

For Review Only

- What would you choose to work as if you had to *do it for free*?
- What task on your To Do list *actually* gets you closer to your dreams?
- How would you write your *acceptance speech* when you succeed?
- What would *Liam Neeson* do?

Most self-development books seem to have all the answers. This is one book that asks all the right *questions* and guides you to find your own answers—like how a personal coach would.

These strategic questions will make you think. Some may make you smile. All of them will help you up your game, unlock hidden potential, even land that big job or long-awaited promotion.

To survive and thrive in today's volatile workplace, you'll need to be mentally tougher than ever before.

With this book, certified executive coach and former award-winning C-level executive Victor Ng invites you on a journey of personal discovery and professional empowerment.

Whether you're a fresh school-leaver, ambitious young executive or seasoned corporate-world veteran, let THE EXECUTIVE WARRIOR show you how you can coach yourself to career success.

“An inspiring self-coaching book every working professional needs to read!”

—Elim Chew, President of 77th Street, and Co-founder of FastFast Delivery and Elim Chew TV

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THE EXECUTIVE WARRIOR | Victor Ng

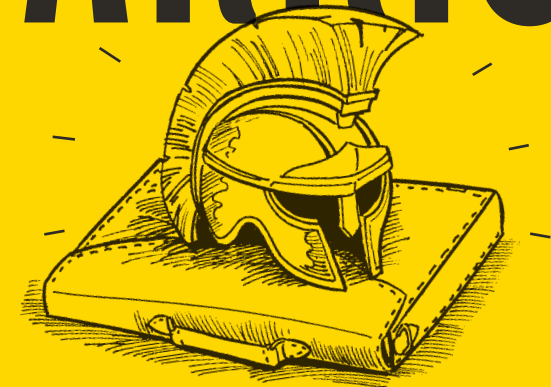
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“Victor Ng shares his expertise with the ease of a professional coach and personal friend.”

—Marshall Goldsmith,

*New York Times* #1 Bestselling Author and *Thinkers50* #1 Executive Coach

# THE EXECUTIVE WARRIOR



40 *powerful* questions to develop mental toughness for career success

**VICTOR NG**

## Praise for THE EXECUTIVE WARRIOR

“Victor Ng shares his expertise in critical intangibles such as mental toughness, self-confidence and leadership awareness with the ease of a professional coach and personal friend.”

— MARSHALL GOLDSMITH,  
*New York Times* #1 bestselling author of *Triggers*,  
*Mojo* and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*

“Victor has the unique ability to create a powerful conversation with the reader, helping one find motivation, resilience and leadership from within. This is an inspiring self-coaching book every working professional needs to read!”

— ELIM CHEW, President of 77th Street,  
Co-founder of FastFast Delivery and Elim Chew TV

“Victor knows what good coaching is all about, and he does just that with this book, combining powerful questions with unique perspectives to deliver a motivational, thought-provoking experience for the reader. Victor has walked the path you are willing to take towards your success. Reading this book will be like taking a transformational journey to rewrite your future story: he will challenge you to choose to believe in your potential for greatness and make your own luck. You can bet on yourself, you will reach your goals and change your world!”

— ROSSELLA PIN, Coach Mentor,  
International Coach Academy

“Victor Ng shows us the blueprint to develop a powerful warrior mindset, a critical asset for today’s professionals to navigate through change and challenges. With this book, he skilfully coaches the reader to set empowering goals, overcome self-doubt, achieve next-level performance, and become a resilient leader.”

— ANTHONY CHOW, CEO and Co-founder of Igloohome

“Mental toughness and resilience have become key survival skills in an ever-volatile work culture. In *The Executive Warrior*, Victor Ng takes us on a journey to develop the tough-mindedness we need to survive and succeed at work. Full of useful advice you can apply today, this book will fill you up with motivation to reach your goals.”

