



Some Changes you Only See in the Rear View Mirror

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<https://PredictableSuccess.com/rear-view-mirror>

So appropriately enough today - Independence Day - this IndependenceDay weekend is the fourth anniversary of me getting this (waves passport).

I became a US citizen four years ago this month, and although I'm privileged enough to have also both a British and an Irish passport, there's no doubt that the US is home to me.

But you know, it was a long process. It's taken me over 20 years. I moved here in 1998. And at that time I didn't really have an intention of staying here permanently, and certainly not becoming a US Citizen.

I intended for a while to have a bicoastal lifestyle. I kept my home in Northern Ireland and intended to work here for a while and then go back. And then I realized I probably wasn't going back, and I can remember and as I look back, sort of in the rearview mirror, I can see some inflection points.

I can recall the time, maybe three years into living here when I finally stopped converting prices from US dollars to UK pounds. I could do the math and understand really how much this was costing me without having to go back into British pounds.

I remember when I finally stopped looking the wrong way when I pulled my car out of the parking lot - let alone turning into the wrong lane. And then the kicker was probably about eight or nine years into my stay here when I went back on one of my visits to Northern Ireland and a friend said 'Welcome home'. And I remember being literally both physically and mentally disoriented. It was just strange being told 'welcome home' when I realized this wasn't my home. My home is back here in the US.

And so after 16 years I finally became a US citizen. And although that journey in the rear view mirror is sort of easy to see developing, at the time I didn't really see it as a path I was taking. It wasn't - it didn't feel like I was having to make a decision, or take specific steps. I just got to a point when I looked in the rearview mirror it was time to do this.



And I've had a little mini version of that over the last four months. As most of you will know that I've lived here and DC for the last six years or so. I'm looking right now at the National Zoo. My apartment - I call it 'The Tree House' - looks right out on the National Zoo here in DC.

But when the lockdowns came into place, I found myself trapped (if you want to call it that) at the place up in Chesapeake Bay that I go to at weekends. And as time drew on there, I began to get very comfortable. (It's hardly an inconvenience to be up at my weekend place - it's a beautiful part of the world right beside the water, six or seven acres of wonderful land, you know, it's like something out of Walden Pond), and then when travel restrictions eased a little bit and I found myself coming back here to DC, I increasingly found myself coming back to get a few things and go back up to Chesapeake.

And so, long story short, this is my last day here in The Tree House. In fact, as soon as I've finished - when I press the button to end this recording - I'm walking out the door, and that's it. I'm finished in DC for now, and the removal folks are coming in a couple of weeks time and they'll bring all my stuff up to Chesapeake.

And that's another example of something that when I look in the rearview mirror, I can see the path to getting here, but I didn't think back then on March 13th when I found myself trapped up at Chesapeake, it was nothing in my head that was saying "Okay, maybe I'll stay here."

It was something that changed over time - pretty swiftly, but as I say, easier to see in the rearview mirror.

And what's got me thinking about that a lot is the series of podcast interviews I've been doing just over the last few weeks. I've been asking leaders to reflect on how this covid crisis has changed them as leaders as they've had, you know, a challenge that we've never seen before in scope and scale. How has that changed them? What has it wrought on them as leaders?

And I've been amazed the degree to which in every case the answer that's come back has been one that's clear for them to see in the rear view mirror, but they didn't see it at the time.

A good example is Julia Hamm. If you haven't listened to my interview with her [go find it here on the website](#). It's well worth a listen. And Julia was explaining that one of the things that she always thought she was great at was forward-facing customer and client relationships. But what she's realized about herself during these last few months is that she's really good at the internal work as well. And that that had not been something that was clear to her. But as I asked her the question and she reflected back on it, that's what's occurred to her.

And sometimes changes that are wrought in us and we can only see them in the rear view mirror. And what I'd like you to do is to scroll down and [leave me your observation](#).



What do you see in the rearview mirror about how this challenge of covid on our leadership, how has it changed you over the last four months?

I'm Les McKeown. In spite of everything, let's have a great week!