

“Been There, Done That” . . . Really?

By: Rick Poling

“Been There, Done That” (with an occasional “Got the T-Shirt” added) is a phrase I’ve heard (and often said) all my life, usually to denote that some trip, activity or experience has already been realized or accomplished, so there would probably be nothing to be gained by doing it again. But lately, I’ve wondered, is that ever really true?

The truth is, there will never be another moment in our lives exactly like the moment we’re in right now. And the people we’re around every day? They too are experiencing present moments uniquely different from any other moment they’ve ever had before or will ever have again. Those factors alone present infinite variables of possibilities of conversations and exchanges between us and others that are unique to this moment . . . the sort that have never occurred before and will never occur again. But, there’s more. Even in the “most routine” of routines, there are subtle and some not-so-subtle differences every day, aren’t there? And still further, there are undoubtedly many things that remain essentially the same day-in and day-out but that have escaped our noticed or appreciation; for example, how many times, almost by accident, have you noticed something along the route you travel every day that you hadn’t seen before? What if we ACTIVELY looked for such things?

What if we actively sought to discern and appreciate the uniqueness of each moment?

What if we conditioned ourselves to live fully in “the present moment?” (As one modern philosopher, Dr. Wayne Dyer, has said, it is no coincidence that the word “present” is synonymous with the word “gift”).

What prevents us from “living in the present,” experiencing and making the present moment the very most it can be? Are such impediments imposed upon us or are they self-imposed? Clearly, upon reflection, they are self-imposed. How much time and energy and emotion is spent dwelling on the past or worrying about the future? Every moment spent dwelling on the past literally sucks the oxygen out of the present, making it impossible to find fulfillment in the present moment, robbing us of opportunities to see things or people as they are “now” as opposed to how they once were; nothing nor no one can possibly be seen in a new way or with a fresh beginning if it is locked in the past in our minds. Also, it is estimated that over eighty percent of the things we typically worry about are things over which we have absolutely no influence nor control! When you really think about that, isn’t it amazing how much time and energy and emotion is devoted to worrying about things we could not possibly change? And, do you know what gets lost in that process? The greatest thing we CAN change . . . the present moment!

Another way we may often rob ourselves of fully enjoying and appreciating the present moment is by thinking that portions of our day are so “routine” that they must be the same day after day after day. There often is great comfort in having routines. They give us predictability and a sense of peace or reassurance. Sometimes, in work and in life, they are necessary. But,

routines don't REALLY foreclose the prospect of seeing or learning or experiencing something new or in a new way, do they? Doesn't that restriction only occur in our minds rather than in reality?

Surprisingly, the extent to which we live "in the present moment" even causes a measurable phenomena (beyond our moods)! We have all no doubt heard the term "vibes" used to describe how another person may be perceived, but did you know that scientists recently determined that human beings indeed create and emit vibrations dependent upon their mood and mindset? It is true. And the greatest determining factor in the extent or strength of a person's vibrations was, guess? . . . the extent to which they were engaged in the present moment, and how open they were to experiencing and totally engaging in what the present moment has to offer. That may explain why the term "electric" is sometimes used to describe the "vibes" people generate and feel from each other in a church service or a wonderful live music performance; people are more likely to be fully absorbed in the present moment during such times -- dwelling on the past or worrying about the future are not on their minds at such times, there is no time for that; instead, their minds are being fully occupied and saturated by the events of the present moment. At those moments in time, their measurable vibrations may double or triple their "normal range" or distance of detection by another person (four to twelve feet is the "normal range" or distance of detection of an typical person), and studies have shown that those "normal" ranges are dramatically higher in those persons accustomed to living in the present moment and being open to all the prospects the present moment provides. Not only that, WE can EACH increase our "range" of vibration and impact simply by being more fully immersed in the present . . . the force and effect of living "in the present" is not only greater upon ourselves, it is greater upon others around us as well!

It has been suggested by Dr. Deepak Chopra that self-instilling one very simple habit of behavior can radically and vastly expand the quality of our lives and exponentially increase our positive impact upon others . . . it is to ask ourselves anytime we encounter another person, no matter how many times we've interacted with that person before, these two questions: "What will I learn from this person today? What 'dance' will we have together?" It is easy to see how the actual use of those two questions could be life-changing, not only for ourselves but also for everyone we encounter. How much more fulfilling and positive would our world be if everyone viewed everyone else in that way?

Behavioral Psychologists report that we human beings are incredibly adaptable creatures, capable of radically changing our lifestyle or mindset and discarding an old or instilling a new habit in just thirty-five days of focused behavior. What if, in the next thirty-five days, all of us focused upon living in and fully appreciating the present moment, being observant of and receptive to all around us, seizing each opportunity to learn or hear or see or experience the "here and now"? I can't think of a better new habit to develop, can you? "Been there, done that" could truly become a thing of the past!

QUOTE OF THE MONTH: "If you think you can, or, if you think you can't, you're right." Henry Ford