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Winter 2015



**Top 7 Challenges Women
Entrepreneurs Face**

**The Urgent Versus The important
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Top 7 Challenges Women Entrepreneurs Face That Can Put Them Out of Business

By: Simone Mitjans

Trust me, I've been there, and I understand that you might have had a few bumps in the road as you are building and expanding your business. Your mind is probably telling you, "Well, you didn't get results before, so why try it again?" But it doesn't have to stay that way. All of the most successful people have failed many, many times - but they never gave up, and eventually they reached the pinnacle of success. Whatever's stopping you, there's a way to overcome it and

reach your dreams.

Here are the top 7 challenges I see women entrepreneurs facing that can put them out of business and keep them from making a difference:

1. Don't have enough money. However, know you won't have the means until you make a decision that you are going to move forward, no matter what. The universal law of polarity states

that you can't have a desire without a way to make it happen. This Principle embodies the idea that everything is dual, meaning everything has two poles, or opposites. Anything that manifests has two sides, two aspects, or two extremes. Everything "is" and "isn't" at the same time. There are two sides to everything in existence; opposites are identical in nature, yet different in degree. When extremes meet, and all paradoxes may be reconciled, truth is found, beauty is apparent, and life feels rich. The key

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here is being able to recognize when an opportunity presents itself.

2. Don't have the time. But time management is an illusion!

We can never manage time; we can only manage our tasks. The more clarity you have about

what kind of lifestyle you want to live, the more you will activate your creative intelligence to give you the right inspiration for your business. This will allow you to have more time to spend doing what you love, whether it's spending time with family or friends, volunteering, or anything else! You get to choose! How awesome is that?

3. Don't have the right support.

Let's be honest here - family and friends were never meant to support you in building your

business. Psst, I will let you in on a little secret: they don't want you to succeed! No, not because they don't love you. To tell you the truth, it's subconscious. They have a false feeling that if you succeed, you might become different, or you might leave them, or you might whatever. This is a disguised ego trip that many of us go through. It is not bad, right or wrong; it just is. The best way to move ahead is to invest in a neutral support system such as a coach, mentor or trainer.

4. Don't know the "How". This is a big one when it comes to entrepreneurial road blocks. But here is the truth: if you believe that everything happens for a reason, you don't really need to know the HOW. You just need to make the decision and take a step, big or small. The whole game of life is about

learning, adapting and growing, and your business allows you a great deal of flexibility to maximize your potential.

5. Don't believe in themselves. It just breaks my heart when ideal prospects come through the door, and I see they have great gifts to contribute in the world, but they stop themselves because they don't believe they can do it. I tell them, "You don't really have to believe it. I believe it for you! We wouldn't have attracted each other if it wasn't meant to be." Having someone believe in you, even if it's not yourself, helps someone feel empowered, encouraged and relaxed enough to take the next step. I tell people, "It is not about YOU! For now believe in your purpose and remember all the hundreds and thousands of people who are waiting for you to step UP."

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6. Don't implement what they learn. I did this for a long time. I bought every single system out there; I hired coaches, and I went to workshops. Then, when it came to implement what I learned, I was stuck as hell. Not because I was lazy or stupid but simply because I WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE DOING THAT! No matter what kind of assistance we obtain, we aren't meant to do everything by ourselves, especially these days when outsourcing is so accessible.

7. Don't know their life's purpose. Hear me now: you will never know for sure! So, you better get moving with what you have and start building from there. This one held me back for a long time. Although I was being guided, I still had to do my part and when opportunities showed up I said "YES!" Many times it was even an unreasonable YES. But I said it, and it brought me forward.

My question to you is this: which of the challenges above are you allowing to STOP YOU? Although you might be unhappy, frustrated, confused or even angry with what is currently going on in your business, at least it's familiar.

What you want, but have never experienced, places you in what is called the "uncomfortable zone." You can't compare the known and trusted, however awful, with the unknown and scary, even if it may be far better. Understand that I've been there many times, and I still go. Everything you want is out of your comfort zone. You have to cross over the bridge to achieve greatness in your business.

Right now, replace the "don't" at the beginning of each challenge with a "do!" and you will get there. Successful entrepreneurs never stop pushing themselves to the next level; never. They avoid being in the vibration of stagnation and prefer hanging out in the vibration of creation. If that is what you envision for yourself as well, invest in yourself by getting the support you need as well as all the "how-to's" and "what's" of activating the power within and learning marketing strategies that will put you and your business on the map.

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Once You've Been King —

It's Hard to Become a Prince

By: Rick Johnson

There are several scenarios where you may have once been a king and then find yourself in the role of a Prince. Let's take a look at three of them.

- o **The company is sold**
- o **The demotion**
- o **The career change.**

The Company is Sold

So you sold your company and the new owners want you to stick

around and run it for a couple of years. Don't make the mistake of thinking that nothing has changed. Everything has changed. You don't own it anymore. You will find it extremely difficult to watch change that is initiated as a result of the sale. Change initiated by someone else. You are no longer the king. You no longer have final say. You have to answer to someone else. This can be a traumatic experience. Things will occur that you disagree with but can not do anything about. This in itself can become extremely frustrating.

Don't believe that age old lie that is

often spread by an acquiring company — "Nothing will change". That's a bunch of hog wash. Things will change; some for the better some not. The difference is that you no longer control that change. Oh, they may tell you that you are still in charge. And you may very well be in charge of the everyday mundane occurrences. But, make no mistake; you no longer own the strategic vision. You no longer have the ultimate say for the strategic direction of the company.

Can you handle that? Most can't. That is why the majority of former

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owners that stay on with the acquiring company usually don't last through the original agreed time period. The reason is simple.

"Once you've been King - It's hard to become a Prince."

The Demotion

Being demoted is an emotional experience for anyone. The methodology and tactics used to demote someone vary tremendously based on the reasons for the demotion. The reasoning behind a demotion often dictates the eventual result of that demotion. First of all, it is arguably the most difficult decision to make work regardless of the circumstance. Statistical surveys tell us that the majority of employees that are demoted end up leaving the company or being terminated by the company within six months of the demotion.

The reason for these statistics is very understandable. A demotion can easily produce the results totally contrary to your intentions. . You could produce a disruptive, ineffective, disgruntled employee, who begins to cause all sorts of problems after being demoted, including:

- o **Becoming hostile and unproductive**
- o **Constantly complaining and sabotaging team efforts**
- o **Poisoning the thoughts of coworkers and perhaps driving out your top performers.**
- o **Quitting without noticed**

Depending on the reasons for a demotion, different types of transition and corrective actions are dictated. Is the demotion strictly related to business economics beyond the individual's control? Is demotion a result of a performance issue? Is the demotion related to the "Peter Principle" where this employee had been previously promoted beyond their abilities and competence? Is it an attitude problem? The act of demoting someone rarely ever corrects performance or attitude issues.

