## RELEASING THE SELF FOR CREATIVE LIVING

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Mr. Rudolph, Dr. Maxfield, and friends. Whenever I hear the title of this book, Man's Search for Himself, I'm reminded of a cute story which the president of W. W. Norton and Company, publishers of the book, told me while it was being manufactured. The assistant at Norton's who designs jackets for their books is apparently a very industrious man and used to take the half finished jacket of my book home to work on in the evening. After the third or fourth evening his little girl, who would see the lettering on this jacket each evening, remarked to him, "Daddy, has that man found himself yet?" And then she added, "If he hasn't, tell him all he has to do is look into a mirror." Now perhaps for the innocence of a child it's quite possible to make some steps toward finding yourself by looking into a mirror but for those of us who no longer possess this innocence, finding ourselves is much more complex and more difficult than looking into a mirror.

In opening this series, "Releasing the Self for Creative Living," we want to ask first, what are the blocks which keep modern man from living creatively, in other words, what are the blocks which keep man from finding and being his genuine self. Now I wish to submit to you that there is going on in modern life, a process which makes living creatively at a deep and meaningful level exceedingly difficult and this is the process of mechanization of the self. The pressures of modern life which may even reach way out into these present environs of Columbus, Ohio, tend more and more to make the human self an object of mechanical manipulation, to make the self a thing, to make the self an object of external control. You perhaps have discovered or at least read about the vast tendency toward social conformity throughout the country, the tendency toward social mechanization of the human personality.

Several years ago there was an article in Fortune magazine, a study by the brilliant reporter, William Whyte, who later wrote The Organization Man. This study was called "The Future Care of Park Forest" and was a study of a suburb in Chicago which Whyte called Park Forest. This was a suburb to which young executives in Chicago moved when they got above a certain salary, \$15,000. Whyte discovered when he lived in this suburb for some time and studied the people, that the goal of these people was, underneath the surface, the adjustment of everybody to be as nearly like everybody else as possible. In evening meetings in the suburb of Park Forest, evening social events, it was considered a social error if you disagreed with anyone. People lived in this modern development in houses which opened on courts and the practice was that everyone was free to drop in on everyone else. No one was introverted in Park Forest. There was talk, talk, talk going on all the time, talking to neighbors, other members of the community about problems. Privacy was very much frowned upon. From the windows one could see into the neighbors! house, and if the neighbors very much of the time stayed in a room that could not be seen by the other neighbors the feeling developed in Park Forest that something was wrong. As one of the wives there said to Mr. Whyte, "I never feel lonely, even when Jim is away. You know friends are nearby here, because at night you hear neighbors through the walls." Another wife said, "When I first came here I was pretty much of an outcast. I remember how shocked I was one day when I told the girls in the court how much I enjoyed listening to "The Magic Flute." I began to learn that diaper talk is a lot more important." Another one said about the adjustment of her child in school, "Johnny has not been doing so well in school. The teacher told me he was doing fine in some respects, but that his social

adjustment was not as good as it might be. He would pick one or two friends to play with and sometimes he is happy to remain by himself."

Now togetherness, adjustment, not remaining by yourself, to be such that you could fit into the group so that there was the least friction on all sides - this was the goal of Park Forest. And as the article went on to say, they were all in the same boat, but where was the boat going? None of them had the slightest idea and it was not permitted to raise the question.

This may sound to you a description of a community very different from Columbus, Ohio, but I propose to you that it is not nearly as different as it may seem. The circles may be a good deal different, but the pressures toward this kind of social mechanization of human beings in our day are exceedingly strong and exceedingly powerful, exceedingly seductive and most powerful when one does not know that they are operating.

There are the tendencies toward the control of personality below the conscious level. You perhaps have heard of or even read the book called The Hidden Persuaders, a study of what is going on in the east now at a great rate. You are the victims of it out here whether you know it or not when the advertising sells the unconscious. This is now called "motivational research." One interesting aspect of it, though not nearly as important, are the subliminal ads that were talked about on TV a good bit. These subliminal ads may not be anything to be afraid of but the general tendency to deal with human beings on the assumption that you can sell them most effectively if they don't know that you are selling them is proceeding at a much faster rate than one would like to think. Now this book was written in order to show the evils of adjusting advertising to the goal of selling people on the basis of their unconscious level.

