



MINORITIES &

SUCCESS

Summer 2015

**9 Pieces You Need for a
Successful Business**

**Legislation Affecting YOUR
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Pathway to Student Success

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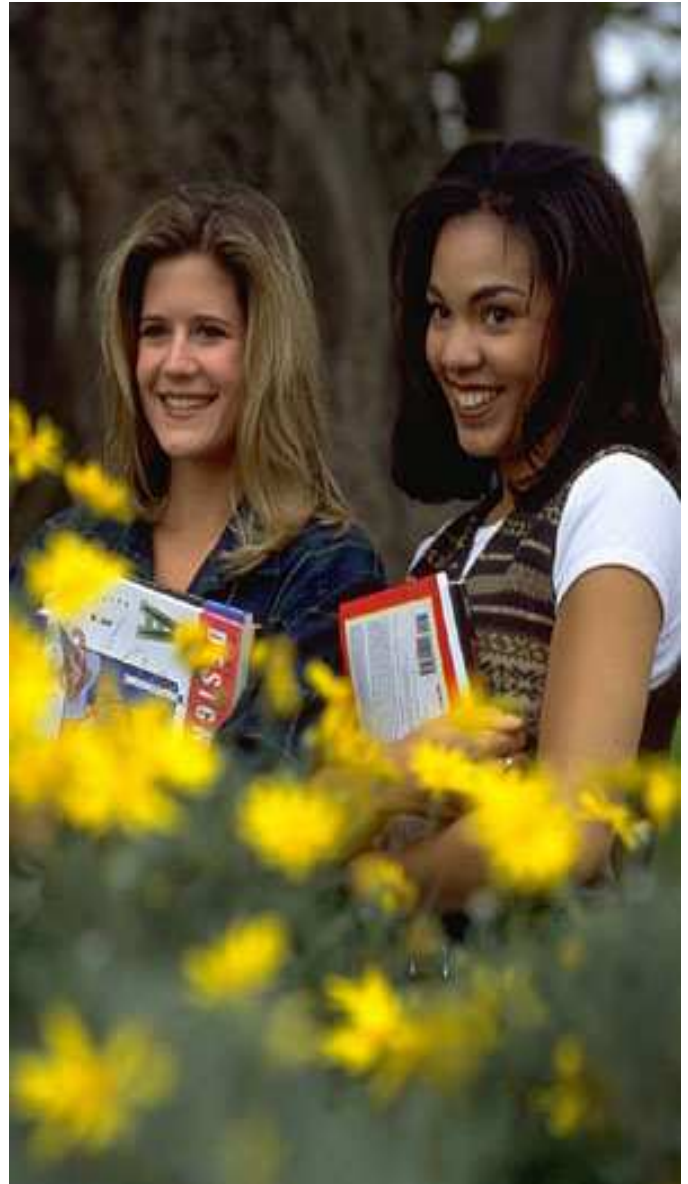
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Monday Morning Quarterbacking is Good For Business

By: *Sandy Geroux*

We've all heard "Monday morning quarterbacks" talking about how the coaches "never should have tried that play" in the game the day before.

While it may seem futile to lament what happened in the previous day's game, let's keep in mind that hindsight is 20/20. There is a very positive "flip side" to examining what was done, why, where it failed (or succeeded) and how it may be

used differently and more effectively in the future...

...and I'm not just talking sports.

In business, after doing our homework to ensure the best chance of success, the next step is to listen to Nike and "Just Do It." Once we've done it, we can act just like those "Monday morning quarterbacks" - but with a positive purpose in mind - not simply to vent and complain, but

to actually determine how to do it better next time.

Here's an effective process for creating success with ANY project:

1. Do your homework. Conduct the necessary research - market research, demographics, cost, price points, competition, etc.
2. Create a test plan. Design the marketing piece, plan your advertising, determine your

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target prospects, write the ad copy (or hire someone to do it for you).

- Put metrics in place to enable yourself to analyze the success of the test. What are your sales goals? Profit goals? Customer satisfaction goals? Timeframes? Don't just do something without knowing how you'll determine whether or not it was successful.
- Start with a small test. Don't spend a million dollars on an unproven concept. Start with a small, targeted sample. If it succeeds, expand the sample later and repeat that success. But if it doesn't succeed as wildly as you'd hoped, you have a chance to tweak it without sinking yourself financially.

- Review your results. Did you hit the mark? Is your profit where it needs to be? Did you get the sales you thought you'd get?

How can you improve? *NOTE:* For example, in sales presentations, many times the reason a sale is not completed is because the salesperson fails to "ask for the business" at the end of the presentation. Are you doing a great job, all the way up to the point of asking for the business? Do you have your closing question ready? Have you practiced and role-played it, to get it out of your mouth ahead of time, instead of "practicing on the customer"? Did you ask it? Did you shy away?

- If you fell short of your goals, change the one or two things that most likely caused the shortfall.

Don't change too many factors at one time, or you won't be able to tell which one(s) caused the subsequent failure or success.

- Try another small sample and review your results again.
- Keep tweaking until you get it right - then run with it!

The above process is a list of To Do's. Below are a few **To Don'ts**:

- Don't quit if you don't succeed the first time! Too often, we're just looking for an excuse NOT to do something - so we try it (without fully researching it); when it fails, we justify the failure by saying, "See I knew it wouldn't fly!"

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2. Don't listen to the nay-sayers (before, during or after). You can always find people to tell you it can't be done, it isn't succeeding, or should never have been started. Listen carefully for reasonable concerns and find ways to address them to minimize their potential negative impact. But if you wait until everyone agrees, nothing will ever be done!
3. Don't wait until everything is perfect before you begin. Remember the wise words of Napoleon Hill: "Do not wait; the time will never be "just right." Start where you stand and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along."

So, the next time you have an idea, don't just sit around thinking about how great it will be... research it, plan it and then get out there and actually do something about it - because sometimes the best indicator of success is your willingness to get out there and do something good... combined with your willingness to review and tweak it, and make it great!

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Business Ethics - Maintaining The Mindset Of An Ethical Business Owner

By: *Iyonna Woods*

Business owners are ambitious and hard-working people. There is nothing more satisfying than seeing a vision come to reality and getting paid from pursuing a passion. However, the road to success is full of challenges that may push the entrepreneur to the point of giving up or worse, doing something that is not in line with an established set of morals. It may seem like the someone in the practice of underhanded dealings is getting ahead faster and even more bountiful than someone

who is not, but it never lasts. Those who violate a set code of business ethics always end up losing more than they gained. Here are some tips to prevent you from falling into that trap.

1. Trust the process.

Having a business mentor to bounce ideas off is very helpful. If your mentor confirms that you are on the right path with your actions, trust that you will

have great success. Look at the challenges as learning opportunities. Usually, there is something that you need to learn before you see huge success.

2. There are no shortcuts to the top. You have to put in the work.

Ambitious people always want more and are open to different types of challenges. Success looks very different to different people. It is so easy to want what someone else has

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and more. The question is, are you willing to do what they did to get that? An opportunity to take part in unethical dealings may tempt someone to take a shortcut that presents as very lucrative. Don't fall prey to that trap. Stand firm in your own version of success and don't try to take shortcuts to get there.

3. Be someone who you want to do business with.

Let's be honest. If someone has a history of crooked dealings and wants to do business with you, most likely, you will decline their proposal. Sacrificing ethics usually means that someone is getting the short end of the stick. That may not register when you are benefiting from it but it's only a matter of time before the tables will turn. Will you still want to do business with someone who is getting over on you? Will your customers want to do business with you after you've short-changed them? Make business decisions that are in line with someone whom you would want to do business with.

4. Stay in touch with your accountability partners.

When no one is around, you feel like no one sees you in the act of making a poor judgement call. If you feel like something you're about to do isn't right, it usually isn't. It's natural to want to go against your gut feeling when you think you will profit in the end. Ask your accountability partner for insight before you make your final decision. Usually, they will confirm what you originally thought and talk some sense in to you.

5. All money isn't good money.

In 2008, the largest Ponzi scheme in the history of the United States all came falling down. Bernie Madoff promised investors an unheard of return on investment in an unheard of amount of time, conning investors out of \$65 billion. It took a large team of people to pull a scheme of this proportion off. They all made lots of money over a short time. They also all went to jail. Every dollar earned goes farther than dollars "given".

When you aren't progressing as quickly as you think you should, don't take easy ways out that will violate business ethics. Trust the process and learn from it. There are no shortcuts to successful business. You have to put in the work to make it last. Behave like a business person that you would want to do business with. Have your accountability partners hold you accountable. Stay away from deals that are too good to believe because all money is not good money.

