

Shattering Our Four-Minute Miles!

By Jennifer Webb

There's a fun 1946 show tune by Irving Berlin called "Anything You Can Do" and is about two people bragging—each one is trying to best the other in all their accomplishments. Thinking about that silly song, from the Broadway musical Annie Get Your Gun, it reminded me of the wisdom of appreciating those who know more than we do. Learning from those who know more than we do, is a great way to inspire us to do things we may not have even thought possible.

Four-Minute Mile

Roger Bannister is a great example. Prior to 1954 it was believed no one could run under a 4-minute mile, it was a physical impossibility. That is until Roger shattered the record at a dual meet at Oxford. Once the psychological barrier was broken several men ran under a four-minute mile the same year. Someone just had to show them it was possible.

Perhaps this is the best time—right in the middle of the pandemic—to decide who can inspire us to our greatness, and who can we inspire. How can we be someone's hero, simply through our day in day out actions? And where can we get the mojo we need to break our own four minute miles?

How do we get inspired? And pass on our excitement and optimism?

Celebrated Archer

Last Sunday I became inspired while watching a segment of CBS Sunday Morning about one of the world's greatest archers. He became great because he believed he was a failure—not being able to earn a decent living—and decided if he could just become a decent archer at least he could hunt and provide food for his family. He got better with practice and persistence. Then in January 2010 Matt Stutzman

decided to be the best archer in the world. By 2011, he made the U.S. Olympic Team, and by 2012, he went to his first Games, and won a Silver. He is a celebrated archer world wide today. He was born with no arms and does it all with his feet.

That prompted me to do some research and find another example of incredible courage and vision. Nick Vujicic founded an organization, “Life Without Limbs,” became an evangelical minister and motivational speaker, and doesn’t let anything stop him. He swims, fishes, surfs, skydiving, snowboards, and plays golf, all without arms and legs.

What separates these extraordinary people from the rest of us? Absolutely nothing. If one person can accomplish something, anyone else can as well by examining the approach they took and specifically how they’re thinking about the challenge. It’s also about losing any victim mentality mindset.

How do we stay inspired right now and pass on our positivity? Here are some of the characteristics that propel people forward despite the circumstances:

They are brilliantly flexible

If you watch a super-slow-motion video of a bouncing ball, you’ll see that when it hits the ground, it goes flat. It’s not a perfect sphere at that moment. But the flexibility that allows it to be flattened is what gives it the power to spring back to its original shape, throwing itself up into the air by using the very same force that brought it down.

In the 1974 boxing match between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman, Ali demonstrated this talent. He leaned back against the ropes and deliberately allowed the incredible power of Foreman’s punches to be diffused into the elastic cords. Ali wasn’t absorbing all that force, as he would have if he’d stood up in the ring. He knew the ropes were made to stretch and bounce back. He used their resilience to support his own, minimizing wear and tear on his body until he wore Foreman down and won the match.

Neurologically we thrive on change, whether we feel very happy about it or

not. Our brains love diversity and challenges, and if we can align ourselves with seeing our future as a growth opportunity instead of a major inconvenience, it helps us be much more effective.

They are propelled by purpose

Purpose propels us to action; always has and always will. Whether it's an enormous purpose to help a company change its mindset, or a small purpose like helping a family member or reaching a new goal, the focus and passion involved in creating a real purpose is an enormous motivator.

The explorer Ernest Shackleton had purpose. While stranded in pack ice that could prove fatal to his crew, his number one mission in life was to make sure all his men survived. His purpose was hardwired into his psyche; it was the reason he got up in the morning. And despite incredible odds, all his men survived.

Do we need to rethink our purpose? Covey reminded us more than 20 years ago in his book *Seven Habits*, to continually sharpen the saw--renew the four dimensions of our nature to be more effective---in other words continue learning. Sometimes something as debilitating as COVID can help us reevaluate our purpose, pay attention and refocus on what is relevant and important to us.

They survive the failures

Failures are setups for comebacks. Every successful person has failed many times over. Successful people make lots of mistakes, it's just the way it is. We've all read the long list of Lincoln's failures, but behind his setbacks he was terribly depressed. Yet he still got up and kept going. Courage to accept all the failures—and who reading this hasn't made several—is just keeping on keeping on and believing in the outcome. It's not the failures that matter, it's the conversation we're having with ourselves about these failures that make all the difference in the world. Argue for your tenacity and patience and skills; be the voice you wish was always reminding you of your worth and value.

They have selectively poor memories and small egos

Successful people forget the wrongs that were done to them, the challenges they endured at the hands of others, and get on with their day. It's impossible to succeed without getting some scrapes and bruises, that's part of the game. However, as we

understand not to take personally anything along the way, we become capable of navigating our world without the burden of emotion sidetracking us. We choose to forget about all our yesterdays and focus on the outcomes of today. The old self is gone—expiration date expired—and the new self sees the wisdom in getting ego out of the way and working collaboratively with others.

Here's to learning from others whose strategies are working, sharing what we've learned with all those not quite where we are yet, and shattering our four-minute miles!

Please go to www.magiccomm.com to read Jennifer's blogs- Living Bigger, listen to her podcasts- The Science & Magic of Attitude, and check out her October Peer Group Facilitated Coaching