When this book was published in New York, it immediately became a best seller. I one day asked a colleague of mine who was vice president of the most prominent motivational research company in the country what effect the book had on the business of his company. I must say, I still am naive even though I have for many years dealt with human beings in crises and anxiety and know a good deal about the depair and evil in human life. I was still so naive that I was surprised when he said that the business of the motivational research companies boomed after the publication of this book. The assumption was that if it was possible to sell people's unconscious, then regardless of the social implications of it, this is what many businesses want to do.

Now I make no condemnation whatever of business as such in this remark. I only want to point out that there is inbred into the culture of the middle of the twentieth century, tendencies to treat man as an object, to deal with man on the assumption of a mechanized model, and that this not only comes into our social life but comes into our economic life, comes into our psychological and religious life as well.

There is a story told of a psychoanalyst in New York City who had decided that he was spending too much time listening to people's pre-associations on the couch and so he consulted an efficiency expert. This efficiency expert told him, "Yes, it's very clear you spend too much time simply sitting there. What you should do is to get a tape recorder. You can set the tape recorder going and go about more pressing business during the day, and in the evening or later on if you want to, you can listen to the pre-associations of your patients." The analyst tried this system

and for a week it worked very well. But then at 10 o'clock one morning he was down in the corner drugstore having a cup of coffee and who should walk in but the patient for that particular hour. The analyst raised his eyebrows, and the patient said, "There's nothing to be anxious about. I decided I was spending too much time lying on the couch giving my pre-associations, so I consulted an efficiency expert. This efficiency expert said, 'Yes, you are entirely right, you do spend too much time doing that. What you should do is get a tape recorder and then you can record yourself while you are shaving in the morning or at any odd time during the day.' And so," said the patient to the analyst, "up in your office now, my tape recorder is talking to your tape recorder."

Now this story fortunately is not true, or at least not true of any colleagues of mine, but the moral of it is all too true for the comfort of all of us. There is a tendency in psychological science, in psychiatry, in psychoanalysis, to deal with people as though they could be understood by tape recordings, to deal with them on the basis of the mechanization, the de-personalization of the individual.

This loss of self, of the experience of being a person in modern life, is certainly not the fault of the psychologists, nor is it the fault of the machine, and it's not at all an accident that occurs because we happen to live in America with the development of science at the particular stage which it is. Rather it is something much deeper occurring in human history. It is an aspect, an end result of the historical development of modern society, a development that began some four centuries ago with the endeavor to deal with nature as an object, the endeavor to gain power over nature, the endeavor to exploit nature and to use nature as a source of our scientific and industrial gain. Now this was a great gain for modern man when we could take this external objective approach toward nature and gain power over it, but something in the development during the past four centuries connected with this need to treat nature as an object has brought us to a point of great peril for the human being himself when the human beings tend to fall into the same pattern that was applied with such tremendous success to the rest of nature. Man himself tends more and more to be treated as an object, an object of mechanical manipulation.

Now as I say this is a historical development. It is much more profound than what is occurring in Park Forest or what is occurring in modern psychoanalysis or even what is occurring in United States. And I think we will not understand the real problem of being creative in the middle of the twentieth century if we fail to understand the tragic point in modern man's history at which it stands.

In New York a short time ago there was an exhibit of Picasso's paintings. I hope this exhibit stops in Columbus, Ohio, as it travels around the country. If you want to understand the spiritual temper of any given period in human history there is no better way to do it than to look at the art of the period. This is a symbolic underlying presentation of the spiritual, psychological, emotional attitudes of man toward life at that period. What do you find in Picasso, who is possibly the greatest, if not one of the greatest, of the modern artists. You find that from 1920 his development period by period has revealed with a frightening clarity the gradual loss of personality of modern man. In the 1920's he was painting his classical figures by the sea. He had begun before the First World War in painting his tragic pictures of peasants and poor people in Europe which are very touching and show his profound sympathy with human beings. They also show that the idea that modern artists draw distorted figures of the human being, due to the fact that they cannot draw, is foolishness. Picasso is a marvelous draftsman and can draw precisely what he wants to draw. Now from these poor people before the First World War his figures developed into the classical figures by the sea in the 1920's,

somewhat Greek looking. When you look at these you have a feeling that these people are detached from life, a kind of romantic detachment from the tragedy of existence. This is precisely what we all did in the 1920's. And then in the early 1930's you see in Picasso's paintings these very figures by the sea now becoming made out of metal. Instead of bathers sitting there you see pieces of metal that are very gray with some metal that stands for the head of the bather and the beginning of the presenting of man in the model of the machine.

