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Think You Can!⁽¹⁾

By R.W. Trewyn*

“Whether you think you can or think you can’t — you are right.”

That profound truth by Henry Ford⁽²⁾ may be more important in America now than at any time in American history. Today’s blame others, victim culture is poisoning the citizenry, destroying our country.

It’s time to quit whining and pay attention to Mr. Ford’s wisdom. Think you can ... then do!

Stop pointing the finger at everyone else as to why you’re not succeeding. Look in the mirror. You think you can’t ... then don’t. It’s you!

It’s not your culture. It’s not the color of your skin. It’s not your gender, whatever you might consider yourself to be. It’s not the wrong pronoun someone calls you by mistake.

“Whether you think you can or think you can’t — you are right.” Henry’s crystal ball figured it out for you back in the last millennium.

It’s you!

And guess what?

Henry Ford thought he could, then went out and proved he could.

People should try to emulate that.

My discovery of Ford’s quotation occurred a decade or so ago, but I first observed the reality of it over a half century ago — in combat.

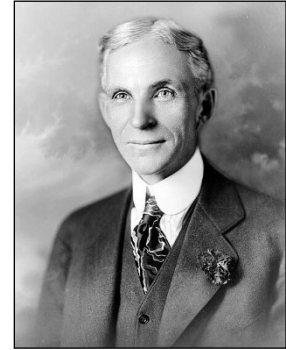
During the Vietnam War, Delta Company’s 2nd Platoon always believed they could do whatever was assigned ... and did. Conversely, 3rd Platoon always thought they were going to get their butts kicked with whatever was assigned ... and did. In the process, 3rd Platoon went through lieutenants and sergeants at an astounding pace. The Army infantry’s leadership motto, “Follow Me,” took a heavy toll.

As a staff sergeant in Vietnam, I spent most of my time as the platoon sergeant in Delta’s 2nd Platoon after a couple weeks as 3rd squad leader. However, due to officer and NCO casualties, I also served as a platoon leader off and on with 2nd Platoon and 3rd Platoon. As a result, I learned the character of both firsthand.

The second time serving in that capacity with the permanently paranoid 3rd Platoon, the duration was short — 1-day — before my tour in Vietnam ended. A booby trap tripped behind me booked my flight to Okinawa where I recovered four months before being discharged from the Army.

Yes, combat taught me the meaning of Henry Ford’s astute words decades before stumbling across his actual statement. The outcomes are real.

Your attitude and belief in yourself are key determinants, but so are the attitudes and beliefs of those around you. If you have a choice, don’t surround yourself with people who think they can’t. It’s contagious and potentially deadly. A 2-inch change in trajectory with any of the three pieces of shrapnel that hit me could have killed me.



But, no, I don't mean potentially deadly only in combat. The same can be true in civilian life. It just might take longer to end up dead, at least, physically. Mental necrosis can happen quickly, and clearly has in many of those ranting in the streets about their victimhood.

Over the years, there have been innumerable books written touting the value of positive thinking. All may be worth reading.

However, instead of perusing dozens of lengthy narratives, memorize the twelve words put forth by Henry Ford. Thinking you can will get you just as far and arriving there requires less time.

Having retired last year prior to hitting my 80th birthday this year, "only recently did I appreciate that every professional success I've enjoyed over the past 52 years was because of my time in the Army" (Trewyn, R.W., "Correcting the Record About Vietnam Veterans' Service," *ARMY Magazine*, 72 (11): 23-25, Nov. 2022). "There's no way I would have held any of my university leadership positions had it not been for the NCO Candidate Course at Fort Benning, Georgia, and leading troops in combat."

Those instilled in me the most important part of Ford's maxim, "think you can." Coupled with the "Follow Me" motto of the Army infantry school, it was a game-changer.

Something else Ford's logic helped cinch in my retirement is not to hang around people who believe they're old. Their "think you can't" maladies multiply synergistically. The debilitating mindset is highly transmissible, like COVID, and just as deadly.

Avoid them like the plague! Don't get infected.

And, yes, I have personal knowledge regarding its lethality.

For years, my father told everyone he was going to die at 64 because that's when all his uncles did. History convinced him of that fact and it proved to be true. Well, except for the part about his uncles.

Exploring the genealogy after the fact, I was unable to find dates when every one of them passed away, but his uncle Frank lived to 73. Moreover, dad's father, who should have factored directly into his assessment, died at 78.

We can be thankful, though, that he lost track of his fostered uncle in Illinois who perished at age 53.

The mind is a powerful catalyst. It can expedite an early exit from this life.

Will you — or I — live forever by thinking positive?

No!

But we'll live better ... and likely longer. For most, longer and better together tend to be a nice combination. It's more enjoyable.

"Whether you think you can or think you can't — you are right." Heeding Ford's advice works.

Assess what's required — "think you can!" — then do it.

****R.W. Trewyn earned a PhD after surviving Vietnam combat, and more treacherously, endured 53-years postwar slogging academe's once hallowed halls.***

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American Thinker Articles: <https://www.americanthinker.com/author/rwtrewyn/>

References:

(1) https://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2023/06/think_you_can.html

(2) https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/203714.Henry_Ford