

You Are the Master of Your Destiny

We all want a guarantee in life. We want to see the results before we go out on a limb. As natural as this tendency may be, it's not how life or success works. We have to pay the price, face the test and win the game. But, if we maintain vision and courage along the journey, we also receive the biggest and best rewards life has to offer. In spite of all our planning and preparation, unexpected challenges are certain to arise. The bumps in the road are unavoidable, but you'll never get to your destination if you aren't willing to drive over them. The difference between catastrophe and triumph lies in whether or not you're buckled up, prepared and willing to weather the storm. If you're ready, those bumps will become stepping-stones. Even though you had to endure some discomfort along the way, you'll ultimately end up on higher and better ground.

Sometimes we find ourselves surrounded by people who seem to work the same amount we do, or even *less*, and they still get better results. Drives you crazy, doesn't it? The key thing to realize is that working *harder* is not necessarily the same thing as working *smarter*. How do you work smarter? You need to have the right tools at your disposal. Consider any professional who uses tools for a living. Having the right tool available makes the job easier. Suppose you had to cut down a tree, but you had to do it with a pocket knife. *Eventually* the job would get done, but what if you had an axe or a chainsaw instead? The same job would get done better and faster—two factors we would all appreciate more of in whatever our jobs may be. Sometimes, when using a new tool for the first time, we need some special training. Then we need practice. Finally, repeated practice will lead to seasoned experience. Acquiring the Exponential Factor can be compared to training and exercising to get your body in shape when you haven't followed an exercise routine in years, or ever in your life. There may be some pain and discomfort in the beginning stages, but if you keep at it, it starts to feel good. You are being stretched and pulled out of your comfort zone, but in the end, it's definitely worth it.

My early mentor Jim Rohn taught me two important lessons. The first thing he said was: "Do you want to spend a day at the beach or own a piece of the beach?" Sure, this next step toward exponential success will take some energy and effort. Will it be

worth it? No question about it. You have to do things you don't want to do to be able **not** to do the things you don't want to do. In other words, if you pay the price now, you can do whatever you want in the future. The second thing Jim said was: "For things to change, *you* must change, and for things to get better, *you* must get better. To change your life, your income, your relationships, *you* need to change you. We find the biggest challenge to our success in our mindset. Ironic how this is the very thing most people work on last. I'll admit I was in the same boat. I would go to the seminars, read the books and listen to the tapes. I would listen to successful people talk about vision, goal setting, mental programming and attitude and say, "Yeah, yeah, whatever, just give me the tools." Hello—those things are the most important tools. When I finally realized that if every millionaire I listened to and every success book I read talked about these important principles, I better do them. When I realized this important truth, my life and my income changed. Then in a flash, it came to me. The universe will not reward you physically until you believe in it mentally. It is the mindset that matters and which is the biggest obstacle to your success and happiness.

You understand now how all this changing and growing is a process. But how much change is necessary? How much growth is required? The answer is: as much as possible. Have you ever noticed how every life form on Earth except human beings seems to strive to reach its maximum potential? How tall will a tree grow? It will grow as tall as it possibly can in its given environment. Part of the problem in our tendency to underachieve, ironically, is that we, as human beings, actually possess the ability to make choices. Some of us will choose to excel; others of us will be content with the status quo. Sure, *desire* is innate, but *action* is not. Jonathon Winters once said, "If your ship doesn't come in, swim out to it." Are you swimming, treading water or watching from the shore?

People want improved circumstances without an improved self. They want victory without paying the price. The problem is, one really can't happen without the other. Any improvements that have not generated from an improved self are, at best, superficial and short-lived. If you want to change your future, you have to change yourself. Have you ever reflected on the fact that there are countless numbers of people

who could have been phenomenal as leaders of the most powerful countries in the world, or who could have been brilliant leaders of the world's greatest businesses, or who could have invented technologies that might have forever altered the course of humankind? They could have, but they didn't. Someone else did. Thomas Edison wisely pointed out, "If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves." Why not be the one who stretches to reach your greatest potential?

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