

Are We There Yet?

By Gary Klaben

Comes that familiar cry from the back seat as you drive a distance too far for a child's patience. "Are we there yet?"

Is it children's impatience? Or is it their eager desire to enjoy "there," to joyfully, playfully, excitingly be "there?"

Here versus There. Simple, but also very complex. We are good in the Here. We stop to smell the roses in the Here. Yet, as human beings, we are on an inevitable journey to There.

Are Here and There external to our existence—or do they represent our state of mind, our state of being, our purpose on the planet?

Okay, maybe a bit overdone philosophically.

But we have to assess where we are periodically or else we could be going down a rabbit hole that leads to a surreal destination.

A bit of contextual thought is necessary to set up exactly what Here is and what There is, and what they are not.

You may hear a variety of phrases in response to a question about taking a future action or

discussing someone's future plans. Someone may answer: "We are not There yet." "When we get There, we can do this or that." "When I'm There, I'll know." "I wish we were There now." "Can't we get There any faster?" You get the point.

We use There to describe some future state external to us that is dependent on certain people, events, time, money and other conditions. We rarely use There as an internal state of being, until we actually do arrive at a pre-defined, conditional There.

Here, likewise, is grounded in a certain set of rules or conditions: "I'm Here." "We are all Here." "I want to stay right Here." "Can we get him Here now?" "I need you Here with me." "Come Here and we'll discuss it."

Here is typically a simple expression of being in a certain place at the present moment. It is very much grounded in "right now." It's a statement of fact. It can also mean you are mentally, emotionally and spiritually present. "I'm completely Here."

But let's dig a little deeper.

As humans, we alternate between states of being in the past, present and future. We intuitively realize that being stuck or dwelling too often or long in the past is a losing proposition.

Unfortunately, when I have a conversation with someone—usually some elderly individual, but not always—much of the dialogue with them is about the past. Some of them sense they are not too long for this world. So they live primarily in their past triumphs and the good times of their lives, while staying in the present just long enough to take care of their daily living needs.

Regrettably, their mindset is on a downward slope that no amount of medicine, surgery, encouragement or cajoling will halt this ultimately destructive process. If not in some way addressed and recalibrated, they eventually may give up their will to live. Very sobering indeed.

The present is a better state of being: the Here state. It is where we spend most of our time. Think about the many benefits to us, and those around us, to be Here. Stuff gets done in the Here. The world revolves around the daily Here



routines involving food, shelter and social belonging—thereby accomplishing tasks and hopefully moving toward some future.

Finally, the future. We obviously can't physically be in the future, so it, therefore, has certain characteristics of the past. The future is a place we can dwell on, think about, have a conversation and write about. It's a place we can completely make up. It's where our dreams exist for us, our family, our community and mankind.

For those of you who write down goals, they reside in the future as well. Those who dwell on the future can be very inspiring: Mahatma Gandhi freeing India, John F. Kennedy's moonshot, and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream."

Surely their mindsets were on There—not Here. Or were they?

Come play along with me. What if people could switch their definition of There to Here? In effect, melding them into one?

Instead of your expressing something in the future as There, try expressing There as your permanent state of being. (I know. I know. Back to the philosophy again!)

But I'm deadly serious.

Being There puts us in an ideal state—a "moonshot mentality" that sets a BHAG (big hairy audacious goal), causes us to energize and innovate, then provides us the

joy of celebrating our achievement.

There as a permanent state of being is a positive, not negative. My Italian friend Jim would say, "Tutto bene," loosely translated, "It's all good." And it is. Oh sure, everyone has their daily ups and downs, successes and failures, good and bad days. Some days, one gets mired in the mud of the Here. It's called surviving—no other choice.

At other times, though, There is waiting to be dreamed about, planned, organized and executed to achieve your desired future.

One thing is for certain: One can't stay idle. Albert Einstein said, "Life is like a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving."

There's no standing still; time moves inexorably forward. Just remember—the good ole days weren't always that good, and tomorrow is what we can make of it. Gandhi advised, "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."

And, please, enjoy your journey to There. Again, "Tutto bene." To quote "Peanuts" creator Charles M. Schulz: "Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It is already tomorrow in Australia."

I had the pleasure of knowing a client's father for some 20 years. He died at the age of 105 last year. Harold was one of those people who always had a There present in his life. He envisioned what he was about and carefully prepared to

make it happen.

He drove his car up to the end and even had elective hip replacement surgery at the age of 103. He volunteered at the library and balanced his checkbook each month. He recognized me by sight at a distance, even though we had only met a few times. He was one of those men I hope to emulate if, God willing, I make it to his exalted age.

So, what I'm asking you to consider is to change your mindset. Change in your mind the very definition of Here and There. Change from a mere physical location and a dream to a dynamic, enterprising, unified state of mind.

The conventional Here is a place where you push yourself toward the future. It is the status quo and incremental improvement of your condition. It is a place where you may feel captive and entirely me-focused. You need things to happen and find yourself often in a state of frustration, confusion and powerlessness.

