

## SUCCESS INSIGHTS

A rose is just a rose!

**The last e-zine - #6 Stumbling Block to Success – was about gratitude and choosing our focus wisely. This in-between issues shares a story that illustrates the concept of WHAT WE FOCUS ON EXPANDS. I hope you enjoy it and we will return to Stumbling Block #7 in next week.**

She was obviously a sad woman. Her voice trembled as she related her story to me. Recently separated from a verbally abusive husband of 15 years and unemployed for the last six months, she had plenty of concerns.

Besides finding a job and having to move, there were the roses. “What if the people who move into my home when I leave don’t take care of the roses?” She asked this with tears in her eyes.

What struck me was how much pain and worry she was expending on these roses. At a time when she could be spending her energy on creating a new exciting future for herself – she was almost making herself sick worrying about the roses.

Perhaps you can’t relate to this woman’s love for her rose garden but how many of us can relate to worrying about the “what if’s?”

In no way am I suggesting that divorce or unemployment are not serious challenges. However, when life throws us these challenges, how do we tend to respond?

Do we dwell on the scary or painful aspects? Do we obsess over all that could go wrong? What if someone doesn’t tend to our “roses”? If you recognize that this is your tendency, you must realize right now that you are *choosing* your focus and where you put your attention.

It is similar to going through a painful breakup and putting on a depressing or emotional piece of music *knowing* that it will evoke melancholy feelings in you. (C’mon, you know you have done this. My personal favorite was Barry Manilow! I still can’t listen to “Weekend in New England” without breaking down.)

You could just as easily put on an uplifting, happy piece of music that insists you elevate your mood. (Think about the theme from “Rocky” or “If I Had a Million Dollars”.)

Here’s a fun experiment. Put on an upbeat, positive piece of music and try and produce depressed or unhappy feelings. Can’t do it, can you?

The point is whatever you choose to focus on – whatever song you choose to play – that more than anything else will create your experience.

This reminds me of the movie “Forest Gump”. No matter what happened to him in his life, he seemed to be able to turn it into a positive experience.

One of the most comical scenes in the movie is when Forest is running across country. He inadvertently steps into a pile of dog poop. He simply shrugs his shoulders and exclaims, “SH\*T happens”. Before you know it, t-shirts are being printed up and sold with this slogan on it and the creator is making lots of money.

There are many lessons for us in this story. The first is "SH\*T happens." That is a *fact*. There are unfortunate circumstances that befall every one of us. I don't care how charmed a life you think someone leads, no one is immune!

The determining factor of how our life ultimately goes is in our response. You will see – if you look – that happy, successful people will have one response ("Oh well, sh\*t happens"). Unhappy, unsuccessful people have a completely different response ("Why does this sh\*t always happen to ME?")

To focus and dwell on the downside is to automatically acquaint yourself with the those in the second group. So how do we acquaint ourselves with the first group?

Take control of what you focus on. The one thing – the only thing – we have control of in this world is our thoughts.

How do we do this? Let's use the women from the beginning as an example. After she related her story of worry about her roses, I asked her to imagine a young family moving into her house. I painted the picture of the kids playing in the yard while the mother tended lovingly to the roses.

The woman went from teary-eyed to smiling immediately. Then I asked her to create an exciting possibility for herself, her future home. She began to speak animatedly about a little house, a bungalow, that she had always dreamed of. I told her to write down a description of this house so detailed an architect could design it. I encouraged her to describe the rose garden she would plant, as well.

Anytime she starts to think about the roses she left behind, she is to read the description of her future home.

Whatever you are dealing with in your life; illness, divorce, financial trouble, family issues, work problems, I want you to – right now – get out a pen and paper. Write down how you want it to be. Write the ideal scenario for you. Don't worry that you don't know how you are going to create this scenario. Don't let time, money, family circumstances, age, location or anything else be a limiting factor. This is your time to revisit your dreams that you may have tucked away long ago.

Answer the following questions:

1. What future inspires and excites me?
2. What negative or self-limiting beliefs are stopping me from attaining that future? (These might include your "what-if's".)
3. What positive or self-affirming beliefs will assist me in attaining this future (past successes, skills, talents or gifts I possess)?
4. What is one action I could take to start towards that future?
5. When will I take this action?
6. Who will I ask to hold me accountable for taking this action?

You have now put into motion an action plan for changing your situation. Again, you don't need to know or even understand all the steps that will need to be taken to reach your destination. You just have to take the first step.

Oh, and while you're at it, put on a song that makes you want to dance that first step!

## QUOTES

Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom.

~ Victor Frankl, author

Think 'impossible' and dreams get discarded, projects get abandoned, and hope for wellness is torpedoed. But let someone yell the words 'It's possible,' and resources we hadn't been aware of come rushing in to assist us in our quest.

~ Greg Anderson, The 22 Non-Negotiable Laws of Wellness

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**Nancy Roberts**



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