

# Successful Complacency

## Don't Let Success Become the Beginning of Failure

What would you consider to be the biggest obstacle that you will face when trying to achieve a big goal? Although, you will probably get 100 different answers from 100 different people but most of them may be ignoring the silent killer of achieving your set goals. That is complacency and for the purposes of this article we'll take it even deeper to call it Successful Complacency. To be honest it may not even be a term that exists but it should. I can't seem to really find anywhere online that it was used so I will go ahead and give credit to Justin Mann who is the driver on my crew and a training rockstar for introducing me to the term. With that out of the way let's see if we can learn something today about ourselves.

Success is a great thing, that's what we all strive for but one thing harder than achieving success is the ability to remain successful. We must all beware of success because if we take it for granted and let our guard down then that success can quickly turn to complacency. The concept of Successful Complacency is born out of basic human nature.

- As we gain success, human nature tells us that we are doing so good that it's ok to slow down or take a breath and enjoy all that we have achieved. After all "We deserve it!", right? That is the great lie that we tell ourselves and the beginning of the end of our forward movement towards goals.
- To combat this mindset it takes a lot of self reflection and honest evaluations of what is really going on. Yes we may be accomplishing some really good things but in the big picture are we really so successful that we can afford to slow down? Have we really achieved all of our goals, if so



then we better get busy setting some new ones. Human nature is to look at ourselves in the best light and but to first focus on the imperfections of others, so knowing that we need to keep things in the correct perspective. Our jobs are the absolute definition of dynamic and if you think for a second that you have it all figured out or that you've seen everything than I am afraid you are on the fast track of getting yourself humbled.

Nothing feels better than dominating a training drill or performing superbly at a structure fire but what do we do after that? Do we use that momentum to keep pushing to get even better or does that success fool us into losing focus and makes us think that we can ease up a little bit? That's a very important question that we must continue to ask ourselves. On the other hand, how do we react when we don't do so well in training or on scene? Those are the times that you should be thankful for a little dose of humility and for what should be a shot of training adrenaline that makes you want to work even harder.

I had one of those humbling moments recently during some training evolutions. I was very quickly made aware of some areas of weakness in skill sets that should come natural to me and it was embarrassing. I wanted so much to be the absolute best at the scenario and I couldn't have been more wrong. No I didn't just blow it completely but it was nowhere near where I should've been.

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It didn't take me long afterwards to have a little clarity and to realize that it was probably exactly what I needed. I needed a little wake up call to get me focused again and fired up about training. Because a dominating performance probably would've caused me to lose focus and drop my guard. It was also very clear that even though we do a lot of training as a crew that there are definitely ways that we can make it better and more efficient. These were invaluable lessons for me and for my crew; lessons that we would have not learned if the situation went differently. So I am very thankful for that.

I think before wrapping this up there is one more thing that we need to address that has a lot to do with how success affects us; and that is pride. Like success, there are 2 sides to pride.

- On one hand pride is a great thing. Having pride in your station, crew, department, equipment, etc. is a key to creating a winning culture. Feeling proud when you achieve some success is a great feeling and one

that we want to continue to replicate. Crew pride will drive us to train hard and remain focused on getting a little better every day.

- On the other hand too much pride can be a recipe for disaster. Being too prideful keeps you from learning from mistakes, heeding the advise of others, and seeing cracks in your skill set. Pride blinds us to anything that we may possess that is negative such as weak leadership skill, areas that we need more training in, and deficiencies that will keep us from succeeding in the future.

Pride is necessary for success and for creating a desirable culture but it must remain in check. Just like self reflection was mentioned as a way to combat complacency; self reflection is critical to maintain a healthy level of pride. Be proud of who you are, what you've accomplished, of your crew, and of all the good things that your crew has done but don't let that be the end of the story. Never be too prideful to listen to honest constructive criticism from those that you respect. Without the help and mentoring of those that we respect we will never truly excel at anything.

As was stated earlier, success is a great thing. Without some success here and there it is easy to get frustrated and lose all hope of achieving anything. When used properly success can breed more success because we want to continue to experience that feeling we get from it. On days that the motivation may not be as easily accessible, remember what it felt like when you had that last little taste of success. When you feel like you are starting to hit a brick wall, just imagine what it's going to be like to reach that next hurdle and how much it will be worth it. Enjoy your successes, there's nothing wrong with that but work hard to not lose the focus and drive that got you that success!

