

"Hiring Winners" by Mirza Yawar Baig

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Mirza Yawar Baig has been a prominent figure in Entrepreneurship, Leadership Development, Business Consultation as well social causes. With a long and prolific career he has continuously interacted with a diaspora of people those who have contributed abundantly to their work places or within the sphere of their interactions. An aspect that comes through for most people who are doing something towards personal and professional growth, is that they possess winning qualities. He is out with his book "HiringWinners which tells us why, it is important for employers to look for winners and how everyone can be winners.

Why did you decide to write a book on hiring winners?

I had been teaching my course on hiring techniques called 'Hiring Winners' since 2000 when I decided to put down the fundamentals in a book. In my practice of helping business leaders develop a winning culture, the thing that I have been most keenly aware of, is the need to hire winners. It is true that good training can achieve much. But it is equally true that no matter how good the training course or the trainer there are some things which can't be 'trained in'. Losers will never become winners because of training. As they say, 'If you want someone to climb trees, hire a monkey.' Hiring a rabbit and training him will get

you nowhere because there are certain intrinsic abilities, orientations and attitudes that are required even for the training to take hold. The qualities, characteristics, behaviors, values and beliefs that make a winner must necessarily be hired. Skills can be trained. You can train a person of high integrity how to write accurate financial accounts. But to try to inculcate integrity into someone who is essentially dishonest is not something that any amount of training can achieve.

How can we find out what these intrinsic qualities are?

How can we ensure that the person we hire comes pre-loaded with these qualities and that he or she has and will continue to exercise them? How can I know what the effect was of their displaying and practicing the desirable behaviors in their life in the past, so that I have some idea of what I am likely to see here? How do the values and motivations of the individual sync with my organization's culture and ideology? What is the cost of all this? All these and other questions and their answers, is what this book is about.

Who is a winner?

You are a winner if you are willing to take responsibility. To take ownership for all that you say and do. For the effect of your words and actions on others and on the world. Not merely to accept accountability but to actively seek it. To stand up and say, "Here I am. You can count on me." And if things go wrong, as sometimes they will, to say, "I am responsible for what has happened. Here is what I learnt from this. And this is how we will ensure this never happens again."

How can employers recognise they are hiring winners?

For that you have to read the book. But here goes to answer your question: Winners are people who instinctively understand these things, even if they may not be able to state them clearly. You can see this from the choices that they have made in life. Choices that the method you will learn in this book will help you to see. Look for them and recognize them. And remember that the truest way to recognize them is sometimes to recognize the fear and humility that you will sense in your own soul as you listen to someone else's story.

Winners are people who challenge the status quo. Who refuse to accept the 'accepted' just because those around them accept it. Winners are people who will challenge you to live by your stated ideals. Who refuse to pretend that they still respect you if you give in to your fears and lie to yourself. Winners by the look in their eyes remind you that you have failed yourself, and by their look give you the courage to get up and start again. Winners disagree with you and challenge you to prove your theories. They make you exercise more rigor in what you do, refuse to accept mediocrity, set goals that frighten you so that the adrenaline you need to accomplish them is poured into your veins. Winners challenge you to constantly learn, grow and mature. They challenge you to prove to them and to yourself that you are indeed worthy of respect.

Is there a certain kind of interview that can determine winning capabilities in individuals?

Yes there is. It is called by various names but it consists of probing for what the person has done in his / her life until you met them which will tell you that they can fulfill the needs you are hiring them for. What

a person has done before, he/she can do again. The rest is conjecture, hope, aspiration, good intention but not fact. That is what we focus on.

How can individuals train themselves to be winners?

Learn to own responsibility. Accept that you are in control of your life and then do what it takes to move your life to where you want to be. Whatever is happening in your life – good or bad – is because of what you do. You own one side of the equation and what you do with it, affects the solution. For example in the equation $2 \times 3 = 6$ you own the first part i.e. 2. So if you want the 6 to change to 12; you have to change your 2 to 4. People are stuck on the other side of the equation which they don't control and blame the solution on that. This is a big mistake. The solution is in our hands if we realize that we control one side and that is all that is necessary to change our lives.

I have seen innumerable examples of this in my life. I also started literally with the clothes on my back because I started my work life in Guyana in 1979 and Guyana Airways managed to lose both my suitcases when I moved from India. They are still gracing someone else's home. So I landed without any luggage. I could have curled up and died. I didn't. I was too busy being excited about being in a country on the other side of the world. This attitude of excitement has never let me down.

It is the switch in the mind – accepting ownership for your own destiny – that is the difficult part. Once you do that, the rest is easy.

What are some important , "inherent and developed", qualities of winners?

1. Vision
2. Inspire followers
3. Single-mindedness of purpose
4. Strategy
5. Faith
6. Deal with Ambiguity
7. Execution

Details of each of these are in the book.

Under what circumstances to winners not perform?

Winners tend to lose steam if they are needlessly restricted by bureaucratic procedures. They have little patience with excuse-makers and blame-shifters. They take responsibility for their work and like to work in teams of people like themselves.

What is the responsibility of the employer to nurture and support winners in his establishment? In an organization , the winner is at a lot of times at the mercy of his superiors.

Organizations must ask if they want to win or lose. Organizations need winners, not vice versa. Winners will find organizations which have the perspective to value them or they will set up their own organizations. Meanwhile organizations which devalued and discarded winners perish. What you say about

winners being at the mercy of their superiors in unfortunately right and when that happens a lot of their energy goes in coping rather than in something useful. That is why it is essential to hire winners because winners attract winners. Losers do the same.

How can people imbibe a winning attitude?

Get them to see the value for themselves by changing their attitude. I have found this to be a fairly easy thing to do. After all we are all genetically programmed for survival and growth and once you get someone to see how they can gain, then there's no holding them back. In my practice as a Life Coach I do this all the time, much to my own delight.

Can people who lose, also become winners?

Anyone can become a winner. We are not born to lose. We are born to win. The problem is that sometimes we get into a wrong track. But as soon as we make up our mind to change we can. As I said, it is really quite simple.

You favourite example of a winner?

President Nelson Mandela: Amazing case of a man who refused to lose hope in the face of apparently insurmountable odds.

On Winning- DISCIPLINE

People often ask me for the secret of leadership. I tell them to come close and then I whisper it in their ears; after all it is a secret, see? It is one word; DISCIPLINE. That is all. Every one of us has the same time; 24 hours. It is what we do in it that counts. It is not the amount of our resources but what we did with them. It is not the talents that we were born with but how we leveraged them and used them which will determine how they benefit us.

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