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Photo: Clay Banks

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Striving For Greatness

By Rick Johnson

Jim Collins author of “Good to Great” has said that “Good is Often the Enemy of Great.” That may be true but I also believe that good is often good enough and too much focus on greatness can be the enemy of good. Most of us would be happy with good performance, a good life and good friends and relationships. However, it seems like it is human nature to strive for greatness when running our companies. This is more inspirational, more of the accepted standard of achievement, continuous improvement, excellence in everything we do; all this seems to be a natural instinct for most leaders.

Being an effective leader, striving for

excellence and being inspirational is essential to creating a great company. There is no doubt that during these tough economic times that average is not good enough. Look around, if you have average performing employees that can't seem to reach the level of performance that is in alignment with your vision, “Now is the time” to do something about that.

However, don't let great be the enemy of good. Good employees are not easy to find or replace. Yes, great employees are what we all would like to have but everyone can not be great. Sometimes good is good enough. Remember that when evaluating individual performance in

your organization. Good employees can make your company great.

Consider the following to stimulate your creativity in striving for greatness for your company.

Don't Drink Your Own Koolade

Do a self assessment of your personal leadership model. Who are you? What is your purpose? Do your employees really understand your vision? Don't let your ego get in the way. Be open to constructive feedback. Use a personal coach or your Board of Directors to help you stay grounded and on track. We all have egos but effective leaders control their own egos and understand

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how to utilize their understanding of people to inspire peak performance. They are confident and have high self esteem without demonstrating arrogance. The most effective leaders are those that are humble and modest. The CEO Strategist “Lead Wolf Leadership Creed” puts this very succinctly.

The Lead Wolf Leadership Creed

A Lead Wolf Leader...

-doesn't follow the footprints of others. They are always first in line to lead the way.
-doesn't panic during crisis. They are the symbol of strength for others.
-doesn't look for the light at the end of the tunnel. They carry the light.
-doesn't flaunt their title. They find time to be more than their title.

•doesn't get up early to make themselves better. They get up early to help others become better.

•has a “Vision”. They don't just dream; they are the dream and they communicate that dream with crystal clarity.

•isn't arrogant but they command a presence and display confidence.

•is not the first one to take credit but is the first one to give credit to someone else; those who helped create the success.

•may not be the most valuable player but is the one most valued.

•doesn't like being called the reason for success. They firmly believe that success is created by the people you surround yourself with; after all — they are the leader.

Create a “Culture of Greatness

True leaders inspire others to greatness. In spite of what may seem the contrary, being a true leader in times of sacrifice and turbulence is even more important than in normal times? Collins says you have to have the right people on the bus. Effectively he is saying you must hire the right people. More importantly though, these employees must not only want to stay working at your company, they must be so happy that they are willing to give their discretionary energy to lift your company to greatness just as you want to lift them to greatness. That goes back to my original point — average isn't good enough. This is especially true in a tough economy. Build the right kind of culture, a culture where employees are challenged, held accountable, are treated with respect, are trusted and one in which they can have fun doing their job and the rest is easy.

Balance Compassion with Performance
So how does an effective leader

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balance compassion with performance and accountability? A leader must demonstrate the need for maximizing performance to the team. This is communicated more by action than words. Tolerance for the lack of excellence or sub par performance sends a distinct message; the wrong message. If you are going to maximize growth and profitability in your organization striving for greatness; that means that every manager must become an effective leader. A leader encourages, leads by example, cares about the team and gives regular feedback. People need to be recognized and praised. A leader influences and inspires others to believe in themselves and to follow a vision for the future.

Leaders lead by example, they delegate and empower people. They also seem to have a keen sense about selecting and developing the right people. Winning organizations

continuously build leaders at every level in their organization. Leaders, who actively attempt to mentor, coach and build other leaders gain respect throughout the organization and transfer knowledge, ideas, values and an attitude about success. They...

