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The Year of Illumination

Shifting Perspectives

There is always a chance for us to shift our perspectives; but we may not always see it coming. Although I have read several self growth and enlightenment books recently including Secrets of Success, The Science and Spirit of Real Prosperity by Sandra Anne Taylor, The Science of Getting Rich by Wallace D. Wattles and The First 30 Days, Your Guide to Making Any Change Easier by Ariane de Bonvoisin, I have enjoyed two fiction books by Dean Koontz: From the Corner of His Eye and Hideaway.

What's interesting to me is that out of all these books I have read recently, the Koontz books have had a great impact on my view, or perspective, of things. The message I want to share with you this month is from Hideaway:

“The apocryphal story of the three blind men examining the elephant is widely known. The first blind man feels only the elephant's trunk and thereafter confidently describes the beast as a great snakelike creature, similar to a python. The second blind man feels only the elephant's ears and announces that it is a bird that can soar to great heights. The third blind man examines only the elephant's fringe-topped fly chasing tail and “sees” an animal that is curiously like a bottle brush.

So it is with any experience that human beings share. Each participant perceives it in a different way and takes from it a different lesson than do his or her compatriots.”

Think for a moment about the way we take in information and form our opinions. In this instance, the perspective of each man was dependant on his experience. We often observe others' situations or events from a perspective based on our experiences and determine that our perspective fully represents reality. By basing our decisions on our observations or past experiences which we believe to be how things really are, we limit the outcomes of our new experiences.

How can we benefit from a shift in perspectives?

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Since many of our thoughts are born from our prior experiences and how we recall those experiences, applying prior ways of thinking about something may leave us without the benefit of growing and learning from those experiences. A shift in perspectives helps illuminate possible alternatives to our prior way of thinking: in other words, changing our thoughts.

The three blind men had complete confidence in their ability to determine what creature was before them. They drew upon their knowledge and experience to help them in their endeavor. How could shifting their perspective have helped them create a different experience?

1. They could have used more than their sense of touch.
2. They could have tested their theory, such as encouraging the bird to fly.
3. They could have taken a step in any direction and continued their exploration.
4. The men could have perhaps shared their findings and explored the differences.
5. They could have returned at a later time and repeated the process.

However, not one of them sought more information by venturing past their starting perspective. They each stayed within the comfort of what they knew.

Perspective is dependant upon our experiences as well as our proximity to the situation. As we expand our perspectives, we cross the lines of comfort and habit and venture forth with curiosity towards the unfamiliar.

Today's world accentuates many opportunities to shift perspectives from that which we have always known to something more expansive. Remember, there are two sides to every statistic: we can count the number of unemployed people or those that remain employed; lament over how many companies have bottomed out or celebrate how many are finding better ways to do business; and even discover more opportunities for change than there are reasons to keep things exactly the same.

As Koontz writes, we all take away something different and the lessons we learn also differ from the lessons of others. The benefit to shifting perspectives is to see what we may have been missing in our interpretation of lessons or experiences in order to expand the list of what is possible.

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For a no-charge copy of my reading list, send an email with 'reading list' as the subject to: [Renee@landofpossibility.com](mailto:Renee@landofpossibility.com)

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