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SPIRIT, MIND & BODY

Contemplating Success

Imagine you're on the brink of change. Perhaps you have one of those elusive great ideas or you are longing to start your own business. Maybe you want to move to the country to escape urban chaos or maybe -- just maybe -- you want to sell everything you own and travel the world before your time and your resources start running thin.

But something is stopping you. What?

Of course, there is fear of the unknown. Certainly, there is fear of failure. And let's not forget the self-doubt that accompanies the beginning of anything new. But consider for just a moment the possible fear of success. That's right. You heard me. The fear of success! It may sound crazy, but many people are as afraid of succeeding as they are of failing. And it's fear of success that prevents them from taking a chance on their dreams.

Why fear success? It sounds counter to everything we know. Isn't the idea of achieving success the major reason we set out to do just about anything? It wouldn't

make sense to set out to fail, would it? Yet many people fail before they ever get started because they fear their dreams might actually come true. Think about it. What if your dreams actually did come true? Then what? See what I mean? Success can be a scary proposition.

But why?

One reason is that success requires responsibility. The dreamer dares to dream. The dreamer begins to act on that dream. The dream begins to become reality. The dreamer starts reaping the rewards. Then the dream may take on a life of its own. As it grows, so will the responsibility of keeping it alive and thriving. Fear enters the picture when the dreamer begins to worry that the dream may grow beyond his or her expectations and beyond his or her ability to handle it.

Another reason people fear success is that they fear the commitment required to reach it. Making a dream come true requires commitment. It is not the commitment to others, but the commitment to themselves that

prevents many people from seeking their dreams. Ask this question: Am I really willing to make the effort? Only a resounding "Yes!" will permit a dream to take flight and keep it soaring through challenging times.

A third reason for avoiding success is the possibility that the dream -- once realized -- won't fulfill you the way you hoped it might. Experience teaches us that we don't always know ourselves quite so well as we should. Having a passion for beautiful homes may not mean that selling real estate is the perfect job for you. If you don't try, however, you'll never know. Trying may require the investment of some time and resources, but at least you'll know for sure whether you really want to sell real estate. If not, you can put your energy toward something else.

The fourth and final reason people fear success is the possibility that they will no longer have a dream to dream. Let's say that you have always dreamed of living in the mountains. You have always thought to yourself, "When

I live in the mountains, my life will be more peaceful, happier, and more fulfilling." One day, you go to live in the mountains and you realize you no longer have a dream for the future. We enjoy the hope of having or becoming something "some day." When that "some day" comes, we may feel we have lost our inspiration. On the other hand, that could be the perfect time to begin again the magical process of dreaming.

The conclusion? Dreams can and do come true, especially if we are willing to make a commitment to them. We have the power to achieve our dreams and that can be what scares us the most. Why let it? Why not acknowledge fear, without being led by it? Dreaming is a creative process which allows the imagination to speak, informing us of opportunities that could provide fertile ground for growth. Growth might lead to joy, fulfillment and love, or it might lead to disappointment. One thing is certain, however: listening to dreams and acting on them will keep our creative forces flowing and keep us

passionately alive.

