

Lesson 3: The Obstacle Is The Way

Hi, Andy Vellacott here with episode 3 of The 10X Effect course, and in the last episode we talked a bit about obstacles and how to overcome most of them before they ever even become a problem. But what about those obstacles that crop up that you weren't expecting? Or maybe you were expecting it but it came up anyway and you didn't know how to overcome it.

So do you do what most people do when they come up against an obstacle and just turn away and pretend it's not there? Or you distract yourself with something else that is a little bit less overwhelming and less uncomfortable? That's what most of us do, but it's not something that we used to do. I mean when we were kids we faced obstacles ALL the time. Everything was an obstacle! Learning to walk was hard, but we managed that. Learning to talk was even harder, but we didn't get all in our heads about it and say "this is taking too long", or "it's too complicated!"

Everything that we do in our daily lives today was once an obstacle. An obstacle is simply something that challenges us. And a challenge is something that causes us to grow. Learning an instrument is not harder than learning to talk. And learning something as an adult is not harder than when you were a kid. I mean think how many years it took you to learn to talk! How many years it took you to learn to read? So what changed? Why do we get so frustrated as we get a little bit older that things are hard, or they take too long?

Well it isn't the subject matter that changed. Kids are learning to walk, and talk, and ride bikes, and play instruments just as well as they ever did. Yeah, but Andy, kids have more plastic brains than adults. No! Wrong! You can still learn a new language and probably faster than you learned your own language when you were a kid. If I dropped you in a foreign country you'd probably be speaking a few words in hours, let alone days, and you'd probably be holding a pretty decent conversation with some of your new new friends within a few months.

So here's what changed. Remember back to when you were in junior school, and you were being taught how to read. How to sound the words out and scan across the page. That was a daily class and you were getting better and better at it! Then one day, you just stopped being taught how read better. They decided you could read well enough, left you to your own devices and you stopped improving. And most people read as adults at about the same level they were at when they left junior school. Now imagine if you'd had a daily reading class in high school, where they continued to teach you how to read better, and better, and better. How much better would your reading be by now?

Now that's an interesting idea, but it's not the bit that really interests me. The bit that really interests me is what message did that send to you when you were a kid. What belief about your reading did that instill within you about your reading probably without you even realising it? If you look at your reading now, have you ever wondered if you can improve it? Or have you ever wondered if you *need* to improve it or if it's even *possible* to improve it? Most likely not, because most people never ask those questions.

We tend to just accept that that's how we read, so we tend to just read things that suit our style. We avoid reading things that feel like they might challenge us, and we make the decision subconsciously to read something that is more comfortable. Now that is the physical manifestation of a belief in action. Your beliefs shape your decisions and therefore your experiences. But the kicker is they'll have that effect *whether the belief is true or not!* And here's the double kicker - the more the belief shapes your actions, the more you *validate* that belief. As Henry Ford put it, if you think you can, or you think you can't, you're probably right.

So what do beliefs have to do with obstacles? Well, lets say I put in front of you a huge, thick, heavy, dusty old book. I can almost hear you sigh already! I bet very few people hear that description and think "Awesome, I can't wait to delve in to that book and see what gems it contains!" I'm going to let you ponder where that belief might have come from. So you have this big book, let's say it's about a subject you're really interested, and you're aware that you might be avoiding it because you have a certain belief about what your experience of reading it is going to be like.

But you also know that on the other side of reading that book is going to be a wealth of really useful information. So here's where things get really interesting, because when you can start to unpick your beliefs you can start to ask yourself a different set of questions. So what if instead of dreading reading the book, you asked "How can I grow in order to make reading this book easy for me?" "How can I grow in order to make reading this book easy for me?" "Where do I need to work on myself so that this is not a problem for me?" "How can I make reading this book FUN for me?"

What a different experience that is going to be! It's like the guy who was looking at a number 6 on the floor. He believed passionately that he was looking at a 6 and absolutely wouldn't be told otherwise. Then another guy walked in and stood opposite him, and he can see that it is a number 9. The first guy starts to get in a big fight about which one of them is right, until the other guy says look, come and stand over here where I am and you'll see we're both right!

So you have just switched it around and accepted that maybe, by doing a bit of work on yourself first, you can turn this from an obstacle into a pleasure. But the book hasn't changed! It's still the same dusty old book!

All that's changed is how you are looking at it, AND accepting that you might need to invest a little bit of time in yourself FIRST, before you start to read it. The obstacle has melted away and been replaced by an exciting challenge. And this is what makes the journey so exciting, because a challenge can spur you on and stretch you. Challenges help you grow in order to meet them. All an obstacle is is a reflection of where you need to grow. You're going to move much faster through a challenge than an obstacle, and you're going to grow exponentially with each one.

And the more you grow, the smaller the obstacles appear to be and the bigger the challenges you can take on. You're going to become more confident, and that leads to being a confident enough person to make the bold decisions you need to make and take the actions you need to take, in order to actually get the things that you really want to get. It's going to take away all of the doubt, all of the second-guessing, and all of the hesitation that's been holding you back.

And with this kind of base to work from you can start to ask some really powerful questions about what you are capable of, what you are truly deserving of, and start to uncover how much you might have been missing out on all this time. Once you become able to start questioning your limiting beliefs you start unlocking a world of potential. And that's the subject of the next episode and we're going to start going deeper into that truth. So thank you for listening, and I'll see you soon.