

# Swimming with Sharks in the Sea of Discouragement

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## Thesis

Discouragement is not FREE! It is purchased each and every day at the price of...

- Your health
- Your relationships
- Your passion
- Your future

## A few things our parents failed to mention when we were kids...

1. "You will be good at some things in life – but not everything. No one's good at everything."
2. "No one else in the world is going to be impressed by your knowledge or intelligence."
3. "No one else is going to think you are particularly talented or good-looking."
4. "No one else cares about your dreams and aspirations. If you want them badly enough, you'll have to get them yourself."
5. "In fact, no one else really cares if you live or die."  
- AND –  
"If any of this really matters to you, you're going to suffer a lifetime of disappointment and discouragement."

*Other than your immediate family, the only people who might care about you are the ones who receive a secondary gain from your success.*

## What "Discouragement" is NOT!

### *Depression*

- Often the result of a chemical imbalance in the brain
- Not always related to one's circumstances
- May be accompanied by physical pain
- Should always be treated seriously
- "Anger turned INWARD"

### *Anxiety*

- Body feelings that accompany a stressful situation
- Typically brought on by a specific trigger such as flying, public speaking (phobias)
- Is not inherently dangerous in the short term

Remember: Depression and Anxiety are Treatable!

<http://www.stresscenter.com/>

## "Discouragement" Defined

- Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary:
  - "The state of being discouraged."

- Bancroft's Dictionary of Dubious Distinction:
  - a malaise caused by under-fulfilled or unmet expectations
  - a mental state that drives one towards thoughts of giving up (or refusing to try)
  - self-directed criticism for ones failures or shortcomings
  - a feeling of inferiority when compared to those around you
  - a sense that ones present, negative circumstances will last forever

#### So, Why are Auditors Susceptible to Discouragement?

- Successful auditors are typically very ANALYTICAL
- Analytical people tend to have these things in common:
  - We believe that good effort leads to good results
  - We are risk-adverse
  - We take setbacks badly
  - We tend towards a quickness to guilt and self-blame
  - We think in terms of "good or bad"; "right or wrong"
- Generally we are inhibited, serious and introspective

#### Alfred Adler (1870-1937)

"We have found that all neurotics are discouraged ambitious people, and that discouragement in children and adults probably is shared by 90% of mankind."

"A rational therapy in the treatment of neurosis is justified by the fact that the causes of the discouragement are fictional."

#### What Immediate Actions Can I Take?

- Don't over-think it
  - Acknowledge that it's unlikely your problems can be solved overnight
- Seek to understand the source of your discouragement
  - Avoid pressing to find a solution until your frame of mind has improved
- Don't seek to cast blame
  - If it's someone else's fault, you really have no control over it
  - If you determine it's your fault...
    - You'll be disinclined to accept it anyway
    - You'll just reinforce the negative feelings
- Take Baby Steps
  - The "Perhaps Bridge" does not lead directly to the top of Mt. Everest
  - Set some "short" goals that you have complete control over:
    - Lose 5 lbs
    - Begin to walk a mile or two each day
    - Clean up your desk at the office or home
    - Try a new hobby – set a "stick to it" period
    - Take a class unrelated to work
- Learn Gratitude
  - The "Frustration" piece of the Discouragement equation generally stems from a lack of gratitude
  - Gratitude (or Ingratitude) do not necessarily emanate from one's personal circumstances

**Gratitude is not only the Antidote for Discouragement...It's also the Antonym!**

### The Importance of Self-Talk

Your brain has...

- 30,000,000,000 (30B) Neurons...
- Stretching over 6,000 miles...
- Composing 100,000 miles of Neural Fiber

Note: A single neuron can send signals to hundreds of thousands of other neurons in less than 20 milliseconds

And so...

- The first time you have an experience a neuron pathway is created
- Each time the experience is replicated the pathway is reinforced until it becomes a Superhighway
- This is why experiences lead to familiar thought patterns, behaviors and emotions

### Quotations to Ponder

"Every great work, every big accomplishment, has been brought into manifestation through holding to the vision, and often just before the big achievement, comes apparent failure and discouragement."

- Florence Scovel Shinn

"If you break your neck, if you have nothing to eat, if your house is on fire, then you've got a problem. Everything else is inconvenience."

- Robert Fulghum

"We have no right to ask when sorrow comes, 'Why did this happen to me?' unless we ask the same question for every moment of happiness that comes our way."

- Author Unknown

"The problem is not that there are problems. The problem is expecting otherwise and thinking that having problems is a problem."

- Theodore Rubin

"It is not likely that any complete life has ever been lived which was not a failure in the secret judgment of the person who lived it."

- Mark Twain

"A man's life, I reflected, is too long a span today for the pace of change. If he lives more than a half century, his familiar world, the world of his youth, fails him like a horse dying under its rider, and he finds himself dealing with a new one which is not really his"

- George F. Kennan (September, 1959)

"Discouragement is not the absence of adequacy but the absence of courage."

- Neal A. Maxwell

"Realize that your present difficulty is only a small part of you, and the rest of you is doing quite well, thank you."

- Lynn Grabhorn

"When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it."

- Henry Ford

"Ingratitude is akin to Thievery."

- Rabbinical Teaching

"Happy is the man who wants only what he already has."

- Modern Proverb

"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others."

- Cisero

"Most people who die in the wilderness, do so out of SHAME. They begin to believe they deserve it."

- from "The Edge"

"First ask yourself: What is the worst that can happen? Then prepare to accept it. Then proceed to improve on the worst."

- Dale Carnegie

"Being challenged in life is inevitable, being defeated is optional."

- Roger Crawford

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."

- Thomas Edison

"Success is going from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm."

- Winston Churchill