

Mentoring Module

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

There is a fact of life of which we are all very much aware, if we actually take the time to really think about it; of which we can do something about, though rarely take the time to do so; and which is absolutely key to directly influencing our both personal and professional facets of life.

We are each our own best friend and our own worst enemy. And as we consistently act in a manner that our thinking influences us to do, it is important to recognize whether it is either friend or enemy directing our actions.

Conflicting adages of: *Look before you leap*; and: *He who hesitates is lost*; both hold merits – providing wise guidance. But the person that looks into the chasm of challenge that *must be crossed* and then decides against leaping, because the gulf appears deeper and wider than earlier anticipated or previously imagined, is sticking to the boundaries that have been set by our own worst enemy. Why? Because the chasm *must be crossed* and when it is not, then it becomes deeper and wider each time the opportunity arises to cross it. When we hesitate to do that which we must do, then we lose the will to break through the boundaries that we have set ourselves.

When we can truly accept that whatever happens to us is because of our previous choices we can begin to see the boundaries that we have set. Admittedly there are boundaries that have been conditioned into us by well meaning parents, teachers and friends during our formative years, but it is still our choice that keeps us within them. To paraphrase one of my literary mentors, Ralph Waldo Emerson: *Sow a thought, reap a choice; sow a choice, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.*



We do become what we think about, and the degree to which we stretch ourselves by embarking upon challenging situations, is directly proportionate to how much we believe in our abilities, our strengths, our talents, our conviction, our resolve and ourselves. Talking ourselves either out of something or into something either sets or breaks our boundaries. On both accounts we are listening to the person that knows us best, yet knows us worst, knows our frustrations, our aspirations; yet knows our insecurities and dreams. Knows what is required to make us do something; yet knows exactly how to prevent us from doing what is required.

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What can we do to overcome this paradoxical conundrum (a seemingly absurd and contradictory, confusing problem) of knowing who to listen to at the right time: Our own best friend, or our own worst enemy? There is a simple answer.

First, there are 4 precepts to accept:

1. **Your Future must never be considered an extension of the past.** Just because you have failed at something once, does not mean you will fail in the future. Just because you have not tried something before does not presuppose that you will not be able to do it.
2. **At any moment you are much more than the sum total of everything you have ever done.** Many of the things that you have already achieved were completed despite the uncertainty that you may not, might not, or could not achieve them before you started.
3. **Mistakes mark progress; failing at something is a vital ingredient to succeeding at it.** Good judgment comes from experience and experience in turn is based on bad judgment, which leads to mistakes and failure.
4. **Having the desire to do something leads to developing the ability to realize it.** Emerson wrote: *There is nothing capricious in nature, and the implanting of a desire indicates that its gratification is in the constitution of the creature that feels it.* In other words: you would not have the desire to achieve something, unless you were capable of its achievement.

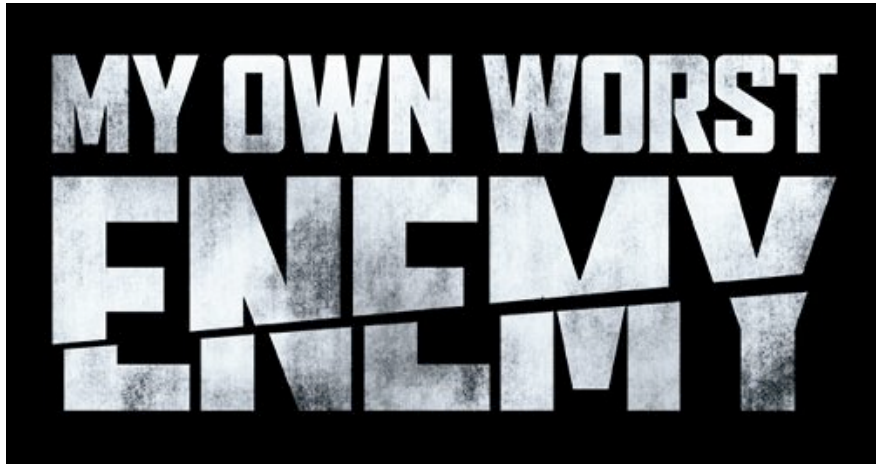
Whenever you have the desire to do something, the inevitable chasm will soon appear. Your rationale, which occupies a fixed boundary founded on well-meaning admonitions such as ‘take-care’ warnings, will strive to influence you that you ‘should not bite off more than you can chew.’ Your intuition, which knows no boundaries, will counsel that you must take the jump – but with a proviso of either: Yes, you can do this; it is the challenge you must take and you are ready, so go-ahead; or, Yes, this is the right challenge, yet the timing is not yet right - get prepared and plan the jump; don’t just leap impulsively.

Whenever the thought and desire are in harmony with your abilities and potential your best friend will always answer in the affirmative. Whenever the moves you consider making are not in line with your motives, then your best friend will always counsel cautiously.

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Whenever you are doing something that takes you away from what you have desired to achieve, then you have allowed your own worst enemy to take control of your thinking. Taking uncalculated risks is an example: A disciplined person of good character driving under the influence of drink is the classic example. An influential politician, corporate figurehead, or pillar of the community that uncharacteristically and impulsively leaps a chasm will witness their whole career plummet, when half-way across, they realise that their action will result in disastrous consequences. Whatever the reason they were their own worst enemy.



Life is about taking risks, whether crossing the street or borrowing £1M for a new venture. Business is the great arena that offers thrills, excitement, fame, riches, status and success; as well as disaster, ruin, loss, fear and failure. Many remain in the fixed boundaries of the arena. For freedom beyond the walled boundaries only belongs to those gladiators determined to break through, knowing that the key do to so lies deep within themselves, and available to them whenever they make a decision.

What is that decision? It is to break through existing boundaries; indeed to accept no boundaries. To not limit your thinking to what cannot be done; rather to be prepared for what must be done. To leap when you must and to not hesitate, because you have already peered over the edge, know what is expected of you and know that you can achieve it.



When you prepare yourself and are prepared to do whatever it takes, then you discover that every challenging chasm that you encounter shrinks as you unhesitatingly leap across it.

And remember, to get something you never had you have to do something you never did.

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