

Breakthrough - Championship Living in a Computer Age

Championship Living in a Computer Age – Presentation 12

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Dr. Byrne was the featured Keynote Speaker at Bio'76, the combined annual meeting of the Association of Biomedical Communications Directors (ABCD), the Association of Medical Illustrators (AMI), the Biological Photographic Association (BPA), and the Health Science Communications Association (HeSCA). His 1976 Keynote presentation was powerful, and was filled with his technical insight, personal reflection, and comedic wit.

In 1985, Dr. Byrne produced a cassette series of twelve professional lectures, which defined what he called, "Breakthrough." The concepts presented in his Breakthrough series are universal and are applicable today.

The following article is the twelfth presentation from this "Breakthrough" series. It has been transcribed from a cassette series produced by Richard Byrne in 1985. Some of the content has been edited from the original transcription text in order to provide clarity or context to the reader.

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Dr. Richard Byrne

Championship Living in a Computer Age

We live in the computer age. I'm absolutely sure of it. Earlier in this series, I hedged my bets and I said, "Is it really real, and do you think so, and it's up to you," and so forth. I'm here to tell you now, we all live in a computer age.

Furthermore, we live in an age of breakthrough. There are lightening leaps, and quantum jumps being made in every aspect of human life right now. I am sure that you can learn to embrace this new momentum, in order to break through any barriers in your own life. You can find those old anchors to your past, you can let go of them, and you can break through to a new unanticipated plateau.

Now, in preparation for that breakthrough, you're going to have to live like a champion. You're going to have to be mentally, physically, socially and spiritually fit. Once you reach that new plateau, how are you going to stay there? Once you've broken through, how do you keep from sliding back? I'm sure you know that many people breakthrough and then just quit. A young woman wants to lose weight. She loses weight; nine guys ask her for dates, she doesn't know what to do that! "I never had a date!" and so she goes home and eats a pizza, because she can't deal with her new exploded potential. For so many people, once they break through, they conquer their computer phobia, and then they go unconscious and think it's no big deal. You're going to have to live like a champion.

Now, I'm going to give you my best tips. I have a long list of tips. When I speak to people, I say, "Today," – and I look at my watch and I have six minutes, – I say, "There are ten basic tips for champion living." The next day, I'm speaking and I have only six minutes, and I say, "There are five basic," or, "Three basic," or whatever. I have thought about this, and I'm going to give you the best

advice I have regarding mind, spirit and social relations. I'm going to give you three tips under each category. Three tips. These are little one-liners, little short things you can write on a 3" by 5" card, and then once in a while, you can shuffle the deck and pull one out and think about it.

I don't think you can really toss these ideas away. These are the ideas that govern my life. This is the result of years of thinking about these issues and so, even though I hope they are interesting, I hope they are lively and stimulating and so forth. I am serious about them, so, let me tell you.

First, here are some tips for the mind. I think you should be conscious occasionally. No, no, not all the time. Some of you say, "Oh, I'm conscious all the time!" Oh, baloney, you're not conscious all the time, but try to be conscious occasionally, like five minutes to the hour, twice a day, five minutes of ten, five minutes of three, take five minutes and be conscious. Ask yourself a question: "Say, how can I break through the barrier of my fear or computers?" Or, "How can I break through my lack of understanding about whatever it may be?" Then pick up something at random. Pick up the third book, from the left hand side, of the third shelf, of somebody else's bookshelf. Pick up anything. Pick up a newspaper, pick up a magazine and open it at random, read one line and hang out with it. It'll say, "The price of gold has dropped." Hang out with that concept for a while; think about it! Some of you will say, "Oh, that's so absurd, it's ridiculous, it's not going anywhere!" You see, when you're conscious, the answers just bubble up out of you. The answers are not in the thing you're going to read; the answers are in you. Championship living is in you from the beginning to the end. It's not out there; it's in you. So read something; let your mind work on it, and then write down what you end up with. Be conscious.

Second tip. I think you should be ignorant. Be ignorant. Don't pretend you know things you don't know. I'm telling you, that's lethal! I deal with people, like the head of data processing for a huge high technology firm, and some stranger walks by and asks, "What's the most powerful portable computer?" The guy says, "Well, I believe it's the such and such!" You can tell from the tone of the voice that he's faking it a little. He's acting like he knows. Have you ever traveled anywhere with someone who wouldn't ask for directions? It drives me nuts. It just drives me nuts! You know, we're lost. We're really lost!