— RHONDA WONG, CEO of Ohmyhome

“With this book, Victor Ng guides executives to find what many of them need today: purpose, resilience and a whole lot of motivation. Using the power of questions, he challenges self-limiting beliefs that hold us back from our full career potential. I’d recommend this to anyone who needs a guidebook to professional success.”

— WINNIE TAN, CEO and Founder of Tripzilla

For Review Only

# THE EXECUTIVE WARRIOR

*40 powerful* questions  
to develop mental toughness  
for career success

**VICTOR NG**

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*To my wife and best friend:  
Thank you for making this book possible.*

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Finally, to my wife and family—thanks for telling me to “just write a book”.

# Introduction

DO YOU EVER wonder why some people seem destined to be successful at the workplace?

They appear to have all the advantages—intelligence, talent, good looks, higher education, powerful connections and, as if they even need it, good luck. While we toil to reach another rung up the corporate ladder, these privileged few are slipping into the elevator to the top floor.

Okay, stop right there. Let me share a secret with you: none of those “advantages” actually lead to a successful career. They might give these people a head start, but the rest of us regular folk can more than make up for lost ground.

In today’s workplace—accurately described by the ominous-sounding acronym VUCA, which stands for Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous—one needs more than the usual advantages to survive and thrive.

Mental toughness has long been cited as the source of success by Navy SEALs, professional athletes and elite entrepreneurs—responsible for helping them achieve impossible goals,

survive times of extreme adversity and rebound from epic failure. Now more than ever, mental toughness could be the single most important asset for any working professional.

### **The power of questions**

Many self-development books claim to have all the answers, yet this book is one that asks all the right questions to help you find *your* own answers, simply because we're all different.

The Greek philosopher Socrates used questions to trigger thinking and reflection in his followers, until they discovered the most ideal answer to their problems.

As humans we tend to develop a particular way of thinking. This way of thinking develops into a "thought machine", churning out internal conversations in our mind. As our thinking follows a fixed pattern, the inner conversations often yield the same outcomes. These outcomes shape our core beliefs and guide our decision-making.

Powerful questions have the ability to jolt us out of thinking in our usual way. Suddenly we are thinking outside the realm that we are used to. It is in the new realm that we are able to discover self-awareness, confront uncomfortable truths, dispel limiting beliefs and ignite change. Questions are the key catalyst for making the all-important shift in our mindset.

### **A self-coaching guide**

Every section in this book is headlined by a question. To use this book as a self-coaching guide, I would recommend these simple steps:

1. Read the question posed to you at the top and take at least a minute to reflect on it.
2. Read the rest of the section as a guide; think of it as a signpost pointing you to your own answer.
3. Go back to the question at the top and dig a bit deeper to find your answer.
4. There are no right or wrong answers; be completely honest with yourself.
5. Observe your emotional response to each question—why do you feel that way and what does that tell you about yourself?

Obviously, this doesn't sound like a quick read. It can be, but to get the most from this book, I'd suggest you take your time with it, if not to answer the questions, to question your answers. That could well be the difference between reading a book and using a book to read yourself.

### **How it all started**

I had a pretty rough start to my career. Here are some of the challenges and setbacks I faced:

- I was once a university reject.
- I had no relevant training, qualifications or experience for the jobs I was interested in.
- I offered to work for free to get a job during a recession.
- I sent out over 100 resumes and got ONE interview.

- At my first interview, I was told that my work samples were “so bad they should be thrown out of the window”.

Looking back, the adversity I went through fed my hunger to succeed and built up my resilience. Those two attributes led me to an unbelievable career in one of the world’s most competitive industries.

Against the odds, I worked my way to become one of the youngest C-suite executives of a global communications agency network. I led high-performance teams and companies—we won over 100 industry awards and were recognised as best-in-the-business. It was very gratifying, though at times extremely gruelling too.

Through it all, I learned many valuable lessons about mental toughness, personal performance, overcoming challenges, leadership and finding balance (mostly through making mistakes!).

With this book, you too can learn from those lessons. I believe the best teacher or guide is someone who has walked the same path before. And I can’t wait to share what I’ve learned from my journey to help you with yours.



