

Relax and Achieve

Can a person try too hard to achieve a goal that he or she desperately wants?

Steve Chandler and Scott Richardson, writing in *100 Ways to Motivate Others*, offer examples that say yes.

Early in life, Richardson, attorney and leadership coach, learned an important lesson about achieving success from Rodney Mercado, his music teacher. Mercado believed that concentration and relaxation were the keys to mastering anything in life.

Young Richardson resisted the premise. The teacher tried to prove his point. Mercado began playing a difficult piece of music on the violin and instructed his student to place his arm on top of the teacher's forearm while he continued to play.

Richardson was astonished to discover that the muscles in Mercado's arm were not tense. This state of relaxation gave him the ability to play with incredible speed and accuracy. At this point, Richardson realized how difficult he had been making things for himself by tensing up in an effort to play better.

Richardson soon witnessed another example of this theory on the track field. In one race, a runner just barely beat Richardson. But that runner was tense and struggled for the victory, actually stumbling across the finish line gasping for air. In another race, an experienced runner – fluid, relaxed and whizzing by – took the lead over Richardson and won by a wide margin.

The conclusion? The next time you are faced with a challenge, remember to relax and ease yourself into the process. Trying too hard to achieve something makes it harder to achieve.

--Beecher Hunter