



# latest word

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## Straight Line Success

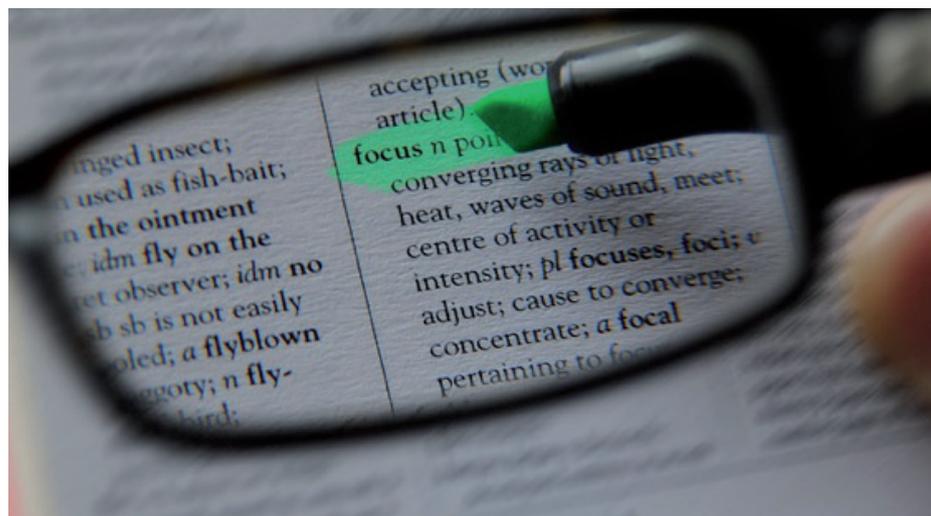
***"A river cuts through a rock, not because of its power, but its persistence."***

Recently my teenage daughter set her heart on getting a particular top in a well known high street store. She spotted the top on their website, and it was also a limited edition so it wasn't in plentiful supply. They didn't have her size available online so she took to phoning around the stores. It was sold out in most of the outlets but two of them reported that their system said they had one or two in their particular stores. So she convinced my wife to drive across the city to one store and then out west to the other. One store indicated they had one in stock, as per their system, but it wasn't to be found and the other store had two in stock on their system, but only one could be found, which unfortunately was too big, so mother and daughter returned empty handed. My daughter kept trying online but no joy and my wife would drop into the various outlets if she was passing but no joy either. On one of these occasions, I was with my wife and we went into their Grafton Street store, and we used my phone to look up the item online in order to show the shop assistants, but despite their valiant efforts and enthusiasm, we were unsuccessful in our mission 😊, once again.

As a side story the shop assistants in that Grafton Street store were gems. Their passion for the products, their shared enthusiasm and desire to help us succeed in our mission was fabulous. I

can honestly say that despite not getting the result we wanted, I truly enjoyed the experience. Every now and again you come across employees who are worth their weight in gold, and I'm sure their employers very often don't even realise it. Take a bow the fabulous staff of River Island, Grafton Street on that sunny Saturday afternoon in July.

Anyway at this point I was now getting bitten by the bug to land this much desired piece of clothing 😊, and now that I had the photo and reference number on my phone, I took to



dropping into River Island when I was passing a branch and enquire would they, by any miracle, have this particular top in stock.

Now I have a bit of a difficulty accepting that I can't have something I want, whether that be tickets for a particular concert that's sold out or even a job or a client, and I'm usually extra motivated if it's something for my children, and so now I wanted to land this prized piece of River Island merchandise and took action.

I checked for stock online and dropped into stores. I was in their Swords branch and enquired showing my picture and product number. Their system said they had one in stock but again, it couldn't be found but the shop assistant told me that they were due to have a sale that Thursday and it may have been taken off the floor and gone out to be re-priced for the sale and I should check in on Thursday. What's this, a glimmer of hope??

So Thursday morning came and I checked their website, it says there are two in Blanchardstown only, and none in Swords or any of the other branches. So I phoned Blanchardstown and was told their system said two but we'd been down that road before and in that same branch. I asked could they physically verify that they actually had them in stock and I'd drop straight over to purchase it. The guy on the phone said he couldn't do that and as they were in the sale, he couldn't hold them either, it was first come first served.

realise I should have brought backup 😊. I went over to a guy with a walkie talkie and told him I called this morning and it was the same guy. He looks up his handheld device and checks for stock and he says they are all gone and his system says none left in stock. That's it, I tried hard but it looks like I may have to accept defeat on this occasion.

