

## Climbing the Ladder of Success

“What’s shaking your ladder?” by Sharon L. Wise

Staying focused in this industry is one of the most difficult tasks that we must master in order to arrive at our desired destination – the top! What is crucial to climbing the Ladder of Success? F-O-C-U-S.

**F**= First things first

**O**=Other things second

**C**=Cut out the unimportant

**U**=Unify behind the vision

**S**=Stick with it-Self Control

**F=First things first.** On a daily bases we can find ourselves frustrated as we begin to realize that we have no control over the timing of the immediate needs of our grieving families that arise without notice. We know this is the reason we are here, to serve the families as their needs arise, but our daily task list is shifted without warning. Therefore the first thing first, has to be the family in front of us. Sound easy? Let’s look a little deeper.

Most of us in the Death Care Industry are visionaries; we tend to have lots of ideas. Most of us have no problem planning our day, focusing on the top 10 things we want to accomplish, scheduling our tasks, phone time and prospecting. But the better question to ask is, “Who am I? If I were to die today, what would I most regret leaving unfinished?” What we **focus** on should always flow from who we are. Once we define who we are, then we can do the what, because “the what” has to flow from “our who.”

Now, how do we discover “our who?” My “who”,I know that I love to solve problems. I enjoy helping someone who is hurting. I love making a difficult situation easier for those involved. Ask yourself these questions. What are you passionate about? What makes you angry? What do you want to fix? What makes you happy? When have you felt that you have made a valuable contribution to mankind? The answers to these questions will help you discover your who.

**O=Other things second.** When I asked myself these questions, I shifted my focus to the talents that I knew were my “who.” When I focused on raising the standard of Family Service, the daily lists of task became “**Other things second**” as smiles on the faces of the families I served let me know that a door of opportunity, through a sincere relationship, had been opened allowing me the opportunity to connect with their circle of influence. This helps me attain one of the main goals of selling; getting in front of more people.

**C=Cut away the unimportant.** Maintaining our focus is easier when we’re concentrating on positives rather than negatives. We’ve all heard it said, “As a man thinketh so is he.” Develop the Winner mentality. The battlefield is not always what is going on around you. The battlefield many times is in our mind, so start hanging “success photographs” on the walls of your mind. Picture yourself in health...in prosperity...as a top producer...as an uncommon problem solver...as victorious. When you control your thoughts you control your life.

**U=Unify behind the Vision.** What is your vision or professional brand? What sets you apart? Communicate your vision clearly. Look for ways to **unify** support in your organization. Who is holding your ladder/vision to assist you in accomplishing the vision for your company. When people think of your cemetery or funeral home, what do you want them to relate to the community? Now, ask yourself this question. If you knew that you were going to own the largest, most successful Funeral Home/Cemetery combo in America, who do you have in your current organization that you would take with you and who would you leave behind? Who's shaking your ladder and breaking your focus? This question must be addressed if you are to reach your destination. The answer to this question may require action.

**S=Stick with it.** Stay Motivated. The next time you walk through your cemetery, remember this...many are inside those graves with buried dreams, buried treasures, buried potential that were never fulfilled because they lost their motivation. Your success is determined by your ability to stay motivated. Identify the specific factors that create distraction and loss of motivation in your life. When you've lost your motivation, there were downward steps that you took. Identify those influences and deal with them. Recognize the elements that awaken your energy, enthusiasm and passion, focus on these. Your words and conversations greatly affect your own motivation, choose them wisely. You will start succeeding significantly in life when you learn to motivate yourself hourly and remember, never, never, never quit!

So, put **F**irst things first and **O**ther things second, Cut away the unimportant things and **U**nify behind your vision, then **S**tick with your plan. With the right **F**OCUS, you will make it to the top!