



Leadership Living

the MasterPoint™ Series for the ascendant professional

by Tim Herd

Thinking and doing and being

Olympic champions, bodybuilders and dieters, sales representatives, and all your basic goal-setters keep before them a clear picture of the desired end results even as they work toward them from afar off.

You see, our brains are gullible: they believe what they are consistently told.

The teen berated as a screw-up continues as one; the girl ostracized for being different becomes a loner; the man who confesses he has no willpower succumbs to temptation. On the other hand, the child praised for being thoughtful continues to be; a student who believes she can overcome dyslexia does; a disadvantaged young adult rises to the challenge of being a single parent. All of us act according to what we believe we are capable of doing, to the degree we believe it.

Sometimes the “facts” are irrelevant. You wish to be a professional musician, but you’re simply not proficient enough. That may be true. But it doesn’t mean it always will be. A professional musician practices many hours every day to hone and maintain his or her skills; so does the *aspiring* professional musician. We must take on the habits and behaviors of the professional before we actually become the professional.

Professional motivators and creative thinkers speak about thinking “outside the box” or acting beyond our comfort zones to effect innovation and change. The truth is, ruts are comfortable. We spend a long time carving them out to our exact dimensional habits and then resting in them: *aahhh!* But to seek improvements in our lifestyle or to dream an impossible dream forces a change in our thinking, which in turn affects our doing, and eventually, our being.

When I was in junior high school I enjoyed a couple of semesters of Mechanical Drawing, where we sat at large drafting tables and used the T-square and triangles and scale ruler and dividers and compasses to draw 3-D objects on a piece of paper taped to the table. Mr. Dotter insisted that he did not mind us making mistakes, declaring often that “He who makes no mistakes, does nothing.” But he did warn us about making grooves in our work. We all had a tendency to push hard on our pencils, firmly and irrevocably etching our decisions forever. Sure, we could erase the line if it was wrong, but we couldn’t erase the groove in the paper the line created, so our mistake remained even though we had repented of the error.

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We may not always be sure of our exact pathway to progress, but we can tread lightly as we train and develop to avoid unnecessary and unsightly “grooves” in our professional lives that may mar ourselves, our relationships, and our future. To do anything at all guarantees that we will, from time to time, make

mistakes and fail. That is certain. So the issue is not when or what we fail, but how we fail and recover, while consistently reconfirming to our own minds the purposeful image of our destination.

It is the willingness to do what it takes; to purposefully banish negative, destructive, and counter-productive thought patterns, and substitute them with uplifting, edifying, and encouraging ones to motivate a change in our behavior. It is to accept in faith that which we cannot see as though it is. And to act upon that belief to fulfill our own greatest potential.

MasterPoint 56

Think to believe; believe to act; act to become.

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