Then toward the middle of the 1930's, 1936 or '37, you find Picasso's great picture Yernica. This is a picture that he painted to show his feelings about the bombings of a small town in Spain by Mussolini's Facist planes during the Spanish revolution. This picture shows human beings in all sorts of different parts, it shows the human being fragmentized. Also animals fragmentized, and the bright colors that were present in Picasso's earlier pictures now are gone and it is a stark portrayal in gray and black of the despair and tragedy that he saw in this small Spanish town. This is a significantly shaking picture to look at not because it has to do with the bombing of a city. This you do not see. What you rather see is a sole modern man being fragmentized, torn apart, de-personalized as a human being.

And then toward the end of the 1930's and the 1940's come these distorted pictures of the human face, and now the portraits that Picasso paints he no longer names, but they are given only numbers. This is a most significant aspect of what is occurring, that man as Picasso sees him is in the process of losing an individuality that can be named. Naturally through the 1940's his pictures become more and more stark until the human portraits themselves look like the figures of witches and eventually become identified with simply the mechanical portrayal of machines.

This is a staggering picture of what has been happening to modern man. I am afraid that to you it will seem much too extreme, but I am here to propose to you that it is not too extreme and that it represents the most difficult thing we have to face in the middle of the twentieth century, namely the tendencies within human beings themselves to lose their identity as persons, to lose themselves and to become mechanized, de-personalized, and to become the human being who loses the capacity for creative living.

On the announcement for these lectures, your kind committee thought up some remarks about what I would talk about, including this sentence that I would point out, "Why with boredom and self-dissatisfaction when one's earlier ambitions are not realized, one loses the interest in creative living." Permit me to say with all laud to those who wrote this, that that is precisely what I am not here to say. I don't think the emptiness and the isolation and loneliness of modern man have anything really to do with the fact that his earlier ambitions may not be realized. The real sense of alientation in modern man comes in precisely those people who are successful. Now the men in Park Forest, these young executives, were the successful men in our society, and they are the ones who are setting up the future within their own lives to experience real boredom, real alienation in their older years.

People do not talk about alientation, loneliness and isolation so you often do not know if this is occurring, even in yourself generally. But as one who knows a good deal about people who are successful as well as about those who are failures, let me say to you that the important point is not failure to reach one's ambitions. The important point rather is that in Western man now, whether he is successful or unsuccessful, and perhaps more clearly when he is successful, there is showing itself

a loss of the capacity to experience one's own person as being real in his own right. This goes along with the loss of the capacity to feel, as I have tried to say in my book, Man's Search for Himself, and it goes along with the loss of the capacity for passionate commitment to life. All of us hope and pray that the world will not end with a bang with an atom bomb, but I think T. S. Eliot in his poem "The Wasteland" has more accurately sensed what our greatest danger is, not the world ending with a bang, but as the poem ends, "This is the way the world ends, Not with a bang but a whimper."

Now let me suggest to you in the second place, that the creative self is precisely the self which stands against this mechanization of human beings. It is precisely the self that stands against the tendencies toward de-personalization, and this is where I think your seminar in Columbus is of very great importance. If you can really discuss the meaning of releasing the self for creative life you are doing much more than what is generally meant by creativity. You are tapping the level in yourselves and thereby perhaps in other people, that can stand against these tendencies toward the mechanization of modern man.

By the creative self, therefore, I do not mean the "do-it-yourself" movements. These are all to the good; nobody has any objection to them. But if living creatively involves our only doing what somebody else could do better in a shorter time and cheaper, then somehow it does not seem as though we have hit the most profound level of human existence. The idea that creativity is something you do only on Sunday is to my mind the greatest disparagement of the idea of the creative man.

We must be talking about something much deeper than that. I mean by the creative self, the capacity of the person to be aware of what is happening to him and by this awareness to take some responsibility in molding himself and molding the world with which he comes into contact, and thereby to make of himself and of this world which he loves and works with, something that is closer to the genuine potentiality within himself and the potentiality within his world.

