On Human Weakness

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October 15th, 2024

Revision	Notes
0.0	Initial draft

This short essay is a quick look at human weakness.

What is human weakness? Good question. A weakness is a pattern of thinking, not only as an action, but also as a model (which is comprehension) which generates suffering for the individual who houses the weakness. Weakness is an inability. Weakness is the lack of experience, or the lack of contemplation, or the lack of action. Weakness is something that is within the individual's ability to fix.

I think the main steps as they relate to overcoming weakness is to observe the weakness in yourself; studying the weakness; and working towards eliminating the weakness. I believe it is a human failing not to engage in this process to completion. I mean, it doesn't have to be done in a sequential manner, it can be done concurrently. Some weaknesses may be studied for a very long time before the ability to fix the weakness is possible. The point is to engage in the process, and not to sabotage the process. Sabotage can range from using your other strengths to muscle through the weakness without eliminating it, to hiding the weakness from yourself, all the way to fudging the weakness as a strength.

Having thought about it, one fundamental understanding before moving forward is that humans can act on the immediate physical world to arrange it to our liking. However, outside of that, the only other domain we have some capacity to reign over is ourselves. What we cannot control is infinite. We cannot control or change other people (IE: make your loved ones more loving); we cannot change our relationships to other people as we wish (replace a crappy driver around you with a more pleasant one); we cannot change our relationship to the vast majority of physical phenomena (ie storms, disasters, weather, etc…); and the list of things that we have no control over is truly infinite. So, why is that important? Since the only thing you can somewhat control is yourself, by eliminating weaknesses, and developing in yourself the tools needed to bear, and succeed in any situation is up to you. It has nothing to do with anyone or anything else. It's on you. This is where this truth comes in:

> "there is nothing outside of yourself that can ever enable you to get better, stronger, richer, quicker, or smarter. Everything is within. Everything exists. Seek nothing outside of yourself."
>
> Miyamoto Musashi

When anyone points out your weakness, they are giving you a gift. An interesting story comes from an acquittance that trains in mixed martial arts. For the sake of anonymity let's call him Joe. During a training session, Joe was put in the front of the class to be a body to demonstrate some technical maneuver. The trainer put Joe into position and demonstrated an attack. During the demonstration, the trainer pointed out that Joe did something wrong in terms of defense, he dropped his elbow a few inches, or something like that. The trainer tried to correct Joe, but, it is hard to control automatic impulses when you are getting hit. That is when the trainer turned to class and said. Each and every one of you, come on up and perform a move that exploits Joe's weakness. Now, we are talking about people in their early to mid twenties. These are strong humans. In Joe's rendition, he said that everyone had a blast smashing him, and he got smashed so hard, that now days he has the best form for that particular defensive stance. Now, you can imagine that this wasn't a fun experience for Joe. However, it was necessary in terms of eliminating a weakness.

In the same spirit, I am publishing all my weaknesses on my website. The more I am smashed for my weaknesses the better. Yippee Ka Yay…. (I'm keeping it rated G).

Weakness #1 – I lean too heavily on technical ability rather than on delegation

I defer to my existing skills to solve problems rather than focusing on developing skills that are better suited for the future. For example, if I am doing something repetitive that I can do very well, I would be better served to show someone in my circle how to do what I am doing. In the short term, it would take more time, would require more patience, and would result in a reduction of efficiency/productivity; yet long term it is the best possible thing. Overcoming this weakness spreads knowledge, creates more capable people, and most importantly it is scalable. Normally, in 99% of situations I defer to long term payoffs over short term payoffs… tomorrow is always coming. However, where I fall short, is during work that I am a master in, I plow through the technical rather than releasing my expertise and putting on the delegation/organizational hat. In the off chance that anyone believes this to not be a weakness, please keep in mind the following: technology amplifies human capacity; and if you are engaging in an activity that is beneficial to others, it should be scaled. Where would we be if Henry Ford (for all his imperfections) spent all his working time building cars manually, rather than optimizing the process of making cars? On top of that, think of any weakness that you can overcome by using your strengths. Are you not better served if you one day put down your strengths and rely solely on a weakness you have that is better suited for the work if it was a strength in your toolkit? If you do that, your weakness will strengthen, and will become a functional strength. One such example is touch typing. For a while I was a lighting fast two finger typist. One day I simply had to plant my fingers on the keyboard and develop touch typing. I can assure you that touch typing is serving me very well nowadays. Basically this weakness is a requirement to stop leaning on my strengths (technical ability) and lean on my weakness (coordination of people).

