

## **Lessons we can learn from Famous Leaders in History:**

What do Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Genghis Khan, Sun Tzu, Oda Nobunaga and Crazy Horse have to do with business? Directly, nothing. But indirectly in the sense of their tactics, creative usage, and battlefield decisions in the face of dire consequences, their ability to produce solutions and tactics that were incredibly effective made them legendary.

When you look at the body of work of famous military leaders, oftentimes you must consider their massive responsibilities in the face of the overwhelming change that they instituted in their time in the world. I chose popular social and world changing leaders and their military tactics because those tactics were directly responsible for their abilities to win wars-as well as influence their own armies and command them in times of great upheaval and difficulties. The lessons distilled from their victories and military tactics can directly correspond to business and management skills and solutions. This is not to say that you need to use battlefield terms or anything aggressive as some do-but that the independent lessons distilled down to their essence are useful, tactical solutions that every business can embrace and embody in their culture and goals. Today's businesses can be battlefields, with the timing and ability to change campaigns and social media on a whim as effective tools for gaining business and becoming successful. This is also to say that all these leaders had faults or problems that eventually led to their downfall. This is important to note, because as you stick to these lessons, realize that you need to adapt with every situation. Realizing what works, and what needs to change is just as important.

These lessons apply for just about every business as well. You can be a one man stand or a multilevel company and still have the same problems to address. Many of these leaders addressed the issues of scale and tactics within that scale as well. How do you institute change in your company or structure to make the entire company better? It's possible, and you don't have to be a threatening warlord to do it.

**\*\*Also, note that some of their tactics are not necessarily covered here due to the nature of how psychotic they eventually became. It DOES take a psychopath to institute extreme change, something you may need to work hard for, but most of which is completely unnecessary in the face of business. Business can be won at cost-but that doesn't mean that it must cost you your soul. Be responsible, learn how to meditate, and realize that winning at all costs or by any means necessary isn't a bottom line. It's ok to be marginally profitable, and that's what separates**

responsible business from people only looking at bottom lines. I'll address this aspect in a different text. Machiavelli and Marcus Aurelius have differing ideas on the ability to accomplish things and the bottom line of what that means.

## **Knowing is Half the Battle: (I love G.I Joe and quote this often)**

Sun Tzu's Art of War is a legendary manual for early warfare. It's probably a must read just for philosophy as much as it's for warfare. If you condense the message, it's quite simple: Know Yourself, Know Your Enemy, and Know Your Surroundings. You could consider this the 4p's and SWOT of business in that knowing enough about your weaknesses and your competition allows you to seek that advantage you need to be a successful business. This is the granddaddy of the terms that I discuss here, so it's the most general, but also most important. Most business plans include sections of these acronyms to give people a sense of understanding where their business is at. I know that many people and small businesses don't take these evaluations as seriously as they need to. The need for self-evaluation is important to all the named war leaders and tactics. If you don't consider yourself and your weaknesses, you cannot properly assess how you approach your problems and be successful in your endeavors. It requires that ability to open-up and be objective and many people have a problem with that. This may be one of the hardest things you have to do-and it's also a principal reason why people have a hard time adapting in their business. It's also the prime example of why you SHOULD focus on it. Embrace these tactics that are employed below, because they help the difference in opening a business and truly being successful. And when you do, you'll grow and become a better person overall, as well as a better businessman (or woman) for your life. If you're having a hard time, create a roadmap. Utilize questions asking yourself where you want to be, and what you truly enjoy. List your goals, and the ways that you or the company wish to accomplish them. This gives you a general idea that you can begin to refine into something that shows you where you want to end up. This sort of evaluation is essential to realize and direct you into a useful aspect of your career. You may want to make money, but you don't want to make money at the expense of people. Or maybe you do, but if that's the case you would still need to know what steps are next to get away with that.

