

The one thing can always vary

I just had myself a great weekend. John Bifar, head of Dreamtime Entertainment flew me down to his studios in Fort Myers, Fla. to do some television work. One of the projects we tackled involved an on air discussion of one of the nation's leading motivational gurus, David Essel. Essel is an author, life coach and speaker in the tradition of Deepak Chopra, Wayne Dwyer and John Gray.

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Sport Psychology

He is not on Oprah yet but may get there this year. And he will get there thanks to his new DVD entitled *The One Thing*.

My job over the weekend was to meet with Essel, listen to his concept, determine if it had any credibility and provide my

analysis for the audience. And you thought television work was easy. My first impression of David Essel was that he had an amazing combination of rock star good looks and a very fast mind. He had charisma plus.

So here is David Essel's definition of "The One Thing." "The One Thing" is that one idea or awareness or change you must make in order to achieve your full potential. "The One Thing" is what everyone seems to be looking for but has a hard time finding. And here is how he came upon this concept. In 1996 he was the only American radio host to be granted an interview with the Maharishi Yogi. You will remember the Maharishi as the founder of Transcendental Meditation and

the guy The Beatles went to for spiritual guidance. However John Lennon was so full of psychedelics and so tired of fame and travel that he could not be reached by Maharishi. However this was not the case with David Essel.

There have been over 500 research studies on the physiological and psychological benefits of Transcendental Meditation and there was David Essel interviewing the founder of this technique. To say it had a profound effect on him is an understatement. The interview went on and afterwards David reported that he remembered only one thing about the interview. He recalled that the Maharishi Yogi would laugh like a child to preface many of his answers. This and only this was what Essel remembered. Three weeks later he gave a follow-up call to one of the Maharishi's assistants to ask about this. The assistant promptly said "Ah yes, you seem to have learned the one thing of importance." David then asked "what would that be?" to which the assistant replied "you have learned of how the Maharishi lives joyously in the moment. Congratulations." And that lesson has stayed with David all these years and is now the basis of his concept.

I wondered whether "The One Thing" actually is an unconscious reference to the one neurotic issue one must master. Does it refer to the one "aha" experience one finally has that is life changing? Essel clearly had one in the presence of the Maharishi. Does the one thing mean the one thing one must now do in order to grow? In all likelihood it references all these things at once. That's what makes the concept so compelling. There is a religious term that comes to mind. When

one is born again many say this is like an experience that changes them forever.

The value of this concept relates to how much creative interest it generates in those who behold it. We call this the concept of fecundity in psychology. An idea is fecund if it generates research interest. Transcendental Meditation was fecund enough to generate 500 research studies. Many athletes use some form of transcendental meditation to find inner calm during game time. Tiger Woods is a master of meditation.

And what remains to be seen is whether David Essel can take this concept into the public's mind. If he gets on Oprah he will have proved the power of this concept. And this takes me to my last point. What I take away from this is the power that certain individuals have over others. The Maharishi Yogi is someone with great spiritual power. So was Jesus Christ and so was Mohammed. The great British psychoanalyst Alfred Bion called these people mystics and described the impact these people had on the world. It looks to me like David Essel ran into one of those mystics during his interview with Maharishi Yogi and now it is David's turn to spread the word. And in a world with so much stress and pain it sure is nice to see someone who has found a way to feel joy and peace in the present.

Dr. Tom Ferraro is a noted psychologist with more than 20 years experience working with professional and amateur athletes in the fields of golf, baseball, lacrosse, figure skating, jujitsu, boxing and horse racing. To comment on this column, e-mail him at betterliving@journalregister.com.