

# Embodied Wisdom

October 12, 2006 by [lifeshifting](#)

I love the adage that I heard once at a talk by [Margaret Wheatley](#) (of “**Leadership and the New Science**” fame!): “Planning is a defense against God”. So true, so true. The best laid plans of mice and men...or in other words we start out as men and end up as mice...no no...that’s not right. Well, no matter, point is...getting this theme of “Life-Shifting” out in the world and understood obviously ain’t gonna be easy...simple, yes. Easy, no. Of course, there is nothing new here...as my post about Buddha reminds me...but still...difficult messages are sometimes hard to digest. What I am trying to say is that I got a bit of flack from a good friend for yesterday’s post. You see, he didn’t seem to think that my bedtime example of one of the core principles of “Life-Shifting”—that everything is always in flux, therefore everything is possible—was very successful. AND, he makes a great point.

You see, although he understood how in a situation like lying in bed feeling over-heated and frustrated lends itself to reflection, shifting, possibility and a warm blanket...what he didn’t feel clear about was how this principle works on a bigger scale. What if you are really stuck with something in life? Stuck in your relationship or in your career...or worse stuck in depression. Something like that. This is a really valid question because clearly there is more to “Life-Shifting” than learning how to tolerate discomfort in the bedroom. Ultimately, the entire process and set of principles that I am calling “Life-Shifting” is designed to move us through the stuck places in life that take us away from feeling that sense of possibility, opportunity, opening, and joy. But we have to start somewhere.

I chose to start with a small, rather insignificant example...on a physical, emotional level, for a very specific reason: I truly believe that every real shift in us begins on a micro-level, in the body, with a felt sense of the internal fluctuation, movement and impermanence of me, myself, and I. This is where the opening first occurs that life could be—well, OTHERWISE. Otherwise (ha!), if we just try to “understand” the concepts of “Life-Shifting” and take on huge changes based on the “theory” (as most of us do most of the time!), my experience has been that, despite our best efforts, the change we desire rarely happens (at least for long!). Thinking about a situation and learning new ways of understanding is essential, but most of the time, this is not enough to get us off our butts and into the actual ACTION-MODE that constitutes real change.

What I am pointing to here is what my good friend and wonderful teacher, [Tom Lutes](#), likes to call, “embodied wisdom”. His point is that unless we actually get down and dirty with ourselves, and on a very granular, practical level EMBODY the theory and concepts that might shift our perspective or break us open to a new way of being/living, it is all just good ideas. Fodder for conversation, perhaps, food for thought, for sure, but not the nourishment of deep change that we seek.

So where does the rubber hit the road: the body. Only by starting to flex, practice and play with the concepts of “Life-Shifting” in tiny, physical, felt-sense ways, will the possibility of bigger shifts, bigger change, and true wisdom regarding the nature of self (that there isn’t one!) start to accrue. Of course, we will tackle the big stuff—that’s what we are all about here. But just as simply knowing that you should lose weight or stop smoking or break up with that guy/gal doesn’t usually get you to SHIFT GEARS in any real sense...you’ve got to start somewhere. Start small. Wake up in the body, here now. Feeling the movement, the flux, and ultimately, the possibility of flow, surrender and grace. It will expand...things will shift...and change, yes, big change, will occur.

Let me leave you for today with another example to ponder: yoga. For me, practicing yoga presents a grand opportunity to really SEE/FEEL/SENSE how this key principle of “Life-Shifting” really works. Yoga takes you into your body through the breath, the posture, the stretch. It is a practice that constantly surprises, because just when I think that I cannot stand the pain of that stretch, or that I will never get my body to move into that position, something shifts and lo and behold—it happens. I’m there. IT/Me constantly amazes...and constantly brings me to new levels of awareness, joy, even ecstasy. Life moving through. Never stopping. Always expanding. Try it. You’ll see!

Peace,