

Week 01

Week 01 - mindset reflection journal

The first thing I do every morning is meditate for about 30 minutes. The technique is very effective at increasing Self Awareness. I decide to document a thought that came up each day regarding "soft skills". Now, the mind goes where it will during meditation so I can only relate what came up that seems pertinent to this assignment.

Day 1. Monday, October 30, 2023

I recalled something I observed as a young child that began the process for me to see every other human being as being just like me. That is, we all begin equal, and we all end equal. Our only opportunity to shine is during our lifetime. All that I observed what a young child asking his father why the sky is blue. And, to the father's explanation the child asked why that was.

That began a life long journey for me to question all the things I believe to be true. It did not take long for me to conclude that I don't really know anything. That the basis of all my beliefs are assumptions I cannot prove.

After some contemplation I came to the conclusion that everything I think I know came from my own experience or the experience of others. When I was born I brought no knowledge of the world with me. I concluded that I, like every other human, comes into the world knowing nothing.

Day 2. Tuesday, October 31, 2023

During my morning meditation I recalled my father taught me math and chess at a very early age. The basis of math is logic. And, I discovered one truth that applies to all human interactions. That is, in any interaction between two people there are exactly four possible outcomes. It is possible I could "win" and you could "lose". It is possible you could "win" and I could "lose". It is possible we could both lose, as is the case in war and divorce. The 4th and final possible outcome is that we both win, which is the foundation of what Karl Marx called "capitalism". The first two outcomes are also called zero sum gain, which is the foundation of modern "liberalism".

Day 3. Wednesday, November 1, 2023

This morning I recalled something a young woman social worker who works at the Veteran's hospital adjacent to UCSD suggested. This came as a result of my bringing up an old "litmus test" to determine a person's "mindset". That is, the question of, when you see a glass with water in it halfway, is the glass "Half full", or is it "Half empty"?

The fact is both views are true and correct. But, they are also an indication of how we look at the world. My social worker made a suggestion that has helped me keep a positive outlook towards life ever since. That is, think about the things in life for which you can be grateful. Since I am a Christian who both prays and meditates it has been easy for me to take a few minutes in the beginning of my day to thank God for a wonderful life.

#### Day 4. Thursday, November 2, 2023

This is the first morning for the class to meet each other and our instructor, Emily Kay. I don't know why it struck me, but I could not help but wonder what social skills have to do with front end web development. But, then it occurred to me there are only two ways to accomplish things in this world. They are "coercion" exemplified by hard skills and there is "persuasion" which is exemplified by soft skills.

There is no way, using a web page to promote an idea, you can coerce a viewer into fulfilling your objective. You have to rely on soft skills to promote your ideas.

#### Day 5. Friday, November 3, 2023

This morning I was thinking about developing web pages with an eye towards "win-win" outcomes. It struck me that sports are "win-win" events. That is, when one side scores points, those points are not deducted from the opponent. Both sides can gain points. The objective is to gain more points.

I learned something important about sports at an early age. That is, winning is not everything. I learned chess at an early age and became the top player at all the schools I attended. But, I learned by winning every time, I made no friends. I learned to spend equal time on attempting to win, and helping the other person to win. I learned that, while many people see sports as only competitive, the reality is there is far more cooperation than competition.

Whenever two teams decide to play by a mutually agreed set of rules, they are not competing. They are cooperating. I have learned in all cases, when interacting with people, to always aim for a "win-win" outcome. To do that, you cannot only think about your needs. You have to learn the needs of the other.

#### Day 6. Saturday, November 4, 2023

This is the first day I have time to really reflect on the purpose of this exercise. It is likely I am the oldest person in this class. Perhaps, I am the only person with a lifetime of experiences. I am certainly at the age where anger gets me nowhere. In an interaction where both sides gains, that means both sides learn something. And, in order to learn, you have to be willing to change your mind.

That reminds me of a great line attributed to Winston Churchill in the movie, "Darkest Hour". It was the last line in the movie. Someone says to Churchill as he is walking out of Parliament after declaring war on Germany, "Winston, I see you changed your mind." To which he replied, "Those who do not change their minds never change anything!"

Turns out, it was actually George Bernard Shaw, the great Irish playwright who said, "Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything."

In order to develop soft skills I look to the masters throughout time. My favorites are Moses, Socrates, Jesus, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, and Jordan Peterson; all masters of the power of persuasion.

Day 7. Sunday, November 5, 2023

I believe today we are to reflect on the previous six days. And, this is quite an auspicious day for such reflection. I recall Emily commiserating with us about her teen age children. I believe she was indicating her teens are emotional, flighty, and self involved.

I think the teen years are the most difficult for humans. Our brains are still developing/maturing. And, at the same time, being wracked by hormones. As an old man reflecting on my teen years I recall very confusing times. And, at times, overwhelming.

I have seen places where teens turn into very fine people. Those places are called "church". Church is a place specifically designed to help people of all ages develop their social skills. It is a wonderful environment because everyone there is aiming for the same goal, to be the best they can be.