Think very hard before you decide to demote someone. Chances are you are better off terminating the individual. You may be wiser to lay them off or fire them rather than demote them. The future of someone that has been demoted is generally very limited. Their career aspirations, attitude and ego are often tied to their position in the hierarchy. At the very least, offer them the opportunity to resign. It may be in their best interest as well as yours.

The Career Change

You just weren't happy doing what you were doing. So

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you decide to make a career change. You may even decide to further your education first. However, you're not a rookie. You have been a member of the workforce for at least ten years. The problem is that you just didn't enjoy the type of work you were doing.

However, you are resilient, a hard worker with great references and you quickly find another job totally unrelated to the work you had been doing for the past ten years. Watch out. Life is not always simple. You have scar tissue and experience but it doesn't count for much in your new career. You are a rookie starting over. Don't expect the same level of recognition or respect that you earned in your previous career. You are starting over and often times that means starting at the bottom.

Don't wear your ego on your sleeve and have an open mind. Remember, that new coworker may be five to ten years your junior but in the realm of direct experience he may have ten years of training and on the job learning on you. He can help you.

Recognize that you must adjust your attitude to accept your new position and rank.

Remember "Once you've been King — It's hard to become a Prince."

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The Mystery of Marketing

By: Rick Johnson

Many companies often blur the connection between marketing and sales. Some even combine the function and actually create the position Vice President of Sales & Marketing. That would be the same as appointing someone as Vice President of Finance and Operations. Unless the company is exceptionally small, no one person can maximize their effectiveness at either position. Simply put, both functional areas are completely separate and require separate management.

Sales vs. Marketing

Basically speaking the sales function is to bring in business. Marketing's function is to give sales the tools it needs to be able to bring in that business. Marketing's job is to understand the company, the competition, and the market. Additionally the current trend is to put "Vendor Management - Relationships" under the direction of marketing.

Many companies operate under the misconception that the job of marketing is to saturate the opening of the sales funnel. They accomplish this

saturation utilizing advertising, brochures, branding techniques, trade shows hoping that they can generate numerous leads for the sales department to follow-up on.

In reality sales resources are limited and cannot afford to chase unqualified leads. Marketing often believes they are performing a demand creation activity. However, that is not always the case and true measurement of success in this arena is generally very limited. This creates the ability for marketing to create "urban legend" with regard to true demand creation performance. Ask

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any marketing manager and they will quote excellent performance statistics regarding lead generation.

If you take any marketing course in business school, the Five P's of Marketing are ingrained into you from day one. Collectively these 5 P's make up what we as marketers call the Marketing Mix. While there are some variations to the P's, they generally consist of:

Product- the product or service offered to the customer

Price - pricing strategies with the goal of meeting a desired profit margin or costing structure

Place (Distribution) - distribution of the product/service to your target market

Promotion - communication and endorsement of your product/service to a customer

People - service marketing and the level of customer service you provide to your customer

Make no mistake; it is the customer that drives the entire marketing mix. The entire process starts and stops with the customer - this is the only true measure of success

Marketing is Also about Customer Retention

Unfortunately, some marketing "professionals" wouldn't know a customer even if the customer were a rattle snake and bit them in the behind. Many marketing managers simply don't have enough contact with customers. They rely on surveys, research and sales person feedback alone. Furthermore they often lack the

sales experience to understand where the opportunities really lie. Make no mistake; it is the customer that drives the entire marketing mix. The entire process starts and stops with the customer - this is the only true measure of success; anything else is just "smoke and mirrors" or "Urban Marketing Legend".

Some Key Marketing functions should include the following:

- 1- Market research
- 2- Market segmentation
- 3- Competitive analysis
- 4- Customer and market segmentation and product attractiveness
- 5- Development of marketing plans
- 6- Pricing strategy and tactics

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7- Advertising & Promotions

8- Brand management

9- Vendor Management

Marketing managers should be the first ones to notice trends and be able to make recommendations of new products. Product development and product launch should be key strategic initiatives led by marketing. Marketing is how you define your product, promote your product, distribute your product, and to maintain a relationship with your customers.

Marketing can also play a role in helping sales to become more effective (thereby increasing the close rates) by providing competitive data, solution-building tools, and so forth. However, those peripheral activities are only useful insofar as they match the requirements of the qualified leads - the leads that marketing should help generate. In real life, many sales professionals believe that most marketing "tools" are useless and they throw them into the trash can because the "tools" have no relevance whatsoever to actual customers. It's a sad truth that some marketing groups are viewed as the generators of piles of unqualified leads and piles of useless, generic marketing junk.

If that is the case at your organization, the solution to the problem of unfocused, generic marketing activity is to compensate Marketing personnel based upon their ability to reduce the cost of sales.

This works because:

1. Cost of sales is easily quantifiable and highly visible to top management, which can quickly take action if Marketing falls short.
2. Focusing on sales cost prevents Marketing from funding activities that neither generates qualified leads or helps Sales close those leads.

Unfortunately, many (not all) marketing groups are compensated based on how many brochures they print, how many ads they run, how many conferences they attend and how many presentations they give. Some take credit whenever a sale is made, regardless of how the actual sale was generated.

Marketing is often out of sync with the overall sales process or they are not “measured” in a way that ensures they add value to the sales process. Effective marketing should lead to effective sales which make it ridiculous that marketing is not held more accountable for the overall cost of sales.

Marketing may be viewed as “doing their job” if they put out enough brochures, advertising, etc. But, the sales team is considered a failure if all this great marketing effort is not turned into increased sales. And how about booking to billing ratios from month to month; if that starts to go in the wrong direction, it may not be a reflection of poor sales performance. It could be that the Marketing “strategy” may need to be re-visited.

Let me clarify — Marketing is not sales. Marketing is a support function to sales but should be held accountable for supporting growth with effective, measurable marketing plans. Marketing should be responsible for product, price, promotion, and placement(distribution). The objective is to have the right product, at the right price, at the right place, at the right time, for the right customer. It’s a little more complex than sales and as such it should be held to the standards of accountability as sales departments are at a minimum.

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How to Virtually Guarantee a Decision-Maker Meeting

By: Gloria Berthold Larkin

Government contracting has developed into a very competitive marketplace because it has the potential for being very profitable. Companies of all sizes, from tiny micro-firms with one employee to large, mega-firms with thousands of employees, have been successful in selling products and services to government agencies at the federal, state, city, county and municipal levels.

However, competition has heightened as more companies try to break into, be competitive and stay

successful in this market. It is mandatory that a business person learn how to build relationships with the decision makers before pursuing contracting opportunities. A successful Capability Briefing is one of the best ways to start and reinforce the relationship building process. Five years ago, very few people knew what a Capability Briefing was, and now, it is a critical tool to help you be as successful as possible, no matter what size company you represent.

In the last issue we discussed the multiple layers of decision makers

involved in federal government contracting, how to identify and find them and the specific preparations to be made before asking for a meeting. To refresh your memory the three layers of decision-makers are:

- Small Business Representative
- Contracting Officer
- Program Manager

Now that you have identified these decision makers in the agency you are targeting, how do you go about

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contacting them, what is your specific message and how do you ask for and virtually guarantee a decision-maker meeting?

