

MINORITIES & SUCCESS

A group of diverse young adults are walking along a paved path on a college campus. In the foreground, a young woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a teal cowl-neck sweater over a light blue shirt and mustard-colored pants, is walking and smiling. Next to her is a young man with a beard, wearing a grey zip-up hoodie over a white shirt, olive green cargo pants, and a green beanie. They are both looking towards the right. In the background, another young woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue and white plaid shirt under a denim jacket and grey pants, is walking and smiling. The background is filled with trees showing autumn foliage in shades of yellow and orange. The overall atmosphere is bright and positive.

Are You Committed To Your Success?

**What It Takes to Create an
Winning-Award Business**

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In this Edition:

**Personal Branding Strategies for
Women in Business.....Page 4**

**What It Takes to Create an
Award-Winnig Business.....Page 13**

**Are You Committed to Your
Success.....Page 23**

Price of success.....Page 26

**Create Your Success by
Acting With Enthusiasm.....Page 28**

**Human and Civil Rights Violations
Still Occur In the United States.....Page 30**

**Best 14 jobs of The Future:
The Most In-demand Careers.....Page 35**

**Creating a Safe and Connected
School Climate.....Page 43**

The Inequality in Public Schools.....Page 48

MINORITIES & SUCCESS

<http://minoritysuccess.us>

Publisher.....MSPG Inc.
Web Design.....Blue Cyber Media
Editorial.....Michelle Rad
Lay out Design.....Farimah Farahpour

Free Subscription for Colleges, Libraries and Minority
Employment Organizations. \$29 all others

Your comments are encouraged. Please write to:
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Vol. XXXII No. 4 ISSN# 1058-6318
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Personal Branding Strategies for Women in Business

By Susan Friesen □

How a Personal Brand Plan Benefits Your Business Brand

You don't get a second chance to make a first impression.

Truer words were never spoken, and they apply to both you and your business.

If you're a store owner, for example, you know that if someone has a negative interaction the first time they visit, they're going to walk right out, and likely never come back. They might even tell a few friends.

But if they have the time of their life on their first visit to your store, you've got a loyal customer for life. And again, they might even tell a few friends.

But what about if you're someone who works with clients? Someone who hopes to be a leader, a speaker, an author, an entertainer, a consultant?

Perhaps you've done the hard work of building your business brand, with a logo and professional website to match.

But your business brand is only half the battle. Because if you want to stand out and reach your ideal clients, then you

need to spend just as much effort on understanding, developing and maintaining your personal brand.

While personal branding is critical for all business people of all genders, the reality is that women are so often conditioned to be meek and mild. So while anyone can benefit from the tips I'm about to share, I highly recommend that women, in particular, listen up (so they can get the confidence to speak up and stand out!).

Why You Need a Personal Branding Strategy

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Women often ask me, 'how does a personal brand contribute to my business?'

Branding takes work and effort, and business leaders are tuned in to ROI. So they often want to know how a personal brand can benefit their business, before putting in all the effort.

In short, your personal brand is a representation of your business, and people will judge you accordingly.

The reality is that people do judge a book by its cover.

So creating a brand is like the cover for your business. You want that cover to not only stand out, but also to be a true reflection of who you are, and what your business is all about.

And whether intuitively or directly, most people believe that how you do

one thing is how you do everything. If your personal brand is haphazard, lazy or nonexistent, that will reflect on your business whether you want it to or not.

On the other hand, when you align your personal brand with your business brand, you're much more likely to not only connect with the right people but also turn them into raving fans.

So that's the 'why' of developing a personal branding strategy. To learn more about how personal branding dovetails with professional branding on our website.

Now let's get into the 'how.'

Creating A Personal Brand

If every journey begins with a single step, then the first step on this journey is to embrace your personal brand.

That means being confident in who you are. This calls for authenticity. Honesty is important over all else in branding - being genuine builds trust, and trust builds customers.

This can be difficult for women who are often raised to be people-pleasers and all-things-to-all-people.

That's why you need to keep your target audience in mind.

When building up your brand you need to define your ideal client.

And then realize that only your ideal client matters.

Not everyone has to like you, and that's OK. Remember that the people who don't embrace your brand were never likely to be customers, anyway.

So be confident in who you are. Own it! Own your personality and don't be afraid to share it with the world.

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**Embrace what makes you unique,
and share it with the world.**

READ: 8 Personal Branding Mistakes
that are Hurting Your Business

*Personal branding blunders can
repel customers. But how do you
avoid them so you don't actually
harm your business?*

*Here are the biggest personal
branding mistakes to avoid.*
Read more online.

Examples of Building Your Brand and
Building Your Business

In my role, I wear lots of hats. Our
Canadian-based agency provides
just about every service you could
require for digital marketing: logo and
graphic design, custom website
design and development, SEO and
SEM marketing, social media
marketing, content writing,

copywriting, newsletters, and strategy
consulting.

And while I love all my hats, I think
what I love most is working one-on-
one with small business owners and
entrepreneurs to help them define both
their personal and professional brands
and use them both effectively.

**It's so powerful to help women have
their 'aha' moment of getting crystal
clear on who they are and what they
have to offer.**

For example, our good friend and (now
retired) client Dana Smithers is a
woman who lives, eats and breathes
her personal brand. Always the 'lady in
red,' Dana is a shining example
of **integrating her personal brand** with
her business brand and her whole life.
Our client Katherine Hartvickson
of **Quantum Ascendancy** is another
shining example of creating solid and
consistent personal and professional
brands.

Katherine is a high performance
leadership and HR Consultant, as well
as speaker and best-selling author.
She is also a powerhouse personal
brander, infusing professionalism and
grace into everything she does. This
includes regular insightful blog posts
and a longstanding social media
presence that establishes her as a go-
to expert.

And like we've covered, it's important
to fully embrace who you are.
For example, our client Yvonne Douma
isn't afraid to show her playful side!
While her company **Douma
Leadership** offers serious services to
entrepreneurs looking to improve their
communication skills, Yvonne brings
an infectious lightheartedness to her
work that her clients love.

So instead of forcing herself into the
'somber businesswomen' role, Yvonne
embraces who she is, with a social
media presence that reflects the fun,

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family-oriented person she is. Don't get us wrong: Yvonne is a super serious entrepreneur and consummate professional who also shares incredibly insightful tips and strategies to establish herself as an expert in her field (for example, see our talk on communication skills on our website).

But that doesn't mean she needs to shoehorn her personal brand into something that just isn't her.

Branding Tips for Women In Business

So once you've got a little clarity on your personal brand, what comes next?

Here's are some tried-and-tested ways to build your personal brand:

Optimize Social Media

The best way to effectively use social media in your marketing is to be consistent and create authentic engagement.

Social media is not a tool to sell your business. Instead, it offers a wonderful opportunity to share your personal brand. Keep your social media presence consistent in order to build and enhance your personal brand awareness and develop a "know, like and trust" factor with your followers.

