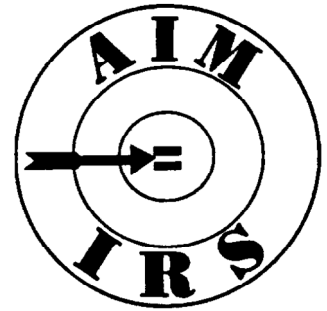


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09.30.09
Professional Butterfly



BECOMING THE PROFESSIONAL BUTTERFLY
by Nido Qubein

When corporate leaders decide to re-engineer the corporation, they don't just set out to improve the present system. They set out to create an entirely new system.

When you set out to re-engineer your life, you're not just improving your present circumstances. You're creating a whole new set of circumstances, in keeping with your vision of what life should be.

Harvard Business Review compares it with the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly. "A butterfly is not more caterpillar or a better or improved caterpillar; a butterfly is a different creature," noted authors Tracy Goss, Richard Pascale, and Anthony Athos.

Becoming the butterfly you want to be means putting the old circumstances in the past, and concentrating all your resources on creating the new ones.

This can be risky and scary. You're leaving the comfort and security of the old cocoon and accepting the challenges and uncertainties of a free environment. It's natural to want to leave the path open for a return to the old ways if the new ways don't work out.

But if you leave the path open, you're quite likely to retrace it. At the first sign of adversity, you'll give up the adventure and return to your cocoon -- the life you were trying to put behind.

A butterfly, of course, cannot return to its cocoon. The moment it makes its way to the outside and flutters its wings, it is committed to a new type of existence. Its life as a butterfly is not just a matter of what it does. It is also a matter of what it is.

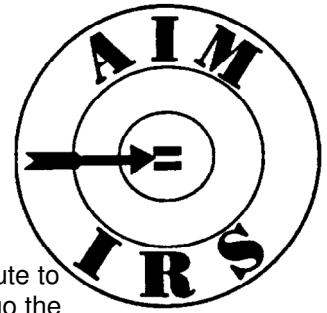
You can shut off the path to retreat by transforming yourself into something you never were before. The process of education can be transforming. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. wrote that when a mind stretches to embrace a new idea, it "never shrinks back to its original dimensions." There is a qualitative difference between an educated person and an uneducated person, just as there is a qualitative difference between a butterfly and a caterpillar. The worker mentality sees a job as a necessary evil that has to be endured until quitting time sets you free to pursue your real life. Professionals see their careers as rewarding components of their real lives. They learn to integrate their careers and their personal lives so that one meshes with and supports the other.

Workers wait for someone to tell them what to do and how to do it, and they let others worry about whether the way they're told to do it is the right way. They may concentrate on performing their assigned tasks well, but won't worry about what happens outside their own areas.

Professionals take responsibility for their own success and for the success of the organizations to which they belong. They see themselves as partners in prosperity with the organization, and see the organization's ups and downs as their own. They are constantly looking for things that they personally can do to contribute to organizational success. Workers accept a ceiling on success in return for a steady income. They are not boat-rockers, but believe in doing things the way they've always been done -- which they perceive as the safe, cautious way.

Professionals are willing to take intelligent risks, accepting the possibility of failure as a fair price for the opportunity to grow. Workers concentrate on the means. They do their jobs without worrying about how their jobs contribute to the total picture.

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Professionals concentrate on the ends. They see their jobs in terms of how they contribute to the organization's success. Professionals are usually perceived as good because they go the extra mile to be good. They keep up with the latest developments in their field, and share their knowledge with others. They communicate confidence, dressing and grooming themselves for success and always conscious of the importance of image.

To achieve this type of professionalism, you must set a high standard for yourself and never allow yourself to fall below that standard.

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