And we can't find anything. We say to the person, I say to the driver, "Ask." And he replied, "No, no, no, I was here only 12 years ago, no problem, it's right around here somewhere!" I say, "Hey, there's a guy, there's a filling station! There's a policeman! There's a mailman! Ask!" "No, no, no," and the reason they don't ask is that it makes them look like they don't know. They don't want to look like they don't know, because then it'll look like they're ignorant, and yet they don't know. I want to tell you, your reality is formed by what you say about it. So, if you're ignorant, I think you should at least be as ignorant as you are. Okay? Then go and ask the source, which will usually be some young neighborhood child. Third tip for the mind. I think you should do what you are doing while you are doing it. You may say, "Well, that sounds pretty stupid!" My experience is that most people in the business world are never doing what they're doing, while they're doing it. They're always doing something else while they're doing this. In other words, they're running a board meeting and they're "shooting their cuffs." Everybody at the table is shooting their cuffs, extending their arms, looking at their watches. They're all leaving the meeting. They're all thinking, "Let's see, soon I'll have to leave for the airport." Then all the way to the airport, they're thinking of things they should have said back in the board meeting, "Boy, if I were back in the board meeting now, this is what I'd say." I think you should drive a car while you're driving a car, use the computer while you're using the computer, and eat dinner while you're eating dinner. That's why I hate, and resent, what we call business lunches, "Let's go to lunch and talk business!" I say, "No, no, no, let's talk business and then let's go to lunch." Let's do what we're doing, while we're doing it.

Let's talk about tips for social relations. I think you should find a partner. I think you should get a partner. I think we should all have a partner. A buddy system: As you learn something, teach it to someone else. Get a partner and say to that person, "What do you want to know?" and he says, "I'd like to know how to program in BASIC," or, "I'd like to know how to do electronic mail," and you say, "Good, teach me." The person will know it within a couple of weeks. If you want to learn how to do something, agree to teach it to a church group, offer to teach it to your rotary club within ten days. Within seven days you won't have done a thing, you won't have learned a thing, you'll be just as stupid as you are right now, and then the heat comes up. You say, "I've got only three days left, oh no! Gee, I have two days left, oh my

goodness, maybe I should cancel the meeting! I better cancel the meeting because I can't do it! Oh, wait a minute; if I cancel the meeting, I'll look like a fool! Oh, I have a day and a half left. I think I'll get out the book!" Then you get the book out. "Wait, a minute, I only have half a day left!" All of a sudden, it's incredible. Have you ever melted ice off the freezer part of your refrigerator? It doesn't melt, nothing melts, nothing melts, and then 27 pounds falls off? That's what I'm talking about. About two hours before you're due to teach the class, suddenly you'll say, "This really not as difficult as I thought," you learn the whole thing and you show up smiling. Make a commitment to a partner, and teach them whatever it is you want to learn.

Related to that is my second tip on social relations. In social relations, what you put out is what you get back. Again, what you put out is what you get back. Is there anyone who is not cooperating with you currently in your life? Anyone who is not cooperating with you? Good. Then you need to cooperate with them more. You may say, "I cooperate plenty! I'm not the problem!" No, no, no, that's ego, that's vanity. That's not getting the job done. You cooperate more, and if they don't cooperate, you cooperate even more. If we want people in our life to smile, smile at them. If you want people to be enthusiastic on the phone, be enthusiastic on the phone, because what you put out is what you get back.

My third tip on social relations is always come from a position of mastery. Okay? Don't seek mastery. I come from Independence, Missouri, and I don't know how to change that. You can twist my arm, and I say, "Omaha, I come from Omaha!" but not really. I come from Independence, but you can also come from a place called mastery. When you come from mastery, and you say, "I come from mastery, no problem, what is it?" They say, "Well, somebody has to barbeque the chicken." You say, "Fine, not to worry." Because you come from mastery, you ask whatever questions are needed, you look around, you figure it out, and then you barbeque the chicken. Okay? You can come from mastery in developing your access to a computer. When you come from mastery, all you have to do is learn the key strokes. You know, C, L, D. It's not a big deal. The big deal is if you don't come from mastery. "I don't know, maybe I won't be able to do this, I'm not very good at math!" Have you ever jumped between two buildings in a city, or have seen kids do that? It doesn't have to be 20 feet. If you're only two feet away from the other building, and even if you actually

just fainted, you'd fall over onto the other building. I'm telling you, if you don't think you can make it, don't jump, because the "outcome" is in the "intention." So come from the best intentions; come from mastery.