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9 Pieces You Need for a Successful Business

By: Dawn Goldberg Shuler

According to an article in Forbes in 2013, there were almost 28 million small businesses in the United States, and over 22 million of those were self-employed with no additional payroll or employees. Over 50% of the working population (that's about 120 million people) works in a small business. And the last statistic for now: small businesses have generated over 65% of the net new jobs since 1995.

So, seems like a small business is the way to go, huh?

Well, you need a little more than the proverbial shingle. As I coach and consult with small business owners in creating successful businesses, we cover several areas of business: administrative, list-building, lead generation, marketing, creation and development, training, revenue generation, credibility and visibility, and financial tracking.

It occurred to me that the big graphic can be broken down into more manageable pieces: the pieces you

need to run a successful business. Each of these pieces has a basic level and an advanced level.

1. You need to know what it is you really do and craft your concise message accordingly.

- Basic - Think in terms of the benefits people get in working with you. What is the experience your clients and customers get?

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- Advanced - Get as clear, concise, and specific as possible as far as your target market. Everything you do and put out into the world needs to have that message woven in. For example, if you speak to groups, then your signature topics need to reflect your message and brand.

2. You need products/services to sell. You have to offer something to the world.

- Basic - You can offer one single product (a book) or a service (consulting)
- Advanced - Create a sales funnel so that you can reach more people at various pricing points and readiness levels. Think group training, packages, and high-level programs

3. You need a way to capture leads in your database.

- Basic - Go to networking events, talk to people, and call them. Document your interactions so that you can easily see at a glance your connections with people. For great success, follow up and keep in touch.
- Advanced - Create a multi-faceted approach: offer a free resource on your site; do online as well as in-person speaking to widen your network.

4. You need a way to let people know how to work with you.

- Basic - In what forms can people work with you? In person, by phone, in classes? Make it very clear HOW you work.
- Advanced - Offer different ways to work with you: privately, in groups, one-off consulting sessions, longer-term packages. Pepper your communications with compelling language (and links) so that people know what you do and how to sign up for what you do. Add a line in your email signature. Have a blurb on your ezine. Make it exceedingly clear on your website where they click to work with you..

5. You need it to be easy for people to find those products/ services that you sell.

- Basic - Is it excruciatingly simple for people to see what it is that you do from your business card and/

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or website? Spell it out, even if you feel as if you're being overly dunce-like.

- Advanced - Once you can easily understand your target market, make it straightforward for them to see which of your products and services fit them. Think in terms of "If you're here, then you want this" language.

6. You need an easy way for people to pay for those products/services.

- Basic - Connect your products and services to PayPal. You can set up a PayPal account for free, and you only need to pay fees when someone buys.
- Advanced - Use a more professional merchant account, and offer a variety of payment

methods, like payment plans.

7. You need to tell the world about what you do.

- Basic - Talk to people! Yes, this is similar to Piece #3... and "build it, and they will come" only works in the movies. Make sure your message from #1 is clear and concise, and then stick to it.
- Advanced - Have a multi-faceted, multi-style approach. Create marketing materials in all forms: text, audio, video, pictures.

8. You need some sort of way to talk with people about what you do.

- Basic - This is your 30-second elevator speech: who you are, what you do, and who you do it for.

- Advanced - Keep honing and play with different ways to say it to capture attention and interest. Tweak, tweak, tweak.

9. You need to measure your results.

- Basic - Have revenue goals and track how you're doing.
- Advanced - Measure everything! From number of sales calls and those results to open-click-through rates of emails. Once you know what works and get results, you can tweak some more and maximize.

Are you missing any pieces? Any pieces that can be shored up? Are you ready to move to the advanced level on any of these?

Here's to YOUR successful business!

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A Four Step Action Plan to Repair Your Communication Gap at Work

By: *Helen Wilkie*

If you've done needs assessments or attitude surveys in the past, you'll be familiar with the common complaint about lack of communication. Yes, this is frustrating, especially if you thought you had dealt with the problem. Well, here are four action steps you can take on a regular basis to correct the problem.

1. Find out what the problem really is. Three people might complain about communication and, without your realizing it, each could mean

something different. Perhaps one means he doesn't understand the procedures manual; someone else wants management information about the system; yet another never receives feedback from his supervisor on his performance; and there could be many more. You can't take effective action until you know where the gap is.

Action step: Ask your own people if they feel a lack of communication, and if so, what they specifically mean.

2. Your communication system could be well designed, but still leave a gap.

That's because the problem is not the system, but the communication skills of the people using the system. For example, maybe you have a communication chain for reporting safety problems. But if even one person along the line misunderstands the message he receives, or doesn't make his own message clear to the next person — safety is at risk because the system breaks down.

Action step: Review your actual communication chain activity to find potential weak spots.

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3. Communication skills are not programmed into our DNA. There are many skills involved in workplace communication: speaking, listening, voice tone, understanding, writing, reading, persuasion. The way these skills are used is different in different workplaces —but they are essential to productivity. Communication skills need to become second nature to everyone through training, and this will raise both productivity and morale. Everybody wins.

Action step: Institute communication training programs based on specific needs.

4. When you ask people to change the way they do things, or to learn new skills, you have a much better chance of success if you help them understand WHY the change or new skills are necessary. Particularly, if they can see the value to themselves, they will take a much more positive view of the training.

Action step: Illustrate first the WHY, then train on the HOW.

These steps can be crucial to your business or department's success, because while there is a communication gap, people and organizations can never reach their full potential.

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Business Update: Legislation Affecting YOUR Access to Federal Contracts

By: *Gloria Berthold Larkin*

Informed business owners not only are aware of the legislation that affects their business, but also take proactive steps to incorporate the changes into business-building strategies. The areas affected by recent legislation and rulings include:

- Small Business Parity
- Increased Dollar Thresholds
- Sole Source Dollar Award Thresholds

- Women's Procurement Program
- Prime Contractor Requirements for Subcontracting Plans
- Bundling Limits
- Size Standards Review

Small Business Parity

Equal footing was restored to all small

business types in federal contracting programs. The types of small business affected are: those businesses who are "Small" as determined by the SBA Size Standards, 8(a) Certified, Women-Owned, Service Disabled Veteran-Owned and HUBZone. This means that the contracting officer now has the ability to choose the small business type for set-aside opportunities as opposed to being required to focus on just only one type, such as HUBZone.

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Owners of small businesses pursuing government contracts will take advantage of this situation by answering every Sources Sought Notice or Request for Information (RFI) where their products or services are required. The federal government uses Sources Sought Notices and RFIs as market research to determine if enough qualified small businesses can perform the work, and if so, will then have reason to set-aside the contract for small business, or a particular type of small business. For instance, if two businesses who are 8(a) certified respond, the contracting officer may then issue the opportunity as an 8(a) set-aside. If one business responds who is 8(a) and another who is woman-owned, the set-aside may be for "small business".

It is critical that small businesses respond to these notices in order to give the contracting officer a legitimate reason to use the set-aside program and not use a full and open competition process where all businesses, large and small, would compete for the contract.

Increased Dollar Thresholds

In the past, contracts between \$3,000 and \$100,000 were to

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be set-aside exclusively for small business, with a few exceptions. This threshold was increased from \$100,000 to \$150,000. Generally, this means that all contracts valued between \$3,000 and \$150,000 should be set-aside for small businesses.

The exceptions to this new limit would be sales made on GSA Schedules or task orders on other contract vehicles such as Government-wide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) or Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts. Those sales are available to any size company, large or small.

Savvy small business contractors will take time to contact all current contracting officers for whom they have worked and educate them about the increase in the threshold and ask for any upcoming opportunities that may fall within the new thresholds.

Sole Source Dollar Award Thresholds

Contracting officers have had the opportunity to make sole-source contract awards (where no competitive bidding is required) to 8(a) and HUBZone firms up to 3.5 million dollars for any non-manufacturing work and 5.5 million dollars for manufacturing. Those limits have now increased to \$4 million and \$6.5 million dollars respectively.

The Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs) threshold for sole source awards has now increased from \$3 million to \$3.5 million for non-manufacturing and \$5.5 to \$6 million for manufacturing contracts.

Educated business owners will contact their local Small Business Administration (SBA) representative

and learn how to request and participate in the sole-source contracting process. There is a very specific process to follow to win sole source contracts and your SBA representative is a very important person who will guide you through the process.

