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Wooden it be nice to be a winner like that coach?

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John Wooden was the coach at UCLA for 26 years. He's known as one of the greatest men's basketball coaches in history, winning 10 NCAA championships in 12 years. ESPN named him Coach of the Century.

He didn't focus his team's efforts on winning, but rather on getting his players to do their best.

You may be thinking: This man knew how to get a team to win.

But on the contrary, Wooden lived by a different definition of success.

"Success is peace of mind, which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best you are capable of becoming. Then perhaps when circumstances come together, we may find ourselves No. 1."

The brilliance in this philosophy, as it relates to sales, is that too many salespeople spend all their time worrying about the competition and comparing themselves to others instead of focusing on being the best they can be.

Salespeople can control their self-improvement, which is based on wise choices that result in becoming a master at sales and persuasion.

Wooden posted this note on his team's bulletin board:

"There is a choice you have to make,

In everything you do.

So keep in mind that in the end,

The choice you make makes you."

Here are a few choices to consider:

- Choose to be a lifelong learner and apply what you learn.

The second half of this statement is just as important as the first. It's not what you know, it's what you apply. Salespeople who are on their way to reaching their full potential are always learning. They invest in their training, read books and listen to CDs.

They're also humble enough to know they don't know everything, and seek out mentors and advice.

- Choose mastery.

Many people have learned sales techniques. Few achieve mastery because they don't study and practice.

Salespeople on their way to achieving their full potential are skillful at persuasion, critical thinking and asking questions. When asked by their sales manager, they can answer the following without hesitation:

- (1) Share with me how you open up a cold call.
- (2) Show me how you quantify the cost of this problem.
- (3) Give me the five key questions that help determine key decision criteria.
- (4) Share with me your pre-call planning strategy.

- Choose to manage your time.

We have Blackberrys, CrackBerrys, Franklin Covey and yellow sticky notes. We should be the most organized people on the planet.

Unfortunately, salespeople can waste one or two hours every day because they make a choice not to organize their calendar and be proactive.

Time management is pretty simple:

- (1) Make a to-do list every day.
- (2) Determine what has the highest value in helping you do your best each day.
- (3) Figure out when you're going to accomplish the most critical sales activities and the amount of time they'll take to accomplish.
- (4) Lose the addiction to email and cell phones, and focus.
- (5) Organize your calendar blocking, customer care and referral relationships.

- Choose to show up, try and do the work.

A good work ethic is in your control. Quit worrying about what you don't know, what you've never done -- and just do it.

While your competitors are getting ready to get ready, you're actually talking to qualified prospects. You may work harder in the beginning because you don't have the referral contacts or sales finesse. Who cares?

It's in your control to work a little harder, show up more until you master selling skills, learn product knowledge and develop contacts that help you reach your full potential.

- Choose to sell a product or service that you love.

One of the many reasons Wooden was a great coach is that he loved being a teacher, coach and mentor. He made a choice to be in the profession of coaching.

If you're not passionate about sales, the company you work for or the product/service you sell, add another item to your to-do list: Find another job.

You'll never reach your full potential as a person, salesperson or sales manager if you lack passion and conviction. They're the best selling skills on the market and can't be taught by any sales training organization -- because they come from within.

Make a choice to achieve success by always doing your best. Winning is usually the result.

About the Author

Colleen Stanley is president of SalesLeadership Inc., a business development consulting firm specializing in sales and sales management training. The company provides programs in prospecting, referral strategies, consultative sales training, sales management training, and hiring/selection. She is also the author of "Growing Great Sales Teams: Lessons from the Cornfield." Reach Colleen at 303.708.1128 or visit www.salesleadershipdevelopment.com.

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