



What is holding you back?

If you have ever been to a circus you may have noticed that the elephants are held in check by a chain attached to a small wooden stake driven into the ground. At any time he chooses, this huge powerful beast could effortlessly pull the stake from the ground and be on his merry way. Why doesn't he? What is holding him back?

When they are young, elephants are shackled with a thick heavy chain wrapped around the trunk of a tree or attached to a metal stake driven deep into the ground. No matter how hard they try, baby elephants cannot escape the chains that bind them. Eventually, they cease to push and pull because their efforts seem useless. With the mental stake driven as deep as the metal stake, the elephant becomes conditioned to believe that he will never be able to escape, so he gives up trying. Sadly, many of us mimic the adult elephant. Our enormous powers are negated by our own flawed belief system which shackles us to our current circumstances, giving the false impression that we will never be able to rise above them. As noted author and lecturer Dennis Kimbro said, "We become limited not by reality but by reality as we perceive it."

Do you remember the grand dreams you had as a child? Whatever happened to your ambitions to be the next great doctor, teacher, or entrepreneur? Weren't you making plans to write the next great novel, record the next big hit or make an important scientific breakthrough? Many of us still harbor those dreams but have succumbed to the many barriers standing in our way. These so called barriers are nothing more than a litany of excuses that we cook up daily; but as they say, you can either have successes or excuses - you can't have both. Ask Ray Charles or Stevie Wonder. Both are blind but have gone on to have stellar careers as recording artists. Consider Erik Weihenmayer, the first blind person to conquer Mt Everest and reach its summit. What barriers did they see? Their optimistic outlook and strong belief in themselves outweighed any physical shortcomings they might have had.

High achievers have to deal with limiting beliefs every day. They face the same barriers that underachievers face - the issues of age, family background, past failures and lack of education among others. The difference lies in their commitment

to reach their full potential. They never stopped fanning the flames of their childhood dreams and continued to push and pull for as long as it took them to break free of both the metal and mental stakes in their lives. The underachievers abandon their dreams and explain their desertion as simply being mature and realistic. This self-defeating behavior gives rise to a negative outlook on life, self pity, laziness, indiscipline and poor work habits. Before long they become like the mighty elephant walking around in circles tethered to a wooden stake by a flimsy piece of chain; unable to break free. As one author puts it, "people are trapped in their everyday habits - part numb, part frightened, part indifferent. To have a better life we must keep choosing how we are living."

As you can see, a lack of commitment on the part of the grown elephant to win his freedom no matter how long it required him to push and pull at the chain has formed habits which ensured that despite his mighty strength, this giant is relegated to a life as a circus act. How many times have you allowed yourself to become frustrated because of failed attempts to achieve a certain goal? Your lack of commitment to the attainment of your goals leads to complacency and a life of mediocrity. Famed newscaster Walter Cronkite said, "I can't imagine a person becoming a success who doesn't give this game of life everything he's got." High achievers are those who ceaselessly do everything within their power to become what they're capable of becoming.

If you find yourself shackled by the mental stakes that were driven earlier in your life; if you find yourself hindered by circumstances and people who would suggest you can't realize your dreams, simply think long and hard about the treasured ambitions you have locked away. Commit - make a heartfelt promise to yourself to do whatever it takes to bring those dreams to the light of day. As Benjami Disreali said, "Nothing can withstand the power of the human will if it is willing to stake its very existence to the extent of its purpose."

Keep On Pushing!