- Create a sense of urgency
- Project and articulate the vision
- Create stretch goals
- Develop trust and a spirit of teamwork
- Develop realistic expectations for success
- Promote an environment of success, trust and belief
- Demonstrate honesty-to tell the truth-to do the right thing- with no hidden agendas
- Lead with Integrity and respect-

responsiveness -recognizing employee value-empowerment

- Show passion and commitment
- Motivate and inspire

Effective leaders must have an edge. They must be courageous enough to take risk and have an unrelenting readiness to act. Popularity is not a requirement, but the ability to generate respect and trust from the employees is, without a doubt, one of the most critical attributes. Effective leaders get results. They make things happen. They continually advance a clear agenda, get others to buy in and move the organization to accomplish specific objectives. They are explicit, consistent, concise and sincere.

So... check your ego at the door. Follow the “Lead Wolf Leadership Creed” and you can take your company to greatness; even with just “Good” employees.

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Essential Project Management

By John J Matthews

"The nice thing about not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise rather than being preceded by a period of worry and depression." — author unknown

If you get in a car in Chicago with the intent of driving to Los Angeles, the GPS rarely plots the California portion of the map while you are in your driveway. Rather, the GPS methodically and sequentially plots each road to take in order to reach the desired location. Project Management follows the same logic of a series of key tasks or steps that have to be completed in a systematic

process in order to meet the desired outcome. Traveling to Los Angeles from Chicago can only happen if the tasks of traveling through the Midwest and the Rockies are met first.

This type of thinking seems elusive when it comes to business project management. Ask someone to "map" out the many steps required to achieve a desired result of managing a project and many times you get resistance as in "overkill" or simply a "deer in the headlights" look. Yet, the dollars at stake as well as the operational disruption to the organization seem secondary to the

tedious task of mapping the process in advance. No one would jump in a car and start driving without a map nor should they start a project without a plan.

Lacking a plan almost assuredly locks in failure as much as putting the wrong project manager in place. There is a specific skill set that is required from project managers that enables them to manage to an on-time, on-budget conclusion. It is critical for the organization to identify those key people to lead projects or as an alternative, outsource to industry experts.

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Below highlights the key components of project management:

On-Time, On-Budget: This should be the mantra of every project manager. There should be nothing more fundamental in the mind of the project manager than completing the project on-time and on-budget. All too often, project managers view their projects in a vacuum but rarely are these tasks within an organization, mutually exclusive. Failing to comply with an on-time, on-budget philosophy not only causes the project at hand to fail, but risks the failure of other reliant projects.

Know End Game: Determine in advance, what a successful project conclusion looks like. The most successful projects have a clear vision in mind from the onset. Poorly managed projects fall victim to duplicative resource allocation and cost overruns known as “capital creep”. Capital creep can be crippling to an organization since it not only “sucks away” future dollars to be invested back into the company, but layers on added expense that diminishes the overall return of the project.

Resource Management: Let the fighting begin! Project management is all about organizing systems and processes in a sequential fashion in order to efficiently complete the task at hand. Implicit in that mindset are identifying key resources that are necessary to knock out the work. The challenge is, resources are finite and competent people are always in demand. There can be some intense competition for solid resources - overallocation of their time is an ongoing concern.

Practice “War Gaming”: Imagine if you could anticipate issues in advance of them happening - that is what “war gaming” is. Play out possible scenarios and anticipate “broken pipes” in advance of them actually happening. Scheduling a resource for a task to be completed only to find out that they are going on vacation is an avoidable “broken pipe”. By laying out as many steps as you can against a time line, a project manager should be able to recognize obvious “hiccups” to the process in advance and devise alternative solutions.

Be Realistic: Rome was not built in a day and your project will not be either. Setting realistic goals not only for the project but especially for the approving committee, is paramount to managing expectations. The project cannot be built for free nor can it be completed in an afternoon. Realistic goals and time tables need to be continually communicated and are crucial to the overall

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perception of the project. It is vital to manage the expectations all along the way.

