

Making Your Miles Count: A lecture on success.

I was giving a speech a while ago and had a short question and answer time at the end. I was asked a fairly standard question about success and what is the biggest leverage to achieving it. I have many books on the subject and there are more books about the subject than all my library shelves could hold. It's a nearly endless topic that can be approached from thousands of different perspectives. What was alarming to me was my response. I found myself talking about things I rarely discuss... it was like I was hearing it for the first time.

I am a planner, a hard and diligent worker. Plan your work and work your plan is my motto. Become proactive rather than reactive. Get ahead of the curve or in front of the wave. Don't leave things to chance, predetermine your success. These are the foundations of what I believe. However, my response to the question focused on reactions rather than proactivity. I was intrigued by what I was saying yet apprehensive. I was listening to a speech from my heart not my head.

The point I made was that often our greatest success comes from how we REACT to our adversities. Too many people are headstrong and forceful in building their own success as they see their success to be defined. They have exact expectations of how things should be rather than nurturing things to grow. As I look back on my career I realize that there were three or four major events that caused me to change the direction towards success. Each change produced significant success. It was not ME forcing MY plan to work but how I REACTED to my changing circumstances. Each major success I achieved was rooted in a major crisis of some sort. My crisis was seeded in my inability to be flexible, my stubbornness to see MY plan through no matter what. I refused to react to my changing circumstances. Success only came when I exercised patience and humility. I learned it the hard way.

However, my speech contained more than just a lesson on flexibility. It was encouraging the art of proper REACTIONS to highly negative circumstances. Too often burning a bridge, humiliating someone, overplaying authority, cutting and running or any of a number of excessive responses is too evident in unsuccessful people. Patience and self-control is too often hard to find in the middle of a crisis, and yet successful people embrace its virtues at the exact time when unsuccessful people do not. The art of mature reactions can be one of the most highly leveraged situations in business and personal life.

Being an accountant for a couple decades gives me a 30,000 foot insight into highly successful people and people who are not (or certainly less). If I would define success in one word I would use discipline. Whatever a person is disciplined in they will be successful in. If you want to be successful financially you must be disciplined in all the areas that financial success is rooted in. Blowing up emotionally at a dispatcher will most likely affect your financial future because personal relationships are needed for trucking cash flow. Too many times I have witnessed needless and costly turnover rooted in overreactions. Years, sometimes decades of productivity have been lost to burnt bridges, impatience and pride. Then, once recovered, and circumstances present themselves again the costly reactions start the loss cycle over again. People don't have to be impatient and proud all the time to perpetuate a life cycle of loss... they just have to time it every few months or years to drop themselves down again.

Responding to a crisis or circumstance inappropriately (with impatience, pride or some other form of immaturity) will guarantee unsuccessful results. However, proper placement of patience and humility during a time of crisis multiplies returns more than any other discipline.

Everyone encounters setbacks and crisis, reacting appropriately is what makes the successful people successful. Every greatest leap of success in my life is rooted in a proper reaction to failure and crisis... EVERY SINGLE ONE! Every one of my failures is born in pride and impatience. Guarding our reactionary attitude is the foundation of all success.

About the Author:

Robert D. Scheper is a leading Accountant and Consultant exclusively serving the Lease/Owner operator industry in Canada. His first book in the Making Your Miles Count series “taxes, taxes, taxes” was released in 2007. His second book “Choosing a Trucking company” is the most in-depth analysis of the independent operator industry today. He has a Master degree (MBA) in financial management and has been serving the industry since he and his wife came off the road in 1993. His dedication, commitment and strong opinions can be read and heard in many articles and seminars. You can find him at www.makingyourmilescount.com or 1-877-987-9787.