Now, the tips for the spirit. I think everyone should go on 'receive only' once in a while. I call it 'receive only', where you just listen and don't talk. You don't have to be highly religious, and you don't have to pray about it, but just take a break, and instead of trying to be clever and figuring it out, just listen, and see what comes into your mind. There are many wonderful ideas floating around inside our minds, but we're so busy, we're so noisy, we talk so much, we're putting out so much information, that we don't listen. You ought to take some time every day, in my opinion, where you simply stay quiet and listen. See what ideas emerge from your own mind.

The second tip for the spirit is that I think you ought to get the big picture. Remember the airplane? You're flying the airplane, and there's wind and cold air out there, and you say, "There's no ice in this drink," ...that's the little picture. Look near you right now. Look at some object. Is there some object standing still there? Good. Now, is that object moving? Maybe a glass or a book or a chair? Is that object moving? The little picture says, "No, it's not. It's right there, it's not moving." In the big picture, let's suppose you zoom up 1,500 feet above that object, and you look at it, and then you zoom up 15,000, and then 100,000 feet, and you look at it, and suddenly, wow, there'll be a moment when it suddenly becomes the big picture. You'll see that that object is moving a 1,000 miles an hour eastwardly, as it's rotating around the Earth; it'll be moving 66,600 miles an hour around the sun. One of the fringe benefits that we all get for being human beings is that we get a free trip around the sun every year, and we don't appreciate it enough. It's also moving 44,000 miles an hour around the center of the Milky Way. It is moving a lot! We need to see that big picture occasionally, because we get so trapped in the little picture of our personal problems and, you know, "I can't get the disk drive to work!" In the big scheme of things, maybe nobody noticed! So, occasionally, try get the big picture.

My last tip for the spirit is that in every aspect of the computer age, whether you're working on a breakthrough or you're just trying to maintain championship living, come from a state of aliveness. I hope during this series it seemed like I've been alive. I've tried to be alive with

you. I'm trying to talk to you. I want to be vivacious and alive and present. I see people who encounter a computer, they encounter teleconferencing, they encounter any kind of problem, and the aliveness leaks out of them like air out of an old inner tube. In fact, sometimes you can even hear it! You say to them, "Well, we have a little problem with the computer." "Sigh," "What's the problem?" "Well, it's crashed." "Sigh," and air just come out – it's like, "Oh, no. No, no." The problems are the good part. Come from aliveness! Have energy. Have ecstasy. Remember that swimming pool springboard. When you went off that high board, and then you came up through the water, and you said, "Yay! I'm alive!"

I hope you've enjoyed this series. I'd like to remind you that in the very first installment of this series, I said you should respect the power of a single idea. One idea. Don't try to memorize this entire series. Don't make long lists that you try to put in to effect in your life. Look for the single idea that makes that 'ping,' that resonates with you, that seems to be the answer for you. Put that idea to work in your life now.

God bless you, and I wish you the very best in your own championship living and breaking through in the computer age.

References

Byrne, R. *Breakthrough - Championship Living in a Computer Age* (Audio Cassette Series), Springboard! 1985. (*This cassette series is no longer available*)

About the Author

Richard Byrne was a former professor and dean at USC's Annenberg School of Communications. He was known for making computers less intimidating for all of us. In 1982 Dr. Byrne founded one of the first consulting firms of its kind, called Springboard! His company was devoted to acquainting executives with high technology. As president, Dr. Byrne traveled as far as Europe and Thailand presenting as many as 200 lectures a year. He enlivened complex computer terminology with humorous wit and common-sense explanations. Dr. Byrne, who had previously taught at the University of Wisconsin and the University of Texas, left his position as a full-time

professor at USC in 1984 to devote himself to an increasingly lucrative lecturing career.

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