

READY - AIM - FIRE!

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

To date I have not met anyone who did not want to be successful in whatever he/she chooses to do in life. Not many say, “*I think I’ll just be mediocre...it will satisfy my needs!*” Yet there are people who seem to avoid success because of various excuses. Why? Why would anyone settle for less than EXCELLENCE? As teachers, do we not have an obligation to serve as role models who are constantly raising our own standards?

What holds people back? We certainly have an abundance of information that can “boost us to the top.” Perhaps we should all ask ourselves this introspective question:

What would I do if I knew there is no possible way I could fail?

What would you do if you knew there was no way you could lose, be side-tracked, detoured, embarrassed, humiliated, or intimidated...or if you knew you would forfeit nothing, but only gain and benefit from the given risk...? Isn’t it true most of us have set limits on what we can do simply through self-imposed barriers? Literally, our success is of “our own doing.” We have the potential to do just about anything we choose; WE TRULY DO. To respond with, “*No we don’t,*” is just more self-limitation. It is a matter of convincing ourselves we are capable of going beyond our present-day limits.

“Happiness lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. ”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

In a brilliant analogy, author Anthony Robbins explains the way our mind works on electronic impulses (based on an extensive research program at Stanford University). We can now identify the positive and negative impulses being sent via brain waves that dictate our behavior. Simply put: Negative impulses cause negative behavior; positive impulses cause positive behavior. The mind, much like a computer, simply processes the message and kicks back the blueprint of patterns we are to integrate into our behavior. The really exciting part is: Our conscious mind has the ability to make the choice of what message we want to send to ourselves! In other words, we have control over the script that calibrates our computer/mind.

When we don’t consciously make this choice, the mind will reach for the loudest sensory information and adapt it accordingly. It is like drifting aimlessly at sea, however we *do* have the ability to guide our ship if we take the responsibility of steering it, or “setting our sails.”

There is a “price to pay” for success, just as there is a price to pay for negative conditions. It is not a random “luck of the draw,” but a systematic, self-disciplined plan-of-action affording everyone the same opportunities for reaching the given goals.

Not to over-simplify this formula (the reader can rest assured there are volumes written on the subject that warrant study), but the condensation of everything boils down to this three-step process:

VISION-COMMITMENT- ACTION

or in street language:

READY, AIM, FIRE!

VISION (READY) - Successful people tap the visionary part of their minds. It is like mental-musical; the more you exercise it, the stronger it becomes. They see, dream, and envision their goals/destinations. The sub-conscious mind takes over and the details begin to come into clear focus.

Knowing the mind will always lead us in the direction of its most dominant thoughts, these winners make sure they are constantly reaching into their creative minds to shape/sculpt/draw their desired blueprint.

COMMITMENT (AIM) - Successful people understand, “*The world is not devoted to making them happy.*” They face the responsibilities of successful living, knowing it will mean sacrifice in certain areas. They also understand the personal growth and strength results from these efforts. (THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR PERSISTENCE!)

We can succeed if we are willing to make a personal commitment to embrace:

1. FRUSTRATION—Everyone experiences this throughout life.
2. REJECTION—Have you ever met a successful person who has not been subjected to rejection? In fact, the really successful man or woman sees rejection as a stepping stone to advancement.

READY - AIM - FIRE

3. FINANCIAL PRESSURE—

Whether we like it or not, it is part of our society. The only certain way not to have any financial pressure is to avoid finances. We know that's not going to happen.

4. LACK OF WILL TO GROW—

Complacency is a dangerous landscape. It can cause the mind to rationalize everything from boredom to apathy. Skepticism is ammunition for self-defeat. In the words of Henry Ford:

“Whether we think we can or whether we think we can't, we're always right.”

Think “WE CAN!...or - better yet - I CAN!”

We must “take aim” through your personal commitment to follow through no matter what obstacles or barriers we encounter. Each disappointment can serve as a stepping stone in reaching the goal.

ACTION (FIRE!) - Herein lies the last key element of the trilogy. It is easy to “dream the dream” and it is exciting to sit down and “draw up the plan,” but doing it (TAKING ACTION!) seems to be where many halt-and-fault. If we are expecting others to come to us in support our endeavors (save-the-day!), then we have missed the point. If our dreams are not worth self-action, what is the ultimate value to begin with?

“But what if I miss the target when I fire?”

Reload and fire again!

“But what if I run out of ammunition?”

The fuel/ammunition is self-created; the closer you get to the goal, the more enthusiasm and excitement you will experience. Positive energy produces more positive energy just as negative energy produces more negative energy. What is the basis of your energy source? Positive or negative?

It is critically important to comprehend the order of the system:

VISION, COMMITMENT,
ACTION (ready, aim, fire!)

We all know many situations where we have witnessed this wrong order: READY, FIRE, AIM. (It is important to have “aim/commitment” in place prior to firing. We might wound someone, including ourselves, by not having a good plan!)

Then there is the case of the over-planner with this common pattern: READY, AIM, AIM, AIM, AIM... (These people do not want to “fire/take action” in fear of missing the target and failing.)

One of my favorites (self-recognition!) is the infamous: FIRE, FIRE, FIRE, FIRE! (How many times have we all just wasted human energy in our fruitless attempts to get the job done, but we have no plan, no vision, no goals, no organization, just blind, uncontrolled energy being shot in a hapless, hopeless attempt to hit some unseen target?!)

We can all play with the pattern and apply it to any situation. The three-part formula is tried and true. It works when we work.

Success (whatever it is for you) is available in abundance to each of us in our daily work, personal lives, our missions. Limits are exactly that: *LIMITS*! Using the “ready, aim, fire” technique for success seems like a small price to pay for making our dreams come true. It's worth taking ten minutes out of our busy day to check ourselves.

* Do we have our VISION clearly in mind?

* Have we carefully established our COMMITMENT to the plan to get there?

* Are we taking ACTION to achieve our goals?

What we will gain personally is exciting, but far more important, we will be far more valuable role models of endless, unlimited possibilities for our students!

...and now, its time to:

STRIKE UP THE BAND!

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser began his teaching career at Northern Michigan University. He then moved to the University of Missouri, and from there to New Mexico State University. During that time, Tim 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 in-service workshops, student leadership seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the area of effective leadership training. Tim presently serves as Vice President of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc.