

## **Defining Moments**

### **By Mel Schwartz**

From time to time, many of us tend to experience an occasional insight. An insight is simply the ability to change our filter and look at things differently. In moments of insight, there's a sudden burst of clarity where there had previously been static; there is an epiphany of movement. It's the AHA moment. When we are firmly entrenched in our beliefs and rooted in our certainty, we're not typically open to insights. To have an insight we need to temporarily suspend our beliefs and open to new possibilities. We're not so much working on the insight as we are creating the groundwork for it to come forth. In other words, we're getting out of our own way, and opening to new considerations. Without insights we're shackled to a fixed and stagnating reality in which little changes. It tends to look as if life is just replaying itself, day in and day out.

*Today's insight becomes tomorrow's faded memory*

The more that we move out of old, habitual patterns of belief and thought, the more inclined we are to have insights. My work as a therapist is highly motivated toward catalyzing insights. Insights are the initiators of change, but only if we pay homage to them. Although enlightening for a brief period, insights tend to fade and wither over time. Today's insight becomes tomorrow's faded memory. That is precisely why we struggle with change and stay stuck in the old groove.

I believe that insights are the forerunners of our growth and personal evolution. But only if we treat them with the value they deserve. If we diminish an important breakthrough, we're devaluing ourselves. If we don't take the new thinking and highlight it as a guide to our self-actualization, we are impeding new learning and growth. We're simply not taking ourselves seriously enough.

In my personal life and in my work, strongly believe in making a commitment to insight. A commitment to insight might sound like, "My life is changed because of this insight. I am committed to this change, as of this moment." Although this might sound awkward and perhaps corny, it is actually the foundation for an increasing self-esteem. When we make a commitment to an insight, I refer to that as a defining moment.

Defining moments occur when we direct our lives onto a new pathway, borne of an illuminating insight and an expanded awareness. Defining moments stand out in singularity and literally redefine our lives. This process moves us from the mental breakthrough of the moment into a state of action. Sustaining the defining moment requires a foundational shift in our lives. There is ordinarily a state of inertia at work, whereby we tend to slip back into the familiar zone. Therefore, making a commitment is truly essential to maintaining the change.

If you can't identify defining moments in your life, you've likely lived by the rules of conformity and have been influenced by fear. Defining moments speak to the deeper underlying questions and struggles of our lives. When we react in habitual and formatted

ways, we don't penetrate beneath the surface of our existence. Fear and anxiety typically corral us into this formatted type of thinking and behavior, whereby we're in a reactive mode, not quite operating from the deepening awareness that insight can evoke.

Defining moments are those in which we take full authorship of the script of our lives. Creating the defining moment is achieved by shifting the insight to the foreground of your attention and illuminating it with full intention. The deepening experience of awareness and presence enables the profound shift into the realm of defining moments. Defining moments are the peak experiences of our lives when we come to recognize them as such.

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