Capability Briefing

To be successful in the federal market, it is important to use the language your customers use. In that regard, it is recommended that you change your terminology from decision-maker meeting to Capability Briefing.

Purposes of a Capability Briefing

- Introduce the agency or organization to your firm
- Initialize the relationship building process
- Take a critical step in the capture management process
- Provide proof of
- Core Competencies
- Past Performance
- Differentiators
- Mitigate Perceived Risk in Hiring a Different Vendor
- Satisfy RFP requirements
- Renew relationship with an agency if original contact left or was reassigned

To Request a Capability Briefing

First, do your homework! Confirm that the agency, organization, prime contractor or potential teaming partner wants to meet with you and has potential business opportunities appropriate for you.

Second, continue doing your homework by researching past, current and forecasted opportunities before you request a Capability Briefing. Come prepared to discuss specific matches between your firm and upcoming opportunities. Only when you know about most of the upcoming opportunities is it appropriate to ask for additional information regarding the pre-pipeline opportunities.

Third, target the right person or people. Realize that there is no one decision-maker in the government market, but rather, layers of decision-makers. It is your challenge to identify those decision-makers and plan to meet each one at an appropriate time in the buying cycle.

Fourth, follow the appropriate process. Do you call first,

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email first or wait for an out-reach session? The short answer is all of the above, but with caveats.

Phone call: Call first and leave a voice mail stating who you are, your firm, your phone number and that you are sending an email requesting a Capability Briefing. Mention that you will call back in three days to set a time for the meeting, unless he/she prefers to schedule a date/time by email.

Email: Send a very short email with a one page targeted Capability Statement attached as a PDF.

In the Subject line state: Capability Briefing Request.

The body of the email should include your mention of the voice mail message, your attached Capability Statement PDF, and how your firm meets the needs of that agency. Ask for a Capability Briefing and mention two alternatives dates/times. State that you will follow-up with a phone call in three days.

Make sure every email you send includes:

- Your name and title
- Company name
- Email
- Phone number
- Web site
- Any other appropriate information (GSA or other contract vehicles, certifications, DUNS, etc.)

Then follow up with the promised phone call, leave another message and repeat the process until you get the meeting or hear from that person referring you to whom you should speak with instead.

Rules Regarding Requesting a Capability Briefing

1. If the agency or prime has a vendor registration process, ALWAYS complete that registration before requesting a meeting.
2. If you are a small business, ALWAYS start with the agency's or prime's small business representative before pursuing other people within the agency.
3. NEVER ask for a meeting regarding an opportunity that is already advertised as a solicitation.
4. If you are certain that the person you are contacting is the correct person, do not give up. Most people give up after one or two tries. *Successful contractors never give up!*
5. Make your message compelling-you should be such a perfect match for the work they have coming

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up that they will *want* to meet with you.

5 Common Mistakes

- 1. Do not start at the top.** If this is your first foray into an agency, do not target the Director, XO level or other executive level person. While this is a typical tactic in the private sector, it will backfire in the public sector.
- 2. Do not use a generic Capability Statement.** Instead, tailor each Capability Statement to the agency or prime you are targeting. Otherwise, it will be at best ineffective, and at worst, deleted.
- 3. Do not expect an immediate response.** Remember, these decision-makers have many responsibilities, and meeting with contractors is not necessarily at the top of their list. However, the better match you are for what they need, the better your chance is of hearing back from them.
- 4. Do not skip the Small Business Representative.** These people can be your best ally if you are a small *or* a large business. Plan your strategy to always start here before going to contracting officers or program managers.
- 5. Do not offer to take them to lunch or dinner.** This is a rookie mistake. While it is expected in the private sector, this is not allowed in the public sector.

Preparations for a Capability Briefing

Your preparations and research will be different for each type of person. We covered the specific preparations in the previous issue. Please review these to make sure you have done all of your homework before asking for the Capability Briefing.

Who Should Attend a Capability Briefing

When you are meeting with the following people, you want to consider having the appropriate people from your company attending.

Small Business Representative

- Your business development person

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- Your XO Level (if a small company)

Contracting Officer

- Your business development person
- Your XO Level (if a small company)
- Contract vehicle experts

Program or Technical Manager

- Your business development person
- Your XO Level (if a small company)
- Technical experts
- Subject matter experts

Location

Almost always, the Capability Briefing will be held at the targeted person's government office. They will rarely if ever come to your office or location for a meeting.

Materials to Prepare

PowerPoint Most often, contractors rely on a PowerPoint presentation to sell their message during a Capability Briefing. This may be a good time to use such a tool. However, be very careful as many government offices now prohibit bringing electronic equipment of any kind and this would eliminate use of a laptop, projector or even flash drive. Always ask first if a PowerPoint is allowed, and if so, do you need to bring your own projector and laptop.

Rule of thumb: Plan for one slide for every five minutes of time. If you have 30 minutes allotted, your presentation should be no more than five slides, period.

Always take printed handouts of all slides.

Always print out more copies than you think you will need of the slides as you may have more people attending than you initially thought.

Always take a pad of paper and a pen.

Always be prepared to discuss details of related past performance, research, processes or procedures related to a specific contract, RFP, RFQ, RFI or other targeted opportunity. You may also choose to include case studies

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or other data that will effectively identify your differentiation strategy.

Materials NOT to Take to a Capability Briefing

- Do not take your cell phone in to the meeting. Many federal buildings require that you do not take any communication device inside, especially one that can take photographs.
- Unless you have received authority to do so, do not bring any electronic equipment such as a laptop, projector, or camera to the meeting.
- Unless you have received authority to do so, do not take samples, display boards, demo units, or other equipment.
- If you want to leave a promotional item such as a pen, make sure it is under \$25.00 in value

You now know how to find the decision-makers and request a Capability Briefing. If you spend enough time and effort executing this process, you will build strong relationships with the people who are involved in making decisions regarding which vendors are hired to perform the services and provide the products needed.

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Holding Effective Meetings

Nine Simple Rules

By: Helen Wilkie

Most people in business complain that there are just too many meetings. That may be true, but business meetings are a fact of life, and the best we can do is learn to make them worth the time and effort they require.

Effective business meetings are an exercise in communication: we speak, we listen, we discuss, we decide. Meeting rules may vary from one situation to another, but holding effective meetings is essential to getting things done. If you want to learn how to conduct a meeting, here

are my nine simple rules to help you through the process.

1. Call only necessary meetings

Before you begin the whole process of calling and holding a business meeting, ask yourself if it is really necessary. Do certain people actually have to gather in the same room to accomplish your purpose, or could a series of phone calls, an e-mail or a memo serve the same purpose? Develop a reputation for calling meetings only when necessary, and

people will be more willing to devote their time to them.

