

Schoveing Series 3: Living by Knowing When to STOP

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ABSTRACT

Would changing the way you prioritize your life help ensure a successful and fruitful life? Would you like to renew the way you live, think, feel, and will? Is the senselessness of demanding more and exhausting yourself in the pursuit of what keeps you trapped in a vicious cycle of “striving and never arriving” keeping you awake? Do you know when to stop and determine what is important and valuable to your life? Do you have daily habits that keep you in a comfort zone that you would like to break? Would you like to stop working and start living? Does parenting make you nervous and question loving? How many of you procrastinate and never have time to start focusing? Are you so consumed in your mind that you take over all conversations and never listen to what the other person is saying? Do you live your life thinking that fate is all you have and nothing else can stop your circumstances from continuing? Is fear guiding you? Are you apprehensive of what will happen tomorrow and have not forgiven the past? This paper will unlock your ability to answer these very important questions. The goal is to start believing in yourself, your success and have the unwavering faith to achieve your life’s purpose and unlock your unlimited potential! Everything you ever wished for will be brought forth as you have a harmonious relationship with yourself, the great architect of the universe, and the world. Practice knowing when to stop.

INTRODUCTION

The inspiration to write this paper came on September 5th, 2016. I was at a stoplight, at the intersection of Watkins Mills and Stedwick Road in Montgomery Village, MD. While I waited for the light to turn green, there were a lot of thoughts crossing my mind. The summer had been so hectic with no break working on a FDA submission for a diabetes drug. The days were very long at work and I felt like something else besides me was controlling my life. So, as I stared at the red stop light, I came to the divine realization that if traffic laws have to be obeyed in order for us to be safe and not harm each other, then the same traffic laws should apply to our lives and we should live our lives guided by a new way of thinking that allows us to live on this earth by knowing when to stop. We have to learn to prepare to stop (amber), then STOP (red), and then proceed with life (green) guided by principles that enable us to start living, loving, focusing, guiding, observing, forgiving, and leading.

The 7 keys that you are about to read and embrace in this paper are designed to open a new way of thinking for you and your loved ones. I am still *evolving* practicing each one of them, so we are together in this journey. As you embrace the philosophy, you will learn and know that you have these keys within you that unlock the infinite potential of being able to lead a life that you ALONE appreciate and love, because you end up releasing the need to control anything, anyone, and yourself now and forever. As you read, don’t read with your mind only, feel the words and the response deep within. I am only writing what you already know. You will discover that all I am doing is to remind you of what you have forgotten. You will know explicitly that these words are true when that feeling of heightened aliveness engulfs you. You are now on a path to career success, a happier family life, loving life, work life, and a better social life. Living by knowing when to stop becomes a part of you forever.

The skills described in this paper draw its conclusions from the author’s personal experiences as an individual and people manager and various books on personal development by authors listed in the reference section.

What is the Schoveing Series? It’s a plain and meekly made up name that I thought would be great to come up with when I am given the chance and honor to present in major conferences! That’s it to the name.

KEY 1: HOW TO STOP WORKING AND START LIVING

I am not talking about retirement or you quitting your job, that is far from the intention this key, brings you. My concern here is our mental attitude about working taking precedence over living as human beings. We have become human doings who are obsessed about our work and have built habits that are detrimental to our well-being. What do you do when you get home after work? Are you still working in your head even after leaving the office? Are you shuffling your kids around while trying to catch up with your emails on your phone? Are you forgoing important meals with your family because you have to work? Are you working weekends? Do you yell at your kids when you get home that you are working for them and they should be quiet because you need to catch up with work? Do you ignore your spouse or partner when they ask you to put the phone down or shut off the laptop? Do you get irritated when you have to answer your emails during your vacation? When is the last time you cooked dinner for your family and sat together to enjoy the well prepared delicious meal? The list is endless and you only need to be true to your self by pausing right now and taking stock of what you have been doing to yourself, your spouse, and your family.

To stop working and start living is not exactly an easy road to be chosen. In fact, the idea itself is not easy to comprehend. The path of victory is always thorny; but when the thorns hurt the feet most, we can console ourselves with the thought that the path really does lead somewhere, and we know definitely that it leads to success, achievement, happiness, and satisfaction. Difficulties there will be, disappointments, failures and setbacks, but to him or her who sets their face towards the light, and will keep steadily onward, there must come success and accomplishment, above all expectation. You must alter your mental attitude, and direct your thoughts into those channels, which lead to success, achievement, health, happiness, and perfect good. It is also important to arouse the inward power within you, build up character, and discover and develop your creative faculty. The object of all life is development; and everything that lives has an inalienable right to all the development it is capable of attaining.

