

LEADERSHIP – COACHING AND MENTORING PACK

October 2019

(Established 2006)

Welcome to this month's edition.

Damian Piper, our resident Performance coach and consultant, starts this edition with: **Are you considering your career next steps?** Damian reflects on his career and has come up with three universal themes which he believes could be applicable to you. As someone who has been fortunate to have two long careers (first 24 years, second 23 years and counting) I found Damian's latest article to be essential reading and recommend it. Have you checked out Damian's podcasts yet? They are available at www.effectivechallenge.com/podcasts or on all the major podcast platforms.

One of my favourite quotes is from Michelle Obama: 'Find people who make you better' it is something I have endeavoured to do in both my personal and professional lives and I have constantly benefited from doing this. **Being Bettina's Dad - Find people who make you better** is about how Bettina has made me a better person. Next month I will be writing a post about how people I have worked with have made me better as a leader and a person too.

I am currently reading 'Black Box Thinking' ('Marginal Gain' and the Secret of High Performance) by Matthew Syed. I think it represents my thinking and philosophy both in work and my running career. More importantly, it is about how we cannot grow unless we are prepared to learn from our failures and mistakes. For a taster I have included a link to a presentation from Matthew about Black Box thinking: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmVCYgs3mko> from reading his book, I am prompted to include a blog post I wrote five years ago, as my last article in this month's edition: **'Fail and Fail Big'** as I acknowledged and confronted failure, seeing it as an opportunity.

This month's quotes have been taken from my wife's @JoyceRaw1 and @livelikearaw twitter feeds – thanks Joyce. I am also live on Twitter: @DoshLtd sharing leadership thoughts at 7am, 7 days a week. We welcome new followers!

Steve

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It's not about how good you are,

It's how Good You want to be

Are you considering your career next steps?

Over the last month, I've been asked on three occasions to talk about my career to different groups who for various reasons were taking stock of their careers and were looking for external input to help their thinking.

I have a reluctance to talk about the specifics of my career as I genuinely believe a career is a personal thing and therefore what might work for me might not be suitable (or helpful) for others. I always encourage people to take personal responsibility for their careers. Without that there's a greater chance that you end up at the mercy of the 'system' or perhaps doing things that you think will please others. As I reflected on my career I came up with three universal themes which I believe could be applicable to others. Here they are:

1. **Balance - a career is just a part of your responsibility.** This is probably the number one area for me. Seeing your career as one element of your responsibilities is a first step to achieving balance. I haven't always got this right to my detriment. We each have between eight to twelve key roles in our lives e.g. dad/mum, son/daughter, health and wellbeing, family member, friend etc. There are times when certain roles need to take precedent. Starting a new job or becoming a parent for the first time or some health setback requires you to give more attention and focus. Careers can be one of those things which can quickly get out of kilter with the rest of our lives in an effort to 'get on'. If we are able to give ourselves objectivity around the whole of our lives then chances are we are more likely to feel better in ourselves and ultimately feel more fulfilled. Failure to do this can mean we find other areas suffer then over time we begin to resent the career. From working with others an even worse outcome is finding that they achieve career 'success' only to realise they've missed out on their kids growing up or a serious health setback as they have prioritised the inbox over their health. Seeing whatever career choice you make in the bigger picture context will be of benefit; even if that's not obvious in the near term.
2. **Do something you find real meaning in.** This again is a very personal thing and understanding where your meaning sits is something to consider (not just for careers). Doing something that aligns to what you consider to have meaning and is consistent with your value set will mean you can be your authentic self and as a result likely increase contribution. This doesn't mean to say everyday will be a bed of roses. There will be challenges. There will be people you don't get on with. There will be tasks that you don't enjoy. If ultimately you see the real meaning and feel aligned you are much more likely to be able to work through those less 'pleasant' things.
3. **Keep learning and growing.** There's a strong case that one of our needs is growth as a person. Growth is possible in many areas of our lives. Our careers are a great place with which to support our growth. Growth can come in many formal and informal flavours. I know from my personal situation and the conversations with plenty of others that being able to develop and grow as part of career has been incredibly rewarding. Lots of people reach for the more formal type of development. This is great although I'd say this really misses out on the more practical side of growth. To know something theoretically is only part of the story. Doing it for real takes it to a whole new level.

