



Work Like You're Showing Off!

The Joy, Jazz, and Kick of Being Better Tomorrow Than You Were Today

by Joe Calloway
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Take-Aways

- “Show-offs” are aces at what they do and they take pride in their competence. They enjoy creating win-win situations.
- Being a show-off doesn't mean bragging. It means delivering results.
- You can always improve. Push yourself toward top performance.
- To make room in your life for what you want, you must release the obstacles and assumptions that hold you back.
- Don't waste time deliberating. Take action toward achieving your goals.
- To learn and progress, you must be willing to make mistakes.
- Everyone improvises as they go along. Stop doubting yourself; take your best shot.
- Sometimes the best idea doesn't dazzle, but simply offers a new perspective or a different approach.
- Show your clients you care. Be available to them. If you're not, your competitor will be.
- If you're optimistic about opportunity, you're likelier to find it.

Rating (10 is best)

Overall	Applicability	Innovation	Style
7	7	6	7

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Relevance

What You Will Learn

In this Abstract, you will learn: 1) Why “show-offs” succeed; and 2) What attitudes and habits will help you “show off” at work.

Recommendation

Joe Calloway encourages you to pull out all stops and become the best at what you do, a real show-off. Most of his material, which is drawn from his inspirational lectures, is amped-up common sense: Don’t promise more than you can deliver; figure out how to do what you already do better. He provides useful, though time-worn, advice. Calloway finds inspiration in the most unlikely places, such as watching a diligent barista at a mall coffee shop, and presents readers with brief, easy lessons. Each item gives you a little something to chew on and urges you toward a better self. *getAbstract* recommends this book for a quick shot of positive thinking, small but mighty in its inspirational punch.

Abstract

Leave It on the Field

“Showing off” doesn’t mean parading through life unleashing your ego. It’s deeper than that, since it is anchored in respect for excellence. Showing off means always doing your best, even when your task seems trivial or small.

“Show-offs” don’t have to be managers or executives. Consider Leslie, an employee at a copy center in Nashville, Tennessee. She handles all requests with aplomb, takes pleasure in her competence and, like all true show-offs, gets things done. She doesn’t toot her own horn, but rather lets her work speak for her. The other way she shows off is by doing her best for others. Helping others achieve their goals is the most effective way to get what you want. People you help will reciprocate with the cooperation and respect you need to meet your own objectives. Cultivate these attitudes and habits to show off your full abilities:

Be Your Best and Be Proud of It

“Never, ever, ever be as good as you’re going to be.” Look for ways to improve – then you’ll have every reason to show off your efforts and achievements:

- **Strive for “relentless improvement”** – No matter how good you are at something, you can always improve. The key is to challenge yourself and educate yourself continually. If you feel comfortable in your job, then you’ve stopped growing. Stay current, relevant and energized. Ask yourself whether circumstances are really holding you back or if you simply need to try harder.
- **Emulate “Joe and Muhammad”** – Although they are now retired, American athletes Joe Namath and Muhammad Ali once showed off shamelessly, but they had the chops to deliver on their claims of excellence. Because their skills backed up their boasts, they weren’t bragging. On the other hand, top performers who don’t require fanfare get credit for being more classy. Whatever style of showing off you prefer, be sure that you do your job and do it well.
- **Don’t be “all hat and no cattle”** – That is how Texans label people who present

“Showing off is not about doing big things or being a superstar. Showing off is about small things done with attention and intention.”

“Your value...will skyrocket if you adopt the strategy of taking action rather than hesitating, questioning and doubting.”

“The best way to get what you want is to be sure the other person is getting what they want.”

“If you don’t understand that, then you don’t understand the basic fundamental operating principles of business, relationships, politics or playground dynamics.”

“We love people who do what they say they will do. Consistency is the foundation of success and the great business builder...the definition of integrity.”

“The people that are...a pleasure to be around are the ones who have let go of what you think of them.”

themselves well but lack true skill. If you can’t show results, you’re not a show-off. To prove that you’re better than your competitors, simply outperform them. Let your strengths shine and speak for themselves. Overcommitting is deadly in business. Always doing what you promise is an old-fashioned but respected virtue.