To stop working means that, you should embrace the natural and inherent impulse of life to seek to live more instead of working more. Why? Because, it is the nature of intelligence to enlarge itself, and of consciousness to seek to extend boundaries and find fuller expression. Nature is formed for the advancement of life and its impelling motive is the increase of life. Nature is friendly to your plans. Everything is naturally for you. Make up your mind to believe that this is true. To start living, you must be ready to exert your will and accomplish wonders. One must eliminate mental laziness and desire to have fulfilling lives with our loved ones and friends. You must want real life, not merely pleasure or sensual gratification. Life is the performance of function; and the individual really lives only when she performs every function, physical, mental, and spiritual, of which she is capable, without excess in any.

What is your purpose in life? Is it to work? I hope not, because life is for living. In the book, *The Power of Now*, by Eckhart Tolle, he says the following; "Your life's journey has an outer purpose and inner purpose. The outer purpose is to arrive at your goal or destination, to accomplish what you set to do, to achieve this or that, which, of course, implies the future. But if your destination, or the steps you are going to take in the future, take up so much of your attention that they become more important to you than the step you are taking now, then you completely miss the journey's inner purpose, which has nothing to do with where you are going or what you are doing, but everything to do with how. It has nothing to do with the future but everything to do with your consciousness at this moment. The outer purpose belongs to the horizontal dimension of space and time; the inner purpose concerns a deepening of your Being in the vertical dimension of timeless now. Your outer journey may contain a million steps; your inner journey only has one: the step you are taking right now. As you become more deeply aware of this one step, you realize that it already contains within itself all the other steps as well as the destination." Your purpose in life will be fulfilled when you realize that you are endowed with Infinite powers to fulfill all your desires in this life here and now. As Eckhart puts it, "you are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold. That is how important you are!"

In the *Magic Story*, (Author Unknown), there are six lessons that can be acquired by anyone wishing to have more out of life. These are:

- **Man should not be blinded to whatsoever merit exists in the opportunity which he hath in hand;** remembering that a thousand promises for the future should weigh as naught against the

possession of a single piece of silver. This means that we should not be blinded by our current work thinking that our life is our work. There is more to life than just working.

- **Fortune is ever elusive, can only be retained by force.** Deal with her tenderly and she will forsake you for a stronger man. This is to suggest that when you work, hold the thought of what you desire to become with the unwavering faith that you do achieve what you desire, closing your mind to all that may tend to shake your purpose or dim your vision.
- **Failure exists only in the grave.** Man, being alive, hath not yet failed; always he may turn around and ascend by the same path he descended by; and there may be one that is less abrupt (albeit longer of achievement) and more adaptable to his condition.
- **Seek comrades among the industrious, for those who are idle will sap your energies from you.** Stay away from people who are constantly complaining, condemning, and criticizing everything and everyone. If you do this yourself, you need to stop. In order to start living, you must be at peace with yourself and the world around you. Harmony and peace of mind are powerful thought forces that will build you up.
- **The Ishmaelite and the leper are the same, since both are abominations in the sight of man** – albeit they differ much, in that the former may be restored to perfect health. The former is entirely the result of imagination; the latter has poison in his blood. (The Ishmaelite is a person whose hand is against everybody, and who thinks that the hands of every other man are against him). To start living, do yourself a favor and stop dwelling on misfortunes of any kind. Instead, choose to see light and love in everyone and everything around you.
- **Whatever you desire of good is yours.** You have but to stretch forth your hand and take it. Have no fear of any form or shape. Ask of no man permission to perform. Start today; start now upon this new journey.

KEY 2: HOW TO STOP PARENTING AND START LOVING

If you asked married couples that have 2 or 3 children, none of whom are yet teenagers, who are the most important people in the family, what do you think would be the response? In today's society, the response to this question is "our children!" If you probed further and asked the same couple what makes them give their children this status, what would be the response? At most, you will get a few mumbles and fumbles that appeal to emotions.

I believe this is the root of the many problems that many parents have with their kids, treating the kids above the marriage, the family, and the couple themselves. This should be the other way around, because children exist because of the couple and their marriage and thrive because they have worked hard to create a stable family. Parents provide clothing, food, shelter, and some great vacations, which these children enjoy.

Growing up, it was clear to us that our parents were the most important people in our families and that is why we respected our parents and looked up to adults in general. I still recall the importance my parents placed on their relationship, and therefore we did not sleep in their beds or interrupt their conversations or throw tantrums in the supermarket. My mother's round dining table was a special place to meet for the family meal and that was more important than after school activities. Our parents interacted more closely and talked more with one other than they talked to you, which led to our early emancipation. It was clear to us that the most important person in a family is the parent just as the CEO is important in a corporation or a teacher in a classroom.

