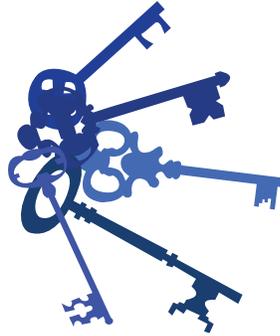


Five Keys to Being Amazing

By Carl Pritchard, for Apex Systems



We sometimes look at our professional peers in quiet awe and wonder. “She’s done so much with her life! Another promotion? Speaking in front of what group?” They seem to have a knack for being amazing. A few years back, one of my clients apologized for not getting back to me sooner. Her excuse? “I was climbing Mt. McKinley.” Wow. Amazing.

It’s not easy being amazing. It’s a lot of hard work. But there are ways to make it easier, and there are ways to make it all about just being you. The five keys? **Goals, Direction, Progress, Specialties** and **Joy**. Apply all five keys, and you’re unlocking something amazing.

Goals

Setting down personal goals sounds easy. “I want a million dollars.” (Don’t we all?) But goal-setting is challenging because they both need to be achievable and challenging. The etymology of the word goal ties to the “place where the race ends,” which means, too, that it’s specific and achievable. We don’t enter races we don’t plan to finish. Good goals are specific, with measurable outcomes. Our role here is to ensure that we know what the finish line looks like.

Direction

Rosie Ruiz ran into the history books in 1980 when she was declared the winner of the Boston Marathon, only to have the title stripped when it became evident that she had not run the whole race. Reports at the time said she could not identify certain parts of the race and didn’t remember running through particular neighborhoods. The neighborhoods on the path to our goal matter. Part of what makes you amazing is your life journey. Small town? People relate. Big city? People relate. Raised with a silver spoon in your mouth? Yes, people relate. Went through the school of hard knocks? People relate. The fact that you have a journey makes all the difference in the world. When you lose sight of that journey or won’t willingly tell others how you got from Point A to Point B, you’re not as amazing. Knowing the road you took makes for a better life story.

Progress

“What have you done for me today?” is a common business question. Life doesn’t freeze at any given point in time. Amazing people are in a constant state of reinvention. They are able to express how far they’ve come on their journey and the interim goals they’ve achieved. Amazing people never see themselves as “done.” My father reinvented himself multiple times. English major. Draftsman. Family physician. Cabinet builder. Sculptor. Organist. My mother did likewise. Schoolteacher. Community advocate. Small businesswoman. Antique picker. Rug hooker (classic antique style). Both of them, throughout their lives, saw room for progress and ways to make themselves anew.

Specialties

Like my parents, I reinvent myself on a regular basis. For now, however, I’m the “project management risk guy”. It’s where I have carved out a niche. Small niche? Yes. But the key is to be able to dominate in your niche. Even if your industry is a “big pond,” you can be a big fish in a small area of that pond if you identify a niche where you can truly excel.

Joy

Invariably, being amazing is tied to joy. We look at those who have great success, and we seek out their joy. We look at those who are ravaged by disease, and they are amazing when they still find joy. Being joyful about one’s lot in life is the critical outward expression of being amazing. While I relish my current roles, I have infinite gratitude for every role, every reinvention, and every blessing that has been bestowed upon me. From my dog (a labradoodle) to my two sons to my first car (a 1969 Renault R10) to my jobs to my travels to my lovely wife of 30+ years, I’m grateful. Gratitude in all quarters, environments and conditions is an amazing trait.

Want to be amazing? Check your life on the list above. And get to work!

About Carl Pritchard



Carl Pritchard, PMP, PMI-RMP is the owner of Pritchard Management Associates. He is the author of seven texts in project management, including his latest, Risk Management: Concepts & Guidance, 5th Edition. He trains and lectures in project management around the world, and serves as the U.S. Correspondent for the British project management magazine, Project Manager Today. He has created two project management certification apps for the Windows8 environment, and produced the 9-CD audio collection, The Portable PMP® Prep: Conversations on Passing the PMP® Exam. Carl is a former PMI® Project of the Year semi-final judge and served as the speakers’ coach for a national leadership conference in project management for four years. He served as a chapter author for the Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) 4th Edition and sits on the board of directors for ProjectConnections.com. He welcomes your comments, insights and questions at carl@carlpritchard.com.