

Jay Abraham Discussing Self-Confidence and Career Fulfillment

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Abridged Japanese Interview (2017)

"What can somebody with no self-confidence do to recognize their own talents and abilities?"

Every human being excels at something. First, do a benevolent and gentle inventory on yourself. Maybe you're a better listener. Maybe you are better at analytical things. Maybe you see correlations. Start with the understanding that every human being has value to contribute. You can't contribute until you refine and recognize what it is. It's like mining raw ore. You mine ore, refine it and convert it. We all have nuggets of gold within us. The first thing is to find your strengths and attributes and acknowledge those.

I am very gifted in marketing, strategy, and understanding the interactions amongst humans. However, I don't turn on my computer well. I'm a mad scientist, but I can't change a light bulb. So, the first thing is to appreciate where you are strong; your superpowers. Every human being has superpowers. We don't need to be egotistical, but we have to be respectful and appreciate that we all possess strengths. Once you realize your strengths, play to the strengths. If you do that, you're very confident, because you appreciate your value and your self-worth.

We are all unique human beings with gifts. If you don't recognize your value and what it can mean to others, you can't really contribute it. If you can't contribute it, you're very frustrated.

"Why do you think you were able to believe in your ability to change like this?"

I think I realized that the world doesn't care if you give up, nor does it care if you pursue greatness. Everyone is so worried about everybody externally. What you have to do is realize this: If you don't believe in yourself and a higher level of possibility and aspiration, then you will never achieve anything.

I was blessed because my young, formative years were spent very transitory jumping from one industry to another. I got to see all that was possible from effort, time, markets, and opportunities. I realized that there was so much more available than most people recognize or were aware of. When I got introduced to an enormity of alternative opportunities and possibilities, I realized that accepting mediocrity was a disservice to myself.

I realized the time I had on this earth, the opportunity I had, the 24-hours I had, the vehicles or paths that were available for me to harness my superpower and connect it to meaningful opportunities were infinite. When I realized that, I gave myself permission to not be judged by society, to not comply with status quo, and to forge my own path.

In certain cultures, it's very restrictive, but those restrictions are illusory. They aren't real. They're a linear-minded society imposing rigid thinking on young, pliable, wonderful minds, and I think it's tragic.

I realized that the possibilities for any human being with a decent intellect and self-belief is infinite; it's just where you wish to limit yourself. It was very liberating to me. I was able to see opportunities and realize there's no reason I can't have them.

"I've read that you've been penniless three times in your life. Can you tell us how you overcame the adversity of those situations and how you believed in yourself again?"

I've been blessed. In my life, I've been exposed to so many opportunities, possibilities, and different areas of little-understood prosperity, profitability, and productivity.

Here's what I learned: You can lose all your money... but if you can add meaningful value to somebody else in a business, if you retain your integrity, ethics and ethos, and if you understand things that other businesses don't understand (and those things have value), anyone will give you money. On the other hand, if you keep your money and sell out your integrity, you'll never get it back.

I kept my integrity. I always looked at ways to understand overlooked opportunities, hidden revenue sources, and ways other companies did not see opportunities. I was always the person who went out of my way to educate, demonstrate, and contribute – and I did it in a way that earned people's trust and respect.

I have never had any problem rebounding from adversity because of an understanding that we are rewarded in life for the problems we solve and the opportunities we uncover for other people or businesses. As long as you focus on helping them see, and then either solve or mine problems or opportunities in their business or life, you always will come back and be valued and successful.

Focus on what their problems are or what their opportunities are that they don't see or that they see and don't know how to resolve. If you can help them resolve them, they will always give you rewards.

"For somebody who has fallen on hard times, is there a way of thinking you have or something you did to start again?"

Yes. First, I never wanted to be mediocre. I always sought people who would mentor me. I would work nights if I had to so that I could go and get successful entrepreneurs or business owners to mentor me. They were impressed with my passion and unstoppable desire.

Second, you have to believe in yourself. You have to believe you are here on this earth, whatever your religious belief or ideology, for a bigger purpose. We're here to make a difference. To make people better off. To add value. To be a meaningful part of improving our world. You can't improve your world if you're struggling with self-defeat or low self-esteem.

Third, no matter what has happened to you and no matter what adversity has befallen you, as long as you have a decent brain and the ability to understand that there are an enormous number of successful people out there who have pieces of the puzzle you don't, you will progress. If you approach them, ask good questions and listen, they will grow you and develop you.

You have to believe that you are here for a bigger purpose than being a failure. You are here to meaningfully impact lives, companies and segments of the world. You cannot possibly do that if you have a low self-esteem. There is no place in your life for self-defeat. Reversals are normal.

Tony Robbins says to people, "Do you like surprises?" and they say, "Sure." Then he goes, "No, you don't. You only like the positive surprises. The negative ones you hate." The point is this: Life is about developing the ability to overcome, transcend, and turn adversity into opportunity for yourself.