Learn some more tips on how to create an effective social media strategy with us online.

Develop An Appropriate Content Strategy

A good content strategy is important for so many reasons, one of which is establishing your personal and professional brands. We're all familiar with the phrase 'content is king,' so it should be no surprise that well-written content is one of the most important elements of your website and marketing materials.

Now, the right content strategy will look different for different companies. It can include:

- Website content
- Webinar/Teleseminar registration pages
- Product and service sales pages
- Blogs and newsletter articles
- eMail Marketing / Newsletters
- Social media posts
- Press Releases
- Print marketing materials

Ultimately, the goal of all content should be to showcase your brand, appeal to more clients, gain conversions and, ultimately, increase business.

If you're new to content marketing, we have some great resources to help you get started:

- How To Create Blog Content to Attract Your Target Audience
- How To Convert Newsletter Signups Into Customers Without Feeling Sleazy

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- How To Engage And Inspire With Interactive Content Marketing

Accept Praise With Grace

This is a personal fault of my own, and I suspect it's something many women struggle with. It's sometimes tough to respond to a compliment, but I highly recommend you take a moment and accept it. Part of owning who you are is being grateful when people recognize it.

So instead of shrinking back and deflecting compliments, accept praise with grace

And don't shy away from your accomplishments, either! It's not bragging if you simply list your accomplishments and let them stand for themselves.

Find your Community

Surround yourself with your target

market. That way, you're more likely to be spending time with people who are more likely to respond to your personal brand.

Not everyone appeals to everyone, so put yourself in places where your ideal clients will be present. Mixing water with oil will just cause you unnecessary problems.

By placing yourself in the right setting and letting yourself shine with a strong personal brand, you will lead yourself to your ideal clients. The opposite - trying to be all things to all people - just leads to hurdles that are best avoided.

You can connect with your community at networking and community events, and never underestimate the importance of a great Facebook group!

Work With A Branding Expert

If you're an entrepreneur, then I have no doubt you are good at what you do. But what you do may not be branding and marketing.

Remember, personal and professional branding takes a lot of time and effort. It can also be a little intimidating.

You'd outsource your accounting if numbers make you cross-eyed, and you'd outsource your building management if you were swamped for time. Similarly, it's often a great idea to outsource your branding and marketing if you feel like you're in over your head, or if you just don't have the time to dedicate to this important work.

That's where our team can help, with consulting and branding strategies to help you get to the next level. I can't wait to learn more about your business goals!

To your business success,

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What It Takes to Create an Award-Winning Business

By Susan Friesen

14 Strategies We Attribute to Our Recent Business Excellence Award

Out of the blue, I received an email from the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce one day notifying me that we were nominated for a 2016 Business Excellence award.

Say what?

Once I got past my shock and disbelief that they must have the wrong Susan... it began to sink in that someone out there thought we were worthy enough of this nomination. Wow, what an honour!

Part of the nomination process consisted of a 30-minute interview in front of a 3-judge panel. Imagine being forced to actually brag about yourself for a half an hour! Talk about squirming in my seat!

Fast forward to last week where the awards ceremony took place. Much to my relief, our category was up first so I could relax the rest of the evening.

To be honest, I wasn't all that anxious - I knew the odds of winning was only 1 in 7 so I waited patiently for the winner's name to be announced, not at all expecting it to be us.

But it was! We were declared the winner!

Say WHAT???

Shock and disbelief once again came over me as I took a moment to grasp what just happened. Walking to the stage was quite the blur but I managed to do it without tripping up the stairs to get our award.

In the aftermath of winning this wonderful recognition, I reflected some more about that judge's interview and how they deemed us the winner from the other worthy nominees in our category.

With that in mind, I wanted to share some of the attributes I feel helped us

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win this prestigious award. Without further ado, here's what it took for me to create an award-winning business:

1) Be Passionate About What You Do

We are not the first business I've created; there's been plenty others ranging from creating craft pieces to faux finish painting. But no matter what I did, I was very passionate about it.

Don't waste your time trying to run a business just to make money. You're going to tire of it very quickly and it will be harder to make sales.

But when you're passionate about what you do, others will immediately see that and will be drawn to you like a magnet.

2) Love Working With the People You Serve and Offer Exceptional Customer Service

One of the truest joys I receive is the knowing how much we are able to help a new business owner get their online presence up and running. Being a part of their joy at seeing their dream materialize into something tangible gives me just as much joy.

If you avoid answering the phone or responding to emails because you dread having to talk to a client, then you need to adjust your marketing so you attract the right people to work with.

If you don't love who you're working with, then it's hard to establish a successful business that needs to cater to your clients by making customer service a #1 priority. And that means answering the phone, responding to emails in a prompt manner, and treating every person as if they were your only client. And when you're attracting your perfect ideal client, then this should be easy to do.

Make your business about them, not you. Just remember, if you had no clients, then you'd have no business.

3) Know Your Stuff

Before even thinking about starting a web development/digital marketing business, I ensured I got the education I needed first. I attended the Vancouver Film School in their Multi-Media program and then later earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with a concentration in Computer Information Systems (with an A+ GPA).

Not to mention the countless online courses I've taken over the years to ensure my skills are kept up-to-date with this ever changing industry.

Sadly, I see a lot of entrepreneurs wanting to start a business with not a lot of skills or experience under their belt and then they wonder why they're

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struggling.

Reading a book or taking one on-line course is probably not enough to reach award-winning status. But if you're passionate about building a successful business, you'll find a way to ensure you become as qualified as needed.

4) Be Committed

Is working 15 hour days, 6-7 days a week committed enough? Yep, that's what Daniel and I do every week. We have to in order to fulfil points 2 and 3 above.

It takes a lot of time and effort to ensure your clients are taken care of properly. You also need a "do whatever it takes" level of commitment.

You might not need to work such long hours as us and trust me, we're

continually working towards lessening that kind of volume but until then, we are willing to do whatever it takes to ensure our business is successful. Are you?

5) Be Consistent

Consistency shows up in many forms when running a successful business. For me, it's being consistent with my message, my brand, my Social Media presence, my newsletters, my team management, and the level of quality we bring to our clients.

Do I miss sometimes? Absolutely. But being consistent in these areas are very important to me, and I do what needs to be done in order to show up the best I can for my team and our clients.

Without consistency, it's hard to create brand ambassadors (such as the ones who nominate you for an award),

loyal team members, and a steady flow of clients.

Whatever you have decided to commit to, be consistent at it and you'll be amazed at how things start to flow your way.

6) Surround Yourself With a Dedicated and Knowledgeable Team

I started off as a one-woman show. Because of my educational background, I was able to do the design, build and marketing of a website quite easily. I'm what you would call a "generalist", someone who knows a lot of about a lot of things and is a specialist in a few areas.

But my one-woman show was not going to create a successful business. Especially in this technologically-driven industry. It quickly became apparent my skillset was only going

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to get me so far.

