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DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- At the beginning of the video, Mr. Carolla shares his life philosophy with us by stating, “You’re unlucky. I’m unlucky. We’re all unlucky. But don’t worry, that’s a good thing.” What exactly does he mean by that? Why is being unlucky such a good thing for you?
- After telling us about how people admire his accomplishments, yet explain his success as ‘luck,’ Mr. Carolla counters with, “That’s not luck. That’s me. I earned that.” Why do you think that many people are so quick to assign explanation of Mr. Carolla’s success as an arbitrary circumstance rather than the product of merit? Do you think that jealousy plays a factor in their ascribing his success to ‘luck?’ Why or why not?
- Mr. Carolla explains that, “...your dad could own a Ferrari dealership. That would put you at the top. Or you could be born without your limbs. That would put you on the bottom. But then there’s the middle, and the middle is where 99% of us reside.” Do you agree that most people fall somewhere in the middle of the ‘luck spectrum?’ Assuming yes, why would relying on ‘luck’ to bring you success in life be such a volatile and foolish proposition? How much a role do you think that luck actually played in the dad ending up owning a Ferrari dealership?
- When Mr. Carolla tells the story of how he made the connection that was a seminal moment in his career, he states, “...I came back the next morning... I found him [Jimmy Kimmel] and made my own luck.” How important was Mr. Carolla’s perseverance in determining his own future? What does Mr. Carolla mean by ‘making his own luck?’
- Towards the end of the video, Mr. Carolla plainly states, “...what I’m trying to tell you is don’t count on luck. Rely on hard work,” Where do you think that this value of hard work came from in Mr. Carolla’s life? Where should such a realistic and practical value come from? Mr. Carolla applied this value of hard work to overcome being unlucky... will you? Why or why not?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Richard Branson

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “RICHARD BRANSON: Success From Hard Work Is Not ‘Luck,’” then answer the questions that follow.

- How does Mr. Branson explain his success? What does Mr. Branson believe about businesses considered ‘luckier’ than others? What point does Mr. Branson make with the golf analogies?
- What does Mr. Branson think about one’s ability to control ‘luck?’ Do you think that ‘luck’ is something that a person can become more skilled at? Why or why not?
- Do you think that Mr. Branson’s success can be attributed to ‘luck?’ Why or why not? How do you think that Mr. Carolla would explain Mr. Branson’s success? Explain.



QUIZ

WHY BAD LUCK IS GOOD

1. If Adam thought he was lucky, he would:
 - a. Have won the lottery.
 - b. Have a more positive life outlook.
 - c. Still be in his old North Hollywood apartment.
 - d. Live in Las Vegas.

2. Because life is like a prize fight, you need to:
 - a. Get up every morning and do hard work.
 - b. Place your bet on who you think will win.
 - c. Pick your fights wisely.
 - d. Watch videos of the great fighters.

3. “Let’s not rely on Vegas, let’s not rely on the lottery. Let’s rely on _____.”
 - a. The government.
 - b. Hard work.
 - c. Employment benefits.
 - d. Our parents.

4. If you’re up against a competitor for a job you want, your resume should be:
 - a. Half as good.
 - b. Comparable to theirs.
 - c. Accompanied by a cover letter.
 - d. Twice as good.

5. Seeing yourself as unlucky is a:
 - a. Bad thing, because the fates are maligned.
 - b. Good thing, because we are motivated to earn a living.
 - c. Bad thing, because we’ll have less self-esteem.
 - d. Good thing, because we can finally give up on success.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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RICHARD BRANSON: Success From Hard Work Is Not 'Luck'

- [Richard Branson, Contributor](#)
- Sep. 9, 2014, 11:36 PM



[Steve Boxall and Zero Gravity Corporation via Virgin](#) You can't get lucky if you're playing it safe, Branson says.

The following has been excerpted from "[THE VIRGIN WAY: Everything I Know About Leadership](#)" by Richard Branson.

I believe that "luck" is one of the most misunderstood and underappreciated factors in life.

Those people and businesses that are generally considered fortunate or luckier than others are usually also the ones that are prepared to take the greatest risks and, by association, are also prepared to fall flat on their faces every so often.

In stark contrast, the "play it safe for fear of failing" brigade are the ones who just never seem to get as lucky as the risk-takers. Coincidence? I don't think so.

Sadly the vast majority of people seem to view their chances of "getting lucky" in much the same vein as the likelihood of being struck by lightning, as if it is something over which they have zero control. Well, in my humble opinion they couldn't be further from the truth — anyone who wants to make the effort to work on their luck can and will seriously improve it.



Paul Kane/GettyBranson, the founder of the Virgin Group, has an estimated net worth of \$5 billion.

I remember watching the final round of the British Open golf championship on TV and seeing one of the leaders chip out of a deep greenside bunker. His shot was high but it just clipped the top of the flagpole and amazingly the ball dropped right into the hole. One of the British commentary team exclaimed, "Oh my goodness, what a lucky shot!"

Another commentator in the broadcast booth (a retired American champion as I recall) immediately snapped back with a stinging rebuke, "Lucky! What do you mean 'lucky'? Do you know how many thousands of hours we all spend practising shots like that? He was trying to put it in the hole and he succeeded. Let me tell you, he worked long and hard on getting that lucky!"

The same sentiment was more eloquently expressed once by Gary Player one of the all-time golf greats, who famously said, "*The harder I practise, the luckier I get.*"

Over the years, like that golfer, I have often been accused of being lucky in business, but I too believe that a lot of very hard work has played a major part in any luck that has come my way. I must admit to sometimes struggling to figure out where coincidence stops and good luck begins, or put differently, how just happening to "be in the right place at the right time" can so dramatically play into one's path through life.

A LUCKY EXORCISM

One classic example of this phenomenon had a huge bearing on the early success of Virgin Records. To our surprise and delight, our first-ever album release, Mike Oldfield's "Tubular Bells," had become a huge hit in the U.K. but we were still trying to get someone to take it in the U.S.

Despite this European success and my persistent efforts, I just couldn't seem to convince the legendary head of Atlantic Records, Ahmet Ertegun, that an all-instrumental album would sell in North America. Regrettably he just didn't "get it."

Then one day while Ahmet just happened to be playing the album in his office (presumably still trying to figure out what all the fuss was about) in walked movie director William Friedkin looking for backing music for a movie he had in the works.

By an amazing stroke of good fortune, before Ahmet could turn it off, Friedkin heard "Tubular Bells," instantly loved it and that was that: he had his backing track and we had our U.S. deal with Atlantic. Oh yes, and the movie he was working on just happened to be "The Exorcist," which was destined to become one of the greatest box-office hits of the day, and so it also helped introduce "Tubular Bells" to a global audience.

You could call it luck if you want, but there again I'd spent a lot of time yammering away at Ahmet and if he hadn't been intrigued enough to listen to it one more time it would probably never have been playing at that critical moment in time.

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