



Do You Deserve It?

By Steven L. Anderson, Ph.D., MBA

So much of success is feeling like you deserve it. If there is a part of you that is not ready to succeed it will hold you back. That happened to me recently. Last summer, Char and I bought the house of our dreams, but it was really my dream. It is a beautiful place that sits on the lakeshore of Hoover Reservoir. Every day the lake presents us with views that make us happy that we moved there.

So, on 7/4/09 I felt like I had died and gone to heaven. I had an amazing wife and six great kids. I was healthy. I loved my job and sales for the year were fifty percent higher than the year before. And now I was living in the house of my dreams. I must be some kind of stud, I thought.

Time for some humility. From that point until recently it seemed like nothing could go right. We couldn't sell our other house. The previous owners of our new house were smokers and try as we might we could not get the smell out. Then things started to break in our new home. At last count six of the major appliances broke including the furnace and the freezer. Each time we had to call the home warranty company and Char, God bless her, had to wait a half day for the repairman to show up. They usually ordered parts and then she had to wait for them again. She did this while working in two plays, working full time at ILS and painting most of the inside of our home. What a partner I have!

Meanwhile, the recession finally caught up with our business. Sales were still flat with the previous year, but with two mortgages to pay and all of the moving expenses we were going backward fast! Also, even though we kept on dropping the price of our home, no one would put in an offer. I have never felt so powerless in my life. I would lay awake at night trying to think of some way to get rid of that house. It was very scary.

All of this began to erode away at my confidence. And unbeknownst to me I began to feel that I was being punished for being greedy. Subconsciously I began to feel that I did not deserve to live in this home and I was being punished for putting my needs before those of others. Nonetheless, I maintained an attitude, as I always do, that if we kept leaning into the problems we would eventually overcome them. We did of course. We sold our old home in October and after painting every surface in our new home the smell disappeared. Also, the spate of maintenance problems seems to have abated.

But I was left with a feeling of being traumatized and no matter what I did I didn't seem to be able to get my confidence back. I questioned my ability as an entrepreneur, manager, husband and father. I was in a lot of pain. At this point I knew there was something deep inside of me not allowing me to move beyond this situation.

Then I did what I always do whenever I am in a lot of pain, I sat with it. As I began to listen to the voice of my pain it began telling me that the reason I couldn't regain my confidence was that an old part of me was telling me that I was being punished for being selfish. I was raised with the belief that it was never right to put my needs first. I don't agree with that any more. I think we must take care of ourselves in balance with serving others, but obviously some of my old beliefs had been activated by the stress of the move. As I listened to the old voice tell me that I didn't deserve to succeed in this new venture, a big smile crept across my face. "Bull

@\$*#!”, I exclaimed! “I deserve it and I am going to prove that I deserve it by taking this business to the next level!”

Man, did that feel good! Immediately a huge weight came off my shoulders. Also, not surprisingly, immediately all of the problems I was experiencing began to clear up. My new confidence affected the results all around me. The problems with the house began to clear up immediately, and I began to revel in the feeling of living in the house of my dreams. At the same time tension that had been building at work eased. I can’t say for sure, but I sense that this caused our business to surge forward. We closed several sales that we had been working on for months and several new requests for work came forth. As I sit here we are poised to move into a beautiful new office, business is booming and I feel very connected to my staff. Right now I feel a surge of energy and confidence that we cannot be stopped.

Funny how giving myself permission to succeed was all I had to do to move to the next step. I want to ask you to take a look at your own dreams. Are you succeeding to the level you think you deserve? If not, have you given yourself permission to succeed? Do you believe to the bottom of your soul that you deserve to be incredibly happy and fulfilled? I want to suggest to you that any part of you that questions the validity of your dreams will hold you back. I urge you to give yourself permission to succeed. You deserve it!

Here are a few thoughts that might help you give yourself permission to succeed:

1. Hang around other successful people. They will give you the encouragement you need to make your dreams come true.
2. Get really focused on your dream. Without a plan you will fail. You can’t make a dream come true if you don’t have a dream!
3. Pay attention to areas where you consistently get stuck in making your dreams come true. That’s probably where you haven’t given yourself permission.
4. Sit quietly on a regular basis. Listen to any thoughts you have that are holding you back. Challenge them. Slowly they will lose their grip on you.
5. Know in your heart of hearts that you are an amazing human being. The world deserves your best and so do you!