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Life's Batting Average

Missed opportunities are the curse of potential

by **Denis Waitley**

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To conquer your fear of rejection, you need to handle the word “no” in a constructive way. When people turn you down after a presentation, you have to interpret the “no” as *“no, this is not right for me now.”* We also can interpret “no” as meaning, *“I need to know more about this opportunity or the products before I can say yes.”*

Baseball’s greatest hitter grew up near my neighborhood in San Diego. When Ted Williams slugged for the Boston Red Sox, my father and I kept a record of his daily batting average. And when I played Little League ball, my dad told me not to worry about striking out. In Williams’s finest year, dad reminded me, the champion failed at the plate about 60 percent of the time.

Football’s greatest quarterbacks complete only six out of 10 passes. The best basketball players make only half their shots. Even with satellite mapping and expert geologists, leading oil companies make strikes in only one out of ten wells. Actors and actresses auditioning for roles are turned down 29 in 30 times. And stock market winners make money on only two out of five of their investments.

Since failure is a given in life, success takes more than leadership beliefs and solid behavioral patterns.

It also takes an appropriate response to the inevitable, including an effective combination of risk-taking and perseverance. I meet many

individuals who are seeking security at all costs, and avoiding risk whenever and wherever possible. Knowing that certain changes would make success much more likely for them, they nevertheless take the path of least resistance: no change. For the temporary, often illusory comfort of staying as they are, they pay the terrible price of a life not truly lived.

Parable of the Cautious Man

There was a very cautious man,
who never laughed or cried.
He never risked, he never lost,
he never won nor tried.
And when he one day passed away,
his insurance was denied,
For since he never really lived,
they claimed he never died.

> **In other words, missed opportunities are the curse of potential.**

In our eagerness to avoid risk, we forgot its positive aspects. Many of us continue to overlook the fact that progress comes only when chances are taken. And the security we sought and continue to seek often produces boredom, mediocrity, apathy and reduced opportunity.

> **And herein lies a paradoxical proverb: You must risk in order to gain security, but you must never seek security.**

When security becomes a major goal in life–when fulfillment and joy are reduced to merely holding on, sustaining the status quo–the risk remains heavy. It is then a risk of losing the prospects of real advancement, of not being able to ride the wave of change today and tomorrow.

Learn how to lead and succeed in a knowledge-based world in Denis Waitley's **Empires of the Mind**. The self-development legend will teach you how to "fireproof" your career while developing the qualities of personal integrity and sincerity necessary in a leader.

Denis Waitley is one of America's most respected and beloved authors, keynote lecturers and productivity consultants on high performance human achievement. He has inspired, informed, challenged and entertained audiences for over 25 years from the boardrooms of multi-national corporations to the control rooms of NASA's space program. Denis has been voted business speaker of the year by the Sales and Marketing Executives' Association and by Toastmasters' International and inducted into the International Speakers' Hall of Fame.

With over 10 million audio programs sold in 14 languages, Denis Waitley's CD album, *The Psychology of Winning*, is still the all-time best selling program on self-mastery. To order this Best-Seller or his newest release, *The Platinum Collection* and to subscribe to the free Denis Waitley Weekly E-zine visit his website here: DenisWaitley.com