It's also handy to keep this on file to revisit after a period of time. You may do this in terms of quarterly meetings, budget evaluations or other company terms. Realize that you may want to

adjust things for more than just the bottom line as well. Some companies are incredibly hard and time consuming- feeling like looking at anything other than the bottom line is wasting time. If you analyzed that however, is that the truth of what you want? Not having any free time, or even enough time to plan for the next steps? It's probably not a great idea to only be reactive in your situation, but also proactive. If you can't be that, then evaluating your process is definitely needed in order to free up that time. You can dedicate more resources when you're not strapped or against the wall, so think about how you can either give yourself that time or create in order to evaluate and breathe. When you do find that time, then realize that you can come back to your plans and see how they've changed over the course of time. Did you accomplish the goals-small and large? If not, how can you take the time to accommodate the differences or put into play workflows that make it easy to accomplish those goals.

Another aspect is not just the evaluation, but the decision to tackle choices that range from big to small. Simplicity is key as an adage, but there are plenty of things that make the difference from that small aspect to the direction that your company needs to pivot. When you evaluate your market and sales, many people focus on the lead metrics. Those are important, sure, but also consider the lag metrics-or the small things that you do everyday that make the difference. 30 pushups in a day makes a remarkable difference in physique for the small amount of effort it takes. A daily posting on social media is a leg up on content, attention and more. Don't forget that the small things lead to the big things in all ways.

Simplicity-in itself is also incredibly important. Simple tasks at their core are easy to do, and the easier things are, the better they are to be accomplished. You can train someone to do a simple task and it's almost guaranteed to get accomplished. The more complex the task, the more time spent on it, and the more potential it has for mistakes and other aspects like boredom, frustration and more to set in. If you want to truly be efficient in your business and practices, look on how to create a workflow that's as simple as possible so that you know it will be accomplished. A modern example would be a podcast. Many people today are starting podcasts, because they think that media online will increase their footprint and possible stardom or sales. It can but one of the biggest aspects I see is not the content-which is important, but the ability to continue with the podcast. 99% of podcasts don't make it past the first 20 episodes. If that's done weekly, then that's not even half a year of episodes before the podcast is given up. It takes a lot of work to record and edit and produce a podcast. If you're putting in that kind of work and not seeing results, you would be tempted to give up. Realizing that podcasts as a media are easily digestible, you would know that if it's simple to create and kick out to the world,

then you can continue to fight the trenches as you reach past the point of return on the investment. That return will also take longer since the market is saturated. As long as you stick to it, you'll be able to outrun the luck ratio and put your work in front of the people who want to see it.

Sun Tzu also spoke about the advantages in methods that required intelligence and gathering. He was not shy about his use of spies, and methods of gathering information. When a battle is won before it's begun, it saves not just the bloodshed, but it's the most efficient way to continue to grow. When you can create that business plan and execute it for precision, it provides that valuable road map. You need to adjust, of course, but the overall plan works to your goals and your advantages. This is key to starting a business and the reason why every SBA makes a business write one. Create a plan and use this to your advantage. Go back and revise it constantly. Make changes as you grow, adapt, change goals, meet goals, and blow beyond those. Push yourself to evaluate your plan and then revise that plan to meet current expectations. For those that don't know or just need a refresher, SWOT stands for Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The 4 P's are Product, Place, Price, and Promotion, in any order you choose really. There's also a newer one called SMART-which stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and finally Timely. Whichever terms you want to use, or use all 3, it's still best to give yourself some idea of improvement and which ways you can truly improve. Or have someone else evaluate your business. Truly honest reviews and outside opinions can make a difference in the ability to judge the business from the outside, so welcome all feedback for the best way to give yourself the advantages. This is why business recommends mentors to help channel the ideas and give valuable feedback in situations where you may not recognize the opportunities that are presented. Wisdom and insight are hand in hand with evaluation.

## **Think Small**

Another example while it's hot is Oda Nobunaga. Netflix's new series is fascinating on the building of Japan from small feudal warlords into a centralized power structure. In essence, think of small to large business transitions. Oda started small-as one of the smallest provinces in feudal Japan, and he only began with half of that. This is what experience gives you in terms

of realizing advantages and disadvantages. Oda capitalized on every advantage he could-mainly focusing on three specific things:

1. Eschewing Tradition
2. Strength of Attitude
3. Importance of Technology

Oda rose to power by empowering those thought to be the weakest section of warriors, the peasant class. He also empowered his “employees” by adequately training them, supplying them, and counting on the attitude and class warfare between the Samurai (basically knights) and the peasantry to rile and encourage them enough to be angry fighters. His fighters outnumbered the Samurai-specially trained warriors that had greater ability-at a rate that the samurai could not overcome.

