

Positive Perfectionism – By Gary Green

According to the Guinness Book of World Records (2005), the greatest amount of 'fastest laps' ever recorded by one driver in a Formula One season was nine. It was achieved by Mika Hakkinen in 2000, while driving for the McLaren-Mercedes team.

However, even though Hakkinen was easily the fastest driver with the fastest car that year, Michael Schumacher won that championship! Schumacher wasn't the fastest, but he was consistently fast. According to Wanderlist (2005), Schumacher is classed as the greatest racing car driver of all time, but even though he's the greatest, he still doesn't win every race.

How often do we try and win every battle, only to wind up losing the war? What's important is to realise and accept that to make anything; we must first give ourselves permission to make mistakes. Being a perfectionist (Negative Perfectionism) is not a successful characteristic . . . but being constantly excellent is! This is the essence of Positive Perfectionism; aiming for excellence but not beating-up on ourselves *when* we fall short.

In a similar sense to the *Tortoise and the Hare* fable, Ayrton Senna holds the record for 'the most Formula One pole positions in a career' (Guinness Book of World Records, 2005). From 65 pole position starts, he won 41 times which is an outstanding achievement. However, while Senna was easily the fastest . . . he wasn't always the winner (he wasn't perfect).

Success in life (however you define success) stems more from being positive than perfect. We need to accept that we are all *perfectly imperfect* with unique God given talents and abilities. My experiences with coaching clients have taught me, that once their latent talents are identified and refined, it generally leads to more successful, fulfilled and blessed lives.

Along with Hill (1961), I believe we benefit by finding and following our soul's purpose. When we do, it doesn't mean we won't occasionally *get in over our heads or stop making mistakes* . . . we still will. However, these experiences (when properly channelled) will become stepping stones to greater success. To quote Powell (2005), "The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing" [online].

Notwithstanding this, often what hinders our success is our thinking. That's because 'thoughts' generate 'emotions' and 'actions', and these lead to either success or mistakes. Tracy (1995) believes that the major things that stand in the way of our success are usually called 'problems'. The gap between what we have, and what we want is filled with them. Because success un-obtained means there are problems unsolved, problems serve to highlight our weak spots (like a weak link in a chain).

Nature often draws attention to our weakest links (usually imbalances) via problems. But as life's problems contain seeds to greater success, once we fix them, we naturally advance in life, becoming more successful, stronger and happier. In my opinion, the only real problem is having a poor attitude towards problems (i.e., Negative Perfectionism). Remember, you may as well chuckle over your problems, because

everybody else will. I hope this all makes perfect sense.

I'll conclude this precis on Positive Perfectionism with some *food for thought* . . . it's never too late for our clients to become all that they can be. If they believe there is room for improvement in their lives (and there's room for improvement in just about everyone's), then a Coach / Counsellor can help them achieve that improvement. Sometimes, as little as one degree of improvement is all it takes to make a big difference. Take the example of water; at 212 degrees it's hot, but at 213 it's boiling hot. And if a Coach / Counsellor could help them improve their life just one degree a day, in 180 days they could literally turn their life around!

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