So if you're considering what next for your career, no matter what the specifics I'm confident consideration of the above three themes will help you make more informed decisions and hopefully a great career as a result.

As always, I'm interested in any thoughts you have about this post.

Damian Piper

Change coach and consultant

I've got a personal goal to do what I can to support people with performance development. Please subscribe to receive my thought-provoking updates designed to take your performance to the next level: <https://effectivechallenge.com/blog/>

While I have your attention - if you're more ☺ than ☹ then please listen to the Effective Challenge Podcast. Feel free to share if you think others may benefit from its content.



www.effectivechallenge.com/podcasts

Stay close to people who feel like sunshine



Being Bettina's Dad - Find people who make you better

(And six fun things I get from being Bettina's Dad)

I think I can safely say we are not an especially religious family, however, we do often say that our youngest daughter Bettina is a 'gift from god' (we also say that she is our 'crown jewels').

This morning, Bettina is in our sitting room composing herself for the day ahead. She likes this 'me' time without anyone disturbing her, e.g. me telling her how much I love her or asking her what she is going to do today. I can hear her singing to herself and repeating what she is planning for her day ahead (read eight books, finds 10 snails, feed the donkeys she cares for and the colour of her nails (her Personal Assistant will do this for her)).

If you are new to my series 'Being Bettina's Dad' Bettina is a woman who copes with a learning disability, autism and epilepsy and, as mentioned in my twitter 'bio', is one of my awesome daughters.

I share stories on my 'Being Bettina's Dad' series on my blog and in my monthly Leadership Pack to inspire readers to look at the world a little differently and help people on their leadership journey and, most importantly, to learn as I do from Bettina.

It is Bettina's birthday in a couple of weeks and as we reflect on another wonderful year in Bettina's life, we think about what she has brought to our lives. Both Joyce and I could summarise it in one sentence: Bettina makes us better people.

One of my favourite quotes is from Michelle Obama: **'Find people who make you better'** it is something I have endeavoured to do in both my personal and my professional lives and I have constantly benefited from doing this. This blog post is about how Bettina has made me a better person.

(I will write another post soon on how I have done this in both my Army and my Social Sector careers).

Six ways I think Bettina has made me a better person:

1. Bettina, more often than not is 'in the moment'. Me? I am either looking back or looking into to the future too often, when really I should just enjoy being in 'the now' and savour those moments. Bettina has made me more mindful
<https://leadershipintheraw.org/2016/03/10/being-bettinas-dad-bettina-transforming-my-life-with-mindfulness/> Bettina has a joy of life which is infectious – I am so glad I caught her bug.
2. My communication systems and processes are enhanced. Previously I had relied (perhaps too much) on verbal skills. I was not able to do this with Bettina as she was unable to verbally communicate effectively until she was 10 years old. Even now her speech can be limited, so Bettina taught me the importance of visual clues and to focus on other aspects of communication such as body language. Such as how she uses hers and paying attention to my own body language and the signals they may give. Joyce covered this in her blog 'Care to Communicate' <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2015/02/12/being-bettinas-mum-care-to-communicate/>
3. Bettina always acts without prejudice. Bettina does not discriminate. She takes each person on their merits – everybody starts with a 'clean slate' with her. Although this can make Bettina vulnerable, it is a wonderful quality that I try to emulate each day.

4. Bettina focuses on what is important and lets the rest go. I am not there yet and definitely not up to Bettina's standard, but I am in a better place because of her: <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2019/02/07/do-what-is-important-and-let-the-rest-go/>
5. Patience. While Bettina (like the rest of us) can get frustrated with what she is trying to achieve, she has an abundance of patience as she tries to work things out. It was absolutely fascinating watching how she worked out the controls on our DVD machine some years ago. She did it through trial and error. I have been too quick to say "this is something I can't do" on some piece of technology. This morning I worked out how to change a setting on my smart phone. I now follow Bettina's systematic approach to solving a problem.
6. Bettina helps us dig deep. Bettina came into our life during a two year Berlin posting. We were now a young family of four, living far away from our extended family in the UK, so we had to dig deep to look after each other: <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2015/11/27/being-bettinas-dad-when-love-is-not-enough-to-keep-you-safe-and-secure/> Bettina needs 24/7 support, so as a family we continue to dig deep for her and Bettina digs even deeper for us. Bettina shows and gives her love unconditionally and we do the same for her.

