

"Work harder today than you think you did yesterday."

»Alex Elle

Hard Work Making It Look Easy



Many of us see people in positions of accomplishment and extrapolate that their skills or talents came easier to them than most.

We think people are naturally smart, or athletic, or funny or organized. Sure, there is no doubt that certain traits seem to be more naturally engrained in some folks than others are.

However, I suggest that one trait – whether naturally occurring or consciously developed – will make or break us.

That trait is a work ethic.

Exceptional talent is nice, but it is not as highly correlated to success as an exceptional work ethic.

The fact of the matter is that most folks who appear to have natural traits have worked longer and harder at developing those traits than their peers.

Are You on Customers' Menus?



A new Tex-Mex restaurant opened in our neighborhood and my sons were hired to their first non-dad-funded jobs.

(Insert fist pump here.)

The owner is a super guy who has managed restaurants for a very successful Houston-based chain. This is his first attempt at owning and running his own place.

He and his wife have designed a smart, welcoming restaurant with a fantastic menu.

The product is outstanding. He knows as well as anyone, however, that a great product alone will not cut it in any highly competitive industry.

There are always scores of alternatives. I've joked with him that there are more similarities in running and marketing a successful bank branch and running a restaurant than many would believe.

One of my favorite quotes on the subject was from Michelangelo. People of his time assumed must have had magical gifts in order to produce his masterpieces.

Yet, he acknowledged, "If people knew how hard I worked to get my mastery, it wouldn't seem so wonderful at all."

You see, Michelangelo was a grinder. His masterworks were as much the result of a willingness to put in full days of work, as were his artistic skills.

Of course, the more he worked, the more artistically skilled he became.

I have long been fascinated with listening to people talk about their jobs, and specifically, what it takes to be successful in their lines of work.

You will never find the truly successful person who shrugs and says, "I don't know. It just kinda fell in my lap."

That thought was in my head this week when a friend sent me a link to an interview with Jerry Seinfeld and Colin Quinn discussing comedy.

People tend to see comedians as people just getting on stage and having fun. It seems effortless.

Yet, both concede the idea of the spontaneous genius standing on a stage and being funny is a myth.

Their "spontaneity" comes from having written and rewritten and practiced and performed and rewritten material over and over again.

After our initial conversations about the challenges any business has in registering on people's radars, he and I have regularly bounced marketing ideas off each other.

I have to admit that I experienced a certain sense of pride that a seasoned manager of true retail establishments appreciated some of the in-store banking best practices I shared with him.

Beyond the actual "guerilla marketing" techniques we've discussed, the principle I shared with him that seems to have resonated most is, "Don't be fooled by what you see. Just because you see traffic doesn't mean they are seeing you."

A corner unit in the strip mall, while cozy and landscaped, makes his location peaceful...and for all practical purposes...hidden.

From his outdoor dining area, he can see thousands of cars daily, only about 100 yards away.

However, those drivers are busy looking at and thinking about a dozen things, none of which include his restaurant.

I shared that this can easily happen to in-store branches in busy stores as well as brick-and-mortar branches along high-traffic roads.

That which is static is ignored. Our human brains are wired to notice things that appear active and changing and disregard the stagnant.

That is as true for relatively new and modern branches as it is for older, more traditional looking ones.

Most folks, in any profession, who receive “big breaks”, are in position to receive those breaks due to the work they have put in when no one was requiring it of them.

Some put in only as much work toward their craft as is needed to remain employed. Others put in whatever is required to become outstanding.

It's an individual's choice. What will your choice be?

It is easy to put our heads down and work hard at our day-to-day jobs, assuming nearby foot or auto traffic is noticing and considering us.

If we aren't regularly giving them something to grab their attention, however, those are likely false assumptions.

How will you earn their attention this week?

"Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear."

»George Addair

*Dave Martin, author of **The In-Store Advantage**, has become one of the most prolific writers in the banking industry. His keynote presentations, seminars, and podcasts have an authenticity and humor that brings teams of all sizes and seniority levels together.*

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