## **PART 1 · DREAMS**

Where do you  
want to go?

## Q: How far away are you from your *full* potential?

HAVE YOU EVER brought a dog to the beach? It's one of the most fun things you can do.

He might run straight for the waves, jump over suntanning tourists, or sniff around the sand for something to dig up. You never know, but you let him be. If he does something he shouldn't be doing—like chewing the bits off a beached whale—you yell at him to stop and go do his thing somewhere else.

In life, we're like a dog on the beach. We're free to roam. We get distracted by everything. We like to think we know what we're doing, even when we don't.

But when we're messing around with the wrong thing, there is no well-meaning owner to pick us up and drop us where we're meant to be. If we're lucky, we get a wake-up call to remind us that we're not doing what we should be doing with our lives.

Many people go through life without living out their potential. Motivational legend Les Brown once said that the richest place in the world isn't the bank, it's the cemetery; it's where too many people leave their unused gifts behind.

Are you living out your potential? And I don't mean "living up to" your potential, which implies scaling up more than stretching out.

The famed author and entrepreneur Jim Rohn urged us to stretch ourselves past our perceived limits: "The big challenge is to become all that you have the possibility of becoming. You cannot believe what it does to the human spirit to maximise your human potential and stretch yourself to the limit."

Bruce Lee believed in the expansion of one's potential: "Ever since I was a child I have had this instinctive urge for expansion and growth. To me, the function and duty of a quality human being is the sincere and honest development of one's potential."

**Living out your potential isn't about climbing another rung up the corporate or social ladder. It's about ditching the ladder for a trampoline if that's what you're meant to do.**

Are you not living out your full potential? Here are five warning signs to look out for:

### **1. You're unhappy even when you're supposed to be happy**

Your numbers topped the department again. Your colleagues admire you and your boss adores you. But for some reason, the

lustre of success doesn't seem to stick anymore.

Maybe it's because you're great at something you secretly wish was something else.

That "something else" is what you truly want to do in life. You desire it but you can't have it. It's almost like having an affair behind your life's back.

## **2. You think about your childhood dreams—a lot**

When we were children, everything was simpler. You were brave, so you wanted to be a fireman. You were kind and compassionate, so you wanted to be a nurse. You liked muscles and tights, so you wanted to be a WWE wrestler.

It wasn't complicated. It was the real you wanting to be the future you.

Along the way, Life happened. Family, friends, the economy, money—all somehow conspired to derail your childhood dreams.

You need to happen back to Life. Only then can you live the life you've always imagined.

## **3. You wonder if this is all there is to life**

Ask yourself, if everything were to end tomorrow—like a giant asteroid crashing into Earth and shutting everything and everyone down—how would you feel?

Dying's a lot worse than it is if you have unfinished business. Would you be screaming like Mel Gibson in *Braveheart* when they were doing carpentry to his bits? Or would you finally find peace like Darth Vader sans helmet?

#### **4. You're losing old friends (if you have any left)**

We're not talking about user names and profile pictures on social media here. We're talking about people with childhood nicknames only you would know, people whose faces you've known before lines grew on them.

Old friends are a fail-safe reminder of your identity as a person. They knew you before you became a job title in the working world. If they can no longer relate to you or don't feel the same way about you, maybe you've drifted too far from your core.

#### **5. You start to admire people you never thought you would**

I've seen many busy executives at lunchtime, with a sandwich in hand and a glazed-over look on their faces.

One rather distinguished gentleman was watching a street busker perform an emotional rendition of "Stand by me". He leaned over to me, a complete stranger, and said in a cracked voice, "I wish I had the courage to do that when I was young."

If you spend your life on the wrong things, it's easy to admire those who are doing the right thing for them.

---

MANY PEOPLE STRUGGLE through life not because they're not capable. They're struggling because they settled for something less than what they're capable of.