Women's Procurement Program

The SBA announced the publication of a final rule, called the 8(m) Program, to implement the federal procurement program for women-owned small businesses (WOSB) that has been over ten years in the making. This is an economic-disadvantaged-based program in which eighty-three industries have been identified where WOSBs are underrepresented among federal

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contractors. Thirty-eight of which the SBA has deemed WOSBs to be “substantially underrepresented.” The 8(m) program seeks to open up more opportunities for WOSBs working in these 83 industries.

To be eligible, the company has to be considered “small” under the primary NAICS code, and not less than 51% unconditionally and directly owned and controlled by one or more women who are U.S. Citizens. Further, the rule specifies that, with certain exceptions, the woman who holds the highest officer position may not engage in outside employment and must manage the company on a full-time basis during the normal working hours just like other companies in the same or similar line of business.

To determine whether a woman is

economically disadvantaged for purposes of the 8(m) Program, the SBA will check her income, personal net worth, and the fair market value of her total assets. A woman will be found economically disadvantaged if her adjusted gross yearly income,

The businesses who will be most successful in this market will have all of the necessary certifications, contract vehicles and full preparation with regards to the needs of the market, not to mention strong relationships built with the decision-makers.

averaged over the three years preceding the certification, is less than \$350,000, her personal net worth is less than \$750,000, and the fair market value of all of her assets is less than \$3 million. In the 38 industries

where women are deemed to be “substantially underrepresented,” the rule waives the economic disadvantage requirement.

Woman-owned businesses may either self-certify or certify through third parties approved by SBA. Regardless of the certification method, every woman-owned business must ensure that all requirements for the following three databases are met:

Central Contractor Registration (CCR)

“WOSB Program Repository,” to be established by the SBA

Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA)

This program is scheduled to go into effect in February 2011 and the SBA estimates that federal agencies will be

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able to start setting aside contracts for WOSBs in the first quarter of 2011.

Right now, WOSBs are planning their strategies to build strong relationships with target agencies and prime contractors so that they will be well-positioned for accelerated success after February, 2011.

**Prime Contractor Requirements for
Subcontracting Plans**

Prime contractors have been required to write specific subcontracting plans for all non-construction contracts over \$550,000 and \$1 million for construction contracts. Now, the limits are increased to \$650,000 and \$1.5 million for construction. Prime contractors will also be required to use the subcontractors listed in their subcontracting plan, unless they went out of business within 1 year.

Prompt payment to subcontractors will also be enforced in that subcontractors must be paid within 90 days.

Contracting officers will be required to include this and related issues in the published prime contractor's evaluation.

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Bundling Limits

In the past ten years, the practice of contract bundling, or consolidation, has grown dramatically. This is the practice of combining many related or even non-related services or products under one, generally very large, contract. Because the contracts grew to extraordinary sizes, often exceeding 100 million dollars, most small businesses were effectively cut out of competition.

Recent legislation now states that no Federal agency acquisition plan can include consolidation of contract requirements (bundling of contracts) worth more than just \$2 million unless consolidation is necessary and justified. There is now an across-the-board policy on bundling: Agencies will be required to solicit bids from small business joint ventures and teams on solicitations above the bundling threshold.

This means that there will be many more contracts of smaller sizes up for competitive or even sole-source bids. While this is very good for small business, it will make the contracting officers' lives difficult and demanding.

The businesses who will be most successful in this market will have all of the necessary certifications, contract vehicles and full preparation with regards to the needs of the market, not to mention strong relationships built with the decision-makers.

Size Standards Review

Every business can be identified by its industry with the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). These NAICS have been associated with specific measurements such as number of employees or amount of revenue to determine when a company is considered a large or small company. Some size standards have not changed in over ten years. To keep up with economic changes, the SBA will now conduct a review of one third of size standards (by NAICS code) every 18 months, completing a comprehensive review of all NAICS every 5 years.

These legislative updates can bring significant changes to the federal procurement market and either help or hurt business. The more knowledgeable and better prepared you are, the greater the chance is that your business will benefit, increase revenues, employ more people and help rebuild our economy.

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How Electronic Medical Record Systems Have Changed The Way Patient Information Is Stored

By: *T Rue*

Technology has come quite a long way from where it was many years ago. It might seem unbelievable to the generation of today to think that 40 years ago, hospitals did not have computer systems in place to keep track of patient records and instead wrote everything down and stored information via filing cabinets. Some institutions used typewriters, but this method was still very time consuming.

The development of EMR systems has forever changed how patient information is stored and maintained. This type of technology allows for faster record keeping and also lets medical staff access records quicker and cuts down on patient wait times.

Every medical institution, such as hospitals, clinics, and private offices require a reliable system. As aforementioned, stocking and

categorizing of documents that had been either handwritten or typed used to be the most common way of storing medical records. This method would create piles upon piles of papers being stored in large rolling filing cabinets.

The burden placed upon the medical team under these circumstances was immense because they had to search for

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medical files on a daily basis. Once the file folder was found, they then had to sift through all of the paperwork within the file in order to find the document needed. The medical staff was also responsible for maintaining the integrity of the files and keeping them safe from harm.

When records were kept in their physical forms, the risk of these sensitive files falling into the wrong hands was high. Sometimes medical documents became lost, stolen, or damaged in natural disasters without any backup measures having been put into place.

EMR systems changed all of this almost instantly. Paperless, computerized record keeping systems have redesigned the entire process of medical record keeping. All patient records are stored in the medical system via computer. These records are backed up a number of times in case a disaster were to happen or a breach in the system were to occur.

The incidence of medical errors have been distinctly decreased by using electronic means of keeping records. As we all know, human error happens all of the time but electronics don't make mistakes. Electronic methods of record keeping are far more convenient and provide a high level of accuracy when it comes to storing patient data.

Medical records are important because they let the medical team know what occurred with you during your last appointment, surgery, or checkup. These records contain vital information about your health and well being. Imagine if your child was allergic to a medication and this info was noted in his or her records. You can be sure that the pharmacy and prescribing doctor would not issue this drug.

Medical records can save people's lives and provide the medical staff with a clear history of your health. Electronic book keeping of these records ensures that your information is easy to access, kept safe, and let your doctor know everything he needs to know about your health history.

In this day and age, records can be shared (with your permission) electronically from one health professional to another. This can mean sending your electronic records within the same healthcare system or sending

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them to another country all from the push of a button.

In other words, electronic medical record systems have completely revamped how the medical system keeps patient records on file. These types are records can also be used in the legal system to either prove or disprove claims within the medical realm. Error free charting is important in this instance and electronic medical records can provide just that.

Skywriter MD is an innovative electronic medical record keeping company that was created to help medical providers regain time lost due to extensive charting and documenting of patient records. The company has honed and shaped a renowned software that collaborates with the medical facility staff and offers real-time communication with virtual scribes.

The user interface of Skywriter MD is designed to support both direct and indirect interaction during the patient visit. The doctor might be seen typing a few things here and there into a computer but otherwise, he or she is more focused on the patient than on writing and charting.

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Deciding to Start a New Career in Allied Health

By: Erik Johnson

The term 'allied health' is generally used to indicate a cluster of health care professions that covers more than 100 occupational titles, exclusive of physicians, nurses, and a handful of others. Generally, this profession is categorized into two broad categories, mainly - therapists/technologists and technicians (assistants). While technicians perform their duties under the direction of therapists and their education takes less than two years, the educational course of technologists on another hand is

more strenuous and their responsibilities primarily revolve around technical skills. They are actually the key personnel who play a vital role in identifying the grounds behind different healing methods that can help them in evaluating the side effects of any therapeutic procedure.

Today allied health is one of the few professions that offer enough room and ample opportunities for career advancement. Talking about the scope of this profession, there are some of the most promising statistics that

certainly define the growing popularity of this profession. In fact, it is estimated that there are near about 5 million allied health care professionals who are working in more than 80 different professions. Adding to this, as per the recent study made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it is expected that in the next few years almost 36% more health care professionals will be required in the allied health fields. All these facts and studies clearly indicate about the rising demand for allied health workers.

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These days, there are even many specialized areas in health care that have been very little to do with being a doctor or a nurse. The key point to note is that these careers like Recreational Therapist, Clinical Laboratory Technicians, Health Information Technician and many more suitably fall into the allied health class and collectively make the health care system succeed. Perhaps, looking at the current situation, it won't be wrong to state that this field in health care is varied and there is something for just about everyone. However, if we talk in terms of salary then the salary in this field differs largely depending on the kind of employment setting, years of experience, region of the country, occupancy and designation.

Apart from this, the greatest reward of a job in this field is that it is one of the few professions that actually allow you to bring a positive health change directly, which can be both empowering and satisfying as well. At times the change can be immediate, or even the one with the lasting result, but depending on your area of expertise, it can offer a variety of opportunities and avenues in which you wish to practice. It is one of the few fields that can bring a difference to not just your life but other life as well. So, by now if you have made up your mind and planning for making a career in this allied health care field then to get started all you need is the right training and degree from accredited school.

