

BEST ADVICE FROM ENTERPRISE READERS

BY ROBERT M. GIGNAC

Someone once told me that if you wanted to see time fly take a clock and throw it out the window. I've never actually tried it, but it is an effective metaphor. The proverbial clock has been flying, especially since I realized it was six months ago that I asked the readers of this magazine for their "best advice" in response to my article, "What is your Best Advice?" in the September 2009 issue.

After sorting through numerous replies, I have selected seven pieces of advice that I feel complement the advice I shared, which was: 1) Go to work every day being willing to be fired for what you believe in; and 2) Show up completely. In no specific order, here's what the readers shared with me:

1. Make sure you are constantly striving towards a goal that you can clearly identify; otherwise, you are not really going anywhere and letting life take you wherever it happens to go.—Donna Rowshanbin
2. Refuse to fail!—Sherri Earle-Hird
3. The only person who can make you happy is you.—Valerie Preston
4. Keep your ears open and your mouth shut.—Joanne McGarry
5. Think only of the things that you want to experience.—Linda Martin
6. If you don't have time to do it right, when do you have time to do it over?—Carol Wilson
7. Stop worrying, you will be fine.—Gary Briley

Space does not allow me to expand on these replies to the degree that several of the readers did, but I'd like to share my thoughts on a few of them. Item #1 is a request to avoid something that I have fallen prey to at times—simply following the path of least resistance. We are responsible for charting our own course and it should be a quest toward goals and accomplishments that we define for ourselves. When we choose to follow the path of least resistance we are at the whim of what is happening around us. Sometimes when we have difficult decisions to make we try to hedge our bets, wait for more "data" and, occasionally, we secretly hope that someone else will make a decision for us—because it offers us an out. If it doesn't work out, we can fall back on the "sorry, I didn't have a choice—it was out of my control."

Item #3 ties very nicely to #1—when we chart our own course, we are responsible for our happiness. There are times in

my life when I expected other people to make me happy—and it was only when I realized that my happiness was in my control and not someone else's that I actually became so.

Item #4 does not mean that you are never supposed to express your opinion, but falls into line with two sayings that I share with people during seminars. The first is, "We are given two ears and one mouth for a reason—we should be listening twice as much as we talk" and second, "We can't learn anything while we are talking, only while we are listening."

Item #5 reinforces the power that our mind and thoughts have on our potential for success. It was personal development guru and author Earl Nightingale who said, "The mind moves in the direction of our current dominant thoughts." As such, it is always in our best interest to focus on the positive aspects of issues that we might be struggling with at any given point in time.

Item #7 is a reminder that it is not always about us. In many situations, if we focus on ourselves rather than the real problem, we may miss the real issues and arrive at an incomplete/incorrect solution. That doesn't mean we should never consider our wants or feelings, but sometimes the "correct" solution to a problem may make us uncomfortable, be inconvenient, or highlight a deficiency in our own thought processes. When that happens—and it will—remember that it is not always about us, it's about solving the "real" problem; and when we do that we'll be okay—so we should worry less.

As students of personal development (and after all, how can we grow and develop if we aren't?) I'm always happy to learn about quotes and ideas that inspire others. I hope that the reader feedback that I am sharing here will provide you with some new insights and inspiration as we all continue to develop. If you are ever stuck for conversation at a conference, networking event or seminar just turn to the person next to you and ask, "What's the best advice that you have ever received?" Fight off the urge to talk and just listen—the next thing you hear could be the missing piece of your inspirational puzzle. Until next time... **E**

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