

CHANGE YOUR FOCUS CHANGE YOUR LIFE



By Silver Rose

Yesterday I attended an exciting **Strategic Doing** workshop led by Ed Morrison of Purdue University.

Morrison's organization works with geographic regions on Economic Development issues that impact the community as a whole. Having said that, this process can work on *any* issue because it is designed to **change conversations**.

We all have conversations that impact us in ways that work and ways that do not. One conversation for example could be, "I'm too old to change," versus, "I have the wisdom and experience to change quickly and well." Another example: "I don't know how," versus, "I'm figuring it out."

These are not exercises in semantics. Whatever you tell your brain, it takes as gospel and acts on it. That's why conversations matter so much.

In our society, we pay little attention to how we sound:

- We entertain friends and co-workers with examples of stupid things we do, all to get sympathy or a laugh but at what cost?
- We complain about things that seem out of our control and we get others to agree with our negative viewpoints but at what cost?
- We talk about how hopeless things are in government, education, and the world but at what cost?

Conversations matter. The Law of Attraction says, "You get more of what you focus on." When Morrison's organization works with groups to tackle specific issues, one of the outcomes is that people stop looking for someone to blame (blame begets more blame). Instead, they take responsibility for moving toward solutions (which beget more solutions). The first step toward accomplishing that shift is to change the conversation.

When you mix in the element of holding conversations within *networks*, things get very interesting.

Change Your Conversation, Change Your Life!

Networks are nothing new. We all have them, even those of us who are not on Facebook or LinkedIn or any online social or business networks. Your network is comprised of family, friends, co-workers, your church group and other groups to which you belong.

Every conversation you have has an impact on your network and spirals out to the networks of others. Think about movies or books people have recommended to you. Sometimes they haven't even seen them or read them but they feel comfortable recommending them because, "My friend Pat told me it was great." That is a positive outcome of a network.

Conversely, how often does something negative get repeated only to spread rapidly throughout people's networks? Urban legends abound. And if the news media gets involved, heaven help us, we have a network on fire!

Think back to the floods in New Orleans. Which conversations inspired you more—reports of death and destruction or stories of neighbors helping neighbors? The impact of the former is a feeling of helplessness whereas the latter inspires hope and a desire to help. This is the very essence of what's possible when you change the conversation.

If you want to have a positive impact on your world (and who wouldn't?) it is time to pay attention to your conversations. We are deaf to our negative conversations. I often think back to the day I was complaining about someone whom I judged to be very negative. You can imagine how red my face was when I suddenly realized that I was being negative about someone else's negativity!

All conversations have focal points. Since it is true that you get more of what you focus on, if you want to change your life, change your conversations!

For more information on *Strategic Doing* go to:
http://www.pcrd.purdue.edu/What_We_Do/sdb.pdf

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