

O's Five-Point Plan to ...

BEING FORTUNATE

Why do some people have all the luck?
The answer: Luck has nothing to do with it – preparation and opportunity is everything.
By **KATHERINE GRAHAM**

1

When Good Focus Goes Bad

British psychologist Richard Wiseman, PhD, spent eight years studying luck. In his book *The Luck Factor*, he lists some of the qualities that differentiate the lucky from the unlucky. Chief among these is identifying opportunities in life. “We are traditionally taught to be really focused, to be really driven,” comments Dr. Wiseman. “But in the real world, there are opportunities all around you. And if you’re driven in one direction, you’re not going to spot the others.”

2

Be Your Own Cheerleader

It's normal to focus on what we're doing wrong and try to correct it. The problem with this approach, however, is that self-confidence often takes a knock. Fortunate people take the time to acknowledge what they're doing right and congratulate themselves. Cape Town-based psychotherapist and executive coach Mary Ovenstone believes we predispose ourselves to positive experiences by what we believe. “If we feel confident, we draw good responses from people, and processes fall into place around us,” she says.

3

Welcome the New

Our expectations – whether good or bad – clearly affect the final outcome. Lucky people are convinced the future is bright, Dr. Wiseman asserts, which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The opposite is true of unlucky people. “Unlucky people are stuck in routines,” he says. “When they see something new, they want no part of it.” Having an optimistic attitude helps us to try new experiences, to persist in the face of failure and to interact more meaningfully with others.

4

There's Always a Silver Lining: Go Find It!

“Blaming your current situation on bad luck is problematic,” says Ovenstone. “It implies that something bad is happening to you, whereas in reality it has emerged from within you.” Instead of bemoaning your fate, you need to articulate the problem and develop a positive response to it. In this way, you'll be turning “bad luck” into “good luck.” For example, don't dwell on your ill fortune. Imagine how things could have been worse, and take control of the situation. As Ovenstone puts it: “Find the window of opportunity in the middle of the wall of blockage.”

5

Now Persevere

There's a famous quote by golf professional Gary Player: “The harder I practise, the luckier I get.” You need to work hard, so that when luck does come your way, you're ready to make the most of it. Many scholars described Mozart as a child prodigy, but from the time he started playing music as a 4-year-old until his genius was recognised at age 7, he put in thousands of hours of practice. If luck is being at the right place at the right time, it's important you're prepared when it strikes. **Q**

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