

12 Important Things I Have Learned About Leadership, Success And Failure

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Business success is not about the need, it is about the want.

Showing up with the greatest strategy, solution or program will not take you forward unless your audience, your constituency, your stakeholders recognize the critical area of need you serve as a WANT. Some of the greatest inventions, ideas and strategies were never realized as great successes by their creators. The imperative to find and fill the want so that you can establish a footprint that will allow you to speak to the need is critical.

• Competitive differentiation and success are about creating value.

Innovation is fueled by the desire to create value.

Competitive differentiation and success are about delivering this value. What does not create value will not survive. Success is a value based equation, and today part of that equation is the optimization of great thought, great ideas/innovations, great communication and collaboration. The ability to innovate is born of a desire to create value, this desire must be part of organizational cultures, learning initiatives...it is part of [the DNA of 21st century business success.](#)

• The biggest challenge we face is internal.

The greatest threat we face is internal; whether we are sabotaging our own ability/talent, working in the wrong culture or sector, trying to climb a ladder that no longer exists...It is our mindset, our ability to stand tall by recognizing our strengths and challenges and using BOTH to optimize and realize our potential that is the way forward. [It is our 3Q Edge™](#)

- **Leadership is a tough road, but true leadership is not an easy journey, it is a road of purpose, commitment, courage and results.**

What separates those who truly lead and those who do not is the ability to cleave to the courage, purpose and commitment to achieve results. [Results that drive great business, results that drive an evolution of self, of one's people and positively impact the community in which one lives.](#) Our greatest hope lies in the hearts and minds of leaders who can inspire, empower and enable our greatest potential. If you want to lead forward, be prepared for a tough road that is worthwhile because paving the road will be your biggest commitment and contribution.

- **Purpose Equals Profit on a Multiplicity of Levels.**

You cannot destroy the power of purpose because it is the fire that lights our souls, our greatest thought, action and results. Purpose keeps us strong, focused and helps us develop the resiliency we need to lead, learn and succeed forward. Purpose is the strength that kindles the human passion and resolve that can take us forward on a multiplicity of levels that impact the quality of our lives, our workplaces, our leadership and our world. Coaching, training, learning and development, mentor-ship initiatives that are not focused on tapping into the purpose of the organization in alignment with the individual and collective purpose of employees and teams will be unable to drive sustainable results in this new trajectory of change, challenges, hyper-competition and opportunities. Purpose equals profit on a multiplicity of levels.

- **Being a change-maker is not an easy path, but it is worth it. We can all be change-makers in our own way. All positive changes big and small are critical.**

I did not start out my career aspiring to be a change-maker, but I successfully led a steel company when there were few/no women in similar positions, helped to change the environmental law in a province, and took a landmark case for children's rights to success and have faced and overcome gut-wrenching challenges. None of these accomplishments were easy, and they required gut wrenching decisions and fortitude. Was it worth it? YOU betcha. There is nothing that can replace knowing that one has in some small or large way contributed to a better future. We can look upon challenges we face and feel defeated, or we can pick challenges we have the courage and commitment to address and help resolve. The former is tough, but in making the difficult choice, we make a right choice that drives our best self and best results forward.

- **Difficult challenges and failure are hard, but necessary.**

I have had great success and I have also suffered great challenges and failures that humbled me, nearly destroyed my career and taught me that the only way to lead forward is to learn forward. The ability to develop a new relationship with one's failures that optimizes our ability to learn and relearn, build resiliency and grit and also look at problems, solutions and failures with new eyes that take us forward is critical. Using failure to succeed is a critical life and leadership skill.

- **What you focus on grows.**

Neuroscience and psychology have taught us that what you focus on grows. Our minds give direction to our brains, and the focus of our thoughts, the belief systems that underlie them will predetermine what and how we see things. Learning to do an internal re-set, to let go of default patterns of thinking that sabotage our greatest potential is critical and doable. We can learn to take small, [consistent steps that re-write default patterns of thinking \(as well as communicating and doing\) that take us forward faster and better.](#)

- **The ability to develop cross-cultural, cross generational communication, engagement and results is real, doable, teachable and critical.**

We cannot break through barriers when our focus is the barriers that exist between us, because this mind-set automatically limits our ability to communicate, collaborate, ideate and work together towards a better future. Learning how to build bridges across cultures, generations, internal and external barriers is one of the most important communication and leadership skills. I cut my teeth being a woman CEO in the steel industry many years ago because wearing the yoke of a visible minority who was discounted immediately, having to develop international and cross generational communication helped me realize that [the way forward is a focus on what unites and resonates all parties regardless of culture or generation.](#)

- **Seven commitments are critical**

anchors for great leadership.

They are commitments that take us forward faster and better. Commitments that ignite our best selves, best work, best leadership and best lives. They can be used as part of learning, training or leadership commitment statements that are championed by the C-Suite and lived vertically and horizontally in the organization.

Leadership starts with a commitment that must be mirrored in our organizations, our lives and the employees, constituents and communities we serve.

- Our greatest promise lies in re-setting the status quo because what worked in the past may be impotent in the future.**

Learning, leading and succeeding forward means re-setting the gender divide, championing diversity, collaboration and taking active positive steps that drive new ways, better ways, faster ways to work better together. The ability to stretch, to grow, to move past educational, generational, cultural silos that keep us transfixed on one point of view, rather than incorporating the power of shared viewpoints and complimentary strengths is the way forward. [Leading forward means making a critical shift forward.](#)

- Happiness and success are a value proposition. Life is a gift you can either choose to spend or use.**

We live in a world of paradox where some of the richest, most successful people are also bitter, disenchanting and unhappy. Once our survival needs have been met, the truest success is happiness; and true happiness can only be defined by self actualization and our ability to feel that we are

contributing, giving, sharing and growing. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is timeless, because the human desire, [the pilot light of purpose that lights our greatest purpose and happiness cannot be cast asunder.](#)

Human effectiveness must be a critical focal point, because looking at efficiency without effectiveness, short-term results without long-term consequences, communication without engagement and buy-in will deter our greatest potential and results. The imperative to realize our ability to think smarter, communicate, collaborate and lead forward faster and better must be aligned with a focus on the actualization of human potential, purpose and the realization of results that take us forward better together.

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