

## 20/20 Vision

By

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"Turn to the moment fully and welcome it. Smile, and give what you feel your full, thoughtful attention. Because if you don't allow yourself to move past what happened, what was said, what was felt, you will look at your present AND future through that same dirty lens, and nothing will be able to focus your foggy judgment."

*1000+ Little Things Happy Successful People Do Differently*, Marc & Angel Chernoff

The start of a new year brings with it all sorts of long-standing rituals, traditions, and songs. From watching a shiny ball dropped down a pole in Times Square to kissing a loved one (or someone standing nearby) to spending all day watching football or even coming up with a list of resolutions which will hopefully last beyond the next sunrise. However, this year is special in that it invokes a quest for clarity of vision (whether or not you believe it starts the new decade or merely bookends the last one.)

Whether hindsight or foresight, we all aspire to see 20/20.

And, now that 2019 has sped by ("Where on earth has the year, gone."), here it is.

Some would say that if you thought the previous year was divisive, disruptive, discouraging, and demoralizing, you ain't seen nothing yet. To read or listen to or watch social media, or any media for that matter, one could easily come away with the feeling that we are in the last days. Guns and flames and storms and screaming heads. Everyone offended. Everyone apologizing. No one apologizing. Make no compromises and take no prisoners. Opinions are truth, and truth is optional.

It is so very hard to find clarity in any aspect of our daily lives.

Or is it?

Does social media reflect how we actually feel, or what will grab our attention and elicit a visceral response. Does all the rhetoric spilling forth in our Facebook and Twitter feeds and appearing on our Snapchat and Instagram accounts really express how we are feeling about our own lives? Does the TV news I watch or the newspaper I read define who I am as a person and explicitly describe how I view the world?

The Chernoff's (quoted above) aren't the first to remind us that the lenses through which we view life are a choice. If we focus on all the hate and confusion and anger and despair we feel and dwell on all that has gone wrong in our lives, our world view will become so clouded we may never see with clarity. Every pronouncement of "us" versus "them" impairs our ability to find the good in people or witness small gestures of patience and kindness. We may become so consumed that we miss out on seeing all the beauty and love that are available for us to see if we merely look for it.

Holocaust survivor and groundbreaking psychologist Viktor Frankl, reminded us in his oft recommended book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, that “Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” This from a man who lost his family, most of his friends, and even his life’s work in the worst concentration camps of Nazi Germany. Despite all this he still managed to recognize that despite losing everything he still had a choice, his choice on how to respond. And by focusing on his ability to choose, he always had power over those who sought to take everything from him including his humanity.

We only kid ourselves if we believe that we have the ability control the world around us. We can’t control the weather, but we can choose how to respond on a cold, rainy, blustery day. We can’t control how others are going behave or act or react, but we can always choose how we are going to respond them. Frankl found the clarifying power of choice even when it appeared all choices had been stripped away.

What choices can you focus on in this year of 20/20? Where can you wipe clean the lens of your worldview? Removing the smudges of preconceptions, biases, prejudices, and emotionally rooted fears. There are many places to start, and, at this turn of a new year, there are lots of people with systems and suggestions trying to sell you a shortcut.

Don’t be fooled. The kind of clarity we are seeking isn’t found in planner, a meditation retreat, or even an app (sorry Apple).

The reality of this 20/20 year, is that if you can just make one, clearly focused choice, you will learn that you really do have the all the power and clarity you need to make the next choice. And the next, and the next.

And by focusing on the moment. Fully embracing it, warts and all. Not hiding from it or numbing it out with distractions, you will find that the fog really can lift, and the smoke really can clear. And, if you are persistent, and little lucky, you may even begin to see yourself in a whole new light.

That’s the 20/20 vison we are really looking for.

The choice is up to you.

