

**"If you were starting over today, what would you do differently?
Whatever your answer, start doing it now."**

»Brian Tracy

Get Me a Rewrite



During a recent presentation/conversation with bankers, we joked while reflecting on their past year.

I suggested that many who dwell on their past mistakes do not then take the extra steps that may help them avoid them the next time.

We do not do enough planning for what we would do differently if a similar challenge presents itself.

Folks are too often more comfortable imagining things were out of their control. There is no pressure to change anything if that is the case.

Sure, some reflect on what they "wished" they would have done or how they wish they would have handled that disgruntled employee, upset customer, impatient supervisor, challenging prospect, etc.

However, there is a difference between reliving a negative event in your mind and

Work Hard. Be Nice.



While driving through Houston last week, I paid closer attention than usual to Minute Maid Park.

I figured the Astros would have turned the entire thing into a World Series Champions monument by now.

They haven't, but a banner that did catch my eye promoted a concert by Ed Sheeran.

The thought of the little guy with the well-worn guitar standing alone on stage in front of a baseball stadium of fans made me smile.

Sheeran's story is equal parts inspirational and instructional.

Ed was an easy target for bullies as a kid. He was undersized, with large eyeglasses, a prevalent stutter, and a bit of a hearing problem... as he was born with one eardrum.

planning a different course of action – or reaction - for it next time.

Moreover, there always is a “next time.” It is highly common to find ourselves facing similar problems and issues from one year to the next.

These challenges may come via slightly different vessels, but they are not unique or original.

And yet, by not planning what we’d do differently, it becomes déjà vu all over again.

People instinctively react the same way, usually get the same non-optimal results, and further reinforce the feeling of being...well...victims of circumstance.

Obviously, not every challenge we face will be under our complete control - no matter how well we plan our responses.

However, the ability to shape our futures is enhanced when we have a willingness to objectively learn from our past.

I joked with the group that the good news about whatever mistakes/setbacks/debacles they experienced last year is... hey... they survived them.

The past is safe. It’s like a movie in our minds now.

Many of us think of the past as “the good old days.” Yet, those days were quite likely every bit as stressful as our current ones.

If someone had tried to sell the story of that kid becoming an international music star, even the Hallmark Channel would have balked.

After overcoming his stutter by memorizing and repeating Eminem lyrics (I kid you not), Sheeran gravitated to music, saying it was where he felt most in control.

He left home after high school to begin “gigging” multiple shows each night, usually for little or no money. The workload he took on was brutal.

When he had no money for a room or a friend’s couch to borrow, he slept on park benches.

The journey that brought him (broke) to America, got him discovered by Jamie Foxx, touring with Taylor Swift, singing duets with Beyonce’, and headlining arena shows worldwide is almost beyond belief.

In interviews, Sheeran has consistently shared that he feels the idea that anyone succeeds from innate talent is ridiculous. He readily jokes about how bad he was when he began performing.

Through it all, his father’s advice steered him. He told Ed that he should work harder than anyone he truly admired, and always be nice to everyone he worked with.

That Sheeran is incredibly popular among other musicians is no accident.

Fittingly, a few years back, he asked his record company to share with him the

However, we now know we made it through.

While it isn't always all that much fun to mentally relive our more stressful or disappointing moments, we can do so knowing the hero of our story (you) survives in the end.

More importantly, we can write a better script for the next time our hero faces similar challenges.

A new year is indeed a blank page before us.

How much work is going into your script?

work diary they compiled of their top selling artist.

Sheeran got it and then doubled the number of appearances and tour dates that top artist had fulfilled. The next year, he surpassed the previous top artist's highest sales.

The road to success is seldom straight, and frequently unpaved.

And yes, Sheeran's story is incredibly unique. It would be hard to replicate.

The core lesson of it, however, is something anyone striving to succeed should embrace.

Work hard. Be nice.

"You can't get much done in life if you only work on the days you feel good." »Jerry West



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