Children should be prepared through LOVE to be responsible citizens who in turn will strengthen the community and culture we live in. Raising or is it "maintaining" a generation of children who feel entitled is a sad affair and it is not only happening here in America but all over the world. The Japanese-American futurist, Francis Fukuyama, was partly spot on in his much-maligned book "*The End of History*" (history is still marching), when he predicted an unstoppable global march towards "uniformity" of people's ways all over the world. You'll find blue jeans, coke, chips, mobile phones, etc. at virtually all corners of the world to go along with YouTube videos, movies, audios and tantalizing texts; all of which mold young minds in every culture along a uniform if not the same direction!

This why I think we should re-focus and re-imagine parenting by learning to love our children and then

giving them roots and wings to be whatever they will to be. Remember that effective parents don't want to be leaned on; they want to make leaning unnecessary. As parents, set an example and let them see that it's possible to be self-sufficient and enormously successfully. Allow the children to learn to trust in their highest nature, rather than having to thumb through a rulebook to decide what is right.

One of my favorite US presidents' is Abraham Lincoln. He was a parent that emulates what I am trying to say here about stopping to parent and loving your children. Here is what Abraham Lincoln wrote to his son's teacher when his son joined school:

" My son starts school today. It is all going to be strange and new to him for a while and I wish you would treat him gently. It is an adventure that might take him across continents. The adventure may probably include wars, tragedy and sorrow. To live his life will require faith, love and courage.

So dear Teacher, will you please take him by his hand and teach him things he will have to know. Teach him – gently, if you can, that for every enemy, there is a friend. He will have to know that all men are not just, that all men are not true.

Teach him also that for every scoundrel there is a hero, that for every crooked politician, there is a dedicated leader.

Teach him if you can, that 10 cents earned is of far more value than a dollar stolen. In school, teacher, teach him that it is far more honorable to fail than to cheat. Teach him to learn how to gracefully lose, and enjoy winning when he does win.

Teach him to be gentle with gentle people and to be tough with tough people. Steer him away from envy if you can and teach him the secret of quiet laughter. Teach him if you can – how to laugh when he is sad. Teach him that there is no shame in tears. Teach him that there can be glory in failure and despair in success. Teach him to scoff at cynics.

Teach him if you can the wonders of books, but also give time to ponder the extreme mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun and flowers on a green hill. Teach him to have faith in his own ideas; even if every one tells him they are wrong.

Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone else is doing it. Teach him to listen to every one, but teach him also to filter all that he hears on a screen of truth and take only the good that comes through.

Teach him to sell his talents and brains to the highest bidder but never to put a price tag on his heart and soul.

Let him have the courage to be impatient and the patience to be brave. Teach him to have sublime faith in himself, because then he will always have sublime faith in mankind, and in God.

This is a tall order, teacher, but see what best you can do. He is such a nice little boy; he is my son."

Parents, reduce the pampering and the unnecessary help you offer your children. Let your children grow in wisdom, intelligence and strength. Let them face the truth and the realities of life. Teach them to grow to become independent adults. Teach them to fear God, respect others, and develop confidence in themselves. Raise children to be self-sufficient, to make their own decisions as soon as they are able, and to feel proud in the decisions they do make.

Now lets help the parents themselves. The biggest challenge is that we wear many hats: have a household to run with infinite tasks, have jobs to go, have personal things to do (go to the gym, read, etc.), and we have children to raise. Children make a parent's ability to focus a challenge. These kids always want something, or have a problem, or want attention or have to be driven somewhere or have an appointment to be taken care of. And the truth is that when these kids are not requiring attention, they are busy thinking about things we need to be doing with them or for them. With these many hats, one

effective way is to segregate your roles. Block them off into doable separate chunks of your day or week and then focus on them individually. Example would be getting up early in the morning and spend time with yourself. Mid morning help kids get ready for school, or early evening have some personal time when the kids are doing their homework. One size does not fit all and it's up to you to find a schedule that fits you. Be flexible and calmly accept changes to our schedule, but as we switch role (parenting, work, personal, etc.) we must learn to do only that role.

KEY 3: HOW TO STOP PROCASTINATING AND START FOCUSING

Procrastination is a form of mental dissipation that leaves a person desire less to achieve higher goals in life. It is a sickness that must be eliminated because it makes a person to put their focus or attention on things and people that are not important and not urgent to our well being. In her book, creative visualization, Shakti Gawain describes the feeling of letting go and yet taking control at the same time: "Let us imagine that life is a river. Most people are clinging to the bank, afraid to let go and risk being carried along by the current of the river. At a certain point, each person must be willing to simply let go, and trust the river to carry him or her along safely, At this point he learns to "go with the flow" and it feels wonderful. Once he has gotten used to being in the flow of the river, he can begin to look ahead and guide his own course onward, deciding where the course looks best, steering his way around the boulders and snags, and choosing which of the many channels and branches of the river he prefers to follow, all the while still "going with the flow." So hold on to your goals and keep your desired outcome very clear in your mind by choosing to have focused attention to all that is important to your life.

