

CHAPTER 60

THE ART OF EVALUATING YOURSELF

BY ABEL MAXWELL

More people with specific goals on a personal or organizational level are going to save a tremendous amount of time and make a lot more money in the next few years than ever being made in human history, and you have to be part of them.

In the lines to follow, my purpose is to show you how to start in order to make it happen.

That being said, let me introduce to you “The Evaluation” and what it entails to make your ambition a reality and be transformed. The evaluation is the first step of the process of reaching any objective or goal. It is a critical stage that is unfortunately undermined despite its decisive purpose to help your most profound aspirations.

An evaluation is the fact of making a judgement about something; it refers to an assessment, a rating or estimation. It is an essential part in the process of reaching your goals and objectives. Without it, it is difficult to have a clear idea of where you stand, how you do in your market, in order to better position yourself in the future or maintain your core competencies in your area of expertise.

I have identified three key points that will help you with your evaluation whether it is undertaken on a personal or professional level.

I - Know who you are**II - Know where you are****III - Know how you are****I - KNOW WHO YOU ARE**

Being aware of who you truly are and what you do needs to be clearly identified and evaluated. Every human being is good at something and your job is to find out what's your God-given or innate gift or talent to be fruitful. I have singled out in the next lines some key points to be observed for a close evaluation.

- How clear is your intent?

Clarity refers to what you want to achieve; this is absolutely fundamental in order to have a clear sense of direction of the transformation process. Hence, you should have in writing **your vision** (know where you're going) and **your mission**, which will become the blueprint of the whole path to follow to reach the target.

Your vision refers to your faculty to foresee your future or the future of your organization – whereas your mission indicates your function or your vocation.

Other than informing on your values and what you do, both your vision and your mission's purpose is to help you keep on track with your reason of existence and the drive motivating you to reach your goal.

Just for a thinking purpose, have you notice that a giraffe does not have the same vision as a turtle? Indeed, a turtle eats from the grass whereas a giraffe eats from the top of the tree. This means that the altitude of your vision will determine how clearly you see and therefore how much you can get accomplished on a personal or organizational level.

- Are you proficient in what you are doing?

“In what are you good at?” or “Are you good at what you're doing?” is the question to ask yourself here, because competence alludes to the level of your skill. Your talent or gift needs to be sharpened and perfected to become a proven skill to be competitive in the marketplace.

“What are your core competencies?” “How committed are you to continuous improvement?” are valid questions to assess your current state.

- How creative are you?

It’s impossible to have been created by a Creator and not be creative as implied by TD Jake’s findings. As a result, as we cannot be creative without being connected to a Higher force or a Higher inspiration, it’s important to be connected to that Higher Source through our inner guts and intuitions.

Successful people are people who follow their intuition; they are not necessarily the smartest, but they just dare to follow their inner guts. For instance, most people have had an experience of creating something and procrastinating to develop their idea before somebody else does it before their very eyes.

II - KNOW WHERE YOU ARE

Having a clear understanding of your situation in the present moment is the first key because it refers to the beginning of the whole process.

a) SWOT

You can complete a SWOT analysis, which will help you highlight your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and your Threats.

You might want to have them in a table for visual purposes to maximize your efficiency and effectiveness in this step; this is the SWOT analysis of the current situation:

- Your **Strengths** are characteristics that give you or your organization an advantage over others.
- Your **Weaknesses** are characteristics that place you at a disadvantage relative to others.
- Your **Opportunities** are elements where your competition is not performing well.
- Your **Threats** are elements where your competition is performing well and elements in the environment you cannot control – that could cause you trouble.

Your **Strengths** and your **Weaknesses** are from internal origins whereas your **Opportunities** and your **Threats** are from external origins.

