

26 Days to Excellence In Business Leadership and Life.

**My XYZs of Excellence:
26 Days to Excellence in Business Leadership and Life**

by J A Epperson, MBA

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J A Epperson, MBA

My
XYZ's
of Excellence

*26 days to Excellence in Business
Leadership and Life*



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In Business Leadership and Life*

J A Epperson, MBA

Foreword by Karl L. Nielson, Esq.

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Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-63492-363-7

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-63492-364-4

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Published by J A Epperson Analysis & Advisory, Las Vegas, NV 89134

My XYZs of Excellence

Subtitle: 26 Days to Excellence in Business Leadership and Life

By J A Epperson, MBA

Printed on acid-free paper.

Book also available as an eBook and Audiobook.

Editor: Dawn Chaston

Proofreader: Kate Epperson

Cover Designer: Kaytie Olsen

April 2017: First Edition

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Epperson, J A

My XYZ's of Excellence by J A Epperson, MBA

Self-help / Personal Growth / Success | Business and Economics / E-commerce |

Marketing | Mentoring & CoachingLibrary of Congress Control Number:

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017906862

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Foreword

The magic of J's book is that it is both specific and general at the same time. Even if you are not looking for great tips on how to improve your small business, you will find great tips on how to live a better life and become a better person. And if you are looking for specific tips on becoming the entrepreneur you knew you always had inside you, then this book is truly for you. Simply stated, you will be better for having read this book and for having implemented its keen insights. If you apply J's mantra of "learn it, do it, and teach it," his directives will come to life for you.

Having known J for many years now, you will not meet a more positive minded person. That he has shared many of the very personal insights that have made him that way demonstrates the kind of caring and insightful person he is. Enjoy the book!

Karl L. Nielson, Esq.
Las Vegas, NV
February 2017

Preface

When I was ten, I started working at my father's business. He built custom campers and canopies for pickup trucks. Initially, I swept the floor and held up the ends of boards. For eight years I got to work closely with my father and older brothers after school and on Saturdays. Then I left for college to learn how to be a success.

After graduating, I spent the next 40 years working for Chevron, Intel, Consolidated Freightways, First Interstate Bank and other corporate entities. Along the way I started and ended vitamin, soap, insurance, investment, weight loss, marketing and consulting ventures. Some were successful and others were complete failures.

Little did I know that the principles I had learned while working with my father—but had mostly ignored for 40 years—were actually “keys to success” and all that I needed to employ to be successful in my life. In fact by living the 26 concepts outlined in this book, I might have increased the potential for my own success years earlier.

So if you're looking to excel at what you love doing in your own small business, I invite you to start your journey to greater success by learning from this book. By following directions, doing assignments and sharing the concepts with someone, you will internalize the concepts so they become part of how you live your life each day.

My father said to me many times, “It's not enough to live and learn, J you really need to learn and live!” Now I want to share with you what he taught me along with key principles and concepts I've learned from over 40 years of mistakes and successes.

Stop and think for a minute; are you teachable? Are you a business owner who believes it takes more to succeed than simply employing labor, capital, and resources? Are you someone who realizes that your company must focus on leadership and successful marketing? Do you want to learn how to improve personally and professionally? Are you ready to lead?

If you're ready to make some changes in your life, step up your efforts to get out of your “comfort zone” and to change from being ordinary to becoming excellent, then this book is for you!

Introduction

The title, *My XYZs of Excellence* is a departure from the usual book titles that start with ABCs of one thing or another. I used the last three letters of the alphabet in my title to indicate that this book uses all 26 letters. I have found many people start reading self-help books with good intentions but stop before they get to the end.

I hope that you read through the entire alphabet of business concepts for success in *Section I*. Answer the questions in the reflections portion of each chapter.

Then as you read and study *Section II*, you will see that each of the 26 concepts is assigned to one of five basic business-building essentials that are crucial to building a successful business. These essential business-building foci are 1) **attitude**, 2) **client** 3) **message**, 4) **implement**, and 5) **grow**. Together, *Sections I* and *II* comprise a practical, do-it-yourself curriculum.