Six fun things I get from being Bettina's Dad:

1. I get to sing (with Bettina) the latest Muppet soundtrack on the way home from the beach on a Saturday morning. Bettina has an eclectic taste in music from Disney to Jazz. We are going to see one of her favourite bands next year – The Lighthouse Family.
2. I am living in a time warp. When most people of my age are doing the grandfather thing, thanks to Bettina's need for consistency, I need to be someone half my years (she has no concept of age). To Bettina I am still: 'Steve, Daddy Boy' although I am pretty sure I can no longer carry her on my shoulders!
3. I get to go to Pantomimes (without embarrassment) and sit through the latest Disney movie (while feigning nonchalance)
4. I get to hear lots of really cool phrases and expressions from Bettina e.g. "ahh there you are" or "you hem" then adopt them. By the way 'you hem' is not a compliment!
5. Regularly helping Bettina comb Frinton's (Essex) beach for the right kind of sea shells for our garden.
6. I can make my coughs sound like sneezes! Because of Bettina's autism, the sound of a cough by someone who is significant in her life can sound threatening and distressing. I like to think I have perfected my fake sneeze. I am quite proud of this as it is the only thing I can do better than Joyce.

And six reasons why you should always look for people who will make you better:

1. They help make you think differently and challenge your long held views and perceptions
2. They bring added quality and joy to your life
3. They raise your standards (and in the case of Bettina your manners too)
4. They stop you from being complacent – no resting on your laurels with being Bettina's Dad
5. They educate you. (Often without them knowing they are doing this, so show them lots of gratitude).
6. Because you want to be a better person than you were yesterday.

Thank you Bettina, for changing my life for the last 32 years.

When it comes to finding people who make Bettina better 'B' doesn't have to go too far to meet her role model and the person she tries to emulate every day. It is her big sister Jennifer:

<https://leadershipintheraw.org/2018/10/02/being-bettinas-dad-a-role-model-for-bettina-2/>



Bettina and Jennifer taking a rest between a full on shopping expedition

You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand.

Woodrow Wilson

MY TOP 4 PICKS FROM Ted.com

Each month I trawl through Ted.com for inspiring, thought provoking and moving 'talks' so you don't have to. Here are my top four picks just for you:

How to let go of being a good person and become a better person:

https://www.ted.com/talks/dolly_chugh_how_to_let_go_of_being_a_good_person_and_become_a_better_person

What if your attachment to being a "good" person is holding you back from actually becoming a better person? In this accessible talk, social psychologist Dolly Chugh explains the puzzling psychology of ethical behaviour -- like why it's hard to spot your biases and acknowledge mistakes -- and shows how the path to becoming better starts with owning your mistakes. "In every other part of our lives, we give ourselves room to grow -- except in this one, where it matters most," Chugh says.

Why being nice to your co-workers is good for business:

https://www.ted.com/talks/christine_porath_why_being_nice_to_your_coworkers_is_good_for_business

Looking to get ahead in your career? Start by being respectful to your co-workers, says leadership researcher Christine Porath. In this science-backed talk, she shares surprising insights about the costs of rudeness and shows how little acts of respect can boost your professional success -- and your company's bottom line.

Why the secret to success is setting the right goals:

https://www.ted.com/talks/john_doerr_why_the_secret_to_success_is_setting_the_right_goals

Our leaders and institutions are failing us, but it's not always because they're bad or unethical, says venture capitalist John Doerr -- often, it's simply because they're leading us toward the wrong objectives. In this practical talk, Doerr shows us how we can get back on track with "Objectives and Key Results," or OKRs -- a goal-setting system that's been employed by the likes of Google, Intel and Bono to set and execute on audacious goals. Learn more about how setting the right goals can mean the difference between success and failure -- and how we can use OKRs to hold our leaders and ourselves accountable.

How to build and rebuild trust:

https://www.ted.com/talks/frances_frei_how_to_build_and_rebuild_trust

Trust is the foundation for everything we do. But what do we do when it's broken? In an eye-opening talk, Harvard Business School professor Frances Frei gives a crash course in trust: how to build it, maintain it and rebuild it -- something she worked on during a recent stint at Uber. "If we can learn to trust one another more, we can have unprecedented human progress," Frei says.

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle; the other is as though everything is. Albert Einstein

Do this and your team will love you

Time to read: 30 seconds

Dear Steve

Take the blame for everything, and the praise for nothing.

