

**DAMN
GOOD
ADVICE**

1

Forget results,
think behaviour

*The fight is won or lost
far away from witnesses –
behind the lines, in the gym,
and out there on the road,
long before I dance under those lights.*

MUHAMMAD ALI
American former heavyweight boxer

Behaviour first, then results

Results are always late. **Results are a consequence, not a cause.** Results are a lagging indicator, not a leading indicator. No one understands this concept better than High School learners who have just received their Matric results only to discover that their results do not meet the minimum University entrance requirements. By the time these Matric results come, it's too late to do anything about them.

Results are a lagging indicator of progress, and as such a poor measure of progress. Results are consequences of behaviour. In a timeline of events, results will always lag behind behaviour. Therefore, behaviour is the mother of results.

Daily Behaviour

I love the Olympic games! This is the one time when the world discovers new sports superstars. It's all because of results. But is that really where the story begins? Not at all! Superstars are superstars long before they get to the games – we just don't know about it. But they do know it. And those closest to them also know it. They know it because they are witnesses to the superstar's behaviour. When the superstar finally wins a gold medal, those who know him best are the least surprised. Happy for him or her? Yes. Surprised? No.

This principle applies to everything in life. **Whatever results you desire there's already a recipe, behaviour or blueprint that is congruent with that result.** Results should never catch you by surprise. But how many times do you see some of the best business strate

If the ladder is not leaning against the right wall, every step we take just gets us to the wrong place faster.

STEPHEN R. COVEY
1932 – 2012
Author, businessman and
keynote speaker

gives, sales targets or student results fall short of expectations? In almost all these cases the planners failed to determine in advance the correct behaviours that are congruent with the desired outcomes. In all these cases the remedy is the same – modification of daily behaviour to be congruent or aligned with the desired outcome.

Never adjourn a sales meeting or deploy your business strategy without thoroughly investigating daily individual behaviours that best align with the outcomes you desire.

Present action coached by the future

The result you want dictates the behaviour you should adopt – not the other way round. Every result has a behavioural price tag attached to it. Only those who pay the price achieve the goal.

The story that drives this point home well, is one told by author and motivational speaker, Jim Rohn:

My mentor, Mr. Shoaff, had an interesting way of teaching. When I was 25 years old he said, ‘Mr. Rohn, I suggest that you set a goal to become a millionaire.’ I was all intrigued by that. You know, it’s got a nice ring to it – millionaire.

Then Mr. Shoaff said, ‘Here’s why.’

I thought to myself, ‘gosh, he doesn’t need to teach me why. Wouldn’t it be great to have a million dollars?’

Then Mr. Shoaff said, “No. Then you’ll never acquire it. Instead, set a goal to become millionaire for what it makes of you to achieve it. Do it for the skills you have to learn and the person you have to become. Do it for what you’ll end up knowing about the marketplace. What you’ll learn about the management of time and working with people. Do it for the ability of discovering how to keep your ego in check, for what you have to learn about being benevolent. Being kind as well as being strong. What you have to learn about society and business and government and taxes and becoming an accomplished person to reach the status of millionaire.”

From this story we learn two lessons:

1. Every result prescribes a behaviour that is congruent with it.
2. To get a certain result you must first become someone who is able to achieve that result. This process is irreversible – once you have that capability you will never lose it. **Once you develop a skill and get to know how to do something you cannot go back to not knowing.**

When you understand these two lessons, there are then only **three questions** you should ask yourself before and during any important endeavour:

1. What behaviour is congruent with the outcome I desire?
2. Who do I have to become in order to achieve this goal?
3. And throughout the duration of the project ask yourself: ‘Is the action I’m taking leading me towards my goal or away from it?’

THE WAY YOU

activate the seeds of your creation
is by making choices about the results
you want to create.

When you make a choice, you mobilise
vast human energies and resources
which otherwise go untapped.

All too often, people fail to focus
their choices upon results and
therefore their choices are ineffective.

If you limit your choices only to what
seems possible or reasonable,
you disconnect yourself from what you truly want,
and all that is left is a compromise.

ROBERT FRITS

Author, management consultant, composer and filmmaker

REMEMBER:

Doing nothing is also an action and it has its outcomes!

Predicting the future

If you accept that future results can coach your present actions, then it also means that **you can predict future results by observing your present behaviour.**

The only way to predict a future result is to create it with your present behaviour. **Success is the sum total of good and easy habits performed consistently.** Failure is the sum total of bad and easy habits performed consistently. By taking the right action consistently, your behaviour improves your chances of success. **When you behave by postponing the right action you improve your chances of failure.**

What can you really control – the result or your own behaviour?

Author of *Start with No*, Jim Camp – the Godfather of what he calls decision-based negotiation (as opposed to emotion- and compromise-based negotiation) – states that during a negotiation you can only control your own behaviour and actions, but you have absolutely no control over the outcome. He points out that one should always **guard against neediness (the need to get the deal) and against the fear of saying or hearing the word “no”.** Camp says unskilled negotiators who lack basic training on what he calls decision-based negotiation tend to heavily rely on their emotions when negotiating. In situations where they negotiate with skilled negotiators their emotions become a weakness and get easily exploited. Their goal is to achieve a ‘win-win’ outcome and they easily compromise to get the deal done.

Camp says there’s a difference between goals and results. **Goals are**

**DO IT NOW:
improve success**

**PROCRASTINATE:
improve failure**

behavioural in nature and are always within one's control but results are merely outcomes that are beyond any one negotiator's control. In a negotiation, all parties have a right to say no. Therefore it is never a wise idea to have 'signing the

deal' as your goal. Yes, it is a possible objective – but it still depends on how you handle your behavioural goals – things within your control.

