

Question 1: Lesson 1

Clifton Taulbert says, "The ability to choose the way we respond to our circumstances is perhaps the greatest power we have." Rodney Walker says, "You should not let your circumstances define your choices. Let your choices define your circumstances." Illustrate how choosing a response in your own life changed your circumstances or led to your personal growth.

Coming into the computer science program, I'd have to admit that I was prone to letting my circumstances define what sort of choices I made. The mere fact that I've chosen computer science as my major was the result of regional circumstances with the employment market and what people sought. Even with that heavy influence of circumstances, I did enter the computer science program with a hefty ulterior motive of being able to eventually build a team. Over this past year, I've been choosing to study in more public spaces instead of seeing my own circumstances as reason for my lack of socialization at Sacramento State University.

This choice to study in more public spaces instead of deferring to one of my existing circumstances of going home and attempting to grapple with studying at home ended up changing my circumstances in the areas of employment, networking, as well as learning opportunities. In the area of employment, studying in public spaces had allowed for me to interact with people who I would normally never have interacted with and in doing so eventually landed an IT position with based off their recommendations. This eventually resulted in the change of financial circumstances from one where I was constantly worried about funds into one where I don't necessarily need to worry about how daily expenses will be worked out. In the area of networking, I had gone from someone who barely knew of a few dozen people to someone who can create opportunities for themselves by simply tying together various areas of their own network. Some of those choices to study in public spaces were more strategic like my choice late in spring to seek out fellow computer science students to build out my network of peers for various personal, professional, and educational projects. Doing so had created the opportunity for me

achieve one of my goals for my experience here at Sacramento State University which was to eventually craft a highly capable team.

Question 2: Lesson 2

When have you encountered an opportunity while at work (school, or volunteering) that you were able to solve? Provide a specific example of a problem as well as the solution. Were you encouraged to pursue a solution? Did you view the problem as an opportunity? How can this experience help you identify future opportunities?

I've encountered many opportunities where I was able to solve a problem that impacts many people. Whether or not I was encouraged to pursue the solution varies on the environment of the problem. For example, my favorite opportunity found at work was one where I was able to solve the time and energy issue of workflow for the work area that I was tasked with. The gist of the problem was that I was getting bogged down with new product introductions which was impacting other areas of the business rather distinctly. Although nobody saw the problem as a problem but rather a course of norm I saw it as an opportunity to try out new tricks that might speed up my workflows. Eventually this problem itself became my opportunity to learn because many of the smaller problems that I was solving were centered around finding ways to automate my workflow using the tools that were available, most important of which was the freedom to do as I saw fit with company hardware and junk hardware. Now did I see this problem as an opportunity at the time, not particularly, since I was more focused on maximizing my output while minimizing my input. How this experience helped me to identify future opportunities was that it helped to prepare me with an understanding of various programming languages that would prove beneficial in the future when I'm working on other projects at other organizations.

Question 3: Lesson 3

1. Share an example of how fear or a lack of confidence may have prevented you from taking action in the past. Did you make excuses, or did you acknowledge your fear? Did you overcome your lack of confidence? If so, how? Why is it important to acknowledge your fear than rather make excuses?

2. Share an experience when you deliberately pushed yourself beyond your comfort zone. In what way(s) did this experience enable you to succeed? What was the result of overcoming your fear? Describe the difference between this experience and your experience from the previous question. Why is the distinction between these two experiences important to an entrepreneurial mindset?

One example of how fear or a lack of confidence prevented me from acting in the past was my original reason for not going to university when I was younger. At the time, my fear of circumstances demotivated me from pursuing a university education which in hindsight was a dumb decision. Looking back, I probably could have gotten a much better result had I gone straight into Oregon State University straight out of high school in pursuit of a computer science degree early on. Would that path have brought me into contact with various business fundamentals, no. Would it have brought me into a place of slightly better financial success, possibly. Would I have struggled like crazy through all of it, most likely. I don't necessarily think I overcame this lack of confidence as that lack of confidence is in the past and I've since built out a skill set that doesn't give me the excuse to have such a lack of confidence.

Would I still say that it's important to acknowledge fears rather than make excuses, depends on the context and reason. The reason for this is simple, some fears are warranted. For example, if there is a fear that something will go wrong like a critical failure in code, then it's probably important to review all possible outcomes of any changes to ensure that as few risks of errors are let through as possible. Now would a fear of the sun exploding be warranted, no, not particularly. Would a fear of the economic situation and job situation associated with a degree be warranted, yes, only if you're focused on staying in that region, otherwise no.

An experience where I deliberately pushed myself outside of my comfort zone is any situation where I took the initiative to be the one that initiates the networking that I've done rather than taking a passive stance on networking. The biggest thing that I've gained from that experience is the ability to simply commit to initiate conversation which has been found to be an indispensable tool for building connections with people who I might normally have never connected to. The direct implication of this

won't lead to my success directly since it only opens the door for me to interact with more people within my environments. The indirect implications of this may allow for me to build out a network of people that I can then mix into various combinations that amplify the various skills each person has that they can bring. The secondary indirect benefit of this is that the pool of knowledge that I can potentially exchange with becomes that much wider meaning that the potential that I can validate or invalidate an idea becomes that much better. How this differs between the previous situation of my education choice vs my commitment to network is that the commitment to network is much more low stakes in my own mental accounting while the choice of education is one that I still hold as a very high-cost decision. Knowing the costs, and implications of each decision being made is important for an entrepreneurial mind. When a bigger decision is unfavorable, it simply means that prep work needs to be done to create a future favorable situation that would reward said larger decision. Much like preparing the networks and resources necessary for the next major operation.

Question 4: Lesson 4

Sometimes the knowledge we need to acquire to get where we want to go can seem too big or daunting. Focusing on just taking one step at a time is often the best strategy. Describe a long-term or difficult goal you are trying to achieve or one you have already accomplished. How did you go about pursuing knowledge to succeed? How could you apply this concept to other challenging tasks at school, at work or in your personal life?

A vague goal that I have which has been the driving force behind all my machinations, has been the goal to make myself as resistant as possible to whatever happens in my environmental conditions with a primary focus on the economy. Unfortunately, that sort of goal is too broad, so I've broken it down into several areas. Cornerstone one is the ability to find or create the work that I like to do regardless of the economic situation. How I'm currently going about attempting to make such a goal a reality has been to take a multi-faceted approach to the problem. Taking small steps towards building a network of people who enrich the potential to innovate within my community has been a key move in my playbook in various ways since no single effort that has been successful has been a solitary effort. Chunking big

problems into many smaller questions which eventually compound to form a solution is the other facet to the effort. Continuing to hone and expand my library of skills has been the third facet of my strategy since it allows for me to do more, and exchange information and work for more information and future favors. How I apply these concepts towards work and school has been pretty much the same since the philosophy overlaps all areas of life. If I don't know something right off the bat, someone I know might know a thing or two about the questions I have, and at the same time the information pools that I know will likely have an answer or two if I ask the right questions. As I continue to add skills to my library, more solutions can be patched together as novel and effective solutions to larger problems which can then be shared to help others solve bigger problems. As I continue to work through the assortment of smaller problems towards a solution, I'll find and eventually answer the assortment of small questions that will be found along the way.