

Emory Austin

"Your Inner-Space Odyssey"

Joe is so convinced that bad luck follows him that he falls backward into a ditch and sprains his ankle trying to avoid the black cat crossing his path. Margaret is so obsessed with the constant contemplation that some undiagnosed illness might be just around the corner that the heart attack she finally suffers gives her a strange kind of prophetic satisfaction. Paul, on the other hand, is so certain that he works for a great company that opportunities for advancement come to him from every direction. And there is Sarah, whose bright-eyed enjoyment of life and of people brings friendships everywhere she goes.

Where are *you* going next? Are you moving in the right direction? There is a direct, measurable connection between what goes on in your head and what goes on in your life; between your expectations and your life experience; between your career role and your role on planet earth! Look around you: isn't it amazingly obvious how other people either bless or curse their lives by their attitudes? Glances in your own mirror, however, too often reveal only murky reflections of what you yourself are becoming, day by day, as one experience after another underscores and underlines the accuracy of your own viewpoint and belief system! Stop for just a minute. Figure out how the mindset you have accepted as reasonable is affecting your life journey. Is it positive? Does it need to be changed in some way?

It is numbingly easy to be so caught up in looking at the waves that you forget to study the current. The majesty and the undertow are both a part of the same scene. Both contain value. True of the ocean; true of life experience.

We all want to lead happy, fulfilling lives. To be respected in our professions. To have vital and meaningful relationships that sustain and enrich us. Here are five Inner-Space Odyssey keys that will unlock doors to great possibilities. Try adding them to your own key chain:

"Inner-Space Odyssey" Key #1: **Be Willing to Stand Apart from the Crowd**

Take an probing look at yourself. Do you realize that your unique and different characteristics (even if you don't like some of them!) are usually your best allies and will make you memorable long after the bland personalities whose main thrust is to blend in have been forgotten. Take your differences and make them impactful for yourself, your team and your clients.

We spend far too much time trying to "package" ourselves, when a stronger approach might involve some "unwrapping" of ourselves and our brand. Use this fine-tuned discernment to give your companies, customers, cohorts and cronies the benefit of your own flavor and approach. This is where strong leaders are born and where your own power lies. Analyze your strengths and allow them to propel you forward.

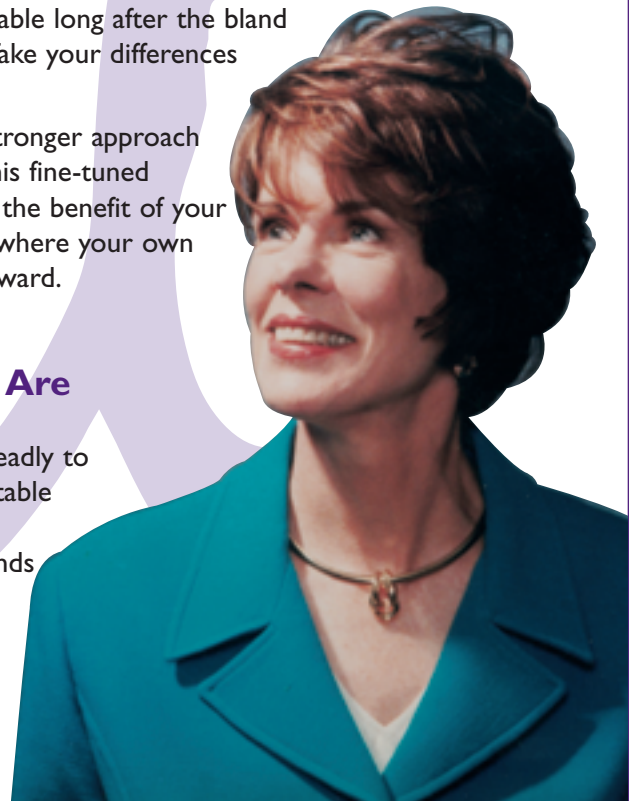
"Inner-Space Odyssey" Key #2: **Never Get Too Comfortable Where You Are**

Whatever turns your life and career are taking, it can be quicksand-deadly to get too satisfied in your current situation. We can get overly comfortable with success. It is also (sadly) possible to become comfortable with mediocrity. Guard well against this trap, because today's world demands

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giant steps in making and handling changes that may not be altogether welcome. Successful professionals will make certain they understand current business trends and are tuned in to what is required to adapt to and capitalize on them. Some degree of restlessness is required for growth and new discoveries. Too much ease is like Novocain for the brain and the heart.

"Inner-Space Odyssey" Key #3 Seeing Well is More Important than Looking Good

The big question here is— exactly where and on whom is your eye focused? Who decides whether or not you and your organization stay in business? Who is important to you personally? Whoever that is— your customers, members, associates, prospects, friends, family— LISTEN to them, study them, understand what their real needs are and make solving their problems your top priority. Remember: their perception of you is the only thing that counts with them. If they don't understand the value you bring, they won't accept your answers to their problems; they will begin to distance themselves from what might have been a closer relationship with you.

"Inner-Space Odyssey" Key #4 Go for the Throat

Your own throat, that is! The way you express yourself . . . the way you communicate . . . is possibly the single most important business and personal skill you have. Spend time developing a stronger love affair with words and use "quotable" ways of sharing your ideas with others. Read a book a week. Highlight and underline and write all over the pages. Listen to those who speak well. Study how they use their voices and their words to influence and persuade— and weave more of your own power into the much-too-neglected art of skillful expression. Then, when you speak up, they will listen. But more than that, they will *hear* you!

"Inner-Space Odyssey" Key #5 Pick Your Own Daisies

Don't wait for someone else to hand you what you want or to make your dreams come true. You alone are responsible for "playing the hand" that life deals you. Those who believe they are working for someone else are sabotaging their tomorrows. Ultimately we are all entrepreneurs – either successfully or unsuccessfully working for ourselves. Claim this responsibility as a great freedom to do and become and have whatever you want.

If you want to change something about your life, take a closer look at your belief system. If you begin to change something on the inside, a corresponding change will occur on the outside as well. Whatever you accept into your life and attitude will either cost you pieces of your self or will add to your possibility of creating a life filled with richness and impact.

Either choice is habit forming. Either choice has ongoing consequences.

It's your call.

