

What If You Knew You Could Only Succeed?

Donald W. Mitchell

Many people are frustrated by unfulfilled dreams. All too often, they haven't even given their dreams a try: that's a shame! Who knows what they could have accomplished?

One of the most startling examples I ever experienced of seeing the effect of someone not trying things was when I took my mother to play her first round of golf when she was in her late sixties. Within four holes, she was consistently beating me . . . and I had been playing golf for many years.

I was very excited, but she wasn't. Why? She said that she thought that golf was boring: It was too easy.

She never played again. She didn't realize how rare her talent was in the game and didn't care. What's more, my mother is very shy. She didn't realize that through golf she could have made many good friends and enjoyed easy companionship with them.

Most of us have the opposite perspective to my mother's: We doubt ourselves, even when there's nothing to base that doubt on.

It's a strange way to look at things. If someone else has ever learned to do what you want to do, there's a good chance that you can learn, too. But most of us are filled with thoughts that prevent us from even trying . . . thoughts like "I probably wouldn't be any good."

What if we took the opposite approach and just assumed that we would succeed? You would certainly try a lot more things.

Let me take that one step further and encourage you to believe that you can only succeed. With that approach, you will not only try more things, but you are likely to seek out an optimal way to learn and pursue success.

Where might such a belief come from? Examining your own life is a good place to start. You learned to walk, didn't you? You learned to succeed in things you enjoyed, didn't you? You probably had success in many other things you did as well.

Looking back at my life, I realize that although I had many temporary setbacks, I eventually succeeded at everything I stuck with. Cut from the third grade basketball team due to complete incompetence, I was the starting point guard on my eighth grade team. Initially discouraged by a low grade earned in my first college course in my major, I redoubled my efforts and later earned the highest grade on the honors oral among those with my major.

This subject of believing you can only succeed reminds me of the experiences gained by one of my business students, Mr. Puneet Jain. Mr. Jain was born in India and earned a degree in engineering there, a difficult course of study. Mr. Jain's father owned and operated many successful businesses so it was natural for Mr. Jain to be interested in those subjects as well.

After a few years working as an engineer, Mr. Jain took on management roles in his father's businesses. But without formal training in management, he lacked complete confidence. Despite the discomfort, he was successful. After six years working in his father's construction and hydropower businesses, Mr. Jain was asked to lead one of his father's manufacturing businesses, one that makes polypropylene bags to store commodities like cement, sugar, and rice.

Despite this fast-track business success, Mr. Jain wasn't satisfied. He had always been interested in finance and wanted to try his hand in that area, an area where no one in his family had ever worked. But he lacked a sense of being knowledgeable and professionally qualified to work in finance. Considering the alternatives, Mr. Jain realized that an MBA in finance could provide both the knowledge and the credentials that he sought.

Mr. Jain was attracted to studying at Rushmore University (an online school), due to its strength in finance. The educational experience vastly exceeded his expectations: He learned to discipline himself to learn a new subject; he benefited from objective reviews by the school's experienced finance faculty, but the biggest gain came in his confidence. He learned that if he focused on finance he could succeed at doing it. What a nice and empowering surprise this was!

After graduating with an MBA in December 2006, Mr. Jain founded a new company, M/s Quality Capital Limited, which specializes in researching securities and making investments. The company has prospered, and now he's living his dream of heading a successful business in his beloved area of finance. Every day he has a chance to apply his new-found knowledge.

I was curious about Mr. Jain's impressive success in a new field. I asked him how his MBA education helped. He replied, "Rushmore's self study and objective assessment model gave me immense knowledge and confidence in my chosen field of finance." Obviously, the potential for great accomplishment in finance was within him all along, but adding the right confidence and knowledge helped him turn that potential into substantial accomplishments.

In learning from Mr. Jain's example, you should assess what you lack to live your dreams:

- Are you confident you can succeed?
- Do you need knowledge to succeed?
- Do you need experience to succeed?
- Where can you gain what you lack among those three elements?

Chances are there's a teacher out there waiting for you. Perhaps you've even heard the old saying, "When the pupil is ready, the teacher will appear."

Start by switching to believing that you will succeed, and the rest will fall into place.

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