

Insights from *How to Fail at Almost Everything and Still Win Big* by Scott Adams

“The best way to increase your odds of success—in a way that might look like luck to others—is to systematically become good, but not amazing, at the types of skills that work well together and are highly useful for just about any job.” – Scott Adams

3 Universal Systems/Skills that increase your odds of professional success:



Clear Writing

The goal of all business writing is to write clearly. That means removing unnecessary words and passive language.

“As it turns out, business writing is all about getting to the point and leaving out all of the noise. You think you already do that in your writing, but you probably don’t.

Consider the previous sentence. I intentionally embedded some noise. Did you catch it? The sentence that starts with “You think you already do that” includes the unnecessary word “already.” Remove it and you get exactly the same meaning: “You think you do that.” The “already” part is assumed and unnecessary. That sort of

realization is the foundation of business writing.” – Scott Adams

Your sentences should follow the structure of ‘Actor-Action-Object’.

“Your brain processes “The boy hit the ball” more easily than “The ball was hit by the boy.” In editors’ jargon, the first sentence is direct writing and the second is passive. It’s a tiny difference, but over the course of an entire document, passive writing adds up and causes reader fatigue.” – Scott Adams



Making Conversation

The goal of conversation is to get people to like you. A proven conversation technique is smiling, using open body language, introducing yourself, and searching for a common interest by asking questions.

“The technique is laughably simple and 100 percent effective. It’s all you need to be in the top 10 percent of all conversationalists.” – Scott Adams

Here are five go-to questions:

- Where do you live?
- Do you have a family?
- What do you do for a living?
- Do you have any hobbies/sports?
- Do you have any travel plans?

“The secret to making the list of questions work without seeming awkward is in understanding that the person you meet will feel every bit as awkward as you. That person wants to talk about something interesting and to sound knowledgeable. Your job is to make that easy. Nothing is easier than talking about one’s self.” – Scott Adams



Persuasion

“No matter your calling in life, you’ll spend a great deal of time trying to persuade people to do one thing or another.” – Scott Adams

Scott is a trained hypnotist, and he knows a thing or two about persuasion. Here are two of his favorite persuasive words/phrases:

“... Because”: People are more cooperative when you ask for a favor using a sentence that includes the word because, even if the reason you offer makes little or no sense. – Scott Adams

“Would You Mind...?”: It’s hard to be a jerk and say no to any request that starts with “Would you mind.” The question comes across as honest, while also showing concern for the other person. It’s a powerful combination. – Scott Adams