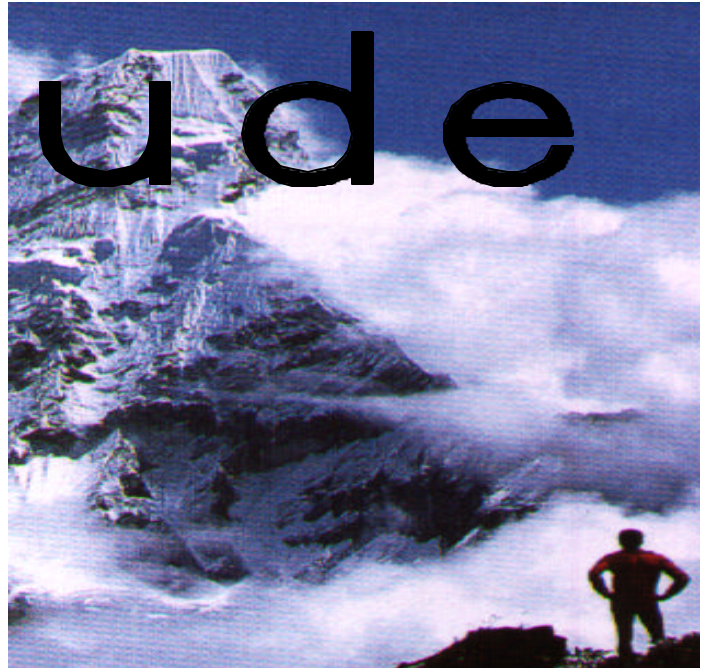


Business Success is a matter of

attitude

By Jill Dominique

The challenge today is to embrace change, not to resist it. It will take courage, resourcefulness and endurance to succeed in the unpredictable years of the 1990's ...



Look at life as a great adventure, and you will thrive," says John Amatt, founder and president of One Step Beyond. "We each have to discover our unique strengths, and apply these skills to appropriate goals." Amatt, a member of the first Canadian expedition to reach the summit of Mount Everest, spoke in April '92 to a joint meeting of the Canadian and American Chambers of Commerce in Hong Kong, applying analogies from his climbing experiences to the challenges encountered by organizations today. Amatt is not a man who sets limits; his mission is to inspire others to be bold, resourceful and determined in meeting their own challenges. And, he means business.

No one can refute that the world is changing, and that the status quo will no longer guarantee success. An increasingly global economy, new technologies, worldwide communications and political upheavals are changing our value system and the way we do business. Many agree that the competitive advantage may no longer be based on an abundance of raw materials and cheap labour, but on having a well-educated, innovative and highly-adaptable work force. Educators and

corporate executives are busy these days analyzing what it will take to keep up.

But, as stated by a recent article in Canadian Business, we cannot afford to get caught in a "paralysis of analysis". We must actively respond to the changes we confront; we must learn to think ahead. As hockey celebrity, Wayne Gretzky once said, "I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it's been." Like it or not, individuals and organizations must learn to adapt. As Amatt says, we must willingly confront change and question past assumptions in order to explore new and potentially more effective ways of doing business in the future.

Amatt encourages individuals to embrace what he has coined the "**Adventure Attitude**". For many, the word "Adventure" conjures up images of outdoor sport or the pursuit of physical challenge. Amatt considers "Adventure" to mean the fundamental attitude with which we must confront daily life.

"Our civilization was developed through the spirit of adventure of our forefathers," says Amatt. "These were people who abandoned the security of the known world to test themselves against the unknown. They committed to action, took risks and accepted responsibility for

their decisions. If we remain hooked on the security we've built around ourselves from the past, we will cease to test ourselves; we will cease to grow. The challenge today is to embrace change, not to resist it. It will take courage, resourcefulness and endurance to succeed in the unpredictable years of the 1990s; the courage to try, to commit, and to take risks; the resourcefulness to be innovative and creative in finding new ways of doing old things, and the endurance to keep going when the going gets tough."