I have a very good friend that says, "Failure is not permanent. It's only an attitude, and it's only a function of the last encounter you had." Whether you fail at a job, fail in a business, fail in love, fail in a class – that's yesterday. From this moment on, you have the ability, the intellectual capacity, and the obligation and the privilege to forget about yesterday. Go forward with the right committed attitude that you are going to conquer and overcome whatever has been your constraints, and let other people contribute.

People want to be an island. They want to try to figure it all out for themselves. There is no way any one person can possibly understand the totality of knowledge and understanding in today's world. That's why you need creative collaboration. You need mentors. You need to ask lots of meaningful questions. You need to look forward to gaining the pieces of the puzzle that you don't have.

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I have a belief system that I think is very important: When something goes wrong, most people don't know how to analyze and identify the cause. I believe that 2% of what happens in our lives are acts of God. They're uncontrollable like a tsunami, an earthquake, or birth defects. Those are tragic. Yet, 98% of what happens in our lives is the result decisions we make or don't make and actions we take or don't take. There are forces, factors, elements in life that are immutable. You can't change them. Either you learn to harness them or you allow them to overwhelm you. When you realize what the decisions you make or don't make are, when you realize the actions you either take or don't take, and when you realize all the forces, elements and factors available for you to either control or that will control you, you gain enormous power. Power doesn't give you arrogance; it gives you confidence.

When most people have a setback or a failure, don't try to understand what forces, factors, decisions, actions or inactions caused it. There are causes and effects. The greatest thing that can happen is failure that doesn't kill you, because if you understand it, it teaches you how to move towards more opportunity and more probability of a positive outcome. Most people say, "Why did this happen to me? I'm so cursed. I have bad luck. I'll never be successful." However, if you understand that you probably did not harness the right forces, or that you probably either didn't make a decision (or made a decision), or you didn't take an action (or you took an action) that goes against logic or the direction, you can turn it around.

We have more control of our destiny and fate, whether it be financial, career, physical, relationship, than we think. However, often times we don't really understand that deeply enough to capitalize on it. The moment you understand it, you have enormous empowerment.

“What kind of perspective or way of thinking is needed for somebody who is bored with their work or job to make them interested and enthusiastic about doing it again?”

First, I have a belief system I live by: Any time two people come together in any environment – business, career, personal, fraternal, friendship – your job is to make the other person better off because you were in their life. You can't do that if you don't know what they need, what they value, and how to make them important. Importance comes from asking questions, listening, and allowing the other person to answer.

Second: You need to be committed to examine, evaluate, appreciate, understand, respect, and acknowledge everybody else's point of view. Everybody we deal with in our lives has a different outcome, a different reality, a different belief system, and a different understanding. You have to be fascinated and focused on trying to connect with everybody on their reality, not yours.

Third: We all have to be committed to being a student and a teacher all the time. Our job is to learn from everybody that which we don't understand or have only a perspective on where there may be many. Our job is help grow and develop every human being however we can.

Fourth: You have to develop the ability to be hopelessly curious about everyone and everything, and see the value, the fascination, and importance. For example, when I travel to Asia, I take the first day and I hydrate. The next day, I sit in the lobby for four hours and just smile at people until they smile back. Then, I get on the elevator and I smile at people in the elevators. Then I get off the elevators and I talk to the housekeepers, the janitors, the maintenance people, the food service people. I do this because I want them to feel like they are relevant – and I listen.

I also read the obituaries, but I don't read the big ones about all the celebrities. I read the ones about the husbands and wives who were relevant in their community. Maybe they were involved in their church. Maybe they were involved in baseball. Maybe they helped at school. But they were relevant. You can't be relevant until you acknowledge the relevancy of everybody else. Learn about everything and everyone, no matter how elevated or seemingly mundane they are, because everyone has value.

“What gives you the most satisfaction when you're at work?”

Most people don't have the beginning of understanding of how much more is possible from a life, from an opportunity, from a job, from a business, from a marriage, or from any of a number of things. When you show them how much more is possible from the same time, the same effort, the same career, the same lifetime, they get very excited and passionate.

I love helping people understand what their real purpose is in life. It goes down to this concept of adding value to others and helping them understand that value is different to different people. When I get

people to understand that value is totally in the mind of the other person, and that your job is to appreciate their value definition and not your own, it gets exciting.

When you give somebody passion, purpose and possibility, and you give them the process, method, reasons, examples and proof, you see their whole being, mind, body, eyes, and physiology change. It's so wonderful to transform people by sharing with them a spectrum of realities, understandings, possibilities and philosophies or worldviews that no one has ever shared. They come alive. They get motivated to connect. They get motivated for themselves.

That's been the most fulfilling repeat experience of my life. I've done it all over the world. I never thought that would be what I would do, but that's what really turns me on.