

## Tips for Leaving the Wheel Behind

1 June 2008

Years ago my daughters had a pet hamster called Scamper, and just like clock work, Scamper would get up in the middle of the night and begin to run on the stationary wheel located in his cage. With great interest we watched Scamper one night follow his usual routine: Running on the wheel...Jumping off the wheel... Finding some food to store in his cheeks... Running on his wheel again...Jumping off to find a favorite hiding spot in which to empty the food from his cheeks...Then back on the wheel to continue his daily routine. Going on for hours, Scamper appeared to be pretty focused. Now, when you begin to understand that hamsters are nocturnal rodents that instinctively gather their food when they know their predators will be sleeping, (night time) you can start to see why this *natural habit* is essential for their survival.

However, as humans, what can happen to us if our daily activities become so repetitive and extremely predictable? Do we begin to lose our focus? Do we grow in frustration with the realization that nothing new is happening to us as no changes are taking place? Or do we actually see ourselves becoming quite relaxed and comfortable as we begin to settle into a world of familiar as our every day experiences become similar in nature like that of a hamster?

For some of us, much comfort can be found when stability and familiarity play a role in our daily lives. For others, living in constant change is the best choice. However, no matter what method is best suited for you, try to keep these few tips in mind.

**Tired of the outcome - Change the action** - If you feel as though you are stuck in a rut and the outcomes you are experiencing are no longer favorable, please find the courage to change your course of action. Try taking on a new thought, idea or perspective by asking those around you what they would do if they were in your situation. Read books on the subject of your concern to see if a suitable and realistic solution is found, and above all, ask a skilled professional. For example, if you want to change your thoughts on saving money, talk to a financial adviser. If you want to find a great place to take a holiday, talk to a reputable travel agency. If you desire a healthier lifestyle, talk to a nutritionist or fitness instructor. The point is to take action towards the direction you choose, and then stay on course until you reach your final destination.

**Learning is growing...Growing is adapting to change** - If you want to

maximize your learning opportunities begin by accepting change into your life more readily. When you consider how many things change naturally, like global weather patterns, the yearly seasons of fall, winter, spring, summer, and even our physical human bodies, we begin to realize that change and adapting to change is a part of life. Therefore, the only real power we hold is in our ability to either accept the changes by adapting to them, or reject the changes which may see our level of frustration and anger mount. Just remember, change for the sake of change is not always best, but change for the purposes of creating a better and healthier environment for ourselves and others, may be an option worth exploring. So if you want to be happier in life, learn to embrace change as learning opportunities designed to strengthen your character. Then remember, whatever you choose to do for yourself and whatever course of action you take, do it for the best of intentions, for others may be watching and learning from you.

**Take the time to rest awhile before continuing** - Just like the hamster that works hard all night long to gather his food and then rests during the day, so too, should we, as humans, take the time to rest awhile before continuing. Far too often when we are too busy in life feeling *hurried* or *rushed*, we have no idea as to whether or not the decisions we are making are in fact in alignment with our goals. By taking a few minutes at the beginning and the end of the day to reflect upon the decisions that were made and the attitudes and actions displayed, we can better equip ourselves to make any positive adjustments along the way, ensuring our goals will be reached in due time.

So the next time you feel as though you are just like a hamster running on a wheel, please stop yourself, jump off the wheel and begin to change your course of action. You can achieve plenty, as long as you pace yourself along the way.

Take the time to assess how well you adjust to change and see if you can take a step outside of your own comfort zone to learn something new. After all, life can be full of excitement even if our daily routine needs to be somewhat consistent in order to survive.

Maureen Tazzioli