

The Ego of Success...Redefining Success (Part 4)

In our previous issue, we discussed that success must be measured in terms of character formation, healthier family life, becoming the best we can be and grooming successors.

In this issue, we will cover 4 other perspectives of success.

1. Success is about developing people

People development must be a top priority for leadership. This is not just propelled by the functionality of performance but it must be a personal value of the leader, regardless of employee's loyalty. This is the human stewardship required of today's leaders. Great leaders put a high premium developing the human potential. This is the concept of *dignification*: treating employees as human being rather than cogs in a money machine, providing them opportunities to develop skills to accomplish meaningful jobs, and to nurturing human potential at every level.ⁱ

There is a tight tension between people development and corporate profitability. It would be a mistake to overemphasize either side of the equation.

Without profitability, the company cannot survive and provide jobs, not to say, about developing people. Without people of integrity and competence, the company can never become profitable.

2. Success is learning from failures and adversity

Research done by the Center for Creative Leadership shows that most leaders learn leadership lessons from crises and failures. Certainly, a key success factor of leadership must be resilience. Tom Gernedas saw failure as a very human-centered notion, "When we fail in spite of doing our best, it could turn out to be a step towards better things we cannot see at the time of apparent failures."

Similarly, Patrick Morley of Orlando described a downturn in his real estate business, by saying, "God wanted to get my attention...(Failure) is the reality and even has its merits: it keeps us humble and fit, and teaches us to do the most with little. In fact, we may end up feeling more secure and have an even better system of values."ⁱⁱ

3. Success is about developing friendships

Jim Baker, former US Secretary of State, once said, "The fleeting aspect of power causes us to understand the importance of lasting personal relationships – friendships. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "God evidently does not intend all of us to be rich, or to be powerful or to be great, but he intends all of us to be friends."

For the CEO, friendship is the hardest social relationship to find and enjoy. For them, there is a tendency to see people as functional beings: either clients or competitors. They are afraid of being exploited. Sometimes, past experiences of corporate betrayal scar their desire to develop friendship.

They are also fearful of exploiting their friendships for business. Great leaders are able to distinguish between a professional relationships and personal relationships. They tread this line carefully.

Dr Robert S. Weiss, a psychiatrist who has studied the social choices of executives, reports that friendship is an extremely wide discretionary area for the successful executive. Many executives make no time at all for friendship or they see this area of their lives “totally optional.”ⁱⁱⁱ

However, friendship has tremendous benefits. Primarily, we are gregarious creatures. The first face we see is the other. We are made for friendship and intimacy.

The other benefit is the emotional support for the tough job of the CEO. Raytheon’s Tom Phillips explains, “Being a CEO is the loneliest position in the world. And you have to have someone you trust to whom you can talk and compare notes.”

Also, friendship allows us to share perspectives about issues in business and to get in touch with social justice issues.

4. Success is about developing companies that embody these values of success

Finally, success is about leaving legacy. How we end is more important than how we start. Our corporations must embody these values if we are truly successful. This is perhaps the most arduous challenge for the leader.

Leadership is about channeling the needs of the individual worker into a productive harmony with the needs of the group to the fulfillment of the organization’s purpose, which then brings it into a full cycle to *dignification* and relationship between people.

William Rentschler, former chairman of The Medart Companies, and now a consultant/business broker to private firms. He has been most effective in turning floundering and failing small to mid-size companies around. His primary motivation is job creation. He is an eloquent spokesperson and living example of the CEO’s responsibility to provide meaningful work.

He has a deep, unconditional commitment to the welfare of others and intrinsic respect for individuals.

*“The good people are out there in abundance, eager to take the reins, but must need a little help, which we must provide...
When I die, I hope whoever delivers the eulogy will remember me as one who sought always to provide steady, decent, challenging jobs, which allowed good people to support their families, build and retain their self-esteem and “work hard at work worth doing.”
I would consider that among the contributions that make a life worthwhile.”*

How inspiring!

In conclusion, it is truism that when we have these perspectives of success and strive towards embodying these success principles, we will then move from becoming successful leaders to great leaders.

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ⁱ Nash, L.L. 1994. *Believers in Business*. Thomas. Nelson Publishers. Nashville. USA.

ⁱⁱ Nash, L.L. 1994. *Believers in Business*. Thomas. Nelson Publishers. Nashville. USA.

ⁱⁱⁱ Nash, L.L. 1994. *Believers in Business*. Thomas. Nelson Publishers. Nashville. USA.