So my first hire was someone who could offset my biggest weakness. Warren was a student at UFV and applied for my part time programmer position. He was a perfect complement to our company and the moment he came on board, I was relieved of having to do all the site builds myself. I could then take that time and focus on building the business instead.

It's tough to try and do everything yourself when it comes to running a business. Sure, there are expenses involved in hiring but if you hire smart, keep an eye on your bottom line, and know when to let go of those that aren't serving you best, your business will escalate far quicker than if you try to struggle with everything yourself.

This topic is worthy of a whole article

itself so I encourage you to read How to Take a Solo-Entrepreneurship to the Next Level for more.

7) Have Honesty, Authenticity and Gratitude be a Part of Your Daily Life

It's sad I even need to list this as an attribute but I've been in business long enough to know not everyone adheres to these principles.

To me, this is a no-brainer - I'm not certain I could live any other way?

But judging from the stories I hear from new clients about how they were treated by their previous web developer, it sounds like many people need to be reminded of this.

No business will thrive without honesty and integrity. And a little secret: gratitude will not only make your business thrive, but your whole life too.

Give it a try and see what I mean.

8) Persevere

Every business, including ours, has its ups and downs. The key to success is to not let those "downs" overcome your enthusiasm. Pick yourself back up, learn from whatever lesson there was to be learned, and keep moving forward.

If we had quit when we only had \$20 credit left on our credit cards at Christmas time just a handful of years ago, we wouldn't be award winners now!

9) Invest in Your Business

Building the company has been one investment after another. It never ends really.

There's always something that needs to be worked on. Here's a short list of my recommendations on where you need to invest in your business:

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a.Branding & Website

b.Marketing

c.Education

d.Building a Team

10) Understand You're Running a Business, Not a Hobby.

I think this is an important distinction to make and one many entrepreneurs aren't differentiating.

I've always looked at our company as a business and that's mostly due to my business mind and having a business degree.

But for those that simply are passionate about something and have a dream to make money off of it, it's hard to know exactly HOW to turn that dream into a business.

They end up blindly doing what they think they should be doing, all by themselves, in order to save money (or not spend money they don't have) and hope for the best.

If this sounds familiar, I'm adding another business investment to consider as your top priority: A business coach or mentor. ASAP. Otherwise, you'll probably end up just running a hobby.

11) Set up a Systemized Business Structure

I've worked with a lot of clients over the years. Some amaze me at how organized and systemized they are. And others, well, not so much.

Having a systemized business structure in place is the only reason I haven't gone insane with my daily workload.

Here's the tools we use to be more organized, efficient and less stressed.

12) Get Comfortable With Sales

Sales. It's a dirty word for many entrepreneurs and business owners alike. Me too. I hate to think of myself as a "sales person" but at the end of the day, if we're not selling our wares, we don't have a business.

Now that's not to say you need to become a pushy, in-your-face predator. Far from it.

Remember attribute #1 about being passionate? That's what you need. People will trust your passion and will respond to it. But be careful, sometimes passion can be too intense and will turn people away.

Find your sweet spot as to what resonates with your ideal clients and keep working at it. But do embrace the fact you're selling your wares and learn some strategies that fit with your

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personality and comfort level that will work.

13) Give Back

Giving back is an imperative attribute to have when building a successful business. We give back in several ways, here's some ideas to consider that we do:

- Offer discounted prices for non-profits
- Volunteer your services to community groups
- Send cash donations to worthy charities you believe in
- Make purchases that support worthy causes
- Donate door prizes and/or silent auction items for fund raising activities
- And support your own clients whenever you can

14) Be Accessible

When new clients approach me due to being disenchanted with their existing web developer or marketer, the most often complaint I hear is they can never get a hold of the person. Either they take forever to respond to an email or never answer their phone.

I think I'm going to write a book on how NOT to run a successful business based on this alone. It boggles my mind when I consistently hear stories like this. How are these people keeping a business going with such poor service and accessibility?

I have a policy to answer emails within a day of receipt. I often exceed that policy but sometimes the volume is too much and I get delayed in responding. Same thing with the phone. If we're available to answer, we do so. If we're not, we'll call the person back right away.

Being accessible provides peace of mind to our clients; they know we care enough about them to take care of their needs in a timely manner. 'nuff said.

There you have it. My honest take on what created the company to be an award-winning business. Maybe I need to write a book about this because, honestly, I could have added more but, it's coming into the 15th hour on this Sunday night of working so I'll leave it at that.

What about you? What would you add to the list? Please leave a comment below, I'd love to hear from you!

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Are You Committed To Your Success?

By Anne M. Bachrach

Sure, many business people say they are committed to their success, but are they really? When it comes to commitment to your success, there has to be a “no excuses – no exception” rule to back it up. This rule is especially true for entrepreneurs, simply because there is no one to point the finger at should things not work out as planned. As an entrepreneur, you are the one holding the key to your success and no one, but you, can be held accountable. Once you make a commitment to something, there absolutely has to be a “no excuses – no exception” rule, because that is

the only rule that separates the failures from the successes. You must cut out all ties to an escape or alternate plan because that will set in your mind that failure is not an option. In other words, when you establish only one direction to go, that is where you will go. Imagine what would happen if you were to commit to your success only 99% of the time: 1% percent of your clients would be unhappy with your product or service and proceed to tell 10 of their friends. Those people would proceed to tell their friends they had a friend that had a bad experience. This could translate into dozens of lost clients and thousands in lost revenue.

1% of your printed marketing materials (websites and social media profiles) were published with spelling and grammar errors. This has a devastating effect on any business with a poor perception from the public and potential clients. 1% of the time you do not answer your email from a prospective client within 24 hours. You respond a few days later, but learn they have taken their business to someone who responded promptly. See how much of a difference there is between 99% and 100% commitment? Although 1% doesn’t sound like much, reaching 100% commitment at every opportunity is not always easy.

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The only way to truly hold a reputation for commitment is by consistently demonstrating 100% to each and every task. Once genuine commitment is displayed, your success is inevitable. There are two rules when it comes to your success, and a sure-fire way to catapult your success, but they only work when you are 100% committed!

Rule #1: 100% Commitment to Achieving your Goals

There may be many opportunities for excuses and exceptions, but under no circumstance do you waver from what you truly desire. Ever. What do you do if your life doesn't support your goal achievement? In all honesty, there is no easy way around it – some changes will have to be made. Sometimes those changes are easy, and other times they are not, especially when there are others to consider. This is no more true when you have a spouse/significant other and/or children. After all, every action you take has the potential to affect them. You may have to do some soul searching and find out if you can make changes that will allow you to commit to your goals, while causing the least amount of discomfort to those that will be directly affected. If you choose to commit to achieving your goals, do not settle for anything less.