Combining this with attacking at night, changing his battlefield to his advantage and against his opponents, and embracing the new arrival and development of guns/arquebuses meant he was able to move quickly, attack quickly and unconventionally and win decisive battles early on in his career. He maintained his advantage by doing his homework on his opponents, as well as keeping up his appearance and threatening demeanor.

As a small business, every advantage to grow is your opportunity. Where a larger business may not deem it worth it to add a product or change to fit a market, your ability is to offer what you can while you can. If you can fit a niche, capitalize on a product before it blows up, or otherwise supply a market before it grows, you have found the tip of the spear and the ability to change with it. That change is the next most important thing.

Thinking small is also important for large businesses in the sense that earmarking some funds to attempt any changes or new research and direction is key. Small businesses have the advantage of being mobile, but it doesn't mean medium to large can just sit on your laurels. Most have to defend them and continue to grow in order to become that level of success. We've seen those countless times with companies like Sears, which was miles ahead in mail ordering and ended miles behind Amazon in online shopping. Sears could have been Amazon if it had devoted that time to following the new aspects of where the market goes.

## **Adaptation is Key:**

The Hadenosaunee or Iroquois, a 6-nation member tribe in Northeast America in the early days of British settlement adapted quickly, abandoning their bow and arrows for metal tools and guns as soon as they were available. Like Oda, they embraced battle tactics and changes as soon as they could, ensuring that they were maximizing the opportunity for effect. You can say their formation was a direct adaptation of their environments. One of the earliest examples of Native American tribal power-the Hadenosaunee united against a common enemy, creating an empire that spanned across the upper northeast, from Ohio to Massachusetts to Tennessee. Their tactics changed quickly too, from encircling their enemies (not useful with guns) to run and gun guerilla warfare. This ability to change or adapt quickly is not just these examples, but the norm in history as many different armies used similar tactics.

Your business will need to have the ability to adapt. Times change, and at the rate that they change, it happens faster. Technology gets faster, computers can do more work, and being a small business means finding solutions those bigger businesses can't or won't do. When a pivot is needed, a smaller business can accomplish this faster and be ahead of the curve in terms of reaching customers and being a better solution. Use this concept to your advantage. There is danger with new methods, but there is more danger in staying still and missing the opportunity of customers. Unless you have a method where you don't need to change, you should always be on the lookout for new opportunities that you can use. You'll need to test these, of course, but with proper research will bring stronger returns to your business.

Zoom has now become ubiquitous with business during COVID. So many businesses have had to switch to Zoom to find new customers and service their current customers. This requires you to learn and open up your process to create new opportunities. Business can still thrive with COVID-despite the horrible situations that they find themselves in. It's also within these difficult times that you realize how you can adapt to the new situations. This is the new normal for now, so embrace it, because it is what happens.

Or embrace working from home. This will linger much longer than you might think. As people become comfortable and can accomplish tasks, you might be fighting an uphill battle to bring them back to the office. The real question is why bring them back at all? If you can accomplish the same goals and the same tasks, then you may be able to save real estate costs, and other advantages to keeping people at home. If you find sales and processes lacking, then by all

means bring them back. But taking that situation away just because it's "something that's always been done" is foolhardy. The world changes, and you need to keep up with that.

### **Find An Advantage:**

Crazy Horse is a great example of a warrior searching for advantage. Crazy Horse was a Lakota, a western Native American from the Ogala Sioux. Responsible for many victories against stronger American forces, Crazy Horse was forced to be creative with battlefield tactics, using feints and battlegrounds to his advantage by stretching out the enemy lines only to break through them like Alexander the Great. As his battles with the U.S Army raged on before the culmination of the Battle of Little Bighorn, he noticed something wrong with Army guns. As the guns fired, the oil from the bullets and cartridges would jam after 5-6 shots. He would run on his horse back and forth across enemy lines multiple times, waiting for the cartridges to jam, and then commence his attack after the soldiers were fumbling with their guns and equipment. You know that scene that Kevin Costner does in Dances with Wolves? Yeah, that wasn't a white guy doing that dance first. This was shrewd planning on the part of Crazy Horse-and an opportunity advantage. Take advantage of your competitors' ability to reload or find that weakness in their lines that your company can serve that other companies are not paying attention to.

