

FIRST WORD



USING YOUR HIGHEST VALUE TO DRIVE SUCCESS



WHEN A BUSINESS stalls in its growth, or even loses market

share, there are many things business owners blame, from poor market conditions to bad economies.

Dr John Demartini, a performance and behaviour specialist believes that we are the architects of our own successes – and that how we align our values with our business goals and vision is a far greater predictor of success than external conditions.

You'll see this theme running throughout this month's issue, from our Smarts section to our Cover profile, Robin Olivier. Robin and his co-founders have built a R240 million business, and the only person who has a degree is their CFO. They have focused on a goal and achieved it.

Dr Demartini shares a

story that highlights how our values and vision affect our businesses. He was working with the 63-year-old founder of a logging company in Melbourne, Australia. The company was losing market share, and its owner blamed a number of external factors. At no point did he look to himself as the cause of his company's decline. He had built a very successful business; the problem couldn't be him.

"I asked him what had inspired him to build the business in the first place," shares Dr Demartini. "He was a leader, and now he was blaming Japan. I could see that he'd lost his mission, his vision – his highest value. To find it again, he needed to remember the real reason that he'd built the company in the first place."

This was his story:
"When I was a boy, we were

impoverished, and bused over to a rich area. I went to a rich school, but I didn't have anything. My first day of school was humiliating. That day, instead of taking the bus home, I collected all the paper from trash cans in the area so that I could make myself a notepad. I also found pencils. I wouldn't be humiliated again. I would have stuff. I started this company because I didn't want kids to be without paper."

Through telling his story, he realised that he had forgotten his highest mission and calling. He'd been thinking of retiring. Instead, he refocused on the mission he'd had all those years ago when he launched. Within eight months he'd completely turned the company around. External factors didn't matter.

Fulfilling your highest values

Successful people fulfil their highest values. They understand their values, and align their lives and businesses with those values. It's an essential foundation to true success. "Your brain is a highest-value seeking and fulfilling organ. It's driven and designed to do everything to fulfil that value. This is why if you align your highest values with work, you're engaged and inspired," says Dr Demartini.

The problem is that it's easy to think something is a high value when it isn't. Take retirement savings as an example. We all know we should be saving more. We say that's a high value – and yet our spending habits say otherwise. Our spending habits prove that instant gratification usually trumps retirement savings. If you want to know your true highest values, investigate where you're spending your money.

These are Dr Demartini's steps to finding – and fulfilling – your highest values:

- » **Don't confuse values with social platitudes.** You might voice what you think is important because of society or other influencers, but you need to cut through the clutter to what actually matters to you.
- » **Learn to objectively identify your values.** How? Look around you. What's in your space? How do you spend your time? You'll always find time for the things that are really important to you. How do you spend your money, and where are you most reliable?
- » **Take actions to achieve what's crucial to you.** Actions lead to execution – but you start with small actions. Small actions lead to bigger actions, and keep you on a path that aligns with your values.
- » **Delegate non-priority things.** Don't fill your life with things that drain you. Delegate them so that you can concentrate on the activities that align with your highest values and energise you – that's how you can keep everyone inspired, focused and moving forward.
- » **Visualise what you want your life to look like.** We can do extraordinary things when we're really inspired and can activate that part of our brains. If you can visualise where you want to be, you can make it happen.

Entrepreneur continues to be South Africa's top-read business magazine because of you, our loyal readers. Thank you. We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we have enjoyed putting it together.

Nadine Todd, Managing Editor