Rule #2: 100% Commitment to Never Ending Improvement

The second key to your success, is committing to never ending improvement. You may be better than you were yesterday, but in no way are you better today than you will be tomorrow. Taking a humble approach to learning is one of the best ways to set yourself up for success. Use every action and reaction as an opportunity to learn how to do things better next time. In addition, surround yourself with as many positive role models as you can. Watch, listen and learn from successful entrepreneurs that have gone before you; what you learn can result in huge shifts in your perception and life. When you are facing obstacles or challenges, do not allow self-doubt, fear or frustration to sway your commitment. In fact, during these times, it is more important than ever to remind yourself why your goals are important to you. Reconnect with the emotions that are the driving force behind your goals and you will remember why you are taking the steps in the first place to make changes. Remember, your commitment to your success not only benefits you, but those around you, and the world as well. You must embrace commitment to your goals along with never ending improvement if you wish to reach true success.

“Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes; but no plans.” ~ Peter F. Drucker

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Price of success

Failure. In the English language this is a bad word. It brings up emotions of sorrow sadness unpleasantness, not being good enough and so on. But what if the price of success was failure. What if without failure we could not experience success. Then what?

If that is true, and according to all the experts that is the case, where do we stand? What happens if we fail to fail?

When we were born we had no definition for failure. All that we experienced was success, starting from successfully coming out of the womb and taking our first breath, the next success was being fed, and

moving our hands and eyes and so forth. Fast forward a bit and we start making an attempt at walking we don't know failure we hit the ground but get up again and try it again we don't give up because failure to us has no meaning yet.

Fast forward to language. Here is when we start to have a concept of failure. The moment we understand and start communicating all the messages of society form around one thing. Be careful not to fail. As we grow up and go to school we are on a daily basis bombarded with the message that failure is bad and you have to do everything in your power to avoid it. Pay attention for most of

us the message is not that success is good but that failure is bad and you should try to avoid it by being successful. So the meaning of success changes from accomplishing something that was out of our reach, to avoiding failure. The sweet taste of success is replaced with the bitter taste of failure, hidden under the cover of avoiding failure is success. So we go to school and learn not for the sake of learning but to avoid failing. We get into relationships with the fear of failure looming over our heads and instead of a joyous and carefree love we attempt to do the right things as not to fail. We enter the job market and the pressure

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increases. We do our job well so that we don't fail or get fired. We fail to create and invent. Our passion for life and zest for creativity gets lost. We become these drones walking around and doing everything in our power to avoid failure. In the process we stop taking risks and start becoming numb, sad, unfulfilled, and we start wondering why are we even doing what we are doing. We lose a sense of purpose in life. We give up on our dreams, wants and desires because they are too risky and we might fail at them. The aversion to failure becomes so strong that it cripples us and takes all the joy out of life. And then we have a kid and start teaching them the same.

But what are we to do. We started out avoiding failure in order to succeed and we end it up failing. Our whole focus in life is failing, fear of failing or avoiding failure. All we think about is failure.

What if we were to go back and change the meaning of failure, change it in our dictionary and renaming it the price for success, what if every time we failed we knew that we are one step closer to success? What if we started taking risks in life again, learn for the sake of learning, love for the sake of love and work for the sake of working. Would we become creative and inventive? Would life become joyful again? What would that be like? Would we then feel successful regardless of the result?

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Create Your Success by Acting With Enthusiasm

by Bud Bilanich

If you want to succeed, you must commit to three things. First, you must take personal responsibility for your success. Only you can make you a success. You need to be willing to do the things necessary to succeed. Second, you must set high goals — and then do whatever it takes to achieve them. Third, stuff happens; as you go through life you will encounter many problems and setbacks. You need to react positively to the negative stuff and move forward toward your goals.

You have to take personal responsibility for your own success. I have a quote from Paul J. Meyer, a well known motivational speaker, hanging just inside the door to my

office. I read it every time I go in and out of my office. That quote reads...

Whatever you can...

Vividly imagine,

Ardently desire,

Sincerely believe.

And enthusiastically act on...

Must inevitably come to pass.

The four most important words in this quote are ***“and enthusiastically act on.”***

When you enthusiastically act on achieving your goals, you are

demonstrating commitment to taking personal responsibility for achieving them.

Hard work is one way to demonstrate your commitment to your success. Put in the time and effort you need to succeed. Do it under the best of circumstances and the worst of circumstances. I grew up in Pittsburgh. I’m a lifelong Pittsburgh Steelers fan. As you probably know, they won the most recent Super Bowl. Ben Roethlisberger may not be the prettiest quarterback to watch, but he is willing to do the work it takes to perform and succeed. He played the entire Super Bowl with two broken ribs. That’s commitment to performing and

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succeeding.

I'm not suggesting that you work when you're injured. I am suggesting however, that you need to enthusiastically act on what you imagine and desire. That means you need to seize each day and get the most out of it. Paul Meyer offers 13 suggestions for seizing the day. Here they are, and how I use them in my life...

1. **Be an inverted paranoid:** I believe the whole world is conspiring to do only good things to me.

2. **Be a quick forgiver:** I don't have time to waste in unforgiveness.

3. **Be optimistic:** Believing the best of people and circumstances is a sure way to find the best.

4. **Be thankful:** I always give thanks for the blessings I've received and keep a smile on my face.

5. **Be an encourager:** Encouragers make me feel better, stronger, and more

capable of accomplishing my dreams. I want to do the same for others.

6. **Be spontaneous:** I have a sense of urgency and a do-it-now attitude. I get things done fast.

7. **Be a giver:** My greatest joy is giving — especially my time and advice. I love to help other people succeed.

8. **Be positive:** Being positive has the potential of turning the worst situations into victories.

9. **Smile a lot and laugh at life:** Adversity is a steppingstone, not a roadblock. Why not laugh in the midst of the challenges?

10. **Live life with enthusiasm:** I will only live once, so why not give it my all?

11. **Enjoy life:** I truly enjoy life.

12. **Find a hobby you enjoy:** I read, cycle and go to the movies. No matter where I am, I always have something I like to do.

13. **Look for people to help:** I get up every morning excited about helping

others that day. I'm really excited today, I'm recording a CD full of helpful career and life success tips.

At first, this list may seem a little surprising. It doesn't say things like "get up early," "create a to do list and cross off everything before you quit for the day" or "handle each piece of paper only once." These are good ideas, but I like the way Mr. Meyer approaches seizing the day — being human by being positive and a giver, looking for people you can help, smiling, being spontaneous and encouraging others.

The common sense point here is clear. Successful people commit to taking personal responsibility for their career and life success. They decide what they really want out of their life and career. They create a vivid mental image of themselves having what they want. And then they act — enthusiastically. They seize the day and do whatever it takes to get what they vividly imagine and ardently desire. Commit to taking responsibility for your success. Seize the day and act.

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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 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.

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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.

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 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.

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- 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 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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Best 14 jobs of the future: the most in-demand careers

The world is evolving, and becoming ever more digital, but what does that mean for your education and career? In this article, we dive into 14 jobs set to thrive in the future. So, whether you're fresh out of school or university, or looking to switch careers, this article is for you.