Find that advantage. A better bullet manufacturer, gunsmith or whatnot would be able to make a fortune or create sales by servicing this industry and making those jammed cartridges disappear. This would force Crazy Horse to create new solutions, but he as a leader was incredibly adaptable in his situations. Time and time again he created new solutions that baffled military leaders and created disorientation to his advantage. Look and probe for those weaknesses in your market and area and attempt to fill them. You never know what may work to your benefit and become a large seller.

### **Focus and Flexibility:**

With all these stories and examples, it's not enough to simply say: I want to rule the world. Each of these leaders had a vision of the world or their world, but they started with the first step. Being specific and focusing on one step at a time requires a focus and a focus with a goal in

mind. The goal might be to rule the wedding dress industry of Arizona, but it starts with making sure your shop is listed in Google first. The next step leads you to greater fortune, so stay focused in order to keep moving ahead. Even forecasting is a little bit too grandiose in terms of creating something out of thin air. Everyone would like 100 sales. How do you get there and how do you make sure you keep up with the demand? If you're making a product by hand, how do you scale your inventory, or should you build your inventory up to a reasonable amount first? If you're selling too quickly, do you raise your price?

Etsy is an incredible resource for artists and small production companies. Not only does Etsy give you a great platform to begin with, but it also gives you the data to realize product development. Your own website does as well, but Esty will tell you how many people saw your product, where they came from (Etsy or external sites) and if it's successful. If I know that I got 10 sales for every 300 views, half from Etsy and half from external marketing, then I know that I can make those sales on my own website just as easily and save the cost of putting them for sale on Etsy. And being small and mobile, I can start to formulate which products are selling better than others, make sure I have stock on hand to make those products, and make sure that I'm working on lines to improve those products or supplant them for the next cycle.

If I know I want to sell 100 a week, I'll be prepared when that number finally does come and I'm ready for the next step, either expanding to other products, my own website, other production capabilities, or just trying another product and segment entirely. This is large business tactics and improvement, all in the small business market. That flexibility and ability to create opportunities and forge new ones after realizing what works and doesn't work is the path to success. Everyone can fail, but it's those that pick themselves back up again and keep going that will ultimately be successful. Metrics on podcasts have shown that while the market is crowded, about 5% of people continue to produce more than 5 shows. In fact, it only takes 20 shows to be in the top 1% of podcasts. In this sense, your competitors aren't those 2 million people interested in a podcast, but the 20,000 still going after 20 shows. OR maybe selling microphones and podcasting equipment to those 2 million people with short attention spans. (That's the pivot)

**Empower Your Employees (If you have any):**



The Mongol Armies of Ghengis Khan and the Khanates traveled extremely fast and extremely well. Each soldier carried up to 4 horses with them, which made switching horses easier and allowed them to cover much greater distances in incredible time. And each soldier functioned independently of their unit for survival, as well as within their unit for attacking purposes. This disciplined but loose approach allowed several units to band together and attack with unifying purpose as well as allowing them to break apart and create different feints and retreats within their attacks to draw enemies out and break their lines.

Allow your employees the freedom to rock out when they need to and offer guidance when you need to command. You have invested and trained your employees for a reason. Allow them to do their job as best they can, and you can function on the overall command and tactics you need them to win on a day-to-day basis. Micromanagement can bog down companies, and you don't want to waste time internally when you can focus on using your employees and assets to your best advantage. If your business is having trouble with more than one employee, then your focus should be on you and your training, not the employees.

Napoleon wanted all his officers to experience artillery-not just in theory, but even the most basic jobs. He knew his most powerful weapon on the battlefield wasn't just the iron itself, but the people to load it. His theory of battlefield tactics during his rise and reign focused on the most powerful weapons he had available and protecting while making them an important part of his battlefield. It also provides a great advantage when you lose key components and must replace them. If you don't know how to do a job, it makes that person/position extremely valuable because it's unique. Especially in a hectic and chaotic place like a battlefield (or a deadline), people must be able to rotate and change objectives very quickly. Therefore, managers should know how to handle every aspect of the job they are managing, because not only might they need to take over the job-an employee calls in sick or has emergencies, but they can also improve the workflow into something that's more efficient. One could even say that aspect was part of his defeat at Waterloo. His commanders were rotated among his troops, which led to veterans being staged with superiors they were unsure of or had less trust in. This resulted in key challenges to his army, by the time he arrived at his battlefield, it was akin to using a "blunted knife" versus his normally technically superior army.

