

Introduction

*“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.
Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful
men with talent.*

*Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.
Education will not; the world is full of educated failures.
Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.”*

Coolidge, President Calvin

Personally, I view **Perseverance** as being the persistent determination to adhere steadfastly to a course of action, a belief, or a purpose against all odds. It is the dogged determination that overcomes difficulties which appear insurmountable. The spirit of indomitable perseverance crowns every victory.

Having spent 30 years in business, I have had enough traumas to last me several lifetimes. I have been driven to the edge of the abyss on numerous occasions, and I have personally tasted the bitter frustration of failure. In the past, I have observed the impact of failures on both business colleagues and friends. In all instances, I have witnessed the severe denting of self-respect, self-esteem and self-pride to the point where an individual actually questions the value and purpose of his/her own life.

Fortunately, I have been blessed with a fighting spirit and the tenacity to keep going with hope in my heart, and the words of wisdom from great people like Churchill in my mind.

*“Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never –
in nothing, great or small, large or petty - never give in
except to convictions of honour and good sense.”*

Churchill, Sir Winston Leonard Spencer

Now, I know that **Perseverance** and failure cannot co-exist. Failure happens when someone quits. Nothing can take the place of **Perseverance**. It is the best friend and ally of those who accept any failure as an enabler for renewed resolve to achieve the desired outcome. It is the ultimate insurance for success. As Confucius

said: “Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”

It is my personal belief that of all the modern “Keys to Fortune” none turns the tumbler of the lock of Life more easily than perseverance. Today, more than ever, the greatest need that I have observed is for people to become more efficiently effective. This need comes not only from competitive pressures, but also from cost pressures that are forcing a reduction in the depth of organisational hierarchies.

Perseverance will be an indispensable companion in your search for effectiveness, which essentially means doing the right things. Being more effective also means being more flexible as businesses increase the rate at which they change. Therefore, you need to handle more responsibilities, new organisation structures, new products/services, new processes, new policies, new business environments and new ways of working.

Perseverance will also be your trusted ally in your quest for efficiency, which is about getting things done better, cheaper, easier and faster so that you can have more time, more money, a better life and less stress.

In the past, I used to picture success as a pot of gold that I would find one day, and like many of my contemporaries, I measured success in monetary terms, by job title, social status and even by what type of car was driven.

After acquiring the detached house, the executive car, the exotic holidays, the nice clothes and having savoured the experience of breakfast at Claridges, lunch at the Dorchester, afternoon tea at the Ritz and dinner at Raffles, it suddenly dawned on me that success is not actually a destination but a direction. Wealth and material gain are the automatic by-products of success.

My present view is that, as you journey towards the end of your life which I call your **check-out-date**, success is defined by the quality of the goals that you create for yourself and by what you contribute towards those goals. Another elegant definition is that success is the

progressive realisation of a worthy goal. Of course, the goals need not be just monetary. They can encompass any areas of your life where you wish to effect change for the better. For example:

- Spiritual - serenity, peace, meditation, religion
- Health - mental, physical, emotional, financial
- Intellectual - personal growth, career, hobbies, learning
- Family - immediate & extended
- Social - friends, community, affiliations.

Like everyone else, you want the best that life has to offer. Although life is not an unending succession of problems and crises, you will nevertheless have to accept that problems have their time and purpose. For many, fear prevents them from dealing with life's challenges. Very often it is:

- Fear of the unknown
- Fear of failure
- Fear of being childless
- Fear of imagined consequences
- Fear of family bereavement
- Fear of getting old
- Fear of death, etc.

I believe that, in your quest for freedom from the shackles of your circumstance, you have to face up to your fears. No one likes problems and they certainly do not go away if you ignore them. In fact, a problem deferred is very often a problem magnified. So, I always put feared things first whereas others put them last.

Apart from death, taxation and uncertainty, the only other thing in life that is certain is change. Therefore, you must come to terms with the simple fact that to live successfully you must **embrace change**, and you must force yourself to come out from your comfort zone where you enjoy the safety and security of everything remaining the same.

You must not lose sight of the fact that life is a succession of events. There are seasons and cycles, and nothing stays the same:

- What is born will die
- What has been assembled will be scattered
- What has been dispersed will be gathered
- What has been amassed will be used up
- What has been exhausted will be accumulated
- What has been erected will fall down
- What has collapsed will be built up
- What has been elevated will be run down
- What has been low will be made high.

You may not have control over what happens to you in every season or cycle of your life, but you most certainly have a choice as to how you deal with everything that happens to you. You may experience health problems, business setbacks and personal difficulties, and have to face the consequence of extensive devastation and loss of lives, caused either by the evil of man, or natural calamity, such as the tsunami of 26th December 2004.

It is your choice to view the glass as being half-empty and wallow in self-pity by letting your grief and misfortune get the better of you by taking the easy way out.

Instead, as a disciple of perseverance you can adopt a positive mental attitude. Your rescue will start with viewing the glass as being half-full, and your recovery from the trials and tribulations of every cycle of your life will continue with your efforts to make a difference in this hurtful world.

I have faced the pain of losing loved ones, business failure, tax investigation and ill-health, and I have always drawn inspiring energy from the words of the Persian mystical poet and Sufi saint Jalaluddin Rumi (1207 – 1273), who wrote:

I saw grief drinking a cup of sorrow and called out,

“It tastes sweet, does it not?”

“You’ve caught me,” grief answered, “and you’ve ruined my business, how can I sell sorrow when you know it’s a blessing?”

I hope that this work is a useful guide in your search for personal success as you journey through life. I am certain that you will have fun modelling your unique key that shall turn the lock of Life and open your door to richness.

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