

TUESDAY TIP:

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Success has little to do with the skills you possess, the product you represent, or how hard you work.

Are you shocked by that statement? You should be. After all, almost everything you've ever read or ever heard has connected success to one, two, or all three of those factors ... the skills you have, the products or services you provide, or the amount of hard work you put in. The truth is ... you can have all three of those things and still fail. In fact, many people do. Author and entrepreneur Michael Aun made that clear in his thought-provoking column he entitled "What if?"

And just so you're clear, I'm not endorsing or putting down any candidate of any party at any level by sharing Aun's column. I simply think he makes a very good point about success ... that you can have lots of skill, provide a wonderful service, work hard, and still produce mediocre to miserable results. Aun puts it this way:

- "What if Congress never had a fat pension waiting for them despite their length of service?"
- "What if you told Congress that unless they ended the deficit, all of their benefits would end?"
- "What if Congress didn't get a paycheck until the budget was balanced?"
- "What if you simply said to them, 'If you don't fix the deficit, you can't run for any elective office?"
- "What if Congress was required to participate in Social Security, and what if all the money sitting in the Congressional retirement fund was moved to the Social Security System immediately? Wouldn't that help bail out the Social Security shortfall? And what if you prevented Social Security from being used for anything other than Social Security?"
- "What if Congress had to fund their own retirement plan like the rest of Americans?"
- "What if Congress could not vote itself a pay raise without voter approval?"
- "What if all the perks that Congress is awarded each year were taxable as income to the sitting Congressmen and Congresswomen?"
- "What if you ditched Congress' current health care system and required them to pay for and get the same health care the rest of Americans get?"
- "What if Congress had to actually live by the same laws they have passed for the rest of us and receive the same penalties we get for breaking those laws?"
- "What if Congress had just one shot at getting it right, only one term and only one opportunity to fix the problems? Would they take their task more seriously?"
- "What if the same laws that apply to Americans for theft applied to Congress as they steal money from one fund and stick it in another?"
- "What if Congressional members were required to serve for two years in the military or some equivalent position before qualifying to enter into the political pool?"
- "What if a Congressman or woman was required to start at the bottom and work his/her way up to qualify as a candidate for office, forcing members to know what it's like to hold a job, be paid a minimum wage, and feed a family?"
- "What if you had to go through a licensing process to earn the privilege of running for a position in Congress? Why is it tougher in some states to get a driver's license than it is to offer to run the country?"

Aun's point is well taken. There are few, if any, organizations in the world that are more important and more prestigious than the U.S. Congress. It should be a shining example of success ... day in and day out ... but the results seem to indicate otherwise. So what is the shocking truth about success? You need to be certain you don't fall victim to any one of these myths.

Myth #1: Success is all about having the right skills.

Using Aun's whimsical article, Congress is filled with skilled people, even though their success rate is fairly low. Like me, you know several highly skilled people, but they may not be using their skills and they are NOT achieving incredible results. As the recipient of the "Outstanding Professor Award" by two different universities, as a Certified Speaking Professional, and as an inductee into the Speaker Hall of Fame, I can teach you exactly what to say, what questions to ask, and even show you what to do and not do ... so success is GUARANTEED to come your way.

And yet I have to admit, many of the people in my audiences will return to their day-to-day lives and do the same old things they've always done. In fact, they'll even have the gall to wonder why they're not achieving all the success they'd like. They're content to go on whining and complaining about how unfair life happens to be or how unlucky they are. Bottom line: Success is not about skills ... alone!

Myth #2: Success is all about having the right product or service.

Many companies want to praise, applaud, and focus on their product. They'll say such things as: "Our product is the best in the market We have the best research team in the world ... We have spared no expense in creating the highest quality product ... and ... We do it faster and cheaper." However, I meet individuals every single day who have an amazing product and they are not producing amazing outcomes in their business. When I coach them they'll protest, "But, Dr. Zimmerman, I really do have the best product on the market. It really is true about mine!"

I understand that. Your product may very well be wonderful. Indeed, you ABSOLUTELY MUST have a passion for and a belief in your product or service. No question about that! But the key to success does not lie here. If it did, everyone who represented your amazing product would be producing "amazing results" in their businesses and they are not. Furthermore, as you deliver your product story, you must realize that all your competitors are saying the same things about their products. Your prospects are hearing the same thing from EVERYONE. So who do they believe? And how much ... or how little ... trust do you think there is in the marketplace as a result?

In today's market, you don't have to have or be the BEST product to win. You cannot have a poor product, but you don't need the best. I know many people who have a GOOD product who are winning BIG! Second bottom line: Success is not about product ... alone!

Myth #3: Success is all about hard work.

The legendary football coach Vince Lombardi said, "Football is like life. It requires perseverance, self-denial, hard work, sacrifice, dedication and respect for authority." Brian Tracy, one of America's foremost authorities on success says in all the studies of self-made millionaires, it's clear that they worked harder than other people. Successful people work very hard at their craft, and unsuccessful people don't. And it's quite clear that throughout history people with average ability will outstrip a genius if they are willing to work harder. Tracy even goes so far as to say that Americans are saddled with the "40-hour-per-week myth" ... which is only good for survival. They will allow you to tread water and perhaps keep your job. But every hour you put in above 40 hours puts you on the side of success. And finally, successful people spend more time on high priority tasks while failures spend more time on low priority tasks.

I tend to agree with Tracy. At least my life aligns with his comments. I've worked incredibly hard all my life. But I'm also forced to admit that we all know people who work incredibly hard, pull long hours, hold multiple jobs, and are barely making ends meet. They work hard! And yet, they are not successful. Third bottom line: Success is not about hard work ... alone! So what is the answer?

Success ... incredible, joyful, fulfilling success ... must include your mind set.

Let me illustrate by taking the example of a poor golfer. You could give him the best clubs (read ... your products and services), but that wouldn't make him successful at driving off the tee. But you could give a poor club to a great golfer, and he will work magic. Now you may say, "Dr. Zimmerman, Arnold

Palmer, Sam Snead, or any one of the other great golfers have a great clubs (products), great skills, and they have worked hard at their sport for years." You are absolutely correct.

But let's get right down to the bottom line. What drove them to acquire the skills and to work so hard? Think it through and you will realize that the answer MUST BE their mind set. Their belief in themselves, their focus, determination, commitment, persistence, self-image. All things that comprise the inner game of success, drove their behavior and brought about their incredible results.

Like Isabel Bauche, the most successful people are successful ... first and foremost ... because of their mind set. As she put it, "I choose... to live by choice, not by chance; to make changes, not excuses; to be motivated, not manipulated; to be useful, not used; to excel, not compete. I choose self-esteem, not self-pity. I choose to listen to my inner voice, not the random opinion of others."

Jennifer Stockburger, an automotive engineer, said essentially the same thing in a shorter way: "If you believe in what you're doing, it's amazing how much you can accomplish." I'm all for having the right skills, the best product, and working hard ... but they're NOT ENOUGH to ensure your success. You need the right mind set to go along with all those things.

Don't fall victim to these three success myths. Get your mind set working for you instead of against you.

Action:

Which of these three success myths have gotten in your way? What are you going to do about it?