

Two Case Studies: To Change or Not to Change

Brian has been starting and running his own small businesses for over 30 years. He's exceptionally good at finding markets that need a business he can develop, he is great at getting inventory at rock bottom prices and he is sharp about finding locations that allow him to build equity in commercial property that will be attractive to future buyers.

Brian could have made even more money than he has if only he had been able to ask for help to work around his weaknesses; Brian has no tolerance for people who don't meet his exacting demands, and therefore, key employees rotate through his businesses like day laborers. He works well with help who are capable of running the business themselves, yet willing to work for cheap money, eager to get to work early and willing to stay as long as necessary, have no need to have positive feedback and thrive in an environment that is verbally abusive.

Brian has a heart of gold and would do anything for his friends; he has reached out to strangers in need and loves his children. But these wonderful traits don't really mitigate the know-it-all attitude, the foul mouth and the sensitivity level of a tungsten bar. He may talk about himself all the time, but he has zero interest in developing any insight into his strengths or weaknesses.

Dan has started and run a couple of very successful businesses in the last few years. He ended up selling them when things got too detailed for his tastes. He cares about people, but is blunt and critical. If an employee doesn't get it, Dan will often just go off on them.

Like Brian, Dan is a very capable and an exciting entrepreneur; his strengths are notable, yet his weaknesses can be debilitating to his long-term goal. Unlike Brian he will talk about his weaknesses and is genuinely interested in understanding himself so that he can move his game to a higher level.

Dan came in for coaching and in just a few sessions made significant changes in his ability to regulate his emotions around his employees. He claims that he has come to understand what he needs to do his best work; and when he can create those situations he is much more relaxed.

These two brilliant businessmen represent the range of people I interact with. I ran into Brian years ago and he has barely mellowed despite the considerable ups and downs in his life. He is apparently just going to stay the way he is, despite being truly miserable some of the time. I asked him once if he thought he could change and he said, "Sure, but why?"

Dan is a client of mine who is excited by the chance to grow and become a more effective leader and communicator. He could hold his own in a verbal slam with Brian, but win or lose; Dan would want to understand what had happened and how he might grow from it.

Coaching is about learning practical techniques so you can gain and hold clients and key employees, but coaching is also about learning how to learn and create the next generation of growth for your business and yourself.

If you're ready to take a look at the role your behavior plays in both enhancing and restricting your business and life, contact me for an in-depth review of your current situation and some thoughts on how to move ahead. The world's top athletes have individual coaching to do their best; is your success any less important?