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WHY WINNERS WIN

What it Takes to be Successful in Business and Life

GARY PITTARD

WILEY

ANYTHING BUT 'OVERNIGHT'

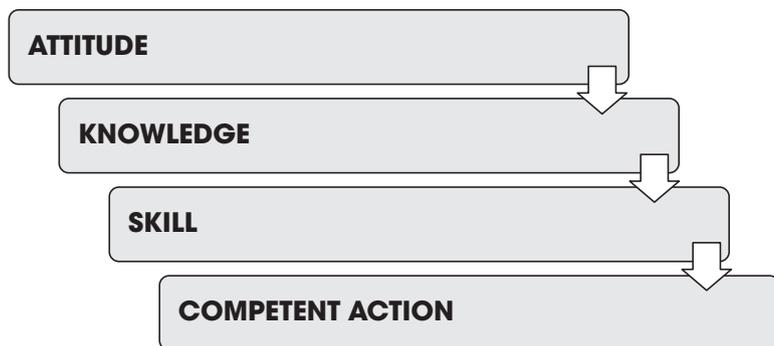
Ask any successful person for their story and none will say they were an overnight success. Success is a journey. It's a journey many people have taken in the past, and you can take it as well.

There is no such thing as a natural-born anything. Some people have natural abilities, but they are only of advantage if you develop and use them. You might understand the winning qualities reviewed in the previous chapter, and know how to avoid the traps and pitfalls discussed in the chapter before it, but as with most things, knowing isn't enough. It's what you do with that knowledge that matters.

Catherine DeVrye writes in *Hope as My Compass*, "The only place for a "what-if" analysis is in a spreadsheet. There's absolutely no point being shackled by the past. Life is never about "what-ifs", life is only about "what-is". It's about what is happening now. What is my life like today?"

The four-step path

Winners win because they follow the four-step path of the success journey:



In the next four chapters, we'll look at each stage in more detail:

- *Attitude*: It all starts with the right attitude! This alone isn't enough, but it's an essential first step, because it gives you the internal motivation to keep going.
- *Knowledge*: The next step is knowing where you want to go and how to get there. This means having a blueprint (a 'big picture') for your life, creating goals along the way, setting challenging but realistic targets, and making plans to achieve those targets.
- *Skill*: The next step is to acquire the necessary skills to put those plans into action. This book is about being successful in business and in life, so although this chapter focuses on sales skills, the lessons can be applied in all types of situations.
- *Competent action*: Finally, we look at how to put your skills into practice by taking action.

The first three steps—attitude, knowledge and skill—are important, but they aren't enough. You might have the right attitude, acquire the knowledge and think you have the skill. But without action—*competent* action—you won't learn the skills you really need.

To learn to fly a plane I can read books and play Microsoft Flight Simulator, but that alone won't be enough. No amount of theoretical knowledge will prepare me for how the plane actually handles on take-off, on landing or in a crosswind. If I want to be a competent pilot, I need real-world practice. I need to get out there, fly some circuits, land—and have the instructor take over before I kill us both. However well I have mastered flying in theory, only through action can I acquire the skill needed to land a plane safely. Knowledge comes through study. Skill comes through purposeful practice.

That's why all four stages are important. Some people stop after just one or two stages, and they wonder why they don't succeed.

I've seen people stop at knowledge; we call them 'Professors'. They can quote anything out of a training manual, but they don't get results because they don't do sufficient practice to turn their knowledge into skill.

Others jump straight into action, without first building up their knowledge and practising until they develop skill. These people often think they're skilled, and many work hard, but they are hardworking incompetents.

Many people start by taking *incompetent* action before they realise they need more skills. That's all right, as long as you don't take too long to realise your actions are incompetent. As long as you're willing to learn and try again, it is a natural way to learn and grow.

The success journey is a never-ending cycle. When you do the action and it doesn't get the results you expect, you realise you need more skills. Dedicated winners return to

study and practice. These people have the right attitude, are always learning and practising, and keep getting better.

Although there are only four main stages to the success journey, that doesn't mean you'll master them all at once. In *The ONE Thing*, Gary Keller and Jay Papasan explain:

When you see someone who has a lot of knowledge, they learned it over time. When you see someone who has many skills, they were developed over time. When you see someone who has done a lot, it was accomplished over time. When you see someone who has a lot of money, they earned it over time.

Be patient but persistent. Time is one of your tools for learning—use it wisely.

Certain things in your life won't become apparent until you have time for reflection. For example, when I went through financial trouble, I started to work on myself and identify the things holding me back. In this way I learned to see the abundance in my life. When I became a better person, I worked better. I found more clients who were happy to pay for the service I gave them.

Getting started

Your journey to winning begins with a crucial step: *getting started*.

In *The ONE Thing*, Gary Keller and Jay Papasan quote Mark Twain: 'The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret to getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks and then starting on the first.'

In *Crunch Point*, Brian Tracy suggests, 'The only real antidote to worry is purposeful action in the direction of your goals.' If you start working in the direction of your goals, you start to feel more in control and there is less worry.

So let's start with the first of these four stages: Attitude.