

## Past, Present, Future

by Gordon W. Brown

When we say The Past is Approved, The Present is Received, The Future is Open, we do not say that everything in our past was acceptable. Rather, that we take ownership of our past, it belongs to us, and it is a vast library of experiences, both good and bad, that we can learn from. With “approval” when we can begin to examine ourselves. It can make us sad when we consider some of the past events. On the other hand, there are countless moments in our past that brought joy and satisfaction. We use both of these kinds of memories to inform our Present.

Everything occurs in the present, our thoughts about the past and the hopes we have for the future. They occur right now! There is a saying - “Living in the past creates depression and living in the future creates anxiety.” I believe this is quite true. So the best thing is to live in the present. Live in the now, living a life of action, not reaction.

Now the Future is open. We can plan for it, we can set goals in our Contract that create pathways to fulfillment of our hopes. But we cannot predict that everything will go according to our desires. No way! Things will change. We will be disappointed. But we counteract this by preparing our minds and bodies to take things as they come. In the present.

Goals are dreams with an action plan.

We know that we need to be flexible, prepared, and SMART. Planning and making goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Framed. This reduces the element of surprise if things go sideways. If things don’t go as planned we may find that something is no

longer Relevant, or, for one reason or another, not Achievable, but we don't give up, we fill those voids with new goals to improve the quality of life.

"How can you come to know yourself? Never by thinking, always by doing. Try to do your duty, and you'll know right away what you amount to."<sup>1</sup>

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Goethe (1749-1842) German author, philosopher, scientist, and theatre artist