



Winning Ways

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Winning Ways NewsBits

Do you know of a business owner or salesperson that should be making \$100,000 a year or more and isn't? They need to take "Winning at Sales" sales course starting September 6th or September 15th. Sign up at www.winningwaysinc.com

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The Leader Inside

One of the challenges in becoming a strong leader is finding the right balance between taking advice from others and relying on your own abilities. People tend to err in one of two ways. One is to say, "Other people have no wisdom to offer me... I can figure out naturally and instinctively the best way to do anything I need to do. I'm going to play it my own way, and not bother to seek advice or training from others." The other is to continually look to other people for a model of how to be successful. In this mode, people tend to think things like, "Sarah seems to be doing really well, maybe I should start doing what she's doing... Bill's got a lot of things that I want, maybe I should make my working style more like his."

The problem with the first way of thinking is that it limits your growth. Each person has some things they're naturally gifted at, and some things they struggle with. A person who refuses to learn things that don't come naturally will never be able to progress beyond a certain point. Even people with extraordinary natural gifts will eventually be blocked from further achievement if they don't step out and begin training in skills that don't come easily.

The problem with the second way of thinking is that it keeps you looking outside yourself for the cues and definitions of success. People who fall into this trap frequently compare themselves to others, berating themselves for not doing the things others do, or setting other people's achievements as their own measures of success. They also tend to flit from one new idea to another, trying on the methods and purposes that seem to be working for other people, without having a clear idea of whether it's really right for themselves.

Great leaders, in contrast, draw their inspiration and sense of purpose from within. They know what they want to achieve, and what gifts they already possess to help them achieve it. Then they use lessons and experiences others can share with them as a tool to help them reach their goals. They are always willing to listen and learn, but they are confident in their own vision, so that they can receive advice and input without letting it deflect them from their own deeply personal sense of purpose.

If you set someone else's life as the benchmark for achievement, you are doomed to fall short. That is because no one can possibly be as good at being Sarah as Sarah can. She was made with a unique set of skills, qualities, and passions, and each one of them has contributed to bringing her where she is today.

The good news is, the same thing is true of you. No one else has your experiences, your personality traits, your gifts, and your passions, and so no one else can possibly fill the role in the world that you're able to fill. A great leader is someone who has embraced this truth, and is dedicated to building their own unique life on its foundation. It is a process of lifelong discovery: five, twenty, and fifty years down the road you will still be discovering new avenues of leadership, as you learn more about yourself and what you have to offer to the world.

One reason many people shy away from this path is that it's intimidating. It feels much safer to walk a road that's already mapped out. But to do this is to deprive yourself of the joy of discovering your own unique potential, and your own unique definition of success. It also deprives the world of a bright, strong, passionate leader... because whatever sphere you choose to operate in, embracing your inner vision is the first step to self-leadership, which is essential to becoming a leader of others.

How do you begin to discover the leader *you* were made to be? Begin by silencing the other voices in your life: the voices of family, friends, co-workers, the media. These all have valuable things to say, but they don't have access to the core of you. Only you have that. When you ask yourself the questions below, it may be tempting to give someone else's answer. Any time you catch yourself doing that, stop and say, "But is that really what *I* want, how *I* feel?" Think through what you really want your purpose in life to be, what strengths you can play off of and what areas you'd like to develop in. The questions below are a great starting point for discovering the leader *you* were made to be.

Some questions to ask yourself:

-If you could have any life you wanted, what would it be?

-What do you want people to remember you for? How do you want your biography to read?

-What needs do you see, either in your life or in the lives of other people, that you get most excited about filling?

-What strengths do you have that make you valuable to people around you?

-What qualities would you like to develop in yourself, to help you get to where you want to be?