

Work Smart, Not Hard

For years, we've been advised to "work hard" if we want to succeed, but the truth is that—at least since the dawn of the industrial revolution—it is those who have figured out how to *not* work hard who have achieved the most success.

Perhaps the notion comes from pre-industrial days when working hard at a subsistence-level endeavor like farming could produce marginally more success than working with less gusto. More hours of backbreaking labor meant a few extra potatoes come harvest time. Cool.

For better or worse, that's not how the vast majority of endeavors work today. The guy who works the hardest likely has the greatest chance of being replaced by automation because the harder a job is, the fewer people are willing to do it (and the more they want for their labor), so the more incentive there is to replace people with machines—who don't charge any extra to do hard jobs.

Most millionaires and billionaires aren't folks who spent a lot of time toiling in the hot sun digging ditches. Despite the adages and advice to the contrary, they didn't spend their lives working at traditionally hard jobs. There are good reasons why this is the case.

Keep in mind, I'm not knocking the expertise required to run a business or the amount of mental labor required to balance the duties and risks involved in management or investing. My point is that the laudatory praise directed at menial physical labor is typically unwarranted.

If you really want to succeed in the modern world, observe the folks around you who are working the hardest and figure out how to accomplish the same result with less effort. In the end, you'll be the one with the mansion while they'll be collecting unemployment. The future belongs to those who work smart, not hard.