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Does Your Paradigm Need Shifting?

Galatians 3:24-25: (NASB) ²⁴Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.



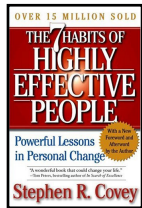
Happy New Year! It is 2011 and it is a new beginning - at least for the calendar anyway. What is your year going to look like? Do you have any changes planned? Is this the year that you will finally - well, you know, is this the year that you will finally - (now fill in the blank...) With a new year usually comes a review of what *has been* and a preview of what we would *like* to have happen. My question to you is this - along with your thinking about changes with your job, your home, your car, your weight, your habits etc., are you thinking about changes in your Godliness - are you thinking about how you can finally really make your faith be stronger and healthier? Stay with us as we talk about our thinking - how it works and how to elevate it to a higher spiritual level!

Questions for Consideration:

1. What is a "Paradigm," and what is a "Paradigm Shift?"
2. How do we plan proper and productive paradigms for our potential purposes?

1. What is a "Paradigm," and what is a "Paradigm Shift?"

(Source: Explanation of a "paradigm" by Stephen R. Covey in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.)



Page 23: ...For our purpose, a simple way to understand paradigms is to see them as maps. We all know that "the map is not the territory." A map is simply an explanation of certain aspects of the territory. That's exactly what a paradigm is. It is a theory, an explanation, or model of something else.

Page 29: ...The term "paradigm shift" was introduced by Thomas Kuhn in his highly influential landmark book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn shows how almost every significant breakthrough in the field of scientific endeavor is first a break with tradition, with old ways of thinking, with old paradigms.

So a paradigm is our map, but because we write out the map, it may not be as accurate as we would like it to be.



The New Year's Resolution Song - Become a Better Person, by "Rhett and Link," YouTube.

- *Working out, losing weight, reading more, watching less, learning all the rules for chess, becoming so much smarter in general... eating fish not fingernails, volunteer to save the whales, becoming a better guy in general...*

We want New Year's resolutions to be a paradigm shift, but are they often just a disappointment?

2. How do we plan proper and productive paradigms for our potential purposes?

John Maxwell, well known author and leadership mentor, laid out six steps for a life-changing experience. We will use these steps as a basis for our conversation:

When you change your thinking, you change your beliefs.

Acts 10:9-16: Peter's paradigm was firmly set. His life-long dedication to the Jewish Law was entrenched and immovable. Even with a vision from heaven, Peter won't do what has been instructed. The necessary answer to be able to change his paradigm was a command three times with an explanation, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy." This would lead to important, world-changing instructions. His paradigm could begin to shift because he now saw a road that opened for him. **Acts 10:19-20**

The ME Application: For change - real change - paradigm-shift-kind-of-change to happen, it *must* begin way on the inside, with our thinking. This is completely opposite to what we are used



to, which is get the idea, like the idea, decide to implement the idea - all in a space of about 3 seconds! It's like making hasty New Year's resolutions that quickly fail.

This would not have been easy for Peter, which brings us to our **CONTRAST POINT** - the difficulty we have with the little changes we attempt in our lives:

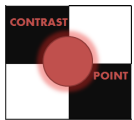


The New Year's Resolution Song - But Not This Year! by "Rhett and Link," YouTube.

- *But not this year! After all these failed resolutions my future is clear!*

When you change your beliefs, you change your expectations.

Mark 9:20-22: A dire situation is brought before Jesus. Mark 9:22-23: The challenge for this man was to adopt a paradigm shift, a new belief that would bring a new expectation. Mark 9:24: Something was in his way; the frailty of hopelessness and the frustration of doubt. His faith was finally rewarded. Mark 9:25: The power of faith: Jesus commands and it is so!



The New Year's Resolution Song - Just do what comes easily! by "Rhett and Link," YouTube.

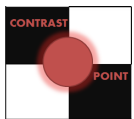
- *Just forget those resolutions you know you that you are never gonna do and commit to things that come easily to you, like eating at least one value meal a week - or put the correct shoes on the correct feet - just raise the bar to walk effortlessly underneath!*

The ME Application: To truly change my beliefs, I need to know what they are and upon what they are based. Is my Christianity based on a solid foundation of Biblical evidence, personal study, prayer and experience; or is it based on how I feel when I am at church? If my belief is a feeling, then it needs to be changed!

Philippians 4:11-13: The Apostle Paul's strength didn't come from him internally alone, it came from God through Christ within him.

When you change your expectations, you change your attitude.

1 Peter 4:12-16: The early church was surrounded by miraculous events, the newness of Jesus' resurrection and the twelve Apostles. Massive numbers of people flocked to Christianity and all seemed to be as positive as it could be so when the fiery trials came, they needed to be put in perspective. Rejoice under fire now, so in the long run you will be rejoicing on the final victory of Jesus. There is a paradigm shift: Don't look at a trial as a trial, look at it as an opportunity to rejoice in a growth experience. It is a BLESSING to be reviled for the name of Christ!



The New Year's Resolution Song - Settle into a Comfortable Spot, by "Rhett and Link," YouTube.

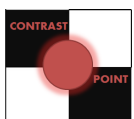
- *Settle into a more comfortable spot - hit the snooze, rollover then repeat, make large purchases then lose the receipt. Just raise the bar to walk effortlessly underneath...*

The ME Application: What am I expecting, not only from life, but specifically from my own Christianity? Am I looking for all of the abundance and none of the effort? **Is my Christianity an entitlement or a privilege?**

Matthew 5:38-45: My expectations should now lead me to an attitude of tolerance and giving. Jesus is really requiring of us a paradigm shift.