For you working stiffs, your week may be defined as Miserable Monday, Wednesday Hump Day and TGIFF (Thank God It's Finally Friday). This defines an unexciting, stolid, proscribed state of Here mentally, emotionally and physically.

Fortunately, There is about pulling you toward your stated intentional future. It's how you attract to you the people,

resources, relationships and money necessary to realize the future. Your *abundance* mindset is about the *exponential* improvement of *others'* conditions.

It's about wanting a bigger future for others, allowing you to achieve your dream. More than everything else combined, There requires that you have a very strong defined *purpose*, a powerful *WHY*.

How very much better it would be if, somehow, Here and There could join forces to achieve a desired future reality.

In Viktor Frankl's internationally renowned 1946 book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, he describes times during his nightmarish existence in Nazi concentration camps when you knew someone had given up hope. They stopped sharing their food. They stopped communicating. They turned inward and died shortly thereafter. They were tragically stuck in the Here.

Frankl—after his liberation, when reflecting on his fellow prisoners' experiences—concluded that life never ceases to have meaning, even in a Nazi death camp. Prisoners' different reactions to their horrific condition were not solely the result of their prison condition, but also the freedom of choice that some continued to exercise even in severe suffering. Confronted by utter desolation, some kept their spiritual selves alive by contemplating their loved ones and maintaining hope in the

future.

While dealing with the subject of Here and There, I must mention Elon Musk. A South African-born, Canadian-American entrepreneur, engineer, inventor and investor, he has created four multi-billion-dollar companies, PayPal, SpaceX, Tesla and SolarCity.

He has also envisioned a conceptual high-speed transportation system known as the Hyperloop and has proposed a vertical-takeoff-and-landing supersonic jet aircraft. You may have caught the most recent announcement about

Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.

- ALAN LAKEIN

Plenty.

There is nothing more powerful and inspiring than a man or woman with a purpose and a vision for the future. No matter if you're 22 years old and just starting out in the working world, or volunteering at the public library at 105 years old.

The secret is putting yourself in the There. Making There real by thinking, talking, writing and strategizing about it. Financial and estate planning are all about the future. A There mindset requires action and exertion. In the 1989 movie *Field of Dreams*, an Iowa corn farmer (Kevin Costner) hears

Tesla's home battery. The battery is designed from the research and development of Tesla car batteries and is now available to store electrical energy, especially solar energy.

As noted in Peter Diamandis' 2015 book, *Bold: How to Go Big, Create Wealth and Impact the World*, the SpaceX Dragon vehicle in May 2012 made history when SpaceX became the first commercial company to launch and dock a vehicle on the International Space Station. When Diamandis interviewed Elon Musk, he asked him, "What's your secret?"

Musk has a few, but none is

a voice telling him, “If you build it, he will come.”

Building it is about identifying your purpose and intention regarding your future. The money, estate, investments, insurance and taxes come along for the ride. Not only do they logically follow, but there is wise purpose behind how each is thoughtfully employed, aligning them to serve each person’s own “work in progress.”

The funny thing about being in the There, your Here becomes so much more vibrant, exciting, meaningful, focused and enjoyable. Stopping and smelling the roses was never better.

Moreover, a There state of being inspires those around you. They suddenly want to be part of your There. Who wouldn’t want to watch Elon Musk launch toward a new frontier? He has tackled the banking system, automobile industry and governmental space agencies—and won!

Who cannot ponder with awe at what made 105-year-old Harold tick. He was a vibrant,

open-minded and productive citizen of the world.

These are There people...because they learned to anticipate, envision, act and strive in a greater Here.

By being There, we definitely attract to us the people, resources, relationships and money necessary to achieve our dreams. By focusing on others and wanting something bigger than ourselves, we build a stronger Here experience.

It’s just one of those oxymorons:

To have a great Here, we must be There.

To be sure, the past is not forgotten. There are many things from the past to bring along to your future—your There. But you have to decide what to leave behind and what to bring forward. A friend of mine has a great way of putting it. Your life is a bookshelf. It holds only so many books. When you read a new one you want to keep, you must remove (donate? gift?) a book to replace it with a new one.

That is how the past works.

This is a huge subject area that I valiantly attempted to write in the space allowed. It could easily be a book. There are so many elements and facets to Here and There. The successful people I’ve encountered or read about invariably spend much more time in the There. For them, There is an intentional, purposeful, proactive and energetic state of being.

Again—it requires action and exertion.

The late comedian Rodney Dangerfield once quipped, “I joined a health club last year. Spent about 400 bucks. Haven’t lost a pound. Apparently you have to go there.”

Appreciative Endnote: Renowned business strategist Dan Sullivan (Strategic Coach®) continues to stimulate my thinking on various financial-advisor topics. In writing this, I am indebted to Dan’s incisive thoughts and continue to draw inspiration from his visionary concepts. It’s often said that people benefit from having a great Muse. Dan is exactly that—a creative and resourceful business soulmate.

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