Behaviour and results in selling

According to Bill Gibson, my friend, mentor and, in my humble opinion, one of the world's top sales geniuses: "Professional selling is continually walking into the world of uncertainty, certain of your success, because you are practising the winning habits, activities, skills and attitudes of the top sales producers in your industry". In this statement Bill says nothing about closing the deal or going to get them – but he puts all emphasis on behaviour.

Of course, the principle of 'results-behaviour congruence' is not only reserved for business situations. It applies in all areas of our lives where consequences can be experienced.

Here are just a few examples that you already know:

HEALTH AND FITNESS (and weight maintenance) – eat well, in moderation and live an active lifestyle or risk serious health challenges.

FINANCES – spend less money than you make; invest wisely – or risk financial calamity

RELATIONSHIPS – behave in accordance to the promises you make. My favourite saying is one from Beverly Gibson – "Love is what love does, not what love says!"

Happiness is in many things. It's in love. It's in sharing. But most of all, it's in being at peace with yourself knowing that you are making the effort, the full effort, to do what is right.

JOHN WOODEN
1910 – 2010
American basketball
player and coach

Process vs Outcome

When it comes to world sport, one of the most respected coaches was the legendary John Wooden – by those who love basketball and those who did not care about the game. It's not about his basketball prowess, it's about his philosophy. His coaching was grounded on a simple philosophy – an unrelenting **focus on becoming a better player (and human being) – the process or behaviour – rather than obsession with winning – the outcome.** It was this philosophy that led him

to become one of the most successful coaches of all time inside the basketball court. ESPN named him the greatest coach of the 20th century.

Coach Wooden was so committed to the process that he had a single goal for each training session – to help his players become better than the previous session. In his book *Wooden*, he writes: “When I was teaching basketball, I urged my players to try their hardest to improve on that very day, to make that practice a masterpiece”. He goes on to point out that too often people get distracted by things outside their control – **that yesterday is history and tomorrow is not yet here – but it is within our control to make today a masterpiece.**

At the beginning of each season – before the first practise session – Wooden would demonstrate to his players how he wanted them to put on their socks for the rest of the season: “Carefully roll the socks down over the toes, ball of the foot, arch and around the heel, then pull the sock up snug so there will be no wrinkles of any kind.”

Why would a great coach obsess about something as simple as putting your socks on?

CHOP YOUR OWN WOOD;
it will warm you twice.

HENRY FORD
[1863-1947]
Founder of the Ford Motor Company

There are two important reasons:

1. Ensuring players had no wrinkles in their socks helps avoid blisters. Players with blisters cannot play their best game; some may have to sit on the bench during important games which could cost the team a championship.
2. Emphasising the importance of basics to his players – making sure they pay attention to tiny but vital details that most people would overlook.

It all starts with your philosophy

When I decided to write *The Best Advice I Ever Got*, I was not merely interested in the type of advice the featured executives had to give, but first and foremost, I was interested in their own personal philosophy, their paradigms and beliefs that underpinned their own success which would give context to the advice they give.

It is my view that our personal philosophy – the underlying, unseen paradigm that governs our behaviour – works like a computer Operating System. All our programmes run on it. Ultimately we can track the quality of the lives we lead back to this philosophy. **Our philosophy influences our attitudes towards life, our attitudes inspire our behaviour, our behaviour gives birth to corresponding results, and the sum total of our results paints a picture we call quality of life.**

The safety of results *versus* the uncertainty of behaviour

Why do people choose to be attached

If you want to see someone who will succeed, watch for the rare man or woman who takes pains over each small step.

EKNATH EASWARAN
1910 – 1999
Author and spiritual teacher

In great attempts it is glorious even to fail.

WILFERD A. PETERSON
1900 – 1995

⋮ to a result instead of committing themselves to the behaviour that is congruent with that result? It's because results are safe, results are tangible, results are black and white, results are clean – everyone understands results. Even if

you don't understand the game, you can tell who won by looking at who has the higher score. **Behaviour on the other hand requires commitment; behaviour can be messy and behaviour can be awkward.** When people don't understand your goal to win the next marathon, they may look at you like you've lost your mind, when they suddenly see you training for six hours a day every single day of the week.

I'm always concerned when I hear someone saying 'I'll do all I can' or 'I did all I could'. In most cases these statements are alibis for mediocre results or failure. **Great results do not care about how much you can do, great results only care about one thing – that one must do 'whatever it takes' to achieve them.** This may require extreme behaviour and people are often too scared to choose extreme behaviour. Doing whatever it takes is the demand that great results place on us if we want to achieve them. Doing 'all I can' is the protection or safety net we put up for ourselves in case we fail.

When you choose to go after great results there's always a chance that you will fall flat on your face, that's why most people choose to play it safe. **You must be connected to your target, stay fully committed to the behaviour it requires to achieve it while you stay completely detached to the outcome.** That way your behaviour will never fail to deliver the outcome you want.

**DON'T
FIX
RESULTS**

**FIX
BEHAVIOUR**

MANY PEOPLE SIT AROUND
waiting for the world to discover them,
and that rarely happens.
If you move toward your goals,
expressing all your power,
opportunity will find you as a result of your actions.
For by riding your energy,
knowing and believing your higher self is with you,
you will be in the right place, at the right time.
But make the first move,
taking constant care to purify and review your life;
move from negative habits into the fortress of light.
Discipline is the horse you ride.

STUART WILDE
[1863–1946]
British writer

**DAMN
GOOD
ADVICE**

2

**Forget progress,
think vision.**

*It always seems impossible
until it's done.*

NELSON MANDELA
[1918-2013]

South African anti-apartheid revolutionary, politician,
philanthropist and former President