An allied health care education can help you develop your talents and knowledge in the areas in which you are planning to work. In addition to this, the program supports you, through supervision that further ensures the progress of a personalized learning plan. However, the important point to note is that the program you choose must be an accredited one, because graduating from an accredited educational program has an essential knowledge foundation that helps the graduate in updating with the skills required as an entry-level professional within that given field.

There are even different degrees like Master's Degree or Doctorate (PhD) degree available in the allied health field. While a Master's degree refers to the concentrated study in a specific field, a Doctorate degree mainly refers a research degree that demands an intensive study on a specific subject. Nevertheless, whatever Allied Health career you are interested in, attaining a degree in health care can help you gain success in your career and give you greater job security along with extra financial and personal satisfaction.

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Successful People Build Their Brand on Integrity

By: *Bud Bilanich*

Creating and nurturing your unique personal brand is the first step in creating positive personal impact. While your personal brand should be uniquely you, it should be built on integrity. According to Wikipedia, “Integrity is consistency of actions, values, methods, measures and principles.” Integrity and consistency are intertwined. People who are consistent in their actions are seen as people with a high degree of integrity.

This brings me to the point of this article...

Recently, I had an opportunity to review a new video called Ouch! Your Silence Hurts. This video deals with a subject with which many people are uncomfortable — what to do when someone says things that are in conflict with your values.

The video has four vignettes in which someone says something derogatory about another person. In the first vignette, a person’s name is dropped from a promotion list because of her image. We’re left to guess the image — it could be that she is overweight; it could be that she is disabled; it

could be that she has oddly colored hair; In the second, a server at a restaurant gives very poor service to a Black couple and then complains when they don’t tip. In the third, a person makes insulting remarks to an Hispanic man. In the fourth, several people in a team building session make veiled comments that question a man’s sexual preference.

Each of the vignettes demonstrates a discriminatory attitude that results in a negative situation. If you are someone who values the dignity of every human being, and believes that

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our diversity makes us stronger, you probably would be offended if you experienced these vignettes in real life.

The producers suggest that you can react to such situations by being a “silent colluder”, a “passive bystander” or a “pro-active ally.” The message in the video is that we all need to become pro-active allies if we are to defeat stereotyping — and its negative effect — in the workplace and society.

If your brand is built on integrity and you claim to value the dignity of every human being, you should become a pro-active ally when you encounter such situations. That means that when you experience a negative situation, you take positive action to address it. You speak up — you say something, even if it means that others might be uncomfortable.

Several years ago, I was conducting a team building session. At one point in the session, one of the participants blew up and went on a rant. After he finished, there was dead silence in the room. I sat quietly waiting to see what would happen. After about a minute, one of the participants started a new conversation — essentially acting as if the entire rant hadn’t happened. Just as I started to say that we couldn’t just move on, we needed to discuss the rant, the effect on the team and the issue that caused it, one of the members of the group spoke up. She said something like, “That was quite a blow up. I don’t know about the rest of you, but I’m uncomfortable moving on until we take some time to discuss it.” She chose the pro-active ally route.

Notice that she wasn’t confrontational. She did two things. She labeled the incident, “quite a blow up.” More important, she spoke about how she felt, “I’m uncomfortable moving on until we take some time to discuss it.” She stayed true to her personal brand of being forthright — and she helped the team. And she did it in a non confrontational or blaming manner.

The common sense point here is simple. Successful people create positive personal impact. Creating and nurturing your unique personal brand should be your first step in creating positive personal impact. Regardless of how you choose to brand yourself, you should build your brand on integrity. This means saying what you think. The video suggests that you should become a “pro-active ally” instead of a “silent colluder” or “passive bystander” when you encounter a situation that doesn’t fit with your values. This is a wakeup call. We shouldn’t let words and actions that conflict with our values go unchallenged.

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Great Leaders Use These 9 Steps To Create The Best Events

By: *Richard Brody*

Wouldn't it seem to make sense that since so many organizations and groups are often dependent upon a variety of events, in order to fulfill either financial, social, fundraising, or some other organizational aspect or need, that there would be more attention paid to the necessary details, etc., that might make the difference between success and failure? In my over three decades of not only identifying, qualifying, training, developing and consulting to over a thousand individuals in actual or potential leadership

positions, as well as negotiating, developing, planning and overseeing hundreds of events, I have come to realize that far too few so - called leaders are properly prepared, nor pay sufficient attention to creating meaningful and significant events, that fulfill their purpose in a positive way for their group. Great Leaders Use These 9 Steps To Create The Best Events.

1. Know the intended purpose or goal of the particular event: Why are you holding it? What do you wish to

achieve? Is it primarily for fundraising, social purposes, to fulfill an organizational need (or requirement), etc.? You must know what and why you are doing it, or you'll be challenged in your quest to be successful!

2. Create a meaningful budget, from the onset: Know what you are willing, and able to spend! If the intent is to do fundraising, be sure that your overhead or fixed expenses (also known as turn - key) are under control. Be conservative in your

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estimates of projected revenues, and thing of the worst - case scenario, when you determine anticipated expenses.

3. **Develop priorities/ determine needs:** How will you be able to negotiate if you don't know what your priority is, and what you must get (at the minimum). Too often, those that negotiate for events, seem to do so without having a needed direction.

4. **Negotiate using RFP's (Request for Proposal) with absolute integrity:** Avoid negotiating with only one venue, but submit a quality RFP to several potential venues that might meet your requirements and needs. Avoid making empty promises (or guarantees) in an attempt to get a better deal, and realize that the best negotiating position is to use win - win.

5. **Develop a quality team, and break the event into parts, and delegate properly:** You can't do it alone, but to merely delegate without doing so to the right people, can often be even worse. Clearly and transparently explain what you are trying to accomplish, and what you expect of those who will help you, by taking up the *mantle*.

6. **Have contingency plans:** Something always happens,

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that does not go exactly according to your preliminary or preferred plan. Consider ramifications, and be prepared with seamless back - up plans.

7. Make a great first impression: The old expression that you only get one chance to make a first impression should be taken seriously! Statistically, when attendees get a positive initial feeling, the rest of the event goes far more smoothly. Create a feeling that the organizers truly care about the attendees!

8. Show/ demonstrate value (real and perceived): Often, leaders focus solely on what they consider to be valuable, while there is a need to view this aspect from the perception of actual and potential attendees.

9. Demonstrate warmth, oversee everything, and actually be present: Event organizers and leaders must never try to hide! They must do all they can to make attendees feel welcome and wanted, and address concerns, issues and other relevant matters.

You can't hide or procrastinate, and must consistently be proactive and involved. Great leaders use these 9 steps to create the best events.

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Learn How to Successfully Search for a New Career

By: Kelli Smith

Are you tired of the same old job? Would you like to enjoy your career and not just do a job? If the answer to these questions is yes, then let's explore how to successfully search for a new career.

Love What You do and You Will Succeed

In Barbara Sher's, *Wishcraft: How to get what you Really Want*, she states one of the foundations of success is enjoying what you do. If you are not quite sure where your interests or passions are, think about the games that you played as a child. Did you

play teacher, doctor, or cops and robbers? Did you enjoy directing and coordinating the activities of the group, or did you enjoy playing alone? Think back to what you enjoyed to start your career search for your future.

Career Assessment is a Valuable Tool for Career Success

If you have difficulty finding your talents and interests, career assessment tests are valuable tools to help you discover your hidden abilities. Most colleges and universities have guidance counselors

that can administer and evaluate the testing for you. You can also do career assessments online. There are numerous Web sites that offer free testing. You can take several tests to see if a pattern emerges across the different evaluations on what career best suits you.

Evaluate Your Lifestyle

You should consider what your lifestyle needs are. Do you need full-time or part-time work? Do you like an 8 to 5 or prefer flexibility in your schedule? Are you most productive at an office or at home? Success in your

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new career can be determined by how compatible your work is with your lifestyle.

Talk to Others

Professionals doing the job are the best source of knowledge and insight into the new career you are contemplating. Ask those in the profession about their jobs and get their feedback. Setting up informational interviews is a great way to get a feel for an industry.

Walk the Talk

After twenty years as an accountant, I wanted to do something more. As a “people” person, I didn’t like the alienation of crunching numbers all day. I was also bored. However, I was nervous about giving up proficiency in a field and starting over. When I became Controller at a mortgage company, I watched the loan officers, and I liked what I saw. Loan officers helped people, controlled their own schedules, and were constantly challenged by new scenarios. So, I decided to become a loan officer and have enjoyed it ever-since.

