

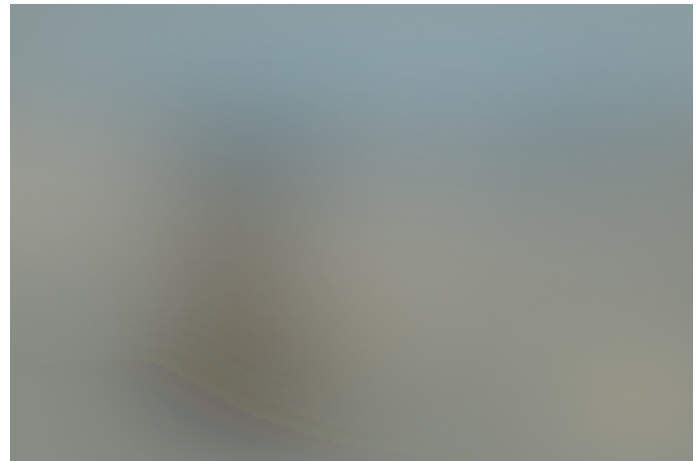
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Smoothing Rough Edges

Originally Published On The Executive Hub:

How rough are your edges? Which aspects of your professional life need to be smoothed, polished, developed or refined? Do you understand what it takes to close the gap between success and true greatness as it applies to you? We have all known truly talented executives and entrepreneurs who while successful, still have a huge barrier precluding them from reaching their full potential...themselves. In this post I'll discuss how to break through the final obstacle between success and greatness which is most often the barrier of self.



Over the years I have come to believe that the professional talent curve is comprised of a range consisting of the low-end, mid-point, upper-end and several points in-between. Under achievers are those professionals whose talent and ability far exceeds their level of performance. Achievers are those who perform up to their ability and the over achievers are the rare few whose performance consistently eclipses their natural ability. The professionals at the upper-end of the talent curve have learned to grow beyond self imposed boundaries, and have developed their skill sets and competencies to levels that most never thought them capable of.


I can't tell you how many successful professionals I've met that have lost key employees, failed to close substantial transactions or missed significant opportunities, had clients consciously make a decision to work with other less talented practitioners or inferior companies simply because they were tired of the attitude/ego/arrogance, had their company hit a plateau, or any number of other tragic and avoidable circumstances simply because they were either unwilling or incapable of recognizing their own shortcomings. They either weren't capable of doing what was necessary to polish the rough edges and take their game to the next level, or they failed to recognize their shortcomings to begin with.

Okay, so you own your own company or run someone else's, have had your fair share of media attention and industry accolades, have achieved many of your goals and earn a better living than most...The bigger questions are:

- Are you successful or are you a true success? Do you know the difference?
- Are you content and do you really feel successful or are you frustrated that you haven't reached your full potential?
- Have you truly maximized your potential, or do you even recognize what that is?
- Are you making others successful, and do others view you as a true success?
- How do you know what you don't know?

The difference between being successful and being a true success is to bridge the gap between being good and becoming great. I believe it was Shakespeare who said "Be not afraid of greatness; some are born great, some achieve greatness and others have greatness thrust upon them." Whether greatness is inherited, earned or stumbled upon, it cannot be sustained without consistent effort to refine and develop your skills and abilities. A cavalier reliance upon what has worked in the past will only take you so far. It is very common to watch professionals leverage intellect, aggressiveness, creativity, innate leadership ability, charisma or other positive traits to become successful. However it is uncommon to see professionals take those same characteristics and truly develop them to the extent of achieving greatness.

If you are not consistently working on self-improvement you will eventually hit a plateau, and the only way to break through the plateaus that will inevitably arise is to continually improve upon your abilities and to further develop your talent. Let's say for sake of argument that you are indeed the best at what you do. Does this mean that there is no room for improvement and that you should not seek the help and counsel of others?



My recommendation to those at the upper-end of the talent curve who desire to transition from being successful to becoming a true success is to get out of your bubble and get honest with yourself. It is not necessary to succumb to the bondage of self... Find a mentor or coach who can credibly assess your strengths and weaknesses, understand your goals and help you see the things that you cannot see yourself, that others won't tell you, or even if they do tell you that you refuse to acknowledge. Step outside yourself and begin the journey from good to great.