As a patient of mine said a few weeks ago, "To be creative simply means in the long run to be honest with yourself." This simple sentence has a very profound truth. To find one's own potentialities, to be able to not only be aware of them but through this awareness to take responsibility for becoming one's genuine self, for bringing one's own potentialities into actuality for one's own sake, particularly in relation to other human beings - this is the essence of the creative self and to my mind, it also is the essence of becoming a mentally healthy self.

The human being is characterized by the capacity to be conscious of himself, to pause between the stimulus and the response and to be aware that the stimulus is acting upon him. It is at this point that we can no longer talk of determinism of the human being. I think the argument of freedom against determinism with respect to human beings is basically a false argument. It rests on premises that are not adequate to the human being, on premises that may be adequate to other aspects of animal life, certainly are adequate to inorganic life. But with the human being the distinctive characteristic is always that he can be self conscious, that he can know himself as the person who is being determined. And once he knows himself as the person who is being determined, then no longer is he only the object of the stimulus. In that pause no matter how slight, no matter how instantaneous it may be, in that pause in which I know that the conditioning in a given situation is coming to me lies my freedom and my capacity to throw my weight on one side or the other so that I am no longer merely an object of what is happening to me.

On this simple basis comes the freedom which makes man eventually able to stand against the juggernaut of modern economic determinism of history, to transcend to some extent the tremendous threat of atomic warfare, to transcend the other movements of a modern century which would overwhelm the human being and make us simply the victim of the mechanized development.

This capacity to be aware of what is happening to you and thereby to have some hand in the molding of it shows itself in four main ways. It shows itself in men's capacity to reason. Reasoning is a matter of making symbols, to abstract from the immediate situation in which we find ourselves through agreement with each other that we will call this object before me something with two syllables, table. This has nothing whatever to do with reality, but by this kind of symbolic agreement you and I then are able to reason about these objects. Already language, the use of symbols, is a way of transcending the immediate relationship and through our self awareness it shows the capacity to reason, to deal with ourselves.

Another prominent way this is shown is in science. In science by abstraction we can establish laws of nature and control nature.

Another way this capacity of man is seen is in art. When Picasso was able to paint this picture of Yernica, this modern fragmentized and torn apart man, already in the painting, hideous and tragic as it may seem to you, the fragmentization of man is transcended. We are able then to experience this splitting up of modern man, and by experiencing it to take some stand in relation to it and to transcend it. It may seem to you that modern art, in its abstraction and its often despairing and tumultous endeavor to present by color and distorted form, the inner condition of modern man, simply represents ugliness. Now it does not at all if one understands what the modern artist is doing. It rather is a way of experiencing what he sees in modern life, saying this in a form that already transcends the situation.

The fourth way this capacity to be aware of what is happening and then to transcend it is shown in human beings, is of course in religion. By religion here I mean the capacity to ask the meaning of life. I do not mean the particular answers which are the particular dogma, right or wrong, valuable or not as they may be. I mean rather the capacity of man to ask what the meaning of life is. Here we have a parallel to reason, to science, and to art. The expression of man, the creative self taking a view of his life that involves freedom, responsibility and the hope at least of molding his relation to life with greater meaning.

The present religious revival throughout this country I think shows both of these things I've been talking about very vividly. It shows certainly the questioning of the meaning of life. In this sense it shows modern man trying to overcome his fragmentation and trying to find some basis on which he can stand to make meaning of a world which is perpetually these days on the verge of self destruction. But the religious revival shows precisely the opposite just as well, namely the tendencies toward the mechanization of modern man. The religious revival is to some extent the phenomenon of conformity and the most outspoken representatives of the religious revival, if one is to judge from their frequency over TV, are men like Norman Vincent Peale who make of religion a new form of mechanization, a new form of technique by which one can become successful, a new form of technique by which God is somehow on your side.

I think these tendencies of religion probably flourish in Park Forest. The Park Forests throughout the country are now the places where a lot of people go to church and their very going to church not only shows the inquiring for some new meaning,

it shows at the same time the most dangerous aspect of life, namely asking the meaning of life in the guise of conformity. It is now fashionable to be religious and I regard that as perhaps the most dangerous aspect of modern religion. It always has been through history dangerous for religion at the points where it has been fashionable to be religious.

