



Powerful Ways to See the Road Ahead

This is Mike Stelzner from Social Media Examiner and you're listening to the Ray Edwards Show

I have a question for you, how do you see the road ahead of you? How do you see the future? We often treat the future as if it's a mystery, as if we don't have a say in it, as if we don't have any control over it, as if it's just something that happens to us. While there is an element of truth in that there is a deeper truth, also.

That deeper truth is simply this... how we imagine the future, determines the future we will experience. In large part that's true, we get to choose how we see the future, it's a conscious decision and the choice we make has a profound influence over the outcomes we actually experience.

This episode gives you five powerful ways to intentionally, on purpose, see the road ahead. Hang with us, it'll be fantastic!

Tip of the Week

I may have finally found the app to replace my beloved Card Munch. Remember Card Munch, that was the iPhone app I previously used to process business cards that I received at conferences, when I was networking and so forth. I would scan them into Card Munch and that would suck them into LinkedIn, so I had the contact information of people that I met.

Now there's a new app called **Card Reader**, which is made by Full Contact. This thing is fabulous! The maker of the app claims that it is the easiest way to scan business cards into Google contacts, iPhone contacts and 250 other apps. That's cool. The advantage that Card Reader has over other card scanners is quite simple and extraordinarily powerful.

The business cards you scan into it are transcribed by real live humans, not by OCR (optical character recognition) software and many scanning utilities actually take a picture of what they scanned and software looks at the image and tries to figure out what the letters are to turn into text. It works fairly well, Evernote has OCR built in, if you use the premium version and it works pretty well but it's never perfect, there are always a few mistakes and that might be okay for a longer document where there's lots of context and you can edit later and proofread, but for business cards you have email addresses, phone numbers, street addresses and zip codes and the way people spell their names.

You cannot afford to have these goofed up, so I love the fact that these are transcribed by real people and if you've like to be the one in a million person who actually does something with all those business cards you collect, because what most people do is collect a big stack of business cards at a conference or seminar and by the time they get home the cards are forgotten about or end up in a desk drawer and six months later they're thrown away when the desk drawer is being cleaned out.

There are extraordinary people, who actually stay in contact with those they meet at conference. Maybe they send them a card, drop them an email or call them on the phone. They build relationships that result in business and friendships and a richness of life. If you'd like to be that person the first thing you actually have to do is preserve the information on the business cards. Give Card Reader a try. Full contact the service that's behind Card Reader, will also unify, synchronize and keep up to date all the contacts you have in your iPhone database, in Google, Facebook and Twitter. It's super cool.

I really love it. I've only been using it for a few days but I'm a big fan. It's \$10 a month if you want to stay with Full Contact. Check it out, it will change the way you deal with business cards forever.

Spiritual Foundations

If you went to church when you were growing up or if you went to church after you grew up, if you've ever been to church, if you've ever watched a movie, you probably have heard a song called 'Amazing Grace'.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind but now I see... beautiful words. Somehow in our Christian life, in our Christian universities and seminaries we have decided that grace is a doctrine, a little, teeny-tiny part of the overall gospel of our systematic theology. I believe something different. I believe that grace is not a doctrine or a part of the gospel, I think it's the gospel itself. It's the whole gospel, the gospel of grace.

The Bible says that grace and truth came in the form of Jesus Christ. Why is this so important? Why am I dwelling on this in today's Spiritual Foundations? If you get this, if you really get what grace is, what the gospel is, I believe your life can be transformed the way we wanted it to be when we got saved. Remember that excitement, you got saved and you thought oh my goodness I've been forgiven, I'm made clean, I'm a new person, I'm so excited!

Then someone in the church started talking to you about... here's all the stuff you have to do now to clean up your act. You have to stop doing all these things that you like doing and you have to start doing all these things that you don't like to do, and by the way we have a bunch of work for you to do. We want you on committees, in small groups, run meetings, vacuum, pick up, it's a lot of work receiving the free gift of salvation. It's like the biggest bait & switch campaign ever pulled off.

