

LESSON 7

It's easier to win

Many studies have explored what motivates people to live as they do. We've already shown in this program that people are responsible for their personal lives, with the exception of an act of nature or government, catastrophe, or war that might intervene to change things, permanently or temporarily. In my early life I saw war in Sri Lanka before coming to the UK at 19 years old. Other people's lives have been changed by injury or illness. Most of us though have our health and our lives to live. Nightingale says that sometimes, that's a personal handicap. That it can take a person with a physical disability to show us the unlimited potential we have if we just learn to set goals for ourselves and stick with them until they're achieved. Sadly, many of us take the path of least resistance.

Baseball team owner Bill Veeck said, "I don't want the natural athlete; I want a guy who'll go after the hard ones". It's the people in this world willing to go after the hard ones who achieve greatness. They're motivated, motivated to give everything to achieve their goals.

Only about 5% of people achieve unusual success during their lives. These people earn more money, live in nicer neighbourhoods and in bigger, better homes. They might send their children to prestigious schools. Generally they have more of the good things in life. Since the rewards we receive in life must equal our service, it makes sense that they must also make a larger contribution to their communities than most people. They also tend to be more articulate, that is they can use language better than most. (I'll

tell you more about the power of language in *lesson 9*). Of course there are exceptions; I'm sure you can think of a very successful person who can barely string a sentence together. There's no doubt though that they have still achieved their success by serving the people.

We need to focus on the general rules not the exceptions, how most people end up in the top 5%. Nightingale is convinced of the importance of environment. He explains:

When a child is born, the odds are that he will not be born into this top 5%. And we know how important environment is. Let's assume the child is a boy. The child grows up accepting his environment, his world as it is. His environment shapes him. His speech is influenced by the speech of his family and peers and becomes the way he speaks. What he learns in school will likely have very little effect on him.

Our speech gives away our upbringing. And it's not just speech. The average young man, or young woman, grows up to mirror his or her environment. He thinks as they think. Everyone he loves is in that group. It's his group too, and unless something comes along to motivate him to go in a different direction, he'll become an indistinguishable part of that group.

It's natural. The group's goals become his goals. If their goals are relatively modest – a nice house on a nice street; a steady job of whatever kind; a steady income; a good partner and good kids – his goals are too. He could want so much more but his expectations are set low all of his life. He never gets out of low gear. You don't need to shift up a gear in our world that is so affluent and constantly moving forward in order to meet average standards.

He marries and when they have children his wife is the hardest working human being on Earth. She works 16 hours a day, seven days a week. She and many of her peers also work outside of the home. Neither she nor her partner know about the 5% and how you can join them.

No one, not a teacher or parent, ever said to her or any other young man or young woman that people can be put onto a socioeconomic ladder or pyramid with the top 5% at the top, and in most countries including

emerging economies, a large middle class below, divided into an upper middle class and a lower middle class. At the bottom of the pyramid you'll find the people who need to be helped by everyone else, perhaps because they are too old or unwell to help themselves.

This pyramid makes it very clear that we all have options. We have the freedom to choose to live and work in virtually any layer of that pyramid. The higher up the pyramid you go, the better life is. Of course it takes more effort to climb higher than it does to settle in the lower layers, you don't have to learn as much or work as hard.

No parent or teacher told them where their family is on that pyramid and what life is like there. If every young person was shown that pyramid when they're about 12 or 13, if it was explained to them that they have the option to live where they want on that pyramid, how wonderful would that be? This program is for those of you who want to be in the top 5%. It tells you a lot of what you need to know to get into and stay in the top 5%. Getting into the top 5% may be your goal but know that there are as many ways to get there as there are people on Earth. Any route, any career will do, if you go about it the right way.

People have made their fortunes collecting rubbish – it's an essential service for any community – but to transform it into unusual success you have to approach it in a certain way. The young man and woman in the earlier anecdote because of the environment they grew up in, their conditioning, fall into the group **average world citizens**, because they live their lives in an average way. But they're not really average people, none of us are. With motivation they could be exceptional people and do exceptional things. They could give more to their communities and in return get far greater rewards if they knew what we're talking about in The Mindset program.