Procrastination is putting off that which you know that you have to do, but you find excuses in you mental faculty to justify why the task should not be done. Most procrastinators are people who are not goal-driven and not well organized in their daily lives. Ask yourself the question; "How much do I want what I want?" This will help you change you mindset to leap from procrastination to focused attention. In the book, *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind*, by Joseph Murphy, he writes; "A young man asked Socrates how he could get wisdom. Socrates replied, "Come with me." He took the lad to a river, pushed the boy's head under the water, held it there until the boy was gasping for air, then relaxed and released his head. When the boy regained his composure, he asked him, "What did you desire most when you were under water?" "I wanted air," said the boy. Socrates said to him, "When you want wisdom as much as you wanted air when you were immersed in the water, you will receive it." Likewise, when you really have an intense desire to overcome any block in your life, and you come to a clear cut decision that there is a way out, and that is the course you wish to follow, then victory and triumph are assured.

If you really want peace of mind and inner calm, you will get it. Regardless of how unjustly you have been treated, or how unfair the boss has been, or what a mean scoundrel someone has proved to be, all this makes no difference to you when you awaken to your mental and spiritual powers. You know what you want, and you will definitely refuse to let the thieves (thoughts) of hatred, anger, hostility, and ill will rob you of peace, harmony, health, and happiness. You cease to become upset by people, conditions, news, and events by identifying your thoughts immediately with your aim in life. Your aim is peace, health, inspiration, harmony, and abundance. Feel a river of peace flowing through you now. Your thought is the immaterial and invisible power, and you choose to let it bless, inspire, and give you peace." It is clear from this passage that if you are afraid of procrastination, put your attention on focusing.

In the book, *Focus*, by Leo Babauta, the author says that our ability to focus will allow us to create new ideas in our lives, help us to slow down and find peace of mind. It is a medium that allows us to simplify and focus on less and put our mind on the essential things that matter most to us. The author calls it the power of less. I have a lot of admiration for this author and his blog because the mantra is simplicity and focus and less. Focusing will enable you change many bad habits and accomplish more and thus change your life. Here are a few tips from great minds, to help you focus:

- **"Most of what we say and do is not essential.** If you can eliminate it, you'll have more time, and more tranquility. Ask yourself at every moment, "is this necessary?" – *Marcus Aurelius*

- **“Without great solitude no serious work is possible.”** – Pablo Picasso. Turn off your phone, get off the internet, go for a run, disconnect from people and things, reflect on life, lose yourself in a task you love, organize your clutter. These are unbeatable moments.
- **Create a focus ritual.** A ritual is a set of actions that you repeat habitually e.g. waking up ritual, pre-bed ritual or a start-your-day ritual. When you create a ritual, you will be more mindful to observe it instead of rushing through mindlessly. A ritual helps you focus because you pay mindful attention to it. A ritual can be a daily, weekly, or monthly focus.
- **Cut down on the stream of news, messages, and information.** Our biggest problem is emails followed by Facebook, twittering, instant messaging, blogs, phones, cell phone, news sites, Skype, videos and many more. Become conscious of these distractions choosing only that which add value to what you are doing. You will be amazed at how much time you can free up to focus on doing awesome and creative things. Make the important decision that you do not need to respond or read every email that you are copied on. Do not feel guilty. It's OK. If you have work email on your personal phone, may I suggest you disconnect the email and ensure that you answer emails when logged on your laptop? Cleanse yourself of unnecessary information. Allow yourself to unclutter your environment. Start with your desk. Clear your computer desktop.
- **Slow down.** We live in a world that is hectic, fast-paced, and hurried. Slowing down will help you focus better, have a deeper focus, appreciate what you have and enjoying life around you. Hurry is a manifestation of fear and it will rob you of your precious time.
- **Simplify your work life.** Learn to give a “quality no” to others. When you agree to every request put in front of you, you allow all your time to be taken up by tasks that are important to others, and not necessarily to you. You have to be tough and value your time as a precious commodity. Another way to simplify your work is through doing less. We have been conditioned to think doing more means we are productive, and if we look busy enough, people will think we are productive and kind of important. This is absurd. All we are doing is stressing ourselves out doing meaningless work. Focus on fewer but high impact tasks and you will see your productivity rising and stress level diminishing.

KEY 4: HOW TO STOP CONTROLLING AND START GUIDING

Humility is akin to surrendering to a force greater than your ego, giving credit to that Source, and being grateful for any wisdom and influence that's given to you by that power. Controlling people, things, and environment shows lack of humility. Humility allows us to think of others first by being willing to serve and exhibit kindness and love, even toward your enemies. Guiding breeds compassion, good-heartedness, love, kindness, and charity.