That's not the way it was supposed to be. We were given, by the Lord Jesus, an abundance of grace, an overflowing bounty of grace and by the way, the word grace means unmerited favor. You can't do anything to get it, earn it or deserve it, it's just given to you as a free gift. In fact, it's grace and the free gift of righteousness, which means you don't have to stop sinning to be forgiven, Jesus just took care of it for you. He took care of all your sins, past, present and future, even the stuff you haven't done yet because to him it was all future. He saw it already and He said I'll pay the price for that, I don't want you to have to pay for it. I don't want you to have to bear that burden.

Paul writes to the Romans, he's writing about Adam who first sinned and brought death into the world and brought the curse onto the world and then he talks about Jesus, who lifted the curse, paid the price, took the kingdom back and said, now live in the life of grace that I've given you.

Paul wrote... '*If because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.*'

So we tell new Christians they're saved by grace through faith and that salvation is a free gift and then we tell them about all the work they have to do to get straightened out and earn it. Crazy... performance-based Christianity it's a modern invention it's not a biblical principle. Jesus didn't say, blessed are you because the church has come near you. He said the kingdom has come near. We don't behave our way into the life of the spirit by the way, we're also taught this in a lot of churches like, and well if you want to be spiritual, if you want to be closer to God you have to start behaving in certain ways. Stop drinking, stop smoking, stop hanging out with the wrong people, stop drinking wine, don't go to parties, don't-don't-don't, stop-stop-stop-stop, no-no-no-no-no.

Paul, the Apostle, who wrote the bulk of the New Testament had a different idea. He says, and he's talking to people who are under this very illusion, this very deception. They have this person who's come into their church in Galatia and started teaching them, you have to follow all these rules before you can actually be saved. Paul isn't happy with this guy, whoever it was. We don't know who it was, but at some point he says in this letter to the Galatians. *I wish that whoever has gotten you all torn up about this would just emasculate themselves.* In other words, I wish they would cut off their stuff.

That's strong language. Paul says, *I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.* In other words, if you walk by the spirit you won't do all this stuff. You don't have to worry about sinning and doing wrong things if you walk by the Spirit your behavior will naturally transform it's not something you have to work at.

Check it out for yourselves it's in Galatians 5:16-18. You can see it in the show notes at RayEdwards.com/144.

So, when we walk by the Spirit we naturally are freed from the power of sin and we naturally become transformed into different people, but here's the big question. How do we walk by the Spirit that sounds very mysterious? How do I do that? Here are some suggestions that might help get you started, I'm not giving you rules or a checklist of things to do, I'm just giving you five suggestions that might be helpful to you. Maybe you could try one or two of them to see if it helps you walk by the Spirit.

1. Become Christ conscious instead of sin conscious

I think that in the book of Hebrews the author of the book of Hebrews, is writing about having been cleansed from an evil conscience. What they're talking about is not being conscious of our sins, not sitting around thinking about oh, what a rotten dirty sinner am I, here's all the things I've done wrong so far today. That's being aware of your own sin and you might notice it's also being aware of yourself versus being Christ conscious.

I believe the quickest, easiest way for us to receive grace, the fullest way for us to receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, the free gift according to Scripture... why does it say free gift. I think someone wanted to overemphasize something. The way to do that is to become conscious of Jesus, who He is, what He does and what He's done. So you become Christ conscious by...

2. Read the Scripture and look for Christ and his grace

You can find him in the New Testament and in the Old. It's been said that the New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed and the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed. So you don't have to look very hard to find Jesus in the Old Testament, but start by reading the New Testament, the gospel of John and the book of Galatians. Read Romans, read Ephesians and you begin to see what Jesus has done, what he provides for you, to you and through you.

3. Recalling, meditating on, speaking about and talking about the testimony of what God has already done for you.

Think about how He's blessed you. You've heard the song... count your blessings one by one, see what God has done. Talk about what God has done in your life and the lives of others. Maybe he's helped you restore a relationship or He's healed you from a sickness or He's brought you out of financial despair or He has given you blessings through the people in your life, through your family, your friends and your pets, through your house, through the privilege of the work you get to do. How has He blessed you? What's He done for you? Talk about that out loud, even to yourself.

