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MONDAY MANNA

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WHAT IS HOLDING YOU BACK?

By Rick Boxx

Occasionally someone will call to talk with me about struggles in their business that puzzle them. They have a good product, possess skills needed for their business, and feel called to what they are doing, but cannot seem to prosper. They are managing to survive but have found themselves unable to thrive.

Because I have been there in my own business experience, I can point them in a direction that might feel uncomfortable, like looking in the mirror. Many businesses have the necessary ingredients for success, but something continues to hold them back. Sometimes it is fear, reluctance to take calculated risks necessary for further growth and development. Other times it is a lack of self-confidence, or listening to the echoes of discouraging, even demeaning words they have heard in the past.

Negative self-talk can be a formidable foe in trying to build a business. However, I think it would be safe to say that every person who has ever achieved success – whether as an inventor, innovator, visionary, or leader in any sphere – has had to overcome both fear and memories of past failures.

We have the classic examples of the Wright brothers, often ridiculed for their idea that it would be possible for humans to fly, and Thomas Edison, whose success inventing the incandescent bulb came only after failing hundreds of times. If they had listened to their detractors, or lost confidence because of past failures, they would have stopped dead in their tracks.

Just as trying to drive a car by staring in the rearview mirror, continually looking backward in life can severely affect our ability to move forward. Jesus Christ was speaking to some of His followers about the importance of single-minded commitment to following Him. He said, *“No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God”* (Luke 9:62). It is hard to keep to a straight path if we are constantly looking to see what is behind us.

So, how can we turn what we know to be a good product, along with the skills we possess and our passion for what we are doing, into success? I think another passage from the Bible gives us the answer. Romans 12:2 offers this prescription, *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”*

The world around us is very eager to tell us that we cannot succeed, that what we are trying to do is foolish and doomed to failure. We might carry with us memories

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dating back to our childhood, memories of harsh, mean-spirited declarations that convinced us that our hopes and dreams would always be unattainable, forever beyond our reach.

Don't wallow in your past. We need to dispose of such mental “garbage.” And the best way for doing this is to ask God to help in renewing your mind, enabling you instead to line up with how He sees your potential. Focus on what He says about you and what He desires to do, both in you and for you.

Writing about many adversities he had to overcome, the apostle Paul stated, “*I can do everything through [Christ] who gives me strength*” (Philippians 4:13). He also wrote, “*And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 4:19). If you believe the Lord has called you to a particular enterprise or cause, trust Him to provide what you need to succeed.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Would you say that you are on schedule for achieving the goals and objectives you have set for yourself and your business, or do you feel that something is holding you back from realizing the success you desire? Explain your answer.
2. Have you – or someone you know – ever struggled with negative thinking, things such as fear, a lack of confidence, or memories of comments from other people that convinced you that you would always be destined for failure? How has that affected your ability to move forward, to eagerly confront the challenges lying in front of you?
3. Romans 12:2 speaks of not conforming to the world, but being “transformed by the renewing of your mind.” What do you think this means, and how can we put this into practice?
4. What do you think is the role of trusting in God, His direction and provision in our ability to succeed in our chosen endeavors? Do you believe He wants to be actively involved in our decisions and the actions we take? Why or why not?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Psalm 37:4-7; Proverbs 3:5-6, 12:25; Isaiah 41:10; Jeremiah 29:11, 33:3; Luke 14:25-30

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