EA Insights

EXECUTIVE ADVANTAGE llc

Join our Mailing List

"Quotes"

"A period of introspection is appropriate after a tough political loss, but we've got to move beyond that now[.]"
~Evan Bayh

"[D]ecision-making is part of leadership."
~Eric Burns

"Security represents your sense of worth, your identity, your emotional anchorage, your self-esteem, your basic personal strength or lack of it."
~Stephen R. Covey

"To succeed, you need to find something to hold on to, something to motivate you, something to inspire you."
~Tony Dorsett

"Making good decisions is a crucial skill at every level."
~Peter Drucker

"The philosophy of the wisest man that ever existed, is mainly derived from the act of introspection."
~William Godwin

"Indecision is the seedling of fear."
~Napoleon Hill

"We teach the child about his own strengths and weaknesses, and we give words they need for the things they need to work on[.]"
~Mel Levine

"We forge gradually our greatest instrument for understanding the world -- introspection. We discover that humanity may resemble us very considerably -- that the best way of knowing the inwardness of our neighbors is to know ourselves."
~Walter Lippmann

Dear Friend,

Down Memory Lane

Indulge me for a minute. I need to take a walk down memory lane. (I promise. It'll be short!)

As a teenager in the '70s, one of my favorite singing groups was The Silvers. This was a HUGE family. The brothers had looks that stilled my teenaged heart, and the group was known for tight harmonies that pleased my ears. I was hooked!

Okay, yes, there is a point here.

One popular Silvers song was titled, "*I Know Myself*." (Feel free to follow the link to YouTube to hear it, if you like.) I didn't appreciate how profound the concept was back then, but I do now. *"I know myself, and no one can tell me different."* How many of us can say that...with sincerity, that is?

Think about it. You may know who you *think* you are. You may know who you *want* to be. You may even know who you want *others* to think you are. The question is: Do you know who you *really* are? And, that becomes important because, until you know you, it's pretty hard to know how best to function or even what needs to be changed in order to reach more of your goals.

So, in this month's **EA Insights**, we explore that "to thine own self be true" sentiment. (I know. I've just careened from The Silvers to Shakespeare. That's me, and I am aware of it!) Go with me, though, as we consider personal aspects with which we all should be familiar and how periodic self-exploration can impact success.

And, don't miss the special offer at the bottom of this edition!

All the best,

June

June Melvin Mickens
Executive Advantage, LLC

What You Don't Know (about You) Can Hurt

June Melvin Mickens
Executive Advantage, LLC

I'm not a big history buff. However, as a former Penn Quaker, when I saw an article recently about leadership lessons from Ben Franklin, my interest was sparked.

One of the highlighted quotes really hit home. According to Ben, *"There are three things extremely hard: steel, a diamond, and to know one's self."* How true!

Looking in the mirror (literally or figuratively) in a careful and honest manner isn't always easy. But, not doing so can be costly in so many ways -- personally and professionally.

Consider the following five areas in which knowing (or not knowing) yourself can help or hurt you.

Know Your Strengths. Success isn't a single point in time; it's a continual process of dreaming, making plans, and taking steps to carry out those plans and realize those dreams. And, knowing your strength areas should play a large part in such a process.

First, if you know your strengths, you can plan and function with them in mind. How much more realistic plans are when they're created around strength areas! How much more is accomplished when you set out to do something that you do well!

Second, if you understand your strengths, you can grow them. Investors and collectors constantly look for ways to increase the value of their holdings. Well, it's no different with these more personal assets. After pinpointing a strength, it's essential to build on it continually so that it becomes more and more useful and more and more valuable -- not only to you but to those around you as well.

Know Your Weaknesses. A lot of people can't bear to face the fact that they're not perfect. (But, guess what, everyone else already knows you're not; so, it's best to 'fess up!) On the other hand, I'm not advocating for self-bashing either. Instead, shoot for a good, healthy reality check...but, a reality check with a purpose.

By acknowledging weaknesses, you actually give yourself a chance at increased success. You see, you give yourself a chance to tighten up areas where you can reasonably improve your knowledge, skill, or behavior. However, if you're going to need prolonged help or if a particular area probably never will be your forte, then acknowledging the weakness gives you the chance to surround yourself with others who are stronger in the area and who can compensate for your lack. So, identify your challenge areas, and figure out how to keep them from holding you back.

Know How You Make Decisions. Some folks take a stand and deal with the details later. Others work through every possible scenario and check every data source before reaching a conclusion. For still others... hey, has any decision been made yet?

In knowing yourself, it becomes important to recognize how you think and make decisions. Decision-making is a crucial part of both personal and professional life, and it can positively or negatively impact success. For that reason, take time to become familiar with your own decision-making style, with how you tend to react in certain situations or around certain topics, and with where you may have blind spots that require a little extra thought or consultation. But, get to know you so that you can make better and timely decisions.

Know What Motivates You. I remember a meeting one day about declining staff results. The person speaking threatened that bonuses would be at risk if productivity didn't improve. While that warning sparked some in the room to action, it left others flat. That's because we're not all motivated in the same way.

Taking stock about what encourages you to action is essential for success. Although there may be several factors that get you going, consider what stands front-and-center. Is it financial security, recognition, power, the good of all, creating a thing of beauty, or something else? Identifying your personal source(s) of motivation helps you to understand what excites you or what urges you to persevere when the going gets tough.

Know How This All Plays Itself Out in Your Behavior. Behavior, in many respects, is an outward expression of the mish-mash happening on the inside. However, most people with whom you interact only have access to that external side of you (your behavior).

Because behavior is what folks see, and how they make decisions about reacting to you, doesn't it make sense from time-to-time to take a step back and examine your behavior generally and in specific situations? Such self-exploration may provide you with important leads into the range of responses you're getting from others. It may shed some light on success you've experienced at points in your life as well as why other situations have presented challenges.
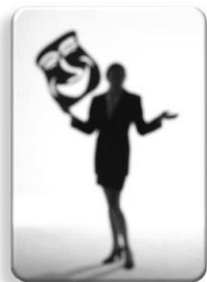
As Ben Franklin suggested, knowing yourself is hard indeed, but it is not impossible. And, success awaits those who invest the time to do so.

So, how well do you know you? Perhaps an introduction (or reintroduction) is in order!

Want to know more about you?

Let *Executive Advantage* help!

Executive Advantage offers a range of coaching programs for professionals at all levels. Coaching supports clients to:

- Explore their strength and challenge areas, decision-making, motivation, and behavior
- Enhance leadership and communication skills
- Improve time management
- Achieve greater job and life satisfaction

For information about *Executive Advantage's* solution for professionals, contact us <u>online</u> or at (301) 280-5950.

About Executive Advantage

At *Executive Advantage*, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with business leaders to build healthy, well-functioning organizations, where goals are met and people thrive. We also partner with individuals to create professional (and personal) lives with clearer direction, improved results, and greater balance.

To learn more about *Executive Advantage*, contact us **online** or at **(301) 280-5950**.

View our profile on Linked in