2. Invite the right people

Invite people who have something to contribute or who need to be involved in the discussion. If you have to consult someone for information or authorization about an agenda item and that person is not there, it's frustrating for everyone. Consider inviting them just for a specific agenda item. On the other hand, don't invite people just because they are at

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a certain level in the organization. Busy people appreciate your consideration of their time.

3. Create an effective agenda and distribute it well before the meeting

An effective agenda is much more than a list of topics. It can function as a meeting announcement, as well as a tool to help the leader control the discussion. Sending it out in advance lets people know what will be discussed and gives them an opportunity to gather information they will need and prepare their input. Effective meetings begin with effective agendas.

4. Start and finish on time

Don't wait for latecomers — start on time without them. You should also avoid the temptation to bring

latecomers up to date on what has taken place before they arrived, a practice that penalizes those who came on time. People shouldn't be rewarded for upsetting everyone else's schedule. Allot a time to each subject on the agenda and stick to it. Effective business meetings start and finish on time.

5. State the objective at the start of the meeting

State an objective that is results-oriented rather than discussion-based. e.g. "We are meeting this morning to approve the final budget for next quarter." This is a measurable objective, towards which you can work during the discussion. Don't say, "We are meeting to discuss.....". After all, you could discuss for hours and technically you would have met your objective, but you could hardly describe it as an effective meeting.

6. Keep the meeting moving towards its objective

Don't let people drag the discussion off track. Keep reminding them of the objective and redirect the discussion back when they stray. Your communication skills come to the fore as you lead a business meeting.

7. Don't just sit there — say something!

But what if you are attending someone else's meeting? Can you still contribute to making it an effective meeting? Yes, you can. Assuming you have received an agenda in advance, carefully consider what materials you should take with you, any information you have that would be important to the discussion and make notes of any points you might make at the meeting. Having something to say and saying it is the

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best way to contribute to a successful meeting. Do your homework in advance and you will know what role you should play.

8. Arrange for appropriate notes

Even informal meetings need notes to summarize what happened and, even more important, to set out any actions that are to be taken and by whom. Names of those who are to take the actions should be included in the notes and, if possible, someone designated to follow up on the actions.

9. When the objective has been accomplished — stop!

If you have been successful in completing discussion of your agenda within the allotted time, don't be tempted to start a discussion about something else. Finish early and you'll be a hero, so don't spoil it by starting to discuss other issues. Congratulate participants on a successful meeting, and move on.

If you follow these rules, you will not only be observing proper meeting etiquette, but you will also be on track to an effective business meeting that delivers results.

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The Urgent Versus The Important: Urgent Wins Hands Down Every Time

By Michel A. Bell

Do you know anyone not rushing about regularly? Even teenagers attending school have joined the daily mad dash. Social networks, video games, and other activities have overtaken their lives. Excellent tools such as iPhones, iPads, and other gadgets with potential to help organize our priorities now drive busyness; we are slaves to these tools.

After getting out of bed each morning, how long before you check your email, Facebook account,

Twitter, or other site? I know; it is a struggle to leave the email, iMessage, or other communication tool until a set time you decide in advance.

What are we going to do about this? We cannot continue with this busyness. It causes stress, leads to heart problems, inefficiencies, ineffectiveness, family challenges, and leaves folks unfulfilled while running around chasing their tails. Sure, we know we must distinguish between the *urgent* and *important* and work with priorities; however, how do we

build these ideas in our day to get rid of the continuing stress? Folks tell me, they just don't have time to stop?

Think about it; we don't have time! What a silly phrase we accept so we can deflect the problem from the main cause: me, you, each of us; it's nobody's fault but our own.

Let me share what you know already, probably in a different form which, by God's grace, might get your attention. We need to understand and develop working approaches to deal with the *urgent* and the *important*.

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The Urgent

Many times the urgent appears convenient requiring little time, no preparation, and is one-off. Why not attend to it now? Several “convenient” urgent interactions will slaughter your priorities because each will require more time that you anticipated.

We must identify and respond to urgent situations on our terms. Typically, *the urgent means somebody is imposing on our time*: boss, spouse, children, colleague, friend. The challenge is how to distinguish to which urgent items we should respond. Essentially, which imposition we must accept, and which we will choose to take. Here is my simplistic three-step suggestion.

First, accept you can choose to reject many urgent requests.

Second, decide that your *default reaction* to the discretionary urgent will be inaction. To help decide your final action, ask: what’s the result if I ignore this now? The phone is ringing at supper with your wife. You hear the email ‘dinging’ sound. Your colleague opens your office door unannounced with a ‘problem.’ Train yourself to process these from your default position in less than a minute, and learn when to say no, and when to say not now.

Beware; there are non medical emergencies that suck you into action; they are disguised urgencies. Ask the same questions as before. You can plan to deal with many of these emergencies. You know they will happen, but you don’t know when: the car will need tires, need maintenance; the fridge will break. You can set aside funds for them regularly, and when they happen, a lack of funds won’t create an emergency. Do preventive

maintenance, save systematically to repair and replace cars, stoves, and so on.

Third, accept your seductive gadgets-phones, tablets, video game consoles-and social network sites, are significant time wasters. You can conquer these only if you decide never to use them unless you *work for time*. You must learn when to work for time and when to *work for task*. You work for time when you set specific start and end times for emails, Facebook visits, Twitter tweets, or other activities. You work for task when you work until you complete the job fully or until you decide to stop.

Meetings are another urgent impostor. They devour time and lead you to conclude, “I don’t have time,” which is absurd. Always set start and end times, and prepare an agenda for each. Most meetings waste time, but

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nobody champions meetings' eradication. Sometimes when an organization has too many people, one way to pass the time is to meet often.

Watch out; the urgent is seductive, often appearing to need a little time and demanding minimal input.

The important

Usually inconvenient and needs planning, the *important* is not as attractive as the *urgent*. Here is where your gadget tools can help set priorities. The important will need thought, reflection, and might give the impression you are not busy: you are not rushing about putting out fires. Unlike the urgent which is reactive, this is proactive. I think this is the significant reason people gravitate to the urgent and away from the important.

Here is my three-step suggestion to work with the important.

First, do not work with a to-do list. Have a list of projects from which daily you take at least one item and slot in your day timer. Set a specific time daily when you will meet with

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you to work on priorities. Do not accept calls or interruptions. Let others know this is your time; tell them you are dead. Something comes up, tell them they need to ask: what would they do if you were dead? Do it!

Second, daily, look one week ahead to see how your schedule is going and what might need deferring to a precise later date to stay with current priorities. Identify specific projects, meetings, and affected parties and reschedule to a later time.

Third, schedule your day with breaks between meetings and activities. Leave time in between for reflection and recharging, and to return important calls.

Summary

You have a choice. Continue rushing about; eventually you might get a heart attack, become a poor role model, or lose your job for ineffectiveness. Alternatively, decide to move away from allowing the often easy to handle *urgent* to the *important* that requires thought and reflection at a slower pace. You might do more productive and meaningful work in less time!

