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Unsuccessful? Ordinary? Or Successful?

By Kristy Grant-Hart

In his book, *Thinking for a Change*, author John Maxwell asserts, “Unsuccessful people focus their thinking on survival. Ordinary people focus their thinking on maintenance. Successful people focus their thinking on progress.”^[1] Is that true? And if so, how do we apply it to the way we think about our work and our programs?

If you focus on survival . . .

The trope in the compliance profession is that our job is mostly putting out fires. There never seems to be enough time to get to less-critical elements like updating training or finishing the risk assessment. But there’s a problem. Focusing entirely on surviving robs us of the ability to accomplish long-term goals. Lack of achievement—even when we’ve successfully put out the fires—may lead to executives feeling like we’ve not accomplished much (or anything). That can quickly lead to career disaster.

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