

Burke Hedges'
Success X Factor
Positive Change for a Better Life

"Life is not what happens to you, but what you make of it!"

There are thousands of stories of people who, against all odds, succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. Henry Ford went bankrupt twice before creating the Model T. Coca Cola sold only four hundred drinks their first year in business. Dr. Seuss was rejected by twenty three publishers before printing his first book. So, if you want the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, you'll probably have to trudge through some mud to get there. So, whatever you're working on, stick with it. Play the game 100 percent full out to win. Take what you get and just keep moving on.

Persistence Pays Off

“Nothing in the world takes the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with great talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence, determination alone are omnipotent.”

- Calvin Coolidge

Back some years ago, a survey of sales executives showed that 80 percent of all sales were made after the fifth sales call. Yet 48 percent of salespeople contacted prospects only once and then gave up and moved on to another prospect. 25 percent made two calls and then quit. 12 percent stopped after three calls. And 5 percent gave up after the fourth call. The other 10 percent didn't quit. They kept on calling. This 10 percent – the one salesperson out of every ten – ended up being responsible for making 80 percent of the sales.

If you think you are going to make a decision to enter the music business, or any other business, and just walk right through a door marked success, you had better think again.

The path to success is heavily strewn with obstacles. These obstacles show up in many ways, sometimes as doors being slammed in your face, not being taken seriously, or in some cases not being totally prepared for your own success, as well as negative and doubtful comments by others. But if your heart is truly at home with your interest, you must prepare for those challenges. One way is by being persistent. Regardless of what anyone says or thinks, persist in your dreams.

What is Persistence?

Persistence is the ability to maintain action regardless of your feelings. You press on even when you feel like quitting.

When you work on any big goal, your motivation will wax and wane like waves hitting the shore. Sometimes you'll feel motivated; sometimes you won't. But it's not your motivation that will produce results — it's your action. Persistence allows you to keep taking action even when you don't feel motivated to do so, and therefore you keep accumulating results.

Persistence will ultimately provide its own motivation. If you simply keep taking action, you'll eventually get results, and results can be very motivating. For example, you may become a lot more enthusiastic about dieting and exercising once you've lost those first 10 pounds and feel your clothes fitting more loosely.

Persistence is a learned condition. We can learn it from our own experience or by watching someone else.

When to Give Up

Should you always persist and never give up? Certainly not. Sometimes giving up is clearly the best option.

Have you ever heard of a company called Traf-O-Data? What about Microsoft? Both companies were started by Bill Gates and Paul Allen. Traf-O-Data was the first company they started, back in 1972. Gates and Allen ran it for several years before throwing in the towel. They gave up. Of course they did a little better with Microsoft.

If they hadn't given up on Traf-O-Data, then we wouldn't have such rich collections of Microsoft and Bill Gates jokes today.

So how do you know when to press on vs. when to give up?

Is your plan still correct? If not, update the plan. Is your goal still correct? If not, update or abandon your goal. There's no honor in clinging to a goal that no longer inspires you. Persistence is not stubbornness.

This was a particularly difficult lesson for me to learn. I had always believed one should never give up, that once you set a goal, you should hang on to the bitter end. The captain goes down with the ship and all that. If I ever failed to finish a project I started, I'd feel very guilty about it.

Eventually I figured out that this is just nonsense.

If you're growing at all as a human being, then you're going to be a different person each year than you were the previous year. And if you consciously pursue personal development, then the changes will often be dramatic and rapid. You can't guarantee that the goals you set today will still be ones you'll want to achieve a year from now.

“Perseverance is the hard work you do after you get tired of doing the hard work you already did.”

- Newt Gingrich

The value of persistence comes not from stubbornly clinging to the past. It comes from a vision of the future that's so compelling you would give almost anything to make it real. Persistence of action comes from persistence of vision. When you're super-clear about what you want in such a way that your vision doesn't change much, you'll be consistent in your actions. And that consistency of action will produce consistency of results.

Can you identify a part of your life where you've demonstrated a pattern of long-term persistence? I think if you can identify such an area, it may provide a clue to your mission — something you can work towards where passion and self-discipline function synergistically.

This world is overflowing with people who gave up on their desires, dreams and goals at the first sign of opposition. Don't you be one of them.....

Seize the day,
Burke Hedges