

Article

Success & the Three Essential Virtues



Shafali R. Anand

*Founder & Chief Envisionist - Creative Agni
ID Specialist & Learning Solutions Architect
Editor & Publisher - THE FOUNT*



Creative Agni
Consulting and Training

The Creative Fire within You

www.CreativeAgni.com

Three Really Short Stories

For this article, I'm turning the article-writing paradigm upside down and starting this article by telling you three short and relevant stories that have you as their central but fictional character. The plots however have been plucked from real-life and re-purposed.

Story 1: The Angel Investor (A Story about Knowledge)



It's an year between 2020 and 2050.

You have the courage, the money, and decades of experience to turn angel investor and fund a start-up. Your son asks you invest in a venture that he and his two friends are starting. He intends to make Eco-friendly plates and supply them in the market. You are wise person, you've been through situations and seen ventures succeed and fail. And you think...rather know, that despite the fact that your son is a bright young man, he could fail.

Why? Because he's young and regardless of his brilliance, naïve in the matters of business. You know that one needs to know the market in order to validate a business proposition.

You think about it and then ask your son to do some market research and present a report to you. Three days later, he reports in that he's dropped the idea because the market for Eco-friendly plates is already saturated. You smile and tell your son that this proved how cool his idea was and that you were confident he would soon come up with another bright idea.

Story 2: A Stormy Night (A Story about Wisdom)



Tonight, the weather takes a turn for the worse.

A man knocks at your door. He looks like he needs help and you count kindness among

your virtues. A storm is raging outside, and you want to invite him in your house, provide him with dinner and a place to sleep. However, you are a wise person. You know enough not to trust first impressions and yet, you also possess a kind heart. So you ask him to wait outside the door, give him some food, a cup of tea, and some money before politely sending him on his way.

Tomorrow the newspaper carries a story about the same man having robbed another house, where he was quite unwisely invited in and given shelter for the night. You feel sad for those who were robbed, but you also breathe a sigh of relief.

Story 3: The Sticky-stingy Tenant (A Story about Courage)

This evening, you visit an old friend whom you hadn't met in years, and after you two have exchanged notes, your friend shares his dilemma with you.

Your friend has a house in old Delhi that has been let out for the last twelve years. In his gut, your friend knows that his tenant has no intention of ever leaving the house. And why would he ever want to leave? After all, the Tenant owns a Saree-shop in Chandni Chowk and the house is only about 500 yards from his shop! Your friend is a wise man who knows fully well that the rents in the vicinity are four-times higher than what his tenant pays him and he realizes that the longer he lets them stay the stronger their hold on the house shall be. Your friend also has a fair understanding of the law and realizes how it tilts in favor of the tenants!

