

How to Be a Lucky Leader

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I had breakfast this week with a former client. We celebrated his recent success. After many years of diligence in building his organization, he now has chosen to take a day off each week. He spends time with his family and pursues his many other interests.

He expressed surprise, however, that his friends and family have not been more supportive. Rather than rejoice in the results of his efforts, they make jealous remarks about how lucky he is.

“Lucky? Luck had nothing to do with it!” my friend exclaimed. “It’s been a combination of hard work, smart decisions, and selecting and developing competent, committed contributors to our operations!”

Have you had similar feelings about other individuals when you had no way of knowing what was involved in their success?

Our human nature seeks explanations for the good fortune of others. Luck--whatever it may be--seems like an easy rationalization. Certainly it seems that some people are luckier than others, right?

Motivational speakers explain that “luck” is an acronym for “laboring under correct knowledge.” Aside from hard work applied appropriately, what is “luck” anyway?

Richard Wiseman heads a research unit within the psychology department at the University of Herfordshire in Great Britain. Fascinated as a child with magic, he became interested in the psychological principles behind the performance of illusion. Since receiving his PhD, his research has investigated some unusual areas of psychology, such as “What makes some individuals lucky and others unlucky?” His research on this topic took eight years and involved hundreds of individuals.

Dr. Wiseman reported his findings in *The Luck Factor: Changing Your Luck, Changing Your Life*. This article summarizes the four essential “good luck” principles he identifies in the book.

Optimize chance opportunities. Lucky leaders notice, create, and act upon chance opportunities. They consciously network with people, knowing that the next person they meet may know just the right somebody who can serve (or be served) with appropriate capabilities (or needs). With a relaxed attitude toward life, they are open to new experiences and welcome whatever comes their way.

Make productive decisions. Sensitive to the cause-and-effect nature of their choices, lucky leaders weigh the likely outcomes of their decisions. Yet they realize that not every behavior yields predictable consequences, so they listen to their intuition and have learned when to follow “gut feel.” They pay attention to their hunches, analyzing when and how their subjective sense helps and hurts them and those they affect.

Expect beneficial outcomes. Lucky leaders have dreams and ambitions, and they expect their actions to move them in the direction of “what could be.” They persevere, even in the face of failure and slim chances. As they interact with others, their confidence in the likelihood of their desired outcomes is evident.

Learn from mistakes and difficulties. Even lucky leaders have setbacks. Yet they can imagine how the situation could have been worse, and they express gratitude that they are now able to work on making things better. Further, they can cite examples of how what appeared to be ill fortune turned out for the best. They let go of the past, discontinuing behaviors they know will lead to poor outcomes.

Dr. Wiseman’s contention is that any of us can be more “lucky” if we follow these four principles. If you are not currently following these principles, start small. Change the way you think and act.

As you progress, you’ll begin to feel, think, and behave like a luckier person. And fairly quickly, your good fortune will be like the lucky individuals Dr. Wiseman studied!

Dennis Hooper helps leaders build “lucky” organizations. Their processes and results move toward genuine excellence. Call Dennis at 478-988-0237. His website is www.buildingfutureleaders.com.