

MENTAL TOUGHNESS: NAVIGATING SUCCESS

ALTERING PARADIGMS LEADS TO SUCCESS

Why do people give up? What happens when a dream that seemed so real folds up and disappears from our hearts? We believe we are worthy of our dreams, because we dream them. We might dream about the money we will share to help the homeless, how our words will rise up and be heard by thousands, or how our actions might shape a world of peace. We dreamed as children and believed in our dreams.

And then we grow up and reality hits.

We heard from the naysayers and from those wiser than us, all the things we could not do. And we believed them. We forgot our inner voice, the voice that was there from our beginning, the one daring us to dream, and the one with us as we played and pretended to be what we had not yet become.

We believed until experience proved to us that we could not have our dreams. We blamed reality for our loss, but it wasn't reality. Our loss came from our *perception* of reality.

What is different between those people who reach their goals and those who don't? We want to believe in some mystical fate, so that we can blame the universe. We want to place blame outside of ourselves, so we can avoid our own judgment. Then we can say, "I tried, but it wasn't in the cards."

It wasn't in the cards. I didn't get the right hand. Somebody else got all the aces. I got the joker.

We say this when we don't believe that we can have what we desire and don't feel worthy of our dreams. We read obstacles as a sign that we weren't supposed to have what we wanted, and we blame fate. It was not our time, not our destiny, not our providence.

How then do you learn to navigate success?

You change your paradigm. You move from the belief that fate limits your destiny to a belief that you create your own life. When you believe something else pulls your strings and guides you to a limited existence, you limit your power. When your faith guides you, the faith of a greater existence, you behave as if your dream is a bona fide fact.

Switching paradigms requires a shift in your mind. Tony Robbins said, "If you do what you've always done, you will get what you've always gotten."

Wanting to get beyond your failures is not enough: Believe that you SHOULD get beyond them. People who accept failure as a stopping point don't have the faith required to move beyond their obstacles. People who believe in receiving their desires don't view challenges as a stop sign; they see them as green lights to increased opportunities.

Believe that you were born to experience your desires. This is your new philosophy of life.

If you believe that only other people get what they want, then you are not prepared to receive your life in abundance. You are stuck in an old paradigm.

The following people refused to be stuck:

- Steven Spielberg was rejected admission to the University of Southern California twice. He is one of the most prolific filmmakers in history.
- Stephen King's first novel was rejected 30 times. He has now sold over 350 million books.
- Richard Branson has dyslexia. He developed Virgin Airlines and is the fourth richest person in the United Kingdom.
- Oprah Winfrey ran away from home as a young teenager after being repeatedly raped by an uncle, cousin, and a family friend. She now has a net worth of nearly \$3 billion.
- Kris Carr overcame a Stage IV cancer called epithelioid hemangioendothelioma. She is now known as one of the most prominent experts in healthy living, with five books and a website followed by over 40,000 people.

As a child I dreamed of being an Olympian. I knew this was my destiny. I felt it. I breathed it. I imagined it daily. It was who I was, not who I was going to become. Then life happened. I was exposed to the jealousy of parents and teammates, and I saw how jealousy can become a cesspool of hatred. After one ninth grade softball game where the spectators in the crowd threatened to take their vocal viciousness to real action, I was escorted off the field by police officers for fear that one of the spectators might harm me. The malicious words of fans and people who I had thought were my friends haunted me. The memory of their malice took on the form of a migraine headache so painful that for two days I couldn't bear light or the tiniest sound.

My challenges with fans and jealousy didn't end there. I was initiated to how people can wield words as swords. This happened during a period in my life before I understood that words cannot wound me without my permission. I accepted those people's malicious actions and words as if they were my truth. In my early paradigm, I was not worthy of other people's love and adoration.

My beliefs affected the way I treated myself and others, which in turn caused more people to treat me poorly. In my senior year of high school, my basketball teammates tried to vote me off the team, and two of my volleyball teammates quit the team rather than play under me as the captain. In college, my teammates wouldn't pass me the ball and refused to sit next to me on the bus.

Did I quit? Yes, a million times in my mind and once physically, but my faith in my dream was bigger than those obstacles.