"It's my fault."

And when something goes well, name the person or people who did it.

Truly authentic leadership is never about you -- it's about your teams and people.

Of course, if someone has made a mistake have a chat with them -- in private.

I started doing this when I was an IT Director -- I was sick and tired of being blamed for everything. So out of sheer frustration, I blurted out:

"That's my fault."

And on the next one:

“That’s my responsibility as well.”

Very soon the others got bored and decided to look for a new target.

It takes great bravery – the results are amazing.

David

David Taylor author of Naked Leader series (books I recommend to you)

Also in the same on the same theme: <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2014/09/25/leadership-the-dosh-way/>

“If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete” Buddha

7 Shortcuts to Work Smarter, Not Harder

By Larry Alton

You can accomplish anything with hard work, they say. You can make your business a success, earn a promotion, and master virtually any skill... if you just work hard.

Except working your butt off is not always enough. Need proof? You can’t inflate a flat car tire by blowing into it as hard as you can, the same way you can’t effectively mow a lawn with a pair of household scissors. No, you need the right tools, the right strategies, for the right tasks. You need to work smarter, not harder.

How though? By finding shortcuts.

Here are seven tips to help you work more efficiently and more productively without expending any additional effort—aka here’s how to work smarter, not harder:

1. Walk away.

Walking away from a complex task might seem counterintuitive, but breaks can actually make you more productive. Removing yourself from the work environment immediately reduces stress and gives your brain a chance to “catch up.” If you’re working on a hard problem, your subconscious mind will continue working on it even if your conscious mind is trying to relax—which is why sometimes, solutions magically pop into your mind when you aren’t thinking about the problem. Either way, you’ll come back refreshed and in a healthier, more focused mental state for work.

2. Recognize and eliminate distractions

This should be obvious, but the most dangerous distractions are the ones you don’t even realize are distracting. Maybe you’re working on a new marketing plan with a couple tabs of research open, and a third tab that’s, conveniently, open to Facebook. You get a new notification, so you click out of your Word doc to check it real quick. You spend 20 seconds looking at the post you were just tagged in (or the event you were just invited to or the “like” your status just got) before you minimize it again. Twenty seconds isn’t a long time, but it breaks your focus and forces you to restart your last

train of thought, possibly costing you a few minutes or more. Compound that happening several times an hour and you've instantly reduced your overall productivity.

3. Ignore low-priority items.

Low-priority items sneak up on you, artificially increasing the length of your to-do list and distracting you from more important work. Say you're working on a big project when a co-worker emails you about a quick change you need to make on your company's website. Logging on and making the change won't take much time, but it will distract you from the project and stress you out if you have to postpone it until later. The best way to fight against these low-priority items is to ignore them altogether. Go into "do not disturb" mode by working offline if you can and don't write them down on your to-do list—they aren't worth your immediate concern, so you'll get to them when you get to them. (Just don't do the same for high-priority tasks.)

4. Create routine habits.

Habits happen naturally after they're formed—they become a ritual, something you can slip into automatically, something you don't even have to think about. For example, if you have to update an editorial calendar every day, make it an unconscious habit, sparing you the necessity of remembering it in a desperate scramble. Forming habits is the hard part—a good rule of thumb is to force yourself to commit the action every day, with no breaks from the routine, until it comes naturally (some people say it takes 30 days, but the evidence is iffy and subjective).

5. Work in chunks.

Instead of sitting down to complete an entire project, sit down to accomplish one goal element or work for a certain number of hours. Forcing yourself to complete the entirety of a project or complex task will stress you out and make you less productive. Instead, allow yourself to work in shorter "bursts" to keep your mind fresh and reduce your anxiety. That way, you can work to the very best of your ability.

6. "Multitask" (not in the traditional sense).

No matter how busy you are, there are always "negative spaces" in your day—and these gaps are when you should "multitask." Try to fill the empty spaces with productive work: On your lunch break, watch a tutorial video or catch up on your emails. On your drive into work, listen to audiobooks or podcasts. During your workouts, catch up on some voicemails or watch a TED Talk. The more you learn and work in these negative spaces, the more you'll get done overall.