Listen to what other people have to say about what God's done for them. Read the Bible, there are plenty of testimonies in the Bible if you can't think of any of your own. He wrote some down.

4. Talk to God

He's real. He's available to talk to, talk to him. Listen to what He says to you. He speaks by the way in different ways. He speaks through his written word, the Bible. He speaks through other people sometimes. You have to check what they say against the Bible to make sure it matches, the Bible will be right always. He speaks through coincidences.

Did you know there was no ancient Hebrew word for coincidence, because they believed nothing happened by accident? That's a concept. He speaks through the still small voice that we heard about when we were in Sunday school, that still small voice, that little spark of conscience that says hey you shouldn't do this, this is not who you really are. You are so much more awesome than what you're about to do, that's that still small voice.

He speaks through a sense of his presence and sometimes He just speaks, you just hear him. Even if you're not a believer, if you're like listening to this saying Ray, could you get done with all the God talk and talk about how I can make my future better, that's what I'm here for. That's okay, but even if you're in that case you've probably heard the voice of God and didn't even know it. Like, when you had that super strong impression come to you to take the freeway instead of the back road today and there was a major accident on the back road.

Maybe it was that time you were thinking of someone and they were strongly on your heart and the phone rang and you found out that someone you loved had just passed away. Or, the time you felt strongly that you needed to call somebody that they were on your mind, you picked up the phone to call them and they said, I was just thinking of you I needed to talk to you how did you know? That's God speaking to you, prompting you, He speaks in so many ways. And you're not crazy if you think you're hearing from God, it's not a condition it's a blessing.

5. Listen to and soak up anointed teaching, preaching and worship music

You might say well, what do you mean by anointed? It's a term from the Bible. They used to anoint people with oil by pouring the oil over their heads and on the hands and feet to anoint the

person with oil. It was a metaphor or sign for being anointed with God's spirit, having the spirit of God smeared on you and rubbed into you, infusing you.

So anointed teaching, preaching or worship music has the spirit of God infused into it. How do you know if it's anointed? Well, that's the subject of a longer discussion but I'll give you a big clue, it will make you feel better. If it makes you afraid it's not from God. Some people will be upset with me for saying that, because they'll say people need to be corrected, they need to be taught about sin, about the price of sin and what will happen to them if they're not aware of their own unholiness. So you should not teach them all this stuff about grace and how easy it is and how God wants to bless them and how He wants to make them happy because that's not what it's all about.

It's not like that. The Apostle John wrote to his little flock about some ministers that were going around upsetting people in the church. These ministers were making people afraid. They were teaching them these weird strange doctrines that scared them. They weren't feeling the good news, which is what the gospel means, they were feeling the scary news and John said, you need to test the spirits that are with these people. The spirit of these people, you need to test the spirits and figure out, are they from God.

Here's how you know, he said to his little flock, if they're from God. If they make you afraid they're not from God, because God is love and fear has to do with punishment and torment. Check it out it's in the Bible.

So do these five things and you may begin to experience how easy it is to walk by the spirit. It's not a mysterious thing it's actually something that you can ease into and be at ease with and as you walk by the spirit your behavior will naturally transform and flow from you naturally and you don't have to clean up your act, because Jesus already took care of that for you. So try these 5 things.

Feature Presentation

Now the time has arrived for me to finally reveal the 5 powerful ways to see the road ahead. Yes, it's possible to see the future. I said earlier that how we imagine the future determines the future we will experience and that might sound crazy to you, but think about it. The way you think about what's going to happen in your future sort of controls how you behave, doesn't it? Doesn't it control what you're going to say, do and think and feel?

So, there are conscious decisions you can make about how you view the road ahead. You can conform your thinking to certain frameworks and that can have a powerful, positive impact on the future you actually experience. So what are the 5 powerful ways to see the road ahead of you?

1. See the future as possible

Somebody that I love dearly once said to me, I would love to have a business like you have. I would love to have the freedom that you have. When I think about doing that, all I see are the obstacles and all I feel is fear. I wanted so badly to say, the reason that's all you see is because that's all you're looking for. Come on! This isn't hard. It's not rocket science. Don't allow your thoughts to constantly dwell on the possible ways things might go wrong and don't tell me you're not in control of this.

