



Seeing True to Break Through

Thoughts from Ron Chapman

March 2007

Greetings friends!

For some, spring is already pushing forth with great fervor! Others won't see it for a few weeks yet. Regardless, in the blossoming and greenish tinge of emerging foliage we can gain a useful glimpse of the nature of things. But first, let's reframe from the two previous e-newsletters.

In January, we examined the need to keep things simple, smaller and fewer. In February, the newsletter observed that everything about our modern world seems to work against simplification, and that the great secret lies in choosing ... making decisions. When we fail to decide, we dilute our efforts and energies by having too much to tackle.

Now for one other important piece of information that is in fact revealed in the blossoms and foliage now proliferating. If you were to study the flora around you from October to February, you would presume little progress. There is no sign of change because things are dormant. Yet even in dormancy a foundation is being laid through roots that continue to grow unobserved and the collection of biological energies preparing for the right moment to surge forth.

So it is with the items on which we choose to focus. With our energies, a foundation is laid for future blossoming. This is true whether we're building a business, which often takes five to seven years to really demonstrate results, undertaking a new artistic expression which can take decades to be validated, or simply bringing forth a project that will create changes a year or more in the future.

Most things take time, which is why persistence and patience are cardinal virtues. Most of us were taught this by our parents or others, when they told us "nothing good ever comes easy."

Yet our culture is determined to tell us otherwise. Suggestions are offered that we can have it all in one minute, or by following three simple steps, or by heeding a single principle. Nearly everything in the realm of marketing and sales, which permeates our society, is designed to create a sense of urgency and prompt gratification. And we fall for it, time after time.

The real tragedy with a sense of immediacy is that it can stop us from persevering. We become frustrated and quit when our new business venture is not successful at the three year mark, and unwittingly undermine an effort that will succeed after six years. We discard a promising and healthy approach to food and diet because we cannot see the underlying changes in our relationship to food which take months if not years to manifest. We cease a design for living that should be a lifelong effort, when a new idea is cast at us.

If you were standing on the bank of a river when it changes course, you would probably think it was swift, dramatic and momentous. But if you were to watch the rearrangement of trillions of grains of sand over decades, you would know that the change of course was part of a larger and considerably longer transition. It is the difference between appearances and reality.

There is a strong likelihood that most of your choices are exceptionally good choices, whether they are selections of businesses, careers, avocations or relationships. Yet to see them bear fruit may take a long time. We can never know without persisting. And perseverance can be easily undermined by a need for immediacy.

One of my favorite advertisements comes from the tobacco prevention field.
"Never quit quitting!"

Life is a long-term proposition! Persist ... persist ... persist!

And as my mentor regularly reminds me, don't forget to have fun!

Ron

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