



Habits
Portals
Business opportunities

Habits

Each New Year we make resolutions to change behavior or circumstances and, just as consistently, break them with little more than a twinge of regret. The reason is simple. We are creatures of habit, repeating behavioral patterns based on experiences and education. It is difficult for us to see what needs to change. Without the supporting inflow of new information or circumstances, we are blind to possibilities. We don't know what we don't know, and without cause, there can be no effect.

This Focused Fire Newsletter reflects a change in my past habits, where political commentary mixed with business subjects was normal. The concern today is not how the government is affecting freedoms and opportunities, but on the business systems and workplace issues that are prerequisite to future success.

Throughout 2017, the focus has been on a deep dive into the digital technologies. To this point, I published two newsletters addressing the topic.

http://competitiveamerica.us/newsletters/FFN_Data_Rules.pdf

http://competitiveamerica.us/newsletters/FFN_Change_Chaos.pdf

Portals

The issue of conditioned actions, or habits, has emerged as a significant factor in these studies. First, the "discovery" of liminal portals has provided fresh insights.

When Kim, our youngest daughter, introduced me to liminal portals, (from the Latin word *limens*, which means, "threshold"), I thought it was merely another academic exercise. I stuck my foot in the water and found it an intellectually fun topic, triggering an excursion from machine to human information processing. Liminal thinking deals with how we learn, confront our bias, adjust our thinking, assimilate knowledge, and transform current views into new paradigms.

Thank-you, Kim.

Understanding liminal portals has practicality in personal perception, team building, project management, and education. It makes critical thinking stronger, and helps us understand organizational and collaborative transformation.

One self-imposed homework assignment was reading "Reality is Not What it Seems-The Journey to Quantum Gravity" by Carlo Rovelli. It provided a perspective on information that is very useful for understanding a future of tightly integrated global networks managed by artificial intelligence. This new reality will dramatically affect how business is done, and how people will interact.

Between the book and the research papers, I am looking at issues more objectively, as a non-human observer and find additional humor in our very human state of affairs. Even the recent election and our national reaction are beginning to make a droll kind of sense. I hope the journey helps change focus to issues I can positively affect.

The second and supporting input was the casual reading of an old classic, David Hume's "*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding-A Letter for a Gentleman Friend in Edinburgh.*"

"-----all inferences from experience, therefore, are effects of custom, not of reasoning."

"Custom, then, is the great guide to human life. It is that principle alone, which renders our experience useful to us, and make us expect, for the future, a similar train of events with those which have appeared in the past. Without the influence of custom, we should be entirely ignorant of every matter of fact, beyond what is immediately present to the memory and senses. We should never know how to adjust means to ends, or to employ our natural powers to the production of any effect. There would be an end at once to all action, as well as of the chief part of speculation."

Liminal thinking is an important tool in helping us understand and deal with the challenges of disruptive change. It helps us understand how current behavior, habits, and bias are barriers to seeing the "possible," and to form new, advantageous paradigms.

How we deal with the implications of disruptive technologies relates directly to past practices and education. Everything is rapidly changing and we can't see all the effects. Even where we do, within the universe of new knowledge, we will learn only limited slices of the whole.

The solution is education, collaboration, innovation, and experimentation. All are necessary for any journey through a liminal portal.

Business opportunities for 2018

This will be a unique year for many reasons.

Events in 2017 that will carry over to the New Year

- Reduction in stifling regulations
- Positive financial growth
- Positive stock market
- The passage of the *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act* (short version of a longer title)
- The focus on American growth
- The promise of potentially massive infrastructure funding with significant private investment and requisite opportunities

Immediate business issues

- Strategies to take advantage of the *Tax Cuts and Job Act*
- Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) strategies with customer focus
- Strategies to integrate real-time Industry 4.0 technologies
 - ERP systems that incorporate mobile technology and IIoT
 - Integrated (Demand-flow)supply chain systems
- Energy independence
- **A shortage of qualified workers**

The list of possibilities and opportunities is too long for inclusion in this newsletter. Every company needs to make a list of the key issues, do a quick SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) customer centric analysis, and prioritize each for further development.

