



# Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

I don't know what this week looks like, for you, but let me play coach/ confidant today - and, next Monday - and think with you about a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

In the next week, you're going to put the finishing touches on a year that presented more seismic shifts, culturally, than any former year in your lifetime. It is the end of a decade called, by **Time**, the "Decade from Hell." At the same time, you're going to pass over a threshold into 2010, a year full of uncertainty, for most... but, at the same time, a year of great opportunity for leaders who believe that change-points are always a chance to alter the course of the future.

***This is a two-parter:*** next Monday is our chance to think-through your leadership vision for your future - in all of life's critical assignments - and clarify your leadership initiatives (*not your "New Year's Resolutions" - those are for losers!*). Today is some *house-keeping*, to get *ready* for next week...



***Get ready?*** Absolutely. New - or, clarified - leadership emphases are great game-changing moves, but they are often neutralized by old diversions and distractions that are hanging-around from the past, draining power from the new focus. Today - briefly - I want you to think about things you've been tolerating - and sustaining - even though you know they've already proven to be unfruitful.

***Personalize this:*** I want you to pull out a scratch pad and do a little "stream of consciousness" processing, under three bullet points:

**Unfruitful Habits:** these are probably not visible to others (*at least, you don't think they are*), but they are unconscious behaviors that diminish

- rather than distinguish - your potential. They may affect you physically, intellectually, relationally or spiritually; they drain your personal strength. Name one habit in each of those four categories that you would be better-off leaving in 2009 than you would be moving it into a new decade, with you.

**Unfruitful Relationships:** no fair naming your spouse or kids in this category! If *they* need some work, *get busy!* This is about finding the people in your life - *beyond* your family - who are most likely to keep you from maximizing your potential. They don't have to be "bad" to make this roster; haven't you moved far enough into life to be able to sift your acquaintances and find the few who are better with you alongside them, and you are the same? Are your friends/colleagues making you better, or making you bitter? *Who could you live better, without?*

**Unfruitful Assignments:** these are activities that have been given to you by someone else, or that have foisted on yourself. Again, they don't have to be "bad" to be unfruitful; instead, new information has confirmed to you that repetition is not going to make these activities right, for you. These assignments don't allow you to

employ leverage - to use your strengths to produce extraordinary results - and wise self-management says that it's time to say "enough!," and move on. You may need to renegotiate your situation with someone else... or, turn conviction into completion with yourself. *In any case, "2009" is the date on this role's tombstone.*

It isn't *Spring* yet, but the end of the year presents the opportunity for some *Cleaning* that is essential for increasing your quality of life and leadership. By the time the ball drops in Time Square, are you ready to say, "Sayonara!" to some habits, relationships and assignments that no longer belong in your life, if it is to be well lived?

More next Monday. Happy New Year!

Bob Shank

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