Daily Business Impact: The challenge managing new projects for an organization is that they still have a day-to-day business to run. Rarely do they have an idle body to be able to manage a project exclusively. Prudent organizations are the ones that identify this in advance and either outsource the management of the project or re-adjust internal teams to minimize disruptions to daily operations. Organizations that fail to recognize this impact will not only see their project fall short of expectations, but run the risk of their daily operations slipping.

Deliver The Goods: At the end of the day, the project manager has a fairly clear-cut task at hand: Deliver a completed project, on-time and on-budget. Managing the project can be fraught with missed tasks and time challenges but the prudent project manager will attempt to minimize those to exceptions only. Leaving the entire project to chance will guarantee only one thing - a failed project. Prudent capital management is one key element to maintaining your operation ongoing profit stream.

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Are You Stuck In One Of The Common Motivation Traps?

By Tim Connor

Everyone is motivated. However they aren't always motivated by the things that we would like them to be motivated by.

There have been countless studies and case histories done on the subject of motivation. Although there are many similarities as well as differences in their ultimate results there are several concepts that can be pulled from all the research regardless of its focus or purpose.

Motivation is often seen as an illusive yet critical idea when we attempt to discover what seems to push some people forward while keeping others stuck in a way of

thinking, acting or believing.

Let's look at a few common consequences of the available body of research.

One. No one can ever have it all or do it all. People have motivation in degrees. Some seem to be overflowing with it while others have trouble getting out of bed each morning..

Two. It is individual. What motivates one person often has no affect on the next person.

Three. To be effective for the long term it must be an inside-out, not outside-in process or philosophy.

Four. The common types of motivation of fear and reward have their limitations and positive and negative consequences.

Five. People get it and lose it at various times in their life for very predictable and/or very illusive reasons.

Six. Goals, values, beliefs, expectations, attitudes, circumstances, perceptions and emotions all play a vital role in a persons ultimate motivation..

Seven. Where there is an inconsistency between talent or ability and outcomes, motivation,

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whether positive or negative, always plays a role in contributing to why.

Eight. You can't measure motivation. You can measure results but motivation is not the

only factor contributing to results.

Nine. The word motivation contains the concepts of motive, goals or purpose and action. Purpose and motives can range from the idealistic, transitory and spiritual to the more concrete, practical and factual. Action can range from sporadic to focused, from a little to allot, from now to later.

Ten. No one can ever really know why another person does or does not do, feel or act in a certain way. Human behavior is somewhat predictable but it is not an absolute science.

Let's get back to the title of this article of common motivation traps. What are they?

As an employee as well as a business owner, father, speaker, consultant and trainer I have witnessed a variety of frustration among a great deal of people due to their lack of understanding of the concept of motivation and their relationship to and their responsibility for other people in their life.

Motivation and the amount of it, at any given time in a persons life, is a very personal thing. People can influence other people for good or for evil but the ultimate responsibility for a person's behavior is, has been and always will be, themselves. One of the greatest frustrations in a person's life is the unrealized expectation of another persons behavior. In other words, why won't my kids, spouse, parents, employees, customers, friends etc. act, think or feel the way I think they should? Why do these same people act, think and feel the way they do? Don't have a clue folks.

Our role as managers, parents, spouses, friends and so on is not to motivate other people. You see we can't really. Real motivation is an inside-out process. When we believe that we can motivate others, we are assuming motivation is an outside-in process. Our role is to create an environment where people would want to, and are able to motivate themselves.

If you look back at the two traditional motivators of fear and reward you will see that they 're both based on an outside-in philosophy. They are only as successful as the person being "motivated" is willing to let them influence them. For example if you use fear on an employee, let's say the threat

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of the loss of their job to get them to improve their performance. If they have the attitude, I don't need your job, I am a talented and hard working individual, I quit. Your threat was useless.

Fear and rewards as motivators are only effective if the person you are trying to motivate is concerned or interested in your threat of punishment or your reward. These motivators are really a motivational environment. Neither of these environments contribute to peak performance behavior within an individual. In the long term they are more negative than positive. Yes, even reward motivation can have its negative consequences.