You can make the change too. Take stock of your skills, your interests, and your dreams and move toward a more promising future. A promising career is only a “wish” and some “assessing” away.

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Students: Ten Steps To Succeed In School

By: *Raymond Gerson*

I have been teaching college success courses for many years to both at-risk students who are taking developmental courses and to students who are beyond the need for developmental or remedial courses. There are some basics or fundamentals which enhance success in high school and college. Here is my list of ten important steps to avoid failure and to achieve success in school:

1. Be in class. Being on time and maintaining good

attendance are important. If you are not in class then you are not learning what is being taught, will not be able to take notes and will not see what subject matter your teacher or professor thinks is important. Obviously it is also important to pay attention when you are in class.

2. Take notes. You cannot review the information that is being taught without class notes. Unless you review your notes several times most of the information is unlikely to get into

your long-term memory and will be forgotten. It is best to learn and use a note-taking system such as Cornell, think link, outline or another system.

3. Turn work in on time. Start early on assignments and break them into smaller chunks. This is how to make the difficult easy. Use a planner/calendar to record upcoming assignments so that you can keep up with the work load.

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4. Take pride in yourself and your work. Do quality work. If something is worth doing it is worth doing well.
5. Set educational and other goals. This will give you a purpose for going to school and this provides self-motivation. Remind yourself why you want a good education and what you want to achieve in school.
6. Set aside enough time to study. To excel in college you need to study at least two hours for every hour you are in class. Do important assignments first. Then reward yourself with play and you will have a stress free mind because you know the important school work is done. Study with concentration for short periods of approximately 30 minutes followed by short breaks in between. Say no to friends who want to play when your school work needs to be done and schedule another and better time with them.
7. Explain lessons to yourself. This is self-teaching. Read a paragraph in your text and then explain what you learned out loud in your own words. Read it again if you did not understand it. Do not go to the next paragraph until you think you understood the preceding one.
8. Create practice quizzes and tests. Self-testing is powerful. Go through your class notes and textbook. Write down every question you think could be on the test. Then give yourself your own quiz and grade it before you take the one in class.
9. Focus your attention. Do not multi-task and divide your attention in class or while reading your textbooks. These are the times when your full concentration and focus are important.
10. Take care of your brain. Getting enough sleep, exercise, water and good nutrition are important for optimum brain functioning. Avoid using recreational drugs and drinking much alcohol because they can impair your brain's ability to function well.

There are many more strategies for succeeding in school, but without these ten basic steps your success is less likely. You can start following these ten steps now for better grades and enhanced learning.

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A Fairy-Tale Approach to Developing a Critical Analysis of Literature

By: Sarah Anne Shope, PhD

Getting an assignment to do a critical analysis of literature can be daunting due to those scary words critical, analysis, and literature. Yet, if we approach that assignment in an exploratory manner, it becomes quite doable. That would be to pull apart a story, poetry, or drama and then put it back together in a way that shows your exploration. While it might still seem overwhelming at first, as the unknown can be, the assignment becomes manageable as you examine the literature, create some sort of

point about it, and discover that you have backup. Make an argument that you can stand up for and then work to defend that idea. Then the only frightening entity is the library, and we'll work on that.

Getting Started

It's a good feeling to complete an analysis-sort of like taking apart a clock and putting it back together, the

difference being that you can throw away the parts that are left over. But, you have to start somewhere, and without a plan you easily fall into procrastination. So, become clear that your starting point is the literature itself. Begin by examining that literature, the era, and the author, and consider what issues might be involved. That, of course, requires reading, and some literature can be terribly hard to read due to length and/or archaic language. It helps to lean on summaries and analyses to get you into

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the literature. But you must force yourself to read through the piece and to gain as much understanding as possible. Don't labor over the fact that it's hard to understand. Make notes on issues and points that stand out for you, and give yourself time to think until you've formulated an idea.

Once you have a fairly good grasp of the target literature, you are ready to start pulling it apart; for example, if your target literature is "The Three Little Pigs," you will note that pigs, a wolf, and three houses are involved in the story. Also, there are issues of how to build a house, and there's a lot of huffing and puffing. What are some other possible issues? Was one of the pigs smarter than the others? Was there truly a physical threat, or was the big bad wolf just a bully full of hot air? When was the story written and by whom? What sorts of things were going on in that time, and did those events drive the story in some way? How was the author(s) related to those issues and events?

Now you want to know more. You have already been warned to not rely on un-authored or questionably-authored websites, but the Wiki temptation is far too great. So why not sneak a look. A quick scan lets you know that, not only is the story of three pigs shrouded in mysterious meaning, its origins are in questions, and much like the pants in *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, the story continues to reappear, and this has been going on for centuries. It appears you have plenty to write about, perhaps too much, so it's time to narrow down the topics to one topic with an angle and manageable issues. Issues might include the elements of the story, interpretations, origins of the story, and the fact that the story is persistently ongoing. Those are issues, but something is missing—the argument! What's the point? What point could you possibly make about a silly little fairy tale? Or is it only that—a fairy tale? Perhaps it's a living thing that sprung out of mortality and culture—a living morphing entity about animals that are really people, written by everyone over time to help people avoid being such inhuman animals that aren't that smart and/or who occasionally act like hot-air bullies.

As you think about all the issues you realize there are plenty of angles to be taken, and the more you learn the more possibilities will emerge. Your perspective on the knowledge will determine your angle; that angle is your theory, and you will become ready to defend it with resources far more credible than Wikipedia. So, start with the few issues that have quickly become clear: 1) the

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lesson in “The Three Little Pigs” is meaningful to humans and it’s anthropomorphic, 2) the story is deeply embedded in culture, 3) and it continues to morph and thrive. Now you must encapsulate your idea into one sentence; for example: “The Three Little Pigs” is meaningful to humans though it’s anthropomorphic; it is deeply embedded in culture, and it continues to morph and thrive. That is a strong idea that contains several parts: lessons-story morals as teaching tools, humanly meaningful, animals as humans, embedded in culture, and morphing and thriving. But it is only the first draft, a *working* version of the thesis statement, and it’s open for change as you learn more.

You *now* have enough to create a first draft of an outline, a *working* outline. At this point, it could be as follows:

- I. Introduction
- II. Lessons
- III. Humanly meaningful
- IV. Anthropological
- V. Embedded in culture
- VI. Morphing and thriving
- VII. Conclusion

Researching

Now you have your *working* thesis statement and outline. Of course, each of the entries in the outline needs to be developed, and the question is where can you go for reliable information? You have already been warned to not rely on un-authored or questionably-authored websites. If you don’t know who wrote the information, how can you be assured it is credible? We are so fortunate that the college library is so well organized and accessible through off-site access via the internet. Go to Galileo and begin your search. You need to be patience and take an approach of exploration. Many students give up on the library quickly if they cannot figure out what to search for and how to sort through *the stacks*. The trick is to learn where to search and what key search words to use. It’s often a chore of trial and error, so you must be patient and continue trying until you have several substantial resources.

You might begin by doing a general search of the title “The Three Little Pigs.” That’s easy, but it turns up a mind-boggling number of retold and adapted versions and at least one graphic novel. There doesn’t appear to be an actual original book entitled “The Three Little Pigs.” This is telling you something about the origins of the story. There are books with architectural perspectives on the story, one article entitled “What if the three pigs tried conflict mediation?” and one entitled, “Wolf is the victim in the ‘Three Little Pigs’ tale.” The search reveals little pigs stories from Germany, England, from Italy, African-American, and on and on. Galileo yields some scholarly information about the oral origins of fairy tales and the early-1800s collections of stories by the Grimm brothers. Also, you find articles on the lesson-teaching aspect of stories throughout centuries. Though there

is nothing specific about “The Three Little Pigs,” you can assume much from studies on the cultural rootedness of the oral-tradition fairy tales. From this cursory search you now have two resources: *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*, (1812, 1815; revised, 1819-1822) (English translation, 1823-1826), and “Mind you stay on the path!': The representation of the parent-child relationship in stories for children” by Gabrina Pounds. In the prefatory information to their collections, the Grimm brothers explain how and why they put the works together. Also, other commentaries speak to the issues of the stories being embedded in European culture and specifically German culture.

Now as you revise your outline, you might want to move some issues around and consider the order of issues in your thesis statement as it becomes clearer that there are actually

three primary matters: origins of the story, the lesson of the story, and the continued morphing of the story. So, you are tightening the outline in that sense; yet, you are also adding to it for a more detailed version of the *working* outline.