Controlling breeds competition. You're not in competition with anyone, so don't feel as if you must defeat another person or compare yourself on any level. Allow yourself to be guided by mercy and compassion toward every form of life, including yourself! Strive to see the hidden strengths of simplicity and humility in those whom you may have previously judged to be weak or ineffective leaders.

In our work places, almost everyone wants to control something (even when it's not their department); timelines, deliverables, tasks, documents, trackers, etc. Sometimes it seems to me that getting ahead most often implies having to be in a state of controlling, contention, and competition. My advice is to change this kind of thinking by embodying the virtue of noncompetition, which will work for us even if we live in a society where controlling and being number one are so highly regarded. To achieve excellence, we must collaborate and cooperate with everyone and wish him or her to play at a high level by being the best they are capable of. What you fight weakens you, what you cooperate with strengthens you. So change your thinking about controlling and competing to cooperating in all areas of your life, including your work. See your teammates as helping you with your mission to make your work better and to advance science to bring drugs that change lives.

In your personal life, work at allowing all others to trust in their highest nature rather than imposing your rules and regulations on others. Moreover, be free to be yourself and come to the realization that you do not have to live by anyone's rules. In the Tao Te Ching, Verse 57, we find the following: “If you want to be

a great leader, you must learn to follow the Tao. Stop trying to control. Let go of fixed plans and concepts, and world will govern itself. How do I know that this is so? Because in this world, the greater the restrictions and prohibitions, the more people are impoverished; the more advanced the weapons of state, the darker the nation; the more artful and crafty the plan, the stranger the outcome; the more laws are posted, the more thieves appear. Therefore the sage says: I take no action and people are reformed. I enjoy peace and people become honest. I do nothing and people become rich. If I keep from imposing on people, they become themselves.”

This beautiful words from the Tao Te Ching is applicable to all forms of leadership, including government, business, and in particular, parenting. Controlling is interference, guiding is a form of allowing. This is very important in our lives and a special caution to those in supervisory positions where they have to practice sensibility when overseeing people who could harm themselves or others. In your own family, examine the kind of restrictions that you are trying to enforce. As I stated on Key 2, remember that effective parents don't want to be leaned on; they want to make leaning absolutely unnecessary. It is important you learn to be spontaneous and less regimented in your daily life. Practice the art of allowing yourself. Practice the art of allowing others. Remember that everyone has a strong sense of what they want to do, what limits they have, and how to actualize their dreams.

Realize that you cannot control everything. This is a big challenge since we tend to be frustrated with other people; because they don't act the way we want them to act. This could be our children, partner, spouse, boss, coworkers or friends. You need to realize that people are interested in themselves in the morning, lunchtime, and after midnight! So accept that you cannot control them but have to accept them for what they are and also accept things they do. The best thing and person to control is only you.

KEY 5: HOW TO STOP TALKING AND START OBSERVING

“Soon silence will have passed into legend. Man has turned his back on silence. Day after day he invents machines and devices that increase noise and distract humanity from the essence of life, contemplation, meditation...” - Francis Bacon Sr.

One of the most difficult things to do as human beings is stop talking and choose silence. When you start observing, you choose silence. Have you ever gone to a crowded restaurant and just paused from a moment to listen to incessant chattering and murmuring happening? Try it and you will understand my point of view. Parents are guilty talkers who think they have the right to be talking, correcting, and telling the children what to do. As a parent, have you ever considered choosing silence on most occasions? Do you need to repeat the same thing several times for your children or spouse to know you are making your point? I will share a funny story that happened to me in the summer of 2015. My Son David knows that he is responsible for washing the utensils when he is home. So, I come home from work and find dishes in the sink and the first instinct is to ask when the dishes will be washed. After posing the question the first time, I don't get an answer. Second time; no answer. So I decided to go to where he is sited and face him right on with this important question about the time when the dishes will be washed. David looks up and says, “Mom, you realize I heard you the first time?” I was in shock to say the least, so I asked him, “David, all these years I have been asking you two or three times to do something you already heard it the first time?” His reply has never left my mind, he said “Mom, you parents like to repeat yourself, I will only tell my kids stuff once”. Ok. I get it. Our children know how to deal with us more than we know how to deal with them sometimes, so it's okay to say something once and then choose silence.

With time, I have come to realize that words emerge from silence and therefore through observation. Thus, I have welcomed the opportunity to be silent in many occasions, and fully analyzed the symbolic value and challenges that silence represented. Even if I do not speak, others can hear my voice and value my thoughts. Few can endure silence for long. To enjoy silence is a rare faculty and many people scarcely know what it means. They live in a world of reverberation; they are always in turmoil, thus keeping silence buried. In the temple we are asked to be silent, God uses a few words. The law of silence or observation corresponds to a period of reflection, an absence of challenge. In his book "The power of silence", Adam Jaworski, contends; "silence is an extremely powerful communicative tool." Taking this element into consideration, I can see the importance of exercising silence since sometimes we are

inadequately prepared to voice one's opinion in a particular subject. The symbolic value of communication, the need to communicate with others, to voice one's opinion often stems from a need to reaffirm one's own identity and confirm one's position in society thus feeling less isolated. And this could be one of the reasons that people talk and repeat what others have said in meetings.