The reason why the SWOT analysis is important is due to the fact that its purpose is to inform you of later steps in planning to achieve your goal.

b) STEEEP

You can also examine the STEEEP analysis, which refers to Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Ethical and Political factors that could affect you or impact you or your organization

- On the **Social** level: it's essential to reflect on how your objective or goals will socially affect the social environment taking into account population demographics of the target market.
- On the **Technological** level: the online world is huge and enables you or your organization to reach even more prospects. It's important to ponder on how you can make use of the technological advances with tools, such as social media and software available, to help you boost your visibility in the e-market place.
- On the **Economic** level: ask yourself if your target market is economically reachable to purchase your services or products at a profitable price.
- On the **Environmental** level: are you having a positive or a negative impact on the environment (environmentally-friendly or not) – as this is becoming an increasing concern nowadays.
- On an **Ethical** level: depending on the value system and principles that govern the culture of the target market, your practices should not come across as offensive and illegal as far as the country's laws and regulations are concerned.
- On the **Political** level: ask yourself if the political environment is favourable for what you or your organization is planning to undertake.

The purpose of knowing where you are is a prerequisite to knowing the direction in which you are going.

By setting your goals and objectives, it's easier to set your action plan. By having it in writing, you become more accountable to yourself and

to your organization to where you are going. By proceeding with a step-by-step “pros and cons” analysis and methodically following through will propel you forward and eventually bring you closer to your intended goal.

III - KNOW HOW YOU ARE

- How confident are you?

Self-esteem is the prerequisite to quality of relationships and is the key ingredient of your confidence magnitude. Unfortunately, it is not possible to learn confidence in a seminar or in a book. However, you can improve your confidence level by doing certain things over and over again because self-doubt is the great paralyzer of achievement. Confidence comes from not always being right, but not fearing to be wrong as Peter McIntyre indicated.

Your confident walk in the direction of your transformation, and acting as if it was impossible to fail will qualify you for your ultimate success. Your true beliefs are always expressed in your actions and rarely in what you solely say

- Are you considering the quality of your relationships?

Life is all about relationships. In my view, the quality of your interactions will determine your level of happiness and success. You need to develop your people skills – which encompass effective listening communication skills. You can increase the extent of your vocabulary and become a better thinker, which leads to better communication.

For example, if you decide to learn one single word everyday, you will learn 365 words per year. What’s fantastic is that every word will introduce you to ten more other words and if you continue this method, you’ll become the most educated person in history in the next couple years.

As a matter of fact, the average child learns five thousands words in his first five years of life in comparison to the average adult learning less than five words per year. Thus, the more words you have, the better is your thinking, just like the more tools a mechanic has in his tool box, the better equipped he is to solve mechanical problems.

- **Are you consistent in your efforts to reach your goals?**

It is commonplace to realize that every great success was at one time a failure and that every success is the accumulation of thousands of little things that were invisible to most people.

Let me use an anecdote to illustrate consistency; there were frogs lining up for a race to climb the Eiffel tower in Paris. Many frogs were at the bottom and started the race, while way more other frogs were cheering the most courageous at the beginning of the race.

As soon as the race started, some of the frogs in the crowd started discouraging those climbing by saying “you better stop because you might fall down from the tower and it’s too dangerous.”

As they kept on racing, one frog was still going on slowly but steadily, while few of them in front started slowing down and eventually stopped the race as the discouragement grew more and more intense.

At some point, that one frog still climbing went ahead of the other frogs despite the dissuading comments of the entire crowd, and ended up winning the race. That frog became the winner and it’s only when he got interviewed that the rest of the frogs discovered he was deaf. So, surprisingly, he could not hear the demoralizing utterances of the crowd. That winning frog was simply consistent in his efforts until his victory. This amusing story demonstrates the power of consistency.

In the same line of thinking, as a basketball fan, I noted Michael Jordan quoting “I’ve missed 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.” This reinforces the idea that he was just consistent in his efforts to make great things happen in his basketball career

- **How committed are you?**

Being committed is one of the hardest things to do for human beings, and finding the work you can get committed to is key in your transformation. In fact, commitment is closely connected to your loyalty to your objectives and goals.

As a result, whether it is for your family, your company or your relationships, your commitment counts a great deal towards your transformation.

- How are you using common sense?

Some people fail to think things through before acting, that's why you should train your mind not only to think, but also to listen to your God-given or innate instinct. It has been discovered that women in general have the courage to listen to their intuition, that's why they are perceived smarter than men.

In addition to that, by learning from your setbacks and your shortcomings, you'll develop the capacity to think intelligently and to feel instinctively – as action without thinking is the cause of failure.

