

Beyond the Horizons Consulting

Volume 1, Issue 7

August 2004

The Sweet Sound of Success

Success in our endeavors and success in our interpersonal relationships *together* help us experience what the poet Matthew Arnold described as the ability “to see life, and to see it whole.” The psychologist Erik Erikson depicted eight stages of the human life cycle. Like an algebra text, ideally each of these stages needs to be resolved positively in order for the individual to progress to the next stage. The last of these stages he termed *integrity versus despair*.

We might term *integrity* “long-term success.” In doing a life review with an older person — or if you prefer, your own life review, you would look for both “nitty-gritty” accomplishments in your chosen life work and



also long-range successes in interpersonal relationships. One example of integrity might be a marriage that has weathered many crises, with both partners growing in courage and ability to love. Another would be a parent-child relationship in which

the parent had instilled positive values so that the adult-child has now become a success in his/her own right. A third example would be a leader who has developed trust among his/her followers through honest and congruent communication.

In *Just Enough* by Laura Nash and Howard Stevenson, the authors asked, What separates a momentary “high” from a lasting achievement? After 300 hours of in-depth interviews, they came up with four markers of **enduring success**:

- 1 Growth toward the extraordinary.** Your own growth toward the extraordinary begins with whatever “handicap” you have squarely faced and overcome in your life. For example, if you had to overcome a language barrier to succeed in your chosen environment and you accomplished that, count yourself a success! If you had to overcome tremendous emotional hardship in your family of origin, and you embraced an attitude of forgiveness and gratitude, count yourself a success! If you had to overcome extreme poverty and lack of learning opportunity, and you nevertheless read, studied, and educated yourself, count yourself a success!
- 2 Importance to you.** Your identification of what is important to you begins with valuing yourself enough to notice what stirs your emotions so that you speak passionately about it. In quietude we reflect upon the previous day’s or week’s events and reexperience our excitement about some issue or aspect of reality. We put ourselves in the way of people and events where we can experience more of our passion, and in so doing we

we recognize the central importance of this theme to our lives.

- 3 **Social significance.** Our theme or interest is important not just to us, but to many who can profit from its gifts. Think of the research that has yielded medical advances such as the polio vaccine. Or think of the paintings, music, and literary works which have inspired so many generations.
- 4 **Sustained impact beyond present effects.** This reinforces the idea of *enduring* success. After all, a widget that merely allows its user to shave 10 seconds off completing a task is much different from a safety device that protects passengers involved in car accidents.

Enjoying the Journey to Success

We have just taken an overview of success, a bird's eye view, if you will. Yet success doesn't happen overnight or in one fell swoop. Maturation of wine can take several years, and so your journey to success occurs step by step, day by day. Little successes — and sometimes temporary setbacks — occur all the time. It is as if they are directing us, especially our momentary failures, toward the wholeness that both Erikson and Arnold were attempting

to portray. Success builds upon success, and we must learn to applaud ourselves with a small bow as a way of experiencing life in this very moments.

Enjoying your journey is indeed an experience in the Now. Sometimes we in the Western world are so focused on goals and on the future that we don't know how to *be* in the present. Eckhard Tolle has written two books about this phenomenon, *The Power of Now* and *Practicing the Power of Now*. Both are antidotes to other-directed living. They bring us back to a core experience of ourselves in our bodies in the present moment.

The Tools that Help Us Create Success

The next several issues of our Newsletter will be devoted each to a specific tool in our "success kit." The one we will explore today is the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* as a tool to understand yourself. The MBTI is described elsewhere on this website. However, it deserves a few paragraphs to reinforce its usefulness to the individual aiming at success on a project. In a recent edition of the *Investor's Business Daily*, Amy Alexander titles her

article, "Great Minds Aren't Alike."

Probably all of us are familiar with the achievements of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Yet many of us don't know how dissimilar the two leaders were. Jack Uldrich, the author of *Into the Unknown: Leadership Lessons from Lewis and Clark's Daring Westward Expedition*, describes how Lewis got beyond feeding his own ego and chose a strong and courageous co-leader. Clark was "a man of incredible strength — a man whose talents in many areas exceeded his own." Not only was Clark a good match for Lewis, but the two men's gifts were very different. This could have led to misunderstandings, disagreements, and ultimately failure of the mission. However, each of these daring explorers valued the other's gifts. Clark excelled at realistic planning — plotting the exact course upriver or over land — while Lewis enjoyed using the stars to calculate latitude and longitude. Not only that, but "using the standard of today's Myers-Briggs test, Lewis was clearly the more introverted and Clark the more extroverted," according to Uldrich. This meant that Clark was more able to express verbally the leaders' ideas to the team, while Lewis was probably a better listener and more reflective. He would have been the one to write down reflections and observations. Both men, however, used their gifts in a concerted way. They took time to discuss possibilities and review decisions between themselves. Thus they presented a united front to the team.

Questions for Reflection

As you think about your passion in life and the steps you have taken toward expressing this theme in a successful way, use the following questions as a guide to gently direct or redirect your energies.

- 1 Is there a passion, a theme, in your life that you notice recurring time and again? If so, can you put it into words?
- 2 Can you make this passion the central objective of your life? If not, how will you give it expression?
- 3 How might this passion have social significance for your family or community?

- 4 What steps do you see yourself taking to make your central theme a reality? Here you might envision allocating some portion of time daily to developing your gifts in this area.
- 5 What persons or role models might you find inspirational? Where can you find information about such persons?
- 6 No matter where you are in your journey to success, can you take time to “smell the roses?” Would you consider a daily meditation as a way to connect with the Now? Would you consider reading *Practicing the Power of Now*?

Beyond the Horizons Consulting provides personal and professional coaching services. In order to derive the most benefit from such services, it is often advisable to do a self-assessment. We provide several instruments to help you do just that. Among them are the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator; the Personal Interests, Attitudes, and Values test; and the DISC, which interprets your behavior in a variety of contexts. The last two instruments are available on-line.

Please call us at (505) 466-4990 for a free telephone consultation regarding your personal or business needs. And remember, There is no time like the present — it’s a gift!