Another example of this was General Robert E. Lee. In his own words, he admitted that his battlefield tactics were better left to the generals and commanders on the ground, his greatest strength lie in the logistics and *"to bring my troops to the right place at the right time."*

Like Oda, using people who have the experience from the bottom gives you a leg up. Not only do they have more enthusiasm, but they also realize the challenges they need to overcome and make better decisions from those challenges. You could call this perspective, which many people learn in their wisdom of life. The perspective of a poor life gives a person respect for money. The perspective of the opposite often gives that wisdom and wholeness to realize what needs to be done. You find creative solutions when your hands are tied, and you're forced to make changes. My father always liked the phrase "do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

### **Employees will make you Embrace the Pain of Leadership:**

Alexander had a famous speech, in which he was convincing his tired soldiers to continue their quest further into Persian territory, and farther away from home. The best line from this speech is "There is no part of my body which has not a scar for all your sakes, for your glory, and your gain." He knew many soldiers by name, and often checked on their injuries and conditions. This endeared his legacy and compassion to his men, and they often fought voraciously for him. Like the perspective example, when the leader can see both sides of the fight, from the largest to the smallest, they not only understand the goal but can also improvise and make the changes from the ground up.

A true leader inspires, and by being in the muck with your employees, or at least understanding their positions, you can better evaluate their problems and goals. You don't need to evaluate every single problem-as different people will have different problems in every position, but the ability to shift and rotate, and understand the positions makes a leader well equipped to have solutions when those problems do arise. It also inspires your employees by showing them that you've done those positions, no matter how much they have difficulty doing so. You're going to need to be the guy that loads the artillery, starting from the bottom. That gives you the experience to do what you need to do and shows the employees that the leader is "one of them". You command infinitely more respect than fear, which motivates in a positive manner, rather than negative.

It's also necessary for leaders when those emergency situations happen. For small businesses, leaders often must participate in those roles when employees call in sick, or they are in need of explosive growth. That often gives leaders the time to look back and evaluate processes as

mentioned. Throughout my own personal work career, I've noticed how companies of all industries have wastage. It's a natural part of business, of course, but in a lot of aspects not paying attention to the business means that that wastage isn't adjusted and accounted for. This can be adjusted for efficiency of course, but again, hiring the right people will make these problems less. Listening to the right people will also ensure that the workflow and process continues to stay streamlined. More often than not-that experience that your employees have can be valuable for future forecasting. Keeping them happy, adjusted and in the loop of communication and information ensures that you can receive feedback from not only your customers, your opponents, but your employees as you strive to make something better.

### **Move Quickly and Carry a Big Stick:**

Alexander was also famous for his warfare tactics. He traveled with an elite group of warriors, and led them directly into battle, charging ahead with recklessness and a feared zeal. At the battle of Chaeronea, an 18-year-old Alexander led a cavalry charge straight for the legendary Thebes unit named "The Sacred Band". This "Sacred Band" was known for its motto or mantra of fighting to the death of every last man. History in that respect proved true as he ended that legacy. His main tactic was drawing out his enemies' lines to thin them, and then striking at the heart, or where he could weaken the enemy the most and then smashing through to create terror and low morale in less conditioned enemy troops.

Part of knowing your business is knowing your strengths like we mentioned. But once you evaluate that, striking quickly is often necessary to create that weakness in the line of your competition. You don't want them to prepare for your sales, campaigns, and counter matching 2-3 steps in advance allows your company to be prepared for the blitz that you enacted. Strike at the heart of your tactics and where you found your advantages. This ensures that you will be successful in your attempts to win customers. Facebook has incredibly powerful tools for finding customers and data retention. It's important for Facebook to know information about its product (pretty much everyone), and they share that information for businesses to tap into easily and quickly. This might be the easiest way to draw customers as they have more information about their users than the wild west of the internet can supply in one place. Use Facebook like a funnel for the hub and spoke model and bring customers you find to your ecosystem where you can keep them coming back.