I. Introduction

A. Reason for interest

B. Thesis argument: Though “The Three Little Pigs” arose out of the cultural needs of its time through oral tradition as an anthropomorphic survival lesson, it continues to morph and thrive today.

II. Origins and author(s) of the literature

A. embedded in culture via oral tradition

B. early collections of fairy tales

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I. Lessons

A. Story morals as teaching tools

B. Anthropomorphic

II. Continued morphing and thriving

A. Retellings and Disney

B. New reasons for telling the story and new angles on morals

III. Conclusion

The Order of the First Draft

This is the time to begin the first draft. While you may not yet have all the necessary resources, it is clear that you have the points and you can develop each idea. While it seems logical to begin with the introduction, it's more reasonable to start with the body and then come back to add the intro. The body of the paper is comprised of the elucidation and justification of your issues; in other words, explain them. Once those issues are buffed out in the body of the paper, you can think more clearly about how to pull in the reader to your argument. That's the best time to create the introduction. The introductory paragraph(s) should provide a strong overview of the issues, and it should contain your thesis statement. It's difficult to deliver a clear overview of the issues before you have fully fleshed them out. After you have a solid introduction, begin writing your conclusion, which is a reiteration of your analysis with your final inferences and then words to encourage the reader to explore more. So, there's the logic to writing the paper in that order. Wait until you have the body of the paper drafted before you try to pull in the reader and offer up a conclusion.

The Body

The body of the paper is made up of your defense of the issues of your thesis argument. The first is the origin of the story, which becomes apparent despite all the folklore fogginess of fairytales and oral traditions. A story of three pigs attempting to survive a known predator rose out of culture from before the 1800s in Europe. Though research does not yield specific evidence of the exact origin of any

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one fairy tale, you find that fairy tales all evolved in that manner, as teaching tools for agricultural families who hoped to put the fear of predators into their children so they would avoid danger. The story of the pigs, as the story of Little Red Riding Hood and her wolf, were eventually, in the early 1800s, anthologized by the Grimm brothers, and of course, they were not written by the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm. Those facts are defended by literary historians such as Jack Zipes in "The Vibrant Body of the Grimms' Folk and Fairy Tales, Which Do Not Belong to the Grimms," his introduction to *The Magic Spell of the Grimms' Folk and Fairy Tales*.

These tales that were not the Grimms' tales—that is, all the tales in their corpus were not theirs and were not even the property of the informants—fascinated the Brothers, and they felt that the unique qualities of the tales

ultimately came from some divine source. They also believed that the common people were the carriers of these narratives. This is the reason why they insisted on their purity while rewriting or even censoring them so that the stories would illuminate and enlighten readers. (Zipes 18)

Most farmers did not read and write in those earlier centuries, and they had reasons to fear harm for their children from critters, the forest, roving strangers, and even neighbors. That was the culture of pre-modern times, and oral moralistic stories grew right out of that farming culture, with animals and threats, and parental warning, as discussed by Gabriel Pounds in "Mind you stay on the path!" (143)

So, who wrote "The Little Pigs"? The answer is everyone! Each teller and writer of the story added his and her augmentation, hyperbole, total

retelling, and illustrations. All of those things happen before the story was ever published, and they continue beyond its publication. The Grimm brothers, of course, did not write "The Three Little Pigs," but it's clear they augmented it to fit their collection.

Although the Grimms maintained that they did not alter the words of the tales that they collected from the lips of their informants, and that all their tales stemmed from the oral tradition, none of this is true. A simple comparison of the tales in the Olenberg manuscript of 1810 with the tales in the first edition of 1812/15 reveals that the Grimms made or had to make substantial changes because it was difficult for them and their contributors to copy down on paper the exact words of the tales that they heard. Moreover, the Grimms also began adapting tales from books published from the fifteenth through

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the eighteenth century. In short, none of their tales could ever be designated as “pure,” “authentic,” or “original.” The Grimms actually knew this, and yet they used those terms because they believed their tales bore the traces of a profound oral tradition. They felt justified to proclaim that their tales were “genuine” and “pure” because the changes that they made were based on their understanding of the “natural” poetics of oral storytelling, and the more they did research about the oral tradition, the more they felt confident in their skills as writers to re-present the unique elements of traditional stories. Incidentally, most collectors worked this way in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (Zipes, pp.8, 9)

The theory of the origins of “The Three Little Pigs” can be extrapolated from a study of the oral tradition and fairy tales in general, and that has already been done. For your analysis it’s simply a matter of summarized the studies and perhaps paraphrasing main points (as shown above), and adding a sparse quotes when they truly hit the nail on the head, being careful to document carefully with in-text citation.

Now you can move on to the second issue, that of the humanness in the meaning of the story and its anthropomorphic nature. Remember, there are architectural

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issues related to the structures of houses and there is bullish huffing and puffing. That brings us back to its agricultural origins and the availability of farm animals and their predators. We can imagine the children of that time and their familiarity with animals and their adult-induced fear of predators. We can formulate our own interpretation if we're able to put ourselves into the era. Naturally, parents want their children to use human smarts to outwit marauders. Along with that, there is the notion of building on firm foundations, a dutiful concept and a human need. Our children need safety, and they can relate to safety issues of animals, perhaps even more than to themselves. While these concepts are embedded in German culture, they exist in all cultures. They transfer to other cultures easily.

In today's globalized world the

connections are such that the Grimms' "German" legacies have had a binding effect in other cultures. The bonds created by the Grimms' tales that entail an understanding of the "we" in cultural memory, tales that did not belong to the Grimms, are highly unusual and account for their remarkable popularity because they touch us in profound ways that break down national barriers. (Zipes, 31)

Other ideas arise as you continue researching; there are theories about what the wolf represents, and while there may well be issues behind that, most of the original storytellers and audiences would not have had awareness of them. It's only through hindsight and with painstaking scrutiny of cultural history that such issues begin to take meaning. Nevertheless, the more complex and theoretical must wait for another more extended assignment or, perhaps, lifetime. For this assignment, it's

important to confine your analysis to manageable issues.

The third issue is that of how the story continued into modern literature and how it now continues into the contemporary American canon. Due to *The Grimm Brothers Anthology of Fairy Tales*, the story became a staple of children's stories, and an early reader for many children, and one that is easily read to children. It seems most children even today, literate or not, can provide the gist of the story. The pigs managed to show up in the Disney movie, *Shrek*, and in the words of poet Roald Dahl:

The Three Little Pigs

Ah, Piglet, you must never trust

Young ladies from the upper crust.

For now, Miss Riding Hood, one notes,

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Not only has two wolfskin coats,

But when she goes from place to place,

She has a PIGSKIN TRAVELING CASE. (Dahl)

Back to the Library

With all those daunting things out of the way, we still have the library to revisit. It can become our nemesis or our best friend, our adversary or our advocate. It can slow you down in a rush to find resources, or it can cut through the weeds and offer strong scholarly good stuff to boost your argument and a grade.

As I began this little piggy lit exercise, the first step was to do a quick internet search, which brought up titles of retold versions of the story and a Wikipedia article. Though I cannot count those sources as scholarly, I definitely learn something from the search. I discovered that the accounts of the three little pigs are all retellings and there is a literary history of fairy tales from European oral tradition, perhaps back to the twelfth century and up to the Grimm's anthologies. The Wiki article also lists scholarly references, helping me to realize this is not a futile venture. The next library step was frustrating because when I searched Galileo for "The Three Little Pigs," it continued to direct me to all those retelling of the story. That required a bit of walking away from Galileo and returning to it later with fresh ideas. I then tried several more precise searches, such as who wrote the story of The Three Little Pigs, the origins of the three little pigs, and fairy tales, and others. The longer I played search, the more I tripped over articles that flanked my thesis issues. I also looked into those scholarly references that Wiki provided. I did not find one meaty article that defiantly explained those issues, but I had credible articles with peripheral information enough to support the argument that the story is a work in progress. Library searches can feel like hard work or they can be approach as exploratory play. Pick the approach that works for you.

The Final Draft

Once you have completed your first draft you have much of the work done. It's now a matter of buffing up, smoothing out, and tweaking. Then, once you see what have, you can carefully and sparingly add summary,

paraphrases, and quotations from the scholarly library resources to boost your argument. Be sure to document each one with in-text citations and list your resources on a works cited page. Then you can complete the final draft of your outline. Go through the paper paragraph by paragraph several times to be sure you have good sentence structures, cohesive paragraphs, and effective transitions from paragraph to paragraph, and good overall flow. Finally, do extremely careful proofreading in three steps: one as line by line, a second as word for word, and a third for formatting issues.

