

Stedman Graham – Grounding Principles of Success

In this article we look at some of the grounding principles of success of one of the most charismatically humble people I have ever had the pleasure to study with. Stedman Graham made it out of the Bronx playing College basketball, before setting up numerous businesses, authoring several books and implementing programmes to support young people in High Schools throughout the USA. He is in high demand globally, as a motivational speaker.



At 6' 7" he is a softly spoken giant, who commands attention with his sincerity. He speaks compellingly because he's clear on his identity and committed to his vision, he listens to better understand and he answers carefully, often with another thought provoking question. Of his many tips for success here are the 3 that resonated most with me: -

1. Know who you are – what is your identity for yourself.

Stedman says if we don't know who we are, the world will try to identify us, by our race, gender, nationality, religion, social class, educational attainments or job. We need to avoid being 'boxed in' by getting clear on who we are. He advocates that we start that process by writing down all the things that we love – family, friends, roles, hobbies, aspects of work – and as part of that process we start to appreciate everything that we are grateful for. Gratitude is a concept, and a practice, which is advocated by many outstanding leaders, and a simple gratitude meditation at the end of each day can help put our thoughts back in perspective.

2. We must have a vision for our life

Where do we want to be? Not just next week or next year, but in 5, 10, 20 years? I often ask people to do the rocking chair test – when they are 75 and look back on their life what will have been the highlights? When, where and how will they have made a difference? How will they be remembered?

Focus on what is important for you, so you spend your time well. When you are living on purpose, doing things you believe in, every task is so much more meaningful. We also need to play to our strengths. Visionary leaders need to surround themselves with left brained people who can bring structure and processes to implement the vision. That's why teams are so important – everyone is not the same and we have to support people to play to their strengths.

3. We have to choose positivity over negativity.

Are you a glass half full or a glass half empty person? Whatever you were up to this point, you now get to choose. Overcoming negative thoughts requires a decision, a commitment and as Stedman advocates, daily practice. Once you determine how you identify yourself, how you are going to fulfil your purpose, you must commit to practicing mind-set skills every day so that we get better at focusing on the positives. When you build your identity, you are less affected by other people's opinions, you learn to take failures and setbacks in your stride and to see them as learning opportunities and you control our environment rather than being a victim of circumstance.

The fact that he has been Oprah's partner for more than 30 years, may be what defines Stedman Graham in the media – having met him, it's his wisdom and compassion that is the lasting memory for me.

To learn more about my CORE Leadership Programme which includes insights from many other great leaders, email me at lynne@lynnepeyton.com

