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Putting One Foot in Front of the Other: *Growing Self, Growing Business*

Lao Tzu tells us “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step” (Lao Tzu, n.d.).

When venturing into business, we begin with a dream, a vision, or something special that we hope will thrive. Often, we may be unclear on how to reach the end. Making things happen is a matter of perseverance, keeping our eye on the prize, and focusing on getting things done. The realization of our dreams is within our own influence and control. Focusing on those things directs our time and energy more productively enables us to thrive. We must avoid those areas of concern where we lack control.

This article will serve as a guide to the self-starter, to those changing careers, or the fresh-face of a new and exciting entrepreneur.

The Step of the Journal

Always, 24/7, 365 keep a journal at your side. Throughout your days, and often nights, great ideas will come to you. Sadly, they come at the most inopportune time. With a journal, or even electronic notes, you can jot down that tremendous idea that came to you in a dead sleep at 1:00 a.m. You can stop in your tracks at the grocery store and write down that earth-shattering idea that just came to you. With a journal you can track your successes, and failures. Always remember the only true failure is the failure to try. Journaling helps you keep track of the tremendous ideas shared in groups, or by random people you meet.

The Step of Solitude

It is important to find time to sit, think, and reflect. We are influenced in all that we do and see, and this may lead us to confusion, or even despair. Solitude is key to clarity, regrouping of progress, and self-knowledge. In seeking a place of solitude, we are focusing our energy on personal growth. We can begin with 15 short minutes a day, and work up to greater periods of time. Reflection on our current life place, and reality can guide our future steps. How did we get here, and where do we want to go next?

The Step of Creating a Vision

Perhaps, in our step of solitude we discover we are way off course. There is always time to create a vision for a bright and exciting tomorrow. We must never lose hope, and always chase our dreams. Cast your vision on pen and paper, pencil, or even crayon if that is what is in your hand. Set in your mind where you want to be, and what you want to do. Write it down, and keep it with you at all times. Refer to your vision frequently and ask the crucial question before acting, “will this get me where I want to go”?

The Step of the Compass

While others may watch the clock, we can keep our vision on true north. Time only ticks loud when you are constrained by the hours, minutes, and seconds of our lives. Forget the clock! Live by a compass. Our compass will keep us focused on our true north, our vision, our dreams. Timelines are a tremendous key to celebrations. Use a timeline to take that one, then two, then third step. Yesterday I had a thought, today I wrote down a vision, tomorrow I'll create a mission, and by the end of the month, I'll have a concise plan of action. All from taking one step at a time.

The Step of Purpose

How do we reach our dreams, realize our vision, reach our true north and thrive? Make every step count. Is there idleness in our day? Read up on that which you seek. Network among friends and colleagues. Join a group, FemCity is a tremendous place to begin. Some will say that many fear public speaking more than death. Join Toastmasters and face your fears. Contribute at least one action each day toward reaching your vision. Relaxation is acceptable unless it turns to binge eating chips on the sofa for 3-hours a day.

The Step of Investigation

Investigate all you can about like businesses, opportunities, and support networks. Conduct a Market Analysis. "A what?" you may ask. Find out if the dream you have is already on the market. Identify the most successful strategies, and look for cost variations. Identify those who you will target when promoting your product or service.

The Step of Commitment

If indeed this is your ultimate vision, your dream come true, then one hour per day should be easy. Many burgeoning writers with writer's block will beg to differ! But if you truly want change, truly want to make a difference, truly want your brand out there then make it happen. Put one foot in front of the other until you reach your summit. Avoid complaining about why things don't or can't happen. Focus on what you can change, and make happen. Focus on those baby steps that will lead to giant leaps.

Now is the time to take the first step toward a more successful future. Now is the time to believe and achieve your dreams and visions.

The Apostle Paul said we should, "... run your race to win..." (1 Corinthians 9:24 TLB). And Jesus Christ Himself said, "... I am come that [you] might have life, and that [you] might have *it* more abundantly..." (John 10:10 NKJV).

We too can begin a wonderful journey, run the race to win, and win more abundantly. The key ingredients to growing, and growing our business are found by putting one foot in front of the other.

Lao Tzu Quotes. (n.d.). Retrieved November 4, 2018, from https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/lao_tzu_137141

WORKSHEET ~

Putting One Foot in Front of the Other: *Growing Self, Growing Business*

1. Journaling: *Buy a journal! It can be as simple as a .49¢ mini-spiral, or as elegant as a leather-bound, zipper, gold-plated journal. There will be times when a thought comes to you, or you network and meet someone without a business card. There are times you need to create a timeline, or a to do list. This worksheet can even be placed in a journal (old-fashioned cut and paste), or written by hand. Perhaps your journal is electronic! That's fine too!*

2. Solitude: *Where will you find solitude? In the space below, designate a specific location, and time that will be your 15 minutes of quiet time each day. Be sure to inform family and friends. Ask them to please respect your time.*

3. Creating a Vision: *Write down what you see at the end of our journey, where you want to be, and what you want to be doing. This will likely change slightly over time as you grow and refine your articulated statement.*

4. The Compass: *In the space below, create a list of things you need to do, or want to investigate in your first few steps. Set some goals, short and long-term. Celebrate those milestones, and continue to review your vision each day. In fact, re-write your vision below!*

5. Purpose: *In the space below, write the occasions when your time may be less than effective. Now rethink how you can spend time more wisely. (Examples: listen to an informational podcast while cleaning or driving, networking with others while standing in the checkout at the local grocers, social networking with a purpose ~ connecting with groups and informational blogs)*

6. Investigate: *In the space below, jot down a few key ideas you find online, or networking. Also write down questions that you need to investigate.*

7. Commitment: *In the space below, designate a time and place where you will dedicate time to purposeful progress. Unlike solitude, this time is action-packed and will result in plans coming together. Much of what you reflected in your solitude may evolve into results during your time of commitment. Public libraries are a wonderful place to work.*



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