

SUCCESS INSIGHTS

#7 Stumbling Block – Not surrounding yourself with like-minded, positive, success-oriented people.

When I was a young girl, I was always admonished to choose my friends wisely. It was often recited from the Good Book “bad association spoils useful habits”. I wasn’t exactly sure what useful habits I had that my parents were so concerned about but the point was clear – be careful who you “hang out” with.

Of course, I never gave it any serious consideration when I was younger and I didn’t understand the full meaning until recently. When I began to really study successful people a couple of years ago, a definite theme emerged - that highly successful people purposely surround themselves with positive, motivated, and like-minded people. And more than that, they avoid negative, pessimistic or victimized people.

How critical is this when trying to achieve success in life? Consider the following example.

In Napoleon Hill’s “Think and Grow Rich”, he speaks about the power of a Master Mind group. This was one of the 13 Steps Toward Riches. Speaking of a group like this, he said:

“This form of cooperative alliance has been the basis of nearly every great fortune. Your understanding of this great truth may definitely determine your financial status.”

He goes on to give the example of Henry Ford who “began his business career under the handicaps of poverty, illiteracy, and ignorance.” Within twenty-five years, Ford made himself one of the richest men in America. It’s probably useful to our discussion to note in that time period, he became a close personal friend of Thomas Edison, as well as formed acquaintances with Harvey Firestone (founder of Firestone), John Burroughs (author), and Luther Burbank (scientist).

Besides being men of great brain capacity, they were all successful in their respective fields. So how does this apply with the current company we are keeping?

In the book “Secrets of the Millionaire Mind”, it points out that most people earn within 20 percent of the average income of their six closest friends. Is this because we go around asking people for their tax returns before we befriend them? That might be a dating strategy for some (*wink*) – but typically we don’t know or care how much money our friends make. So how do we end up with friends so close to our salary range?

You’ve heard the saying, “Birds of a feather flock together.” It’s not the similar paychecks that draw us together but more likely the underlying mindset we share. For example, if your friends on average make \$50,000 and you have your goal set at \$500,000 per year, you are going to have to think differently and take different actions than your friends.

Am I suggesting you dump your friends and start hanging out at the country club? No...and yes! I believe that if your friends are positive and supportive of your goals, and they don’t try to limit you by telling you to be “realistic” (which is code for ‘I don’t think I could do it – so don’t you try it’) then cherish those friends.

However, if your friends tend to be negative, cynical, gossiping, and lead drama-filled lives, there is no need to continue infecting yourself with that kind of negative energy. Only you can make the determination if the people close to you build you up or drag you down.

A good test is this: how do you feel after spending time with them? Are you lifted up, inspired? If not, you may need to start limiting the time you are willing to give them.

On the flip side, it will also be important to associate with people who have attained the goals you've set for yourself. Why? Because the easiest path to success is to learn from those who've gone before you. When you want to improve your golf or tennis game, you play with people who are better than you. That's how you get better. The same is true of any endeavor.

Napoleon Hill summed it up best "You can learn to acquire vast [success] by learning to think like the men and women who have already achieved success".

QUOTES

"There are over 5000 statues in New York City and not one of them is of a cynic or critic."

~ Unknown

"Never let broke people sway you."

~ T. Harv Eker

"Cynicism should be treated like a contagious disease. Quarantine the victim and stay FAR AWAY!"

~ Nancy Roberts

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