

# Road Signs For Personal Success

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As we traverse our personal and professional journeys, we are constantly adjusting to make certain (metaphorically) we stay on course and avoid as many of those pesky potholes along life's highway as possible. We heed various "road signs" to aid in arriving at our chosen destination safe and sound.

Below are ten suggested "road signs" to help us along the way...adjust accordingly:

**1** *Maturity is the ability to understand how our behavior impacts those around us.*

The profound wisdom in this statement is the key to success for so many people, and unfortunately it is the reason so many fail. Before taking action, simply stop and think, "How will this impact all those around me?" That is ultimately the essence of caring.

**2** *The question isn't, "Can one person make a difference?" The question is, "What kind of difference will one person make?"*

We all make a difference. Our very presence in any situation is part of the present-moment tapestry. Something as simple as saying "Thank you" will make a difference, and side-stepping a compliment will make a difference as well. What kind of difference do you want to make?

**3** *If we accept less than excellence, that's exactly what we will get.*

Our mind leads us in the direction of our most dominant thoughts. Do we see ourselves achieving excellence in all aspects of our lives? What is our self-talk telling us to do? Successful people believe they will be successful, and it all starts with: We become what we think we are.

**4** *We are contagious.*

Everything from our attitudes to our work ethic is contagious. Thus, the statement: We become like the people we hang around. Not only are we susceptible to mirroring the personalities of others, but others are equally as susceptible to who we are. The ultimate question is: Do you want people to get what you have?

**5** *Persistence alone is omnipotent.*

Nothing can take the place of time on task. Those who achieve their goals know one of the most important aspects of the process is to emphatically stay the course. Each challenge offers an opportunity to discover a way to embrace reality and creatively find ways to come to workable resolutions. Simply never give up, or more appropriately: Give up giving up.

**6** *It's not what you CAN do, it's not what you will DO, but it's what you DO DO that counts.*

From potential to intention to follow-through: We get trapped into thinking intention is outcome; we deceive ourselves into thinking by merely intending to do something we have accomplished our goal. Even the *plan* to do it is still not the key. The payoff is in the *doing* of it.

**7** *Learn to agree to disagree.*

Allow others to have their thoughts, beliefs, and opinions, and don't make them wrong in the process. We grow by learning and accepting the knowledge and experiences others bring to the table. Embrace unknowing and respect those who see things differently...there is little time for disagreement...just agree to disagree.


**8** *Argue for your limitations and you get to own them.*

Self-fulfilling prophecy. There are reasons and there are results; choose results. We often limit our own possibilities by convincing ourselves we don't have what it takes. Yet if you look at so many of our heroes, they are/were just ordinary people who refused to accept any limitations. Become your own hero.

**9** *Don't complain to someone who can't fix it; don't listen to someone complain unless you can fix it.*

This pointless exercise consumes an inordinate amount of time in our lives. Why would someone complain to a plumber about a toothache? This is true of everything that is part of our daily routine. Communicate with those who can make a positive difference. Simply avoid negative rhetoric and gossip.

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 **Communication isn't what we SAY that counts; it's what people GET that counts.**

In a world of cyberspace communication and social media, it is a common error to think everyone has successfully connected with our communication. It doesn't make any difference what we say unless the listener not only RECEIVES the communication but—more importantly—understands it. It is a bold reminder of the importance of clear, concise personalized communication concerning everything we say and do.

We have chosen a profession where we are constantly working with people, whether it is our students, parent boosters, administrators, community leaders, etc. Hopefully the above suggested “road signs” will offer some “travel tips” to make your expedition worthy and enjoyable.

*Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser taught at Northern Michigan University, University of Missouri, and New Mexico State University where he developed highly acclaimed groups in both instrumental and vocal music. Following his tenure in the college band directing world, he spent three years with McCormick's Enterprises working as Executive Director of Bands of America. In 1981, Tim created Attitude Concepts for Today, Inc., an organization designed to manage the many requests for teacher inservice workshops, student leadership seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the area of effective leadership training. After thirty-plus years of clinic presentations, some three million students have experienced one of his popular sessions. Tim presently serves as Vice President of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc. He is a nationally recognized voice touting the importance of arts education for every child. His books, produced by G.I.A. Publications, Inc., continue to be bestsellers in the educational community. He is also co-author of popular band method, Essential Elements, as well as the Senior Educational Consultant for Hal Leonard, Inc. Tim is also the Senior Educational Advisor for Music for All, and NAMM (The National Association of Music Merchants). He holds degrees from Ball State University and the University of Alabama. In 1995 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the VanderCook College of Music. He continues to teach as an adjunct faculty member at Ball State University, Indiana-Purdue/Ft. Wayne University, and Butler University. In addition, he is a member of the Midwest Clinic Board of Directors and the Western International Band Clinic/American Band College Board of Directors. He is presently the Chair of the National Association for Music Education Music Honor Society (Tri-M).*