Adopting a System of Improvement

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How are things in your life?

Let me be more specific. Are you getting "things" in your life that you want? If you're like most folks, you'd like the results in your life to be better.

So, let's think about how you could get better results.

What you get in life comes at least partially from what you do. But do you ever have total control over your outcomes?

What do you control?
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What do you not control, but at least can influence?
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What do you not control and can't even influence?
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If you want better results, where should you put your time and energy? On what you can control? On what you can influence? On what you can't control or influence?

What you GET, then, is a function of what you DO (what you control and what you can influence) combined with all the things you can't control or influence, right?

Given a situation, how then should you decide what to DO?
--You imagine possible actions.
--You consider how each possible action aligns with your values.
--You evaluate the likely outcome of each possible action.

Those steps are a function of how you SEE yourself and your relationship with the circumstances.

So, let's say a given situation is staring you in the face. You imagine possibilities. You consider how each lines up with what's important to you. You evaluate the most likely result of executing each possibility.
So, you make a choice and DO something. And you GET some result.

What if you don't like the outcome? Maybe you kick yourself.

Okay, then what? How might you GET a better result next time?

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Think! Really. REFLECT on what you did, and why you did it. Think about why the outcome isn't what you expected!

Is there something missing in the way you might SEE a similar situation in the future? If you face this same situation in the future, can you SEE some different possible responses? If you DO something different next time, could you GET something better?

Organizations that improve spend time thinking about what works and what doesn't. They REFLECT when they succeed. How do they SEE situations? What will they DO next time? Should they expect to GET something even better next time?

Organizations that improve also REFLECT when what they GET isn't as good as they had hoped. They consider what they did not SEE completely. They ask, "If we DO the exact same thing next time, should we expect to GET something different?"

Your organization may have already adopted a system for improvement that allows you to SEE situations more completely and DO what will cause you to GET better results the next time around. If so, I'm sure you and your colleagues REFLECT on what works and what doesn't.

If you've not adopted a formal system of improvement, let me suggest that you adopt this simple repeatable process: SEE—DO—GET—REFLECT. Every time you succeed, REFLECT. Every time you fail, REFLECT.

If you REFLECT on how you SEE situations and DO your work, I guarantee that what you GET will improve over time!

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The information above is adapted from material in <u>First Things First</u> *by Stephen Covey and Roger and Rebecca Merrill.*