

Will it Still Matter 100 Years From Now?

Written by T.K. Coleman.

"We hath not much time and yet we have so much to say. Meaningful moments are far and few between. You gotta seize the meaning (If you see what I mean)." -Take6, So Much 2 Say

I am eternally indebted to Robert Fritz for introducing me to the following distinction: the creative orientation versus the reactive orientation.

In the reactive orientation, circumstances are the driving force in your life. Instead of you happening to things, things happen to you. Something occurs in the outer world and you react to it. Case in point: you log onto Facebook, see a post in your newsfeed about politics, you get into a few heated internet fights with strangers (or friends), and then you spend the next hour (or 24 hours) feeling stressed about politics and deeply worried about the existence of people who don't think like you.

In the creative orientation, your individual dreams, goals, and priorities are the driving forces in your life. Instead of things happening to you, you happen to things. Some inspiring idea occurs to you and you act on it. Case in point: you wake up in the morning, think about your future, make a list of the things that matter most to you, and you start working on those things regardless of what's going on in the world around you. If practicing the piano is what you need to do, you practice the piano. If going to the gym is what you need to do, you go to the gym. If building your business is what you need to do, you work on your business. Instead of getting caught up in what seems to be the most sensational story of the day, you decide for yourself what's going to be newsworthy.

We live in an amazing world. Our ability to communicate across vast distances in real-time is unlike anything that has ever been witnessed in human history. I can know what you had for breakfast today, what my cousin Jimmy did for his birthday last night, which NBA teams are discussing trades, and which countries are angry at each other all in a single glance of my newsfeed on Twitter. There are literally thousands of things to react to in any given minute.

So much to react to. So little time.

Charlemagne Tha God wrote: "I think people wake up in the morning and go on social media to find out what they should care about for the day."

That's the risk that comes with living in a world that gives us so much access to instant stimulation and endless internet gratification. But I like this world. And I have no desire to go back to some pre-technological age in the name of nostalgia. Each generation has its unique challenges. Dwelling on the past won't save us from ours. In fact, I've found much guidance by dwelling on the future. The more I live, the more I take to heart four simple words spoken to me by Jeffrey Tucker several years ago: "play the long game." And that, my friends, is my advice to you. Before you push the "react" button today, think about the legacy you want to have. Much of what's being discussed and debated today are things that everyone is going to forget about in the next 5 weeks, or 5 months, or 5 years. And what a tragedy it would be if you traded in your opportunity for a brilliant and beautiful future for the fleeting validation that comes from having a publicly visible reaction to everything that everyone else claims to care about.

Recently, I've been asking myself the following question when I get out of bed in the morning:

Of all the conversations and activities I can participate in today, which ones are most likely to matter 100 years from now?

I'm not entirely confident that my answers to this question are always good, but it sure does help me keep things in perspective. Even when it doesn't help me figure out what I should be doing, it always helps me eliminate more than a few things that I have no business doing.

I'll mind my own business and leave your to-do list up to you. Whatever you do, however, I hope you make choices that faithfully represent the way you truly want to be remembered 100 years from now.

Cheers,

T.K.

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