This could be for a variety of reasons: self-doubt, fear of change, procrastination, or pleasing others. But when we settle

for a life smaller than our true potential, we're missing out on the joy of living.

Pope John XXIII offered an alternative: "Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do."

Nobody has written the instruction manual for life. Maybe it'd be easier if everything was clearly laid out for us to follow. Or maybe it would make life completely unliveable. Too many people have lost the passion and zeal for their work. The single biggest reason for this is that their jobs do nothing to get them closer to their dreams.

You may not even know your full potential yet. But if you ever get a wake-up call in life, answer it. It may not call back.

## Q: What's Your *Point B*?

WHAT IF, when he was younger, Bill Gates decided to be a dentist instead? What if Usain Bolt chose tech instead of track? What if J.K. Rowling gave up writing to become a florist?

What if they never followed their passions? They wouldn't have fulfilled their life purpose. And the world would be poorer for it. They would be *a lot* poorer for it.

Some people are meant to be musicians. Some are chefs. Some are statisticians. Architects. Painters. Bankers. Teachers. Carpenters. Pastors. Firefighters. Even used-car salesmen.

Your life purpose is the one thing that you passionately believe you're meant to do. Without this purpose, you will find it hard to make meaningful progress in life. You will get lost in life's many distractions and you will lose motivation in the face of mounting obstacles.

**It's like trying to get from Point A to Point B, except you don't know where on earth Point B is. Even the GPS requires you to enter a destination.**

How do you know if you're living with purpose and working with passion?

### **1. You wake up and go to sleep every day with the same goal on your mind**

Gone are the days that you had to drag your half-asleep self out of bed in the morning. Or Netflix yourself to sleep at night.

Every day starts (and ends) with a single thought centred around a passion so compelling, sleep is almost an interruption to doing it. This could be writing code, closing another sales deal, crafting that press release, or teaching underprivileged children to read and write.

You have an overwhelming *desire* to be great at it. And you don't need your Evernote app to remind you of that.

### **2. You stop believing in luck**

There are a lot of people who blame luck for their lot in life. They become willing victims in the game of luck. You might have heard some of these gems from them:

- “Just my luck the interviewer couldn't see how smart I am.”
- “He's just lucky to get the promotion because the boss likes him.”
- “My businesses failed because I always had bad luck.”

Lady Luck may be fickle but she's ultimately fair. She's not mad at you. She doesn't pick on anyone just for laughs. But if you want Lady Luck to smile on you, you have to smile at her first.



In other words, you have to make your own luck.

The best way to be “lucky” is to do everything you can to eliminate luck as a factor of success. Do that and you’re now in control of the outcome. It’s nothing to do with luck, it’s everything to do with how much you want it.

The harder (and smarter) you work, the luckier you get.

### **3. You’re hardly ever tired, hungry, or bored**

When you’re “in the flow”, bodily needs seem to go on airplane mode.

How many times have you looked up at the clock and realised it’s been eight hours since you ate something? All while reworking your draft so it flows better. Or making your prototype perform 0.09 seconds faster. This is why Paul Valery said, “A poem is never finished, only abandoned.”

When you’re in the zone like that, everything else seems to fade away. It’s just you and your goal, locked in a delightful dance. That’s the epitome of focus.

### **4. Your doubters go on steroids**

The more passionate you are about what you’re doing, the louder your sceptics will be.

Doubters aren’t necessarily nasty people who delight in your failure. Often they are insecure people who fear that your success will shatter their belief in their own self-limitations. It’s not even about you; your success is their failure to rise above their past failures. They’re fighting you because they’ve been fighting themselves all their lives.

The presence of doubters shouldn’t deter you from stay-

ing on course for greatness. They validate the audacity of your dream, the originality of your ways and the strength of your resolve.

### **5. You sing, you dance—sometimes both at the same time**

Working on your purpose isn't some dreary pursuit of excellence. You don't have to be an undead boss zombie going about the business of chasing down elusive dreams.

