

Understanding the Vital Principle of Tipping Points

If Something is Worth Doing . . . It is Worth Doing Better! Part II

An important question is why great ideas and good intentions most often result in nothing positive happening. We tend to think if only we knew what to do, or had a great idea, we could and would do it; the evidence suggests otherwise.

The primary answer for this lack of progress and improvement (making things better) is not considering and working within the context of the principle of tipping points. The principle of tipping points is simply that more effort has to be exerted, than benefit achieved, until reaching the place (the “summit”) where there is a reversal such that the benefits become greater than the on-going costs – the temptation, before reaching the tipping point summit, is to give up. Nothing happens with most great ideas simply because the person, company, organization . . . did not persevere until reaching and passing the tipping point.

For example, “I have been exercising a week and I don’t see and feel any difference (I may be feeling even worse”) – this is simply immaturity about tipping points, expecting too much too soon and giving up before achieving the tipping point. Many fail in trying to improve their marriages – “I tried for a week (after years of neglect) to work on my marriage and my spouse just doesn’t appreciate it . . .” This is the immaturity of looking too closely at the immediate results, not having a long-term view.

And just because we did not know or think about the principle of tipping points, using them for our benefit, doesn’t mean we are not affected by them. Ignorance about tipping points works against us when we don’t see the danger of tipping points for bad – “I don’t see the danger in y and z, I have been doing them for a day, week and month and don’t see anything bad happening . . .” Whether it is smoking, gambling, drinking, looking at pornography on the internet, spending, spending, spending, . . . just because a person has not reached a negative tipping point doesn’t mean there is not a summit a short way away! Once this tipping point for bad has been crested, it then becomes difficult to reverse and retrace to the other side of the tipping point.

One of the surest signs of immaturity is failing to consider and see consequences; this immaturity may be the result of youth or, even though aged, not properly learning and developing in spite of experiences we should have taken advantage of to avoid the same or similar future consequences. We may understand a child lying in the face of obvious evidence otherwise – it is harder to excuse an adult doing the same!

And as we age, our range and scope of and for seeing potential consequences typically lengthens based on a subconscious better understanding of the principle of tipping points. Immaturity only comprehends (even if wrongly) the very obvious: a fat person, sitting on a see-saw will lift the smaller person. Maturity, formed by experience united with reflection, understands, on the other hand, that the obvious is not always right – for example, properly balanced, a much smaller weight can balance, even overcome, the heavier; this is the principle of tipping points!

The *Second Law of Thermodynamics* states that disorder in the universe (in the “natural” world) always increases. Thus, the efficiency of any process will always be less than 100% and tends from order to disorder in isolated systems, a process called entropy. Unless something positive is done things tend from order to disorder; this is true for homes, cars, our bodies, marriages, organizations, etc. – if we are not deliberately focused on getting better, more than likely, we are getting worse. We can, however, usually counteract and overcome the “pull down” forces of the Second Law of

Thermodynamics by using the stronger power of tipping points. Once the tipping point is reached we find:

It is easier to do something rather than not to do it. With the same effort, once the tipping point is achieved (a discipline is firmly in place) we can make progress as easily as we before worked to just get by.

If a marriage is to succeed work is required; this work may be in the form of counseling, constant arguing, fighting for your “rights” . . . or it might be in an initial harder effort to consider and labor towards better and better – looking for what you can do, not to just get by, but to truly honor, bless and love your spouse; recognizing your number one “asset” is your marriage and caring for this asset – seeking higher and greater tipping points (more consistent disciplines) for better and better.

Realize the benefits of being and doing better exceed the costs of not doing it.

Understand we must still be careful not to get sloppy and slip out of the developing discipline before it is well established.

Disciplines are fought for on the upper climb to a tipping point crest, they are accomplished at the crest and they are maintained and enhanced as we focus and simplify our life, seeking to do that which is important better and better.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics ensures that nothing will remain stagnant very long, thus tipping points will change both with time and as we seek to be better and better in accomplishing our current major “worth doings.” “Better” changes when a couple has children, it changes again, in smaller ways, as they grow up, better must be reset again when the children are out of the home, when couples retire . . . there are short periods of time to rest in a discipline, but most of the time we need to be vigilant about resetting the key tipping points and their associated disciplines.

In the Words of the Beatles – “Help I need somebody . . .”

Neither we nor anyone else can be overly excited about working on (much less helping someone else with) getting by and, likewise, we shouldn’t be looking for grace in all the wrong places. Grace is offered to be and do better and better, not to Just Do It! and certainly not to just get by!

If we thought about it, and what we were trying to accomplish, we might make significant improvements (**bettters**). And what are the elements of doing things **better** rather than Just Do It! or trying to do them **right**?

Simplify/focus – There are only a handful of responsibilities that are vital – we need to look for ways to be **better** in each of them while eliminating the less important tasks that are dragging these efforts down!

Have the attitude of seeking to actually be **better** (as opposed to just doing better and certainly rather than just striving to look better) – this is manifested by an mind-set of “How much can I do . . .” rather than “How much do I have to do . . .”

And yes, sometimes we simply need to think about making tasks **more efficient and less costly**.

Just Do It? Not me; I’ve done too much of this already! Do it **right**? This is an improvement, but usually still very frustrating long-term; with a little thinking and tweaking being and doing **better** and **better** is the easier and superior objective!

Yes, it is a paradox, but nonetheless true and valid: The most satisfying position to be in is not being content with where we are on the vital issues of life – rather peace comes from and through seeking better and better!

The primary answer for personal progress and improvement (making things better) is working within the context of the principle of tipping points; understanding more effort must be exerted, than benefit achieved, until reaching the place (the “summit”) where there is a reversal such that the benefits become greater than the on-going costs and then, through perseverance, rising above the temptation, before reaching the tipping point summit, of giving up.

Yes, it is possible that “your youth is renewed like the eagle’s,” Ps 103:5 but only within the context of the principle of tipping points and the developing disciplines to accept and embrace the potential positive tipping point benefits rather than settling for being the victim of (rather than challenging) the natural disorder and entropy of a passive, deteriorating.

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And to do this requires working within the reality of the Principle of Tipping Points – persevering until reaching and passing the tipping point!