

The Balcony

A perspective shifting activity by De Yarrison, CPCC

The following exercise is intended to help you:

- 1) reflect on your past and present life experiences
- 2) set intention and direction for your future

It is best to read through the entire exercise once, and then come back through it with a notebook and pen. Write your responses to the questions below as well as any other thoughts or reflections that the questions may stimulate.

Up On The Balcony

Imagine yourself standing up on an outdoor balcony. Below, a long meandering path stretches endlessly in either direction. Look down the path to the left. This is the path you've already traveled; the path that has led you here today. To the right is the path unfolding before you. And where you stand at this moment is the present.

Just as yesterday's choices, thoughts, and actions have brought you here today, know that today's choices, thoughts, and actions will determine your path forward.

Yesterday

As you look down the path to your left, you see situations, choices, people, and decisions that you've encountered along your journey thus far. These encounters have worked together to lead you to where you stand today.

- 1) What do you notice about the path you've traveled?
- 2) Do you see any themes?
- 3) Anything surprise you as you look from where you stand now?
- 4) Find one thing, there on your path, that you've never noticed before.

Even the most trying or difficult circumstances such as illness, addiction, loss, or abuse can work for good in our lives when we choose to see the learning opportunity they present. Often, the change and growth we experience through our trials would not have been possible any other way.

- 1) How have you grown or been strengthened through your various experiences?
- 2) What important lessons or golden learning nuggets have you learned through your experiences?
- 3) What 3 qualities have you developed (or have been developed in you) as a result of struggles or challenges? For me, the three qualities are compassion, presence/deep listening, and gratitude for what is.

Today

Stand strongly in this present moment. If you are familiar with yoga, perhaps you would move now into “Standing Mountain” pose. Close your eyes. Inhale deeply and exhale slowly. Do that again. Now reflect on these questions

1. What are you grateful for presently in your life?
2. What are you tolerating presently in your life?
3. What are your 3-5 most important values? For example, mine are: Live simply (less stuff, more relationship), God-centered trust, health & vitality, humility, and authenticity.
4. What do you want more of in your life/in the world? What do you hunger for?

Note: To identify your core values and look at the impact they have on you and your choices, visit my blog articles:

<http://essentialshiftnow.com/2012/02/values-of-behavior-change/>

<http://essentialshiftnow.com/2012/02/part-2-values-of-intentional-change/>

Tomorrow



From my Manifesto for a Conversation Revolution.

Now look ahead on your path, to your right. Each and everyday, I am mindful of my mantra in the photo above. It is my personal choice to not let “life happen to me”, but to be an active partner in creating the life I want. The life I want - and dare I say, the life you want - is one where our daily existence is a reflection of our core values. This is the heart of fulfillment. Fulfillment is not about money, status, achievement, or even people and relationships, Fulfillment is about peace-of-mind, self-acceptance, and self-love. These qualities flow out of a life that is lived in alignment with one’s deeply held values; when one’s daily behaviors, choices, even thoughts, are a reflection of the individual’s core values.

So, again, look down your path to the right.

- 1) What core value(s) is it time for you to express more fully in your daily living?
- 2) How will you do that? What 1 or 2 specific actions will you take?
- 3) Let's look at how you get in your own way. What actions, habits, thought-patterns sabotage your peace-of-mind and self-acceptance? Write them down.
- 4) What's true, if anything, about your self-sabotaging thoughts or habits? What is NOT true or authentic about them?
- 5) What actions, habits, thought-patterns is it time for you to let go of, in service of your desired future?

This exercise was born out of my reflections on what I call the "time paradox." That is, "the days are long, but the years are short." You can read my blog on this idea at:
<http://essentialshiftnow.com/2012/12/days-are-long>

I hope you find these reflections useful. Looking for more guidance or greater impact from these reflections? Coaching with me might be just what you're looking for. Contact me to schedule a free sample session: 610.287.2989 or de@essentialshiftnow.com