Socrates quoted “the unexamined life is not worth living” which emphasizes that you need to pause and take time to reflect on your experiences and think about the past valuable lessons and get wisdom.

- How focused are you?

It is more and more easy to be distracted by all kind of things especially with the heavy demands of current society, but by developing a sense of urgency, you can make better use of your time and complete steps required to reach your goals faster. This will eliminate procrastination because the sense that immediate action is necessary to avoid a negative outcome will catalyze your ability to perform right away.

By concentrating on what is challenging and necessary, instead of what is fun and easy, you can focus on results and not on activities that are not relevant to your transformation.

- How courageous are you?

Being courageous is not the absence of fear, but instead, the decision to take action despite the fear of the adversity. You need to develop your ability to resist fear and engage yourself in the activity in line with your transformation goals. In reality, without obstacles, there would be no need to be courageous.

If you resolve to never quit no matter what life throws at you, then you become unstoppable. At that point, you can be assured to be in a position to achieve your goal.

CONCLUSION

Self-evaluation is a crucial part of the process of reaching your goals and objectives and be transformed. An effective transformation will not happen unless these steps and sub-steps are successfully observed and completed. In a nutshell, by covering key questions on your level of clarity, competence, creativity, confidence, consideration, consistency, commitment, common sense, concentration and courage, you can bring your potential to fruition.

Personally, I would even recommend a regular evaluation after a pre-established period of time to reinforce the initial vision and mission you have set for yourself and your organization. Furthermore, maximize your core competencies more than working on your weaknesses, because that what's giving you or your organization a clear competitive advantage.

Being transformed will be even more remarkable by taking notes of the changes occurring – first with a methodical comparison of what was and what is new, then what is new and works effectively.

When you have a dream, it's your responsibility to protect it from discouragement and pessimists. Always remember that you cannot eat an elephant in a single bite, so you have to cultivate patience through the whole process, because as Aubrey Hepburn stated it accurately, "Nothing is impossible; even the word impossible says, "I'm possible."

That being said, complete your evaluation and confidently reach your aspirations to live in peace, prosperity and purpose.

Blessings,

Abel Maxwell



About Abel

Abel Maxwell helps his clients (professionals, mid-sized organizations in educational, health & spiritual sectors) gain greater value through consulting services using Entertainment and Inspirational speaking. With his passion for arts and culture, he inspires beginners and professionals to excel in what they do.

He studied in three different continents (Africa, Europe and North America - National Conservatories of Dakar, Lyon, Amsterdam and the Royal Conservatory of Toronto) and holds a degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Finances/Marketing from Université Professionnelle Internationale René Cassin (CEFAM Lyon, France) in 2005.

Abel Maxwell worked with a Forbes Fortune 500 company in the field of finance and consulting with over \$298 millions in assets; he also founded the Lyon Gospel Mass Choir (130 vocalists), a choir still performing at several international functions and also released in 2006 his first album produced under the Alter Ego Music record label (France).

Ever since he moved to Ontario in 2007, Abel has inspired a number of people through the arts and has a great deal of influence on different organizations (National Association of Music Industry - A.N.I.M, Connexion Jeunesse Afrique Canada - C.J.C.A, Centre Reveil International, Professional Association of Music Professionals - A.P.C.M) and business projects in Ontario as a Director and Producer at B.O.D.B Entertainment Corporation.

With his appearances in prestigious entertainment venues and TV platforms such as National Arts Center, Radio Canada, Rogers, CBS in North America, he made a great impression on the media as a rising artist (Abel Maxwell's music available on iTunes). Abel Maxwell performed or met with celebrities including Bobby Mc Ferrin, Lionel Louéké, Esperanza Spalding, Miguel de Armas and Kirk Franklin to name a few.

Abel Maxwell speaks five languages (including French and Holland Dutch), and with his tremendous influence especially on the francophone platform, not only is he a successful performer and producer, but he is also an inspirational keynote speaker who delivers a message about reaching out for your dreams with a passion for excellence.

You can connect with Abel Maxwell at:

abel@bodbent.com, www.twitter.com/abelmaxwell,

www.facebook.com/abelmaxwell

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