

The Four Ingredients of Successful Performance

Self-Motivation

You do not have to be coerced to begin, nor prodded to continue, nor cajoled to finish. You are convinced of the intrinsic worth of the enterprise and the value of your participation. You are involved not to satisfy authority figures nor to seek the approval of peers.

Enthusiasm

You do not sluggishly shuffle from one step to the next, nor do you dawdle. Rather, there is a sparkle in your eyes, a lilt in your gait, and a sprightliness in your demeanor. Infectious is your attitude, which inspires others and dissipates their lassitude.

Excellence

This means the desire to *excel*. You diligently craft your output after having submitted to the discipline of mastering the requisite skills and applying them to the best of your ability. You shun slipshod performance and maintain high standards. You critique yourself, but you also readily submit your work to experts in the field for evaluations and suggestions. You are not reluctant to correct, revise, and further enhance your endeavor.

Joy

Not gloomy nor morose, you exude a sense of exhilaration. You are able to face setbacks and failure with a sense of humor. Your healthy sense of detachment gives you the distance you need to prevent you from merging your identity with the project. Your ego is not so inflated that you can't laugh at yourself in adverse circumstances. The project may fail, but you do not consider yourself a failure. Colleagues find you pleasant to work with and you seek occasions to celebrate with them.

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The above reflections were inspired by an effort to give advice to graduates, but they can serve to stimulate the rest of us. Follow this formula and you will be a fountain of limpid water bubbling up in the city square--not a stagnant pool by the roadside of life.

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