7. Work around your strengths and weaknesses.

You know yourself better than anybody. You have strengths and weaknesses inherent to your being, and they're going to affect how you work. Navigate around these by taking on more tasks that you're good at and staying away from ones that slow you down; don't try to do them all yourself. Delegate or work together with others to shoulder the burden of your weakest tasks or skills, and spend more time doing what you do best.

Good time management means that you maximize the daily return on the energy and mental effort you expend. Learn 8 ways to balance your workload and make the most of your time on the clock.

Source: <https://www.success.com/7-shortcuts-to-work-smarter-not-harder/>

4 Keys to Unlock the Power of Your Mind

by Jim Rohn

Take care to feed and stimulate your brain and you will expand your mind. The two are inextricably connected. We need to see the human brain and mind with wonder, awe and inspiration.

The brain is the equivalent of a human supercomputer. It is more complicated than any computer mankind has ever made, and maximizing its ability is essential to becoming the success you want to be—because it controls who you are. It is the command centre involved in and controlling absolutely everything you do, determining how you think, feel and act.

Simply put: When your brain is working at peak performance, it allows you to be your best because it controls the rest.

There are some basic influences on the brain that shape how it functions and how far it develops, including genes, self-talk, life experiences, stress and study. Although these things influence the brain, they do not determine how far you can go or what you can learn. In other words, you have the incredible opportunity to go as far as you desire.

So with such a tremendous tool at our disposal, what keeps so many people from experiencing the possibilities that it can bring? There are some simple barriers that have the potential to wreak havoc on your learning if you allow them to, but you can overcome them. The key to breaking through these barriers is to do the opposite...

1. Change your beliefs.

Many people do not believe that they can learn master knowledge or become “smart.” These are deeply held beliefs for many, and ultimately, if we do not believe it, we will not achieve it.

So change your beliefs. It is up to you to do the work of changing your beliefs. And when you do, you will be opening up new worlds—literally! Feed your mind with information that will change your belief. The truth is that you have an amazing mind with a capacity for learning that is beyond your comprehension. You must believe this. And when you do, you will be unlocking the potential of your mind.

2. Get the right knowledge.

What keeps some people from learning is that they choose not to access or do not have access to knowledge. Knowledge comes from experiences, books, people and other “knowledge dispensers.” We must tap into that knowledge.

So get the right knowledge. Words if they are not true are meaningless. I hear children say, “I read it in a book.” But is it true? Just because someone says it or writes it, doesn’t mean it is true. As a learner, you want to get the right knowledge, not just information or opinions. It is your job to seek out information and knowledge and then test it and run it through your mind to see if it is true, and if it can be rightfully applied to your life in order to make it better and help you succeed. You need to

weigh and measure what you learn in order to gain the right knowledge. And when you do, you will be unlocking the potential of your mind.

3. Become passionate about learning.

Some people simply do not have the desire to learn. They may be lazy, or they may not see the positive impact that learning would have on them. They have no passion inside that drives them to learn.

So become passionate about learning. This will take some work, but the only way to do it is to begin learning about things that have an immediate impact in your life. When you learn about a new financial concept that helps you earn money or get out of debt, that will get you fired up. When you learn about how to interact with your family in a healthy way and your relationships get better, that will inspire you. Become passionate about learning. And when you do, you will be unlocking the potential of your mind.

4. Discipline yourself through the hard work of study.

Gaining knowledge is hard work and takes a lifetime to master. It is an ongoing discipline that is never complete.

So discipline yourself through the hard work of study. Learning will take work. Until someone comes up with modules that can plug into your mind and give you instant access to knowledge, you are on your own, and that takes work. The process of learning is a long one. Yes, we can speed it up, but it is still a process of reading, listening, reviewing, repetition, applying the knowledge, experiencing the outcomes, readjusting, etc. Simply put, that takes time. Slowly but surely, when you discipline yourself, you gain knowledge and learn. And when you do, you will be unlocking the potential of your mind.

Learning is possible, no matter what your age. You are never too young or too old. Your mind was created to learn and has a huge capacity to do so. This week, make a commitment to unlock the potential of your mind!

Adapted from the Jim Rohn One-Year Success Plan.

This post originally appeared on SUCCESS.com.

Someone told me "Only those who care about you, can hear you when you're are quiet"

If you are going to be sceptical, please be consistent

Time to read: 20 seconds

Dear Steve

It's great fun to be challenging, sceptical and cynical – it's an absolute hoot.