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Your Guide To Top Nursing Schools

By: John Morris

So, you want to go to one of the top nursing schools, take up nursing and be a well paid and steady employed nurse years from now? To achieve this and more, you have to scout for the top nursing schools that could give you the best level of education. You go here and there to look for top nursing degree programs such as Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), Registered Nurse (RN), Bachelor nursing programs, Masters nursing degree programs, nursing license and other specialty nursing areas like that of the certified nurse midwife programs.

Put an end to that search... All over the world, University of Phoenix, Walden University, Sanford-Brown College, and Bethel University are the most well known and top nursing schools.

Throughout the years, the field of nursing has brought millions and millions of people above average paying jobs. Not only that opportunities arises like the golden sun everyday, and awaits all degree holders of nursing, especially those that graduated from the top nursing schools, and since nursing is proved to be in an endless great demand, a

number of nursing schools grow and multiple every year like mushrooms. If you wish to take the path of nursing and get high quality education, you'll find the top nursing schools in states such as: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North

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Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming and more.

Most of these top nursing schools require applicants and/or students to acquire formal training and certification. Top nursing schools, according to the studies, are expected to grow more in numbers and go full blown before year 2010. Moreso, the Bureau of Labor Statistics have seen figures of obvious uncontrollable growth in number of employed registered nurses up to date. With this, nursing professions prove itself to be the most in demand and the largest well known profession worldwide. Graduating and earning a degree from the top nursing schools will be your key to the gate of the golden variety of professions such as nurse practitioners, family nurse practitioners, nurse assistance, and registered nurses. Among the given nursing professions, the most popular field is registered nursing.

The top nursing schools enhances the development of their nursing school program and offers which includes undergraduate / non-degree/ graduate medical and health professions; nursing professions; registered nurse; public health and safety; medical administrative services; education; business; liberal arts and humanities; public safety and law enforcement; psychology; computer sciences; math and statistics; nurse practitioner of family; nurse practitioner; public health nurse or community nurse; nursing administration; social services and public administration; dental hygienist; sports medicine; paramedic; therapeutic and rehabilitation professions; nursing for adults and seniors; engineering technology; visual and performing arts; medical ethics and bioethis; religion and philosophy; communication technologies; religious vocations; communication and journalism; residency programs and so on.

The world's top nursing schools are more often than not, located in the top cities where mode of transportation to and from the location is easy and the cost of living is nonetheless, affordable.

In spite of the tight competition going on between all the top nursing schools, they maintain the quality of education and continue to vie for a reputable name in the field of nursing. Throughout the years, they've given their students a systematized curriculum within convenient class hours, an extensive and strong alumni network, and solid learning groups and learning teams. These tons of benefits and advantages have brought in more than a million students lined up for enrollment. Surely, these top nursing

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schools are the answers to all your professional high education worries.

Learning groups and Learning teams in top nursing schools

So, how does the learning groups differ from the learning teams? The learning groups are a heard of nursing students who go all the way up TOGETHER all throughout the degree process. They help each other hand in hand as they move from one course to another. The solidarity in learning groups remain intact even after they've earned their degrees. However, learning teams are a bit smaller than the learning groups in terms of head count. Usually, learning teams in top nursing schools consists of around 3 to 6 students only. They are not as intact as the learning groups because their ways of interaction and communication is very minimal. And most of the time, they do their group assignments and projects, and other activities which enhances learning skills through online learning.

Top nursing schools will continue to extend benefits to their graduates, degree holders and alumni. So, ship all your worries off to Timbuktu, because with the helpful information I mentioned about top nursing schools - you'll be more than ready to take the 1st step!

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Successful People Face Their Fears and Act

By: Bud Bilanich

You can become self confident by doing three things. First, choose optimism. Believe in your heart of hearts that today will be better than yesterday, and that tomorrow will be better than today. Second, face your fears and act. Procrastination and inaction feed fear and rob you of self confidence. Action cures fear. Third, surround yourself with positive people. Don't let the naysayers into your life. Hang around with people who are positive about themselves, their careers and life in general.

Fear is the enemy of self confidence. Self confident people face their fears and act. Procrastination is the manifestation of fear. When I find myself procrastinating, I stop and ask myself "What are you afraid?"

Usually, the answer is on the 12 most common fears on the list below. Which of these stop you from moving forward? What are you doing about them?

1. Fear of failure — This type of fear has its roots in the misconception that everything you do has to be 100%

successful.

2. Fear of success — This type of fear is based on the idea that success is likely to mean more responsibility and attention, coupled with pressure to continue to perform at a high level.

3. Fear of being judged — This type of fear comes from the need for approval that most people develop in childhood.

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4. Fear of emotional pain — This type of fear is rooted in wanting to avoid potential negative consequences of your actions.

5. Fear of embarrassment — This type of fear is a result of empowering others to judge you when you demonstrate that you're only human by making mistakes and having lapses of judgment.

6. Fear of being abandoned or being alone — This type of fear is related to rejection and low self esteem.

7. Fear of rejection — This type of fear comes from personalizing what others do and say.

8. Fear of expressing your true feelings — This type of fear holds you back from engaging in open, honest dialogue with the people in your life.

9. Fear of intimacy — This type of fear manifests itself by an unwillingness to let others get too close, less they discover the "real you."

10. Fear of the unknown — This type of fear manifests itself as needless worry about all of the bad things that could happen if you decide to make a change in your life.

11. Fear of loss — This type of fear is related to the potential pain associated with no longer having something or someone of emotional significance to you.

12. Fear of death — The ultimate fear of the unknown. What will happen once our spirits leave our bodies?

By identifying your fear, you are more than half way to conquering it. Here is my four step plan for conquering your fears:

Identify what you fear. Use the list above to figure out why you're afraid. Is it fear of failure? Is it fear of making the wrong decision? Is it fear of a lost opportunity? Are

you afraid that you aren't up to task? Once you identify the reason behind your fear, you are well on the way to overcoming it.

Admit your fears. It's OK to be afraid. You wouldn't be human if you were never afraid. A common definition of courage is the ability to feel fear and still do what you need to do regardless. In 1988, I faced a very frightening decision. Should I stay in a comfortable but ultimately unsatisfying job with a large corporation, or should I start my own business? I was afraid of failing. Failing meant that I would lose my savings and have to start over again, looking for a job in another corporation. However, once I identified and admitted my fear, I was able to take the next step — acceptance.

Accept your fear. Accepting your fear is important, because it shows that you know you're human. Once I accepted that I was afraid of failing, I was able to start my business and succeed. In fact, I embraced my fear of failure. It made me work harder; it pushed me to work the long hours and learn the entrepreneurship lessons necessary to be successful as a self employed coach, consultant and speaker.

Take action. Action cures fear. It is the most important of these four steps. Do something! The worst thing that can happen is that you'll find it was the wrong thing to do — and you will have eliminated at least one thing from your list of possible actions.

