



# Dealing with CRAP - the forgotten secret of success

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It has to be said that every time we try to improve our lives, our relationships or our business, we encounter more unwanted challenges in the process. The day we decide to take up running in the morning is the day it starts to rain. The day we decide to start working 'on' our business instead of 'in' is the day when we're needed the most on deck. The day we decide to try to be more patient with people is the day when three cars cut us off on the way to work. It's as if the universe is saying to us, 'So you've decided to take me on? Let's just see how strong you really are.'

**\\ This is why the majority of people who set a goal never actually achieve it. In fact they give up after only a few weeks... \\**

I honestly believe the majority of people who fall short of reaching a specific goal such as starting their own business, losing weight, quitting smoking or driving a deluxe car do so because they only prepare themselves for the rewards and benefits and fail to acknowledge the sacrifice and hard work it requires.

That poses the question, 'Are we as teachers, mentors, coaches and role models setting up the next generation for failure due to not preparing them for the pitfalls on the road to success?'

I have read countless books and quotes in the coaching and motivation space and heard many speakers. The consistent message is to follow your dreams, think positive, make a difference and be passionate. They are all good pieces of advice and definitely have their place, but the use of them independently without the capacity to deal with setbacks and rejections can be potentially harmful.

I have met many people whose passion was to pursue their dream, only for that dream to turn into a nightmare due to setback after setback. It's almost like they were singing a line from the famous Coldplay song 'The Scientist' - nobody said it was easy but no one ever said it would be so hard.

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I completely concur that we should be coaching and encouraging people to improve their current performance and position regardless of their age, ability level or status. But if we are to keep the integrity of our industry intact, we also need to be preparing individuals and teams for the hard work and resilience that is required. Failing to do so in my opinion would be an abuse of power and would be similar to a car yard not revealing the price of each vehicle sold and then sending an invoice six months later - it just wouldn't happen.

We have to be prepared to put up with CRAP along the way.

## C - Criticism

Anytime we look to improve our current position, it tends to make the people around us uncomfortable. Of course there will be individuals who will support and encourage us, but be prepared, there will be others who will criticise and condemn - some of whom may be the ones we least expect.

When it comes to criticism, learning to recognise its different source - from the people we don't respect to the people we do respect - is highly recommended.

If the criticism is coming from the people we don't respect and who can't teach us anything, it's best to ignore it as it is more their issue than ours.

If the criticism is coming from the people we do respect and can learn valuable lessons from, then listen up - it's no longer criticism, it's feedback. Understanding the difference between the two will be vital to our ongoing performance and commitment.

## R - Rejection

'No' is a hard word to say at times, but it is an even harder word to hear. It is human nature to feel disappointed, even dejected when we are turned down from an opportunity.

Be it a sporting team, a job promotion, a sales pitch or asking someone out, the words 'I'm not interested', 'back luck', 'not today' or a straight out 'no' can rock our confidence to the core.

Having the ability to use the rejection as a source of motivation to improve for the next opportunity is what I believe has the most say in whether you achieve your goal or not. Again, be prepared for rejection. It's a big cog on the way to improvement.

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## A - Apathy

Apathy is the opposite of motivation. That feeling of 'I can't be stuffed'. Everybody I have encountered has at one time or another suffered from apathy, even the most hardened of athletes. The misconception out there is that some people are just naturally motivated, but when those who are perceived as naturals are feeling tired or lethargic they just choose to do it anyway. That's the difference. When apathy comes knocking (and it will), dig in, get tough and remember why you started in the first place.

We are not computers and we can't expect the upgrade button to fix our problems and shortcomings.

Our positive choices and actions do that, especially in those times when we can't be bothered.

## P - Pressure

Show me someone who has never been under pressure and I'll show you someone who is probably not telling the truth. It is a part of life and comes in many forms. It can come from expectations, time, external influences, internal grief or that feeling of being overwhelmed.

Firstly, I believe it's important to recognise early on that pressure will be a part of our lives and then how to best deal and work through it. Everyone's coping mechanisms are different, but finding something that will help is crucial - going for a walk, going for a run or the gym, getting out and catching up with friends or listening to our favourite song. Something that gets the body moving is always a good start.

Secondly, and most importantly, if we can become more proactive in our planning and decision making we will eliminate a lot of pressure from day to day. Maybe leaving that assignment or report to the night before our deadline isn't such a great idea? Be organised and prepare well.

This is by no means a piece of writing preventing you from committing to constant improvement, but if you can couple the planning aspect with the preparing aspect of dealing with CRAP (Criticism - Rejection - Apathy - Pressure), it sets up a great platform for your future success.

Sometimes the most enjoyment doesn't come from the benefits of an achievement: it's knowing what you had to overcome to get you there.