

DANCING OUR WAY INTO HEAVEN

The Merlin Factor 2.0

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Dwelling on Wallace Stevens' poem that begins, "After the final *no*, there comes a yes, and upon that yes the future of the world depends", I find myself asking the question, "At this extraordinary time in my life, what is my final *no*?"

Tough question. I googled "the Power of No" to help illuminate my query and was overwhelmed by references to countless others who've already thought, written, and talked about this..., and I'm left wondering, "Why do I bother?"

Ecclesiastes suggests that "too much studying is a weariness of the flesh" and "there is no end to the writing of books". I've gotten good at writing funny, smart essays that seem to make little difference other than adding to a Mount Everest of smart ideas already there. Maybe the Sufi's have it right and we should just try to dance our way to heaven. Perhaps the final *no* is to stop thinking about this stuff?

My most recent attempt to engage with making a real difference in the world not for money had the guy not call back! Is this a sign? Here I am, sitting in the glorious New Mexico desert still trying to write the one sentence that will change the world in the direction of everyone having great food, wonderful sex, enough money, nurturing friendships, and peace with justice. This is either heartfelt effort on my part to do the right thing, or simply delusional.

Still, I keep noticing that major turning points in my life and the lives of many people I respect have come after a decisive *no*, often in the form of a major leaving experience -- a nun who left the convent; a vice president who declared he would no longer work in a company that was not entrepreneurial; a manager who unilaterally left her husband after years of abuse; the president of a company who said he would no longer wait for the CEO to retire, but would ask for the job now.

In looking for a final *no*, I keep looking for Escape Velocity -- the equivalent of the 17,500 miles an hour it takes for a rocket to break free of the gravitational pull of the earth. In my work I call this The Merlin Factor --intention powerful enough to break free from the imperatives, the gravitational forces, of a systemic mindset. Examples are given by corporate culture, religions, small towns, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or anything that tyrannizes your mind, and stops you from thinking independently. A Native American professor once called this condition, "cognitive domination."

When this Escape Velocity is achieved and an individual or team says a final *no* to ways of being and acting that are keeping them stuck doing the same things over and over, there is always a corresponding and observable burst of energy, along with an experience of performance and the culture around them improving. This Energy Expansion is the big yes that comes from saying the final *no* to the following 14 Universal Blocks to Energy Expansion:

- Not Being 100 percent personally responsible for expanding your own energy
- Placing responsibility outside yourself for your level of personal energy
- Failure to inquire/ already knowing
- Not Being a Possibility Creator

- Failure to recognize and honor Paradox
- Being a Control Freak
- Not Being a Generous Listener
- Not Practicing Beginners Mind
- Not worshipping the Goddess of Intuition
- Not Practicing having Compassion be as important as money
- Not Celebrating What's Right with the World (Dewitt Jones)
- Not Practicing the Power of Now (Eckhard Tolle)
- Not Honoring your word as Yourself
- Not taking Effectiveness as the Measure of Truth (Serge Kahili King)

Team and organizational leaders who commit to overcoming these barriers, both personally and in those to whom they pledge themselves, will find the capacity to turn the base metal of human self-interest into the gold of noble purpose and material success. The Merlin Factor offers a pathway to individual and collective power and success in an ever more complicated world.