



"The training is fun...
but the learning is no joke!"

How To Focus On The Big Picture In Life

What is the "Big Picture?"

When you have small children in your life time seems to slip away quickly due to schedule, lists, tasks, and the stuff of our situations. Making time for you is a challenge, as is making time for each other. My wife is a master at making the lists and making sure we are all on task. She keeps me focused while always checking my impeccability. Our system is powerful because we each have a strength that the other lacks. Sometimes however I allow myself to be annoyed by the list of life.

Several months ago my wife and I were about to go to bed and just before she said in a matter of fact way. "Hey we should make love before going to bed." Now I love sex as much as the next guy, but after a day of following a strict regimen and schedule I like a little spontaneity in my love life. This felt like another task on the list of life. In that moment our hot, spontaneous love life was in my mind, reduced to a simple last item to be completed. As I looked at my beautiful wife I actually said, "I feel like this is just on the list of things to do."

She then quickly expressed this thought ever so calmly said, "At least it is on the list. We could take it off of the list if you want."

In that moment I realized through my experience what the Big Picture really was and why this step is so critical to the Use It mentality. The Big Picture in this moment: "Woooohoooooo! Sex is on the list!" When you loose focus of the Big Picture in each moment of your life you are loosing complete control of your sense of focus. In our daily lives we tend to gravitate in the way that confirms our victim story. Life is hard becomes our mantra. Is this really true or are we simply making a decision, albeit an unconscious design, to be living in a stressed world? What is on your list?

In the Use It learning the Big Picture is literally the most important all encompassing life mission in that moment. For everyone this is different, but most importantly it is the most positive outcome for the situation you are in. If you are late for work then cut off in traffic and then angry at everyone, then what is your Big Picture? It may be getting to work happy, or getting to work safely. It will never be getting to work angry or just being angry in general. Remember, anger leads to stressful thought and stress faster than anything. Focus on that one large scale, image of what matters most.

By the way, many times we misinterpret the Big Picture and this too leads us away from living our lives better. When we interpret the Big Picture from the perspective of, "This is what I want the Big Picture to be." We become blocked by our desire to be right or to only serve ourselves.

This recently was my dilemma on an outing with our son Tyler. Ty and I were visiting our favorite shopping destination, Home Depot when my wife Kathryn called. She informed me that she was very lost in her attempt to locate the store she was looking for and she was becoming very frustrated. In the background I could here our nine month old daughter crying. When I attempted to give detailed instructions and help Kathryn find her way she began to calm down a bit but told me that if she stayed lost much longer she would simply come home. I knew this would not make her happy at all as she was looking forward to a fun outing of shopping.

About five minutes later Kathryn called again and this time the frustration had grown. She was now even farther away from her destination than before and told me that it was time to go home. Her slight agitation had grown to now a sense of complete deflation at the thought of returning home without shopping for even a moment.

Here comes the Big Picture.

This is a moment that the Big Picture thinking, especially in relationships, will affect everything around you. How you decide to find harmony using the Use It philosophy all starts right at the moment when you decided if the Big Picture is only going to serve you or a greater good. By the way you are included always in the greater good.

I too had a choice. One option is certainly for me to say, "Great she is going home. I will take our son home also and she can watch them both while I finish the project I came to Home Depot to work on." In that moment the Big Picture would be, "Getting My Project Completed." The thing I want you to think about in moments like this is what affect this self serving Big Picture idea will have on everyone you come in contact with. Look, I get it that this is not easy to do. But you wouldn't be reading this now if something inside you was not yearning for a change. You would have no reason to read this at all except that you want to make your life better. Well it all starts small in these moments. Just a half step onto the non-selfish path and you will see dramatic results in your life. You have a choice as I did, standing there in Home Depot knowing that my wife needed help.

Choosing the path I did in this moment was a challenge, but the outcome was wonderful. As I finished putting Tyler into the car and loaded up the remainder of our merchandise I called Kathryn. When she answered I could hear the sadness in her voice. Quickly I let the Use It take over.

"Honey let's meet at the grocery store, you give me the baby, and I will take both kids home. You can go shopping while I feed them and put them to bed. I want you to take all the time you need on this because I know that it is important to you."

Now I know what you are thinking. This sounds too good to be true right? Certainly if your thoughts jumped to how that would never be you or that it would never happen to you then of course it sound ridiculous. All I can tell you is that I live this way. Should I give a course to all husbands on the planet? Perhaps, but I believe that we are here to contribute to the lives of others as well as our own. When I took action by focusing on a Big Picture, which was off of me, the energy of the moment changed. Kathryn was relieved and went on her quest. I was fortunate enough to have some much needed, uninterrupted time with my kids, and the house project could wait. People are much more important than projects.

You will need to decide what is important to you in your life. Is it winning, being right, only doing what you want, or the slew of other reasons we all find to justify only taking care of ourselves? If so you are going to keep seeing the same life results.

"The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results" - Albert Einstein

You are reading this thus creating change. Often you may have a Big Picture that is completely about you and you alone. For example you may have a work project that needs immediate attention, or you need to pay your bills on time. These things may become your Big Picture by which all other Use It steps will flow. Just remember that coming up with the Big Picture may take bring flexible in the moment. It may take you really taking a breath and considering many ideas. The trick to forgetting the big picture is to look at everything close-up...so don't. The big picture is the overall

project or life moment objective. This will keep you focused on what is most important and stop you from overacting when a challenge occurs.

So how do you apply the Use It mentality when in a relationship? What if one person is in resistance of life and you are with this person daily? How do you find your own happiness in spite of the non-happy partner? You can not obviously force the Use It philosophy on them and it would be a lie to say that all is well when it is not. The challenge is to allow someone to find their own path and not be depending on the outcome of any situation to make you happy. Look, if sex is on the list then leave it there. Do not try to make a new list!

The Use It ideas are great except that not everyone around you will automatically come online with the learning. My advice to you is to stay focused on the overall Big Picture and simply live fully in every moment! Do the things that you need do to maintain the relationship while being independent of it. Your individual self is ready to blossom. Take the kids on outings, clean the house, work, laugh and stay your course. The other in the relationship must not be taken personally if you are to ever hope for harmony.

Remember, no struggle can continue without two people. If one stops the struggle becomes internal and individual only. Stay focused on the Big Picture.

"Nothing is softer or more flexible than water, yet nothing can resist it"

"If you let expectations -- ideas about how life should be -- take precedence over how life is, you're going to be unhappy," says Cheri Huber, author of "When You're Falling, Dive: The Power of Acceptance." Your true strength in any moment lies in your ability to take what is happening and use it to build on a more positive outcome. Making your life better is a process not perfection.

How to find the Big Picture?

First take a deep breath, and then literally say in your head, "What matters most here really." The big picture will speak to you loudly. Make sure you do not ask this question as, "What matters here most to me?" That is your ego trying to make you the most important person. As you begin to change the way you think about the stressful stuff in your life you will find some internal resistance at first. Keep thinking to yourself, "What is the most important thing now?" Staying positive during a stressful time is an act of will. No one or no situation can dictate your view of the world except you. Once the Big Picture speaks to you, it will be up to you to listen, then put it on the list.

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