When you're immersed in your life passion, it's one fun, exhilarating ride. Despite the late nights, missed dinners, untold rejections and a general state of slight discomfort—you're strangely *happy*.

Happy to be answering your calling. Happy to stand up and be counted. Happy to do something someone said you couldn't. Happy to get a small win. Happy to be part of something that actually means something. Happy to feel alive.

### **6. You're making all sorts of lists**

You would have at least two of the following:

- A to-do list of tasks for the day or week
- A bucket list of things to do before you die
- A hit list of detractors you want to prove wrong
- A list of creative ideas to experiment on
- A top 10 list of people who are better than you right now—but not for long
- A playlist of your favourite tracks to start your day feeling positive

Lists keep you accountable. Accountability leads to action. On your journey to Point B, your lists become your road map.

### **7. You attract people you never thought you would**

Who are you and who do you want to be? Somewhere between the two is where you are right now. This transition is only possible when you're brave, positive, resilient and self-confident—all characteristics that attract people.

We often see other people's life purpose more than we see it in ourselves. We're naturally drawn to it. We want to be part of it, learn from it, be inspired by it. You don't need to be the life of the party; live your purpose and the party will come to you.

### **8. You're okay with things that make other people go “No way”**

When you find that one thing you absolutely have to do to complete yourself as a human being, there is only one question left to ask:

**“How much am I prepared to struggle, sacrifice, and suffer for it?”**

Growth and success aren't meant to come easy. Everyone wants to succeed. But only the few who are willing to do what others will not, dare not, or cannot, actually *do* succeed.

When you move your goals from “I want” to “I will”, it's only a matter of time before you say “I win”.

FIND YOUR PURPOSE led by your passions. Follow your heart, and your mind will do the rest. That's the only way to live with passion, with energy, with conviction. That's the only way to feel fulfilled when you succeed, to be proud even if you fail, and to be at peace with yourself when it's all said and done.

## Q: What does *greatness* look like to you?

TO MANY PEOPLE, achieving personal greatness is reserved for the likes of Nobel laureates, talk-show guests of Oprah and Tony Robbins.

Yet, there is greatness within each of us, even if we cannot see it now.

For many of us, it's not easy to believe in our ability to achieve personal greatness. Maybe someone made us think we are ordinary, even inferior. Maybe we experienced setbacks in life and don't want to risk failing again. Maybe we are numbed by the mediocrity around our lives. Maybe we had a bad tarot card reading. Maybe we tried and we're tired.

Or maybe nobody told us we can be great. Dispelling the notion in your mind that greatness is unattainable and reserved for a privileged, select few is an important step in setting yourself on the path to personal success.

Listen to the words of this award-winning Nike commercial:

*Greatness. It's just something we made up. Somehow we've come to believe that greatness is a gift reserved for a chosen few, for prodigies, for superstars, and the rest of us can only stand by watching. You can forget that. Greatness is not some rare DNA strand, not some precious thing. Greatness is no more unique to us than breathing. We're all capable of it. All of us.*

Your greatness isn't a championship trophy. It's not a medal of honour. It's not a big promotion, or making partner of the firm. They're all great moments. But they alone are not greatness.

**Greatness isn't about what you've achieved. It's about who you've become as you strive to achieve.**

Zig Ziglar said: "You were designed for accomplishment, engineered for success, and endowed with the seeds of greatness."

Daring to dream, facing up to your fears, putting in the work, overcoming adversity, performing under pressure—all of these are measures of greatness in and of themselves. You are capable of them all.

---

GIGO IS A COMMON concept in computer programming and mathematics. It means Garbage In, Garbage Out. Simply put, it states that the quality of the output is determined by the quality of the input.

There is something reassuring about the direct and unambiguous relationship between what we put in and what we get out of any process.

At the other end of the spectrum of Garbage In, Garbage Out lies its more positive and powerful alter ego: Greatness In, Greatness Out.

Remember this mantra when you put in the work to achieve greatness. The late nights working on your craft. The countless hours spent brainstorming for new ideas. The constant learning of new skills and techniques. All the parts that no one sees that will ultimately lead to the outcome everyone will see.

