instrument there, you do your homework there and you listen to recordings for your class assignments there. As a result of spending so much time practicing, playing and performing around the other musicians you get to know them pretty well.

One day while I was practicing in the music building I had a chance to play Tim's new violin. By trying another instrument you learn a lot about your own instrument and your own playing. You might have only played their instrument for a few minutes, but the things you learned during that time will always stick with you. It is almost as if the instrument becomes your teacher.

I was finally going to have a chance to play Tim Baker's amazing new violin. As I got it in position to play I was really excited. I had heard this violin make some big and amazing sounds. And now I was going to get to sound like Tim! I could hardly wait to hear that large luscious sound.

I started to play. I heard the sound.

I stopped and had to reevaluate. Something wasn't right. It didn't sound like Tim's violin.

I looked it over. It was Tim's violin and Tim was standing right there. I played it some more. It still didn't sound like Tim's violin. Uh Oh. I could sense a major life lesson approaching.

To be honest, the sound I heard that day was the thinnest, wimpiest, puniest, scratchiest and most pathetic sound I had ever heard in the music building. Had they been present, those kids in the beginner's violin class would have been laughing. The sound was awful. Gritty, sandy, thin, shallow - awful.

The sound I produced was so bad, I actually considered quitting music school. Maybe I should just sell my viola and go get a regular job. I was shocked at how bad the sound was. And all the while I was even more amazed by Tim. The lesson was becoming clear. Tim's violin was not making that big sound – it was Tim who was creating the sound. His violin was just a formality.

And from that lesson I went back into my practice room and had to face the facts about my own playing. It was time for me to stop blaming my viola for the sound it made and take greater responsibility for my playing. Tim's violin taught me what it takes to sit principal viola. Tim's violin taught me what leadership is really about.

Being is contagious

While I was getting my Master's degree in Music Performance from the University of South Carolina, there was a professor there named Jack Bauer. He was a fabulous violinist and a masterful storyteller. One of his best stories was from when he was studying music as a college student.

He was taking lessons from a world-renowned violinist named Josef Fuchs. Being a globe trotting soloist, Mr. Fuchs played on world-class violin and bow as well. His violin was a Stradivarius and his bow was a Tourte. At the time, the violin was worth roughly a million dollars and the bow about fifty thousand. Yes, I know. Fifty thousand sounds like a lot of money for a two-foot long pencil with some horsehair on it, but in the right hands, it turns into a magic wand.

Jack was in a violin lesson on this day and his teacher had to step out to take a call. Who knows what the call was about? It could have been an offer for a recording contract. It could have been an opportunity to perform for the President. The real newsworthy item is that Josef left his violin and bow lying on his desk!

So here is Jack in the room by himself doing his best to practice that tricky passage. But the instrument lying on the desk is too much of a temptation. Jack finally gives in.

He goes over to the table and grabs some pencils. He places the pencils around the outline of the violin and bow to ensure that he puts them back in *exactly* the same position on the desk. With much trepidation he picks up the violin and bow to see what it feels like to play on such a fine instrument.

With all kinds of thoughts running through his head – *what if I drop it – what if I get caught* - Jack plays the cherished violin. He plays the instrument just about as long as his conscience will allow him. The longer he plays, the more certain he is that his teacher will reenter the room and his joyride will come to a screeching halt.

Jack goes back to the desk and very carefully places the violin and bow in the exact position they were found on the desk. He removes the pencils and replaces them in the cup. When he is confident that the instrument has been returned to its exact original position and that there is no trace of his mischief, he returns to his own instrument.

After a few moments of playing on his own instrument, his teacher finishes the phone call and returns to the lesson. *Whew, just in time, what a relief.* During the lesson Josef is attempting to describe to Jack how he would like for a certain passage to be played.

“Play with a little more tenderness” – says Josef

Jack does his best

“No, not quite like that, a bit more Andante”

Jack tries again

“Well, tell you what, how about I demonstrate”

(dead silence as the air fills with anticipation)

Josef picks up his Stradivarius violin and begins to demonstrate how he would like for the passage to be played. He gets about two notes into the passage and stops.

“You played my instrument” – he says to Jack

(insert awkward pause here as Jack awaits the impending doom)

“It’s okay, I would have done the same thing if I were you.”

And nothing more was said of it!

How did he know? The violin was left in the exact same position. The instrument was laying on the desk long enough to return to room temperature. There were no marks or scratches left.

This is how Josef knew that his instrument had been touched – As the quality of an instrument increases, its responsiveness increases as well. A Stradivarius is closer to a living organism than it is a piece of wood. Furthermore, each of us leaves an imprint behind wherever we go. With each face-to-face encounter, we leave something behind.

