

Luck

LUCK = Preparation + Opportunity

Have you ever heard yourself wishing someone “Good luck” and then following up with “But of course, you won’t need luck – you seem to be organised and well set-up...” Which begs the question, to what extent are we able to create our own luck?

Clearly, to win the lottery for example, luck plays a big part – but even with this, an individual’s chances are greatly enhanced if they bother to buy one (or more) ticket, than if they don’t buy one at all!

Some people have natural talent, whilst others have to work harder to be successful. In sport, one of the biggest distinguishing factors in elite athletes is the ability to add good preparation, hard work and determination to the innate talent that they were born with. For many, as their peers catch up in size and strength, the easy choice is to give up, rather than to move up a gear or strive for a new competitive edge and the most successful understand that ‘you have to be in it to win it’ and proactively work to develop their store of luck!

People who are exceptionally lucky seem to share certain characteristics:

- They are proactive, they are ‘out there’ and they engage
- They apply common sense, follow sound principles and adopt best practice
- Consciously or unconsciously, they search out opportunity, upgrade and make things happen.
- They work hard and they soon discover that as Gary Player said: “The more I practise, the luckier I get!”

Luck is like time – it is an egalitarian resource. We all have the same amount... but the person, who can persist through bad luck, will be on the spot ready for action when the good luck arrives!

Lucky people:

- invest time and energy and in a sense, they speculate to accumulate
- play the percentages and because they are so active, find that they are often in the right place at the right time
- work their network, seek out interesting people, embrace chance opportunities, respond to stimulus in the media or conversation that becomes a catalyst for an idea

Top Tip:

Optimise your ‘chance’ opportunities:

- Create opportunities
- Notice opportunities
- Act upon opportunities

Leveraging benefit from opportunities is essential and cannot be achieved with as high a success rate by someone who is just waiting for things to happen to them. Lucky people immerse themselves in opportunity.

Lucky people:

- consider their appearance. They understand that their dress, their facial expression and their apparent energy are all important
- use other people’s names and make sure that their own sticks in other people’s minds
- have a story to tell and are interesting and interested. They find ways to make themselves and what they say both distinctive and memorable

Top Tip:

Find ways to connect and market yourself:

- Build on your social magnetism and presence
- Develop a personal ‘stump speech’ and decide what you want people to know, think or believe about you

Lucky people:

- expect things to work out for them and for their good luck to continue – so they go for it!
- are resilient. They persevere and if things don’t go well, they assume it is just a small set-back on a much longer journey to achieving a successful outcome
- don’t dwell on the negatives, but they do learn the lessons and take positive steps to prevent more ‘bad luck’ in the future

Top Tip:

Be confident:

- Don’t agonise
- Build your own self-belief and develop a positive mental attitude
- Allow yourself to be open and be prepared to embrace new experiences

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Building Resilience

Lucky people use four techniques to turn negatives into positives:

1. They think of ways in which a bad situation could have been worse.
2. They question whether this unlucky occurrence really matters, in the bigger scheme of things.
3. They compare themselves with others who are less fortunate and really do believe that 'every cloud has a silver lining'.
4. They learn from set-backs and take positive steps to prevent themselves from falling into the same hole again.

Grow your Network

1. Set yourself a target that at least once a week for the next few months, you will strike up a conversation with someone that you don't know at all or about whom you know very little.

Find out about them and work hard to be interested. Find an opportunity to get your story across as well.

2. Each week, proactively call someone who you haven't been in contact with for a while. Tell them that you thought it would be good to see how things are with them. Be open, be interested and remember its okay not to have an agenda. In fact, it's great to call someone when you don't need anything from them!

Top Tip:

Choose someone who appears to be friendly and approachable and build on your success. If it doesn't work out, what have you lost? (See Building Resilience above).

Deal with the Negatives – Write what's Right

If you have an issue or a concern that you would like to address, why not tackle it head on?

Find a quiet space and set aside a chunk of time to work on your problem. Take a sheet of notepaper and write a draft letter, addressed to whatever / whoever the problem is. Set out why you are writing the letter, what is going on currently and how you need things to be in the future, explaining the consequences of there not being a change.

If it feels right, allow your letter to evolve into a virtual dialogue with the problem and work together, until you identify a positive and proactive way forward.

Visit the Guru

Find somebody who you can use as a mentor to help you think things through, regain equilibrium and plan your strategy. Many people spend a lot of time worrying about things that haven't happened yet and a visit to the Guru can often help to re-establish a sense of reality and purpose. A practised mentor will help you to get back on track. If you are mentoring somebody else, consider using well-trying and tested problem solving tools, like the GROW Model.

This extract is taken from a series of 30 Hints & Tips, created by Mark Barnes of Step System.

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