Discover which new jobs will be around for decades to come, and find out which career paths are in danger of extinction. With your newfound knowledge, you'll be better placed to plan your education and training in order to reap long-term benefits. Here's to the future!

The best jobs of the future

Below, you can find 14 of the best jobs and industries of the future. Most of these roles are already available today, but they're tipped to stay relevant for many more years.

1. Software developer (and other coding careers)

Coding is fast becoming one of the most sought-after skills for technology companies and between researcher groups. In a survey of over 500 tech workers and employers by Remote, 37% of respondents said that software

developers will be the most important tech job in the future. That makes software developers the most highly-ranked job overall in the survey.

The increasing importance of programming has caused some European countries to add coding to the primary school curriculum – here in the UK, one school has even hired a child coding prodigy to teach coding at a school in Coventry. How old do you think the new member of staff is? Well, she's just ten years old!

There is no doubt that coding is going to pave the way for new jobs in the future. But as it may take some time for those primary school kids to reach the

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job market, there is an obvious gap that needs filling for the immediate coding market. Reskilling to make this career change can even increase your salary by 38%. So, if you want to seize an opportunity, now may be the best time ever to get into software development. Start your development by trying our Software Development Fundamentals ExpertTrack. Whether you're interested in learning Python, developing your Java skills, or gaining Django certifications, we have something for you. There are so many different things you can do with programming, and with our courses, you can try anything that takes your fancy. Perhaps video game design and development sounds exciting, or maybe programming applications is better suited to you.

2. Blockchain jobs

According to PwC's Time for trust report, blockchain technology will enhance more than 40 million jobs globally by 2030, earning blockchain jobs our number two spot. The future of finance is definitely going to be heavily influenced by the rise of blockchain technology, and you can learn about decentralised finance or how to become a blockchain developer in our courses.

Most people not familiar with blockchain technology will have still heard about it – usually its association with cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin. However, blockchains are not just used for cryptocurrency. They're standalone technologies that can be useful across industries. They are already been used in the automotive industry to record the history of vehicles to prevent seller fraud. Nobody will be able to lie about the car's mileage or maintenance when all this information is recorded on the blockchain and 100% secure.

Overall, the potential of blockchain is massive – and almost every industry will be crying out for blockchain developers in the future. You can gain an introduction to blockchain and its applications in our course by UCL.

3. Virtual reality jobs

If we had to choose an industry that's going to be booming for the next few decades, virtual reality feels like a pretty good bet. The latest statistics show that the global market size of AR and VR is forecast to reach \$296.9 billion in 2024, compared to the \$30.7 billion market size that was registered in 2021. That's nearly a tenfold increase.

With the 2021 announcement of the Metaverse, a series of interconnected virtual worlds created by Meta (formerly known as Facebook), it's increasingly clear that VR and AR will be hugely impactful in the near and far future.

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From marketing departments to video game developers, virtual reality is going to be a cornerstone moment for the job market and the whole of society. If you want to get started, try our Introduction to VR Programming, Design, and Unity course from VR Voom. If you already have some VR skills, our Construct a Virtual Reality Experience course might be an exciting choice.

4. Ethical hacker (or any job in cybersecurity)

Ethical hacking is a job in the field of network security that many people do today, but this job is sticking around for the long term. The only way that ethical hackers (or white hat hackers) will be out of work is if the internet disappears and is replaced with something else. That doesn't look like a reality in the near future, or ever, meaning ethical hackers are not budging.

So, if you like the sound of a 0% unemployment rate, this might be a good career for you. What's more, the number of ethical hackers is predicted to rise by 20% by the end of 2023, compared to the previous year.

If you want to try your hand at pretending to hack websites to see where improvements can be made, then one of our cyber security courses online may be interesting to you. You can even start with an Introduction to Ethical Hacking from Coventry University and the Institute of Coding.

5. Big data analyst

The world of big data has flourished over the past few years, and that's not about to stop. According to reports by Statista, the global big data analytics market is likely to grow by 30 per cent by 2025, generating revenue of over \$68 billion.

Data analysts are going to become the new leaders in the niche of business

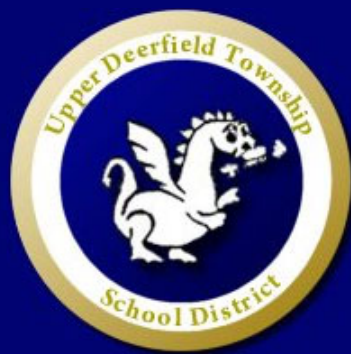
development. And they are already taking over the department thanks to big data and the ability to analyse huge amounts of information for the benefit of their employers.

Only by looking into streams of data can they make accurate predictions and inform business leaders to make the right decisions. If you like numbers and breaking down complex information into real-life decisions, this is a current job that should bring home the bacon for a lifetime. Check out our data analytics courses, from marketing analytics with the University of Virginia to big data analytics with Griffith University.

6. Content creator

There's been a huge and undeniable boom in content creators over the past few years. But what exactly is a content creator? This is a relatively broad term that captures anyone who creates content for digital channels.

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Still, the most famous kind of content creator is the social media influencer – you can read all about influencer marketing in our blog post.

With more content being consumed daily than ever before – after all, global online content consumption doubled in 2020 as a result of the pandemic – the demand for content creators is only set to grow in the future.

From fashion bloggers to true crime vloggers, the possibilities for this career path are pretty much endless. You'll need to be pretty social media savvy, so check out our Digital Marketing Content Creation and our Instagram Marketing Essentials courses to get started. You might also want to brush up on your copywriting skills.

7. AI jobs

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is much further along the process compared to virtual reality. With Elon Musk talking of putting chips in peoples' heads to create superhumans, the possibilities of AI technology really do open your eyes. But AI is not just about creating a new generation of humans. It can be about making functional robots and enhancing business processes. The developments in AI are almost limitless, which means these types of jobs aren't going anywhere fast.

You may be thinking, if AI becomes better, smarter and more widespread, won't more human workers be out of a job? However, PwC's study on AI found that "any job losses from automation are likely to be broadly offset in the long run by new jobs created as a result of the larger and wealthier economy made possible by these new technologies."

From learning about creative AI to exploring medical robots in the healthcare industry or discovering natural language processing, our AI courses will introduce you to the different career possibilities out there.

8. Data protection jobs

The laws around data handling and data privacy are growing by the decade. There is so much interest in our personal data because it can be used by marketing teams to help them sell, and by political departments to help them create targeted campaigns.

But on too many occasions our data is falling in the wrong hands and being misused or used illegally. This will create new jobs where detectives have to hunt down the use of data by certain companies, namely, data detectives who enforce data laws.

These types of investigations have already started, as evidenced by the investigation into Cambridge

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Analytica and how they helped swing the USA election and even the Brexit vote, which can be explained by watching the Cambridge Analytica Netflix documentary.

The key takeaway is that more data detective jobs are just around the corner, and you can learn more about data science ethics and protecting health data in our courses.