In the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu says that the great leader speaks little and never speaks carelessly. You do not lead by talking. A leader creates an environment where everyone feels that they have a personal responsibility and are a part of the process. A leader stays in the background and becomes an astute observer of what is taking place, without interfering and creating an environment that helps everyone to act responsibly. Inspiring leaders choose silence as a tool to encourage others to do the right thing and leaves people to also choose and pursue their own way of life.

Observing is silent knowing. Those who talk without substance are perhaps almost tied to an attachment of some kind – perhaps to a point of view, to being right, to winning, or to profiting in some way. Avoid the inclination and desire to convince or persuade others for personal gain. As an observer you cast your existence in a different light – you have less of an edge and feel balanced, softer, peaceful, and more centered. It is true that those who care the least about approval seem to receive it the most. While their calm wisdom may make them appear to be aloof, they actually end up gaining the respect of everyone. People who practice observing willingly and proudly say to those in charge, “I don’t know.” Whatever your position in life may be, before you can hope to enter into any measure of success, usefulness, and power, you must learn how to focus your thought-forces by cultivating calmness and repose. Here are a few facts about choosing silence that will transform your life and the way you think:

- It is in the Silence that we can be still, and when we are still, we can think, and thought is the secret of all attainment.
- It is in the Silence that you get into touch with the Omnipotent power of the subconscious mind from which all power is evolved.
- He who desires wisdom, power, or permanent success of any kind will find it only within; it is an unfoldment. The unthinking may conclude that the silence is very simple and easily attained, but it should be remembered that only in absolute silence may one come into contact with Divinity itself; may learn of the unchangeable law and open for himself the channels by which persistent practice and concentration lead to perfection.
- All the great eternal forces act in solemn silence, but it is in our power to place ourselves in harmony with them and thus express a life of comparative peace and happiness.
- Insight is a product of the world within and is developed in the Silence—by concentration and observation.

When you find yourself talking excessively, tell yourself W.A.I.T! Why Am I Talking, and then remind yourself of the following basic principles of communication:

- Speak only when it's important. Before you speak, ask yourself if what you're saying is truly important.
- Avoid speaking to fill empty space.
- Think about your words carefully.
- Be aware of time when you speak.
- Think about whether you speak out of anxiety.
- Avoid speaking to impress others. No one will be impressed and in most cases, people get irritated because their time is wasted.

So far we have concentrated on having you stop talking; however, there is good advice that is available on how to skillfully talk. In the book, *Skill with People*, Les Giblin contends that if you observe the following rules, you will be on your way to being an interesting speaker and there will be a clear distinction between your current way of talking and the new way proposed herewith:

- **Know what you want to say.** If you don't know exactly what you want to say, don't get on your feet or open your mouth. Speak with authority, from your knowledge, with confidence – and this can be if you know what you want to say.

- **Say it and sit down.** Be brief, be to the point and then sit down. Remember no one was ever criticized for saying to little and if more is desired from you, it will be asked of you. Quit a winner.
- **Look at the audience while you talk.** The importance of this rule is hard to overstate. Anybody worth talking to is worth looking at. This is why talkers who read their talks rarely go over.
- **Talk about what the audience is interested in.** It is not what you want to say that is important. It is what the audience wants to hear. The audience's interest is paramount, not yours. A sure-fire method of a winning and well-liked talker is to tell people what they want to hear.
- **Don't try to make a speech.** Don't try to orate - few can. Make a talk instead. Be natural. Be yourself. That is why you are making the talk. Just say what you have to say naturally.

KEY 6: HOW TO STOP FATE AND START FORGIVING

When we were growing up, my mother made it a point to constantly remind us that “we have no enemies; we are God’s children, and forgiveness is at the very core of our faith”. She told us that if we can’t forgive then our faith was meaningless. Well, I have to admit those words did not mean much to me then as they do now since I am much older and have a family of my own. I left my home at a young age to come to the United States to do my graduate studies in Statistics. It was not an easy transition especially due to the cost of living and the new weather that brought cold snow instead of sunshine. The American professors talked so fast and everything was fast including how people walked and ate. I also learned for the first time that I was not Kenyan after all, that I was “black”. This was totally new to me that I could no longer associate myself with my beautiful country but by a color of which I actually did not resemble. The constant question, “you have an accent, where are you from?” got me so irritated once that I decided once and for all, I was the one who will be asking that question before I was asked. So when I went to a restaurant and the waiter showed up, I would quickly say “I detect an accent, where are you from?” This was met with laughter that shocked me. It seemed these people had some kind of superiority in their language that no accent could exist.