What is lacking in the religious revival throughout the country is the commitment of religion to a new social vision. This was the case back in the days of Billy Sunday where the commitment was for prohibition. I regard that as a totally inadequate social vision to which to commit the Christian church or any other church, but at least it was some kind of social vision. The religious revival before that was committed to a much better social vision, namely the destruction of slavery. All the way through history where you find the genuine religious revivals you find marching in history a new social vision of what the world ought to be, a religious ferment of new ideas and cultural and art forms. Now I hope these will emerge within the next ten or twenty years. So far, as far as I can see, they are not visible in our culture.

I hope that the religious interest throughout the country will emphasize the questioning and will stick as purely as it can to the search for the meaning of human life. I hope it will avoid like the plague the tendency to answer this meaning by a new technique and mechanization even though this is generally allied to psychology. I am myself a psychologist. I profoundly believe in the deepest relationship between psychology and religion. I also profoundly believe that it is most harmful to religion as well as to psychology that psychology become the new technique by which man supposedly becomes righteous and able to save his soul.

Let us therefore in the beginning of this series on opening the self for creative living keep clearly in mind that if it is really to be creative, the self must be found on the deepest level, mainly the level of man's capacity to be aware of himself, responsible for himself and his life, and thereby to relate to life creatively and with self realization.

As Pascal, one of the original existentialists, said some four centuries ago, "Man is only a reed, the feeblest reed in mature, but he is a thinking reed. There is no need for the entire universe to arm itself in order to annihilate him. A vapor drop of water suffices to kill him. But were the universe to crush him, man would yet be more noble than that which slays him because man knows that he dies, and the advantage that the universe has over him he knows. Of this the universe knows nothing." Pascal goes on to say, "Thus our dignity lies in thought. Strive to think well. Therein is the principle of morality." Now by thinking here Pascal does not mean intellectual activity. He means what I mean in the self awareness, the capacity for self consciousness, the capacity for a man through his mental processes to be aware that he is man and he can know, or at least ask the question, of the meaning of his life and that this is what sets him apart from all the universe.

Let me make to you several practical suggestions about this topic. I do not have the task tonight to give you answers to these problems. You are having five more meetings and there are other competent persons to give you answers to the problems which I have been describing. But to be self exploiting, let me at least not run away without making a suggestion or two about the meeting of the problem.

The first suggestion I would make about releasing the self for creative living is that one needs to have the courage to be alone. This I phrase in a way that I think has special meaning for the problems of the people in our society. What is lacking most surely in Park Forest is the capacity to be alone. What is lacking in our social

conformism, what is lacking in many ways in our tendencies toward mechanization of people, is the capacity of the person to use constructively solitude. Now I do not necessarily mean physical aloneness. I don't mean being alone as "getting away from it all." I mean rather not being afraid to feel what one genuinely feels and to believe what one genuinely believes though it may not agree with the crowd. I mean spiritual and cultural capacity for aloneness.

Some of you know the book Democracy in America written by a French liberal who came to America a little over 100 years ago, traveled throughout the country and loved America very much. He then wrote a book back in France that is one of the most illuminating and most revealing comments upon the inner soul of America. Now let me read a couple sentences from this book. You must remember that the author says this having traveled the whole length of the country, lived a good bit in the middle west where I come from, and he writes in love. He says, "I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America. In the monarchies of Europe there is no freedom of the body or of the vote, but there is a cultural freedom. The majority in America, however, hits the soul though it leaves the body free. Under the absolute sway of one man, "(meaning the monarchs of Europe), "the body was attacked in order to subdue the soul, but the spirit escaped the blows which were directed against it and rose proudly superior. Such is not the course adopted by tyranny in democratic republics. There the body is left free and the soul enslaved. The master no longer says, 'You shall think as I do or die', but he says rather, 'You are free to think differently from me and to retain your life, your property and all that you possess, but you are henceforth a stranger among your people.'"

Now this is an amazing sentence when we think of Park Forest in the middle of the twentieth century, a sentence to have been written a hundred years ago. The great threat against us Americans is not that somebody enslaves the body, not that they make us vote one way or another, but we are afraid that if we take a unique stand with regard to cultural, spiritual, intellectual things that we will become a stranger.