It might be true that we aren't in control of our emotions, but our emotions, I believe, are born out of our thoughts and you definitely can control what you think about. It takes practice. It takes a little discipline, but you can do it. So instead of thinking about how things might go wrong, instead

try this... meditate in great, deep detail on exactly how things might look if they go right. Begin imagining what it might look like if things go right. Ask yourself what if questions, but ask good ones, don't ask lousy what if questions.

Lousy what if questions are...

- What if this doesn't work?
- What if this turns out like every other time?
- What if she rejects me?
- What if he rejects me?
- What if I run out of money?
- What if I go broke?
- What if I get sick?
- What if I lose my job?
- What if my insurance is cancelled?

What if... I'm so afraid I'm going to go home and hide in the closet.

No, think of it this way.

- What if it goes right?
- What if you don't just get the job but you get a promotion?
- What if you get to run the company?
- What if you don't just start a little business but it takes off like crazy and you're suddenly a billionaire/millionaire if billionaire is too ambitious for you?
- What if that happens?
 - What would my life be like?
 - What would I be able to do, give, have, experience?
 - How would I be able to bless people?
- What if that actually happened?
- What if things went right?

2. Think about the road ahead as provident

We used to talk about divine providence. We used to say well, it worked out just so well I believe it must have been divine providence that brought me here, brother. We don't talk like that much anymore, but we talk about lucky, synchronicity or we talk about the universe. I just put it out to the universe and it happened. Well, in my belief the universe has a name and that is God. It's just a thought that I have that I believe, that you might want to consider.

But whatever you think. Think about the road ahead as providence that the universe is the creation of a benevolent God, who only wants the best for you and even when chaos intervenes and things go wrong, because they do, because this isn't a perfect world. We don't live in Heaven yet, things are changing for the better, but right now the world's not perfect. Things go wrong, people get sick, natural disasters happen and stupid people cause wars and do violent things. We have to make them stop doing that, but things go wrong right now, chaos intervenes but circumstances can and do ultimately work in your favor.

What if you believed that no matter what happens that providence or God is going to find a way to work it out so that it's what's best for you? If you're a believer, if you're a Christian and you follow scripture, you know what it says in Romans 8:28. It's one of my favorite verses of scripture of all time it says... *and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for*

those who are called, according to his purpose. That gives me the confidence that no matter what happens in my life things can ultimately work in my favor.

3. Think of the road ahead as peaceful

You might say Ray, how can you even suggest that, my life is anything but peaceful. I've got total chaos in my life. I have problems at home, at work, my spouse and I are about to get divorced. I'm running out of money and about to go bankrupt. I'm being sued by someone, I have all these problems and now I'm an alcoholic and I was born with two broken arms. My life is terrible, it's not peaceful it's chaotic, everything is coming at me at once and I don't know how I'm going to get it all done. It's driving me crazy, it's not peaceful at all!

Peace has very little to do with what is happening around us and everything to do with what's happening within us.

So take a moment, no matter how chaotic and crazy your day is and ask yourself a powerful question. How can I find the peace in this moment? It's an interesting thing how our minds work. There's a presupposition contained in that question and that is that there is a way to find peace in this moment. How can I find peace in this moment? Maybe it's simply to take a few deep breaths and focus on your breathing. Maybe it's to step out of a room where there's an argument taking place and be in silence, take a walk around the block.

Maybe if you feel your life is overwhelming that you stop everything and you go to the park and walk in the trees and sit by the pond to look at the ducks, whatever is available to you. Maybe none of that is available to you, maybe you live where there are no ponds, ducks or parks. Maybe you need to go in the bathroom and shut the door and put the headphones in your Walkman and listen to some classical music to get some peace. But, there is a way to find peace in this moment, just ask yourself this question and try it.

4. Think of the road ahead as seeing yourself on that road ahead as being powerful

The agency, the ability to get things done, to make change, to shift the purpose, the course and quality of your life, the agency in your life belongs to you. You are a powerful person. What I mean is that you have the ability to choose how to respond to what happens to you. You are not a victim of circumstances, of bad luck or of other people's poor choices.

