



ALPHA PYGMY GOATS, UNREASONABLY OPTIMISTIC RUSSIAN ATTORNEYS AND SETTING HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR YOURSELF

Each day after class, he would approach me and ask me questions about ridiculously prestigious law firms and whether or not I thought he could [get a job](#) with these firms. I never had the heart to tell him that it would be impossible for him to get a job with most of these law firms due to where he was attending [law school](#) and his ability to speak English. He did not seem to care, however. For as long as I could take it each day, he would sit there and question me about various law firms and then, from time to time, also ask me questions about the material.

When the semester was over, I continued to hear from him. Every three months or so, he would call me at work to ask me some questions as well. While he was smart, he could not really write effectively, and his writing frequently confused tenses and was a mishmash of words. His writing would have been unacceptable to submit to a court, for example, much less to churn out to a white shoe law firm. In addition, his speech was difficult to understand because he had such a strong Russian accent, and he also would mangle the English language with practically every word he said.

Then one day I stopped hearing from him and did not hear from him for approximately one year. I was getting on the elevator in my building one day and was standing there silent as the full elevator rose to my floor. I heard the word "Professor!" I turned around, and there was the Russian kid standing there in a suit and holding a briefcase.

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

"I work at a [law firm](#) in the building," he said.

I was practically speechless. I invited him into my office, and he told me all about how he had managed to get a position with a decent law firm in the building. We spoke for some time, and I was very, very happy for him. In actuality, I had never believed that this was something he was capable of.

He believed he was capable of this, however. And even though he was working at a decent law firm at the time, he still wanted more. For the next several months, he would call me every five or six weeks and ask me if I had anything at one of the four or five most prestigious law firms in Los Angeles. He was aiming really, really high at firms which hired people from the very, very top of their class at schools like Stanford and so forth, and where the kids that were hired as new attorneys were incredibly polished. Each time I would speak with him I would try and gently tell him that this was not the sort of law firm he should be working at, but I would not say this directly. Instead, I would allude to this by discussing how competitive it was and so forth.

He was not having any of this.

One day I stopped hearing from him again, and I did not hear from him for at least another year. Then one day I was in a large skyscraper that is one of the most expensive office buildings in Los Angeles (rent-wise), sitting in the lobby speaking with someone, and he walked by. I shouted his name, and he came right over to me.

This time he looked different. There was more self-confidence to his face than I had seen in the past. His hair was better cut and he did not have the sort of "bowl cut" I had been accustomed to seeing. He looked like he had a very good pair of shoes on and was carrying an expensive briefcase. I asked him what he was doing. He had switched jobs. While he was not at one of these "top 5" law firms in Los Angeles, he had joined a group of attorneys who had recently broken off from one of those law firms. The law firm he was at was very prestigious by virtue of the attorneys working there. I did not ask how he got the job, but I am sure it had something to do with calling or visiting one or more of these attorneys when they were still working at the former firm. When they were at the big law firm, I am sure one or more of them said something to themselves like "we would love to hire this guy but we cannot—he just does not have the sort of pedigree, and so forth." But when they started their own firm, none of this mattered anymore, and they could hire whomever they chose to hire.

That's what I like to think anyway. I believe this.

I have not heard from this guy in at least 5 years, but I am sure he is doing well. How does a guy who speaks lousy English, cannot write a straight sentence, and who went to one of the worst ranked law schools in the United States (and did not even do that well in law school), rise to the pinnacle of the legal profession to work with some of the best attorneys in the United States?

What does he know that most people do not?

It is simple: He believes that he can achieve whatever he sets out to achieve.

This may be a simple statement but it is among the most "loaded" statements you will ever hear. The reason for this is that most people out there, at some point, believe they cannot go any further and stop themselves. They believe they cannot achieve whatever it is they are interested in achieving. This belief alone is something that keeps them from achieving whatever it is they want to achieve.

I live on a small farm of sorts where I raise ducks, chickens, goats, sheep and tortoises. Several months ago, I purchased a herd of goats to join a male pygmy goat that I also have. If you have not seen a pygmy goat, as the name implies, a pygmy goat is a very small goat. In fact, a grown pygmy goat is about 1/3 the size of a normal goat. I feed these animals every day and spend a lot of time observing them. The strangest thing I have noticed is that the leader of all of the animals—the goats and the sheep—is the pygmy goat. Despite his small size, he is in charge of all of the animals. If he wants to eat first, he makes sure the other animals get out of the way. This little goat is in charge of all of the other animals.

