

Follow Trump's tips for success at work

"You're fired."

Those words are now synonymous with Donald Trump and his hit television show, "The Apprentice," and I must admit that I'm addicted to the show. For those unfamiliar with the Donald's show, a group of up and coming, savvy business men and women are chosen to act as apprentices. Split into two groups, they're given one task per episode, and the team that makes the most profit wins the round and can rest on their laurels.

Members of the other team have to face Donald in his dark and quiet-as-a-pin-dropping boardroom with two of his grim associates. One team member will hear those now famous Donald words and witness his finger pointing squarely at his or her nose at the end of the show. The last man or woman sitting in the boardroom is the winner and offered a fabulous position on Donald's staff.

Why do I like the show? The players come up with some pretty ingenious ideas on how to make money and what to do and what not to do. Would I do things differently? Probably. But it's fun to listen to fresh, new ideas and strategies even if I'm not running a mega-conglomerate in New York, but rather sitting on my mountain home porch enjoying the view and listening to the birds sing.

The magazine "Marie Claire" (okay...I confess to buying this fluff in an airport on my way to somewhere) has a terrific article in their August 2004 issue on Donald Trump. It's his 10 rules for successful employment excerpted from his book, "Trump: How to Get Rich," Random House, 2004. And who better to give the public tips than one of America's all-time success stories?

Now I know some of you out there are frowning because you're no friend of Donald Trump. He's in a business world few of us can completely comprehend and even fewer can identify with. But it wasn't always a bed of roses for him either, which you'll find out when he shares a moment of his past in one or two of his 10 tips.

One of his many quotes sort of summarizes the life he's led and perhaps will provide inspiration for anyone struggling to succeed in the competitive world we live in today: "My policy is to learn from the past, focus on the present and dream about the future. I'm a firm believer in learning from adversity. Often, the worst of times can turn to your advantage."

Tip One: Be plugged in because timing is everything. In other words, Donald suggests paying attention to others around you, particularly your employer. If you see he or she is having a particularly stressful day, don't ask for the afternoon off to watch your son's baseball game even though you're dying to see your son pitch. Sometimes, you have to give up something you really want to add another feather in your career cap.

Tip Two: Be professional. Donald cites an employee he had that couldn't sit still. It was a chore just to be around him, so Donald avoided him. Overbearing enthusiasm can kill a good relationship with your boss almost as easily as apathy.

Tip Three: Give nothing less than 100% of your energy every day. Let's say you've got a migraine from too many drinks the night before — it's tough, but it's not your boss' problem. It's Donald's theory that no boss should have to accept less than an enthusiastic employee.

Tip Four: Be well informed. Donald shares his philosophy by saying, "You can't wear a blindfold in business. Part of your day should be devoted to expanding your horizons."



As I see it

Tip Five: Be prepared for the worst at all times. In the late 1980s, the real estate market crashed and Donald owed \$9.2 billion. One day, he passed a beggar on the street and realized the beggar was worth \$9.2 billion more than he was — and it stuck with him for years to come.

Donald goes on to say that when it comes to careers, there will always be ups and downs, so anticipating problems will save wasted energy and unexpected surprises in the long run.

Tip Six: Pretend you're working for yourself — what kind of job would you do?

Tip Seven: Keep your cutting edge. If your boss asks your opinion on something, don't bog him or her down with unnecessary, on-the-fence information. If you think something stinks, be honest and forthright, albeit tactful. No boss likes "yes men" or "yes women."

Tip Eight: Keep focused on your job. In the 1980s, Donald was jet setting all over the globe, attending fashion shows, dating scores of women and not paying attention to his business. One night, at 3 o'clock in the morning, three of his bankers demanded that they renegotiate his loans totaling in the billions. So, at 3:30 in the morning, in the freezing rain-soaked, taxi-free streets of New York, Donald walked 15 blocks to his office with no doubt more on his mind than wet socks.

Tip Nine: Do your job thoroughly and responsibly. If you don't know something, don't pretend to know or shrug your shoulders and tuck it away somewhere. Do some research or ask for help. So many employees are afraid to ask for help in fear that they will look incompetent. It takes courage to ask for help — don't hesitate. But, on the other hand, don't cry wolf too many times or you may end up getting bit.

Tip 10: Review yourself every day. This is my favorite of Donald's tips because it is something we can do daily. Ask yourself, "Is there anyone else who can do this job better than I can?" If you're completely honest with yourself and answer "yes," figure out how you can do your job better because according to Donald, when it comes to himself and everyone else in this fast-paced business world, "there's always room for improvement."