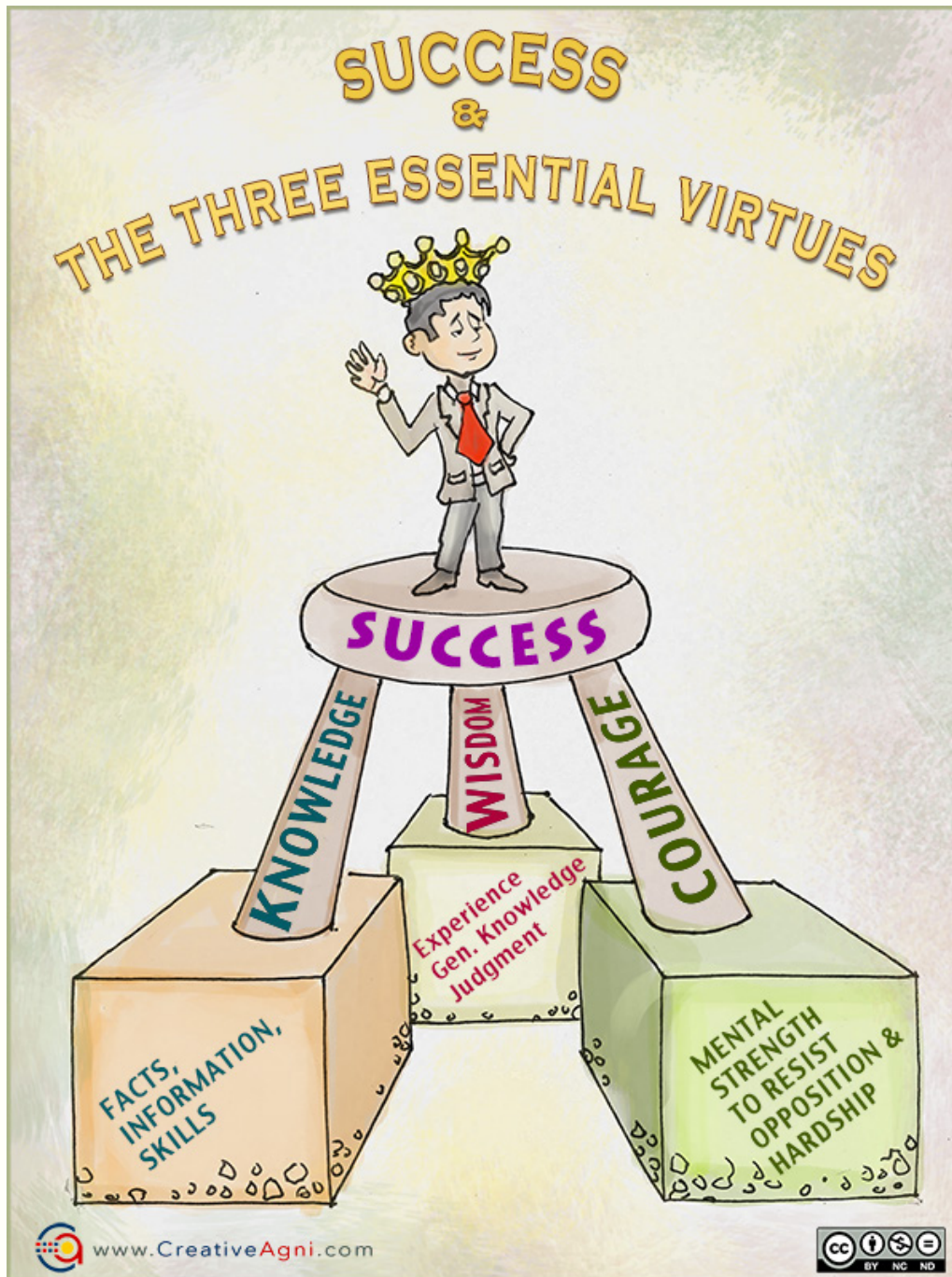
Unfortunately, he doesn't have the mental strength to resist the tenant's prospective



opposition. Fortunately, he has you – a courageous friend, who decides to help. Both of you meet your friend's tenant. You speak to him sternly, and tell him that he must leave or face consequences. In a couple of months, your friend calls up to thank you. His tenant has vacated the house.

Before figuring out how these stories connect with the three essential virtues, I'd like to tell you how this article happened. Long ago I had written a short post about Courage and Knowledge on [my Zen of Learning blog](#). Yesterday, in the [IDCD session](#), while handing out an assignment, I was reminded of that archaic post, and when I checked it out I was appalled by it. That post barely skims the surface of this thought, and neglects to mention wisdom altogether. Perhaps because between then and now, life has taught me a few more things and left me wiser, I could see the missing virtue and realize how important it really is.

"Courage," as Aristotle said, "is the first virtue because it makes other virtues



possible.” It’s true - to a large extent, except there are two other virtues that must be always stay ahead of all other virtues that you possess, and they are wisdom and knowledge.

Let us understand what these three terms mean and then reflect on how they all must come together for us to be successful.

What is Knowledge?