People have not basically changed in the past several hundred years. Most people want the same things in life. Recognition and/or praise, challenge, a feeling they are making a contribution, security, to exercise the freedom of choice, the need to be in on things, to feel worthwhile and productive and the ability to have influence or control over their life and destiny.

If you want a motivated family, organization, team, department or group of any kind satisfy as many of the above needs for the individual or group as you can. If you want a de-motivated team, group, organization etc provide none of these.

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Mastermind Your Way to Success

By Bud Bilanich

Belonging to a mastermind group is one of the best ways of building strong, lasting, mutually beneficial relationships with the people in your life.

To the best of my knowledge, Napoleon Hill was the first person to use the term mastermind group in his timeless work Think and Grow Rich.

The idea behind a mastermind group is simple. No one person has sufficient experience, knowledge and ability to succeed in this life without the cooperation of other people.

When you're creating your success plan, it helps to get the input and thinking of as many people as possible. Remember, surrounding yourself with positive people is a good way to build your self confidence.

Entrepreneurs often form mastermind groups to exchange ideas on how to grow their respective businesses. However, I think that everybody can benefit from being part of a mastermind group. You can form a group with friends at the company where you work, or with friends you know from your church or synagogue — or friends you

meet at your kid's sporting events. It doesn't matter. You just want to find a like-minded group of people; people who want to succeed in their lives and careers, and who are willing to help you succeed in return for you helping them succeed.

Here are a few ideas for forming a mastermind group...

- o Mastermind with people you like and who share your interests and goals. If you don't feel that the mastermind group is discussing things that are relevant to you, you

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are probably in the wrong mastermind. That's OK. Just leave the group and find another group of people who are aligned with your thinking and your career and life success goals. This is less of a problem if you take the initiative to create your own mastermind group.

o Meet in person if you can. In the best mastermind groups, people are comfortable with and like and trust one other. This comfort, affection and trust, comes with personal connection.

o Meet frequently — at least once a month. I think every two weeks is better. Frequent meetings will create momentum which will create personal accountability and drive.

o Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak and have his or her ideas reviewed by the group. Some mastermind groups designate a

timer to keep things on track. You can't have one member dominate the meetings, while others don't get a chance to get the benefit of the group's thinking.

o I find it's best to not add new members once the group has been formed. If someone leaves the mastermind, you may consider inviting another member to join. If you do, make sure it is a decision endorsed by the entire group. In effective mastermind groups, a sense of cohesion develops quickly. This cohesion can be hampered by the addition of even one new person.

o Care as much about the success of the other members of the mastermind group as you do your own. Keep the sixth point of The Optimist Creed in mind — *Be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own* — as you meet with your group.

The common sense point here is clear. Two heads, or three or four, or five or six, are better than one when it comes to creating the career and life success that you want and deserve. That's why forming your own mastermind group is a good idea. Mastermind groups are not just for entrepreneurs. We can all benefit from the thinking of others. Others can benefit from our thinking. A word to the wise though, your mastermind group will work for you only if you are willing to work for it. These groups are a two way street. The more you put in to helping others, the more others will put into helping you. When you get in to a group, don't keep score. Be willing to listen and share your advice first — with no expectation of return. Ironically, if you follow this path, you'll get a lot in return. I guarantee this to be true.

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Make Gratitude Your Attitude

By Madeline Frank

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Karen was also a well-known accompanist for singers in Sara Lee's Studio in New York City. When I wanted to study singing she suggested, "Study with Ms. Lee she's the best voice teacher in New York City. She taught Todd Duncan

who sang Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess".' Karen played for my lessons with Ms. Lee. We had a terrific time. In 1983, Karen Iannotti passed away. She brought such joy to her family, friends, relatives, and students, by her warm caring personality and her beautiful piano playing. She was one of the finest people I have ever known and I like to think she's up there playing piano for the angels.

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

1) Start your day by remembering and writing down the people who have made a difference in your life. Write them a note or call and thank them. Think of one person who has made a positive impact on your life and do something nice for them.

