

Consider that you may be wrong



In Leo Tolstoy's novel *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, the protagonist, Ivan Ilych, is a smart, competent attorney dying from an unknown cause. Tolstoy describes a scene in which Ivan has a sobering realization while gazing at his sleeping daughter, Gerasim.

"Ivan Ilych's physical sufferings were terrible, but worse than the physical sufferings were his mental sufferings which were his chief torture.

His mental sufferings were due to the fact that at night, as he looked at Gerasim's sleepy, good-natured face with its prominent cheek-bones, the question suddenly occurred to him: 'What if my whole life has been wrong?'

It occurred to him that what had appeared perfectly impossible before, namely that he had not spent his life as he should have done, might after all be true."

What a solemn question.

I doubt if many of us will get to the end of our lives and wonder, "What if my whole life has been wrong?" But all of us should embrace the fact that there are specific areas of our lives that are wrong and need to change.

- What if you *have* lived a self-centered life?
- What if you *have* neglected your family?
- What if you *have not* lived authentically?
- What if you *have* pursued the wrong career?

Know this: there *are* areas of your life in which you are wrong. If you think you're an exception to this statement, your pushback betrays your naiveté and error.

The good news is you can change. Thoreau said, "I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life through conscious endeavor."

Conscious endeavor can include turning wrong into right.

Summary

Think With Me - Reflections on life and leadership from Don McMinn

~~Thinking carefully about significant thoughts will change your life. Don McMinn can help facilitate that process.~~

What? - There are areas of your life in which you are wrong.

So what? - These areas adversely affect your life and your relationships with others.

Now what? - Identify at least one area of your life in which you are wrong and change.

Leaders - Analyze the core values, policies, and assumptions upon which your organization is based. Identify areas in which you may be wrong.

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