What Keeps You (and Your Organization) from Improving?

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Individuals and organizations improving--I love the sound of those words! Yet I realize that not everyone shares my enthusiasm for making skills and systems more effective.

Sometimes, we just don't feel like putting in the time and energy to improve. I've heard lots of reasons, and I've catalogued them here.

If anything you read rings true for you, know that there is hope. Next week, I'll describe your power to choose your behaviors, despite the circumstances. That includes finding yourself in a situation where you or your organization have an outlook described below.

I'm not claiming this list is exhaustive. You may have some other reason for not improving. If your explanation is not listed here, please contact me, so that I can make this listing more complete.

Here they are--nineteen reasons (some overlapping) why you or your organization may not be improving.

"Good enough." Striving for more doesn't seem worth the time and effort.

Apathy. Just not interested. Considering the context of my life, putting additional time and energy above and beyond what I'm doing seems so futile.

Comfort. Things are pretty good as they are. Why knock myself out?

Never thought of it. I'm achieving my goals. I've not considered that there might be something beyond.

Can't imagine better. There is no vision that is pulling me toward something else.

Limited energy. I just don't have the stamina to do more.

Learning limitations. I feel like I'm bumping up against my upper limit; I'm already recognized as an expert; I'm at the top of my game.

Medical limitations. My heart, my kidneys, my lungs, my memory, my limited mobility, etc.

Hostile environment. Sometimes it seems that everything is out to prevent my success!

Insecurity. Maybe I'm just reluctant to try harder. I have this sense I can't do better anyway.

Fear. Maybe I have a fear of criticism or of looking bad. Maybe it's a fear of losing to the competition. Maybe it's a fear of success.

Laziness. Ouch! Okay, I admit it--I lack ambition.

Desire to fit in and "get along." Differentiating myself would mean "making waves." No, thanks.

Lack of resources. Money, time, opportunity, experienced individuals--all are in short supply!

Lack of awareness/knowledge. I don't know where to go to obtain the help I need.

Lack of support from those in authority. I'm not willing to push against the powers that be.

Poorly cast in my role. I sometimes wonder if I should be doing something else.

Success (everything comes easy). I already am able to do everything I want; why bother?

Habitual behavior. I've been doing what I do for so long, I can't think of any other options!

I invite you to use this article as a stimulant to reflect on your situation. If anything is restraining you from improving, think about how you might overcome that obstacle. Perhaps you can change the way you look at the situation. Maybe it's time for a change of leadership in your organization. Maybe a career change is in order. If possible, involve others in creatively considering possibilities.

Consider making a copy of this article so you can refer to it when you feel hopeless. Then, as an antidote, print a copy of last week's article on the back. (Contact me and I'll send you that article.)

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