



Reverse Entropy

By Steven L. Anderson, Ph.D., MBA

I wrote an article a few months ago about what it takes to overcome entropy. Entropy is a law of physics that states that all things tend toward disorder. Whether it is rust, erosion, oxidation, or aging, entropy is going to get us in the end.

So, recently, I got to thinking. If it's all about entropy, how can we live in a world that is full of incredible beauty? If you get out in nature, you see mountains that jut up thousands of feet above the sea. You see an incredible array of flora and fauna that are deeply organized, complex and beautiful. So, how can this be? What force is it that has allowed the world to defy entropy and create a beautiful system that swims upstream in the river of entropy? In a nutshell, one thing gives nature the power to create order in the middle of chaos; sunlight. If it were not for sunlight, none of the order we see on this earth would exist. Neither would we.

But, there is one more critical factor that our world needs to overcome entropy. We have to somehow convert that wonderful sunlight into energy that is useful to us. Fortunately, this problem was solved long before we were created. It is a chemical reaction called photosynthesis. As you probably are aware, it is the chemical process by which a plant turns the energy in sunlight into a sugar molecule. This simple chemical reaction has allowed every living thing to be created and to overcome the decay inherent in entropy.

These two factors make me think about what it takes to make our families, our businesses, our societies successful. The sunlight is the source of power in the universe. Some would call that power God's love. But to deeply connect with that source of power and align ourselves with it, we need something akin to photosynthesis. I compare that chemical reaction to our values. We have to know and deeply understand our values, in a sense the rudder of our existence, to make use of the power inherent in the universe. To really be a part of making our society work, we have to first of all, determine which values are most important to us. At ILS, we have decided that the values of authenticity, love, excellence, dreaming, learning, balance, teamwork, community focused, and reliability define us. Then we have to regularly take the time to make sure we are living by those values and try to do our best to align ourselves with the goodness and truth that the universe has to offer. The only way I know to do this is to make time in our lives for quiet reflection and to take the time to plan your life around your values.

So if at times you feel out of sync with the world around you and you feel that you are expending more energy than you are receiving; maybe it is time for some thoughtful, quiet reflection about what your deepest values are and how you can best use them to contribute to the world around you. That contribution is how, I believe, we all can swim upstream and create a world that defies entropy. To go back to the photosynthesis example, if your life does not seem to be what you believe it could be, I leave you with this question, "Are you getting enough sugar?" If not, can creating more alignment with your values help reenergize your life?