The ME Application: My expectations should now lead me to an attitude of love and forgiveness.

We all suffer from a malady that keeps us from many positive changes and experiences in our lives. That malady, that human frailty, that detour in the road, is called procrastination...



Procrastination Everything, CBS News Fast Draw with Josh Landis and Mitch Butler

- *When you're too stressed about finishing something, you are more likely to procrastinate. You could procrastinate yourself to death with medical problems.*



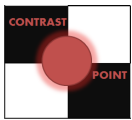
When you change your attitude, you change your behavior.

Remember the Apostle Paul before his conversion? "Saul of Tarsus" had to readjust his attitude and behavior dramatically. He fasted and prayed for three days. Ananias also had to have a major paradigm shift, as he wanted to stay far away from Saul!

Acts 9:10-17: Ananias is obviously a Christian and is given a vision with a very specific task to accomplish. His "here am I Lord" answer tells us that his attitude was already in line with doing what Jesus would instruct him. Notice how Ananias answers that Saul had done much harm to Jesus' saints and continues to do so. (Ananias must be thinking, "Are you sure this is the right person?") His paradigm, though set to follow Jesus' instruction, came to a point of resistance because it was so out of what he expected. Jesus answers the instruction and gives good reason for Ananias to experience a full paradigm shift. The roadmap of his life was already set to do the will of God. Ananias now does what he would NOT have done - "Brother Saul!" A DEFINING MOMENT for both of them! Normally he would have hidden from Saul.

The ME Application: Is MY attitude giving my behavior an opportunity to show the depth of my Christian life, or is it making my behavior just like everyone else's? Romans 12:2

When you change your behavior, you change your performance.



Funny thing about procrastination - it is definitely a behavior that dramatically affects performance.

Tales of Mere Existence - Get my stuff done! Lev Yilmaz, YouTube

- *Oh, the small and innocent beginnings of procrastination! A clean desk will help me get all of my stuff done.*

Behavior-influencing performance is where the "rubber meets the road."

Let's go back to the account of Ananias and Saul. **Acts 9:22:** Saul did NOT procrastinate - he is healed and then he is immediately baptized! Only after focusing his spiritual behavior does he fortify himself with food. Then, again without any procrastination, he proclaims Jesus to the very people he had come to capture! A paradigm shift had to have occurred with the disciples as well. The paradigm of those listening was confused - they *thought* they knew Saul, but because Paul shifted his paradigm, he was able to do something dramatic. All of the changes up to this point had been primarily internal, but this change in Saul's behavior showed the world his authenticity, for he was now fully and immediately engaged in Christianity because of God's power and influence.



Meanwhile, back at the procrastination ranch:

Tales of Mere Existence - The Grocery Store, Lev Yilmaz, YouTube

- *I didn't want to be hungry while I got my stuff done...*

So the procrastination goes from one distraction to the next, only this distraction is bigger.

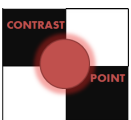
The ME Application: Do I so easily get distracted that changing my Christian behavior continually gets pushed back or replaced by the "everything else" in life? We tend to put the tangible things in front of the intangible.

Philippians 1:20-21: Here is how to battle procrastination: "with all boldness."

When you change your performance, YOU CHANGE YOUR LIFE.

Here we are - we have arrived at the final life changing step!

Yet, for many of us, we are stuck in the vortex of pain - known as procrastination!



Tales of Mere Existence - The Hardware Store, Lev Yilmaz, YouTube

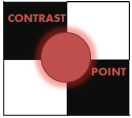
- *I had to get some oil from the hardware store and didn't want to be distracted by a squeaky chair while I got my stuff done...*



Isn't it amazing how something we have learned to live with (like the squeaky chair) absolutely and suddenly needs our attention at the precise moment we are supposed to be focused on the task at hand?

Saul escaped that vortex of pain by acting immediately on his convictions - he was shown the right way and he took it without looking back.

A new paradigm produces a new life: Acts 9:23-27: In a matter of days, Saul's paradigm shift has placed him on the other side of the equation. Instead of being the predator, he is now the hunted! Now it is he who flees for his life. Just because we shift our paradigm doesn't mean others will. They, just like us, need solid reasons to go through that whole process. Fortunately for Saul, not everyone was afraid. Barnabas weighed the evidence and recognized the hand of God and was so thoroughly convicted that he brought Saul before the Apostles.



Tales of Mere Existence - I'll do it tomorrow! Lev Yilmaz, YouTube

- *I want to be well rested tomorrow so I can get my stuff done.*

The ME Application: Have you noticed how far apart our two examples have gone? On the one hand you have the silly story of procrastination which, while funny, brings us absolutely nowhere in terms of accomplishment. On the other hand, we have lives utterly changing: Ananias deepening his faith, and Saul finding his faith to the point of risking his very life.

2 Timothy 4:6-8

We have the choices laid out before us. Towards which path will we lead our Christian life? We have the ability to choose. It is nice to think about changing our job, exercise, diet, health - but the change we are talking about is harder to do. The good news is that it can be done with boldness in Christ.

***Does your paradigm
need shifting?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!***