

Teaching For Success Faculty Success Center

Success Insights Weekly

Forgotten or Irrelevant?

Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed, is more important than any other one thing.
~Abraham Lincoln

Have you ever had the feeling that something is missing in this centuries' recipes for success? Perhaps you have come to the same conclusion that self-discipline, persistence, and clarity of purpose are the crucial missing ingredients. These three take the spotlight when viewed against the screen of current culture where achievement is thought to be the result of luck, an instant breakthrough, or the learning of a few secret techniques.

When reading success literature from the early times forward to the present, one may learn that according to the authors of another era, individuals who do not make the effort to build high levels of self-discipline and persistence, will find they may lack the dedication needed to cope successfully with struggles, setbacks, insecurities, anxieties, and competition for scarce resources.

Perhaps the thought of practicing self-discipline brings to mind a negative image such as a religious devotee stoically depriving themselves of pleasure, friendship, food or rest. This picture of discipline seems too impractical and confining to inspire today.

So, does self-discipline equate solely with self-denial? Viewed from another angle, high levels of self-discipline can liberate a person to focus more effectively on achieving goals.

As an instructor, rate your level of professional self-discipline. Is it adequate to steadily move you forward on a teaching and learning improvement path? In addition, have you the focus, energy, commitment, and skills necessary to mobilize your students to achieve more? Can you clearly express your thoughts regarding the value of self-discipline and persistence to teaching and learning? Do you have a strategy to discuss these success values with your students?

Finally, refining a modern recipe for success is great topic for the "Success Conversation" at your institution, and it's certainly part of teaching for success.

*~John H. (Jack) Shrawder, Exec. Director,
TFS Faculty Success Center*