Knowledge is: “facts, information, and skills acquired through experience or education.”
- The Oxford Dictionary

Simply put Knowledge is facts, information, and skills.

What is Wisdom?

Wisdom is “the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgement.”

- The Oxford Dictionary

Thus, Experience (which is a function of time,) and good judgment (which is the ability to connect the experiences and knowledge-bytes gained over time to arrive at a conclusion,) come together to make us wise.

What is Courage?

“courage, mettle, spirit, resolution, tenacity mean mental or moral strength to resist opposition, danger, or hardship.”

- The Merriam-Webster Dictionary

From the above, I glean that courage is the mental or moral strength to resist opposition or hardships.

So how do Knowledge, Wisdom, and Courage come together for Success?

Let us now reflect on the three stories one by one.

1. The Angel Investor: Without the right knowledge, neither wisdom nor courage would lead you to success. It's important to remember

that wisdom often asks us to seek knowledge, but due to reasons beyond our cognitive processes (love, trust, faith, and so on,) we sometimes venture out to do things without acquiring the required facts, information, or skills. Without the knowledge of the market, investing in your son's business could've been disastrous.

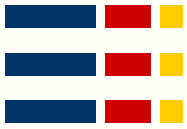
2. A Stormy Night: Without your wisdom, the virtue of kindness would have made you bring the man inside your home, give him shelter and food, and the story in the next day's news-paper could have been yours. Wisdom is all about connecting prior experiences – both direct (acquired by personally going through a situation) and indirect (acquired by reading books, listening to the experiences of others, watching news and so on,) and arriving at the best possible conclusion.

3. The Sticky Stingy Tenant: Without your courage, your friend would've lost his house. He was wise and knowledgeable, and he could probably list a dozen tenant-vs-owner cases with their exact outcomes, and yet however wise or knowledgeable he were and whatever ousting-the-tenant plans he could draw in his head, he couldn't have implemented his plans because he feared opposition and criticism.

So you see, unless you are Lady Luck's blue-eyed boy (or Lord Fortune's blue-eyed girl,) without all the three virtues working in harmony, success shall forever remain elusive.

Perhaps you want to ask if there really are people out there who don't possess all the three virtues!

Technically, we are built to possess all the three virtues and we generally do - except that



we may not have them in adequate measure. I know that five years ago, I was a lot less wiser in matters of business as well as relationships. I also know that I have a lot of courage when it comes to implementing my creative ideas, but despite realizing the importance of learning to drive, I don't have the courage to do it. The point is - can we be:

- more informed and skillful?
- wiser?
- more courageous?

The answer of course is "yes." If we only became more conscious of ourselves and our environment, we could strengthen our three essential virtues.

Which of the three virtues is YOUR Achilles' heel? Identify it and start strengthening it NOW.



Copyright © Shafali R. Anand.



Geek Speak: This article is provided under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 terms.[\(read more...\)](#)

Plain Speak: You are free to distribute or share this article as-it-is.

Creative Agni's Certificate Courses

- The Instructional Design & Content Development (IDCD) Certificate Course
- Instructional Design for Senior-professionals and Trainers (IDST) Certificate Course
- Rapid eLearning Development with Adobe Captivate (REDAC) Certificate Course

Creative Agni's Corporate Trainings/Workshops

- IDT: Instructional Design for Trainers (3-Day)
- IDeL: Instructional Design for eLearning Development (3-Day)
- SBeL: Storyboarding for eLearning (2-Day)
- C2D2: Creativity for Content Design and Development (2-Day)
- GoT: Gamification of Trainings (2-Day)
- ISW: Instructional Storywriting and Storytelling (1-Day)
- CT: Cartooning for Trainers (1-Day)
- CWW: Content Writing for the Web (1-Day)

The Creative Agni Blog & The Fount Newsletter

- Visit the Creative Agni Blog.
- Subscribe to THE FOUNT - A monthly newsletter for the evolved learning professional.



www.CreativeAgni.com

connect@creativeagni.com