

"No matter how many mistakes you make or how slow your progress, you are still way ahead of everyone who isn't trying."

»Tony Robbins

Staying in My Lane



My wife often teases me about being such a creature of habit.

That charge is most frequently made when we go through the farcical exercise of deciding where to eat out on weekends.

The list of places I want to go to typically tops out at 3 or 4. Whatever we choose, I always order whatever my favorite thing is at that restaurant.

No menu needed. I know what I like and I stick with it.

When teased about that habit, I point out that life generally throws enough surprises at me to keep me well stocked in that category.

I'm not looking for surprises at Willie's Grill & Ice House.

I'll Take the Strugglers



I had a conversation with a family friend recently that struck a nerve.

We were reminiscing about some of the young men and women we watched grow up and retelling long-forgotten stories.

In the midst of it, a comment by my friend had me making a mental note of a subject I would want to revisit.

While talking about a young man we had seen overcome many obstacles through the years, my friend said, "I love that kid. I wish some things weren't such a struggle for him."

As he said that, the thought that popped into my mind and out of my mouth was, "Yeah... but give me the strugglers every day of the week. Strugglers care. Strugglers are still trying. I'll take the strugglers over folks who quit as soon as

One of my other set routines is how I prefer to deposit checks. My bank branch on the corner has a drive-up ATM that is my most frequent touchpoint.

I suppose I could use other, likely easier methods. However, I like what I like.

As I pulled around the branch recently and found my favorite ATM lane blocked with an orange traffic cone... I cringed.

Now, while I like using the drive-up ATM...I do not typically care for interacting with live people via intercom and pneumatic tubes above the noise of other vehicles.

In most cases, I would simply drive around a branch and walk in to see someone face-to-face.

This branch, however, has a bizarre parking lot layout and a ridiculous ingress/egress situation.

To get from the drive-up lanes to the lobby, you have to leave the parking lot, drive a city street for 50 yards, make a U-turn, and then navigate a partially blind turn across oncoming traffic.

Instead, I pulled into the far lane from the branch and prepared to be annoyed.

The upbeat voice that greeted me, however, changed my tune.

From her welcome, to the small talk she made, to her jokes about customers who break their ATM by trying to deposit coins in it, I actually smiled for the duration of our interaction.

things get tough or when things aren't simply given to them."

That conversation and that thought has stayed in my mind.

It may be because of the line of work I've been in over the past couple of decades or the dozens of youth sports teams I've coached.

I have had innumerable conversations with peers, managers, coaches, etc. regarding people struggling to understand, to perform, to succeed.

Often, they'll tell me that they themselves are "struggling" to help an individual or a team succeed.

I know I've claimed to be struggling with projects or responsibilities or people many times myself. Reflecting on that recent conversation with my friend, I had to rethink how I use that word.

Am I honestly struggling with something, or am I simply complaining about it and wishing that an issue goes away or solves itself?

Struggling suggests effort.

Struggling means you open yourself up to disappointment and the feeling that your best efforts may not be enough (right now) to succeed.

A kid who is unwilling to struggle to become better at something is setting himself or herself up for a future of frustration.

An adult who is unwilling to struggle to improve his job performance, his

I suspect she had a bit of practice interacting with disgruntled, regular ATM users that day.

She knocked it out of the park.

As much as I like my (usually) trusty drive-up ATM, I don't ever recall driving away from it chuckling.

It took an upbeat teller with an empathetic tone and good sense of humor to accomplish that.

A problem situation that might have been frustrating instead became a relationship-strengthening interaction.

Good people can accomplish that feat. How good will you and your team be today?

relationships, his knowledge, etc. is setting himself or herself up for a future of frustration, as well.

I have long suggested that natural talent is overrated. It is wonderful if some things come easy to you.

The way you respond to things that do not come easy, however, is what eventually defines you.

Honestly struggling with something is not a sign of weakness.

It is a sign of determination and commitment.

What are you committed to right now?

"Done is better than perfect."
»Sheryl Sandberg

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