Now in America as I visualized on the plane bringing me from New York this afternoon, there is a tremendous amount of physical courage to be alone. In Europe you see all the peasants gathered together in one village as you look down from the air; in America the farmers have their houses mile by mile out in the west. One farmer's house may be out of sight of any other farmer's house. And there he lives with his family and lives with the physical courage that quite surprises the European. But what we must do is translate our physical courage, our courage to be alone physically, into a cultural courage, a spiritual courage, and to that the courage to be alone in ideas, taste, in passions, in feelings; the courage to be ourselves in the psychological, cultural and spiritual ways.

Another practical suggestion I would make to you, and again I put this in terms of courage, not because I want to seem sentimental but because I think courage has a great deal to do with these problems, is the courage to commit oneself in all levels of his personality. This is said in distinction from the courage to commit oneself economically. In this country we all work very hard, generally too hard. But very often the commitment stops at that point. It is a commitment to material success. This is shot all through the culture, this is soon to be the goal of all of us. I mean rather the commitment of oneself on what we call psychoanalytically, subconscious and unconscious levels. And this is a much more difficult thing.

A professor I know slightly in New York City told me once this occurrence which is an actual happening to this man. This is a professor of mathmatics and at one time he won a Nobel Prize. This man was searching for a long time for a given formula and then

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ore night he woke up from his sleep with the dream of this formula. He got up to write it down and all he could find was a piece of Kleenex, so he scribbled it out on the Kleenex with a pencil and went happily back to sleep. In the morning he woke up and he couldn't read what he'd written on the Kleenex. Now he was heartbroken about this but he went to bed at night and in his words, he prayed every night that he'd have the dream over again. Now I have no knowledge whether this man is a religious man or not, but this makes entire sense whether one calls it prayer or something else. We know what he meant, and this is as true with people who are non-religious like Heidigger or anti-religious like Sartre or whatever. It's true of a man who really commits himself. Then one can understand that this man went to bed with his whole self. conscious, sub-conscious, and unconscious hoping, dedicated if I may say, to the problem of dreaming this dream again, discovering the formula he sought. Now the story ends very happily, so happily that it sounds like the kind of think that I've been warning you against, namely in several weeks he did dream this dream again. This time he got up and turned the lights on for good and wrote it down and it was the formula he sought.

What I want to illustrate by this story is that human beings creatively speaking live and operate on many different levels, and that what is necessary is that we be permitted to arrive not only consciously but on sub-conscious and unconscious levels, that the deeper levels of personality be also committed to our tasks and our beliefs in life. One finds often when one is talking about creative living, that you get some of your best thoughts not while you're working but in periods between work. You get them often in reverie, often when you are temporarily playing or listening to music rather than when you are actually working. One might think then that if this is true all you have to do is take it easy and your unconscious does it for you. However this is not the case. What is the case is that people like this professor have their insights in moments of reverie or dreams precisely in the areas in which they are most committed in their waking life. Now this is always true. One doesn't get it in some other area. I don't get it in electronics; this is not the area to which I am committed and I don't know enough about it. But in the area to which I am wholly committed, if I am wholly committed, and if you are wholly committed to your areas, then you will find that it is quite true that the subconscious and the unconscious levels work with you. Your dreams are then not haphazard, but the dreams can be creative aspects of one's day to day living and can often bring us to our best insights. You cannot will to be creative. But you can will to devote yourself, then you will find yourself committed on those deeper levels and you will find that the emergence of creative possibilities then comes as an expression of your total living.

Now I hope this evening I have given you some impression of the problems that brought modern man from releasing himself for creative living, and also some impression of the direction down which the answers lie. I think rules and new mechanization are to be avoided for they are precisely related to our greatest difficulty in discovering ourselves for creative living. I would rather want to leave with you some grasp of yourself on a deeper level of existence and I would be confident that if my remarks have enabled you to experience on this deeper level what you yourself are and what your potentialities are then I have done you greater service than as though I would present you with ten rules and techniques for creative living.

Let me close by reading a quotation from one of the wise men of the east. "There is no need to run outside for better seeing, nor to peer from a window. Rather abide at the center of your being, for the more you leave it the less you learn. Search the heart, and see if he is wise who takes each turn. The way to do is to be, the way to do is to be." Thank you.