Can you drive someone’s car and get a feel for how the owner drives it? Can you talk to a child and gather a sense of how it is treated at home? Can you work with a group of employees and take a good guess as to how the boss treats them? Can you take a look at a tube of lipstick and get an impression of its owner?

Well those might seem to be pretty easy to answer for some of you. How about these questions: Can you walk a forest trail and get a sense of who walked the trail before you? Can you enter a room and pick up any lingering emotions left by the person who was there before you?

We all leave something behind. This fact is proven over and over in the world of science and quantum physics. The wonderful gift is deciding what it is that you are going to leave behind. We tend to go through life accidentally. Take some time, now, what is the imprint that you want to leave behind in your next encounter?

I once read a book on stage fright by a famous prodigy names Kato Havas. When she married she put her concert career aside to focus on raising her children. After they were older, she returned to her violin for the purpose of teaching.

By taking several years off from playing every day, it gave her a fresh perspective on violin technique. She discovered on her return that there were a lot of stressful things she was doing. She noticed that there were a lot of stressful ways that most students are taught to play. With some experimenting she soon developed a very natural and effortless way of playing. Her students were making excellent progress by following her advice.

One of the by-products of this new approach to violin playing revealed some new insights to the instrument as well. She began to notice that the instrument would reveal to her how it had been handled. If a student had not practiced much, she could tell. If a student had practiced with a cold tone, she could tell. If a student had practiced the music out of tune, she could tell. All she had to do was play the student's violin during the private lesson and it would reveal to her how the student had been practicing at home.

If the student had been playing out of tune during the week, she noticed that it took a bit more effort on her part for the correct pitches to "speak." If the student had not practiced much at all, or had practiced with a very poor tone, she had to work a little harder to make the violin produce the rich tone it was built for.

I thought her claims were a bit much, but after trying them out on my students, I saw that she was right. The instrument had a "memory." If my students had been playing out of tune that week, I had to work harder to play in tune on their instrument. It was as if there was a bunch of fog inside that needed to be cleared out before the correct pitches would freely sound.

Years later I watched a few films that explained this phenomenon on the level of quantum physics. All things retain an imprint, not just violins. Whenever we touch an object, we are transferring our energy signature. We leave something behind wherever we go. Think of it like a fingerprint in the realm of energy.

So, what is the imprint you want to leave behind? If a new manager stepped into your shoes today, what would they see written on the faces of your employees?

Now it's your turn

Normally an assignment looks like taking your big goal and then breaking it up into smaller goals. And, that is a really good idea. But by now you know that no matter how clear the steps are, it is a person's way of being that will determine whether or not they are going to succeed. If you were to look through your dreams and goals, there is one that sticks out the most. This is the one that would actually require something of you to walk in that new way of living. You would have to step up your game. At the same time, when this becomes your reality it is a game changer.

Step 1

Who would you have to *be* for _____ to flow?

What kind of a person would it take for that outcome to be a natural response. What way of being would produce that result as an automatic by-product?

Step 2

Begin gathering evidence to support that way of being in your life.

This calls for some acting on your part at first. Right now your brain thinks there aren't any reasons for you to be that way. But you won't have the evidence *until* you start being that way. It isn't a catch-22, it really only works one direction. Be the person first, see the results second. So at first you will be an actor playing a very convincing role. But after awhile that dividing line will be blurred like Arnold Schwarzenegger and soon after that the dividing line will disappear, like Cary Grant.

Play the game, you have nothing to lose and the world to gain.

Are you an Asian or a Woman?

There is a stereotype that Asian people tend to do well in math. And there is another stereotype that women tend to do worse in math.

How well do Asian *women* do in math?

Do the stereotypes matter?

A group of Harvard researchers brought in a group of Asian women for some math testing. Anytime a psychologist brings you in for a study on something, you can bet they aren't interested in whatever they tell you the study is on. In the case of the Asian women, the real study had to do with the questionnaire they filled out before taking the math test. The women were split up into three groups:

Group A filled out a questionnaire asking about what language their parents and grandparents spoke. This was designed to prime them to think about their Asian heritage.

Group B filled out a questionnaire asking about life as a woman on campus and other gender related issues. This was designed to prime them to think of their female identity.

Group C filled out a questionnaire asking about neutral things like their favorite class. This was designed to take their mind off of being a “woman” or an “Asian.”

