
THE 3R'S FOR RENEWING YOUR COMPETITIVE EDGE:

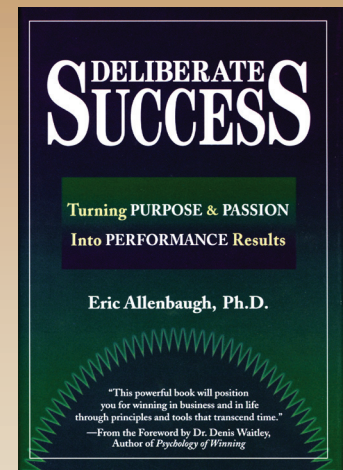
Release – Reaffirm – Reinvent®

Written by G. Eric Allenbaugh, Ph.D.

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THE 3R’S FOR RENEWING YOUR COMPETITIVE EDGE:

Release – Reaffirm – Reinvent[®]

*“As our case is new,
we must think and act anew.”*

Abraham Lincoln

Maintaining the status quo in a changing environment is not a viable option. Dinosaurs tried this tactic — and it didn’t work. Similarly, if you merely stayed at your current state of development for the next several years, you might likewise become an “extinct species” in your own career. Ask yourself: “Am I lagging behind in my field, am I just keeping up, or am I one of the progressive leaders?” Even if you are moving ahead, the speed you are moving must be faster than the speed global business advances — otherwise, you will still be trailing behind! Instead of being concerned about *employment*, you need to focus on your *employability*. Any way you look at it, you need to reinvent yourself at a fairly good clip.

*“Even if you’re on the right track,
you will get run over if you just sit there.”*

Will Rogers

Futurists estimate that fifty percent of the jobs available in the next ten years have not yet

been invented. To sustain your competitive edge and assure your employability, you must commit to a continual process of reinventing yourself — or suffer the consequences of possible obsolescence or extinction. Change comes with the territory, and adaptable, learning individuals and organizations will clearly prevail over those that have fallen in love with their current status. Tom Peters, the management guru, succinctly communicates this message in his typically provocative way:

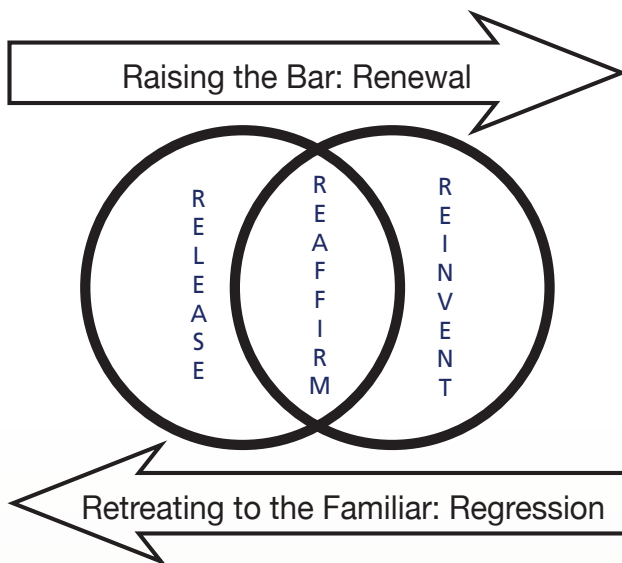
*“Somebody is going to do you in.
The only question: Who will it be?
A competitor – or you?”*

Deliberate success — getting from where you are now to where you want or perhaps, need to be — requires a conscious process of working through the “3R’s” of renewal:

- 1. Release:** What must you release or let go of to provide room and resources to support your growth? (Consider, for example, *releasing* obsolete products and services, negative behaviors and attitudes, limiting beliefs,

unhealthy relationships, and bureaucratic policies and practices.)

2. **Reaffirm:** What existing strengths and resources do you need to reaffirm and intensify to support your next growth steps? (Consider, for example, *reaffirming* your commitment to stellar customer service, honoring your current talents and strengths, empowering employees, continuing lifelong learning, and engaging in practices that promote fiscal viability.)
3. **Reinvent:** How might you reinvent yourself to assure that you are at the cutting edge in your field while simultaneously contributing to your career fulfillment? (Consider, for example, *reinventing* your products and services, delighting your customers, expanding your knowledge, increasing your value, building new skills, and developing new markets.)



“When you’re not learning — someone, somewhere else, is. When you meet — guess who has the advantage?”

Bob Pritchard

The “3R’s” apply equally to both individual and organizational renewal. Recall some years ago when the computer field identified IBM as the benchmark of the industry – they were on top. When purchasing computer equipment, people typically asked: “Is this IBM compatible?” You don’t hear that question anymore. Why? IBM fell in love with its way of doing business, fell in love with mainframe computers, and fell in love with promoting top leaders exclusively from within. They could not adapt and let go of some of their culture that no longer served them well in the current business environment.

IBM became an “endangered species” in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s as they lost significant market share to their more adaptive competitors that provided cutting edge hardware, software, and services to their customers. Market conditions forced IBM to take drastic action – massive layoffs. At the brink of extinction, their corporate “wake-up call” finally mobilized IBM to act. Having learned a difficult lesson, IBM returned to greatness by acting, rather than reacting, and deliberately reinventing itself.

