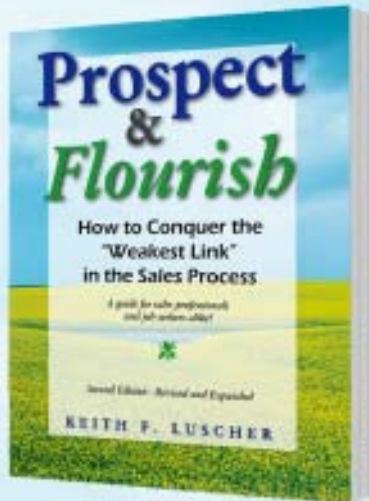


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The Will to Act: A Lesson from Batman

by Keith F. Luscher
Author, *Prospect & Flourish*

At one point over the holidays, when I should have been updating my plans for this coming year, I found myself watching *Batman Begins*—the 2005 predecessor to *The Dark Knight* (which just came out on DVD last month). As the movie chronicles Bruce Wayne's ninja-style training on a remote mountaintop in Asia, I am often moved by the words of Wayne's mentor, Henri Ducard, played by Liam Neeson:

“Training is nothing! Will is everything!” Ducard tells Wayne as they spar across a frozen lake. “The will to act!”

It was a pity that a character who played such a strong role in Bruce Wayne's transformation into the legendary superhero, turned out to be one his greatest arch enemies. But the lesson I took from that cold mountaintop (in the comfort of my couch!) is that training is indeed meaningless if it is not used—if it is not acted upon.

Why do so many of us fail to act? We invest in programs, in books and videos, yet we remain stuck in our old routines. Or worse, we go back to doing nothing. We know what we must do; yet we lack the will to do it. *In reality, we lack the courage.*

Greatness cannot exist without courage. Much of the erosion in business and our culture today is the result of people *lacking the courage to do what they already know they should do*. Consider that historically, many people who have fallen from grace were those who had the highest training and ethics, but lacked the courage—the *will*—to act.

Courage does not come easily. Remember, when we speak of courage, we are not referring to fearlessness or foolhardiness. **Courage cannot exist without fear.** It's human to be afraid—as is the temptation to take the “easy” way out of a situation. However, what separates goodness from greatness is the courage to do what is right each and every day.

Author Tim Kimmel, in his book *Legacy of Love*, describes courage this way: “Although it takes unusual courage to die for something; it takes an even greater courage to *live* for something. Dying for a right cause takes one right choice; living for a right cause requires hundreds of choices each day, every day.”

Bruce Wayne faced his fear, which gave him the courage and the will to advance something he believed in. What about you? **Do you truly believe in the value you can bring to peoples' lives in 2009?** Do you know what you must do? If so, what might be holding you back, today?

Don't worry about tomorrow or next week. You are here, now. For today, identify one action for today, and take it. Summon the will.