

Managing for Success: Polishing Needed for Reaching Potential

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The difference the winner of a professional golf tournament and the 10th player is an average of one stroke; the 50th player, only four strokes. You have to be a really good golfer to even be in the top 200, but a margin of only six strokes separates the top from the 200th player.

The NCAA indoor 60-meter dash was won by less than one second. Success in life and victory on the track is a thin margin.

In a study of aerodynamics, one learns that the leading portion of the wing provides most of an airplane's lift. Of all the square feet of space in the plane, only this very small area up and down each wing provides the margin to lift the plane.

The launching of a space shuttle is an intricate maneuver. Everything has to be exact in terms of the centrifugal force of Earth's movement, the launching speed, and the power as the space shuttle is thrust into space. The slightest margin of error on the launch will cause the space shuttle to be off hundreds of thousands of miles as it goes into orbit or even worse. It has been reported by NASA that the foam hitting the left wing caused the crash of the space shuttle Columbia.

As the white bass run concludes on the Illinois River, this concept was again evident. Some days you can throw any lure and fill a stringer. Other days, a few fishermen with exactly the right kind of color lure, weight of line, and rhythm of retrieval catch all the fish. This narrow margin can work for or against us.

Being at the right place at the right time can perhaps boost a career. One little lapse in judgment, and you can be negatively affected the rest of your life. A bad choice can lead to unwanted consequences. Alcoholism, drug dependency and sexual promiscuity, often with an innocent beginning, can be the margin of failure. For example, there are things in life both positive and negative we cannot control. We have little control over winning the lottery. We can have little control or none at all over an accident of some kind. What we can control are our decisions and actions. A bad choice and our life can be in instant turmoil. An unwanted pregnancy, that first experiment with drugs, cheating on an expense report can and does affect our lives forever.

As much as we want to think of something as glamorous and fascinating, there's always a gritty side we haven't seen. The most precious gem was once buried in dirt. To be truly beautiful, it must be cut, polished and set in the right light. In its original state, it was just as worthy, but its full potential was not known until someone recognized it and was willing and patient enough to set it free.

The right amount of polishing is needed so you can realize your potential. It isn't necessarily what we see on the outside that makes anyone or anything a beauty. It's that glow from the inside. There's always work to be done, a need to keep on refining, polishing, and simplifying. Continue to emphasize those things you learn as you continue to refine and polish your life. We owe it to ourselves to bring out the best of who we are to use our talents for something beautiful and worthy. That requires a staying power that comes only with vision and determination. You need a plan. Here are the essential steps:

Have a vision/dream. You must have this so ingrained in your spirit that you believe the outcome is ordained.

1. To achieve your potential, get the facts and be aware of what's going on around you.
2. Analyze your strengths and weaknesses.
3. Make a few assumptions.
4. Set definite, measurable objectives.
5. Develop a list of strategies for each objective.
6. Put your plan into active.
7. Review your progress.
8. Reward yourself for accomplishment.
9. Finally, discuss this plan with those people important to you. The more you talk about the plan, discuss it with others, and pray, the clearer it will become in your own mind, and you are the jewel who will emerge.

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