“The problem is never how to get new, innovative thoughts into your mind, but how to get old ones out.”

Dee Hock, Founder & Former CEO of Visa

In contrast, Jack Welch, who headed General Electric during its transformational period from 1980 through 2001, clearly understood the “3R’s.” Described as one of the world’s most fabled CEOs, Welch deliberately released some old ways of doing business that no longer served GE. He strongly and consistently reaffirmed basic business values, yet reinvented GE through and through.

Under his leadership, GE transformed from manufacturing household appliances to becoming a highly adaptive, diverse, global business producing aircraft engines, providing financial services, and even expanding into television networks.

Welch demonstrated a compulsive commitment to assuring that the GE mission and values transcended his own leadership. An internally driven succession planning process of six years ultimately resulted in the careful selection of Jeffrey Immelt as his successor. If that were not enough, Welch implemented a nearly one-year overlap and coaching process to assure an effective hand-off to Immelt.

When Welch announced his successor in late 2000, he made it clear: *“It’s all going to unfold very nicely – you won’t see a bump.”* Immelt, his newly appointed successor then said: *“I have a tremendous passion for the company. We simply have the best team in the world.”* (The Oregonian, November 28, 2000) Success is not an accident. Even as Welch released his leadership at GE, he reinforced the principles that made it great and positioned the new leader to be successful. No wonder Fortune magazine described GE at the time as *“the most admired company in the world.”*

***“For something new to begin,
something must end.”***

Kris King

Tiger Woods isn’t just a great athlete – he dominates the field of great golfers. Sure, he came into this world gifted with unusual abilities. Yet he finely hones those natural abilities with a commitment to reinventing himself – daily! *“... Tiger works harder than anyone out there, and*

that’s why he’s kicking butt,” says tennis great Martina Navratilova, winner of 167 singles titles. *“No matter who you are, no matter how good an athlete you are, we’re creatures of habit,”* reported Wayne Gretzky, the hockey legend. *“The better your habits are, the better they’ll be in pressure situations.”* Gretzky went on to say that *“When I watch golf and hear other players interviewed, most of them sound like they can’t believe they won. Then you hear from Tiger, and he either expected to win or can’t believe he didn’t. It’s a different mind-set altogether.”* (Newsweek, June 18, 2001)

“Successful people do what unsuccessful people are unwilling to do.”

Zig Ziglar

Tiger Woods and other great athletes don’t leave success up to chance. They deliberately delete that which does not serve them well, they work at developing their intrinsic talent, and they push the envelope to create even higher levels of performance. Great athletes and great leaders commit to practicing the “3-R’s” of Release, Reaffirm, and Reinvent as a conscious, deliberate commitment to success.

FOCUS ON INCREASING YOUR VALUE

The most valuable career development advice I have ever been given came from Dr. Don Murray, a friend and fellow consultant. While in my early years of consulting, Don said to me: *“Whenever you have contact with a client, make sure you*

provide them with something of value – an idea, a solution, an article. They will then associate you with value.” Imagine the many doors that open when people associate you with providing value? (In contrast, many employees consume organizational resources – you don’t want to be in that camp!) To assure that you are providing present value and positioning yourself for future value, consciously seek to reinvent yourself, learn new ways, engage in cutting edge activities, and let go of old baggage.

***“Learning is not compulsory –
neither is survival.”***
W. Edwards Deming

Brian Tracy advocates that *“You are the President of your own Personal Services Corporation – the Chief Executive Officer of your own life. You are responsible for your own personal business. You are in charge of production, distribution, marketing, quality, finance, and research and development. You even determine your own salary.”* As “President” of your own “Personal Services Corporation,” you have a distinct responsibility to provide high value to your client (your employer) by continually reinventing yourself.

Instead of waiting for your employer to provide continuing education, pay for it yourself. (You are worth the investment.) Instead of asking for more money, ask for more responsibility. Instead of looking to how much money you are earning, look to how much value you are providing. Instead of seeking to avoid assignments, volunteer for activities that benefit your organization. When you consistently provide high value to your employer, you will – in the long-run – expand your

influence, achieve greater results, and ultimately generate significantly higher income.

***“I couldn’t wait for success –
so I went ahead without it.”***
Jonathan Winters

What specific, tangible steps are you now taking to increase your value in this global economy? What talents do you offer and what benefits do you provide that will encourage both employers and customers to continue knocking at your door? What deliberate action steps are you taking to Release that which no longer serves you, to Reaffirm and enhance your intrinsic talents, and to Reinvent yourself to provide even higher value in the future?

***“It is not the strongest species that survive,
nor the most intelligent,
but the ones most responsive to change.”***
Charles Darwin

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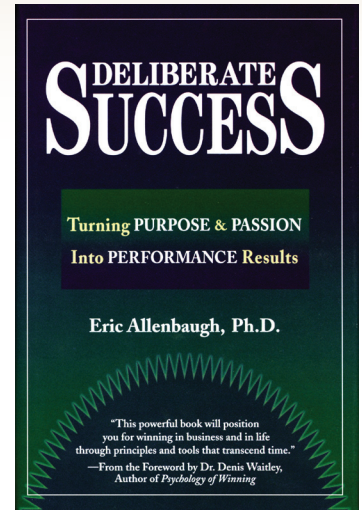
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