

Your thoughts, words and actions...

Will ripple out!



This week has been an amazing one for me, in many ways. One way, in particular, it has powerfully reinforced to me the influence we all have to impact lives. No matter who you are, what you do or what you think about yourself, the thoughts you think, words you say and actions you take will have an incredible ripple effect that will influence many lives. Now, if you're like most people, you will downplay your influence on others. So, if that's you, I want you to pay close attention this week and believe in the impact you are having.

I've just finished reading the book, *The Happiness Advantage*, by Shawn Achor, he refers to another book called *Connected*. In this book, the co-authors Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler draw on years of research to show how our words, attitudes and actions are constantly cascading and bouncing off each other in every which way and direction. Their theory is that words, attitudes and actions don't just impact and infect the people we interact with directly, like our family, friends and colleagues. Their research suggests that each individual influence actually appears to extend to people within three degrees. So, when you choose to and actually make positive change in your own life, you are unconsciously influencing the words, attitudes and actions of an incredible number of people.

James Fowler explains, about his life; *"I know that I am not just having an impact on my son, I'm potentially having an impact on my son's best friend's mother."* This influence ripples out and adds up. Fowler and Christakis estimate that there are nearly 1,000 people within three degrees of most of us. Some less and some much more. This is powerful stuff. Simply as a result of you and I trying to be the best we can be, we are unknowingly positively impacting and improving the lives of 1,000 people. But what about the people within three degrees of those 1,000 people? Are you getting my drift here? This is why I am so passionate and excited at the moment, and, on a mission to help people live a purposeful life of joyful longevity.

I have just recently finished up a 63-day Joyful Longevity program with an organisation. It was early last week that I delivered the last session, which was mind-blowing to me in terms of the ripple effect of small, simple and seemingly insignificant actions. The people who chose to participate in this program had to do just a few very simple things. The first was to identify what was most important in their life and what would keep them on track for the 63-days it takes to create a strong neural pathway in the brain, and, embedded behaviour change. The next thing they had to do was choose a small number of very basic actions they wanted to develop into powerful routines. Thirdly, they had to simply; take the action, tick the box and win every day for 63-days. They were supported and encouraged throughout this process.

The power of one!

As I sat down with the group last week, I asked them to share their experiences, and, what I heard was incredibly inspiring and gratifying to me, even mind-blowing. Every one of these people, in just 63-days, had changed their lives, and, the lives of people around them who they'd inspired. One lady shared how the one and only action she committed to was to eat breakfast every day for 63 days. As you can see, it's a pretty simple choice and one that you wouldn't necessarily believe could make much of a difference. Well, I stood there listening to this lady, amazed.

She started talking about some of the personal benefits she had experienced. When she mentioned she had more energy, I wasn't surprised. When she discussed how it had helped her with her moods and food choices during the day, I was pretty much expecting that. When she explained that the way she was feeling had inspired her to drink more water and start doing more walking, I was gaining interest. When she declared she had dropped two dress sizes, in just two months, I was amazed. Then, the next thing she discussed brought tears to my eyes.

As a result of her decision to eat breakfast, she had started getting up earlier, preparing her breakfast and taking the time to eat it. A few days after she had been doing it regularly, her son, by his own choice, started joining her. As she was talking about this, you could see her getting emotional. She explained how her son would normally just rush out the door, say very little to her, with no breakfast, or something quick & processed. Now he sits with her, eating a healthy breakfast and they talk and connect. Then, her husband, seeing what was happening, started to join them as well. Wow!!! The power of that one tiny, seemingly insignificant decision to eat breakfast that she stuck to for 63 days, had rippled and made a massive difference to her, her son, her husband, her relationships and... who else?

In the same room was the man who explained that, just a couple of months earlier, he was angry, unhealthy and just diagnosed with a condition for which there was apparently no cure. He decided to make some simple changes; to be happy, to stop drinking alcohol and to eat breakfast. The first miracle from these decisions occurred when he went back to his doctor for a check-up, just before this session. His doctor's jaw hit the floor when, after the tests had been done, he found that the condition was completely gone from his patient's body! Then the ripple effect began due to the impact this had, is having and will continue to have on his family, and, the people they influence. His change in moods initially confused his family, but then brought them all closer together.

The last quick story I want to share is about the man who had identified himself as a workaholic and wanted to focus his 63-days towards getting home earlier and reconnecting with his family. He admitted it was a struggle for him, because he had a deeply entrenched habit of overworking and feeling responsible to be at the beck-and-call when work needed him. He worked hard over 63-days and wasn't sure that it was having the impact he wanted, until the last day... day 63! It was a Sunday, and he was out working in the garden, when his son, who didn't enjoy gardening, came out and spend the afternoon with his dad, helping him and connecting with him.

Again, as this man was describing this, you could see the emotion and just how important it was for him. The power of the ripple effect was at work.

All of these examples, and many more, were not born out of life-interrupting events or massive commitments, but of tiny seemingly insignificant daily actions. Do you want to change your life and impact the people around you? Then just focus on you and what you can do, one day at a time. Make no mistake, your thoughts, words and actions will ripple out and impact 1000's of lives.

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