As Michael Caine wisely advised: “Be like a duck. Calm on the surface but paddle like hell underneath.” A Chinese proverb agrees: “One minute of glory on the stage is the result of ten years of hard work off the stage”.

Malcolm Gladwell famously coined the 10,000-hour rule, that it takes 10,000 hours of deliberate practice to become an expert in any field. While the specifics of that rule have been debated, it’s widely accepted that success is unlikely without sustained practice.

Putting in the hard yards can be hard work. Great dreams can die when their owners don’t work hard enough for them. This is why your dreams have to be rooted in your great passion. If you’re passionate about something, you’ll naturally be motivated to learn, overcome obstacles and excel.

Over time, you’ll become very good at it. Look around you and you’ll see that successful people are not just good at what they do—they also enjoy what they do.

If there should come a time when your job no longer motivates you, try to see it in a different light. Break things down and remind yourself of the parts of your job that you're thankful for. Explore new, creative ways of doing the same job. Build new relationships with co-workers for fresh collaborations.

When you put in the hard work, you build strong self-esteem. You see yourself as a professional who is decent, dedicated and deserving of success. This positive self-image allows you to be genuinely confident in your field and attracts people to your cause. This alone justifies the hard part in hard work.

Working hard is a talent. If a pretty phenomenal guy like Thomas Edison could say, "Genius is 99 percent perspiration", we've got our work cut out for us. Don't be afraid of it. Embrace it and excel in it. That more you work at it, the better and more confident you will be.

Once you've made up your mind that you have greatness within you, never waver. Believe me, life has an annoying habit of messing up your self-belief! You will be tested. You will be knocked down. You will look up and see other people laughing at you. You will just have to get up, brush off the dirt, and carry on believing anyway.

Apple's timeless "Think Different" commercial back in 1997 had this empowering perspective on personal greatness:

*Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify*



*them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.*

When you believe in your potential for greatness, you may or may not change the world, but you will certainly change *your* world.

## Q: What kind of *competitor* are you?

IT MAY NOT be *The Hunger Games*, but in this massive multi-player role-playing game called Life, we're all competitors.

Let's face it. There's always someone who wants exactly the same thing you want. That job the headhunter mentioned to you (and four other people). That hot guy or girl you want to ask for a date. Even that last slice of pepperoni pizza in the box.

For many of us, competing hard is the only way to get what we want in life and, perhaps even more so, in work.

**Talent is always useful, but it's not nearly enough.**

For almost two decades, I worked in one of the world's most competitive industries and saw many talented individuals fizzle out. Competing is hard work. My teams won over 100 international awards. While they were certainly capable, they also happened to be some of the most determined and resilient people I know.

You are not entitled to anything; everything has to be earned. A new actor has to go to countless auditions before getting his big break. A small-business owner must compete with the big boys one customer at a time. A business executive has to edge out dozens of candidates to land her dream job.

While in many ways life is like a sport, there is one key difference: life doesn't have a singular definition of winning. It's not as cut-and-dried as being the first to the finishing line, the one to knock out the opponent, or the team to score more goals.

To find success and fulfillment, we must first understand the true spirit of competing. Here are nine powerful quotes with the wisdom to dispel the myths:

**Myth: The best competitors have the most talent**

**Wisdom: The best competitors have the most *desire***

*It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog.*—Mark Twain

*Do your work with your whole heart, and you will succeed—there's so little competition.*

—Elbert Hubbard

*The healthiest competition occurs when average people win by putting above average effort.*

—Colin Powell

At the core of one's competitiveness lies the desire of the individual. It's not about strategies, techniques or skills. What

matters most, as top athletes and entrepreneurs have said, is a desire to win that refuses to be denied.

Underdogs epitomise this desire. Others may have more talent, but underdogs thrive by having more motivation, grit and tenacity.