- **Don’t let past achievement be “the enemy of future success”** – Taking pride in your accumulated expertise is natural, but beware of complacency. Don’t get stuck thinking that whatever worked yesterday will work tomorrow. The market you dominated in the past may no longer exist. To be forward-thinking, you don’t necessarily need new ideas, but rather a way to clear your mind of old ones, even those that may seem to still work. And take your happiness seriously. Don’t do only what you’re good at, but also do work you enjoy.
- **Give yourself your “own stamp of approval”** – Worrying about what others think of you is a waste of time. Instead, spend your time doing work that matters to you and behaving in a way that reflects your values and makes you feel better about yourself. People enjoy being around those who are confident and happy in their lives.

Take Responsibility for Your Success

Decide what it will take to make your skills better, to serve your customers more impressively or to boost your business. No one else is responsible for your life. Seize your destiny:

- **Adopt “the power strategy”** – When you take responsibility, you empower yourself instead of blaming others and handing them control over a situation that affects you. If you don’t like the way things are – your boss, your job, your friends or your life – then decide how you will change your circumstances. It doesn’t matter whether something is your fault or not; until you take charge of your choices, nothing will ever change.
- **Muster “grand stupidity and absurd bravery”** – Stop listening to all the reasons why you can’t achieve your goals and start making your dreams a reality. Your assumptions and inhibitions can keep you from tapping into your full potential, so learn to be daring. Don’t wait for ideal circumstances. Dive into each endeavor with the understanding that you can adjust your plans as you go, if necessary.
- **“Get in the boat and go”** – If you earn a reputation for taking action, managers will hire you, co-workers will respect you and customers will seek your services. People who act decisively and quickly enjoy more opportunities than those who hesitate. If your ideas fail or your plans falter, learn from your mistakes and try again.
- **Cater to an “I want it yesterday society”** – Quickness counts and makes an impression. You can’t afford to make your clients wait. That simply gives them time to line up someone else. Become a quick responder (that means immediately, not within 24 hours) and follow up on all communications. If you’re running behind schedule, be honest and direct about the delay. Learn from the example of Netflix, a fast-paced movie rental service. Customers order a DVD of a movie online, receive it in the mail, watch it, put it back in the mail and, usually the next day, receive a new one.
- **“Expect to connect”** – Consider how you connect. Do you look people in the eyes? Are you attentive? Don’t be afraid to reach out to others. On a basic level, everyone craves love, so let it be your guiding principle, as it is for Southwest Airlines. Its stock symbol delivers the whole message: LUV.

“If I can learn to change the way I look at my world, then I can change my world. If I can see opportunity where my competitor can’t, then I win.”

“Past success can be, and usually is, the enemy of future success.”

“If you don’t have what you want, it’s probably because you haven’t yet let go of something that’s in your way. Something in your life is taking up space.”

“It takes time and energy to work at developing and living by a clear, strong set of values. You have to clear the space to let those values take hold. But the payoff is considerable.”

Be Positive

Your choice of a mindset is powerful: “The world is, quite literally, meaningless until you assign something to it,” so decide to cultivate a sense of optimism and make it your own:

- **“Look at the world through a positive lens”** – Many people think listening to self-improvement tapes and consciously trying to maintain a positive attitude is silly and fantastical. But you actually can change how you perceive reality. Remember that you can always look at your situation a different way. If you deliberately open your mind to the possibility of alternative views, you will become more innovative than your competition. Your optimism and verve will impress people. Although developing the idea that the world is out to help you isn’t easy, it’s just as valid as – and more self-fulfilling than – the common view that everyone is against you. Which would you rather believe? Taking on this belief doesn’t mean that you’d back down in a fight or that you’re soft. It just means you’re optimistic.
- **“Let it go”** – Releasing obstacles in your life is a powerful step, though it’s easier said than done. Often the barriers and excuses that hold you back feel like a security blanket. Letting go means giving up all the behaviors that make you complacent. You probably already know who or what you need to release. Perhaps you need to let go of someone else’s idea of happiness or success. Maybe you need to move or, conversely, you need to give up the idea that you can only be successful elsewhere. Though letting go is hard, the reward is ample: You make room in your life for what you really want.
- **Accept that “whatever happens is normal”** – Stuff happens. Terrible things and irritating things, things you don’t anticipate – these events are all just a part of life and, therefore, normal. Some people will find something to complain about in any situation. When flights are cancelled, you’ll hear “victims” wondering aloud why it had to happen to them. Or you’ll see others grow angry and try to force people to help them. In challenging situations like these, “learn to accept life on its own terms.” Remember that normal does not always mean convenient or the way you want things to be. Rather than getting bogged down in negativity, consider what you can do to reduce the damage, fix the problem or even create an opportunity.
- **“Get ready to switch gears”** – Nobody knows for sure what’s going to happen next. Learn to be comfortable with life’s uncertainties. If you’re looking for predictability, find it in your values, which can help you prepare to handle whatever life throws at you.
- **“Be you”** – Don’t fret if you don’t know what you’re doing. You’re not the only one who sometimes has to make things up as you go along. At some point, everyone has doubts about their abilities, even experts. Stop trying to be someone else or even an ideal version of yourself. Allow yourself to be uniquely you.