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

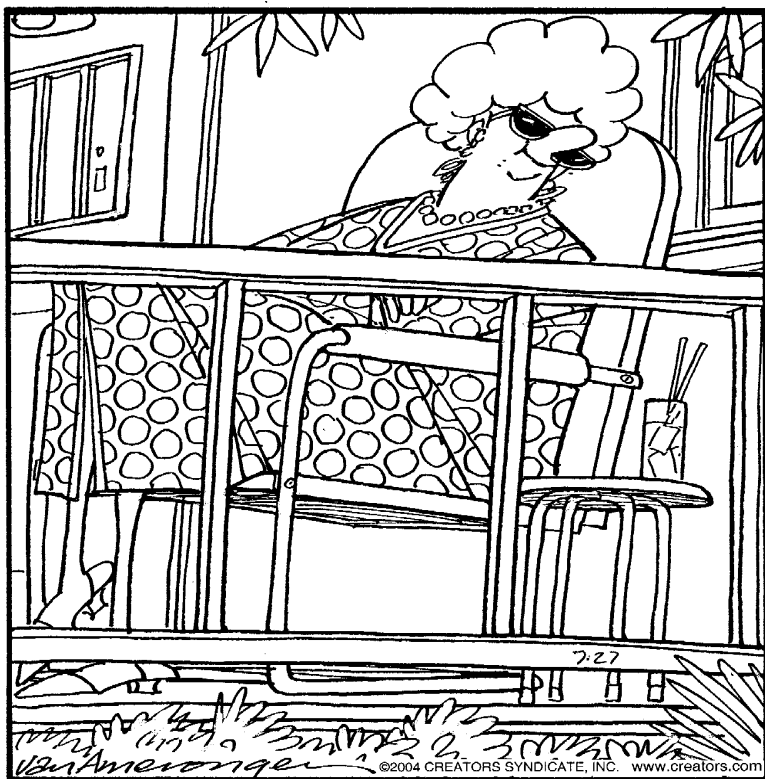
-----Nelson Mandela

Editors' Note:

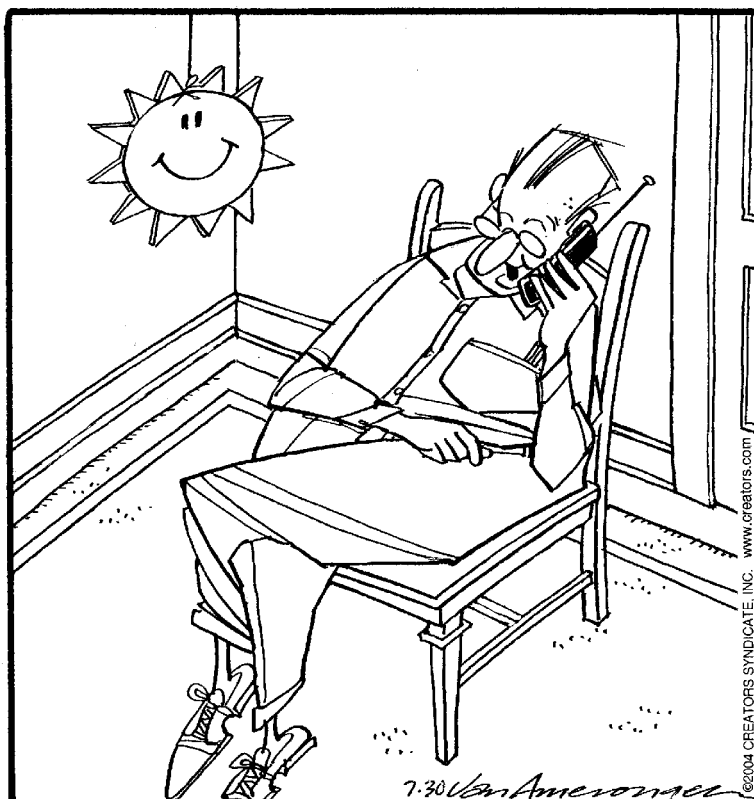
We first met Jerry Van Amerongen three decades ago, when becoming a famous cartoonist was only a dream. Since then, Jerry has shed his day job and been syndicated in more than 50 major newspapers. Now that number includes the Petaluma Post.

How did the Post come to share Mr. Van Amerongen's talents with the likes of the Los Angeles Times? While we hope it has something to do with friendship, there are two more compelling explanations. First, Jerry has enjoyed visiting Petaluma on many occasions. His older brother, also an artist, now lives in Occidental. Second, no other publication in the Bay Area currently publishes his work.

Whatever the reason, the Post's good fortune will be yours as well. We'll be bringing you Van Amerongen's humor regularly, and we'll have a lot to choose from. Working mostly for daily newspapers, he must create six cartoons every week -- a daunting task that sometimes makes him question whether success is worth the commitment. Luckily for us, he always answers "Yes!"



Gloria decides to wait for a clear pattern to emerge from the chaos of the morning.



Troy makes a call from his sun room.