Action is the antidote to fear. In most cases, you'll choose wisely and your fears won't be realized. In the cases when you choose poorly, you'll find that failure isn't as catastrophic as you imagined. Successful people learn from their failures. By taking action on your fears, you win on both counts. You win if you make a good decision and things work out. You even win if you make a bad decision and things go poorly, because you have an opportunity to learn from your decision and the subsequent problems you faced.

The common sense point here is simple. Successful people are self confident. Self confident people face their fears and act. Procrastination is the physical manifestation of fear. When you find yourself procrastinating, figure out what scares you about the situation. Is it fear of failure? Is it fear of success? Is it fear of rejection? Is it fear of being embarrassed? Is it fear of the unknown? Once you've figured out why you are afraid, do three things; admit your fear to yourself, embrace your fear, and take action. Action is the antidote to fear.

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Leadership Training Priorities - A Step-By-Step Approach

By: Richard Brody

In my three decades of management and leadership consulting and training, it has become abundantly clear to me that adequate and effective leadership is a major obstacle and challenge for most organizations. Most organizations neither effectively qualify potential leaders nor have a mechanism in place to assure that leaders maximize their potential to succeed. I generally recommend that organizations emphasize and prioritize leadership training. These are the basics of leadership training,

and the components that all successful programs include:

(1) An organization must have programs for various levels of leadership. The first level is entry level, or early leadership identification and development. These individuals are also known as the future leaders. Next, there is intermediate leadership training, or training leaders at the local and/or lower levels of the organization. There must then be advanced training, for those entering Board or Trustee levels of leadership. Finally, there must

be elite training, for those involved in the highest leadership positions of an organization.

(2) Organizations must train in what is required to be a leader. In other words, "How to be a leader?"

(3) What are the skills required for leadership? These include communication, effective listening, negotiations, staff oversight, member relations, decision making, etc.

(4) How to market the organization?

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This means getting existing members more involved, lapsed members excited again, and potential members to join, as well as exciting donors and potential donors./

(5) How to clearly elucidate the mission statement of the organization? This includes clearly creating one that effectively yet briefly explains the importance of the organization, what it does and what it stands for.

(6) Leaders must understand all aspects of motivation.

(7) Leaders must be trained to be able to both write an effective letter, and give an adequate and motivating speech and/ or address.

(8) How to answer objections? Leaders must fully be able to use the five steps to answering an objection.

(9) How to effectively work with co-leaders and staff?
What should a leader expect?

(10) What is the difference between micromanaging and effective management? What must be done before a leader can effectively delegate responsibilities?

(11) Leaders must fully understand the organization.

(12) Leaders must be trained to fully utilize all aspects of the decision making process, and understand all potential ramifications, both positive and negative, of either making a decision and taking action, or conversely, what might occur if no action is taken.

(13) What are the components of leadership judgment?
What is involved in the process?

(14) Leaders must learn the basics of negotiation, as well as the pitfalls of contracts.

(15) When should a leader and an organization use a consultant, and when not to do? What should an organization look for in a consultant?

These fifteen items are just the “tip of the iceberg.” However, when one evaluates and compares the most effective organizations and compares that to those that flounder, in the vast majority of cases, a significant difference is the concentration on leadership training and qualification. Today, many organizations seem to be suffering from a dearth of leadership and involvement, and one of the major causes of that, is the lack of concentration on developing and training its leaders.

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Five 'Mores' to Enhance Your Performance

By: Kevin Eikenberry

When you think about the most successful, happy, fulfilled people you know, you could probably identify some characteristics these people have in common. If we were sitting together, I'm sure we could build a nice list of these characteristics, attributes, habits and attitudes.

Several years ago, when thinking about that question, I identified several things that those people shared that I wanted to incorporate into my habits more consistently.

These things have made and continue to make a difference for my own personal and professional development.

These five things are truly universal - these five habits could make all of us more productive. After applying them more diligently in my life, I had them printed on the back of my business cards. That version of cards has since been replaced, but when one of those cards came across my desk, I was pleased with the ideas as I read them again, and decided I would describe them in this article.

Following then are the five actions I identified. When these actions are taken more often, they will become habits that will greatly impact our performance - in all parts of our life.

Read More. The statistics are horrible and sad. As a whole, Americans don't read very much. Given that reading is one of the best ways for us to learn new ideas, techniques, skills and approaches, it only makes sense that reading is a key to our education, learning and growth. If you want to advance in any part of your life, make

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reading a part of your daily routine. Reading an average of 30 minutes a day will allow you to read one book per month in an area of interest or professional growth. That's 12 books a year. How much of a difference could that make in your performance?

Listen More. Listening gives us the chance to learn something. When you listen more intently you build the other person's confidence and show, through your actions, that you value both them and their information. Really good active listening is a skill we all have -when the person or the topic is highly important to us we can listen very effectively. The challenge for us is to listen more intently, more of the time.

Ask "Why?" More. Exercise your curiosity! Asking why helps us determine the causes of problems (making it easier for us to solve them.) Asking why helps us learn about anything, when we ask it. Asking why can help us see things from a fresh perspective. As kids we ask this question incessantly. As adults we too often forget to ask it. Ask it already!

Smile More. If I could tell you that there is something you could do that takes almost no energy, costs you nothing and is guaranteed to improve your emotional health, and at the same time helps other people feel better too, you'd be interested in that wouldn't you? Just smile. You will feel better when you do. And a smile is contagious - in a good way. It spreads good feelings and positive emotions. It reduces conflict and stress. Smiling more is perhaps the easiest of these habits to implement. And you can start right now.

Say "Thank You" More. It is one of the first interpersonal skills we teach children. We do it because we know that it is important. Saying thank you is the right thing to do. Say in person, say it in a handwritten note. Say it on the phone, say it in email. When you focus on a spirit of gratitude, it becomes easier. Like smiling, this one is easy to start right away.

These habits aid us in two major ways - they help us become more consistent and successful learners and they help us build better relationships by improving our interpersonal skills. Reading, listening, and exercising our curiosity certainly help us learn more about whatever we choose to learn about. And listening to others (really listening) is one of the best ways to improve relationships. Of course, smiling and saying thank you also make us more pleasant to be around, and encourage others to want to build relationships with us too!

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How to Measure Success So That It Empowers You!

By: Michala Storm

This article will explore how your own definition of success may either support you or hold you back. And it will give you a list of 10 helpful tips to help empower you.

Let me start out by asking you a question:

“What does being successful mean to you?”

Let’s take a simple example. Say you have been unemployed for a while and you still haven’t found the job that you are looking for. Even

though you are putting in a lot of effort it does seem like you are getting the results you are looking for so far.

As a result you may end up feeling unsuccessful and disempowered.

Clearly your objective is to get a job but how you manage you mind in the process of finding what you are looking for will make all the difference in the world.

To be able to manage your mind there are certain premises that are worth keeping in mind.