2) Honor a special person in your life on a weekly basis by acts of kindness to others.

3) Think of the people who have made a difference in your life and honor them in some way by sharing your appreciation by random acts of kindness to others.

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

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

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

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The Power of Connecting With Others

By Madeline Frank

Lady Jennie Jerome Churchill, the beautiful American mother of Winston Churchill, dined with two of England's premier leaders, Benjamin Disraeli and his rival, William Gladstone, in the same week.

A journalist asked, "Lady Churchill what was your first impressions of the two men?"

Lady Jenny Jerome Churchill replied: "When I left the dining room after sitting next to Gladstone, I thought he was the cleverest man in England. But when I sat next to Disraeli I left feeling that I was the cleverest woman."

Benjamin Disraeli on meeting the beautiful, Lady Jenny Churchill, wanted to know all about her. He asked her questions and listened intently to her replies. Disraeli wanted to connect with her and find common ground. Benjamin Disraeli said, "The greatest good you can do for another is not just share your riches, but to reveal to him his own."

William Gladstone, on the other hand, talked about how brilliant and important he was to Lady Jenny Churchill. He was not interested in connecting with anyone else.

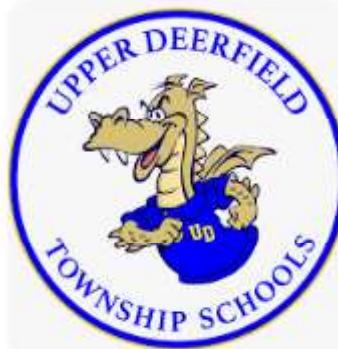
Which leader would you rather sit next

to at dinner Disraeli or Gladstone?

The greatest connectors find common ground and lift others higher just like Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli did for Winston Churchill's mother Lady Jenny Jerome Churchill.

Michael Deaver was deputy chief of staff for Ronald Reagan for 30 years. Deaver said, "Ronald Reagan was one of the shyest men I'd ever met." Deaver was asked, "Why Reagan had such rapport with the press corps?" He replied, "Well, Reagan basically liked people, whether they were part of the press corps or whether they were

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just ordinary people. That comes through." It was said that President Reagan cared about people and it did not matter whether they were a gardener, a secretary, or someone on his team. He treated them the same. Reagan "enjoyed being with people" and connected with them.

Deaver said, "Everyone liked being around Ronald Reagan because he loved people and connected with them. He understood that relationships were the glue that held his team members together- the more solid the relationship, the more cohesive his team."

Dan Quiggle said, "Ronald Reagan spoke plainly and genuinely to the American people-from his heart and with genuine sincerity about what he believed was best for America and for the world."

Benjamin Disraeli and Ronald Reagan understood about the importance of connecting with others. They cared about others, valued them, and wanted to know about them. They asked questions and listened attentively; wanting to find out answers and common ground with the people they connected to. Connecting is important at all levels of your life; with family members, friends, with other employees at work, or at school.

After two weeks of torrential rain and wind my family and I noticed cracks in the ceilings and several damp spots. When the rain finally stopped we called a friend and got a recommendation on a roofer he liked and trusted. We called the roofer and arranged an appointment in his busy schedule to show him the ceiling damage in the house to have our roof repaired.

My husband and I met the Roofer shook hands with him and showed him the ceiling damage in the house. He then asked us the following questions:

- 1) How old is this roof?
- 2) How often have you had it checked and repaired?
- 3) Do you have extra shingles?

We answered the Roofer's questions. He then went up his ladder on the roof and photographed, with his phone, pictures of what needed to be repaired. He then showed the pictures to us and explained what needed to be done.

The Roofer said, "Your roof is in pretty good shape

considering how so many other roofs have faired in this wet stormy weather. We will need to replace all the tiles missing in the pictures and caulk around a few areas on the roof and repair a gable.” He called us a few days later, to tell us how much it would cost. His price seemed reasonable and we agreed to it. He told us what day he would repair it and we left the shingles outside for him to do the repairs.

