



WORKTALK WEEKLY

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Welcome to WORKTALKweekly

Metavision 3

Many words have been written and much money has been made around uncovering the so called 'secrets of success'. Almost everyone has an opinion on what constitutes success and certainly everyone wants to be one - whatever it means. In the end it seems to boil down to how this elusive, yet universally desired, commodity is measured. What units can you use to assess the levels of success in any given category?

On a basic level, success is defined by whatever prior targets and parameters are set. If your goal is to raise a defined amount of money by a specific date, then success is achieved if you stack up the right numbers. 'On budget and on time' is one perfectly valid way to measure success. Indeed, as long as the measuring scale is clear before you start, then it is easy to define success.

In this piece I am suggesting you step a bit further back and look, not just at a project or task, but a life, yours in fact, and consider what a successful life might be. As you take this metavision approach, numerous truths should emerge.

The first truth could involve considering that overall success is made up of a combination of successes along the way. As life proceeds, you attempt to navigate through a number of rites-of-passage. Just surviving the birth process could therefore be your first success. Then you might look at acquiring basic skills - walking, talking, feeding and dressing - all taken for granted now - but huge challenges at the time.

Moving through your journey, you may look at learning, achieving, qualifying, making friends, building a life and earning your money. Such, for many, are the building blocks of success. From the outside, the attributes of health, wealth, notoriety, or power are often applied to the meaning criteria.

The wealthy, wise, powerful and articulate high achievers often author the proverbs of success, based on their own stories, and this is the second truth that you might like to consider. Success is sometimes seen in proverbial forms.

Some examples of these proverbs are: "Never, never, never give up" (closely linked to "If at first you don't succeed try again"); "To thine own self be true"; "It is better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all"; "Follow your dreams"; "Gather good people around you"; "Persevere, overcome, be strong etc, etc".

The list can be endless, but the themes have to do with overcoming, winning through, persevering and ending up victorious.

Far be it from me to criticize these criteria, for they have been forged in the fires of powerful experiences and collective wisdom. My question is to do with whether they are big enough.

Stand back a bit further and you can see that history is littered with successful broken people. The early biblical characters were flawed in the extreme. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all deceivers. Moses was a murderer, David was an adulterer and a murderer, Sarah laughed at God. None of these were paragons of virtue and all revealed their dark and broken natures.

Heroes don't always win in the end, stories have sad finishes and things just plain go wrong.

But at the heart of the success lies a paradox.

It seems that true success is not found in the victory but the surrender. It is not in 'never giving up', but in 'always giving up'. It is more to do with abandonment than intransigence.

Success seems to emanate from the quiet or shocking revelation that you can't, not that you can. The truly blessed are the poor in spirit who have seen beyond a shadow of a doubt that the game of life is about a progressive casting your life on the mercy of God, abandoning yourself to Him in utter dependence and trust.

It is the walking into the furnace with no assurance that you will not be burned; it is the lying still while the surgeon cuts. It is the humble search of the suckling child and the unmoving position of the paralyzed as your friends lower you through the roof to the master of the house.

There is a strange power in this realization of impotence which slowly or suddenly grips your soul with the knowledge that 'without Him you can do nothing'.

With Him, however, is another matter. In all the beginnings God makes something out of nothing at all. This is the lesson from the first working week, and it is the third truth that I suggest you take into your next working week. It is the metavision which will enable you to be a radical believer.

I wish you every success.

Work Well
Geoff Shattock

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