

**Don't sit still**

## **Don't Sit Still**

*"He who feared that he would not succeed sat still." - Horace*

The secret of success? Simple: Don't sit still!

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In modern (American) times, we are sold this idea of "success" as being wealth, power, influence, owning a big home, and lots of cars/stuff.

But I've been curious-- what exactly is 'success' -- and how can we achieve it?

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Looking into the Latin etymology of the word "success", it comes from 'succedo' which means the following:

1. I climb, mount, or ascend
2. I advance
3. I follow
4. I enter

So in simple words, to "succeed" doesn't mean to obtain the rewards/honors of your actions. Instead, "success" means to simply advance-- to simply ascend, to go forth, and to enter-- or to act or attempt!

Thus this is how I would define success:

*Success is risk-taking for something you're interested in or believe in!*

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## **Don't be sedentary**

*"Sedit qui timuit ne non succederet." - Horace*

My translation goes:

*"The timid and sedentary will never succeed."*

To be honest, I think that risk-taking is the most fun, noble, and interesting way to live life.

But where does this spirit and thirst/hunger come from risk-taking? Well, I think most of it comes from the culture in which you were raised, and how you were raised by your parents/schools/teachers.

I once read a story (I'm not sure what the origin was), but perhaps it was one of the spartan Kings who was very displeased to see that his citizens were falling to weakness/vice. Thus, as an example, he took two puppies from a mother dog and raised them differently. One puppy was given a pampered life of luxury, and the other was forced to go hungry and hunt food on its own. When the dogs were fully-raised, he then presented the dogs in front of the court, to make the point:

*Both dogs were from the same biological mother, yet both were extremely different in temperament and courage. The un-pampered dog (which became self-sufficient in the wild) was much more desired as a warrior.*

The reason I share this story is to make the case that our biology doesn't dictate our future. I do believe that some of us have certain genetic "pre-dispositions" to being more of a risk-taker or not. For example, if you're born with slight-autistic-tendencies, you are probably *MORE* likely to take risks. Why? You care less about what others think about you, because you lack certain faculties to determine what others think of you, and thus you don't really care (as much) what others think of you.

When you take certain risks in life, or go "against the grain" -- it is easy for others to label you as an "asshole", "arrogant", or "insane/crazy". But even Arisostle said something like, "Behind every genius is a little bit of madness."

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As an entrepreneurial idea-- whenever you have a "crazy" idea that you're really passionate about-- just attempt it! Take that tiny little risk! Take a step forward!

For example, some ideas:

1. Write a blog post about your idea
2. Make a video about your idea, and upload it to YouTube
3. Make a "MVP" (minimum viable product) of whatever you desire to create. Essentially, create a "beta" version of whatever you desire to see-- and try to make the basic functions work!
4. Try a "non-scalable solution". This is what Paul Graham from Y Combinator recommends-- if you have an idea for a delivery service, you be the first person to deliver! Don't think about scaling to millions of people-- rather, start with yourself, and find your first 1 customer!
5. Imagine the worst-case scenario: If your idea totally flops, will you die? Will you go bankrupt? I would say "hedge your bets" by making sure that your maximum downside isn't more than 10% of your net wealth. For example, in Roman times, they had something called 'decimation' in which if an army was suspected of cowardice, a random 10% of the army would be put to death. 10% of the army is a critical number, because killing 10% of your army isn't enough to critically weaken your army, yet it is enough to incentivize your soldiers *not* to be cowards. I did the same when investing (only 10%) of my savings into Bitcoin.

Don't sit still! ERIC