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.
The Thin Margin for Success

- 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.