Someone very dear to me was attacked in their home some time ago. They were hurt by the poor evil choices of another person, but I watched this person be incredibly brave and decide that they might have been a victim for a few minutes, but going forward I'm not going to be a victim. I'm powerful and choosing to live life fully. I'm going to move on with my life and not define myself as a victim.

I have another dear friend who was diagnosed with cancer and has gone through an enormous terrible period of time with the treatments that are very hard on a human being. If you've ever known someone who's gone through this or if you yourself have been through it yourself then you know how horrible it is and can be. Yet, through all that, this individual chose to focus on other people, to bless others and encourage them to be cheerful, to call them, to write postings on Facebook that lifted people up and encouraged them, not focusing on her own dilemma that she was in, but focusing on loving other people. Incredible example of how to be powerful, even in circumstances that might make you feel otherwise.

You might say Ray, that's easy for you to say you don't know what it's like. I do know what it's like. I may not have your exact challenge to deal with, but three years ago I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and it's a terrible disease. If you know anything about it, it's not good. It doesn't turn out well in most cases, but I had to make a decision because I was faced with a choice. I could either do what many people do, which is to give up and decide my life was over or I could make a different decision and decide you know what, my life has just begun.

I'm not defined or limited by this. **I'm not defined by my challenges I'm defined by my actions.** My actions were that I choose to live fully and openly and powerfully and be more successful than I'd ever been, to have more impact and influence than I've ever had and be happier and more joyous than I've ever been, to have more faith in God and see more evidence of his reality in the world than I've ever seen before, and to pray for more people and see them healed of all kinds of terrible diseases, including Parkinson's Disease.

Everywhere I go, to conferences or churches, if I see someone who has Parkinson's, that's the very person I want to pray for. I want to see God heal that person. I will not be defined by the challenge that presents itself to me, because I know it's not from God and I know that I get to choose to be powerful, I'm not defined by my circumstances, bad luck, a disease, natural disaster or other people's choices.

5. Think of the road ahead of you as seeing the road as being prepared

I believe that God has prepared the way ahead of you but maybe you don't believe that and that's okay. Maybe you believe it's the universe, luck or just the collective consciousness of the human race, I don't know what you believe. I believe that God has prepared a specific beneficial and fulfilling destiny for you and you must remember this, especially when you feel you can't see it. When you're in the circumstances I just talked about, even if you don't fancy yourself a believer, even if you think you're a scientific agnostic or atheist, I still love you and I have a suggestion for you. Believe your future has been prepared for you anyway, choose to believe it.

Let me ask you this. I think this will appeal to your rational mind. Which belief will allow you to proceed with more confidence, clarity and control over your life?

- The belief that life is a random game of chance with no rhyme or reason and you have no agency in it.
- The belief that a force greater than you is looking out for you and constantly adjusting the odds in your favor, where you have the ability to choose that path that is in your favor.

Which belief will make you more calm, proactive and flexible and give you more access to your own personal levels of highest performance? I think that purely on a rational logical basis, the more powerful, the more effective and more useful belief is that you are guided and that the road ahead of you is prepared for you.

Those are the 5 powerful ways to see the road ahead. See the road ahead of you as possible. See the future as provident. See yourself as powerful. See it as peaceful. See the way ahead of you as being prepared for your good. If you will adopt those attitudes, those intentional ways of thinking about your future and the road ahead, I believe you'll see the truth in the statement that how you imagine the future determines the future you will actually experience.

What to Do Now

I'd love to get your comments on this, so go RayEdwards.com/144 and leave your comments at the bottom of the post. You can leave me a voicemail by clicking the recording button and I'd love it if you get any benefit from this show at all, if you'd subscribe to this show in iTunes, which you can do by going to RayEdwardsPodcast.com. Subscribe to the show, give us a star rating and write us a review. It helps spread the word and gets more people to know about the show.

I love you, appreciate you, I'm fascinated by you and I want to spend more time with you, which is why we'll be back again next week. Until then, may the God of the beneficent universe do more for you than you can ask, think or possibly imagine.

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