Conclusion

Writing a critical analysis of literature is simply a mental process, and once it is seen in manageable parts, the process is not the big bad wolf it might have been. As does a smart porker's house, it requires a strong foundation of a thesis statement and primary issues, library research for scholarly resources, and a human brain to think it through. Try it; you'll like it or at least be able to tolerate it to complete an assignment. The great part of doing this sort of critical analysis is that it develops our brains, yielding skills that are amazingly transferable.

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Your Success Depends on This Skill

By: *Kevin Eikenberry*

My hope is that this headline makes you wonder.

Perhaps you are guessing what the skill is.

Perhaps you are thinking I am pretty presumptuous to suggest I know the most important skill you need, after all, I don't know you, your experience or what you do for a living.

This skill is so ubiquitous that it does not matter what you do, where you live, how old you are or what

your present skills are. Unless you live on a desert island, or in a cave all alone with no internet and no interest in ever seeing or interacting with another human being, this skill is critical to your success - and even your survival.

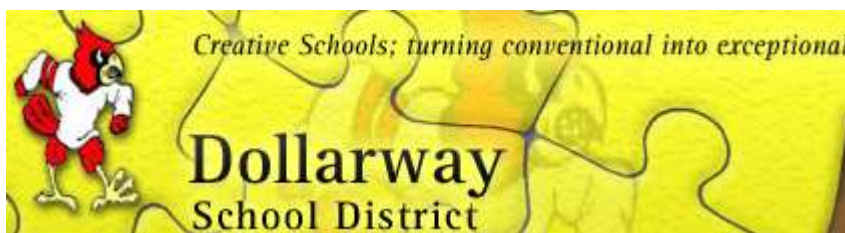
The skill is communication.

Since you don't live in a cave or on a desert island (or if you do, you at least have an internet connection), you are and will interact with others, so your

ability to communicate your wants, needs, ideas, desires, plans, and approaches will impact the results you get - both in the short and long term. And however you want to measure it, building these skills is nearly a sure bet to increase your success.

And because we can all communicate with some level of proficiency, we forget this important fact. We search for missing keys and success secrets in many places - from the practical, like building our technical skills, to the mental, like therapy, to the

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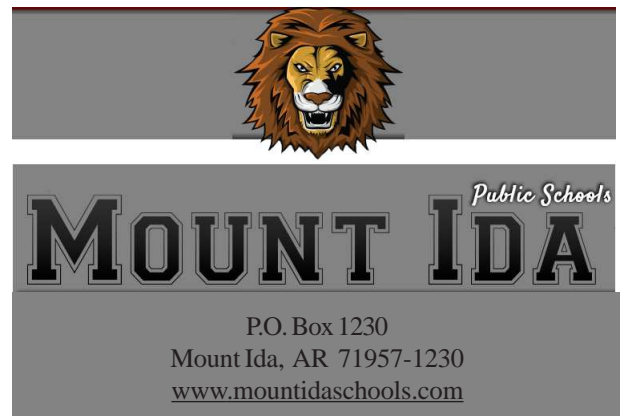
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spiritual, like finding our passion, and much more. The fact is, the biggest secret is not a secret at all, it is right in front of us. While any or all of these other paths or secrets may be of great help, without increasing our ability to communicate effectively, tactfully and persuasively, we put a limit on our satisfaction and success.

Perhaps a more accurate title for this piece would be - The Level Of Your Success Depends On How Much Of This Skill you Have.

However effective you are as a communicator, you can improve. You can build your skills, you can acquire better habits and as you do, you become more effective with those around you. So whether you view success as great relationships, being a great parent, or making a difference at work or in your community, your communication skills are right there impacting every moment of your efforts.

Communication Skills are Life Skills

So I have already covered this point, but let me be clear - as you increase your ability to communicate in one area of your life, you take those new skills and habits to all other parts of your life. This means you will have a massive and immediate return on your investment and effort in becoming a more effective and confident communicator.

Communication Comes in Many Forms

As you have been reading, you have likely been thinking about one type of communication - perhaps one you know you need to improve, or even one that is a current strength. Whichever that is, be it written, face to face, over the phone, non-verbally, in a group, or presenting in front of a large group, they all matter, and improving any or all of them can have a positive impact on your life.

Communication is Interconnected to Everything

Think about anything you do, and you realize that communication is a part of it. When you are with others you are always communicating and you really can't stop. Given that nearly everything you do during your day is impacted by your effectiveness as a communicator, as you get better at it, everything seems to improve all at once.

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Communication is a Hinge

One of my favorite quotations, which I first heard from a mentor of mine, is: "little hinges swing big doors." Your ability to effectively communicate is a hinge. As you communicate better, you will literally open bigger and bigger doors for your future. Consider it like as massive leverage for your future success.

If you are still reading, you agree with me in at least some way, and chances are you want to be a more effective communicator. If so, I congratulate you on that choice. Your next step is to determine how you will improve your skills. There are many ways to do that, including, reading a book, getting some coaching, observing and emulating others, asking for feedback, taking a skills assessment, or taking a workshop.

Here are two good places to start:

- An assessment to learn about your communication style and strengths
- Two powerful workshops to help you build your communication skills

Wherever or however you start, start. Your future success and happiness depends on it, and you are worth it.

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Make Gratitude Your Attitude

By: *Madeline Frank*

Zig Ziglar said, “The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more things you’ll have to express gratitude for.” He also said, “Among the things you can give and still keep are your word, a smile, and a grateful heart.”

As a new high school violin student in the 11th grade, arriving in the second semester at the North Carolina School of the Arts, NCSA, in Winston-Salem, I attended my first music theory class on my first day of school. The teacher said to me,

“There is no way you will pass my class!” After classes that day, I was quite depressed and went back to the dorm. That was the day I met my neighbor, Lois Artis, a wonderful trombonist, marvelous academic student, with a positive motivating attitude, always willing to help others. We talked for a few minutes and I told her what the teacher had said to me. Lois replied, “I will help you and you will do well in her music theory class.”

Lois patiently helped me understand the material, while doing laundry, so

that I did well in the class! She knew, even at that young age, how to “lift” others up to realize their potential. She was a leader even in high school and understood how to develop a team. I will forever be grateful for her help.

In Mr. S’s English class in high school at NCSA, I met Bruce Lemerise, a terrific artist, and illustrator, with a brilliant mind. We enjoyed discussing the assigned books and plays by Shakespeare that we read for class and our

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collaboration produced the top grades in this class.

We would discuss the psychological dimensions of the characters and write thoughtful papers on our discussions. Bruce went on to study art in New York City and I went on to the Juilliard School and we continued our friendship and our discussions on books, art, music, and the theater.

When I played my graduate recitals at Juilliard, Bruce said, "How you walk on and off stage is really important." So he made sure I practiced walking on and off the stage with my shoulders back and my head held high and balanced on my spine walking with my viola and my music. He also had a friend who did stage makeup show me how I should properly make up for the stage. Bruce knew how important first impressions were and wanted

me to make a great one.

Bruce later worked as an illustrator/artist for Pepperidge Farm, Nestlé's, Ogilvy & Mather, Avon, Durkee Spices, MGM/UA, Western Publishing, Woman's Day, Ogilvy & Mather, Country Time Lemonade, and other companies. He did Broadway posters, and greeting cards.

Bruce Lemerise also wrote and illustrated a children's book called "Sheldon's Lunch" dedicated to his mother, Marie Lemerise. He illustrated A Golden Book, "Can I Get There From My Room?" and "The Big Little Golden Book of Funny Poems". Bruce sent copies of these books for my children to enjoy.

In 1988, Bruce Lemerise died. He was a wonderful person who cared about his family, his friends and loved to draw and do illustrations. I think of him often and am so grateful that he

was my friend.

As a student at the Juilliard School in New York City, I met Karen Iannotti, a remarkably gifted pianist. She was a beautiful young woman, inside and out, with a warm personality always willing to help others. We lived at the Coliseum House in New York City on 228 West 71th street. We were neighbors and became good friends and enjoyed playing concerts together.

A writer friend of ours had written a one act play which he premiered at Sardis in New York City for backers and Karen and I played the background music for the play. One of the pieces was "Saber Dance" by Khachaturian which Karen and I wrote a marvelous arrangement for viola and piano. We had a wonderful time making music together and helping out our writer friend with his successful "One Act" play.

