



turning potential into performance

“Tacking” in Pursuit of Quality of Life©

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To sustain energy and momentum toward any end, consistently, involves long-term practice at a given task, craft, sport, or goal.

Having said that I’ve found that ‘quality of life’, at the core, is subjective, personal--intimate even as it reflects who we are in the world, I believe that it’s also true that to sustain such quality we must stand back, with a wide-angle lens, and view the context in which we live.

At this point in history we live in an incredibly interconnected world. Think not only of the possibilities afforded us through advances in medical and agricultural technology, globalization, and increases in communication via the internet but also to the responsibilities we share as a result. As a global community we’ve significantly deepened our environmental footprint; today we use 100-1000 times more resources than our ancestors. Accountability also requires us to communicate, negotiate, get creative about how to address that wear and tear where we live today.

It behooves us to remember this background context as we seek to create a ‘quality of life’ with the choices we make and the subsequent actions we take. Being mindful of our choices against this backdrop vs. ‘just going along’ or ‘not thinking’ carries with it more choices, yet more weight of responsibility as we sift through various options in any decision-making endeavor.

With spring just around the corner, stop and take a moment to reflect on those decision goals you set for yourself or your business earlier in the year. (Breathe here). How are you doing? What’s been your progress? What obstacles have you encountered and how did you handle them in order to stay focused? to keep the momentum going? Did you consider the larger context? What was the impact of that awareness?

If you’re at all like me the path towards your goals is rarely linear and direct; typically the path is circuitous at best and a lot like the rhythms of nature, full of patterns, movement, nuance.

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Imagine setting out in a sailboat with a distant destination across the lake. It'd be great to go from Point A to Point B across the water. Yet we know that it doesn't quite work that way: the wind kicks up and suddenly shifts direction or you sail right into a rain squall--and as is often the way with rain squalls, they kill all wind--and the folks on your craft may or may not know what to do.

What does occur is that you set your sights on land—over there—and move. The wind takes you off course; you make adjustments and tack back in the direction of your destination—again and again and again. You see, this back and forth process is the norm in sailing, at least if you hope to get anywhere!

So it is with our goals: we keep them in our sights, moving toward them, going with the flow of the elements, checking our direction, making adjustments, keeping at it. This process requires our attention, focus, persistence and a willingness to listen and adapt to the environment—in that very moment.

Three points in working our way toward goal completion (of course, it's a given that your goals are inspirational to you, vivid in imagery, focused on objective measures so you'll know when you meet them) include:

- setting about a *daily action practice* that serves as a warm-up movement to get your creative, motivated juices flowing
- remembering to 'tack' as you notice you're off course. None of this beat-myself-up mind chatter that can derail action quicker than a sudden spring squall—e.g. I should've done X vs.Y or sooner or later or . . .
- observing *and trusting* the current conditions around you as you re-orient and get back on track towards where you set your sights.

As you continue to move into your goals for 2008 think of nature, how the earth can and does heal itself if allowed and supported, of your part—however small you evaluate it to be—and courageously focus on 'what's important?' and the contribution you have to make to it all—even the larger context.