

SUCCESS REVEALS YOU

I became an executive for the first time at the age of 23. In retrospect I was too young and inexperienced to be in the role I was appointed to, but God saw fit to make it happen so there I was. I learned a lot in that role, but not because I did well. I learned a lot because I made a ton of mistakes by often thinking I was the smartest person in the room. Thankfully I had a boss who saw potential in me despite my youthful arrogance and allowed me to make those mistakes in an effort to humble me early on.


Looking back over my last 12 years of progressively responsible leadership roles in the private, public and nonprofit sector, I'm so grateful for what I learned and want to share three of my main takeaways with you.

1. Don't allow your emotions to drive you. Our lives are lived



in one of three continuous phases; before, during and after. If you aren't going through anything, just wait. It's coming. If you're going through something, just wait. It will pass. If you got past something, don't get too comfortable. Something's on its way. Knowing this truth is helpful to keep you grounded because we become grateful for "the after", have patience in "the during" and stay humble in "the before".

2. You are response-able. I've come to believe that leaders are neither born nor made. Leadership is simply choosing to confront our deepest fears, insecurities and failures while moving forward in spite of them. We too often compare our start to someone else's finish and get discouraged, but we should instead use someone else's finish to inspire our start. Leadership requires discovering the spiritual fortitude to keep pressing forward when we feel we've given our last and that requires making the decision that neither failure nor forfeit is an option.



3. Past mistakes don't have to limit your future potential.

Success is not the acquisition of notoriety or wealth. Success is the ability to stand at the apex of a mountainous pile of mistakes and realize that your vantage point is now higher because of them. Success is growth and growth is sometimes the reward we get for failing forward. Allow your past mistakes to keep you humble, not hindered.

I have watched many of my contemporaries find success in their various professions and vocations and I've learned one simple truth; success doesn't change you, it reveals you. Above everything you aspire to acquire, acquire the character needed to make you truly worthy of the success you want to achieve. Humility, generosity, diligence, forgiveness, and honesty. These will take you further than intellect or ingenuity ever could.

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