

Create a Powerful Framing for the World

The way we view life is usually invisible to us, and yet it is probably the most powerful thing in our lives.

For example, one person might hear the words of another person and feel incredibly hurt, stressed, angry, and then it ruins their entire week ... while another person might hear the same words and feel compassion and love for the other person. Neither person is right or wrong, they simply have different views of the world.

The way we look at the world is called our “framing” of the world. The lens through which we see our lives. Our view of things.

There is no “right” lens or framing, nothing that we “should” choose. In fact, “right” and “should” are two common framings of the world. There are simply different lenses, different ways to frame anything. And if we bring awareness to the frame, we can choose.

I’m going to share a few examples of framing, and then share how you might create something powerful for yourself.

Some examples:

- An act of helping someone else might be seen as a way to impress others and get acknowledgement and love, or it can be a simple act of joyful connection with another human being, or a way to offer your gift to others.
- Answering an email can be another opportunity to mess up and look dumb, or it can be a way to connect with someone you care about, or a place of exploration and learning.
- Writing can be a dreadful chore full of pressure or boredom, or it can be a place of curiosity and play, or a place of deep contemplation and silence, or a way to sing your song to the world with exhilaration.
- Cleaning the bathroom can be a gross mundane task that you feel like avoiding, or perhaps a meditation practice helping you to be more present to your life, or maybe a way to connect your heart to all others who have to clean a bathroom.

As you can see, there isn’t only one way to view a situation (or another person, or yourself). In fact, I’ve only listed a few in each example, but there are endless possibilities. And which view you choose will determine your experience, and often the results you get and what actions you take.

Our entire lives are shaped by our framing. And we usually don’t choose them, they are automatic.

Bringing Awareness to Our Framing

So how can we make them less automatic and more of a choice? We have to shine a light on them.

How am I viewing this situation that causes me to feel and react this way? What kind of framing would have me avoid this task or situation? What lens would make me have this experience of life?

Some common ways to frame things:

- A way I might fail, look stupid, be rejected, be seen as weird or incompetent or unworthy.
- Overwhelming, too much, too hard.
- Unchangeable, something I should just resign myself to or get through.
- A burden, boring.
- Another way to prove myself as broken or shameful.
- A way I need to prove myself worthy or good.
- A thing I need to get right.
- Something I should do.
- Proof of my wrongness.
- A way that others are wrong or not doing what they should do.
- A huge injustice or disrespect.
- Something I can't have.
- A way the other person is showing they don't care about me (i.e. unanswered messages).
- Something I might lose.
- A way to be inauthentic.
- Something to hide because it's shameful.
- Too much to handle, too tiring, too draining.

There is nothing wrong with these views — we all have them somewhere in a place we can't see. They're automatic, and they shape our lives. Which of these might explain some difficulties you're having with habits, relationships, work, health, happiness?

Choosing a Powerful Framing

There are endless possibilities, too many for me to list. I'll list a few anyway!

The idea is to look at a situation, bring awareness to what your current framing might be, and then decide to reframe it for yourself. Try on the new framing, and practice seeing things in this way for awhile, and see what results you get. There is no right answer.

Pick a situation that seems particularly challenging: maybe you have not been eating healthily, or feel bad about yourself, or are frustrated with someone, or feel like you're avoiding hard tasks, or have a hard time with a family member who is suffering through health problems.

Take that one situation, and examine your view. What framing might cause the reaction you're having? You don't have to get it exactly right, but take a shot.

Are you committed to that framing? Would you be open to letting it go and trying on something new?

Here are a few possibilities among the limitless number ... a situation or task or person might be:

- An opportunity for play, adventure, exploration, learning.
- An opportunity for curiosity.
- An opportunity for compassion and love.
- A way to express your gift, your true self, to sing your song.
- A way to connect with someone.
- An opportunity for wonder, gratitude, appreciation, awe.
- A way to practice mindfulness, being present to your life.
- A chance to surrender, trust, relax with life.
- A place to practice letting down your defenses.
- An opportunity to deepen, to contemplate, to find solitude and silence.
- An exhilarating experience of freedom and openness.
- A place of spaciousness.
- A chance to savor, find the deliciousness, find the delight.
- A place to choose.
- A way to experiment, try something new.
- A way to meet your needs, to own what you want, to set boundaries with love.
- An opportunity to lead, to serve.
- A way to express your purpose.
- An expression of your power.

These are a few of my favorite. I try them on all the time.

What would you like to choose? Could you try it on for awhile, and see what emerges?