



It takes more than talent

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Our minds can be our greatest friend or our worst enemy depending on what we tell ourselves. A lot of the time we create misery for ourselves by believing a lot of stories that we would like to believe but that just don't reflect the reality of the world we live in.

One of the beliefs we like to tell ourselves is that the world is fair. In fact this has a name - "The Just World Hypothesis". Most of us humans like to tell ourselves that the world is fair. And we tend to believe that until unfair things happen to us. The truth is the world is not fair (well not unless you take a very, very long term view). Bad things happen to good people. A lot. Justice seldom seems to be attained. So if you have a belief that the world is fair, you could find yourself ending up in a very uncomfortable space, and even stuck. When things become unfair you can end up repeating to yourself your story about the unfairness of it all instead of accepting what happened, dealing with what you can, and moving on. The world is what it is. When you accept that you can move on and up more easily.

A related misconceived belief is that the world, other people, etc, owe me because of wrongs that happened to me. If you believe this then you will wait, and wait, and wait, and wait some more, to be paid your dues from people, the world, etc. who will not do so. Once again, you need to accept what is, do what you can to fix what you can, and move on, and then you can move up.

One of the biggest misconceptions that so many subscribe to is that those who are successful were born lucky, rich, got all the right breaks, were born with a silver spoon in their mouth, had great backgrounds, and everything in their lives just went right and success alighted upon them. If you believe this and you don't want to be successful in life, good and well. You can keep to these beliefs. If you do want to be successful then you have to change the way you are thinking. If you read the stories of successful people they are not fairy tales. Sometimes they read more like horror stories. They are tales of poverty, loss, injustice, and doors slamming shut in every direction. What got such people to be successful is hours and days, years and decades of hard work, persistence, determination, and never quitting. Many (if not most) successful people came (and still do come) from poor backgrounds, failed innumerable times before they succeeded, overcame significant health issues in many instances, yet carried on. Some will in fact attest that it was the adverse circumstances they were born into or that they experienced, that gave them their drive and determination to succeed.

Greatness is not something that just alights upon a few. It is something that is achieved with a high work ethic and perseverance through many, many failures and dark days.

In his book, "Outliers", Malcolm Gladwell points out that it takes ten thousand hours of practice at a craft or in a field to reach success. The high achievers did not get to where they did, because they were born with super talents, but because they worked and worked and worked - for years. Bill Gates,

Steve Jobs, The Beatles, Mozart, and a whole host of others studied by Gladwell, all worked their quota of hours before they became successful. You do not become great without working really hard for it. And if you don't have the stamina to withstand the struggle you won't make it. The road to success is almost always filled with struggle, tragedy, doubt, heartbreak and failure. No one ever succeeds at a high level without these in their past.



So what I want to tell you is to stop believing that success requires all the right breaks, right parents, right income etc. Success requires you to work hard, persist, and never give up.

And so, perhaps we would do better to embrace our struggles rather than fight them. Are you always complaining about how hard things are? Are you always complaining that others have it easier than you? If you are then I suggest you check things out with those people. It always looks like others are doing well until you dig a bit deeper and find out what battles they are fighting. Now I am not saying you have to like your struggles. No one likes being rejected, or being poor, or being in ill-health. What I am saying, is consider that this just may lead to the break you need to propel you forward. This setback may develop character traits in you that you will need for where you want to be in the future.

I read an Eastern proverb once. The key point was that in order to succeed at anything we have to fail a certain number of times. The number of times we fail before we succeed depends on where we are and the task we want to succeed in. Bearing this in mind, don't be sad each time you fail. Rather celebrate. Celebrate, because you are now one step closer to success and what you want.

I like that.