However, if you are going to do this, please be consistent:

When someone suggests that you can achieve something, or your team or organisation can, then be sceptical about that

and

when someone suggests that you can't achieve something, or your team or organisation can't, then be equally sceptical about that.

We all know people who pride themselves by wearing the 'I disagree' badge of honour. If these people are true contrarians, they must see both the crisis in an opportunity, and the opportunity in a crisis.

David

(David Taylor broadcaster and presenter and one of my favourite gurus)

A look at some of the principles of critical thinking.

My colleague Meike Beckford (a senior manager) kindly sent me some presentations from her MBA about her Mindful Manager training. I have just enjoyed taking these in as I put this month's edition together. I hope you find them useful too:

Reflective Practice:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLI5T24WW1LJRIPu--eDwKIQ9NvXFGWab>

How To Help Every Child Fulfil Their Potential:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YI9TVbAal5s&feature=youtu.be>

Ever wondered why kids say they're bored at school, or why they stop trying when the work gets harder? Educationalist Carol Dweck explains how the wrong kind of praise actually *harms* young people.

(Editor's note: don't forget to skip the Ads)

"The greatest prison people live in, is the fear of what other people think"

8 Things Successful People Never Waste Time Doing

By Cynthia Bazin

As a mentor, people often come to me when they are overwhelmed, stressed and feeling like they're not accomplishing their goals, the things they most want to do in life. They feel stuck. They are at a point which they don't know what to do.

So one of the first things I do first is identify their time-wasters, the things that are getting in the way of them being successful, keeping them from moving forward, toward what they want to accomplish.

I think we all, from time to time, get ourselves involved in activities that do not contribute to our greatest success or happiness. I definitely did at one time, but I made the necessary changes once I became an entrepreneur and learned how valuable each second of the day was—that there really wasn't any time to waste on activities that didn't grow me or my business.

We're all looking to be successful in life, but sometimes we are wasting our time doing things that are holding us back from reaching our full potential. And, often, we don't recognize those things until someone points them out.

It's important to analyse how we spend our days, hour by hour, and regularly look for ways to work smarter, ways to eliminate time-wasters. So, to get started, here are eight things that productive, successful people never waste their time doing (and you shouldn't either):

1. Productive, successful people don't get sucked into social media.

Being on social media—checking notifications Facebook, scrolling through pictures on Instagram, reading quick updates on Twitter, whatever—it's part of everyday life. But if you don't control how much time you spend on it, the hours will fly by and you won't have accomplished anything on your to-do list.

So either put a time limit on it—set an alarm for when you need to minimize it, close the app, do something else—or only get on after completing necessary work projects. Use social media as a reward.

2. Productive, successful people don't go through the day without a plan.

Successful people have a purpose, a laser-focused plan of things they want to achieve on a particular day. I believe in writing things down—but only the top two or three priorities I need to accomplish that day, not a long list of things.

Write down your top priorities and break down those large tasks into more reasonable steps and you'll see yourself wanting to get them done and crossed off the list.

3. Productive, successful people don't do emotionally draining activities.

If you want to step into a truly successful life, you have to focus on things that positively fuel your life. Productive people don't waste their time on things that emotionally drain them.

Before committing to activities on your schedule, be sure the activity will positively add to your life. If you believe it won't, then think about saying no to it. Also, don't feel obligated to give an answer right at the time you're being asked to do something. Think before you say yes and know that it's OK to say no to requests for your time.

4. Productive, successful people don't worry about things they can't control.

Successful people realize that worrying gets you absolutely nowhere in life, especially if you can't do anything about a situation.

So turn your thoughts to action-based activities. Focus on things you can get done.

5. Productive, successful people don't hang out with negative people.

It's said that you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with. So if you want to be your best, you have to surround yourself with the best people.

Be sure to eliminate negative, toxic energy around you. If you want to soar in life, you need to unload what is weighing you down.

6. Productive, successful people don't dwell on past mistakes.

Successful people make mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes. The key to being successful in life is not making the same mistake twice, learning and growing from mistakes, and becoming a better person because of them.

So when you make a mistake, get into a mind-set that the mistake is done with and you can't go back to the past. Focus on what you learned and design a strategy to positively move forward from it.

7. Productive, successful people don't focus on what other people are doing.

It's great to be inspired by what other successful people are doing, but when you're constantly comparing yourself to the next person and it's bringing you down, it's time to shift your mind-set.