Casting off familiar attitudes and ways of doing things is difficult; but recognizing our own resistance and natural fear of the unknown is a first step in moving forward. Amatt's One Step Beyond organization focuses on nine elements of achievement that together provide a powerful acronym, **A-D-V-E-N-T-U-R-E**, to help people develop a new attitude in achieving personal and professional success.

A

A C H I E V E M E N T brings self satisfaction and enhanced self-worth. "It is the constant process of going one step beyond your previous experience", says Amatt. The Adventure Attitude challenges us to re-think our conventional standards of success, to discover what it is that makes us most fulfilled as individuals. "Rather than focus on the pursuit of security, wealth and power, we should instead be working toward self-satisfaction, contentment and happiness," he says.

D

D R E A M I N G big and dreaming often separates great achievers from aspiring achievers. Achievers channel dissatisfaction into a plan of action, and remain focused in order to effect the desired results. Above all, we should learn from our experiences. "Reaching the summit was not the most significant part of the Everest experience, because you learn nothing at the top," Amatt says. "It was during the journey to the top that the learning took place. It is important to digest our experiences, learn the lessons, and apply this new knowledge to future challenges. But, you do not have to climb mountains to recognize these principles; they apply to all of us every day."

V

V A L U E your own values, for this strong sense of self brings clarity to your goals and resolution to achieving them. Leaders have the self-confidence to be independent, often different from their peers. They are adventurers; they experiment with their lives and follow their instincts, unburdened by self-doubt or the nonproductive criticisms of others.

E

E X C E L L I N G performing under pressure. Everyone feels fear. Anxiety over the unknown is one of the most difficult things to conquer. To rise above the fear, we must learn to take action and to turn adversity into future opportunity. Amatt says, "When you run away from

fear, it grows; when you move toward it, it shrinks."

N

N E V E R quit; be determined to persevere despite your hesitancy or discomfort. Most of today's challenges are cognitive, meaning that often the one who wins is the one who thinks he can win. Those who can find hidden reserves within themselves will continue in the face of adversity and be rewarded for their efforts.

T

T R U S T I N G those in our teams can offset our own limitations and bring the strength of others to bear on the problems we face. The limitations of individuals within the team will always be overcome by building on the strengths of other team members. "Rarely does one achieve complete success without the support of others," says Amatt. "We see strengths and limitations in organizations just as we do in individuals. We need to be very frank about identifying these and choosing realistic goals accordingly."

U

U N D E R S T A N D I N G why you are committing to something before doing so is key to your being accountable for your actions. You will be less likely to hesitate, make excuses, or waste time and energy in the paralysis of self-doubt when things don't go according to plan. Achievers demonstrate a disciplined focus on their goals while keeping a watchful eye on the world around them.

R

R I S K - T A K I N G does not mean being foolish or reckless. It does, however, mean having the courage to break free from the security syndrome manifest in modern society. Success for the next generation will mean learning to plan and take calculated risks - to act - to stand firm when all around you seems to be in turmoil. We will need to adapt a more

entrepreneurial attitude in acquiring the new skills, knowledge and experience needed to evaluate risks and make critical choices.

E

E N T H U S I A S M and a curiosity that drives them enables achievers to persevere despite difficulties they encounter along the way. Managers would benefit from stimulating the curiosity of their staff to instill in them a desire to seek innovative solutions to ongoing issues and unprecedented problems. The excitement of something new can inspire people to positively embrace change rather than to dread it. "Without adversity, without change life is boring; the paradox of comfort is that we stop trying," says Amatt. "There is great fulfilment when we discover our unique abilities.

Organizations must learn to capitalize on the creativity and brainpower of their people in exploring new and adventuresome solutions that go one step beyond their former ways of doing business. It is not always easy to let go of assumptions that have previously served us well but as the world around us changes we must adapt or we will be left behind. Amatt says, "Being adventuresome doesn't mean hanging on a rope on the side of a mountain. Adventure is seizing new opportunities and testing our resources against the unknown in everyday life."

John Amatt is a world authority on the use of the "adventure metaphor" as a vehicle for assisting groups in developing the new attitudes and strategies needed to embrace change and overcome adversity in unpredictable times. Since 1983, he has addressed more than 1,000 corporate and professional audiences totalling over 500,000 persons in some 25 countries worldwide.