

LUCK

What is luck? The dictionary has a number of various definitions but all of them indicate good fortune brought about by chance.

Some people believe that certain individuals are blessed with internal good luck and seem to obtain good fortune by chance on numerous occasions. I think I prescribe to this in a limited way.

True, certain individuals seem to prosper in situations of chance far more often than others. I often say that I'm not lucky in these chance items. If only two tickets were sold on a raffle and I had one of them, then the other ticket holder would win.

That's not totally true since I have won at least once that I can remember when I was a guest speaker at a gathering in Kingston many years ago. I was unfamiliar with how long a drive it was from Brampton, so I arrived just before I was scheduled to speak. A chap met me at the door and said "John, you're next but here, take a ticket on the draw we're going to have right now".

You guessed it, my ticket was drawn (I guess they hadn't mixed them too well) and I won. It was a flashlight I think but the sheer joy of winning was a prize in itself.

Sometimes we accuse people of having "good luck," when it really is just the result of hard work. How often have we said of a colleague who was promoted ahead of us "Well he was always lucky" or sometimes something much worse about their "always toadying up to the bosses".

Most often when we engage in this sort of comment we forget the extra courses they took or the nights and weekends they worked without complaint, or that however busy they were they were always there to give you a hand when you had a problem or were overloaded. Along the same vein, I'm always interested in the myths surrounding successful actors and actresses who were "just discovered", when the truth is that they usually have spent many years in bit parts and faced many instances of rejection before they were "discovered".

We often hear of, and indeed, may know, some individuals who are successful investors and seem to have the "luck" of making money on the stock market. Usually these individuals spend many hours in researching the

various stocks and thoroughly reading and consulting various analyses. Over time, I'm told, since my record on investing is less than successful, this research and analysis leads to, not only well thought reasons for buying and selling, but also develops in one the instinct or hunch factor that results, usually, in successful actions. So we may think it's luck but it is really hard work and good analytical thinking.

Let's take going to a casino. Is it "luck" or something else that leads to some people winning and others losing? If you play only the slot machines, then in my view it is pure luck, either good or bad that determines whether you win or lose, since there is no inherent skill in pulling the handle or pushing a button. On the other hand, repeatedly successful people on the other various games usually have a degree of skill, thus the signs Counting Cards Prohibited.

This is not necessarily true of games like Roulette. Valerie recounts the story of her visit to the casino at Monte Carlo many years ago. She played Roulette and gradually lost the sum she had determined to lose and stopped playing. She had inadvertently left a chip on a number that won the next two spins. The croupier, who saw that she wasn't paying

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