

Survivor's Notebook

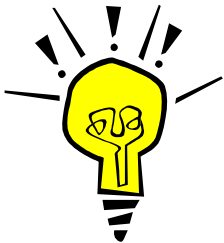
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INVENTING

AT THE AGE OF EIGHT I discovered a way to have something I wanted but could not find to buy. I was a devoted reader of comic strips and could visualize my favorite character performing heroic deeds around the farm where I lived. It was easy to imagine a masked man with two guns and a long whip as he drove a rampaging bull into a pen. I couldn't buy a comic strip like that, but I hit on an idea that worked for me—I could draw the strip myself! It was fun and it was cheap, plus I could be the hero myself if I chose to.

Thinking about that decades later, I wonder if that same strategy would work today. For example, I might enjoy learning the disciplines of one of the martial arts, but not have access to a teacher. Would it be possible to devise my own system of moves, give each one a name, reason, and value? Without a knowledge of anatomy and physiology, how could I know that the movements I create will be beneficial—or at least not harmful? OK, the answer to that is simply to believe that a specific movement will have a specific effect. After all, I'm doing this only for myself, so whatever I say goes and, like my comic strips, it's designed specifically for me.

It has been said that whatever can be imagined can be created. This is significantly strengthened by a number of belief systems which hold that whatever is imagined will be created, which can become a frightful prospect if allowed to run rampant, but with sensible logic and ethical guidance it can be the source of achievement that assures success in whatever we undertake.



The mind is its own
place, and in itself can
make a heaven of hell,
a hell of heaven.

--John Milton

LIVING BY THE ONES

HERE'S AN IDEA that will enable you to do the things you should do without undue effort. We have all read and heard of moral and ethical do's and don't's, and we know what is right and wrong—but we fall into neglectful habits and while we recognize our failure to act on an issue, instead of correcting the fault, we put a cup of guilt in our conscience bucket and go about our business. In time the conscience bucket is flooded by guilt and stress becomes a constant companion. Try this—it might offer relief:

Begin each day by deciding to do something nice for someone—but only once. When the opportunity presents itself, do someone a favor and mentally mark that item done. Then forget about doing nice things for people until tomorrow.

Next, decide to compliment someone you've never complimented before—but only once. Maybe when the postman delivers your mail you can thank him for doing a good job. Then cross that item off your list for the day.

And from the number of household tasks that you have been putting off, select just one to do. When you've finished that task, forget about the others until tomorrow.

Do you owe letters to a number of friends and relatives? Select just one and write the letter, then forget the rest for today.

If you have items that you intend to donate to a charity, but which are gathering dust, pick just one and deliver it.

The usual feeling of drudgery or duty is offset by knowing that you're only doing this once, and the one performance offsets a guilty conscience for procrastinating.

The fact is that as you do just one of the things you select, it will soon become easy to do more than just one, so that in a short while you will not find it difficult to do more than one favor each day, or pass more than one compliment. Doing the right thing will become effortless. Try it. #

