

INTEGRATIVE LEADERSHIP INTERNATIONAL

“Helping individuals and organizations become integrated.”

Lessons on the Path:

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“The Open Door”

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OBSERVATION:

In our coaching and consulting work, we encourage people to search for and generate their own options to their everyday life and work challenges. To generate these options, we counsel the need for flexibility, adaptability and cultivating the ability to see themselves and their world from multiple perspectives. We suggest they awaken and engage their four domains of intelligence, become aware of their motivations that move them through their three levels of awareness, and then illustrate ways of consciously activating their power of choice to crystallize their life options. Once aware and crystallized, we ask them to compare their options with their Ideal, combine or restructure their options if necessary for alignment, and then encourage them to pursue their chosen path that will hopefully move them closer to their Ideal rather than further away from it. We have found this to be a simple, yet powerful transformative and transcendent process.

However, sometimes in pursuing their chosen option, alternative or solution, things don't always go smoothly. Relationships break down. Resources dry up. Fear, doubt and worry creep in. They encounter obstacles and challenges—both internally and externally—that makes pursuing their chosen path difficult. Between their expectations and their reality, there is a gap that causes discouragement and distress along the way. And in these times the questions arise:

‘When is the door I’ve chosen to walk through really closed? What are the signs I need to be aware of that the path I’ve chosen to walk is no longer viable? When should I be determined, persevere and pursue a chosen path at all costs and when should I realize that I need to surrender, let go and look around for another way? When do I let go of my option—and the dream I’ve attached to it—and look once again for the open door?’

Interesting questions that caused me to pause and reflect on our own journey of life and leadership last week. When one door closes, another opens, but we are often so fixated on the door that has closed that we cannot see the one that has opened. This is true internally, and it is true externally.

Within us we have four fundamental and foundational domains of intelligence. Relating to the physical, as one seminar participant suggested: “In our digestive process, you have a front door,” she said while pointing to her mouth, “and a back door. The food goes in the front door, our body takes what is good, lets go of what is bad and moves it all out through our back door.” In the mental domain, the open door would allow information and knowledge to enter and help reshape our mental models, in the process teaching us more about ourselves and our world. Those who are open to new experiences continue to grow. Those who close their mental door, continue to swim in a pool of mediocrity, repeating their old patterns and behaviours over and over again. In the emotional domain, it is the door of the heart that needs to remain open, to be willing to love and be vulnerable. For it is through the door of our heart that our passion, enthusiasm, and excitement can flow through us, influencing our world. When our passion dies, when our compassion is blocked, we leave the ranks of the living and join the ranks of the *living dead*. In the spiritual domain, it is the door of our soul that awakens us to a totally different level of awareness and way of viewing our world. It is an invitation into higher levels of consciousness, awareness and possibilities that is filled with inspiration and original thinking.

In our experience, unless our four doors are open, awakened and aligned, our closed inner door will prevent us from successfully moving from the path of struggle to the path of flow. Only in opening the eyes of our heart, mind and soul will we be able to see the door that opens onto a path that will lead us effortlessly towards, rather than away from, our Ideal. So which doors are closed and which doors are open at this time in your life?

THE OPEN DOOR

“When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.”

Helen Keller

APPLICATION: Reflect this week if you are struggling and banging your head and heart on a closed door in your life or if you are gracefully walking through an open door? If you are in struggle, try and step back and see if you are missing an open door that may be hidden, around or beside the option you have chosen. When you see the open door, when you sense the option, ask yourself: ‘What can I do in this moment to begin to move as my Ideal Self, rather than as my Surreal Self, through the open door before me?’

INSPIRATION: “You can do anything you think you can. This knowledge is literally the gift of the gods, for through it you can solve every human problem. It should make you an eternal optimist. It is the open door.” **Robert Collier.**
Three Paradoxical Scriptural Perspectives on Doors: “Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” **Rev 3:8:** “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” **Mathew 7:7:** “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” **Rev 3:20.**

DOOR OF MY HEART

(Traditional Bengali chant translated and adapted by Paramahansa Yogananda)

Door of my heart, open wide I keep for Thee.
Wilt Thou come, wilt Thou come? Just for once come to me?
Will my days fly away without seeing Thee, my Lord?
Night and day, night and day, I look for Thee night and day.

OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART

(Christian Hymn composed in 1997. To hear the melody, click on this link: <http://www.preciouslordtakemyhand.com/christianhymns/opentheeyesofmyheart.html>.)

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart;
I want to see You, I want to see You.

INFORMATION: Cahill, Kevin M. Dr. (1999) *The Open Door*. Edited by Kevin Cahill. The Centre for International Health & Cooperation; New York: NY. “The Open Door” is a compilation of essays on global peace by Boutras Ghali, Cyrus Vance among others. Especially read, if you have a moment, the essay on “Peace and the Healing Process” by Nobel laureate, John Hume.

UPCOMING PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

June 14-16, 2005: Integrative Leadership: Taking Leadership to the Next Level: Sponsor: University of Saskatchewan, Business and Leadership Programs. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. **Tuition:** \$958.00 per person (includes GST). **Topic:** Experiencing the path of integrative life and leadership. To download a brochure and registration form, **Click this link:** http://www.integrativeleadership.ca/programs/uofs_june_2005.pdf For more information, call (306) 966-5492 or visit the U of S website at www.learnlead.usask.ca under upcoming events.

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