After taking the math test, here is how the groups ranked:

Group A

Group C

Group B

A few questions asking about *one* aspect of their nature was all it took to sway their performance on a math test. If they took the test after thinking about being Asian they did well. If they took the test after thinking about being a woman they did poorly. The key ingredient to shifting all of this was – a question.

If you want to shift who someone is being, just ask them a related question.

Prisoner or Guard

What would happen if someone stepped out of their role in normal life and stepped into playing the role of a prisoner or a guard? What would happen if you put free people in a prison role playing game for a few weeks? Would pretending to be someone else for a little while have any effect on their normal ethics or morality?

Philip Zimbardo, a psychologist at Stanford, found some rather scary answers to those questions with what has become known as the 1971 Stanford Prison Experiment.

70 people applied to take part in a psychology study on prison life. Of those 24 were found to have the mental stability to endure such an experiment. Of those 18 were chosen for the task. 9 were to play the role as prisoner and 9 were to play the role as guard. They consulted with ex-convicts and correctional personnel to make their prison experiment as real as possible. They had it all, cramped conditions, solitary confinement, and even small box confinement. The guards were given no training or special instructions and only a few rules about what they could not do.

At the start of the experiment the prisoners were arrested at home (by surprise,) handcuffed, read their rights, and booked at the county jail. From there they were transported to the makeshift prison. On arrival they were stripped, de-loused, given a gown to wear as prison clothes and a stocking for their hair (even though they were all

men,) given a heavy chain around their ankle, given a number as their new name, and locked three to a cell behind iron bars.

The experiment was originally set to run for 2 weeks.

Nobody could have predicted what would happen next:

On the second day there was a rebellion by the prisoners.
The guards squelched it by force using fire extinguishers and clubs.
The guards stripped the prisoners naked as punishment.
The guards placed the ringleaders in solitary confinement.
The guards began psychological tactics to manipulate the prisoners.
The guards denied bathroom privileges forcing the prisoners to suffer the end result.

But it gets worse ..

Not only had the participants playing the role of prisoner or guard fully transform into their respective roles, but the psychologists overseeing the experiment slipped out of their role as clinical observer and into the role of prison superintendent. When there was the threat of a prison break, the psychologists who had created the whole experiment began plotting how they could thwart any threats to the security of their prison.

What started as an experiment in how the different roles we play in life affect us had gone off the rails. The participants were no longer playing the roles; they *became* their roles. The prisoners actually began thinking like prisoners. The guards started thinking like guards. But even more chilling was that the outside observers started thinking like prison superintendents.

The situation had escalated much faster than anyone could have predicted and the decision was made for the safety and sanity of all involved to end the experiment early.

It only took SIX days for conditions to deteriorate to something like Abu Gharib or the Nazi concentration camps. Remember the participants were carefully screened and only the most psychologically sound applicants were allowed to participate.

This is the power of roles. This is the power of being.

Give someone a different role in the play and you have just created a new person.

Tricks for Tots

There is a successful preschool program called “Tools of the Mind” that creates an amazing learning environment by eliminating the meltdowns and tantrums common in 4 year olds. When you realize that the brain of a 4 year old is practically wired to have

meltdowns, then you can appreciate what an amazing accomplishment this is. At that age, the brain is undergoing so many chemical changes and neuron changes, that meltdowns are a natural function of the brain. The kids aren't "bad" or "undisciplined," anyone who experienced those kind of chemical shifts would be having meltdowns too.

What Tools of the Mind does, that works so well, is to group the kids into different roles during playtime. One day you might be the policeman, the next day you might be the grocery shopper. Anytime a breakdown started to emerge, all the teacher had to do was remind them of their roles. "Is that what a fireman would do?" "Is that what a mommy would do?"

By taking on the different roles in play, the kids were inadvertently taking on the different mindsets that go along with them. If your role that day is "fireman" then you aren't upset that you didn't get to ring up the groceries during playtime. And, if your role that day is "grocery store clerk," then you aren't going to be upset that you didn't get to drive the fire truck.

The classroom dynamics are amazing and effortless. There is no need to lecture or berate the kids. There is no need to calm anyone down. There is never a need to explain to some tear soaked 4 year old why they shouldn't be feeling that way.

When you align the person with the way of being that is congruent with the desired result, then amazing levels of performance are common place.

There was a time when Andre Agassi was the top tennis player in the world. But then his rankings started to slip prematurely. He wasn't too old. He wasn't injured. He just wasn't on top of his game anymore. So what do you do when you need a radical transformation? You go see a being coach. Only they aren't called that, they are usually referred to as motivational speakers.