SECTION I

An Overview of 26 Key Concepts Critical to Business Success

*Enjoy your journey reading through these 26 alphabet chapters.
You may learn new information or review something you already know.*

B Believe and Become

“Never surrender your hopes and dreams to the fateful limitations others have placed on their own lives. The vision of your true destiny does not reside within the blinkered outlook of the naysayers and the doom prophets. Judge not by their words, but accept advice based on the evidence of actual results.”ⁱⁱ

—Anthon St. Maarten

How much do you believe in yourself? Do you *believe* enough to move from simply being to actually *becoming* the success you desire to be?

If you really believe in what you’re doing and what you want to become, you’ll do whatever is necessary to become that person. I believe that you can envision yourself becoming that person. Then as you act on that desire, that belief, you will consciously and unconsciously make changes to your life to become that person.

A recent *Entrepreneur* magazine had an article about visualization which included the following:

“Simply get in the habit of putting together a positive vision into your everyday life. Visualize yourself succeeding, achieving every goal, completing every task. See what it does for you and how it makes you feel... If you can’t picture yourself in your own mind being extremely successful, ...and running a phenomenal business, then chances are you never will.”ⁱⁱⁱ

I have known too many people with barely enough wealth to survive when they reached retirement age. They looked back over their lives with regret for having listened to and believed a neighbor; co-worker or brother-in-law who told them that starting a business of their own was a fool’s errand. They had taken the easy way out and repeatedly grabbed another cold one in order to forget their dream of becoming financially independent. They had spent thirty years

creating a permanent dent in their La-Z-Boy® instead of working extra hours building a business. That should not be your story.

Think about this fundamental truth I learned from my father: “If one person was able to do something then it’s possible any one of us can do it.” In other words, if something is humanly possible then it actually is humanly possible. Replicating the same conditions or even improving them should repeat the result. My father would remind me, “If it’s been done once, it can be done again.”

Do you remember the quest to break the four-minute mile? Many people thought that if someone ran that far and that fast his or her heart would explode. Roger Bannister did break the four-minute mile barrier on May 6, 1954 at Oxford’s Iffley Road Track with a time of 3:59.4. Some say he succeeded because he continually visualized himself achieving it. He believed and then he became. Many see their goals and become what they believe they can become.

Believe and Become – Reflections:

Since May 6, 1954 many runners have run a mile in less than four minutes. If one person—just one person—is able to accomplish something incredible then it is likely that others can do it as well. We must believe it then see it happening in our heart and mind first.

1. What do you visualize as your future?
2. What do you visualize for your business?

Keep reading! We’ll take a more in-depth look at believing and becoming in ***Section II*** on **Day 26**.

SECTION II

26 Days to Excellence in Business Leadership and Life

Disce, facere, doceo or to learn, to do, to teach!

Day 1 – ATTITUDE, Assess and Acknowledge

First step: Learn it

How well do you know yourself? When you walk into a crowded room, are you someone who brings “light” into the room? Are you naturally a contributor; someone others approach for advice and support. If you have a reserve of goodwill, which you freely share, your process of personal growth has already begun. If not and you still derive your motivation and inspiration from others, building a business may be challenging for you.

To build a business the first step, in my mind is for you to assess your own innate traits, abilities and personality so that you can focus naturally on who you are and what you do best.

Before you can learn and grow, you need to have a clear understanding of whom you really are. I recommend you seriously employ the concept of “assess and acknowledge” to determine **who** you are and **where** you are. This understanding will help you develop goals and objectives, which are congruent to your natural internal energy and excitement instead of detracting from it.

There is a good book and an online service called StrengthsFinder 2.0© It’s relatively inexpensive and by using a survey and the GALLUP® organization’s vast database of people and personalities, you’ll gain insight into who you are, deep down inside. What is it that motivates you, what ideals you subconsciously embrace? If you don’t already know who you are and what you naturally think and do, this is a good resource to help you discover yourself.

