

THE LEADERSHIP LENS Newsletter

July 2006, © Mark Sincevich, Staash Press, LLC

A monthly resource providing insight, opinion & practical information on life balance, creativity & personal leadership

Intention and Surrender

My mother had been having chest pains that got serious enough for her to see the doctor. I got the phone call from my mother after her first doctor's appointment of the week. She had developed an inflammation of the lining of her heart or pericarditis. I didn't know that this particular predicament was even a possibility. The next day another doctor diagnosed her with a right brachial branch blockage and a heart arrhythmia. It sounded serious. The pericarditis was causing both of these new symptoms, so the blood flow in her heart was disrupted and it was affecting the timing of the beats. This was causing her to have small episodes of dizziness, leading to a possible loss of consciousness. After a few concerned conversations between all members of my family, we thought that she needed to be under medical supervision. Our plans to go as a family to the big island of Hawai'i on Friday of the same week were in serious jeopardy of being canceled.

Naturally I was worried about her and started to take an Internet crash course on diseases of the heart. The more I learned, the more I asked her questions about the chances of a speedy recovery. At the same time, I was upset for a variety of reasons. I wanted our extended family to have its' first vacation together outside of visiting each other's homes. This was all to take place while my parents celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in Hawai'i. I was looking forward to having that quality time that comes about when we aren't tethered to our homes and the 'to-do' list doesn't beckon. My mother has struggled with her rheumatoid arthritis over the last few years; she deserved to have some fun on this trip! Plus, I had taken a lot of time and energy to help plan this 'trip of a lifetime' and I couldn't do anything about it now. I told my wife, "It just isn't fair," in one of my outbursts that evening.

By the time Wednesday rolled around, I had calmed down and surrendered to forces greater than my own. It was not about how much planning that went into the trip or whether we could spend quality time together as a family. However it was about making sure that my mother was going to recover. It just took me a while to give up control of the situation. Giving up control or surrendering is something that I learn on a regular basis in my yoga practice. There are many forms of yoga and I practice Anusara Yoga, which means 'opening to grace' or 'going with the flow.' I remember one Vinyasa or flow class where my wonderful teachers, Paul and Sommer, talked about setting an intention at the beginning of the class and then surrendering to the results. This is achieved through proper breathing, a positive attitude and not trying to compete.

For example, in Parivrtta Trikonasa or revolved triangle pose, we are instructed to move into the position only as far as our bodies allow with a smile on our face. The breath leads the way, helping to us relax into the pose and to gently go a little farther into the stretch. Pushing too far results in pain, not going far enough doesn't engage the muscles and our mind in the pose. Each person finds his or her own balance. I had started out my yoga practice in Paul and Sommer's class that first semester trying to force each pose, my face contorting into a sneer, the veins popping out of my forehead. These facial acrobatics always brought a humorous reaction from both of them. Their laughter made me realize that I was trying to control the pose much like I was trying to force the vacation that my family was supposed to take.

German poet Ranier Maria Rilke speaks about the powerful effects of surrendering to control in his poem, Der Schauende (The Man Watching). He says, "What we choose to fight is so tiny! / What fights us is so great? / If only we would let ourselves be dominated / as things do by some immense storm, / we would become strong too, and not need names ... when we win it's with small things, and the triumph itself makes us small. / Winning does not tempt that man. / This is how he grows: by being defeated, decisively, / by constantly greater beings. The reason why powerful trees do not snap in the wind is because they bend to forces greater than themselves. And when we surrender to things greater than ourselves, we become more powerful too.

It was now Wednesday afternoon and my mother had just come back from the third doctor in three days. She was also on three different types of medication. She called very excited on her way home. The heart doctor told my mother to have a great time in Hawai'i! The three medications had stabilized her condition! She could either sit around the house or enjoy herself on vacation. I thought about this amazing turn of events as I spoke at great length to a proud Polynesian warrior at Pu'uhonua O Honaunau (Place of Refuge) National Historic Park on the big island of Hawai'i. He was dressed in a subdued red toga and leaned upon a long polished staff. His face was lined with wisdom as he told me about the tattoos that stretched from both elbows to his wrists. One tattoo showed people emerging from a canoe. The Polynesians took vast ocean journeys with the intention of reaching new lands. The Polynesian word for emerging from a canoe is Va'ah, which literally means to 'wake up.' After about an hour, I asked to take this man's portrait, setting the intention and letting go. He agreed. When we set the intention, we need to remember to surrender to the result. Surrendering is a form of letting go and waking up.

About Mark Sincevich:

Mark Sincevich is a professional photographer, author and speaker. He works with organizations and individuals that want to tap into their creative power. Through his photography experiences, Mark brings a unique angle to his professional speaking programs on life balance, creativity and photography. He is an active member of the National Speakers Association and brings the insight of over 17 years of working for various organizations into his programs. Mark continues to sharpen his over 21 years in photography as the executive director of the Digital Photography Institute and as a member of the American Society of Media Photographers. Mark is frequently quoted in the media and his articles and photography have appeared in newspapers and magazines around the country. He is the author of three books including "The Real Ideal" and the soon-to-be released, "Snap: the ultimate guide to digital photography for the consumer." After his assignments, Mark can be found spending time with his family or writing in coffee shops with character. For more information on Mark's speaking programs, photography and products call (301) 654-3010 or visit www.staashpress.com.

Learn how to set the intentions to get more of the right things done by booking Mark's program, "Getting More Done"

We will never sell or give away your personal information, and you can ask to have yourself taken off our distribution list at anytime by replying to one of our messages with "Take Off" in the subject line. For article reproductions, please contact newsletter@staashpress.com.