



## If You're Not Proud, You're Not Done

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**W**hen we were young, we sought approval from our parents. As we grew older, we tried to impress our teacher, show off to our girlfriend or boyfriend, and suck up to our boss. Maybe it's time to impress the most important person in life . . . Yourself. Unfortunately, some people can't say that they're proud of what they do.

If you don't put your heart into your activities, if you hand in incomplete work as finished, if you don't do your best every time you start something, then you're doing yourself a tremendous disservice. The truth is, if you're not proud of what you do, you're not done. This doesn't mean that you have to win the race, secure every promotion, or be named Parent of the Year, but at least you'll know, in your heart, that you've done your best.

### What Makes People Proud?

There are many things that make us proud — getting a promotion, making a difference in someone's life, buying a dream house, being recognized as the best in a particular line of work, knowing that you're raising your kids to be well-adjusted human beings, being viewed as a wonderful [role model](#), or overcoming a serious challenge in life — to name just a few. These accomplishments are especially meaningful when they're the result of hard work, perseverance, and knowing that you've done your best.

But not everyone gets it. They sabotage their ability to be proud of what they do. The reasons are numerous:

Some folks have talent, but they simply don't apply themselves. • Others are so afraid of failing that they don't try at all — and consequently, they fail. • Some people give up at the first sight of an obstacle. • When brainstorming ideas, some individuals settle on the first answer — which isn't always the best one. • Others are more interested in checking items off a to-do list, and moving on, rather than doing their best work.

• There are those who hand in unfinished work, and expect the recipient to review it for them — errors and all. • Still others can't take credit for their achievements because they've cheated. • Some people multitask or have so much on their plates that they can't give anything the attention that it deserves. • Of course, if you receive handouts and didn't earn the rewards you enjoy, then it's tough to be proud of your effort. • Some people measure success by being busy rather than getting the job done properly. Sure, they get a lot of stuff done — poorly.

You owe it to yourself to do your best in life. Don't wait to apply this principle to BIG things. It also applies to simple tasks such as writing a letter to a friend, working out at the gym, or spending quality time with your family. It doesn't mean that you'll always be successful. You won't. But at least you can take pride in knowing that you gave it your all. Plus, when you embrace this way of thinking, you'll end up raising your game by continually trying to better your best.

**If you don't do your best every time you start something, then you're doing yourself a tremendous disservice.**

### A To-do List to Make Yourself Proud:

**Follow your passion.** If you love what you do, you'll never view your job as work. You'll be excited to wake up each morning and give everything your best.

**The only thing we have to fear.** You won't regret failing, but you may regret not having tried.

**Compete with yourself.** Forget about competing with others. It only breeds animosity. Instead, compete with yourself and find ways to improve your game every day.

**Know your capabilities.** Just because you're an expert in one area doesn't make you an expert in everything. Don't let your ego influence you to claim an expertise completely outside your areas of knowledge.

**Focus is key.** Know your limits. Don't spread yourself too thin by biting off more than you can chew.

**Be prepared to leave your comfort zone.** Set stretch goals that motivate you to challenge your best efforts. As Les Brown said, "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars."

**Learn from the best.** Identify role models from whom you can learn. Ask for feedback on ways to raise your game.

**Practice, practice, practice.** Excellence comes from practice.

**Give yourself a report card.** Learn from the past. After every activity, ask yourself, "How can I make it better next time?"

**Yes, you can.** Don't quit. As Thomas Edison said, "Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."

**Don't let success go to your head.** Celebrate success, but don't let it change you as a person. One of the most difficult challenges is to remain grounded after achieving success. Humility is a sign of strength, not weakness. People with humility are modest about their achievements, grounded in their values, and quietly proud.

**Define happiness for yourself.** Any article about doing your best and being proud of what you do wouldn't be complete without a discussion about living with a purpose. Success in life begins and ends with [purpose](#).

## Do Yourself Proud

Why do anything half-hearted if you have the ability to do it well? If you don't do your best, you're only developing bad habits, damaging your reputation, and letting your team down. Plus, you're robbing yourself of the rewards that you truly deserve.

You have what it takes to be a star, but it'll still take [hard work](#) to become a success. That means setting high goals, following ethical standards, focusing attention on your priorities, and sticking with it until you can be proud of your effort. So, always give everything 110 percent. It's the extra 10 percent that everyone remembers. As Abraham Lincoln said, "Whatever you are, be a good one." And remember, if you're not proud, you're not done. ●

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Frank Sonnenberg, a marketing strategist, has written four books and published over 300 articles. *Managing with a Conscience (2nd edition)* is recognized as one of the top 10 Small Business Books of 2012 • Trust Across America named Sonnenberg one of the Top 100 Thought Leaders of 2011, 2012 and 2013 • Sonnenberg was nominated as one of America's Most Influential Small Business Experts of 2012 • In 2011, *Social Media Marketing Magazine* (SMM) selected Sonnenberg as one of the top marketing authors in the world on Twitter. [www.franksonnenbergonline.com](http://www.franksonnenbergonline.com) | Personal Values • Personal Responsibility ©2013 Frank Sonnenberg. All rights reserved.