

Chasing Excellence is a Journey



“Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives - choice, not chance, determines your destiny.” - Aristotle

Pursuing excellence in business and life is like a never-ending road trip. There are some great stops along the way, some detours and unexpected changes, but the journey never ends.

The biggest problem most of us run into in life and business is assuming that we are pursuing a destination. I still struggle with this, but I’m beginning to figure out that the only destination I am pursuing is heaven. Every other stop between here and there are great photo opportunities or the chance to learn something.

If we aren’t chasing something in life we get comfortable. Comfort sounds great, but it leads to complacency. Once complacency sets in our performance begins to slide. If we aren’t growing, improving and striving for great things as individuals and organizations we are declining. Who wants to spend their time on earth like that?

I don’t and I’m sure you don’t either. How we do we jump on this excellence train that

never stops until our final destination? Here are some steps to follow:

1 – Decide – The first step is the decision to step away from complacency and towards excellence in some area of your life – work or personal.

2 – Prioritize – Changing our habits takes time, willpower and effort. All come in limited quantities. Pick the area that will have the greatest impact on your life and start there. Trying to make too many changes at once is a recipe for failure and will cost you time in the long run.

The goal is to create habits that drive you towards excellence. Once you’ve ingrained a new habit into your life, you can refocus your willpower on the next most important habit.

It is difficult to not shoot for the moon when we get started, but research (and my experience) shows that small steps that become habits are the most effective way to go.

3 – Measure – If we can’t measure it, we can’t manage it and we can’t improve it. Odds are you can come up with a number that you can track. Brainstorm with family, friends and coworkers to find a number you can track that will let you know if you are winning or losing.

If you can’t come up with a measurable, you can create one by asking for honest feedback from others. Have them grade your performance on a numerical scale.

With regular feedback and great suggestions from people who care about you, your performance will improve.

Measure daily. If you are not winning the battle daily, you'll never win the week, month or year. Habits are rarely once a week things. They are daily, sometimes hourly things that become a part of who you are.

The more often you keep score, the more often you can make course corrections on your journey.

4 – Test & Measure – Testing and measuring sounds a lot more pleasant than failing and trying again, so call it whatever you like. If your goals are big enough, you'll do a lot of failing as you chase them. Consider those failures as one more method that you don't need to try again.

If you keep persisting, you will succeed. You may not reach your original goal, but you will improve. Don't quit and you will stay on your excellence journey.

Never forget to enjoy the ride. Choose gratitude. Our struggles and failures are all part of the process. I love this quote from C.S. Lewis. It helps me refocus on enjoying the moment when life's detours begin to drive me a little nuts.

“The great thing, if one can, is to stop regarding all unpleasant things as interruptions of one's “own” or “real” life. The truth is that what one calls interruptions are precisely one's real life – the life God is sending day by day; what one calls one's “real life” is a phantom of one's own imagination.”

Here's to the journey – and enjoying the twists, turns and delays on the way!

If you'd like some great resources to help you on your journey you can find them on our resources page at www.valuesdrivenresults.com or call me at 229.244.1559.

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