9. Gene experts/editors

The UK government predicts that by 2030, there could be more than 18,000 new jobs created by gene and cell therapy in Britain alone – so if you're interested in genomic medicine, this could be a field to consider.

Gene editing is a controversial topic because it allows us to somewhat play the role of a god. But away from choosing our newborn's eye colour or height, there is a medical use for it. With the power to edit genes and

use genetic technologies, we will be able to reduce the risks of serious health conditions and vastly improve the quality of life for many people. But this comes with a number of hurdles and pitfalls that will need to be addressed with legislation. What can we morally do? And what is off the table? Gene legislators will need to come in to get the industry started – and they already are – and then we will need medical experts to alter the genes and manage the whole system.

Although the whole topic can be sensitive, it is undeniably a huge step for mankind. You can learn more about the future of genetics in medicine, how DNA influences health, or how genomic medicine can help diabetes in one of our fantastic genetics courses.

10. Mental health jobs

Many people in society are working hard to reduce the stigma associated with mental health problems, opening

the door for people to seek help and use professional mental health services.

But these mental health worker jobs won't be going anywhere either. Just as people will always need doctors and nurses, we will continue to need mental health specialists to help us get through tough times. What's more, skills gap studies have found that mental health skills appeared in unique job postings 230% more in 2021 compared to 2016.

The recent pandemic, recessions, environmental worries and even a boom in remote working could contribute to further demand for psychologists and mental health organisations. Depending on the area you're interested in making a difference in, we have courses on a range of mental health topics, from depression, anxiety and CBT to helping students with complex trauma.

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11. Data broker

Earlier we discussed some new jobs that data will create, and here is another. Just like brokers exist today by helping deals for commodities pass through seamlessly, the broker world will be rocked with a new type of broker – the data broker.

The idea is simple. These data brokers will be responsible for facilitating business agreements between data companies and those who want to buy chunks of data. They will make sure the buyer gets their data and that the selling company receives their money. All the while, ensuring that the data is not shared further, maintaining the integrity of the new data market.

The amount of data online is growing exponentially every day – the current estimate of how much data is created per day is 1.145 trillion MB – so we're pretty confident that data brokers will have job security for many years to come. If you want to learn more about working with data, we have an excellent range of data science, data visualisation, and data analytics courses available.

12. Augmented reality developer

Did you know that the infamous Pokémon Go game was an April Fool's Day joke that went on to make an insane amount of money? We're talking billions – as of 2022, the total revenue is over six billion US dollars.

The reason for its success was that it was entirely innovative for the mobile gaming world. Combining a franchise that millennials grew up with and augmented reality was a masterstroke. Augmented reality changed the face of gaming and set a new bar, but it is proving effective in other industries like fashion, where augmented reality wardrobes enable you to try on clothes from home.

The uses for augmented reality are growing and that means there is a new call for developers with expertise in this niche of technology. You can learn more about immersive creative technology like AR in our course by NFTS and Royal Holloway, or try our Introduction to Virtual, Augmented and Mixed Reality course instead.

13. Drone expert/pilot

Drones are becoming more useful and popular by the day. In fact, The Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International predicts that by the year 2025, at least 100,000 jobs will be created for drone pilots.

Drones can help us provide medical supplies safely, assess building structures with ease, and revolutionise delivery services. Drones are becoming part of society's furniture and are only going to become more present over the next decade.

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With that in mind, drone experts will be needed to manufacture these machines, maintain them, and arguably the most fun job of all – fly them. If you want to become a drone engineer or drone pilot, then we have good news for you. Expect to see more of these jobs become widely available across sectors in the not-so-distant future. It is, however, important to be aware of the challenges and legal restrictions surrounding drone use, which is why our courses on drone safety for managers and using drones for security purposes might be useful to you.

14. Entrepreneur

Don't forget that society is more entrepreneurial than ever before. Fuelled by the internet and technological advancements, the everyday person now has a better opportunity to start their own business or a small empire. With further tech milestones being met, like those listed above, these opportunities to start your own business are only going to get bigger.

If you have an idea or business dream, there has never been a better time to learn the entrepreneurial ropes and give your idea a chance to succeed. Our extensive list of entrepreneurship courses might inspire you, where you can learn anything from entrepreneurship in the food industry to building a start-up from scratch.

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Creating a Safe and Connected School Climate

Thanks to its partnership with publisher Eye on Education, EducationWorld is pleased to present this excerpt from the book Dropout Prevention Fieldbook: Best Practices from the Field by Franklin Schargel.

At a time when schools seem to be teeming with bullying and cyberbullying, teachers and administrators are often unsure of how to combat the problem. The following excerpt shows teachers and administrators how to create a safe and connected school climate while concurrently implementing a threat assessment program.

Some schools' culture and climate can contribute to the prevention of violence. How does a school, its teachers and administrators, and its students work toward implementing a culture of safety?

Major Components and Tasks for Creating a Safe and Connected School Climate

Assess the school's emotional climate.

It is incumbent on those in positions of authority and responsibility to assess the emotional climate of their school.

This perspective can be gained by systematically surveying students, faculty, parents, administrators, school board members, and representatives of community groups about the emotional climate of schools. Anonymous surveys, face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and school climate surveys allow school officials to gather valuable insights about the school's emotional climate.

Emphasize the importance of listening in schools.

A school with a culture of "two-way listening" encourages and empowers

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students to break the ingrained code of silence. Listening also must be expanded beyond academic concerns. Communication between teachers and students should also include listening to feelings, especially those of hurt and pain. It is also important to “listen” to behaviors. Many students have a difficult time finding the words to articulate disenfranchisement, hurt, or fear.

Take a strong, but caring, stance against the code of silence.

Silence leaves hurt unexposed and unacknowledged. Silence may encourage a young person to move along a path to violence.

Work to change the perception that talking to an adult about a student contemplating violence is considered “snitching.” Find ways to stop bullying.

Bullying is a continuum of abuse ranging from verbal taunts to physical threats to dangerous acts. Bullying is not playful behavior. In bullying, one student assumes power by word or deed over another in a mean-spirited and/or harmful manner. Schools must establish climates of safety and respect, which establish foundations for prosocial behavior. These climates teach conflict resolution, peer mediation, active listening, and other non-violent ways to solve problems. In a safe school climate, adults do not bully students and do not bully each other, and they do not ignore bullying behavior when they know that it is going on in the school.

Empower students by involving them in planning, creating, and sustaining a school culture of safety and respect.

Creating a climate of safety should be a collaborative effort.

Ensure that every student feels that he or she has a trusting relationship with at least one adult at school.

These trusting relationships evolve and do not magically appear simply because an adult, such as a homeroom teacher or a guidance counselor, and a student have been ordered or assigned to interact with one another.

Create mechanisms for developing and sustaining safe school climates.

