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Resiliency in Preventing and Adapting to COVID-19—Openness©

This post will be principally about how to use openness to become more resilient when we are confronted with anxiety or fear of an adversity/ a crisis/ or an opportunity. In the case of the present COVID-19 pandemic, this statement applies to both the present state *prevention* and *adaptation* to the emerging future, post COVID-19. **Openness** is an open-mindedness to the ideas, opinions, and experiences of others as well as exploration of possibilities beyond our present reality. Anxiety and fear can be constant companions in developing openness because of the mind's major role in interpreting every experience we have as a possible threat to our wellbeing. Therefore, any idea or opinion which is outside our reality qualifies as a potential threat to our safety or security, until proven otherwise. These include beliefs about each other by group designations, political differences, and views about divergently different cultures around the world. The most powerful means of confirming or invalidating our predispositions about others is *authentic personal experience*; with a corresponding reduction of fear where no threat is discovered.

Three major opportunities for becoming more open are *friendly challenging exchanges*, *opportunities for experiential learning*, and *creative exploration*.

1. **Openness for challenging exchanges exists**: where there is **relationship** based upon respect, trust, and authenticity; **communication** based upon honesty, sensitivity, and transparency, and; **courage** based upon safety, engagement, and change.

I have several very close friends, globally. However, the one who comes to mind with respect to this opportunity is the direct opposite of me in a significant number of ways; an excellent example of openness. He is an LDS, white male. We are at opposite ends of the political spectrum. He describes himself as Conservative. I think you get the idea. At first, I was certain that this could never work. We'll get tired of each other and start making excuses for putting meeting off. He did the opposite. We meet every Tuesday for two to three-hour **conversations** about every subject possible from family to spirituality to political polarization to multiple lifetimes (of which we both agree). The most challenging difference between us is that he comes at people solutions by DOING something; behavior modification, systems change, flowers, a movie, dinner, etc. I am committed to people solutions

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by TRANSFORMATION, an irreversible change in mind-set, **followed** by behaviors which exist in the desired future state. We have gotten into conversations where people in the restaurant stop to listen to us “discuss, laugh, and frantically wave our arms.” Afterwards, I cannot let go or ignore what he said and the points he made. I feel uplifted, detached in mood, and absorbed in almost everything he said. Here is the paradox or explanation: our core values are almost identical. Our relationship is sacred. Most of all, he has an incredible ability to listen, which I wish I had. And finally, we each have one of the two major pieces for cultural transformation: Mind-Set (Transformation) and Implementation (Equity).

2. **Openness for learning exists:** where there is *in-depth self-understanding* of our biases, prejudices, and qualities; understanding of others and their values; and exposure to other cultures through immersion and experiential travel.

The essence of this opportunity is captured by a global definition of diversity, “The ability to master differences.” You can easily see that this quality involves experiences of risk-taking, exposure, embarrassment, humility, and learning.

3. **Openness for consciousness exploration through:** appreciative inquiry; living in the question; discovery of multiple possibilities; request for creative ideas and solutions; and inspirational expressions.

A concept I have used to discuss consciousness exploration is a Ring of Consciousness. (Leland Kaiser, U of Colorado) Inside the ring represents everything we know, our total reality. Outside of the ring represents infinite potential; sometimes referred to as unexpressed consciousness. The **opportunity** in life is to expand our ring size by processes involving consciousness exploration and transformation. This process is really a holistic definition of inclusion: a willingness to compatibly expand our ring by resolving exclusionary ways of thinking and behaving. The result of resolution is expanded wisdom.

Most everyone has done some form of *appreciative inquiry*. It’s a brainstorming group exercise which creates a critical energy that exceeds the boundary of the group’s ring and leads to the **realization** of a sequence of questions posed by the group. The idea is to “pull” the participants into a future reality rather than “push” them by focusing on the positive aspects of how they function. This process is similar to our process of implementing quantum-thinking.

Living in the question is a personal exploration exercise which assumes that an individual has the subconscious wisdom to resolve any difficulty or exploration that is of interest in that person’s life. The individual submits a request to his or her

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inner wisdom, receives answers over a week's duration, and ultimately receives one answer with *intuitive surety*. (Practice makes perfect, and inner trust)

The essence of the other forms of exploration is based upon the biblical statement, "Ask and you shall receive." But it also includes "Seek and you shall find." I do know, by experience, that dream-state requests for creative ideas and solutions to difficult problems can become an integrated routine. The point is that all of these processes involve the courage to *explore* outside of our ring's boundary.

The last example above is inspirational expression. I think of quotes by individuals we all know, but is equally true of relatives or friends in our life, such as Martin L. King: "*You can't ride a man's back unless it is bent.*" Mahatma Gandhi: "*You must be the change you wish to see in the world.*" And Thomas Jefferson: "*The Declaration of Independence.*" These types of inspirational statements and declarations are sometimes spontaneously downloaded and sometimes requested.

The objective of this post is to realize that the more we are *open* to experiences and explorations which lead to realizations and expanded wisdom, respectively, the more possibilities and wisdom we have to confidently deal with any challenge we may encounter. I realize I have just "scratched the surface" of in-depth subjects.

Reference

A "provocative read" I highly recommend is:

The Aftermath—William Guillory, Ph.D., The Center for Creativity and Inquiry, Salt Lake City, Utah. (Paperback available from thewayoftheheart.org and e-book from Amazon)

Conversations: Innovations will be starting "**Conversations Groups**" in the coming weeks relating to these posts and interests you might have. To register for these groups and submit an area of interest, please use the following email address: ResilienceAdaptationVisioning@gmail.com If you have private questions or comments about any of the subjects discussed in these posts, please direct them to the above email address.

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Bill Guillory, Ph.D.
President and CEO
Innovations International, Inc

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bill.guillory@innovint.com

Tel: 801.671-8392 (Mobile)

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