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## Limits Of Perception

I talk a lot about perception these days; about creating your own reality. People often ask me; “Is it really that easy?” Of course the answer is yes, and no... it all depends on your perception. Let me share a story with you.

In 1991 I spent six months traveling through Africa, ending up in the northern part of Uganda on the outskirts of a national park. I learned that the best way to travel here was to hire a bicycle. I found a man who would rent me a bike, mounted it with my heavy pack, and began what was supposed to be a 35km ride. I'd covered the best part of 15 kilometers before a sinking feeling came over me as I noticed I was no longer riding on a rubber encased cushion of air but on the steel rim supporting it. I stopped and dismounted, realizing that I hadn't even thought to ask about a puncture kit, although I did have a pump.

After standing there for a few minutes I heard a

commotion coming from the trees behind me and turned to see three kids, the eldest being about twelve years old. Their faces lit up like the moon as they ran around excitedly chanting “Mzungu! Mzungu!”: Swahili for white man. The oldest kid was staring at my front tire. He said, mostly through sign language, that he could fix my tire, to which I promptly replied: “No you can't, I don't have any patches.” He insisted with more confidence than I had ever witnessed in a child his age, and I had nothing to lose, so I agreed to let him try.

First he produced a couple of sticks, and proceeded to lever the tire off of the rim. I was impressed as he pulled the tube out from under the tire, and ran it through his fingers until he found a fairly significant hole. He set the tube down, shot me a look that said “I'll be back in a minute”, and took off into the trees. He was back in less than a minute, rolling between his hands what

looked like strands of grass until they took the form of a length of twine. He basically made a piece of string right there on the side of the road. Satisfied with his work, he picked up the tube again, found the hole, and proceeded to tie one piece of twine around the tube. He looked up at me with a sparkle in his eyes, took the other piece of twine, and tied this in a knot on the other side of the hole, effectively isolating it from the rest of the inner tube. I let the master continue as he used the pump to inflate the tire, and I stood there with a look of bewilderment mixed with intense admiration.

I'd been riding a bike since I was younger than any of these kids. Up until that point, I would have told you that I pretty much knew all there was to know about bikes. It had never occurred to me that I could fix a flat tire with a piece of string. It simply did not exist in my reality. Isn't it amazing what necessity can create?

That kid had learned how to do that because he grew up in a culture that necessitated resourcefulness. I thought I did as well, but he had taken this concept to a deeper level. Could it be that we don't understand how we create our own reality because we are surrounded by a reality of somebody else's design that has made it so easy to exist we don't even have to think? Are we simply seeing the world in the way we have been conditioned to see it? Have we sat back and accepted

the problems in our lives just as I had accepted that I would be pushing my bike for the next 20 km with a flat tire? What would it mean if we could see things in a new way? What if we could see a desired outcome in our mind's eye and watch ourselves moving toward it intending it to become a reality? What if we focused on what could be, and then worked backwards to bring that reality about? What if we asked ourselves: "What do I need to do today in order to move toward my

desired reality? What would I have to give up, what would I have to do differently?" Sometimes the solution can be so simple:

I had to live through 28 years on this planet before discovering that I could tie two pieces of string around a tube to fix a flat tire. That kid changed the way I see the world. You can change the way you see the world. And if you can change the way you see the world, whether you're ready to believe it or not, you change the world...

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