A mechanism for developing and sustaining safe school climates should serve as a vehicle for planning and monitoring the climate and culture of the school. Questions to be considered in implementing this mechanism might include the following: What should be done to develop and support climates of safety? To what extent are teachers, administrators, and other school staff encouraged to focus on students’ social and emotional learning needs?

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How close is the school to achieving the goal of ensuring that every student feels that there is an adult to whom he or she can turn for talk, support, and advice if things get tough?

Be aware of physical environments and their effects on creating comfort zones.

Building structure, facility safety plans, lighting, space, and architecture — among other physical attributes of educational institutions — can contribute to whether a school environment feels, or is in fact, safe or unsafe. In large schools, administrators may wish to explore changes in the physical characteristics of the school that would permit the assignment of teachers and students to smaller, mutually intersecting and supportive groupings within the larger physical structure.

Emphasize an integrated systems model.

People support most what they believe they have had genuine input in creating. This requires the difficult but necessary task of bringing all of the stakeholders to bear on changes made for safety. Stakeholders include students, teachers, administrators, school board members, parents, law enforcement personnel, after-school and community-based groups, and others.

All climates of safety ultimately are “local.”

Many local factors contribute to the creation of a culture and climate of safety. These factors include the following:

- Leadership, i.e., “open door” role of the school principal;
- “Empowered buy-in” of student groups;
- Connections to the local community and its leaders; and
- Respectful integration into the safe school climates process of “safekeepers,” such as parents and law enforcement personnel close to school.

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The Inequality in Public Schools

Well-off kids who don't get a private education still have significant advantages over their peers.

By Michael Godsey

Imagine you're at a typical American high school. In one class, students line up at the exit early because they can't wait to get out. Next door, honors students are engaged in a stimulating discussion until the bell rings. After lunch, a few of those students drive to their class at a local junior college, for which they'll earn high-school and higher-education credits simultaneously. Some of these high-achievers might return home in the evening only to take another college course—this one a paid-online class—that their parents believe will help them get further

ahead. Meanwhile, back at the school, the struggling kids are staring at computer screens, taking a remedial class. Maybe some of them lack Internet at home and can't watch the video lesson their math teacher posted for homework. Over the weekend, an advanced student might meet with her SAT tutor, while her not-so-fortunate classmate could be washing dishes at the local restaurant.

Although these students might share a campus and a mascot, they form a distinct population within the public school, as is common throughout the

country. This disparity between the relatively advantaged students and their disadvantaged peers often parallels that between private schools and public ones. In fact, the difference in opportunity can be surprisingly extreme within a single public school—sometimes even more so than that between the public and private ones. Just look at SAT scores, which are one of the only measurements available for comparing public- and private-school students. In the middle-class California town where I live, the main private school (which charges about \$12,700 annually for tuition) and public

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school have almost identical average SAT scores: 1830 and 1820 (out of 2400), respectively. But within the nearby public school where I teach, the gulf between the honor students and the rest of the school population is almost too vast to measure: The seniors taking AP English, for example, reported an average SAT score of 1890, while those in the mainstream English classes reported a mean score of 1590.

When a public-school system based on equity and “equality of opportunity” is embedded within a capitalistic society, it can be a little disorienting for students, parents, and teachers.

I wrote an essay back in March explaining that I opted to send my daughter to a small private school on the grounds that attending it reflected a “buy-in” rather than an obligation. I received a lot of critical feedback, including emails from a

local parent who told me that my opinion was a “shame,” a teacher who called me “self-serving,” and a scholar who accused me of “white flight.” I anticipated their finger-pointing because I had already read a wealth of commentary related to the subject, including a highly circulated “manifesto”

from *Slate* describing private-school parents as “bad people” and an essay on ABC.com arguing that enrolling kids in private school “sucks on many levels.” In one article about homeschooling, the journalist and author Dana Goldstein reflected a prevalent—though, according to researchers, debatable—sentiment when she concluded that pulling kids out of public schools “makes it harder for less-advantaged children to thrive.” Furthermore, I understood their complaints because I, too, believe a common and equitable educational system is integral to equality, democracy, and a sense of true

community. As the U.S. Department of Education declares, “equity in education is vital because equality of opportunity is a core American value” and integral to the country’s economic strength.

But another popular approach among parents—enrolling a child in a public school while simultaneously investing time and money in extra programs to boost the child’s success and achievement—seems similar in its contribution to educational inequality. When a child is participating in the public-school system, in theory he or she is thus supporting and benefitting from the broader goals of public education by promoting racial and socioeconomic integration on a single campus. But like students who engage in homeschooling or independent instruction, many public-school students at least occasionally leave the common group for additional outside opportunities: off-

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campus extracurricular programs, for example, or private tutoring. In themselves, these are worthy practices. It's commendable when students and their families want to invest personal time and money in improving individual outcomes, and when schools encourage kids to take advantage of additional opportunities. But this can enable significant discrepancies because not everyone can afford, spend time on, or otherwise access those activities. As a parent and high-school teacher, and a veteran coach of several sports at public schools, I am sometimes perplexed by the value in personal opportunities that are afforded more easily to some students than others. Is it better for my community if I remove my daughter from the private school and instead encourage her to take honors classes at the public school? Does that actually make a difference, and, if so, how? As a teacher, should I be excited for a

student who dedicates hundreds of extra hours to private tutoring and club sports? Or should I be advocating instead for the underserved students who cannot afford the help and therefore find themselves at inherent disadvantage?

Participation in AP classes—which includes a third of Class of 2013 graduates—is one example. I taught AP English at a public school for eight years, and it was an entirely different world than the mainstream English classes I teach now in the same district. Similar to Goldstein, bloggers and parents who criticize the nature of private schooling often argue that it takes the best students away from the public-school system, at the expense of overall achievement at the latter. But within a public school, AP classes can do something similar, taking the more-advanced students out of the mainstream classes. The difference in the overall GPA between students in

the 11th-grade AP class (taught by another teacher) and those in the 11th-grade “college prep” class (which I now teach) is significant: 3.68 and 2.90, respectively.

A 2004 National Center for Education Statistics report, which found that students who took AP science and math had an overall GPA of 3.61, compared to 2.85 among students who hadn't taken either course—even though AP courses are much more demanding. Likewise, graduates who completed an AP or International Baccalaureate class score significantly higher on the federal government's standardized test. Plus, students who take an AP course are more likely to be surrounded by academically engaged peers, have the chance to earn college credit, and are often eligible for an extra point on the grade they received for the class (a 5.0 for an A, for example).

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National statistics reveal that the student makeup of AP classes is not reflective of the school community at large, a reality that I've certainly witnessed in my time as a teacher. In 2013, students in the country who qualified for free or reduced-price meals, an indicator of poverty, represented nearly half of all high-schoolers but only 27 percent of AP test-takers. The College Board, which oversees the AP program, collected \$350 million last year from the nearly 4 million tests that were taken. These exams cost students \$91 apiece, though schools sometimes subsidize the fee.