The Roofer called us after he completed the roof and said, “It will be raining Tuesday or Wednesday. Let me know if we have gotten all the leaks.” This Roofer understood how to connect with others and did the work as promised.

On February 20, 2015, five hundred of us trained with Dr. John Maxwell to be certified to join his John Maxwell Team. One of the most important rules he taught us was his “The 30 Second Rule”. “Within 30 seconds of meeting someone give them the “Triple A Treatment” - your attention, affirmation, and appreciation”.

Two of my favorite books of Dr. Maxwell are “Everyone Communicates, Few Connect” and “Relationships 101”.

So what are the three things you can do today to connect with others?

1) Connecting begins when you take an interest in others by asking them questions just like Benjamin Disraeli, Ronald Reagan, and the Roofer did.

2) Listening carefully to their responses, shows that you care and want to know all about them, and how you can help them.

3) As you connect with others you are finding common ground and building a relationship. Look for the best in others by saying positive things to them and lifting others up.

Zig Ziglar says, “Strong people don’t put other people down... they lift them up.”

“People won’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” This famous quote has been attributed to Teddy Roosevelt, Zig Ziglar and Dr. John Maxwell

So begin today connecting with others just like President Reagan, Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, and the Roofer.

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How Successful Students Score that Top Grade

By Preeti Narayan

Why is it that out of total students in class only few score top grades? Why others just taper down to average or even low grades? What is special about students who score high? What do they do exactly?

Well, successful students certainly study differently. But not so differently that you cannot do it yourself.

With few exceptions, all top-performing students follow a similar style of studying. We call this a “five-point approach.” Here is what they do:

1. Successful Students are ready for regular work

All most all successful students study regularly. Because they know that ‘what you give is what you get.’ If you put in regular hours of studying, then you will learn more, you will get better grades. The idea of scoring high, without doing steady and consistent work is just a pipe dream.

Set aside some hours, each day or each week, for studying. This will help you to study regularly. And prevent piling up of study-assignments during exams.

2. Successful Students have Definite goals

“I will score A grade in English.” “I will get 94% in the next exam.”

These are definite goals. And all top-performing students have definite, specific goals. Having such goals give you a purpose to study better. They motivate you and drive you to study more. Helps you to focus your energies and mind power efficiently.

Hence always have definite goals for studying. But make sure that you do not get carried away. Set realistic goals. The kind of goals which challenge you, but do not seem impossible or too difficult to achieve.

3. Successful Students take well-planned actions

Once you decide where you want to go, you need a road-map to find out how to reach that place. Well, this is

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common sense, you might say. Exactly. And this is where successful students differ from ordinary ones.

Once successful students set their goal, they sit and plan on how they are going to achieve their goal, what actions they are going to take. How much time they are going to spend on it.

For e.g. if the goal is to score A grade in English, what action is needed to achieve this score? Spend more time to study English lesson? Improve grammar? Improve writing skill?... In this way successful students question, analyze and make plans. And then they follow their plans faithfully.

Such planned efforts bring more results and more success. It also prevents wastage of time and energy because you know exactly what you need to do to get your goal.

4. Successful Students study without strain

Successful students study a lot. But they study without putting strain on themselves. Most students make the mistake of studying too hard or studying continuously for long time. This creates mental tension and actually slows down learning and memory.

Studying should be done in a balanced manner. Try to give a gap between studying two subjects. Take a break for few minutes, after studying for 30 or 45 minutes. Relax, walk around your room or house, or drink some water and return back to studying. Such short breaks will refresh your brain and you will learn more.

Also, after taking your study-schedule or time-table into account, set aside some time for playing any sport or watching TV or just sitting out and gossiping with your friend.

5. Successful Students give it importance

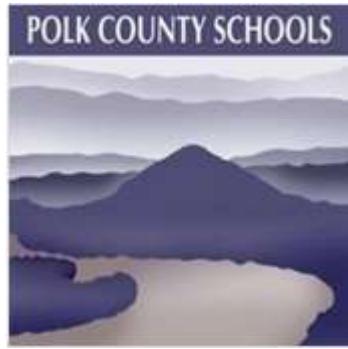
While researching for our course, Success Mindware for students, we found that students who give importance to studies perform better. They score more and have fewer study problems.

