

INTRODUCTION

The ONE-AMAZING YEAR journey is a lot like reading a map or a chart on your Outward Bound course. You start at the place on the map that says YOU ARE HERE and you seek to go someplace you have never been before. You know, at some point, you will be challenged to do something difficult along the way because let's face it, nothing that we truly love has ever come without hard work, struggle, and effort. That's just how it works.

If we are really going to grow on this journey and step into the best version of ourselves, then we must follow a certain progression of stages on our journey to maximize our potential.

The four stages are:

- AWARENESS
- INTENTION
- ACTION
- REFLECTION

AWARENESS refers to becoming mindful of the world as it is, not as you might wish it to be. There will, of course, be time for imagining our desired future, but the first step is simply learning how to see the world around you. If you act from good intentions without becoming aware first, you might actually end up doing more harm than good.

Awareness includes:

- Facts
- Perceptions
- Feelings

Everyone creates mental models or stories for how the world around them works and their role in these stories. To become aware requires us to test assumptions about what is true and what is simply our perceptions of truth. This can be a tricky business as we have come to believe that the way we see the world is THE TRUTH and nothing but the truth.

But in all truthfulness, our human tendency is to make huge leaps based on our assumptions of what is reality. There may be truthfulness in our mental models, but much of the story we have constructed may only be built on partial truths. Awareness brings attention to our assumptions and requires us to see the world around us from multiple perspectives before we act.

Real compassion requires us to come from a place of understanding. This 21-Day Mindfulness Challenge is designed to create understanding before you act on creating your ONE AMAZING YEAR. This awareness may bring up a wide range of feelings and emotions. This can be hard, but it is also essential in our journey. Our emotions exist to convey important information that can help guide our choices and our humanity. They can also consume us in ways that are not beneficial to our well-being or the well-being of others.

INTENTION speaks to our ability to imagine the world we want to live into and get clear about the desired outcomes and the actions needed to get there. Intentions represent both milestones and end results as well as the specific things we are willing to act on based on our precious life energy.

Time, for human beings, is the greatest currency. How you choose to spend your time says a lot about who you are in the world. The 12 Life-Giving Habits are designed to help you be more thoughtful about what intentions you want to set for yourself as you navigate your ONE AMAZING YEAR. For example, if part of your year is designed to move beyond your own self-focus to helping others thrive and flourish, you will want to get specific about what gifts you have to offer and who you want to serve.

Intentions are goals you set for yourself coupled with your theories of action, meaning, what will it really take to accomplish your goals.

ACTIONS are where the rubber meets the road. Just because you intend to do something significant on your ONE AMAZING YEAR, does not mean anything if you cannot put real actions into play on your daily, weekly, and monthly calendars. It could be argued that values are not values until you act on your beliefs.

During your Outward Bound course, you were given an opportunity to put your values into action as you participated in expeditions and various physical adventures. Our intentions and values are often tested when we are in stressful environments. Whether we are in work,

school, family, or engaged in personal individual challenges, we are often confronted with stressful situations that make us uncomfortable. Many people hide from conflict and stress or choose unhealthy coping strategies to deal with this stress.

The actions we choose during our One Amazing Year, therefore, need to be life-giving actions. What are life-giving actions? Any action that is designed to help improve your well-being and the well-being of others around you.

REFLECTION is the ability to think deeply about your actions in service of refining or tweaking them so that you can better create your desired results. Most people discover that life is largely a series of big actions followed by smaller refining actions.

A good self-reflective practice will not only allow you to test assumptions but help you dig deeper to what is true about who you are in the world and the realities of the world around you. For example, many people post on social media, but what most people post is only a small projection of who they are. If you spend a lot of time on social media, you might begin to think the world is solely a reflection of what you read in short little bites.

THE 21-DAY MINDFULNESS JOURNEY (The first phase of your One Amazing Year)

To become aware is like finding a key that opens up a secret door of understanding. Awareness is not always a joyful experience. We may not always like what we discover on this road to understanding. But if you are to create the world you most want to live into, you must be honest and truthful about the place that you are starting.

When you downloaded or purchased my book, it was an invitation to experience ONE AMAZING YEAR. By saying “Yes!” to an amazing year you are agreeing to step into your best story of yourself, that will require real honesty and real actions in order to realize.

The 21 Day Mindfulness Challenge will then focus, five days each, on the four lenses listed below:

- 1) THE LENS OF ME
- 2) THE LENS OF FAMILY/COMMUNITY
- 3) THE LENS OF WORK and/or SCHOOL

4) THE LENS OF THE NATURAL WORLD

Awareness in these four key areas will bring insight into your life that will enable you to more clearly develop the 12 Life-Giving Habits and design your ONE AMAZING YEAR.

THE LENS OF ME is about discovering how you perceive yourself in the world around you. It will ask you to explore your thoughts and feelings more deeply and the stories you tell yourself about what is true. It will invite you to hold up a mirror on yourself and get to know who you are today. Your Outward Bound course/experience will have, no doubt, begun this work of self-reflection and it is our intent to build on it more deeply here.

THE LENS OF FAMILY/COMMUNITY is about observing your family and close community without judgment but with curiosity. Most people establish certain roles within their family and community that play out over and over again. These roles may be helpful and useful, but they also can keep you stuck in places that keep you from growing. By observing closely your family interactions and behaviors as well as your own role in these dynamics, you can begin to make more informed choices about what roles you want to play.

THE LENS OF WORK and/or SCHOOL are the places you spend the most time during your weeks. They are great learning laboratories for the eight key well-being indicators. By observing your own thoughts and feelings about your work or school, you can then better understand the role that your work has in your life.

THE LENS OF THE NATURAL WORLD offers us several key ingredients in our lives. First, it can become a sanctuary away from the hustle and bustle of our busy lives. Second, it is also a place we can learn from, especially in regard to how plants and animals interact with each other in life-giving ways. These lessons can then be applied to the human world you live in.