I double check with him if he had the correct product number and he checks his system again. It says two in stock, he had typed in the number incorrectly the first time. Game on. However, he said they could be anywhere or could actually be sold, as it takes 15/20 minutes for his handheld to update after it goes through the system as sold.

I go to one of the shop assistants and tell her what I'm trying to find to see if she could help or point me in the right direction. She looks through the racks for me as I look at others but comes back with no joy. It could be sold or maybe somebody has tried it on and it might be up near the changing rooms. She then goes on her break. I mention it to another shop assistant who hadn't remembered seeing it but would have a look around for it, while I checked did anybody maybe try it on and leave it at the changing rooms. No joy there either but she looked up her handheld and it said just one now in stock. I'm beginning to think it would have been easier to get one of Willie Wonka's Golden Tickets at this stage but I'm not done yet.

The clock is ticking now as I'll need to get going shortly as I have a meeting soon. I speak to another shop assistant who did remember seeing the top but it was a week or two ago but she'll look too. So I go back to rack one, go elbow to elbow, and look again, then rack two, going through them one by one, while I had two other shop assistants looking too. I think I was the only guy in the shop and they could tell I was an amateur. One after one, no joy but just as hope was waning again and defeat might have to be accepted, over comes the girl who had seen the top before and found it. Halleluiah, now was it the right size? Yessss, the correct size. I've done it !! Mission accomplished !!

I resist the urge to kiss the girl that found it but thank her very sincerely. Another River Island gem. I go up to the till and pay for it, not fully wanting to celebrate until I had actually left the store with top in hand. As I leave the store the other girl who was helping me look came over to me and asked if I had found it. I did, and pointed to the other girl who has located it for me. She was delighted too. Another gem, finding joy in a happy customer.



So I drop over to their Blanchardstown store, which conveniently I had a meeting close by anyway, and up I went into the store. The sale has been on since 8am and I'm arriving around 10:30, and it's just racks and racks of clothes out, and the store is packed with experienced sales shoppers. I'm out of my depth here but I decide to go elbow to elbow with these seasoned bargain hunters. My spirits drop a little and



Now I know I've made this little shopping mission sound a bit like I've been trying to find the solution to global warming but there are so many lessons in that story, which is why I've told it to you. My little mission to try to and achieve an outcome for my daughter is such a metaphor for achieving success in business or any other aspects of life.

### **Lesson One: An extremely clearly defined goal and desired outcome.**

I wanted to find product number xxx in an exact size and no later than a certain date which was her birthday. There was no doubt about what I wanted to achieve and could easily explain it clearly to anyone who might be able to help me achieve it.

### **Lesson Two: Clearly Defined Planned Action**

I was very clear about the steps I needed to take to achieve my goal. I was crystal clear about what I needed to do.

### **Lesson Three: If one way didn't work, I'd quickly decide on another and act.**

I was committed to my goal and if one strategy didn't get me the result, I'd quickly decide on another course and act. I was also committed to repeat steps until I succeeded. Note the key word, committed. Rarely is anything worthwhile achieved without commitment. The most committed wins.

### **Lesson Four: Perseverance. Even when success seems improbable, and disappointments arise, you must persist.**

The path to success is rarely a straight line. There will be setbacks, there will be disappointments but you must persist in the face of adversity. Look at

the great achievements in sport, business or life by those who never gave up.

So my questions to you for the goals you want to achieve in your business or life:

- ◆ Do you know exactly what you want? How crystal clear have you defined it and can you easily and concisely explain your goal or mission to others?
- ◆ Have you decided on clearly defined actions? What are you actually going to do to turn your goal or dream into reality?
- ◆ Do you clearly review your actions for success? Are your actions actually working and if not, have you the flexibility and determination to try a different course.
- ◆ Why do you want this? Are you passionate about achieving this goal? Why? Why? Why? Because if that's not strong enough, you won't have the heart to persevere and overcome the almost certain setbacks and disappointments along the way.

Every success has depended on these four success factors, have you got what it takes to succeed?

The path to success is very rarely straight. Sure if it was easy, anybody could do it.



### **Last word**

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