Studying is not something you do just because your parents asked you to do it. It's actually very important for you. Studying gives you knowledge and skills that will remain with you for the rest of your life. It gives you the ability to get a job and earn money. It gives you financial independence, stability in life, respectability...the list is endless.

And successful students recognize the value of studying well. Hence they give lot of importance to studying. And when you give importance to something, you naturally focus all your attention and energy on it.

As you can see from the above 'five-point approach,' *successful students* don't do anything extraordinary. They just do the right thing. And you are not different from them. You can also do it and achieve success in your studies.

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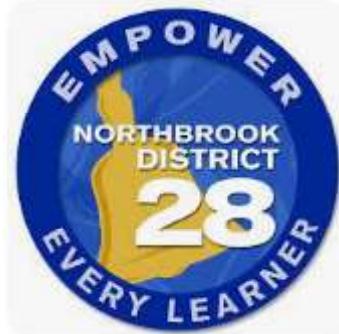
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The Problem With College and Career Readiness Education

By Gabriela Gotay

Preparing our children to be successful in college and once they step out into the workplace is certainly an educational goal worth striving for, but should college and career readiness be the ultimate goal of the traditional education system?

I am proof that focusing on college and career readiness can actually work. I graduated with high honors from both college and graduate school. I have a job and time to blog and come up with other fun ideas and projects. I have good communication skills, interpersonal skills, work with people and take on leadership roles.

However, when I think back and reflect about my years in primary and secondary school, I know there is so much information that is missing. For me, those first years of school seem to be a blur. I know I did receive some information, I know I was there at school, in a room with a teacher and other 20 or 30 students, I know I had the books and I also know, I was a very distracted girl, I know I did not like all they taught and felt no inspiration to learn. Nevertheless, I did the work, I got passing grades, and moved up from one grade to the next until I was “ready”.

Yes, many students reach a level of “college and career readiness”. But what

does that really mean? Even more worrisome, could that be the only goal that is worth it?

New schools and new teaching and learning models have been sprung up for years in different countries around the world. In the US these “avant-garde” schools are implementing many different approaches to teaching and learning. These schools are mostly private schools or public charter schools. Unfortunately, many of the students that need these schools the most, as they provide greater literacy reinforcement and a new source of inspiration to learn beyond the expected bottom line, are missing out.

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What happens when we forgo true mastery of skills, abilities and understanding for the quick and ready-made? When we don't allow the teaching and learning process enough flexibility and resources to provide individual attention to students and support to teachers? What happens when the aim of traditional schools continuous to be the mass production of "workers", giving just enough time, tools and strategies to grasp the very basic concepts and understanding to move on? The answer is simple and worrisome, where the original goal was to produce "useful and moral citizens" the reality is that we are producing nothing more than mediocre children.

Of course many students in traditional educational systems succeed. But shouldn't the aim be the success of ALL?

And what about this insistence on

"college and career" as the next obvious steps, or rather THE steps to take after graduating from high school?