Current state thinking *will not* equate to future state success. Dealing with these issues, and a multitude of others, requires rethinking business propositions in different ways followed by the development of functional new paradigms.

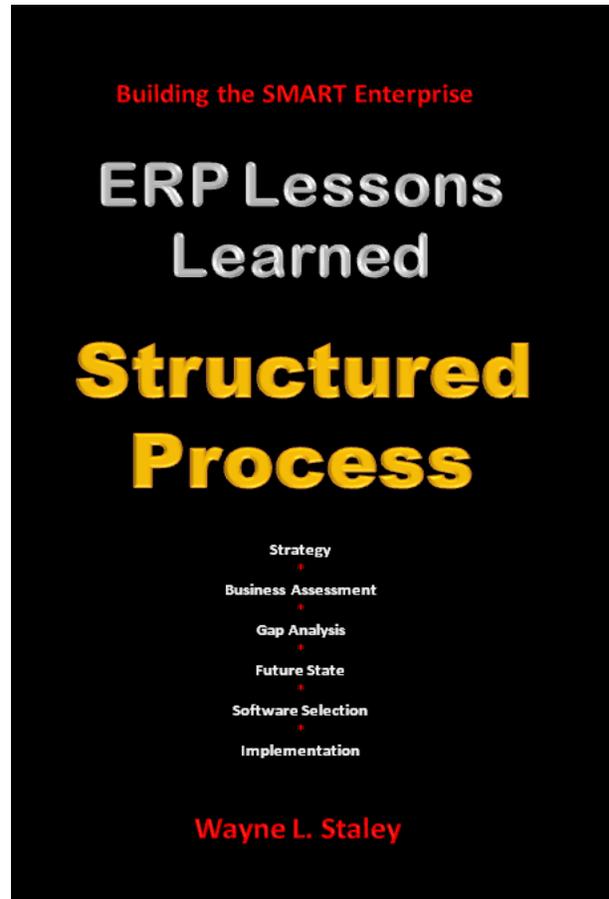
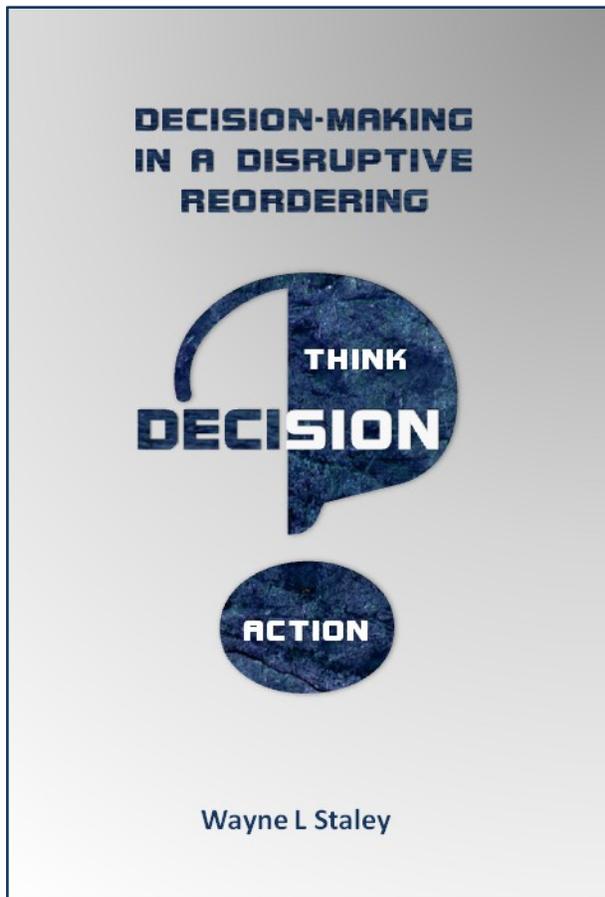


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