

The Thin Margin for Success

The margin for success is so thin that getting across it is astonishingly simple. To make that step, go to the **Going Beyond** folder for Chapter 25 at EffectiveTeaching.com.

The margin for success is so thin that reaching it is astonishingly simple.

Take baseball as one example. The difference between being an all-star and an average player in professional baseball is so slight that it makes baseball seem like a silly game.

Consider the difference between a great season and an awful season in baseball.

The season is 26 weeks long. A player gets 500 at-bats between April and September. That's about 20 at-bats per week or five games per week. The difference between a .300 average and a .250 average is ONE hit per week—ONE more hit for every 20 times a batter goes to the plate.

At the end of a typical season, there will be fewer than 15 players in each league batting above .300. From about 1,290 players playing full time on all the baseball teams, less than 3 percent will be batting .300. If he bats .300 per year, he is in an elite group that is able to earn millions of dollars more per year. **All he has to do is get ONE more hit per week!**

Likewise, for any team, the difference between a miserable season with a 66–96 record and a terrific season with a 92–70 record is ONE more victory per week.

In the same way, success in life is simple. Try one or two new ideas or techniques each year:

- Go to a conference.
- Access a website for a new technique.
- Take an online course or listen to a Podcast.
- Move up six rows at an in-service meeting.
- Share an idea with another teacher.
- Welcome students at the classroom door with a smile.
- Post a daily agenda with a lesson objective.
- Form or be part of a professional learning team.

Notice the active verbs of successful people: go, move, share, form, welcome. It takes just as much effort and energy to engage in the following activities:

- Sit in the faculty lounge with the negative people who moan, complain, and belittle.
- Hide from people who may ask you to do something.

- Gaze at your watch wondering when the day will be over.
- Sit in the back rows at a meeting.
- Use busy work activities to kill class time.
- Vote against anything that measures teacher effectiveness.
- Daydream about what you will do after school is over.
- Sabotage any work that is collaborative.

Notice the sedentary verbs of unsuccessful people: sit, hide, gaze, sabotage. Which verbs best describe your attitude toward life?

The difference between a great year and an awful year is so slim! Life is no different.

All that separates a person from SUCCESS or FAILURE is one word: ATTITUDE.

It costs no money, requires no time, and exerts no added effort. **All it takes is one more idea a week.**