Going back to leading by example, Oda was able to defeat a force estimated up to 45,000 strong with a force of only 10,000 not because he attacked them head on, but because he attacked the head when it was the most vulnerable-alone and unprotected. Many of the leaders did the same, truly utilizing the Tzu method to their advantage as much as possible.

## **Be Professional (Even if you're punching someone in the mouth) in Training:**

Alexander created one of the world's first "professional" armies. His soldiers fought for gold and glory, but they trained like soldiers-not farmers and peasants recruited, but specifically for warfare. These tactics are well known to many other subjects-the Native American tribes trained warfare regularly in their daily life, the Mongols created platoons and regiments for the traveling warriors (their families lived with them as well). Kaizen is a Japanese concept for continuous improvement, which samurai practiced regularly to become fearsome warriors (practiced in business currently as well). A well-trained, disciplined, and equipped militia will fight much better than a ragtag group.

If you've trained and chosen your employees well, you won't need to waste much time focusing on their habits. Train your employees to be professional and allow them that freedom and ability to take care of their portion of responsibilities. This requires choosing the correct employees that are willing to embrace the concepts of your training or business. As an investment, these are some of the most important investments you can make. Micromanaging is counter-productive and takes away from your ability to manage the overall picture and focus on the big details. The Mongols allowed their units to operate independently from each other. Common goals were discussed, but the battlefield tactics were left to engage independently, and controlled by battlefield communication from a high vantage point.

Communication is an incredibly under-utilized issue throughout the workplace. Clear, effective communication is important, not just for the obvious reasons, but for the subtext that rules the office world. It would be great if everyone had a wonderful sense of humor, a great sense of responsibility and an overwhelming sense of loyalty and honor. Unfortunately, with the way that society has grown and changed, many people want to think they have this but cannot be honest with themselves. This creates plenty of internal strife that plays out from the interpersonal to the

external effects. When someone is threatened, they often fight against it, instead of embracing that ability. This stunts the workplace and the effort and creates an atmosphere of distrust and laziness. This breeds contempt and high turnover. That affects the business.

Instead, create the right atmosphere by blending the leadership examples and honest open communication. Lead by example, create strong employees, be open and honest about communication. Of course, this can always have issues. Those issues are a lot more easily addressed when you create that atmosphere to have proper communication. Ruthless atmospheres create ruthless employees, stale atmospheres create stale employees. Try to aim for something in between the gold and glory, because today's employees aren't fighting for blood, so you'll have to tone it down a little bit.

## **Have the Right Attitude:**

This is probably the most important lesson of all these examples I've seen through history. When facing enormous odds, bad situations, or difficult problems, having the right attitude can get you through anything. I'm reminded of this not only in my personal life, but problems in business, relationships and just about anywhere else. Having the right attitude is one of the most important things you can do, ever.

Napoleon is famous for basically having out-coached his enemies in his battles. My favorite quote of his (and there are many) is "Moral force rather than numbers decides victory". Like Alexander, he knew that his inspiration to his soldiers would keep them fighting harder and winning better victories on the battlefield. The right mindset often creates the better soldier. The 300 Spartans (we know it's a bit more in reality) at Thermopylae were idolized for a reason. They were not going to give up and utilized that terrain to an enormous advantage in the face of an overwhelming enemy. The famous Laconic response to "my arrows will blot out the sun"- "Then we fight in the shade" was real, for all intents and purposes, and created a solid attitude that you can emulate when it comes to approaching real life problems.

You can find so many examples of mental toughness-it's pervasive in society. It's almost too much. It's part of that toxic masculinity that males spew on each other. But in many respects, it makes sense. It's probably why you're reading this, while eating iron and spitting nails. You won't be encouraging death and wanton destruction, but you'll need a sense of that toughness

to overcome those problems. When your budget is against the wall, it's the attitude alone that will determine this. Use those examples of history to give yourself some edge and order a tall cool glass of milk at the bar next time you're there.