They're unlikely to ever come across Dr Brand Blanshard's advice about happiness. They'll not learn what happiness is and where it comes from. They're unlikely to ever really explore their potential, what they are uniquely qualified to do, what they most want to do, what will bring them the greatest joy. They're unlikely to ever learn that their rewards, all the

years of their lives, will be determined by the contribution they make, by their service to others. They're unlikely to understand why some people are paid thousands of pounds a week while others earn the minimum wage.

Some would say that this type of thinking stirs up discontent. Discontent is the greatest motivator of all. It's responsible for every advance made by humankind, from running water to delivery services. A little discontent can be a good thing, especially if it's directed at ourselves.

Our environment is a powerful influence on us. Belonging is incredibly important to us as a species. Young people need to be liked by their peers. They crave acceptance and esteem in the eyes of their fellow students, so they do what the others do, and everyone ends up acting just like everyone else. They dress the same, they talk the same, they find the same things funny. As Nightingale explains it, they "follow the follower".

They don't question whether the people they're following are going to lead them somewhere helpful. It's belonging to a group that matters but it's a trap that practically everybody falls into. Many adults are still caught in that trap. You can find men and women in their fifties and sixties still playing to the wrong crowd, still trying to be one of the gang.

In Arthur Miller's great play *Death of a Salesman* Willy Loman says: "The important thing is to be liked". Willy Loman never grew up, never discovered who he was. His story is a modern tragedy, the story of the masses. It's why so many young, healthy men and women are under the influence of unnecessary substances today. It's their rebellion against what they know is the intelligent thing to do.

When someone is unsure of their identity, they'll look for that identity in a larger group. Joining groups, all sorts of groups, is hugely popular because it gives people a label telling them what they are. Successful men and women belong to organisations too, but they don't need the organisation for identity. They know who and what they are. If the organisations didn't exist, they wouldn't feel lost, they'd still be successful, independent people.

Successful people follow their own paths. At some point all successful

people break away from the crowd, they set off on a path of their own. Striking out away from the crowd is the adult, intelligent thing to do. By setting out on their own path, they're not necessarily alone, they're still part of a group. But it's a necessarily smaller group, a group of like-minded people. Not everyone can follow them into that top 5%.

The ancient Romans had their circus for entertainment. Today we have Netflix. It's superior to the old Roman circus – it's convenient with seemingly infinite content and you can take it everywhere you go. You can be entertained anywhere and everywhere and anytime. There are great things you can watch on streaming services and selecting the things you're really interested in makes sense. But millions are glued to screens all day, they're mesmerised. When you think of what they could be doing with some of that time...

Once you've made it into that top 5% you'll see that, as you get older, life doesn't get less interesting, or become harder work. We can become more productive as we get older. And it's nice to grow older with the good things in life, it's certainly more comfortable. You can spend your winters in Florida or Dubai or somewhere else warm, and your summers in cooler climates and enjoy the good life. But, more important than these comforts, is being able to say that you gave it your best, and you're not finished yet. To be able to look at what you've achieved but still look forward to what more you can do.

You can win. There are creative forces up there with the top 5%. Creation is by law. Nothing is created or destroyed. It is awareness that gets us to the next level of creation. It's never too late. If you have a purpose, a worthy goal, and the motivation to reach the upper layers on the pyramid, you can get further in a few years than you would otherwise in a lifetime.

Arriving in the UK as a refugee at the age of 19 I was on the outside. It would have been easy to join the crowd, any crowd, to get a sense of belonging. I'd been forced to leave everything I knew and loved behind. But my future was too important to leave to chance, to trust to following others. My father had sent me off with £100 to forge a new life. I set my sights high: a professional qualification,

a respected career. Following the average person wouldn't get me there. Ultimately I found my group, my peers, my wife and business partner. Other people with goals and ambition. Set your sights on your goal, find the people that will lift you up and get you there.

Be honest with yourself. How often do you follow the crowd? Why? What barriers are there to you following your own path? Challenge yourself to strike out on your own path in at least one area of your life this week. Pre-empt what you'll find difficult in advance and you're more likely to be successful.

This week I'm going to.....

Do an audit of the people in your life. Which people have a positive impact and which a less positive one. Being aware of the need to resist some of the less positive influences can help you to stick to your goals for yourself and avoid following others. Can you spend more time with those who have a positive influence?

Positive influences	How I can get more from these people	Less positive influences	How I can manage their influence