These steely individuals are waiting patiently for their chance to shock the world. Don't let their quiet demeanour fool you; they're confident of their abilities and proud of the work they put in. Plus, they don't know how to give up. They make the toughest competitors.

Ask yourself: Are you giving your all in what you do? How are you motivating yourself? What is the size of the fight in you?

**Myth: You have to beat your competition**

**Wisdom: You are your only competitor**

*The only competition worthy of a wise man is with himself.*—Washington Allston

*I'm in competition with myself and I'm losing.*  
—Roger Waters

*I'm not in competition with anybody but myself. My goal is to beat my last performance.*  
—Celine Dion

If you keep looking over your shoulder, you are not going to see where you're going. When you constantly direct your compet-

itive efforts in response to what your rivals are doing, you lose focus on yourself and your goals.

Be aware of your competition, but beware of the disease of being competitive simply to prove you're better than others. That's narcissistic and ultimately self-destructive. Being in competition with yourself is the healthiest competition.

I know of a very competent middle manager who never seemed to take the next step up the corporate ladder. He was very efficient in his work, well-liked by his colleagues and on top of it all, unfailingly polite and generous. Going by his qualifications and experience, he shouldn't have had to wait seven years to get promoted to a senior role. But he did.

A big part of the reason why he was overlooked for promotion was how he never quite moved with the "in" crowd. He wasn't a regular at after-hours drinks with the higher-ups. He never played the "game", deftly avoiding office politics. He didn't pick up smoking or golfing to cosy up to his boss.

When I asked him how he felt watching his peers grapple for power and position to get ahead of him, he simply smiled and said, "That's okay, my time will come. Nobody needs to lose for me to win." He did win, several months later, when his colleagues nominated him to be the interim head of department to fill a sudden vacancy—a temporary role he promptly made permanent.

Set the bar for yourself. Channel your competitive fire to meet your own standards and expectations. You're the driver on your journey to success. Decide if you're going to race with others or move at your own pace.

Ask yourself: Who decides your goals? What would you

do if your closest competitor ceased to exist? Are you competing to succeed or just to beat someone?

**Myth: The best competitor wins the game**

**Wisdom: The best competitor wins in life**

*Competition is the spice of sports, but if you make  
spice the whole meal you'll be sick.*

—George Leonard

*When you are content to be simply yourself and don't  
compare or compete, everybody will respect you.*

—Lao Tzu

*Do as adversaries do in law—strive mightily, but eat  
and drink as friends.*—William Shakespeare

While winning after competing hard can be deeply satisfying, it's not everything.

Abbey D'Agostino understood that. In the 5,000 metres Olympics heats, she fell over fellow runner Nikki Hamblin, who had tripped and landed in a heap.

Instead of doing the competitive (and perfectly acceptable) thing of trying to catch up with the other runners, she stopped and spent precious seconds to help the visibly shaken Hamblin to her feet while urging her on.

She did the *human* thing.

To all the ambitious, self-driven super-competitors out there: you're not robots. When pursuing your dreams and goals,

you'd like to think you're some sort of Terminator cyborg on a mission, but you're not—you're human. We all are.

Don't win the race but lose one for the human race.

Control your competitive nature before it controls you, especially after you have achieved some success.

Ask yourself: What would make a better story than winning? Can you be happy for the success of others? What do you want to be remembered for, other than your accolades?

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WINNING IN life and work comes from a place of integrity, respect and self-acknowledgement. It may not be a trophy or medal that we can display on the mantelpiece, but it is the ultimate prize worth keeping our eyes on.



## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Victor Ng is a certified executive coach and consultant for future leaders in an increasingly challenging workplace. A veteran in the advertising industry, he was one of the youngest to reach the regional C-suite management of a global communications agency network, having won over 100 professional awards while working in Singapore, London and Shanghai. For 20 years, he has worked with CEOs, entrepreneurs, marketers, PhDs and students. His insights on leadership and professional development have been featured on Business Insider, Channel NewsAsia, Thrive Global and The Good Men Project.**