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CHUCK TALK: The past is gone, the future uncertain, so stay in the moment

Make a list, focus on important tasks and try not to waver

BY CHUCK MACHE

It seems like everyone loves a “feel good” story. And why not, who doesn’t want to feel good? You know the kind of stories I’m talking about:

The kid whose job it is to wash the new cars on the dealership lot. He goes on to not only own the dealership but many more like it.

The sales rep in the new model home development that is unsatisfied with his place on the food chain. He goes on to be one of the largest developers in the area.

The new sales rep in a national company, given only a commission plan and a cube to make outbound phone calls, goes on to be the top producer in all divisions.

You get the picture. These are examples of people who were unsatisfied with where they were in life and decided to make a move to get more. What is their secret? What do they have that strugglers don’t?

Intelligence, great work ethic, leadership and management skills, common sense, communication skills, vision, industry expertise, a positive attitude, a good mentor, time management skills, undying belief in themselves, even luck?

Yes, they have strengths and weaknesses in all of these areas. For sure they have the ability to pursue their goals and dreams with the tenacity of a cheetah chasing his prey.

Equally as important, however, is they know how to stay in the moment.

We’re talking about people who absolutely refuse to deviate from doing the things that they’ve determined will get them to their goals. This power keeps them from making two fatal time management errors because if they stay in the moment they are unable to:

- **Dwell on the past.** The past is the past, and there is nothing that can be done about it – except learn from it. My experience is that strugglers tend to be filled with regret and consumed with reliving past failures or missed opportunities. News flash – even the most successful people in the world have missed

opportunities and past failures. They learn to move forward rapidly, learn from their errors, leave regret in the past and vow to not make those same mistakes. If you dwell in the past, you can't "Stay in the moment." Time spent in "coulda, shoulda, woulda" land will keep you from getting things done now.

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Worry about the future. For those who dwell on it long and hard enough, the future can be a scary place. It's the unknown. People who are "future trippers" spend too much time playing the "what if" game. What if the economy takes a bigger downturn? What if I lose my biggest client? What if we don't grow? These are valid questions, and I don't suggest for a moment that you don't look to the future with positive, healthy plans, but I do suggest that you don't live there. You won't get anything done if you do. Fear will eat you.

Here are three tips I use for staying in the moment:

• **Focus on what you really control:** I have news for you. It's a short list, but it is very powerful. We really have the ability to control our thoughts and our actions. That's the end of the list.

• **Start and end each day with purpose:** Make a list of what is critical to your success each day, and let nothing get in the way of you advancing that list. If your list is filled with things that are not important, you have a bad list. If you are not getting things done on your list, you have a problem. What's keeping you from staying in the moment to get things done?

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Always get the most important things done, always: If life is how life is, you probably won't get all the things on your list done. Always get the important things done. That means you better know what's important to your success.

This much I know for sure, what occupies our mind becomes our reality. We have the ability to manifest our success. The past is the past, and we have no control over it. The future is always a big unknown, and we have no control over it. But right now, this instant, well that's a different story. That's why, for now, I'm just going to stay in the moment and focus on getting the important things done that will get me closer to my overarching goals. It feels good that way.

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