Why would a goat 1/3 the size of all of the other animals be in charge? I know exactly why – because he believes he is the leader.

The other animals could easily intimidate this little pygmy goat with their size, but they stay away.

When I was in elementary school, there was a little guy who was very thin and smaller than the other kids. However, I remember that this little kid was never afraid to fight larger kids. He would lash out and whack them in the face and do whatever he needed to do to win every fight. This kid was so thin and scrawny that I think he ended up winning several sprinting and running awards by breaking various school records when he got older. He was really fast because he had hardly any weight to carry around.

How did this little kid become the leader and the feared one on the playground? He believed he was the leader.

If other kids would have fought as hard as he did, they would have won fights but they did not.

What does this mean for your career? It means a tremendous amount and is among the most important lessons you will ever learn. You need to believe in what you can do, and that you can achieve whatever it is you are trying to achieve. Very few people believe in themselves and what they are capable of.

- They do not believe they can achieve everything they want to achieve in their careers
- They do not believe that they can win various fights and so they back down and never fight
- They do not believe they are qualified for a job so they never apply
- They do not believe they have a good enough education so they set the bar low for themselves
- They do not believe they have enough experience so they do not set their sights high
- They believe others are better than them and resign themselves to this
- They believe so many things about what they are capable of that limit them their entire lives and careers

I want to be very, very clear with you that the problem of you becoming everything you want to be is your problem, and it is all in your mind. You are preventing yourself from being the person you are capable of being due to all sorts of limiting beliefs that are holding you back. If you believe you are capable of being something, you can do it. If you do not believe you are capable, then you probably cannot do it. You are in charge of your mind. The power to be, do and become who you want to be is all in your mind. You need to take control of your mind and become and be the person you want to become and be. It is as simple as that.

In my garage at home, I have what is called a "sensory deprivation tank." Essentially, this tank is filled with salt water that I can go into and meditate in. The

entire tank is dark, and when I am inside of it, I cannot hear anything. My body floats, and I can think through various issues I am dealing with. People may think this is weird or strange, but I do not care. All I know is that meditation is something that has benefited me, and I continually do things to help me become a person. I do not think I would have been able to become who I am today without meditation. There is nothing more important to me, personally, than making sure I control limiting thoughts in my mind and this is why I go into this tank to meditate. I have been doing this for some time.

Everyone has an incredible number of limiting thoughts that they are contending with. There is no doubt you do as well. I am sure there are countless people out there who have told you that you are incapable of doing this or that, that you should only try this or that, and more. You need to banish this sort of thinking from your mind. This sort of thinking does not help you one bit. In fact, it is this sort of thinking that will keep you in a state where you are not reaching your potential for the rest of your life. That's right. Limiting thinking will keep you in a state of not reaching your goals for the rest of your life.

Every few months, something unusual happens in my office. I will be sitting in my office and the receptionist will come into my office and announce:

"There is someone here to see you. They understand they do not have an appointment, but they apparently believe it is important that they speak with you."

I will then send the secretary scurrying out to get more information and will find that the person sitting in the lobby is a job seeker who is coming to see me personally about getting a job in a law firm. This is something I am sure happens in [recruiting firms](#) all over; however, every time this happens, I am amazed by the power of the human spirit and the people who are doing this.

In several cases, the people sitting in the lobby waiting to speak with me have flown in from other parts of the United States. They are always impeccably dressed and have their little portfolios containing their resumes. In most cases, the people who are doing this do not have very good qualifications. They have not gone to the right law schools, and they do not have the pedigree that would allow them to get the [best jobs](#). But they keep showing up because they believe in themselves.

These are my heroes and the people with the spirit to achieve. What is inside of them will lead them to great achievement.

One of the most unusual things I have seen in my life, in working with countless job seekers and others, is that so many people go into interviews and other situations expecting not to get the job. That's right. They flat out expect to lose and not get the job when they go into an interview. People simply do not believe they will get the job.

"What's the use of trying?" many people tell me.

You need to banish that sort of thinking from your mind. You need to believe in yourself and that you will get the results you want in your life. This is the only way you are ever going to get the job you want or reach your full potential.

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