Let’s take a look at some of the premises:

1. Success is individual. You have to define what success means to you.
2. Real progress is NOT a linear process, there will be ups and downs.
3. Your own mind can either sabotage your goals or support them

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Now that we have the premises in place (and I won't go into details about the premises in this article) we can start to look at how you may want to measure your own success so that it supports you.

By standards of society "finding the job" most likely would equal being successful. In my opinion this perspective isn't really useful as it doesn't seem to support you in the actual process of achieving your goal.

Even though "finding the job" is the objective in this example I do suggest that you start out by measuring success by a different standard - a standard which will support you in making the progress that you are looking for.

I suggest that you measure your success by the following standards:

Being successful means:

1. Measuring your own progress versus end result
2. Being able to recognize when certain goals no longer serves you

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3. Being willing to let go of those goals that no longer serve you
4. Setting new goals that are more in alignment with yourself
5. Being able to view your voyage as a learning process
6. Being able to let go of self judgment
7. Stop comparing yourself to other people's success - unless it's inspiring
8. Being able to ask for support (you don't have to go it alone)
9. Being unstoppable despite of inevitable set backs
10. Knowing and believing that your goal is possible

You are of course free to take from the above list and only use what you rings true with you. The list is only meant as an inspiration to help empower whatever goals you want to achieve.

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What is the Strangest Secret For Success?

By: Ben Sanderson

There are many ways that you can manifest success in your life, but nothing has been proven to be more effective than the power of positive thinking and visualization. People who live their lives believing they will accomplish great things and can actually see themselves doing it will be those people who will accomplish their goals. Those who go through life believing they can't and thinking they will never reach their goals are not likely to ever see success.

The brain is a mysterious thing. It is not completely clear why positive thinking and visualization work so well to help people be successful in their lives, but it happens. It happens everyday. People put the power of thinking positive to work and great things start to happen in their lives.

The Strangest Secret

The Strangest Secret is a lecture or

message. It was created by Earl Nightingale. This message speaks about positive thinking and visualization. It helps people to see how it works to bring about great things in a person's life. It tells about the power that just thinking positive and believing in yourself can bring about major changes in your life. People who hear the message of the Strangest Secret are forever changed. This message is powerful beyond words. It is something that once you hear it, you will be forever changed

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and your life will be changed. The message has influenced over a million people to change their lives and to start using positive thinking and visualization in their lives. The Strangest Secret really is no secret at all since it is available to people all over the world. Earl Nightingale gladly shares it with anyone who wants to change their life for the better.

Positive Thinking

Understanding the concept of positive thinking that is introduced in the Strangest Secret is not too difficult. It is all about simply erasing negative energy and thoughts from your mind and life. Instead of thinking about what you can't do, you think about what you can do. Instead of saying something will never happen, you say something will happen. It is a simple idea.

The hard part of this concept is actually doing it. You can make a commitment to think positively, but it is difficult to actually do it. Most people are so used to negative thoughts that they find changing their behavior and only being positive is hard. Negative thinking is a habit. You just have to break that habit. Instead of being negative, be positive. Positive thinking can be made easier with the addition of visualization.

Visualization

Visualization is a concept in the Strangest Secret used alongside positive thinking. It is simply the idea of seeing in your mind. You visualize in your mind something happening or doing something that you want to happen or want to do. It may sound very simple and, in fact, it is an easy thing to do. However, many people simply do not believe in its power. That is when visualization can fail. Just start doing it without expectations. Just train yourself to start seeing the positive things happening in your life. Soon you will find it is easy to think positive and visualize your goals and dreams becoming a reality.

While the power of positive thinking and visualization go beyond science, it does not mean it isn't real. There are many cases that prove the information in the Strangest Secret is very real and that it works. People all over are experiencing the powerful change in their life simply by thinking positive and visualizing themselves living a better life.

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Hope for Discouraged Students

By: Raymond Gerson

Are you a discouraged student?

Do you think that teachers or other students perceive you as dumb and a failure? What others say or think about you is not as important as how you feel about yourself. Don't let others define you. Find your own limits and discover from experience what you are capable of accomplishing. Discover your own abilities.

There are many different types of

intelligence. Everyone has their own special talents and types of intelligence. For example, some have a

There are many different types of intelligence. Everyone has their own special talents and types of intelligence.

gift for music, teaching, counseling, writing, sports, comedy, etc. These

require different types of intelligence. Also, our intelligence is not fixed at birth. We can continue to increase our intelligence throughout our lives in spite of obstacles.

Read the biographies of great men and women and you will see that many of them were once labeled by others as unintelligent or mediocre. Winston Churchill failed the sixth grade and he had teachers who thought that he was not smart. Helen Keller was born deaf and blind. She

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was unable to speak until she was taught to do so by Anne Sullivan. Most people had no faith in her ability to accomplish anything of significance. As an adult, Helen Keller gave inspirational talks to audiences all over the world. It is not the hand that we are dealt that determines whether we win the game but it is how we play the game that counts. Helen Keller was born with a difficult hand but came out a winner. Some people are born with a good hand and lose the game by wasting their lives.

There are many other examples of intelligent people who were considered “dumb” by others. Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison’s parents were told when their children were in elementary school that they were “dumb.” Abraham Lincoln was demoted from being an officer in the military to the rank of private because he was considered incompetent. Even though some people considered Churchill, Keller, Einstein, Edison, and Lincoln to be unintelligent, they proved to be intelligent and made significant contributions to others.

It is difficult to predict what others will accomplish in their lives. Who can predict what you are capable of achieving if you work hard in school and are determined to succeed? Success in school depends more on skill and will than it

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does on brilliance. Good study skills, combined with the motivation to succeed, can take you a long way in school and life. Will or motivation must come primarily from within you. Study skills can be developed and courses are usually offered at community colleges and universities. Many of these courses contain success strategies which can be used to achieve your goals not only in school, but in your life, and they are also available to high school students through college early start programs. I could have used courses such as these when I was in school to build self-confidence and to learn how to study.

In middle school and during my early years of high school I experienced self-doubts, insecurity, and a lack of self-confidence. Like you, I also felt discouraged. When I compared myself to others they seemed smarter, more popular, and superior in many ways. I had no goals and I did not understand how my classes were relevant to my life and future. Needless to say, my grades were poor to average. IQ tests indicated that I was of average intelligence and this is how I perceived myself.

My parents were concerned about my poor performance in school and they spoke to a high school counselor about me. He told them not to encourage me to go to college. He said that I was not capable of succeeding in college and that I would probably perform at a mediocre level at anything I did throughout my life. Fortunately, my parents did not tell me this story at that time which I probably would have used as an excuse to quit school. I did not find out what this counselor said about me until I graduated with a master's degree and an A average.

I thought about quitting school many times when I was a teenager. I am so thankful that I continued my education in spite of obstacles and periods of discouragement.

Over time and through my life experience, I discovered that I had talents and I began to develop my strengths. I discovered that I was capable of making a positive contribution to others through inspirational writing, public speaking, coaching, counseling, and teaching. I love my work and it gives me fulfillment and a deep sense of purpose.

