

# NOW

By Alan E. Ramos

## *Preface: ABOUT NOW*

*As I transition from my future former profession (as an attorney) to my new profession (as an actor), it is interesting to note common issues challenging both professions. One of the challenges common to both professions is the need to be present, in the moment, to be here -- NOW.*

*Some people think that acting is mostly learning lines and emoting on cue (he's crying real tears!), but it is more about being totally present – mind, body and emotion – and listening with all of your being. If you can achieve that state, you give yourself the ability to react to what is being said in an honest and natural way. Otherwise, you are simply saying words, just reading lines with a group of people.*

*Practicing law can offer numerous challenges; among which is keeping it interesting. When my daughter was 10-years old, I took her to court with me (a case management conference). She sat with me for an hour and as we were leaving, she remarked that "That judge has a terrible job – listening to those lawyers."*

*Defending a deposition can also be a challenging experience, particularly when opposing counsel has a difficult time actually forming a question. It can be one of the most boring experiences in life (but great billable hours). The primary challenge comes from the obligation to concentrate and carefully listen to the questions (there are not many grounds on which you can base an objection, but you better get them on the record) and to the answers your client or the witness is giving (which could come back to bite you later). If you aren't present and concentrating, you won't even be aware of the malpractice that you are committing until it makes itself evident in court (or when a malpractice claim is made against you).*

*Life can be complicated. We need to consider the past and learn from our experiences; some of which we don't want to repeat and others that make the present more rewarding. We also need to consider the future (a life with no plan can be a mess, not to mention all the best vacation spots won't be available). How do we get present and still take care to respect the past and invest sufficient energy in the future? And maybe most importantly, what does this process look and feel like?*

## NOW

The past is past -- an obvious statement. But consider that immediately after I write each of these words, they become part of my past, part of the billions of bits of information and memories that make up who I am. Consider that as you read each of these words, they become part of your past, part of the billions of bits of information and memories that make up who you are. The past is an important, vital part of who we are – we would be nothing without our past. But the past is immutable, unchangeable, it is suitable for pondering and learning from and it is important for some of those experiences to become parables assisting us in avoiding repetition; however, it is not a productive place in which to dwell for long.

The future is not yet here – another obvious statement. However, it is important to plan for the future or it may not be terribly productive. We must consider the future and determine what it is that we wish it to be. We need to recognize that we have the power to manifest our dreams by envisioning the future that we want. It is important to remember that the future is unblemished by fault or error or recrimination. The future is bright or dark or any hue we conjure it to be. The future beckons us, entices us, enthrall us with its unsullied purity. It can be hopeful or frightening, energizing or debilitating. But, for all that it can be, it is the future and it is not NOW.

One great danger of spending too much time in the past and/or the future is the possibility of becoming a “Gonna-Do” – one who speaks of what s/he is “Gonna-do” and what s/he “Coulda done”). In the state of “Gonna-do”, seldom is anything actually ever done, as it is easier and less risky to luxuriate in spending the NOW in the “safer” past and future, where no action is ever required – where all that is required of one is to talk.

It is important to consider the past, we can learn from the past and we can savor moments of the past. We also need to consider the future. Without planning, the future could be bleak and unlivable. The key is to ration the

energy of NOW and give to the past and the future only what is necessary. If we give the past and the future any more of our NOW than what is necessary, we have less time to be present, less time to be in the moment – less time to savor NOW – and, at its worst, we can rend the fabric of NOW.

Let us not forget those marvelous moments when NOW and the past intersect. Those moments when a smell, sound, taste (and often for me a song) brings us back to moments in the past where we can feel it as if it were now. This is our ability to experience the past NOW. Feel it, embrace it, experience it for it can be a truly wonderful (or sad, exciting, painful) moment. Indulge the moment but don't stay there too long, for if you tarry, it can become but a wallow in the past and deprive you of time you can be present – in your NOW.

Most importantly, what the past and the future are not: is NOW. NOW is this precise moment. NOW can be felt, it can be tasted, it can be experienced with as many of our senses as we can assemble. If we summon all of our being to experience NOW, we can feel the joy of NOW, we can experience the full sensual ecstasy of NOW, and we can share with others all that we have to share - NOW. We can bring all of our being, all of our knowledge, all of our senses to this moment and experience NOW.

So I encourage you to take the plunge – fully engage in NOW. Find richness in the beauty of NOW. Whatever it is that you do – holding a baby, watching a sunset, smelling a rose, touching the face of a loved one, or changing your life to follow your dreams. Do it with all of your being in NOW and you will feel the full experience of NOW. You will experience the baby's joy and its wonderment of discovery; the uniqueness and brilliance of "that" sunset; the unique smell, softness and sensuousness of "that" rose; the excitement and expression of love returned by "that" loved one; and, the exhilaration of pursuing your dreams. Invest wisely in NOW and create a richer past (which, after all, is made up of all of the moments of NOW) and which may ultimately create a vastly more rewarding and joyful future.

Whatever you do – be it writer, artist, actor, attorney, musician, mother, father, friend or any other endeavor you can imagine – it will only be enhanced by being here NOW. You and everyone that you touch will benefit from your immersion in NOW.

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