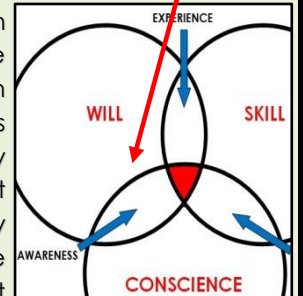




STUFF

Counting down the top 10 traits that constitute excellence and a life well lived - here's a thought. They say that when you die, your life flashes before your eyes. Whilst I'm not sure how anyone knows this, I reckon we shouldn't take a chance with that ultimate reflection. There is nothing more tragic than a life wasted. And I guess that the final realisation - that final confession to self, might occur as we're about to cash in the chips. Ever looked into the eyes of a homeless person sitting in filth at a busy intersection? They sit motionless. Their little cardboard sign and tin cup the only hint of sentience behind the dead eyes. Their life story distilling down to that moment. You ever wonder what they're thinking about? Is it always the case that the only card they have left to play relies on the sympathies of passersby? Well the answer to this (and I speak from experience now as a 16 year police veteran) is 'not always'. For many, it's a choice and one that happens in the absence of courage. Having given up (many not all) is evidence of the lack of courage. The lack of courage causes regret; which is literally the only failure you positively cannot recover from. It's been said that you'll regret more the things you didn't do than the things you did. So let's examine **courage!**

I've placed courage in the **WILL** sector of the excellence model but not randomly. It's close in on **EXPERIENCE, SKILL & AWARENESS**. Experience needs to play a major part as it allows the courageous act or gutsy decision to be as strategically advantageous as possible. 'Once bitten twice shy' doesn't mean you give up - **you just persevere differently**. Skill ensures your courageous act or decision isn't foolhardy. People who **die** for their cause are courageous to be sure but they cease to be able to **contribute** to their cause; which is a needless sacrifice if you can live to fight another day or contribute in some additional way. Skill minimises this risk. Awareness is absolutely essential to courage. To be able to orient your current status relative to what you want to achieve that takes courage to initiate and adhere to, relies on being situationally aware and honest about your readiness and your shortcomings. Experience plays a part because it might not be the first time you've done it.



The gurus speak of the levels of competence. Transitioning from level 1 which is; 'you don't know what you don't know' (unconscious incompetence) to level 2 - 'you now know what you don't know (conscious incompetence) takes courage. The courage to make an admission to the hardest person in the world to be honest with. Then more courage to initiate change. Remember that the best way to handle change is to cause it - that's what entrepreneurs do and guess what my favourite three had in common? **COURAGE.**

TIPS & THOUGHTS ON COURAGE: - In case you've been in outer space, these guys are Disney, Branson & Musk and if you **have** been in outer space you might've seen Branson or Musk. They need no intros.

TIP: Beware of getting comfy. Comfort zones are distractions that take your foot off the pedal and your eye off the ball. Who doesn't want to be comfortable right? That's the seduction and seduction becomes distraction. There's no adrenalin there and courage eventually leaks away and gets replaced with the fear of losing what made you comfortable. Suddenly mediocrity is the yardstick (dare I say 'benchmark'?) These three all went broke more than once and continue to risk everything.

TIP: We can't all be like these people but conscious incompetence gives us all a starting point on the road to improvement. The beauty here is that regardless of what level you achieve or the legacy you leave, if you've done your best, there is no way it can be failure. **What you've displayed is courage.**

TIP: Watch your **'self talk'**. Your subconscious will dictate your actions if the programming is lazy.

TIP: Courage isn't noisy. That's bravado. Don't mistake noisy abusive gym-junkies as courageous. They mostly compensate for other shortcomings. Notice how many walk aggressive breeds of dog. It's the softly spoken retiring people who've uncomplainingly run the laps in the pre-dawn cold who are genuinely courageous. Watch the courage they display when ignoring the noisy gym-junkies!

TIP: Program your thinking and lingo to be optimistic. If you need help, read about the dark ages. That'll make you grateful you weren't there. Brainwash yourself to see the lighter side of bad things and stupid people. Don't get bent because of them. If you do, they're controlling you. My wife has a great saying when someone is being hard to get along with; she tells me to just "let the baby have its rattle." Suddenly situations seem lighter and idiots funnier. Now you're in control and the decisions are better.

TIP: It takes courage not to compromise your standards in favour of what's easy, convenient, popular or safe.

QUOTE: Courage is not the absence of fear but the triumph over it. **Nelson Mandela** **QUOTE:** Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak but also to sit down and listen. **Sir Winston Churchill** **QUOTE:** You get in life what you have the courage to ask for. **Oprah Winfrey.** **When "life's movie" flashes before your eyes one day, how many stars will it rate?**