This was my last straw and I knew I had to call my mom and ask her for some advice on how to deal with Americans and the American life. This is what my dear mom told me: “Priscilla, you need to stop fate and start forgiving. You fate is in your mind and you have lost your place to master what happens to you. You cannot change other people but you can change yourself by changing the way you think. You don't need to understand why you are now black and not Kenyan. No one can change who you are. You are a child of the universe, no lesser than the trees and the stars. Be yourself. Be grateful for these new experiences and let them expand your imagination and knowledge about other cultures. Be humble and teach them about your country, the beautiful landscape, and tell them about the many languages we speak here. Be harmonious with all people and your surrounding and remember to be in a state of total acceptance, willingly letting go what does not build you up. And lastly my daughter, forgive everything and everyone and you will be the master of your fate.” As the years have gone by, and many have gone by, I remember those words from mom with so much clarity that nothing, or no one can stop me from achieving my goals. And yes, I still have an accent. I kept it and I still treasure it too.

In Nelson Mandela's autobiography, *Long walk to Freedom*, he takes us through his country of childhood, impeccable stories about his life in Johannesburg, how he became a freedom fighter, taking on the Struggle for freedom, being charged with treason, his dark years in Robben Island, the beginning of hope while at Robben Island, talking with his jailer/enemy, and finally Madiba helps us understand what freedom means to him, to his people, and to his country. I picked up this autobiography from the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, South Africa earlier this year. This museum complex illustrates the apartheid and the 20th century history of South Africa. There is an entire section dedicated to the life of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Dalibhunga Madiba. Please add to your bucket list for places to visit. Why choose Nelson Mandela to illustrate this key? Nelson played a key role in the formation of the ANC Youth League and the ‘defiance campaign’ of the early 1950s. He operated undercover and got effectively classified as a ‘terrorist’ by the state. He was jailed for 27 years. When he was released from Prison, he won the multi-racial elections to be the first black South African President in April of 1994. So what made Madiba successful as a leader?

While in Jail, Nelson had a beautiful poem that he recited everyday. This poem gave him courage and confidence to get through each day. The poem "Invictus" is a short Victorian poem by the English poet William Ernest Henley. Here are the words:

*Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.*

May I add here that this was my favorite poem growing up and it was a surprise to discover that Madiba put so much vigor and trust in these awesome words.

On an interview with Oprah Winfrey, Madiba was asked the question how he was able to overcome his fate and enemies. His reply was astonishing. He said, "By Forgiveness". He said that resentment and lack of forgiveness does not come from the conduct of the other party in an altercation – no, they survive and thrive because you are unwilling to end that altercation with an offering of kindness, love, and authentic forgiveness. He encouraged the audience to offer forgiveness to themselves and the other person for this was the only way to dissipate resentment, anger, frustration, and anxiety from our lives. Madiba said that he constantly asked himself how he may serve, himself, his country, and his people. He made it clear that it is important to bring love to hate, light to darkness, and pardon to injury. Madiba also offered the following advice as his 10 Laws of Success as a Leader:

1. Demand Respect.
2. Prove them wrong.
3. Use your time wisely.
4. Don't worry about labels.
5. Be humble.
6. Have heroes in your life. (Your heroes don't have to be great people. Your kindergarten teacher can be your hero!)
7. Take a stand.
8. Manage your emotions.
9. Be willing to die for your cause.
10. Speak with conviction.

I realize that it is not easy to forgive and that is why each of us must work on ourselves so that our way of living is balanced, moral, and spiritual. If nature does not create a storm that never ends, why should you hold on to non-forgiving thoughts? Be the judge.

KEY 7: HOW TO STOP FEAR AND START LEADING

In the book, *I write what I like*, by Steve Biko, he explores the subject of fear in one of the articles titled “Fear – an important determinant in the south Africa politics”. In the article, Steve Biko who wrote under the pseudonym of Frank Talk, comments that ever since the white man arrived as a settler in Southern Africa he had created and then preserved for himself a special position of privilege. This position was created and preserved by the use of violence and fear, but the use of these methods was in itself a result of the white’s fear of the black population. He based his facts on the atrocities committed by the government using brutal force and killing hundreds of black people on the streets and villages. He lamented that the system was so flawed and infantile evidence could easily be built by the state and bring to trial and charge young boys playing hide and seek with high treason. With the cruelty subjected to the black race, it was evident to Biko that the aim of the government was to keep the people thoroughly intimidated. This led the Black majority to lose respect for the South African Police – and it is this that leads Biko to come to a realization of a golden maxim – “if you cannot make a man respect you, then make him fear you.”

