

Choose your associations carefully ... Your life depends on it!



As we launch into a new year, there are many positive things that we would like to happen to us, for us and around us. If you are like me, you have made a list of things that you want to change, improve and/or achieve this year. Some of those things are simple & easy and others are challenging and will require a stretch. The first positive step forward you can make this year is to very carefully choose who you will associate with and listen to ...

Many years ago I was a student – incredible, in fact, that I can possibly remember so far back! At the time I was trying to combine a Bachelor of Education degree with a professional football career. The challenge was that the people that I was spending the majority of my time with were my fellow students, who were far more interested in drinking vast quantities of alcohol than anything else.

Now, don't get me wrong, I enjoyed drinking and acting silly – the problem is that alcohol and a successful professional sporting career do not mix! As I tell this story I want to make it abundantly clear that I am not blaming the people I was hanging around for my own actions ... I blame myself for not being strong enough to say 'no' and for choosing people to hang around with who weren't more positive influences on me and my football career.

It was mid week during the football season and there was a so-called inter-college sporting event out of town for two days. It was actually just an excuse to drink a lot! I knew I shouldn't go and I should have been stronger, but my mates kept saying; "*Come on Jobbas - don't be soft – it is only a couple of days – you don't have to drink that much.*" So against my better judgement I decided to go.

We started drinking early in the day, kept drinking throughout the highly serious and competitive sports competition (LOL), and continued late into the night and, as happens, young men and alcohol are a potentially dangerous combination. A group of five of us stumbled back to our hotel room that night and, along the way, for some reason, we got fixated on a street sign. I can't remember why, but we decided we wanted to have it. After that much alcohol, you don't need a reason!

One at a time we jumped up, grabbed the street sign and tried as hard as possible to pull it off — all to no avail until it was finally my turn. After some persuading, ridicule and then a 'leg up' I was hanging off the street sign, legs dangling in the air, jerking up and down trying to get it off. All of a sudden I was drenched in light. The headlights of a police car were shining directly at

me as I hung from the sign! In my intoxicated state, and as I was hanging there, I thought to myself, 'How am I ever going to talk my way out of this one?'

We were all taken to the police station, but it was only me who ended up with free accommodation that night! I also got charges against me for drunk & disorderly and wilful damage. My four other so-called mates denied that they also attempted to remove the street sign and so they got off free. The next day I drove home with terrible hangover, a summons to appear in court a couple of weeks later and anger at myself for not being strong enough to say 'no'.



You will be happy to know that I got off the charges with a good behaviour bond. However, my football performance that next weekend was woeful – as to be expected!

Who are you associating with?

We need to take 100% responsibility for the outcomes we experience – that is lesson number one! It was my fault and I knew it. Lesson two and the most important thing I learned was that if I had been hanging with a different crowd (pardon the pun!), a more positive and encouraging crowd, then I would never have been in that situation in the first place. In fact who knows where I might be today if I had changed my associations back then.

Well, we can't change the past, but we can most certainly choose our present and therefore control our future ... simply by spending time with the right people. When you think about the people you spend most of your time with would you say they lift, encourage, challenge and push you to achieve more to the be the best you can be? Or do they criticise, discourage, drag you down and influence you along a negative path?

Like me, you are prone to be heavily influenced by the people you spend your time with – so if you want more from your life this year, then choose these people very carefully.

AJ's rule for positive association ...

As always, my goal is to keep it simple and so in terms of your associations my rule to live by is ...

Only listen to and associate with people who are living the life you want to live and doing the things that you want to do or those who are on the same path as you.



Limit the time you spend with complainers, criticisers, blamers and discouragers. Don't ask for opinions or take advice from those who don't know or don't have a vested interest in your results. Find the right people, the successful people, the positive people and spend your time with them, then ... watch your year, your success and your life soar!!

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