

Observing Successful People

Chris Widener

I thought about my subscribers on Saturday night and realized that you can learn a lot from observation. Simple, right? Let me explain.

A good friend of mine bought, virtually on a whim, a new, nearly \$3,000,000 home. I didn't even know he had purchased it. They were "keeping it a secret." Then he invited me over to play pool, billiards if you will, which we do quite regularly. But, of course he had to give me the new address.

It was stunning: 16 acres. 7500 square feet. Beautiful custom woodwork. Tens of thousands of square feet of outbuildings, including horse barns (though he is going to raise Yaks – don't ask me why) and what is to become the new indoor basketball court. An indoor pool rounded out the best of the offerings. And, of course there was the billiards room. As we were going through the house I kept thinking, this would fit into most people's dreams... including many of my subscribers.

And that got me to thinking. I really needed to step back a bit and look at my friend again. I mean, I know him too well. We play basketball together. We play pool together (He beats me at pool, I beat him at basketball). We have shared some of the very highest points of life and some of the lowest. We have laughed together and we have fought with each other.

But what is it that makes him tick and be able to become so successful financially? I had never thought about that before. As I did, I realized that you can learn a lot from observing successful people... if you do it.

A little about my friend: 40 years old. Runs 1/5th of one of America's most well-known companies (you may even use them today). Married. 6 children.

But here is what I realize when I look at what makes him so successful:

Intense. One thing my friend is, is intense. Whatever it is that he is working on or doing, he puts every ounce of energy into it. It is all or nothing. This keeps him going when it gets hard.

Focused. Similar to intense, or perhaps going with it, is that my friend is extremely focused. When he sets his mind to something, he gets his eyes on it like a laser beam. This helps him achieve it.

Strategic. He "begins with the end in mind." He tells me frequently that the day you start a company is the day you plan on selling it. Whether you agree with that or not, it does indicate that he is thinking well down the road, which is a lesson we could all learn. This helps him keep his mind on the big picture.

Hard working. My friend puts in long hours. In today's get-rich-quick-without-much-work mentality it is easy to forget that most fortunes are made by plain old long hours. And most people just aren't willing to do it. If I want to get a hold of my friend between 6 am and 6 pm, I call the office, because that's where he'll be. Just

as a side note, he knows how to relax too: He just got back from a three week bicycling trip through Europe with his whole family, ending with a seven day cruise through the Mediterranean.

Competitive. When my friend gets in the game, he wants to win. He doesn't play to lose or tie. He goes all out, within the rules as well as the spirit of the rules, and he doesn't let up until the game is over. If he wins or if he loses, he is gracious. Well, okay, most of the time he's gracious. Sometimes he rubs it in a little bit when he beats me!

Risk-taker. One of my favorite stories about my friend is how he went to his boss at his company and told them they should begin to develop a certain product because they would need it in a year or two. The boss told him it wasn't in the cards. So my friend quit his job and went and started a company that produced that product. Guess who bought the company from him shortly thereafter for many, many dollars? Yep, his old company, where he now runs a huge part of the company.

Fun. When it comes right down to it, my friend is a lot of fun. He is never boring – that's for sure. He and his family have 25 bikes and use them regularly and competitively. He loves sports and plays them well. He laughs, even when he loses. That helps him keep perspective and enjoy life.

My friend isn't perfect. No, I have seen not only his best, but also his worst. He is, like the rest of us, making his way through life the best he can as a person who is not perfect. But he does have quite a few things down pat that you and I could learn from, lessons that would make us more successful in life and work.

So let me ask you:

Are you intense? Are you focused? Are you strategic? Are you hard working? Are you competitive? Are you risk taking? Are you fun?

These are the characteristics of successful people; people who achieve great things in this life and make a difference for their families and others as well.

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