

SPARK 023

(Matrix Code: **SPARK023.00** for StartOver.xyz game.)

DISTINCTION: You can shift who you are by shifting other people's stories about you.

NOTES: It is logical to think that who you are is how you imagine yourself to be. It is reasonable to assume that you have the best assessment of your own qualities because, after all, you are the one with the inside knowledge. You know what is going on in the most intimate of your thoughts and feelings, so you would think that you are the best judge of your own character. As logical and reasonable as this may seem, it may not be true.

Deducing that you are the most qualified critic of your own character ignores one very important factor. The ignored factor is that human beings are all crazy. Most of us more-or-less pretend to act as if we are safe and sane most of the time. But the sanity show that we put on is only on the surface, only a performance. Human beings are far too complex, subtle, multi-dimensional and energetically dynamic to rest in some imaginary state of sanity, mental health, happiness or perfection.

Read between the lines or look into the biographical skeleton closets of even the most saintly of saints and you will discover psychosis and neurosis enough to keep a whole department of psychologists busy. But that is not the point. The point is that whatever else was going on for these people the sum total of their effect on those around them was extremely beneficial. Probably one thing that these wonderful human beings had in common was a willingness to sometimes trust the positive feedback from their fellow man more than their own assessment of themselves. Even though they might have experienced themselves as unstable, untrustworthy, unworthy, schizophrenic, weak, or overly angry, they were willing to accept their own faults in order to continue whatever behavior other people experienced as wholesome and inspiring. You can do the same. Trusting only your own assessment of whether or not you are making a valuable contribution to humanity may be the thing that prevents you from making a valuable contribution to humanity.

The story that is true about you is the story that comes out of other people's mouths about you. Who you are is what shows up over there in other people's experience about you. It does not matter what sort of story your Box is unrolling in your own head about yourself. Who you are is reflected in other people's mirroring. The proof of having changed yourself will be other people reacting to you in new ways.

You will know that you have shifted when other people's experience of you shifts and you start receiving different feedback from them. You can shift how other people experience you by shifting the stories they create about you. In order to shift another person's stories of you, you only need to provide them with new evidence. When they have new evidence they can make new stories about you.

Providing new evidence requires that you shift some of the qualities of the ways you are being. It is the quality of your being about which stories are made. For example, if

people experience you as closed-down, superior, cold, judgmental, or isolated, and you decide that you want to shift who you are by shifting their stories about you, then you must shift your qualities of being.

How do you shift your qualities of being? The Possibility Management technique for doing something that you do not know how to do is to commit first, before you try to figure it all out. Begin by committing yourself to shifting your quality of being. Then start experimenting. The commitment itself creates the necessity for something real to occur.

EXPERIMENTS:

SPARK023.01 Start by choosing a quality about yourself that you would like to shift. For example, you might choose “closed-down.” The opposite of “closed-down” is “open and relational.” Begin by committing yourself to being open and related, even if you have no idea how that might go. Then make a list of some mannerisms and attitudes that you imagine an open related person might exhibit. For example,

- They might look at people directly in the eyes for longer than two seconds.
- They might relax and be with people with no strategic agenda.
- They might carry a neutral expression on their face, no scowl or plastic smile.
- They might speak less and listen more, accepting compassionately and without comment whatever they hear.
- They might occasionally share unasked about some personal joy or difficulty they had during the day.
- They might be able to instantly stop rushing and spend time talking with people outside of their circle of pals.
- They might openly ask for advice about important matters.
- They might be honestly interested in other people’s lives.
- And so on.

Then take these ideas about what openness looks like as a personal list of action steps, and do them, suddenly, all at once, without reason or explanation. Take on these behaviors even if they feel awkward or strange at first. Do them even if they are not you. (Because, of course, they are not you. If they were already part of your repertoire of behaviors you would be shifting some other quality!) Do them as if they were you, as if you had a different quality of being already. Perform the new behavior as an act of conscious theater, high drama, for the purpose of your own development.

Your detector for how you are progressing is how other people regard and interact with you. Trust their interactions with you more than you trust your own experience of yourself. You may feel self-conscious, embarrassed, or uncertain. You may feel like what you are doing is totally fake. Take your cues from the stories other people tell about you, how they speak with you, how they speak with others about you. When their stories about you change, you have changed.

Whenever you catch yourself acting the old way just start acting again the way you want to be, without self-judgment, analysis or criticism. Your commitment is to act as if you are changed until the change stabilizes in you and the acting is no longer

efforted. Beating yourself up does not fulfill that commitment. If you think that you cannot be committed to your new behavior, simply pretend to be committed. Act as if you already have the desired qualities. If you fully accept the challenge of this experiment one thing is guaranteed – no matter what is happening, your days will not be boring.