

## Performing At Your Potential

by **Steven D Huff**

A well known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. In the room of 200, he asked, "Who would like this \$20 bill?" Hands started going up. He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you but first, let me do this." He proceeded to crumple the dollar bill up. He then asked, "Who still wants it?" Not one hand went down. All still wanted the bill. "Well," he replied, "what if I do this?" And he dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now all crumpled and dirty. "Now who still wants it?" All hands remained in the air.

The story reveals a simple yet profound lesson. Outward appearance is not always a good indication of intrinsic value. Even though the \$20 bill was crumpled, dirty and a little tattered, its value remained twenty dollars. Likewise, some people do not appear to have much potential. Their performance simply isn't up to standards. Somewhat like the crumpled \$20 bill, they don't appear to have much value to their organization. Yet, with the right coaching and strategy, most people can perform at a higher level and provide their company greater value than ever imagined.

Here are a few ideas to help you perform at your potential:

- **Build On Past Accomplishments** - Experience counts for something. Make sure you learn from your past mistakes and successes. Both are valuable at helping you reach your potential today.
- **Consider Your Abilities** - It doesn't matter so much what your abilities are - the key is to use them to their fullest. Invest them wisely in activities, projects, people and life and you will find them multiplying. It is an irrevocable law, "What you sow, that will you also reap." Lawrence Welk put it this way, "To be granted some kind of usable talent and to be able to use it to the fullest extent to which you are capable-- this, to me, is a kind of joy that is almost unequalled."
- **Commit Yourself To Continued Learning** - According to Warren Bennis, "Learning is the essential fuel for leaders, the source of high-octane energy that keeps up the momentum by continually sparking new understanding, new ideas, and new challenges." With today's condition of rapid change and complexity, learning has become indispensable for top performance.
- **Develop A Personal Performance Strategy** - Companies are great at developing performance standards, strategies, and action plans. Why not form your own personal performance strategy for your career and other areas of life? Determine your goals and spell out a strategy to get them done, including the step-by-step actions required for success. Many people find checking off completed steps motivates them to continue their strong performance.
- **Keep The "Important" Ahead Of The "Urgent"** - Time management trainers remind their students to focus on their important objectives instead of the urgent demands that come each day. If you want to perform at your potential, make sure you keep your priorities straight.