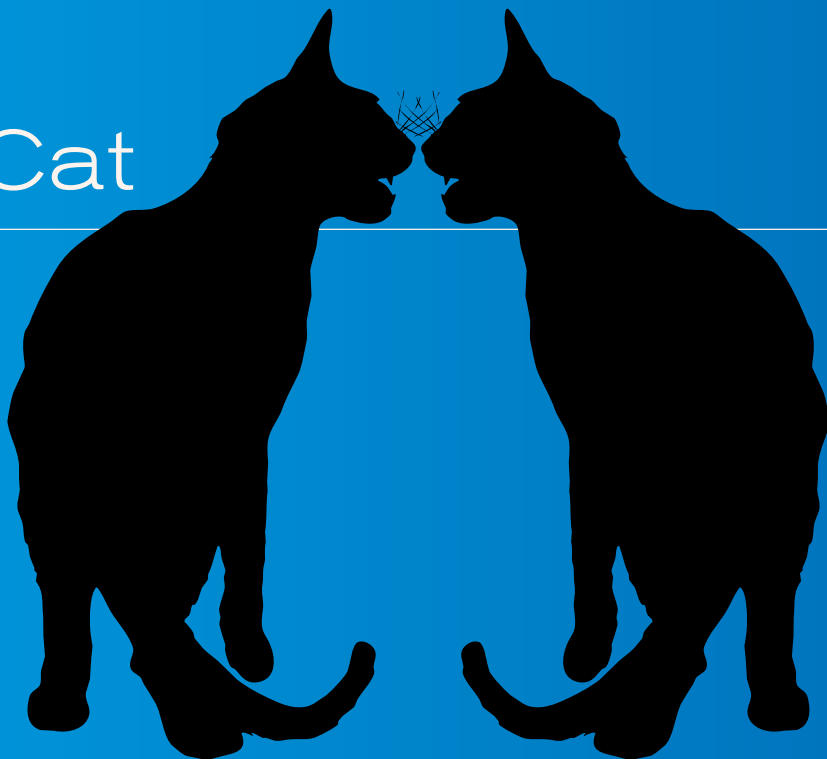


THE UN-COMFORT ZONE

With Robert Wilson

Be a Copy Cat



Last issue I wrote about *Self-Efficacy* which is our belief in our ability to achieve what we set out to accomplish. I wrote about how it is the biggest part of achievement, and that we acquire a sense of self-efficacy in four ways: personal experience, observation of others, a positive mental attitude, and from the encouragement of others. This issue I'd like to expand on how observing other people achieve motivates us to accomplish more.

Some of our goals require us to reach a mental threshold; some are more physical; while others are a combination of the two. One of my favorite forms of exercise and recreation is mountain biking. I get out once a week and hit the trails. Some of the trails have obstacle course-like obstructions called technical features; they are basically log and rock piles you ride over for an additional skill challenge. One trail has several advanced features including a *seesaw*. I rode past this particular challenge for weeks; wanting to do it, but frankly too scared to try.

Then one day I encountered another rider who rode across it. He went up to the center; it tipped and he rode down the other side. It looked easy enough, and so I asked him about it. He told me there was one trick to it. You needed to brake slightly when you hit the center, so that your weight would cause the 'up' end to tip down. If you didn't; it would function like a big ramp and you would fly off the end five feet off the ground. Hmm, good advice, because that was definitely what I didn't want to do.

Having seen someone do it; I was ready to tackle it. I rode across perfectly on the very first try. All I needed was to see it done.

We do this all the time-- sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously.

Last summer I was shopping at Dick's Sporting Goods in Atlanta where they have a three-story in-door climbing wall. My nine year old son was with me and asked to climb it. I bought him a ticket and the rock wall staff strapped him into the safety ropes. He went up about 12 feet and said he couldn't go any further. I was surprised because he is very athletic and picks up most sports immediately and effortlessly. I tried all sorts of encouragement, but he had made up his mind. The staff lowered him to the ground.

Then he asked me to climb it. I looked up and grimaced... it was not what I wanted to do that day, but I had done it once before with my older son, so I paid my way and started to climb. I climbed to the top and rang the bell, then enjoyed the real fun of repelling back down. Once I was down, my son wanted to try it again. I was skeptical and didn't want to waste another two bucks. But, I gave in, and this time he scrambled like a lizard all the way to the top and rang the bell. Just like me and the bicycle seesaw, all he needed was to see that it could be done. Then he was on his way. Of course I'm

totally refusing to acknowledge the unstated thought in his mind... "Hey, if my wimpy Daddy can do it - it's gotta be easy!"

Think of the occasions where you found a role model to show you "how it's done."

I remember the night I decided to become a professional speaker. I was serving as a counselor to a group of teenagers attending a Hugh O'Brian Youth Foundation leadership seminar. Patty Kitching was the dinner keynote speaker. She was warm and funny and told wonderful stories to illustrate her points. Most of all she looked like she was having the time of her life. I turned to my wife and said, "I could do that. I want to do that!" Three years later, I was.

Go out and find someone who is already doing what you want to do. Watch them, talk to them, then get started!

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