Steve Biko is today revered as one of the greatest leaders that South Africa emulates because he took upon himself to teach the black majority that the eradication of fear from their thoughts would be the key to attaining freedom and leadership. He did this through the creation of the black consciousness movement. The movement was instrumental in uniting black Africans in the struggle against the apartheid government in South Africa. Biko stopped himself being concerned and about the white people of South Africa, but instead hungered to get the right answers by asking the right questions. There was need to do some inductive reasoning to find out what went wrong – where and when. He emerged as a fearless leader who questioned the law, the system, the democracy, and the new religion brought by the missionaries whose aim was to ‘civilize and educate’ the black South Africans. This new religion scared the black South Africans with stories of hell. The indigenous religion that the black South Africans followed, there was no hell and if one died he or she joined the community of saints and therefore merited respect. In his struggle to eradicate fear and lead the country to freedom, Biko was arrested by police in August 1977 and died in detention, naked, and manacled, from extensive brain damage, 25 days later.

I am a firm believer that it is fear that deports a man’s soul from his body and renders it a thing to be despised. There is plus-entropy and a minus-entropy in every human body that is born into the world. Whichever one of these is favored by the flesh becomes dominant; then is the other inclined to abandon its habitation, temporarily or for all time. It is important to state here that the plus-entropy of a man, all things are possible. The world belongs to him, is his estate. He fears naught; dreads naught; stops at naught; he asks no privileges, but demands them; he dominates, and cannot cringe; his requests are orders; opposition flees at his approach; he levels mountains, fills in vales and travels on even plane where stumbling is unknown. Therefore, have no fear of any sort or shape, for fear is adjunct of the minus-entropy. Be always on your guard. Whichever entropy controls you, the other hovers at your side; beware lest the evil enter, even for a moment.

When one has no fear, then one is fit to lead. This statement is of mathematical exactitude; there is no deviation or variation to it. A lot of people are followers because they are fearful and let other people do the thinking for them. A leader is fearless and comes from a place of greatness where nothing or no one can get in their way. Fear is an enemy that must be completely destroyed, eliminated, expelled forever for fear is the cloud which hides the sun and causes perpetual gloom. Fear makes people fear the past, present, and future; fear themselves, their friends, and their enemies; fear everything and everybody. When fear is effectually and completely destroyed, your light will shine, the clouds will disperse, and you will have found the source of power, energy, and life. To overcome fear, you must come to the realization that you are one with the Infinite Power and you also consciously realize this power through a practical demonstration of your ability to overcome adverse conditions by the power of your thought, you will have nothing to fear. Fear will have been destroyed and you will have come into possession of your birthright. As a leader, you will not fear criticism or anything else because you are too busy radiating courage, confidence, and power and you only anticipate success by your mental attitude.

Tension leads to mental unrest and abnormal mental activity of the mind; it produces worry, care, fear, and anxiety. Physical relaxation is a voluntary exercise of the will and it is of great value because it enables the blood to circulate freely to and from the brain and body. Relaxation is therefore an absolute

necessity in order to allow the mental faculties to exercise the greatest freedom and therefore eliminating fear. Assume a mental attitude of *courage*, just as the best way to get rid of darkness is to let in the light.

If you love affirmations, here is one that I use most frequently to eliminate doubt and fear:

“My mind is a center of divine operation. The divine operation is always for expansion and fuller expression, and this means production of something beyond what has gone before, something entirely new, not included in the past experience, though proceeding out of it by an orderly sequence of growth. Therefore, since the divine cannot change its inherent nature, it must operate in the same manner with me: consequently, in my own special world, of which I am the center, it will move forward to produce new conditions always in advance of any that have gone before.”

Memorize this passage and meditate upon it, endeavoring to make your mind a “center of divine operation” by entertaining only such thoughts as feel are reflections of your higher nature. Your mind will be opened to receive new ideas, which if followed, will guide you into the path of absolute liberty.

Remember that knowledge can be gained only by making a practical application of these information. We learn by doing – through practice the athlete becomes powerful.

CONCLUSION

We have now reached the end of our journey together, though your individual journey to live by knowing when to stop is just beginning.

Living by knowing when to stop will help you prioritize your life and focus on what is truly important. Do not get caught in the vicious cycle of ‘striving and never arriving’. These keys will help you live a life focused in understanding yourself and realizing that you are responsible for your reaction in any given moment. Exercise personal strength by refusing to turn the controls of your existence over to anyone or any set of circumstances. Having understood and acquired the keys given in this paper, you will come to the realization that you do not need the approval of others or another possession in order to be happy.

Pick a key and work on it each day or week or month, and remember that, it is in the application that we acquire knowledge that changes who we are, and in the end becoming perfect ashlar!

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