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## SEIZING OPPORTUNITY: “OPPORTUNITY AS TRANSFORMATION”

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Title

Part 3 of this issue's "Seizing Opportunity" special-invitation collection, "Opportunity as Transformation," first appeared in "Coaching Corner" (November 2011), a column in *The Mann Report-Residential real estate magazine* published in New York City. The article is reprinted by permission.

**W**e live in the future at expense of the present. We project our desires forward and prescribe responses to yet unrevealed conditions. Living in the future enables us to explore and examine our intentions and potential outcomes. We construct our futures today. The opportunities we create and those revealed to us become portals for change; crucibles of transformation.

We create opportunities and opportunities create us. Opportunity is the yield distilled from our belief, work, and continuous evaluation if the value of what we want is worth the human price we pay. Opportunity is a product of causality between us, others, and environments. The interaction of these variables creates conditions in which opportunities for fulfilling our desires and transforming our lives reside.

The 16th century English philosopher Francis Bacon wrote "A man must make his opportunity, as oft as find it." Is there reciprocity between our efforts to create opportunities and the randomness of our lives from which opportunities emerge? Or, is opportunity a consequence of success? As Dr. Jonas Salk, the American medical researcher offered "The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more." Whatever its origins and designs, opportunity enables our progress and potential.

The current economic recession has robbed professionals in all industries of opportunities. These conditions have reduced the volume and scope of professional development opportunities. However, even with this theft of opportunity many professionals have advanced, leveraging opportunities toward achievement toward transformation.

Opportunity creates conditions for achievement. Daily we learn of others' successes resulting from conditions they've created through opportunity. Often the *conditions-of-opportunity* are the product of a compelling vision of the future. A future steeped in possibility; rich in reward. Our visions must be operationalized in order to be realized. Mental and operational models structure our strategies and methods for achieving what we want. Explore our *Opportunity Model* as a mechanism for concretizing your visions.

### Opportunity Model

- **Learn From History**—Study the past; learn from the actions of others. Find *mentors-of-history*. Engage in a historical mentorship. Learn from those who've created opportunities and conditions conducive to achieving your goals.
- **Experiment With Purpose**—Apply lessons learned to your visions of the future. Study causality, notice differences, construct plans, and develop skills for enabling focused, goal-specific action.
- **Act As If**—Act as if you are what you want to become. Then, work backwards from the *conditions-of-opportunity*.



nity you've created using the plans and skills you've developed projecting yourself into your future. Focus on transforming who you are into whom and what you want to become.

- **Reflect and Recalibrate**—Transformation is an internal alchemy. It is conceived, gestates, and resides within us. Reflection fuels transformation. It renders us receptive to our potential and open to creating growth opportunities. While enabling, transformation requires management; calibrating and recalibrating our thoughts and behaviors relative to our desires.
- **Negotiate With The Future**—Opportunities enable us to realize our futures. Once taken, opportunities quickly acquire characteristics and conditions that must be negotiated with if their power and potential is to be harnessed in the service of achieving goals.

## Transforming Opportunities

In his *Apology*, the fifth century philosopher Socrates wrote, "The unexamined life is not worth living." If true, then the examined life has worth. A variation of this idea is "The examined life transformed by opportunity is worth living." English statesman and author Winston Churchill offers us three orientations toward the value of opportunity as transformative agent may be insightful.

1. "If you cannot read all your books...fondle them---peer into them, let them fall open where they will, read from the first sentence that arrests the eye, set them back on the shelves with your own hands, arrange them on your own plan so that you at least know where they are. Let them be your friends; let them, at any rate, be your acquaintances."
2. "During their lifetimes, every man and woman will stumble across a great opportunity. Sadly, most of them will simply pick themselves up, dust themselves down and carry on as if nothing ever happened."
3. "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

## Transformation As Opportunity

Transformation requires courage and commitment. Examine the depth of your commitment to change before embarking on journeys of transformation enabled by opportunity. Use our *Opportunity Model* as a tool for self-coaching toward realizing opportunity. Remember, opportunity can transform you. Being transformed enables new and limitless opportunities.

*Coaching can enable transformation. Get coached.*

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