

: What is needed for success?



By [John Gatherer](#)

24 Jun 2015

In Chinese philosophy "yin and yang", is used to describe how polar opposites or contrary forces are interconnected and interdependent in the natural world and how they impact on each other. One of the greatest challenges to individuals navigating the rapidly changing, uncertain white waters of life, is to become adept at 'riding the waves', staying on top and finding a balance between the many paradoxes and conflicts that we face in day-to-day life.

Jim Collins the author of *Good to Great* came up with an interesting phrase called the "*genius of AND vs. the tyranny of OR*". It is often not about making a choice between two opposing paths of action, but about finding a balance between two different ends of the same continuum.

We have seen this in many of the highly effective people with which we have worked who have a good understanding of yin and yang - they can be shy and fearless, be highly conceptual as well as attending to detail, display empathy and are tough, be strategic and operational.

Meta-competencies

Successful individuals also have a strong set of core or meta-competencies in their personality that characterise their effectiveness in all that they do. They have a unique understanding of their impact on others and are able to adapt their behaviour to people and situations without compromising their principles and who they are.

From our experience in training, coaching and developing thousands of leaders and talented individuals over the past 20 years, the following have emerged as our top 8 differentiating meta-competencies:

- **Awareness** is the insight of both internal and external stimuli, events and behaviours impacting you - what we pay attention to
- **Authenticity** - being true to yourself, feeling and expressing your emotions, acting on your intuitions and following your dreams
- **Courage** is not the absence of fear, but feeling the fear and taking action anyway
- **Decisiveness** is the willingness to act on your intuition and accept the risk and consequences
- **Resilience** is the internal strength and determination necessary to persevere with setbacks and obstacles
- **Humility** is being unpretentious - not believing you are better or more important than others
- **Drive** is the relentless pursuit of goals, the courage of your convictions and the belief in succeeding
- **Energy** is the amount of internal resources you have to initiate create, and perform work and to go the extra mile

Derailing behaviours

As important as it is to develop and hone core competencies such as the selected list, is the ability to cope with and address those dysfunctional qualities known as derailing behaviours - the dark side of our character. Derailing behaviours are often entrenched in personality traits and display themselves as lack of awareness, 'blind spots', lack of emotional intelligence or stressful workplace triggers. Derailers are those abrasive mannerisms, toxic reactions and fatal flaws that devalue contributions and drain energy and team spirit AND impact results, relationships and trust. People are often competent at what they do but keep letting themselves down with their negative attitude and inappropriate or insensitive behaviour.

Some examples of derailing behaviours are passive - aggression, arrogance, volatility, cynicism, distrust, cautious, hypocrisy, perfectionism etc. We all have them to varying degrees, but the trick is to be aware of the consequences of these behaviours and how to manage them. Remember the yin and the yang of life - derailers can be the shadow side of our bright personality!

Remain Exceptional

The true survivors and achievers in the world of work within our relentless changing environments are those individuals who differentiate themselves from others by offering a consistent, high-quality, value-adding contribution. There is a saying: 'If you're good, you're good', that can ensure your climb up the ladder of success - but under the pressures of economic pressures, competitive skills, stakeholder expectations and challenging realities, there is no room for complacency. There is a continuous requirement to deliver the goods and build and manage your credibility, personal brand and reputation.

In closing, this quotation is offered as food for thought and a prompt for action - "People hear what we say, but see what we do - and seeing is believing....!"

ABOUT JOHN GATHERER

John has co-authored the best-selling book, "I am Talent", focusing on developing individuals' potential, self-mastery and career aspirations, has written numerous articles and presented at conferences, locally and internationally.

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