Weakness #2 – Commitments to myself are inappropriately extended in duration

I perform better for others than I do for myself. Anytime I commit to another person I deliver my promises 100% of the time. When other people are involved I jump out of my skin to perform. It is simply how I operate. The problem is that if I make a promise to myself, my ability to keep that promise and see it to it's completion has a significantly worse track record. The timelines are typically not kept, the commitment to achievement is lower, and worst of all the procrastination is brutal. Something that would take me a week to complete for another person can stretch out to months if the commitment is strictly to myself. This is a weakness.

Weakness #3 – Brutality long winded

I cannot tell you that I am concise. Very frequently when I am asked a question, the number of items relevant to the question, and the sheer volume of words I use is excessive. Only those who know that once in a blue moon a gem comes out of my mouth tend to listen to me without tuning out after some time. I have an extreme record for listeners that tune out. I have to learn to be more concise. I need to be better at doing the following on the fly:
- figure out the point/objective of the interaction that I am having – There is no shame in making a statement and reading the room.
- Figure out the objective of each party to the conversation – there is no shame in asking each party what they would like to achieve as an outcome.
- Figure out the extent of the good faith found in each party to the conversation – this is likely best done by assessing the actions of the other parties. Some indicators are:
  - not wrapping any one topic, and jumping around all over the place.
  - Presence of inconsistencies
  - shifting away from blame towards action for achieving future outcomes or mutual understanding.
  - Observing if other party is misrepresenting my position.

I can sum up the points of others quite concisely, but when my gums start flapping, my ears must like the sound of my own voice. ~~I need to improve my ability to articulate my own communication more concisely~~. I need to be more concise. LOL...See??!!

Weakness #4 – Unsolicited Advice

Holy crap, I have a black belt in giving unsolicited advice. What a brutal weakness. My issue is that I find this world so full of beauty, and I go off on all kinds of tangential projects. I am also the backstop for a family, which means that I have a wide range of experience with all kinds of unpleasantness. I guess I am a bit of a glutton for punishment where I persevere through pain, which is a must when you do all kinds of new stuff. Long story short I have a small set of experiences, and when I see someone about to step into what I perceive is a mouse trap, I quickly leverage my weakness #3 to paint a picture of what to watch out for. Here is why this is a terrible weakness:

- As you try to force info into an unwilling ear, you actually push the person away from the very path that would serve them best. A terrible disservice.
- I insult the ability of the person to handle their own circumstances.
- There are no fuzzy feelings that are increased as a result of unsolicited advice.
- Eliminate myself as a source of information as a question generates a flood of information.

Humans have a tendency to learn through experience, not words. The words of others generate intellectual knowledge, which is superficial. Knowledge based on experience is significantly deeper. There is a bit of shading between the two knowledge types when experience seeks voluntary inquiry of intellectual knowledge from others. That is what I need to learn to do. To overcome this weakness I need to zip my mouth. When I hear someone say something I know a smidge about, perhaps the most I should say is "oh yeah, that's a really interesting activity" and then if the person doesn't follow up with comments or questions, then STFU. This saves both of us time as no knowledge would pass anyway; and it puts a bookmark in that person's memory to follow up if they fail and need help.

Weakness #5 – Stop starting and start finishing

Nuff said. I need to finish my irrigation system, and my fireplace projects as the highest priority. Once those green belt projects are done, I have to come back to the big daddy robot.

In conclusion, this is the most exhaustive list of my weaknesses that I have collected from others, and have realized for myself. If anyone has any additional suggestions, feel free to hit me up at stackingkarma@protonmail.com

See you around.