



Seeing True to Break Through

Thoughts from Ron Chapman

February 2010

Greetings!

Apparently the theme of inspiration in last month's newsletter struck a chord with many. One reader suggested that as a result of difficult times in the past year, many of us probably need something to put wind beneath our wings. I'll trust that feedback and explore the path of inspiration.

With that thought comes a memory. It is the image of two girls dancing and twirling in unfettered joy, filled with the madness of a moment. Like the whirling dervishes of Sufi tradition, they danced with passion and possession. It is not surprising the roots of inspiration come from the Latin *in spiritu* ... filled with spirit.

From this image still more thoughts arise ... memories of clients I have coached. In many cases they have needed encouragement to step back into the dance of their careers or lives. Stephen Levine writes in *Unattended Sorrow* that life is filled with an accumulation of hurts, disappointments and traumas. Whether small or large, they weigh upon us when not attended. Those wounds gain power to diminish us emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. Eventually the cumulative disturbance they produce can take a terrible toll on us.

It was George, a middle-aged professional, who revealed the importance of dealing with those sorrows. He had come to me with specific needs in dealing with an overbearing manager, though the subtext was a life that began abusively. Despite a number of childhood challenges, George managed to break the cycle and gain an excellent education. Yet, as is so often the case, those unattended matters dogged his steps for many years, resulting in under realization of his talents.

To make a long story short, George was able to learn a single technique that served him quite well. First he became aware of the fear that caused him to disengage in the face of the assertive behavior of others. Once aware, he found he could feel the fear at the moment it emerged, and to remind himself, "Now is not then." With that, he taught himself to take a slow and steady breath as he visualized a step forward into his discomfort. With practice, the fear-based retreat became manageable and eventually lost all power over him.

George is a large man. You would never guess he has had a life long battle with fear, which is also strangely at odds with his gentleness. Regardless, he has

faced his challenges so well you would be surprised he practices the inner technique just described. And you would laugh when he told you his favorite song lyrics ...

And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance,
I hope you dance.

That is the chorus from Lee Ann Womack's hit song, *I Hope You Dance*, an unseemly theme for a man such as George. Regardless, those words are his inspiration. And his is a beautiful tale of success at overcoming challenges.

Take a moment right now and look around you at others in your surroundings, or if need be, imagine those others. Never doubt there are challenges being met whether we can see them or not. Never doubt we have that same opportunity.

I hope you dance!

Ron

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