Then there's concurrent enrollment, when high-school students participate in postsecondary coursework on the side, often leaving campus to do so and getting a head start over their less-advanced peers. The merit of this extra learning is

undeniable, but many students are barred from it because they lack the money or didn't get the support they needed to get ahead. More than 1 million students took a course for college credit in the 2010-11 school year, and about half of them paid for their own tuition, fees, and books. Studies show that the individuals who participate in dual enrollment are more likely to both graduate from high school and earn a college degree.

I know a student who took afternoon classes at the local community college last semester and ended up attending classes at his public high school for only 15 or so hours a week. This schedule is what educators might dub a "smart start." And it is really smart. Along with his extracurricular golfing, he has already completed more than a year's worth of college courses. He's confident he can finish his undergraduate work at the University

of California, Santa Cruz, where he plans on enrolling, within two years after enrolling. He's friendly and outgoing, but how much is he integrating into the mainstream student population when he's interacting almost exclusively with other high-achieving students and golfers, and spends more time on the college campus or at his job? Is this schedule conducive to the DOE's goal of achieving "equity in education"? Why I'm a Public-School Teacher but a Private-School Parent

A more-obvious discrepancy happens when parents pay for private tutors or test-prep courses. Private schools, according to the dad and blogger Serge Bielanko, "thrive because the other ones suffer." But when parents pay for specialists to help their children excel at a standardized test such as the SAT, disadvantaged students suffer. *The Atlantic* has explored how the math section of the new SAT is particularly unfair to "kids

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who lack access to in-person test preparation” and “those who live in low-income housing.” And extensive research indicates that SAT scores correlate with family income. Nobody can track exactly how much money is spent on this extra help, but the revenue for test-prep companies and private tutoring is estimated to amount to the billions.

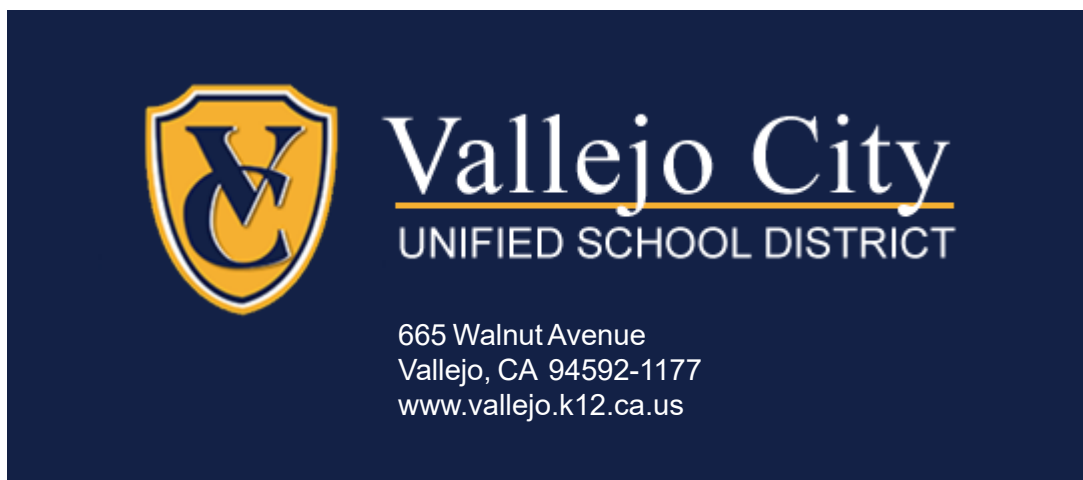
Even participation in club sports is an example of unequal opportunity. Athletic success in high school can help boost a student’s chance at being admitted to college and securing a scholarship. Participation in sports also correlates with academic success, including better grades and standardized test scores, along with improved health, concentration, and classroom behavior. High-school athletes are more likely to attend and earn degrees from college, “Most Valuable Players” even more so.

However, there isn’t enough room in athletics for everyone—in 2009-10, there were just 53 school-sponsored sports opportunities for every 100 high-school boys, and only 41 for girls, according to research from the University of Michigan. Given the limited access, it’s no wonder that millions of parents pay for extra coaching outside of school; participation on private club teams often boosts success in school-sponsored athletics. National data on exactly how many kids participate in private athletic programming is difficult to track down, but I can say that virtually every public-school varsity basketball player in my area—boys and girls—has played for a private team. According to the Aspen Institute, parents of club players in 2013 spent an average of \$2,300 annually per child on memberships, tournament fees, equipment, and travel—and more than \$20,000 a year at the “elite” level. In theory, using a conservative estimate

of \$2,000 for annual expenses and multiplying that by the roughly 21 million youth playing sports outside of school, parents in the United States could be spending \$42 billion a year on club sports. Just the travel alone for youth sports produces an estimated \$7 billion in annual revenue, according to a 2013 National Association of Sports Commissions study.

“You see kids entering the building through the same door.” Yet they enter a “second door” that’s systematically “stratified.” Other examples are more politically charged. *The Washington Post* recently reported that “white parents in North Carolina are using public charter schools to secede from the educational system.” And *The Atlantic* has looked at the “cutthroat world of elite public schools in New York City,” where the NAACP is complaining of modern-day segregation because of

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the disproportionate racial makeup of eight of the city's selective public schools. Apparently, the "sorting" of high- and low-achieving kids causes uneven distributions early on.

Likewise, opting kids out of government-mandated standardized tests—an increasingly popular practice among parents—can undermine equity in public-school systems. Last month, a group of civil-rights groups issued a statement in opposition of the opt-out movement: "When parents 'opt out' of tests—even when out of protest for legitimate concerns—they're not only making a choice for their own child, they're inadvertently making a choice to undermine efforts to improve schools for every child." The group declared that the data from these tests is "critical for understanding whether and where there is equal opportunity." As Andrew J. Rotherman noted in a *U.S. News & World Report* op-ed, many of the same parents who boycott these tests are "more than happy to opt their children in to the college gateway tests" such as the SAT. When a public-school system based on equity and "equality of opportunity" is embedded within a capitalistic society, it can be a little disorienting for students, parents, and teachers. The DOE can proclaim its "twin goals of access and excellence" with a confidence in noble purpose, but when the system is constructed in a way so that individual motives incidentally hinder those who don't have the same advantages, the compass can be difficult to read. But the conundrum of public-school inequality shouldn't be ignored.

I sympathize with the New Jersey parent who, commenting on the practice of academic "tracking" in his daughter's high school, was cited in an article as saying he could easily "look in a classroom and know whether it's an upper level class or a lower level class based on the racial composition." Tracking is a common process in which students are segregated based on their performance. A University of Colorado report bluntly states that while tracking is "rarely couched in the express language of race or class differences ... the preservation of privilege is always the subtext" of arguments in favor of it.

"You see kids entering the building through the same door," the New Jersey parent said. Yet they enter a "second door," he added, that's systematically "stratified."

If I, or other parents, are to eschew private schools for public institutions, how should we guide our children through that second doorway?

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