



Transformational Leadership & Service Podcast

Episode 21 Transcript

The Secrets of High Achievers

Here is a worthwhile activity for you. Take a quick inventory of the people in your life – family, friends, business associates, neighbors, even acquaintances. Now, ask yourself, Do any of these people in particular stand out as being “high achievers?”

You know the type of individuals I am referring to. They are easy to spot. Almost every organization, association, club, class, church, neighborhood and family has at least one. These folks are the ones who seem to always land on their feet, regardless of the difficulties surrounding them. They receive accolades, awards and public recognition, while others struggle in virtual anonymity.

I bet you have at least a couple of people in mind. Now, two more questions, What is it that is different about them and what can I learn from them? Maybe I can help you with these. After years of careful observation, study and focused discussion, I have discovered a few characteristics common to high achievers everywhere. Consider the following.

High achievers crystallize their thinking into goals. All of us think. The average person thinks at work, at home, while driving, while sitting, while watching television, while...well, you get the picture. As a result, the average person is forever coming up with good ideas. Ideas that would work; ideas that would help people; ideas that would be profitable – if only the average person ever got around to acting on these thoughts. Unlike the average person, high achievers are not content to stop at simply thinking up good ideas. High Achievers take the next step and create workable goals to maximize the benefits of their ideas. They know where they want to go and they are not afraid to plan how to get there.

High achievers desire to exceed previous levels of accomplishment. If we are honest with ourselves, all too many of us are guilty of clutching too tightly to fleeting memories of past glory. In some feeble attempt to justify our current performance, too often we revert to past successes (often long past) as the defining moments of our life. Not so for high achievers. High achievers enjoy revisiting past accomplishments as much as the next person. But, they don't dawdle there. High achieves benefit from what I call “divine discontent.” Simply defined, “divine discontent” means that an individual is never totally convinced they have done their very best. They always believe they can do better; that their personal potential has not yet been realized. Because they are always searching, they are always growing.

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High achievers are positive. Have you ever known a really negative high achiever? I'll bet not. Have you ever wondered why? I think it boils down to this simple fact. Whether they recognize it or not, their own negativity serves as a barrier to their personal performance. It's true. Negativity blinds all of us to the possibilities that exist in people, situations and circumstances. I am not suggesting we lean too far the other way. Most of the high achievers I know are not flaming optimists. Most would be better described as "optimistic realists." Optimists in that they believe good things can and will happen. Realistic in that they realize wishing will not make good things happen; but working just might.

How about you? Are you a thinker and a doer? Are you hungry to experience the next accomplishment? Are you positive that you can make a positive impact?

If so, go forth...leadership opportunities await you.