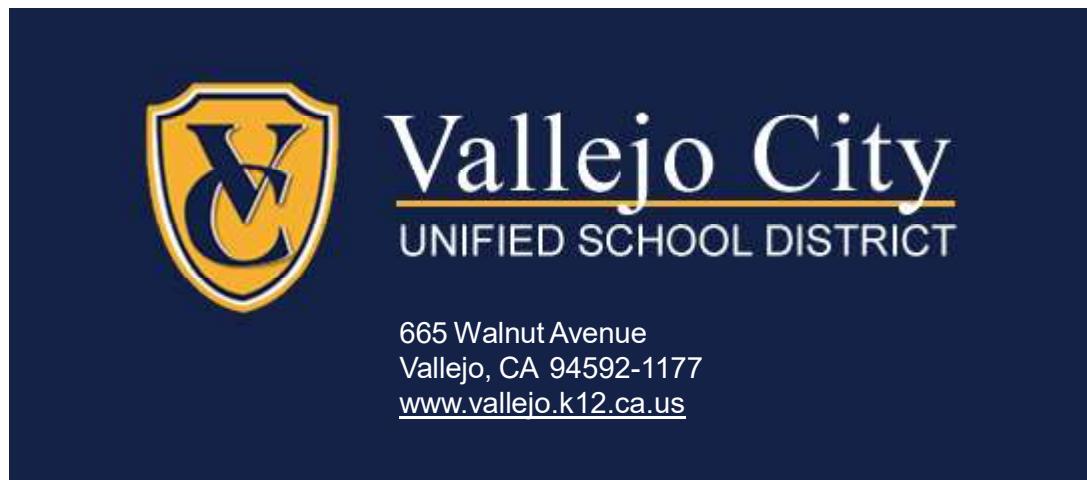
I did follow the very traditional path of college, marriage and career. As I look back and forward into the evolution of our human civilization, that traditional path is still very much ingrained in the way western culture has structured itself. Within society, many of us think we are doing what we want to do with our lives, but in reality, immersed in the traditional education systems, we have been programmed for years. Of course, at the time schools as we know them formally began, its main purpose was to develop rational and discipline citizens, men and women willing and able to follow society's rules and limitations that make everyday life possible. The school became a civilizing institution.

But, when the standards teachers work with emphasize "college and career readiness" we are telling young students

that these are the only acceptable options on the table for their future. I believe, that in a never ending quest to produce children that get into college and find jobs, schools have created massive mediocrity.

College: before our modern times, going to a higher institution of learning was not designed for everyone. Nowadays we have more than enough physical evidence that people that don't go to college can still be greatly successful. This success doesn't happen by accident, but by action and self-discipline. If students grow up and get educated in creative and innovative environments, who can tell how many useful technologies they may be able to come up with or what new ideas they may develop that change the way we live our lives in the coming future. At one time in our human history colleges may have been great places to share ideas and learn about a variety of topics not

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available to everybody else. Now, that is not necessarily true anymore. People around the world connect and share ideas by the second. The internet is all about information, connectivity and learning that takes place instantly. Many free courses are available online, all the books you could imagine to download and the forums for discussion of new ideas.

Career: this word doesn't mean a Job, not anymore. Now a career may be thought of as the path one entrepreneur takes along a line of innovative ideas, products and services. Now a career is not a life spent working for a company, performing exactly the skill, it says in your resume, you acquired in your college degree. The workplace has changed, and the role of a professional within it has also change. Social skills are needed in the workplace, yes, ability to follow rules and procedures, to work in teams, to manage time... but more and more offices and companies are revamping their organizational structure and what they expect employees to do. It's no longer a follow the leader, static environment. It is an ever changing and challenging place, where cultural awareness and diversity is the new norm, where each individual is expected to take on a leadership role, where working standing up is ergonomic and we are even having "walking" meetings.

Innovative educational models have come and go, the stronger ones have endured. But to get access to those, most parents still need to pay. While the public education systems of some states have taken positive steps forward, other are lingering behind, within the security of the states' educational standards and the CCS. Don't get me wrong, having a set of standards is useful in many ways. But the limiting expectation of college and career readiness may be doing more harm than good.

As valuable as is it to prepare children with the skills they will need to be useful and productive once they get out of school, it is also valuable to make the time they spend in school one of self-discovery, reflection, creativity and problem solving outside the box. Because, if children don't see themselves represented in other individual or self-made boxes outside the box of "college" and the box of "career", they will default to mediocrity. Supporting and building of the confidence of children is what opens up the path they will choose to travel no just toward college and career, but through life.

Let's prepare our children to be ready to face life's challenges and opportunities. Let's refrain from forcing "college" and "career" as the only two options and the only to reason that school is worth their time for. School, as a time and place, is so much more than that.

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