



Factors Of Greatness

Luke 9:47-48

And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

Thrive on pressure. Stress robs us of our focus and inhibits our performance. Pressure is negative only when we are ill-prepared. In fact, pressure can bring out extra-ordinary accomplishments.

You will either find a way to deal with adversity, or decide that the season is over, and that your dreams are beyond reach.

In order to reach your dreams, you will have to give more than you ever have in terms of effort and production. That is the challenge, and if you choose to accept it, then you can still see your dreams materialize, and you can be a champion.

Beware of the wounded tiger; especially if that tiger is highly motivated.

Establish good habits. A bad habit is any habit that doesn't serve you in a positive way. For example, common bad habits in the workplace include distractions (the personal calls that drag on, the conversations at the coffee machine that go past the second cup) and excuses ("Yes, I leave at 5, but so does everybody else"). Another bad habit is being on time. That's right: Coming to work on time is a bad habit. An athlete wouldn't show up for an 8 o'clock game at 7:55 and go out to play without warming up. Why should someone who is arriving at work at the appointed time think he or she is prepared for the day? You should arrive a half-hour early, get your social conversations out of the way, get your newspaper read and get your coffee poured, so that when the workday starts you are ready.

Get organized. Don't put things off. Do the unpleasant things early, freeing yourself for what you enjoy.

Master the art of communication. In four words: Listen more, talk less.

Build self-esteem. You have to feel good about yourself to succeed. The way to do that is to deserve success, to establish a great work ethic and the discipline inherent in that. But you also need to build the self-esteem of the people around you.

Understand your own skills, not the least of which is your ability to sacrifice yourself for the good of the cause you are involved in. Do not allow yourself to get jealous of others involved in the same cause, simply because they are more adept at what they are doing than you. Look at them with a mentality that says, "I want a piece of that, too!" Begin right then, to do everything humanly possible to improve yourself. You have as much right as the next man to be successful.

Everyone wants to believe that he or she has value, an important lesson to learn if you are a parent, teacher, boss or coach.

Always be positive. The rule is simple: The more trying the times, the more positive you have to be. Look at change as a chance to be more successful.

Learn from adversity. At one time or another we all encounter adversity that threatens our will to go on. One kind of adversity occurs when you experience a major failure, the kind that leaves you doubting yourself. Then you have to step back, examine your role in the failure and accept your share of the blame. Another kind of adversity comes from events we can't control, personal tragedies. *Then we either learn to overcome or we sink into despair.*

In 1987, Rick Pitino, coach of the Kentucky Wildcats basketball team, learned what I am talking about the hard way. His son Daniel had been born with congenital heart problems. He was hospitalized for months, during which time Rick's wife Joanne, spent 14-hour days with him at the hospital, seven days a week. Finally, Daniel's condition improved and they took him home.

One day in March, Rick talked Joanne into taking a break and coming to New York with him for the Big East tournament. On the bus ride back, a state trooper pulled them over and told them to make an urgent call. The call was to the hospital, and a doctor there told Rick and Joanne that their son Daniel was dead.

Over the next few months there was not much to their marriage or family life. They had religious faith, but they felt that they would never be able to deal with something so traumatic. Their feelings were, "How could God do this to us?" In Rick's own words, "God didn't do it. Life did. There are simply parts of our life we can't understand." *The* *They knew that they had to accept this and return to their lives. Joanne and Rick changed their attitude from pointless negativity to appreciation for the good they had. They turned their attention to their three sons and tried to do positive things in Daniel's name.*

We must force ourselves to appreciate the good still around us; otherwise the bad will ruin our lives.

Learn from role models. The keys: Emulate traits you admire, and learn from other's mistakes.

Be ferociously persistent. *Persistence, more than anything else, keeps us great.* Anyone can be great for a day, a week, a month. But the people who ultimately succeed are the ones who understand that success is a long-term commitment. *You have got to develop a "PHD" mentality; poor, hungry, and driven, the kind of attitude that will drive you to learn more and be better.*

Set demanding goals. Most people, when presented with the fact that it takes hard work to be successful, will begin to work harder. The difficult part is getting them to understand their weaknesses so they can frame their goals around them.

You cannot play to your strengths and just avoid your weaknesses. Doing this will only cause your weaknesses to be more obvious and pronounced, because while you are going on your strengths alone and ignoring your weaknesses, times are getting harder, the competition is getting rougher, and you are getting no better. You must work at your weaknesses if you are ever going to become great. You cannot start on the road to success and greatness until you first admit to yourself that you have this weakness.

We all make excuses for our weaknesses, but if we don't conquer them one by one, they'll consume our time and energy and make us miss opportunities. We need goals that will help us overcome our weaknesses. We just need to put in the time and discipline to get it done.

Survive success. *Today's success is often tomorrow's failure.* A failure to maintain discipline causes it to evaporate immediately. It's that fragile. *So never forget what you did right.* Write down your own secrets to success. Study them. If nothing else, they'll remind you *it wasn't good fortune that caused your success, but an entire lifestyle of achievement!*