Be inspired by others, but focus your mind-set to only compete with the most important person: yourself.

8. Productive, successful people don't put themselves last in priority.

We all go through times that we don't get enough sleep or exercise because we need to work on a big project. But for long-term success and happiness, you must put yourself first on the priority list.

Some great ways to do this is to kick start your day by doing something you love to do—maybe it's completing a great workout, meditating, and journaling or reading your favourite book. Do what works for you. Because when you start off your day doing something you love and that is good for you, you'll feel happy, focused and strong the rest of the day.

Are there things on this list that have been time-wasters for you? Eliminate them so you can step into your best life.

Source: <https://www.success.com/8-things-successful-people-never-waste-time-doing/>

"There is no way around the hard work. Embrace it. You have to put in the hours"

Roger Federer



Set another goal!

(Courtesy of Commando Log Regt RM)

Fail and fail big!

During one of my recent long journeys I was listening to a audio CD from Darren Hardy, the publisher of USA's Success Magazine, talk about 'Failure' and how, as a leader and entrepreneur, he has learned to love failure. Darren believes it has made him successful in his life and business. Personally, I have long believed that if you have not experienced failure how do you know what success feels like? So his messages resonate with me.

Listening to this presentation while driving home, I thought of my biggest failure of my first career – and perhaps it is no exaggeration the biggest failure of my life – it is the 35th anniversary of this failure. There is rarely a week that goes by when I don't think about it.

But this blog is all about inspiration and about helping you on your leadership journey, so my story is a very positive one which I want to share with you. My failure helped me to become a stronger person; have a successful career after my failure; stopped me from being complacent (ever again!); made me hungrier for success and value success when it came my way.

I had failed a course on the last day. Why?

- I had not mentally prepared enough.
- I had focused on my strengths and not addressed my weakness prior to the course

So how did I recover from my momentous failure?

(I now use these strategies whenever I have failure – they work for me and help me bounce back quicker)

- Allow yourself 24 hours of pity time – its ok to feel sorry for yourself – but you need to set a time on this.

- After your 24 hours, do something that takes your mind off your failure. I hopped on a ferry to see Joyce for the day in Belgium. Joyce was seeing out her contract prior to moving back to the UK and it got things into perspective for me. That day was one of the best days of my life!
- As Sir Ernest Shackleton, the polar explorer and one of my Hero's said "A man must shape himself to a new mark directly the old one goes to ground". During my journey home from Belgium I figured out what I was going to do next and I set myself new objectives which were equally challenging
- Look for quick wins. Look for easy wins..... to get your confidence and self-esteem back.
- Set yourself a 3 month a 6 month and 12 month plan
- Look for new opportunities
- Do something new – allow yourself to go down a different path. There is a lot to be said for 'fate' and I often feel that these failures are meant to happen to allow more good things to occur. How many times have you been unsuccessful for a job you interviewed for, only to think years later "that was fortunate because I wouldn't be doing what I am doing now" – I know that's happened to me a few times.
- Put some distance between your failures (at least 3 months) then analyse what went wrong what could you have done different?

One of the perks of two long careers and my age is that I plan for success, but I am not surprised by failure. One of my favourite quotes is "If you're in a bad situation, don't worry it'll change. If you're in a good situation, don't worry it'll change" John A Simone Sr said it. So, in short, don't be surprised by failure and do not let it throw you. Failure is good – although I am not sure if I have learned to love it yet! Failure, when it happens, helps me:

- To get things into perspective
- Makes me hungrier for success
- Reinforces the importance of family
- Allows me to explore new opportunities – perhaps go down a completely new path that will make me more successful
- Makes me more experienced so when I am up against it again I know I will get through it

So 35 years ago what did I do next? I passed my next course; I married Joyce four weeks later; managed and captained our athletics and cross country teams to success; I was selected for an elite team which won a competition (check out the picture at the beginning of this post) two years in a row; 12 months later my wonderful daughter Jennifer was born (the other best day of my life) and at the end of my posting I was promoted and we all moved to Berlin

"Keep on beginning and failing. Each time you fail, start all over again, and you will grow stronger until you have accomplished a purpose – not the one you began with perhaps, but one you'll be glad to remember" Anne Sullivan

Source: Steve Raw <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2014/08/11/fail-and-fail-big/>

First published 11th August 2014