## **Going Too Far (Don't)**

You can look at other famous leaders and see how scorched earth policies have changed society. Looking at unnamed examples, you'll find that there are plenty that have zeal but disregard that level of humanity before going psychopathic. Machiavelli is famous for his books on tactics, but there are some levels and lines he advocates. "The ends justify the means". This is probably the problem with our current state of society-the greed. You can use that phrase to basically kill and enslave people, but does that make you a whole person? You can run the office with an iron fist, but if you make employees unhappy, how many are you going to keep? How much will you waste by having to re-train those from the ground up, and how much reputation will you lose because of that? If you need more examples, just look at many of the anti-work forums popping up, complaining about mistreatment and reprehensible working conditions. In the end, it's business, and it's not warfare. You can create a long lasting and useful product by embracing the concepts and zeal, but not the psychopathy of the mindset that

it can create. If you have trouble bringing yourself back down to Earth, try to do some mindfulness courses or things that will help meditate and calm your system down. It is business, and it's important to people as far as livelihood and living, but it's also not EVERYTHING. You can still rise from the ashes as much as anyone else, despite the circumstances.

While watching "Band of Brothers" on HBO recently, I saw another example of this. While that's not a documentary per se, it features accounts from the actual Easy Company assaults on Bastogne and other issues they had during World War II. One of them I noticed was the concept that under fire or siege, was the issue to "keep going". Failing this, even under pressure and direct fire was sure to lead to failure, despite losing soldiers or getting shot at. It is a primary concept in life-when under fire, keep moving forward. The soldiers themselves began to embrace the "suck" when they ran up the hill at Currahee. Three miles up and three miles down was torture, but it created the perfect attitude needed for Easy Company to become one of the toughest group of soldiers necessary to win the war. If you've ever played sports, you'll recognize the need for training and that "turn the corner" attitude that allows one to embrace that toughness and take it to the next level.

My final example is personal-I was an athlete in high school. I played football, wrestled and played lacrosse. And in each, there was a level of embracing that difficult time to ensure that I "turned the corner" and realized the zen of athletic torture was necessary to become what was considered good or great. Wrestling was the most difficult, but also the one I had the most success in. It was an individual sport, one where you had no other teammates to hide behind, you were responsible for every single facet of the sport-your weight, your training, your skill and talent and abilities. There were no excuses to hide behind when you didn't show up, and so that led to an incredible drive and change in attitude when addressing those issues. Only the strongest survived-so to speak, and those that began to embrace the torture and punishment were made stronger. When we ran conditioning, I stayed behind to do extra. When a teammate received punishment and extra push ups, I did those pushups right next to them, to ensure that I was getting all they could give and more, to make myself stronger. Before long, they noticed that I did and began to do extra with me. We became a much better team because they willingly embraced the training with me, like Easy Company, and we did things on that team that made

small town history and record books. I look back on that and smile, not because it's funny to suffer physically, but because I realize the effort it takes and the attitude of being there.

That phrase is personal to me, as it has plenty of meanings. Turning the corner is what I use when you make that decision in your mind to mentally become focused. It's not just a phase as much as it's a way of life in that mindset. Turning the corner is what makes the difference from placing in a tournament, to winning that tournament. There are moments in your life, whether you've played sports or not, where you recognize a situation that could be one of the worst situations you've ever encountered. You have a decision to make- do you continue to bang your head against the wall, or do you surrender and find a different or easier path? Turning the corner is the ability to stick with it and continue to deal with the blows in order to accomplish your objective. (This assumes there are 2 paths, in life, there's often multiple paths so it's not so clear cut. Sometimes there are only 2 paths, and this requires that grit your teeth measure). I know this situation may hurt, but it will accomplish my objective and I will go through hell to make it. This difference in attitude is what makes a champion, so to speak. And in that sense, it is also what makes someone confident in their ability to solve problems and become successful. You've often heard the term that success breeds, and that is true. You feel more confident "winning" and being able to be comfortable in your abilities. Be that person and turn the corner to a better attitude and the ability to solve problems. Life often only requires you to turn that corner once. When you realize what it takes, you'll know what to do the next time and it's within you to accomplish it. Your foundation as knowing that you have the ability to do so is just as important as actually doing it.