Remember what Polonius the father of Laertes and Ophelia said to Laertes, “To thine own self be true...” even though Polonius was to say the least, a troubled soul, he did offer that bit of advice. You’ll have difficulty succeeding if you’re trying to be something you aren’t. You may learn tricks and develop skills but if you’re doing something, which doesn’t align with your deep-down-real-you self, you’ll struggle to succeed. It’s better to know who you are and then apply yourself in an area, which doesn’t cause you internal turmoil. Your potential for success will come more naturally if you understand

your core beliefs and stay congruent to them while building your business.

Next step: Do it

The second key ingredient to internalizing any new skill or this concept in particular is to do something with it. I want you to do some research and introspection. If you've recently taken a personality survey such as a Meyers – Briggs® review it and answer the questions below. If not then use the Gallup strength finder survey. The tools at the Gallup StrengthsFinder 2.0 website will help you identify from five to all 34 of your core characteristics, use this link: <http://strengths.gallup.com/default.aspx>

Next grab a notepad, calendar book or get a journaling tool. I prefer the *Evernote®* software because it's scalable from personal to business capabilities and it works on mobile devices. You can find out about it by following this link: <http://bit.ly/2o3zmI9> You can even sign on for a free month of the powerful *Evernote Premium* product and begin recording your thoughts.

Write about (1) who you are, (2) why you're in business and (3) what you expect to accomplish in your business. Write it here, or in your *Evernote* electronic journal:

1 Who am I?
2 Why am I in business?
3 What do I expect to accomplish?

Let's expand that thought; take inventory of your own personal "unique selling proposition." What is it about you that makes you

unique. List three things below that you believe make you different from anyone else. Write something about yourself that you believe you can focus on to help grow your business.

Try writing something like this; “I’m someone who easily connects with my clients:”

1 – I’m someone who ...
2
3

Finally: Teach It

The third key to learning is to teach the skill to someone else. Now that you’ve found the StrengthsFinder book and downloaded a copy of the *Evernote* software to your computer, tablet or smart phone as well as completed the two assigned activities, take a minute and identify someone in your life who you would like to join you on this journey of personal growth toward excellence. I’ll refer to this person throughout the remainder of this book as your “study buddy.” It may be a family member, a close friend or even a business associate. But it doesn’t have to be a business associate, just someone who would like to help you internalize this concept of assessment and acknowledgement. I actually believe that anyone would benefit from this step so don’t make choosing a friend too difficult.

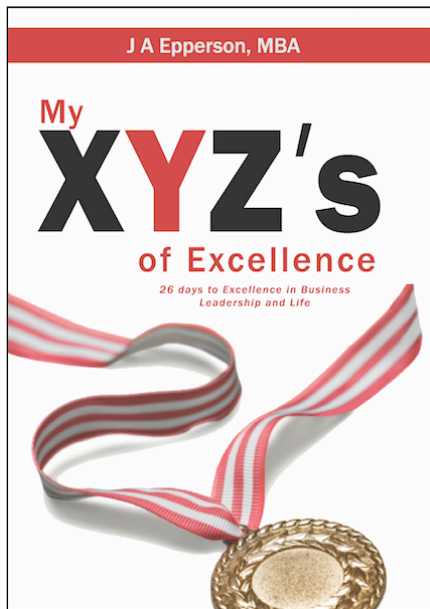
Take a few minutes to share with your study buddy what you’ve learned about yourself while completing the StrengthsFinder 2.0 survey. Or share what you learned about yourself while writing a journal entry in the electronic journaling software *Evernote*. While writing with pen and paper is a great way to journal; I recommend the electronic tool because we all seem to carry a smart phone of some type so that the electronic journaling application is always with you.

J A Epperson

Here's a trophy for completing day one:



Disce, Facere, Doceo
(To Learn, To Do, To Teach)



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