

Anyway, visualization is going to be one of the tips in my book called 10 Steps to Entrepreneurial Success. I think its 10 steps, anyway. I haven't worked out the numbers yet. And I think it will be geared to entrepreneurs, unless I gear it towards career success. At some point, I'll check with a publisher to see which segment of the market buys more books, and make an adjustment. Maybe it will be 10 Steps to a Happy Life.

The point is, in the next few pages I'm going to share some specific, important insights that will help you achieve success in your entrepreneurial pursuits/career/life/etc. These are based on many years of failure and success, well thought-out as I sit at my computer contemplating the check I'll be receiving from the publisher. There will be at least 10 tips, probably. We'll want to leave something for the sequel.

Step One: Visualize success.

But allow me to digress.

I love to write for business people, because it gives me the chance to practice my skills in a language very similar to English, but different. For instance, to use a term found in the English language, as I sat down to right this story I was "thinking." But if this is geared to business, I was doing a lot more than "thinking." I was brainstorming, spitballing, running stuff up the flagpole to see what salutes, then throwing it against the wall to see what sticks. I'm processing my information, ready to take action in a proactive manner by developing an action plan that will be results-oriented with a strong focus on the bottom line. And I just thought of this right now, which makes it "cutting edge."

Everybody likes cutting edge, right?

And all the while, I've been thinking outside the box!

My next step will be to take my idea to my "team" for valuable feedback (which, according to company policy, I'll ignore). We'll interface and my idea will "evolve" until it becomes a concept. This is done through a process called "conceptualization." (In English, this would be called "thinking.")

Once it's gone through the conceptualization process, our concept will gain momentum. Everybody will "sign off" and we can put the project "on line" by giving it the "thumbs up" or a "green light." Our "team players" will get behind it and push it over the goal line. As a consumer, we see you as a valuable part of that campaign, since your job/task/responsibility/contribution will be to buy the book. If you're deadline driven, follow through and jump right on it, your purchase will help us to "pick up market share" right out of the box. That's important, because we'd like to see some positive cash flow.

See how much fun that is?

And by the way, all of this is according to "best management practices" which we decided to adopt because the shareholders never really liked our previous method of "crappy business practices."

Perhaps you've read my previous business books: my how-to for salesmen called "Getting to 'Thanks, We'll Call You,'" or my book on corporate ethics with all the blank pages. I also wrote a book for unemployed middle-managers called, "What the Hell Happened to My Cheese?"

Actually, I didn't write any of those, no matter what it says in my author's bio. And that's Step Number Two, found in my chapter on writing a good resume.

Step Two: The past doesn't matter.

My book on achieving success is going to be different from all of other books on the exact same topic, and not just because I'm recommending "steps" instead of "habits" and "10" instead of "seven." My book will be different because I'm going to focus on "common sense solutions."

And by "different" I mean profitable.

My theory is that "common sense solutions" can be adapted to fit the modern world, and I base that theory on feedback from focus groups. Not really, but see how impressive that is? Common sense tells me that that's an approach that will sell a lot of books.

What is common sense? In the book, I'll probably have to make enough stuff up to fill entire chapters, but since this is just one article, we can shorten it to "making a simple decision in a simple way, to arrive at the same result you would have anyway, and falling back on clichés to make you feel good about it." In other words, I will advocate that people just do what they want to do, and feel good about it.

Exhaustive research has proved that when it comes to important issues, most people will study the variables, make their decision based on emotion, and justify it by saying all kinds of crazy stuff. Not really, but common sense tells me that nobody's going to look it up and prove me wrong.

Common sense also tells me that when people say they made a decision based on "common sense," they feel a lot better about it. "It's just common sense," they say, and who can refute that? When a person can support a decision by relying on an additional cliché, his or her comfort level will increase.

Don't believe it? Try this exercise:

Close your eyes and visualize yourself as a cash-strapped young entrepreneur who has decided to introduce a product in an already crowded market. Now, tell yourself, "It's just common sense; you have to fish where the fish are." Repeat it over and over, like a mantra.

Try it. Close your eyes. Repeat the phrase. See how much better it makes you feel? See the little fish, jumping up and down out of the water? You can't help but feel good about things.

Okay, common sense tells me you didn't do the exercise (how could you close your eyes and still be reading?) but do you see the point? Good. This would be an excellent time to buy an advance copy of the book. It's not written yet, but you can order it from my web site (www.DaveRattigan.com). We'll take your order and send you a galley proof when it's ready.

Let's take a look at how well this approach works as you consider some important decisions:

Do you want to take your shot as an entrepreneur? *It's only common sense; you only live once.*

Would you like to jump from your company to your competitor? *It's only common sense; you've got to get when the getting's good.*

Want to dump your spouse? *It's only common sense; you can't teach an old dog new tricks.*

These could all be terrible decisions. But you'll feel good about them all. And if you feel good, you'll be better able to cope when things go terribly, terribly wrong.

And if someone tries to "rain on your parade" by disagreeing with you, just tell yourself that person doesn't have the sense he was born with.

Step Three: Ignore the naysayers.

In literature, the naysayer is always warning of impending doom. In life, the naysayer is your spouse, your parents, your friends, and other people who think you have great potential but *not for this*. Or maybe it's your banker when you go for a loan, or your landlord on the first of the month.

So, when confronted with a naysayer, what's the best course of action? In literature, the naysayer's prediction always comes true, but that's fiction. In real life, your best course of action is to ignore the naysayer. That's not always easy, but you can do it. And what's the best way to do it?

Go back to step one.

Visualize yourself ignoring the naysayer. Visualize yourself flipping the naysayer the bird.

Doesn't that make you feel better? Of course it does. It's only common sense.

At this point, you're probably noticing that the article ended and it only covered three steps in 10 Steps to Entrepreneurial Success. If the author was dishonest, he might write something like "Step Four: Leave Them Wanting More," or write a tag line saying "for more steps, check the author's web site at www.DaveRattigan.com." But the author is honest, so he confides that this article was due yesterday and he just reached the minimum word count so he's done. (1,600 words)

*Dave Rattigan is a comedian, writer, radio personality and all-around good guy.
His comedy CD is called "Dave Rattigan: Thinks He's Funny," and is available through
his web site at www.DaveRattigan.com.*