Andre Agassi went to do some work with Tony Robbins, the legendary motivational speaker. One of the key things Tony did with him was to point out how he stopped "being" the champion that he was. If you saw him walk down the street you wouldn't think "winner" because he was walking like a "loser." Tony coached him on using his body, his breathing, his gaze, and every part of his movements to reflect "champion." The transformation was instant, and Andre regained his position as contender.

If you want someone else's results, simply take on their way of being. When you stand, and speak, and breathe like them, as if you were playing them in a movie, then you start to think like them, act like them, and produce like them. The more convincing you are at playing their character on the stage of life, the more prolific your results will be.

Power of a Lab Coat

If an authority told you to do something would you do it? Depends? What if it violated your morals? Specifically, would you give someone a lethal dose of electricity just because a lab technician told you to do it? Probably not. When a group of medical school psychiatrists was asked how many people would cross the line just because they were told to do it, they said less than 3% would go that far. It's common knowledge, no one is going to kill someone just because they were "told" to do it. There has to be a personal motivation at play to go along with the order or a person wouldn't do it.

In 1961 Stanley Milgram, a psychologist at the University of Yale, devised an experiment to probe the limits of obedience. His electric shock experiment went on to become as famous as it was controversial. But, it needed to be controversial. Part of the motivation for this study came from reflecting on the war crimes of Nazi Germany. The kind of study designed to duplicate the limits of following orders, is going to be messy.

The experiment involved three people, a supervisor, a teacher, and a learner. The supervisor's job was to make sure the teacher was complying with the rules of the experiment. The supervisor had a white lab coat, a clipboard, and a stern air of authority. The teacher's job was to teach a set of word pairs to a learner and administer an electric shock each time the learner got it wrong.

At the beginning of the study the volunteers drew their slips of paper to determine which one of them was going to be the teacher and which one was going to be the learner. But the slips were rigged, the volunteer was always going to be the teacher and the learner was actually an actor who would play the role of learner but was really a confederate for the experiment.

The teacher and supervisor would enter one room and the confederate learner would enter the adjacent room. The teacher could not see the learner but could communicate through an intercom system. Before entering the rooms, the confederate would let slip that he had a heart condition. The teacher was given a mild shock to know what the learner was going to feel each time they got the answer wrong. Each wrong answer would result in a 15-volt increase. The teacher was educated on the lethal dangers of the higher voltage shocks.

When the experiment started, the teacher would read the word pairs and a multiple-choice list of possible answers. If the learner got it right they moved on to the next question. If the learner got it wrong, the teacher would administer an electric shock. For each wrong answer the voltage would be increased by 15-volts, until reaching the limit of 450 volts. In reality no one was actually shocked. When the confederate learner entered their room, they just played back prerecorded sounds on a speaker to cause the teacher on the other side to think that they were really being shocked. The sounds started with nothing, then moved up to wincing, then complaining, then yelling, then screaming and protesting

while reminding the teacher of their heart condition. Along the way the confederate would pound on the wall between them to beg for the test to end.

If the teacher wanted to stop the experiment or check on the confederate, they were sternly instructed by the supervisor in the room to continue. Only if they persisted through four admonishments to continue were the teachers allowed to stop the experiment early. The admonishments were:

1. Please continue
2. The experiment requires that you continue
3. It is absolutely essential that you continue
4. You have no other choice, you must go on

After the learner reached a peak of banging on the wall, screaming, complaining of their heart condition, and begging for the experiment to end, they would go silent. Yet, there were still more questions to be asked and voltage increases to be made for the wrong answers. Knowing this, how many people continued with the test all the way to the final 450 volts?

26 out of 40 people did. That is a whopping 65 percent!

The results have been duplicated in several experiments in several different cultures with the same results. The majority of the population will kill you just because they were told to. They might complain, protest, stall, or argue, but they will push the button before walking out of the room. Furthermore, of those who persisted through the four admonishments, none of them demanded that the experiment be stopped and none of them asked to check on the learner.

This is the power of being.

By taking the role of “teacher” they were distanced from their own actions. It wasn’t them doing the evil act, they were just carrying out the orders of the supervisor. They weren’t responsible, the supervisor was. The role they were playing at the time caused them to completely bypass their normal moral code.

A famous examples of this include the Kitty Genovese murder in 1964 where there were numerous witnesses, but no one stepped in to intervene. Despite hearing screams for help right outside their apartment window, no one helped. This phenomenon has been dubbed the “bystander effect” and has been documented in several other murders. Playing the role of a bystander, absolves your conscious of a responsibility to act. It turns the brain off, just like playing the role of “teacher” did in the Milgram electric shock experiment.

Wherever you are, stop and ask yourself “who am I being right now?”