



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

Fostering a vision of success

One of the secrets to success is being able to visualize achieving that success. You've heard the mantra: If you can see it, you can be it. See yourself hitting the ball. See the ball through the hoop. See yourself crossing the finish line. Of course, with those words of wisdom come tons of others explaining how hard work and dedication are necessary to see a vision of success through to the end.

Self-fulfilling prophecy

Athletes like Michael Jordan and Wayne Gretzky have used success visualization to reach the pinnacle in their respective sports. Not into sports? How about folks like Einstein or Andrew Carnegie?

The strategy is built on the notion of a self-fulfilling prophecy. In visualizing success, you condition even your subconscious to work toward that goal, accepting the things that will help achieve success and rejecting those that will hamper it.

It's amazing to think we can condition our brain to accept success and to not accept defeat — often the difference in those thrilling buzzer-beater victories. We admire those come-from-behind victories when it seemed all was lost — those athletes who would not accept defeat.

Changing landscape

What do you do when it's hard to visualize the future?

Even for Robert Parish, who holds the record for the longest career in the NBA (21 years), the game of basketball would have had few rule changes during his time on the court.

That makes visualizing success simple compared to visualizing success in the ever-changing ag industry, where we often define success in terms of generations on the farm. I'm not sure any of us have a true picture of what the beef industry will look like in 20, 40 or 60 years.

That's a challenge to encouraging young adults to come back to the farm or ranch. Security is an inherent need, and our industry offers little of it. We can do things to add security: insurance, contracts, estate planning, transition planning, training, diversifying, specializing, etc.

Many of the young farmers and ranchers featured in this issue have taken advantage of those management tools. As you read their stories, it's obvious each has a vision of success and what it will take to reach that point. They all differ, but they are similar in their passion and desire to be in this industry.

Our challenge as an industry is to work together to lay the groundwork for their success. It is their challenge to apply the work and dedication to see their visions through to completion.

A few tenets of success I'd offer to the next generation:

- Realize that your grandpa could never have envisioned agriculture as it is today. We don't need to be able to see the future to see ourselves successful in it.
- Stay educated. In a constantly changing world, there is something new to learn every day. The only thing scary about "new" is that we don't understand it — yet.
- Stay informed. Seek out all the information you can relative to your vocation. Remember, you can accept somebody's second-, third- or fourth-hand explanation, or you can seek out the source for explanations that will let you evaluate something on the basis of your situation.
- Be objective. It's easy to make up your mind and then seek out only the information that will support your viewpoint. That approach multiplies risk. No one is right every time.
- Strive to understand why someone has a different opinion. If you're right, you'll have a better chance of persuading him or her. If you're wrong, you may save yourself some miscues. Either way, you'll likely learn something that will tweak your view and improve your chances of success.
- Don't be afraid to fail. From Abraham Lincoln to Michael Jordan, history is full of brilliant success stories that were preceded by failures. In each failure is a learning opportunity that increases chances of success in the future.
- Be involved. One of the secrets to feeling secure is taking an active role in shaping your industry. Participate in your local government and the organizations that affect your industry.
- Visualize successfully adapting to change. We know the industry will change, but we have the ability to make that an opportunity.

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