Don't give up on yourself. You were born for a purpose. Search within yourself and discover your own special abilities and how you want to use them to make a positive difference.

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Human and Civil Rights Violations Still Occur In the United States

By: Douglas M Midgley, JD

Human and civil rights violations often occur in many parts of the United States as illustrated by recent voting and marriage laws passed in State Legislatures, miscarriages of justice occurring through verdicts rendered in our judicial system, bias and discrimination taking place at the corporate level and bullying in our schools. When they take place, these violations have a serious negative impact upon community race relationships, can cause civil disobedience and strife and sometimes even threaten our ability

to keep law and order. What avenues are open to us to prevent their future occurrence?

An Assessment of our Current Race Relationships Based Upon Sixty Years of Observation

I am not an expert in race relations but grew up with the civil rights movement in full swing and saw what happened over the past sixty years both in

Florida and the nation at large. The best way I know to resolve civil rights problems such as those described is to prevent them from happening in the first place by eliminating the underlying causes, but that is not always possible and when it is possible it does not happen overnight.

The American civil rights movement has brought us much progress in race relationships through the efforts of Dr Martin Luther King, the American Civil Liberties Union, the passage of

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the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by the United States Congress signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson and the well documented efforts of countless others.

But even though our country has elected its first black President, in point of fact our various racial groups if given a choice still seem to prefer to mingle with members of their own race most of the time. This self-imposed distancing of the races from one another when and where it occurs undermines mutual understanding and respect, provides the opportunity for misunderstandings to arise and sometimes becomes the match that ignites civil disobedience when perceived violations of human rights occur. Protests and demonstrations taking place as a result of voter suppression laws, marriage inequality and alleged

miscarriages of justice arising from unpopular jury verdicts illustrate my point.

We need to firmly commit to legal equality for all: black - white (or any other race or color), lesbian - gay - bisexual - transgender, or straight, male - female, young - old, and the disabled without regard to religious doctrine or political ideology.

My focus will be primarily on the voter suppression laws in operation during the 2012 Presidential election.

Human and civil rights violations illustrated by voting laws passed in State Legislatures

When laws such as those listed below

become law with the deliberate but sub-rosa intent to lower the percentage of minority voters going to the polls and casting ballots because the party passing such legislation receives much less support from those voters than the opposition party receives, it is a deliberate impairment of racial harmony and an obvious attempt on the part of the political party in office to keep power at all costs even by violating human and civil rights.

The laws and practices mentioned are reminiscent of laws enacted by so-called "banana republics". When those laws don't have the intended result and the election is lost by the party passing them what's next? A military junta? It is outrageous for a political party in the United States to stoop to that level. If a political party cannot get a majority vote in a lawful and ethical way then it has no right to win election. Consider these tactics

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for a moment all of which have been recently used in trying to win elections.

- Make registering to vote more difficult.
- Impose restrictive and burdensome identification requirements as a pre-requisite to registering to vote and casting your ballot.
- Prohibit same day registration on the date of the general election.
- Reduce the number of early voting days to a minimum.
- Eliminate early voting on Sunday - a day on which many voters of color prefer to cast their ballots.
- Make voting as inconvenient as possible for those who do not normally vote for you.
- Deliberately distribute fliers in Spanish misstating the date of the election and showing it held on a date later than the date for which it had been scheduled.
- Put many more voting machines in favored precincts than you place in precincts dominated by the opposing party to assure long lines and delays in voting in precincts dominated by the opposing party and make sure only short lines exist in the precincts dominated by the party in power.
- Shorten the hours the polls stay open.

Where these discriminatory attempts to suppress minority rights exist the next time a situation develops that those minorities consider discriminatory - such as a miscarriage of justice in a court trial - it will ignite and mobilize civil rights advocates, initiate litigation, cause public protests and bring about petitions to the government officials for the redress of grievances. Is creating the need for such action to keep and exercise rights to which we are all clearly entitled in the best interests of racial harmony? Is it in the national interest to allow such practices to continue? Let the reader be the judge of the appropriateness of such action.

It is extremely disappointing, that even after decades of effort - legal, judicial, public and private, personal and

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corporate to give equal opportunities and set up a level playing field for all we are still trying to dig ourselves out from under the quagmire created by the attitude of people who are frozen in time and unwilling to see the need to change their attitude.

Conclusion

We must continue to educate our children to understand the underpinnings and great importance of the American civil rights movement, its causes and the sacrificed lives that brought it about. And we must instill in them the need to firmly commit to legal equality for all: black - white (or any other race or color), lesbian - gay - bisexual - transgender, or straight, male - female, young - old, and the disabled without regard to religious doctrine or political ideology.

Respect for our racial and cultural differences in all age groups seems key to overcoming the lingering remnants of bigotry and hate that sometimes still disrupts racial harmony and social integration. Old habits die-hard. In this case let's hope they die sooner than later.

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*We Support The Hiring And
Advancement Of All Minorities*

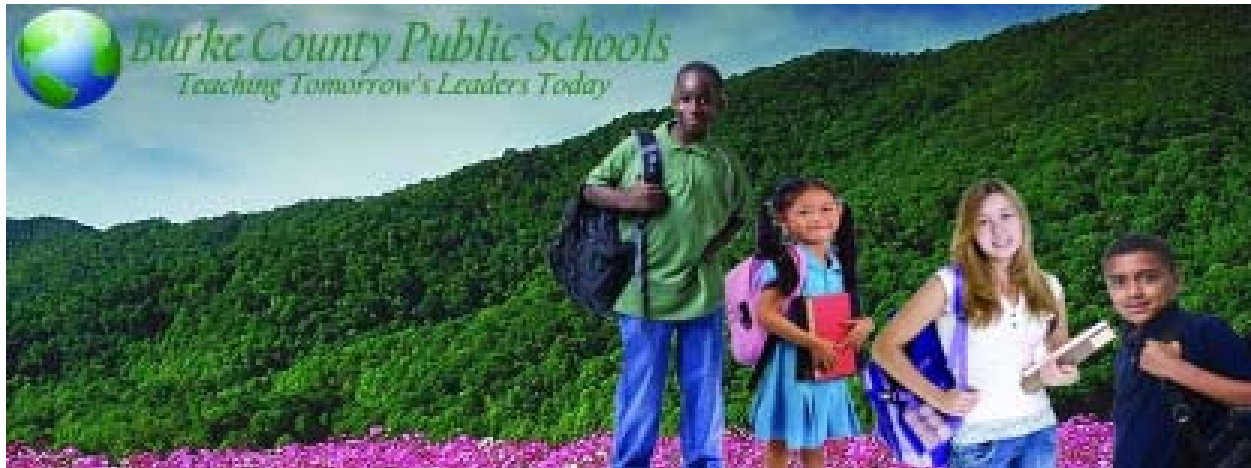


VALLEJO CITY
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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