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Karen Iannotti performed at Carnegie Hall in 1979 in a piano concert sponsored by Carnegie Hall, Inc. to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the birth of composer/pianist Louis Gottschalk. She also performed as a guest artist/pianist for the opening of the workshop and executive offices for Jim Henson Associates, "Muppet Show". She was also the Musical Director and pianist for the "Bel Canto Opera Company" of New York City's production of "Prince Igor" by Borodin. During this time she taught many students and they learned the joy of playing the piano.

Karen was also a well-known accompanist for singers in Sara Lee's Studio in New York City. When I wanted to study singing she suggested, "Study with Ms. Lee she's the best voice teacher in New York City. She taught Todd Duncan who sang Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess"." Karen played for my lessons with Ms. Lee. We had a terrific time. In 1983, Karen Iannotti passed away. She brought such joy to her family, friends, relatives, and students, by her warm caring personality and her beautiful piano playing. She was one of the finest people I have ever known and I like to think she's up there playing piano for the angels.

So what are the 3 things you can do to say thank you to the friends, teachers, coach's, mentors, parents, or relatives who have helped you?

- 1) Start your day by remembering and writing down the people who have made a difference in your life. Write them a note or call and thank them. Think of one person who has made a positive impact on your life and do something nice for them.
- 2) Honor a special person in your life on a weekly basis by acts of kindness to others.
- 3) Think of the people who have made a difference in your life and honor them in some way by sharing your appreciation by random acts of kindness to others.

"Of all the "attitudes" we can acquire, surely the attitude of gratitude is the most important and by far the most life changing."~Zig Ziglar

So start a notebook today and enter the names of your teachers, mentors, coaches, and friends who have made a difference in your life and do something nice for them. Don't wait. Do it now, before it's too late!

Remember what Zig Ziglar said, "The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more things you'll have to express gratitude for."

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Guidelines to Making a Successful Presentation

By: *Scott Elliott*

A lot of people have no fear of standing up in public and making a presentation.

They have all the self confidence that it takes, and they have been doing it for so long that they tend to pour scorn on those who quake at the knees at the very thought. However it may not necessarily mean that an experienced presenter has nothing new to learn. And if your are one of these people who will have to face up to the challenges of making a

presentation in the near future, here are a few tips on how to make a presentation that works.

1. How to prepare the content.

Before you enter into the line of fire, be it for the first time or the 500th, the presenter needs to do research. Not just on the material to be presented. Not just on how it should be presented. Not just on the audience

that it will be presented to. But all of them together. A novice presenter should try to imagine himself as a member of the audience, and feel how the presentation should be made.

They should be well aware of which multimedia program they will be using as an aid, and how it operates. Making a few trial runs before an objective audience to iron out any potential glitches will only increase

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the presenter's confidence in facing the real thing.

2. How to present the content

The thing that many "experienced" presenters will tend to forget in time, is to differentiate between a presentation and a speech. He or she may be the wittiest and most original speaker, but if they leave their audience laughing, but asking themselves, "what exactly were they trying to tell us", and then nothing has been achieved. On the other hand, a scenario that is almost as dry as the Sahara Desert is when the presentation evolves from an often extremely lengthy prepared document. They can stand there for what seems like an eternity, but in reality is only 20 minutes, droning on in a dull monotone. In many cases these speakers will be speaking in a language that is not their native one. To add a little color to the proceedings, they might add in a few slides, which may well be upside down.

The ideal presentation is when the speaker combines an interesting but short lecture backed up by a PowerPoint presentation to emphasize their points. They will know or will have learned that audiences as a rule do not necessarily take notes at presentations. Therefore the professional presenter will have made sure that each member of the audience will have received the presentation in a printed or digital format. This will allow the content to be reviewed any time in the future.

This formula of presentation stands the best chance of meeting the approval of the audience, and being remembered positively.

3. How to wind up the presentation.

Assuming that the presenter has learned the first two steps inside out, and is now standing in front of an audience that will now be eating out of the presenter's hand. This is the time that a successful presentation should be wound down. The best way to do that is to invite a few questions from the audience. This can continue for a few minutes, until everyone in the audience has had enough, and are ready to move on to the next speaker. The presenter can move unobtrusively behind the scenes, and give themselves a pat on the back.

All the hard work, thought and preparation that went into a preparation that works has been worthwhile!

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Mindset: Pathway to Student Success

By: *Raymond Gerson*

Mindset is an idea by Carol Dweck, Stanford University psychologist and author of *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (3). She has spent over four decades researching the types of beliefs that bring about success in school, career and life.

People with a fixed mindset believe their intelligence and talent are fixed traits that cannot be improved. Therefore they are less likely to try to develop these traits. They believe that their talent and intelligence should not require effort and they

lack perseverance when faced with difficult challenges. They think that the need for a lot of effort means that one is not smart and therefore it is better to not try and risk failure or to look dumb.

Those with a growth mindset believe their talent and intelligence can be increased through effort and by working hard at a task. Therefore they love learning, enjoy challenges and they persevere toward long-term goals. They do not see mistakes or errors as failure, but as feedback for how to improve and succeed. They believe

effort to learn difficult tasks increases their intelligence. These are characteristics of successful people.

Can a Growth Mindset be Taught?

The good news is that Dr. Dweck's years of research have demonstrated that **a growth mindset can be taught and learned**. The result on the part of learners is increased motivation, productivity and success.

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Grit

One characteristic of successful people and students is grit. Research by Angela Duckworth (2), psychologist at University of Pennsylvania, demonstrated that grit is important for the accomplishment of long-term goals. However, it may not be so easy to directly teach people how to develop grit. From my review of research studies and my own observations of students I believe that grit is a byproduct of a growth mindset. In other words grit is likely to increase when students are taught and acquire a growth mindset.

One aspect of grit is academic perseverance which is the ability to work hard and smart for a long period of time. For example, the completion of a college education usually requires academic tenacity. Helping students to develop a growth mindset is one way to increase academic perseverance and performance.

Mindset Plus Study Skills Research

In one study (1) with seventh graders who were struggling in math, the students were divided in to two groups.

Both groups of students were taught excellent study skills. One group was also taught about a growth mindset and ideas for developing it. The math performance and grades of the students who were taught only study skills continued to decline over a two-year period. The math performance and grades of students who learned both study skills and a growth mindset continued to improve over the two-year period.

In another study (6), fixed mindset students with higher SAT scores did more poorly in four years of college than those with a growth mindset and lower SAT scores, had less self-esteem and were less persistent.

Without a growth mindset students are less likely to have the motivation to apply good study skills and strategies. Teaching students how to study and learn is important, but they also need the mindset to make use of this ability.

Growth Mindset and Non-cognitive Skills

Students need to be taught how to develop a growth mindset combined with higher-level thinking cognitive

skills and non-cognitive skills. Higher-level thinking includes critical and creative thinking skills. Non-cognitive skills include goal setting, time management and other self-regulatory skills. When students have a growth mindset they can make better use of cognitive and non-cognitive skills which is usually a recipe for academic, career and life success.

University of Chicago researchers reviewed years of research studies (5) on factors which enhance student success. They concluded that academic perseverance and performance improves when students are taught to develop positive mindsets and are also taught effective learning strategies. They found that student perseverance is a byproduct of academic mindsets and metacognition and self-regulatory skills.

In Carol Dweck's book, *Self-Theories: The Role in Motivation, Personality and Development (4)*, she says "The hallmark of successful individuals is that they love learning, they seek challenges, they value effort and they persist in the face of obstacles." This is the result of a growth mindset which enhances a strong work ethic.

Teaching a Growth Mindset

What are some strategies that educators can use to help students to develop a growth mindset? Here are a few suggestions:

- Praise effort and not intelligence. Praise a good job that included hard work. Praise strategies, perseverance and improvement.
- Teach students about the

plasticity of the brain and that they will increase their intelligence when they work hard at learning difficult material.

- Have students set a challenging goal and work hard to accomplish it. Then ask them to reflect on how the hard work paid off.
- Ask them to write about a past success and to reflect on the work that went in to this achievement.
- Ask students to write a paper for younger students who will come after them and explain what they learned about a growth mindset and intelligence.
- Have students research one

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of their heroes to find out if he or she was born great or whether their hero had to work hard, practice and overcome obstacles.

- Ask former students who used to struggle, but who are now doing well, to share their success stories with your class. Consider having the former students make short videos of themselves and their stories that you can show in class or students can watch later at home.

Making a Positive Difference

I believe that about 80% of success (or failure) has to do with our mindset. A growth mindset contributes to success and a fixed mindset makes failure more likely.

As educators we must teach students not only academic content, but also non-cognitive skills and the beliefs needed for success. Carol Dweck (4) puts it this way, "As adults our mission is to equip the next generations with the tools they need to live a life of growth and contribution."

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