

The Art of Possibility

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1. **It's All Invented** – Life is all invented anyway, so we might as well invent a story or a framework of meaning that enhances our quality of life and the life of those around us.

Ask: What assumption am I making, that I am not aware I am making, that gives me what I see?

And then: What might I now invent, that I haven't yet invented, that would give me other choices?

2. **Stepping into a Universe of Possibility** – you can create a place to dwell where new inventions are the order of the day; a place that extends beyond the borders that confine us to our everyday reality. A place outside of "the World of Measurement" (win/lose, gaining of acceptance, threatened rejection, hope and despair) – the assumption that life is about staying alive and making it through - *surviving* in a world of scarcity and peril.

Ask: How are my thoughts and actions, in this moment, reflections of the measurement world?

3. **Giving an "A"** – giving each individual you an encounter in the world an "A" grade from the start. Removing the competitive win/lose, good/bad judgments from your relationships and transporting your relationship into the universe of possibility. An "A" is not an expectation to live up to, but a possibility to live into. People who perceive their role in a group to be of little significance (playing "second violin/fiddle), that they make no difference – fail to live up to their individual potential – the greatness they bring uniquely to the world. When we give an "A" (to ourselves or to others) we can be open to a perspective different from our own.

Exercise: Write a letter to yourself, dated a year from now, that describes why you have earned an "A" in life over the past year. In this letter, you are to tell, in as much detail as you can, the story of what will have happened to you by next May that will earn you this extraordinary grade.

Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall is quoted to have answered when asked of what accomplishment he was most proud, simply, "That I did the best I could with what I had."

4. **Being a Contribution** – step out of the game of “Is it enough?” or “Am I loved for who I am, or for what I have accomplished?” into the game of Contribution – asking, “How will I be a contribution today?”

Steps: 1) Declare your self a contribution

2) Throw yourself into life as someone who makes a difference, accepting that you may not understand how or why. Imagine that everything you do today will send ripples (like a pebble in a pond) out beyond the horizon.

5. **Leading from Any Chair** – allowing others (and yourself) to step into their unique greatness in the world, recognizing that there are great leaders everywhere. It’s all a question of “How much greatness are we willing to grant?”
6. **Rule Number 6** – Don’t take yourself so g-damn seriously! Lighten up! Decide that you are not going to listen to the “calculating self” – the “self” that works to control other people and circumstances to give ourselves a boost; looking out for #1.
7. **The Way Things Are** - is the way things are! Presence without resistance to what is frees you to discover what is possible.
Being with the Way Things Are by clearing “Shoulds”
Being with the Way Things Are by closing the exits: escape, denial, blame
Being with the Way Things Are by clearing judgments.
Being with the Way Things Are by distinguishing physical from conceptual reality
8. **Giving Way to Passion** – Giving way to the passionate sense of what can be, what is possible? Dare to let go of the edges of ourselves – PARTICIPATE.
Steps:
 - 1) Notice where you are holding back, and let go. Release those barriers of self that keep you separate and in control, and let the vital energy of passion surge through you, connecting you to all beyond.
 - 2) Participate wholly. Allow yourself to be a channel to shape the stream of passion into a new expression for the world.
9. **Lighting a Spark** – we have at our fingertips an infinite capacity to light a spark of possibility. We can do this with “Enrollment” – the art and practice of generating a spark of possibility for others to share.
Steps:

- 1) Imagine that people are an invitation for enrollment
- 2) Stand ready to participate, willing to be moved and inspired.
- 3) Offer that which lights you up.
- 4) Have no doubt that others are eager to catch the spark.

10. **Being the Board** – being the board on which the whole game is being played.

Stepping out of the world in which we equate accountability with blame and blamelessness. Realizing that inasmuch as I blame you for a perceived wrong – to that degree, in exactly that proportion, I lose my power and my ability to steer the situation in another direction, to learn from it, or to put us in good relationship with each other. Because – there is nothing I can do about your mistakes – only about mine. I own that whatever happens to me in the world happens in my sphere of consciousness and choice.

Grace comes from owning the risks we take in a world by and large immune to our control. The assumption that life will be under control if everyone plays his part is an illusion, because it requires someone or something to get blamed when things do (and will) break down.

Ask: Now, how is it that I have become a context for *that* to occur?

11. **Creating Frameworks for Possibility** – the leader of possibility invigorates the lines of affiliation and compassion from person to person in the face of the tyranny of fear. Invent and sustain frameworks in your life that bring forth possibility – restructuring meanings, creating visions, and establishing environments where possibility is spoken. In the realm of possibility, there is no division between ideas and action, mind and body, dream and reality.

12. **Telling the WE Story** – It says we are our central selves seeking to contribute, naturally engaged, forever in a dance with each other. It points to relationship rather than to individuals, to communication patterns, gestures, and movement rather than to discrete objects and identities. It attests to the *in-between*. By telling the WE story, an individual becomes a conduit for this new inclusive entity, wearing its eyes, and ears, feeling its heart, thinking its thoughts, inquiring into what is best for *US*.

Steps:

- 1) Tell the WE story – the story of the unseen threads that connect us all, the story of possibility.

- 2) Listen and look for the emerging entity.
- 3) Ask: "What do WE want to have happen here?" "What's best for US?" – all of each of us, and all of all of us.

I am done with great things and big plans, great institutions and big successes. I am for those tiny, invisible loving human forces that work from individual to individual, creeping through the crannies of the world like so many rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, yet which, if given time, will rend the hardest monuments of human pride.

- William James