Dare to be Creative and Innovative

Great ideas are everywhere; you just have to know how to spot them, make use of them and show them off in your work:

- **Know that “sometimes the best ideas aren’t logical”** – Albert Einstein famously said, “Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.” When forming new ideas, rein in your rational side and unleash your imagination. Remember that innovative concepts often seem crazy at first. Copernicus’s wild notion that the earth revolved around the sun earned him the label of heretic. His society thoroughly

“Accept life on its own terms. Things aren’t the way they’re supposed to be. They are the way they are.”

“When you have exhausted all possibilities, remember this: You haven’t.”
 [– Thomas Edison]

“The great disadvantage of experience is the loss of the grand stupidity and absurd bravery that comes with not knowing what works...when you don’t know what works, you’ll try anything.”

resisted his powerful new idea – that is, until it became common knowledge.

- **Become an “idea sponge”** – Learn to absorb inspiration wherever you go, even from unlikely sources. You don’t have to be a genius to churn out brilliant ideas. It just takes a garden-variety imagination and a new perspective. If you’re generating ideas on a regular basis, some of them will be bad ideas. View them as opportunities to improve and learn the next time around. Don’t try to avoid failure by doing nothing or your competitors will leave you in their wake. To maintain an edge, focus on your clients and ask yourself what you can do to show them how important they are.
- **“Get back inside the box”** – While you’re busy generating brilliant ideas, don’t neglect the most obvious opportunity for improvement: your everyday performance. Build on your strengths and shore up your weak spots. Become better at what you already do.
- **Learn to navigate “the Golden Circle of Ignorance”** – As you live your life, you will move through phases of expertise and ignorance. Take a lesson from this ongoing cycle of experience and beware of relying too heavily on what you already know. It may be keeping you from recognizing what you need to learn. Starting from scratch allows you to draw different and new conclusions. Surround yourself not with like-minded people, but with people who see things differently from you. They offer fresh perspectives that challenge the way you think and that keep you on your toes.
- **“Understand the power of adaptive innovation”** – If you are open-minded, you’ll start to see amazing ideas everywhere, just waiting to be adopted for your own purposes. Think of various experiences at the mall. When the barista at Starbucks says, “You’ve got to try this pastry,” he or she is using two ideas that work in any business – ask for the sale and point out options your customer might not know are available. Seeing a deluxe Jaguar parked in the mall outside the clothing stores, and realizing that it is separated from other cars so it can make a bigger impression, also conveys an idea that translates well. Go somewhere where your product or skill is distinctive. Other basic ideas abound, for instance, simplifying your clients’ lives, creating a community for them or offering free samples.

A Sense of Purpose

Nothing drives a business or a career like having a strong purpose that makes the way ahead clearer and more meaningful.

- **Discover “what matters most”** – What will put you over the top? Know what motivates you. Don’t say it’s your family if it’s really making the next deal happen. Fooling yourself won’t help you with your family or your business. To be effective, link your emotions to your values. If they aren’t connected, you’re just wasting your energy in needless conflict. The leaders of the most enduring companies spend time finding and implementing their values every day.

About the Author

Joe Calloway is an international speaker, a business performance consultant and a major show-off. He is also the author of *Becoming a Category of One* and *Indispensable*.