

The Illusion about Success

Have you ever put your heart and soul into a project, just to see your very first attempts to make it succeed, miserably fail?

If you have, you are no different than most other successful people.

Despite that we all are attracted to the "overnight success stories" we see on television and in the news, for most people, these stories can ultimately be more disillusioning than inspiring.

Rather than fortifying us for the long and bumpy but ultimately joyous and successful journey ahead whenever you launch a new endeavor, having the image that it's all going to happen overnight for you very likely will be your undoing.

Famed success coach Brian Tracy summed it up beautifully by saying:

"The difference between successful people and unsuccessful people is that successful people fail many more times than unsuccessful people."

I personally experienced the wisdom of that understanding right after my first book was published. Like many authors, I envisioned hundreds of bookstore customers lining up for me to benevolently sign copies for them.

I'm afraid to say, it didn't quite happen like that.

I was living in Atlanta at the time and arranged my first signing at The Phoenix and Dragon - the largest spiritual/inspirational bookstore in the city.

The store was celebrating its 15th anniversary and had authors scheduled to appear throughout the three-day event.

I was scheduled Sunday at 5 p.m. - the last day and time slot of the celebration.

Brimming with anticipation, I was put into a private signing room in the beautiful store, and . . .

. . . for the next hour and half, had little more to do than to read my own book, and wonder for what purpose in the world I had felt so driven to spend four years writing it.

Despite a nice sign placed outside the room exhibiting images of both me and my book, "The 9 Insights of the Wealthy Soul," not a single customer entered the room. As each minute passed, I became increasingly anxious.

Do they not like the title? I wondered.

Do they not like the book cover?

Do they not like . . . what 'I' look like?

After 90 minutes of this torture, I was absolutely distraught. For the four years writing the book, I had felt a sense of mission and purpose like never before in my life.

Had God just been fooling with me?

Working a full 8-9 hour day in my holistic clinic, I had lived on a strict regimen during the four years of getting into bed by 9:30 p.m., so I could quiet my mind and feel a sense of surrender before turning out the lights at 11:00.

I would sleep with that silent potentiality, so I could wake up at 5:30 in the morning and have two pristine hours of writing before heading into my clinic.

Before I ever began each session writing, I would close my eyes for 10 minutes, and end my meditation whispering, "God, please grant me the words to touch just one person's life."

I truly was inspired, and despite my ascetic lifestyle, I knew that's what I had to do to maintain the grace in my words with which I wanted my readers to eventually be touched.

Now, sitting there alone at my first book-signing, I wondered if my entire life wasn't just a big joke.

I watched the minutes agonizingly tick by on a clock on the wall. At 6:25 pm - just before the store's closing - defeated, I began to get myself ready to leave.

And at that moment, just when I couldn't feel any worse, a middle-aged couple walked in the room.

Trying to regain my composure, I managed to hide my emotions and introduced myself.

The moment I shook their hands, I felt something shift inside me.

I began to give them a summary of my book:

"Well," I started hesitantly, "It's called 'The 9 Insights of the Wealthy Soul.' And it's a story of a WWII pilot, my dad, and the lessons he was giving me in wealth accumulation while he was facing a terminal illness. And each lesson in the story

becomes much deeper lessons about life and death, and finding the greatest spiritual meaning anytime we are facing our greatest adversities."

Both the man and the woman's eyes were now glued on me. I felt a tingle go up my spine. There was something different about the way they were looking at me that I couldn't quite identify. But I didn't know what else to say. However, additional words were unnecessary.

The couple turned to each other, and the husband nodded solemnly to his wife. She then told me, "I think we'll get the book."

My heart began to pound. But instinctively, despite the impulse to jump in the air, click my heels and wring their hands to thank them for being my first readers ever and saving my life, I realized the woman was trying to say something else.

"The reason we're buying it," she said hesitantly, "is . . . our son committed suicide two years ago." She took my hand. "Maybe your story will help us get over it."

I felt my eyes glisten. I was speechless.

In that moment, I knew if I never sold another copy of the book, my four years of writing it had served its purpose.

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