

WORKING HARD AND FEELING LIKE A FAILURE.

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STYBEL AND PEABODY

Murray Graziano works at The Golden Orchard in Toronto's St. Lawrence Market. One morning, we bought fabulous honey. He also shared the following story:

Murray was serving a customer and his wife. The men recognized each other as having been in the same high school class. The man described how he had gone on to achieve financial success and national recognition. As the couple walked away from The Golden Orchard, Murray heard the wife say, "I guess he is one of the students who didn't make it....."

Murray's response to that comment: "I don't financially need to work. I am here because I want to be here."

MURRAY'S LAW OF SUCCESS

There are three critical ideas within Murray's two sentences: (1) are you positioning yourself so that you one day you do not have to be working? (2) When you no longer have a financial need to work in role you occupy, would you still continue to occupy the role? And (3) are your standards of career excellence internal or external.

Are You Positioning Yourself so That You Don't Have to Work? Are you putting enough money away in a retirement fund so that you might one day have the option of not working? If your job doesn't pay you enough to set aside funds for retirement, then perhaps it is time for a different job. The work itself may be exciting and noble. But if you are not positioning yourself for life after work, you need to change your role. And if you are counting upon that Life Changing Event (IPO, M&A, that hot investment tip), you are not working towards plan achievement. You are wishing for statistically unlikely events.

When You Have No Financial Need to Work in the Role, Will You Still Want to Work in the Role? I continue to have fun and to learn from both clients and students. It saddens me to work with "successful" leaders who tell me they can't wait for that "life changing event" so that they can finally get to do what they really want to do. To paraphrase Warren Buffett, a career strategy based on doing what you dislike today so that you can do what you like tomorrow as wise as deferring sex while young so that it can be enjoyed in old age.

Are Your Standards Internal? When I invest, I measure my success against the S&P 500 Index. Indeed, business is about defining external yard sticks and measuring performance against them. Such external standard comparison is natural in business. But does that same logic become appropriate when it comes to measuring the success of your professional life?

As long as you use external standards to evaluate success you are guaranteed a life of dissatisfaction: you will always find someone with a bigger income, a bigger house, a bigger boat, better car, and faster computer.

What are YOUR standards of success? Perhaps you have forgotten them in your focus on others?

REMEMBER MURRAY

The three levels of Murray's Law of Success are simple. If your answer is "Yes" at all three levels, you are managing your professional life.

If your answer to any of the three questions is "No," then it is time to remember what Professor Anthony Athos once told me. There are three phases in a professional life:

Learning the "Game."

Winning the "Game."

Defining the "Game."

Where are you?

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