

The Long Game

Tags: [#career](#) [#personal-leadership](#)

Creator: dorie-clark

Dialogue

You decided on a career in academia, but it didn't work out.

We all want the long-game, but super hard in practice. One thing that helps is thinking about timeframes...

Start doing the work for 2-3 years before you see any results.

What's helped you the keep the faith?

Problems:

1. People revisit strategy too often.
2. People don't stop when they should.

How do you know when it's moved past the impatience point and failure point to something really just not working?

Ask yourself:

- Why am I doing this?
- How has it worked for others? What do my trusted advisors say?

Sometimes we should throw in the towel. How do we know when it's time?

What have you changed your mind on?

Quotes

CHAPTER 8

Highlight [page 98]: Psychologists call it “hedonic adaptation” – the fact that the happiness or excitement we feel about something tends to fade, and we revert to our baseline levels. Getting published regularly in august publications would have seemed like an amazing victory to the Ron of a year or two prior. But now he had different problems to contend with.

Highlight [page 99]: We see others who seem to be doing better or going faster, and we wonder what we’re doing wrong. Even when we understand intellectually that there

are setbacks and false starts – Harry Potter was rejected 12 times, after all 1– we still can't believe they're happening to us. I'm no different. I'd always done well in school, and I admired my college professors. How fantastic to get paid to read, and think, and talk about ideas all day! I was hooked, and decided on a career in academia. I was accepted to a master's program in theological studies at Harvard Divinity School – just as I'd been accepted to every college I applied to – and figured it'd be no different when it came time to enter a doctoral program. Of course, I might not get in everywhere, but I was sure I'd find an academic home. But that's not how it turned out. For the first time in my life, I was rejected by every single program I applied to. When I saw the final thin envelope in my mailbox, I was beside myself: I had no Plan B. It had never occurred to me that I'd need one.

Highlight [page 101]: I tell participants in my Recognized Expert course that they have to be willing to do the work of sharing their ideas publicly for at least 2-3 years before they start to see any results. It's a huge leap of faith – so much time invested, for a very uncertain outcome. It's easy to see why others wouldn't bother, or would quickly give up. But that, of course, becomes your competitive advantage. If you can practice the art of strategic patience – not blindly waiting for good things to magically happen, but understanding the work that needs to be done and making it happen – you're far better off than almost anyone else in your realm. The timing varies for everyone, of course. But in my experience, and often for my clients, around 2-3 years in, you do start to see the 'raindrops': the little victories that give you faith you're on the right path. And by Year 5, you've opened up an almost insurmountable distance between yourself and the competition. When potential clients type a term into a search engine, it's your articles that come up. When they listen to a podcast about your area of expertise, you're the guest. And so – when they want to hire a speaker, or a high-level employee, or an expert consultant to advise them you're the only logical choice.

Highlight [page 103]: This makes sense in the world of technology, but it's equally true in the world of business. As Derek Sivers, the music entrepreneur of "hell yeah or no" fame, described in one podcast interview, his company "didn't really take off for four years...Very often I meet people who start their dream idea and they're a few months into it and they say, 'It's just not going well!' I'm like, 'It's been a few months! Come on!' When I was three years into CD Baby, it was just me and a guy in my house." 4By year 10, he had sold the company for \$22 million.

Highlight [page 104]: Being clear on that helps you avoid the false temptation to measure yourself against others. "You have to keep that sense of values in front of you at all times, so that when you're triggered with one of those vanity metrics, or your sense of wellbeing is anxious, or when you feel like you're on uneven footing about, 'That article wasn't accepted,' or, 'I didn't get hired for that speech,' or 'That client picked somebody else, or 'My boss didn't like my idea,' you're ready for that moment."

Highlight [page 104]: Do you actually know what it takes to succeed? Most of us don't. And as a result, our expectations can sometimes be way out of line. For the 500+

professionals I've worked with in the Recognized Expert community, I've noticed a common tendency: they want to revisit their strategy too often. (I used to be just as guilty of this as anyone.) They're not seeing results as quickly as they want, so they become restless and want to change focus. Should I start a podcast? Maybe I should be vlogging! What am I missing? What else should I be doing? This creates strategic whiplash, and a scenario where you never see results because you're not giving it enough time. What we need to do, instead, is two simple things – which are simple in theory, but hard to stay disciplined enough to do. The first is to identify role models who have accomplished all, or part, of what you'd like to. That's not just to gawk or admire, but to study their path deeply, so you can understand exactly what they did on their way to success and can interrogate whether the same moves are right for you. And second is to get a clear understanding of their timeline, so you'll know how long, realistically, it should take for you to show results.

Highlight [page 105]: Comparison isn't, by itself, a harmful practice. Seeing what others have done can be a way of inspiring ourselves, or sparking new ideas. But our comparisons have to be realistic. We can't take a cursory glance at someone's bio and assume that things came quickly or easily for them. When we realize, as David Burkus did, that our heroes have a 17-year head start, it's far easier to be gentle with ourselves and remember that strategic patience and hard work, over time, eventually pays off. As David says, "Impatience isn't necessarily a bad thing if it motivates you to work. It's only a bad thing if you tell yourself you're failing."

Highlight [page 106]: Creating and sharing new ideas can be a fraught process. Some may be well received, while others are ignored or vilified. As the author Seth Godin likes to say about new endeavors: "This might not work." That can feel very risky, both emotionally and to our overall sense of professional competence. You need a kind and wise sounding board.

References