



# Show Your Cards, Not Your Trophies

One of my close friends, Steve, is a successful business owner in the world of hospitality, event planning and catering. I was listening to a podcast recently in which Steve was interviewed on the topic of *Winning in Business*. During the interview, I was struck by something Steve said: “*In all areas of life, and not just in business,*” he said, “*I believe it’s better to show your cards, not your trophies.*” His phrase, ***show your cards, not your trophies***, caught me by surprise and has been ringing in my ears since the podcast interview ended. The simple-yet-catchy wisdom within his words has offered me some real food for thought.

So much of life around us seems to be all about winning. Whether it’s following a favorite sports team, a hotly-contested electoral race, a global trade imbalance, or even in the way we celebrate our national independence, winning seems to be everything. This perception can be true of how we see ourselves, as well. The bigger the successes, the victories, or the trophies we win in life, the better off we are, or so many voices would have us believe. But, is that the truth? ***Is winning, either in life around us or in how we see ourselves, the most important thing?***

One of my favorite authors and speakers is a research professor named Brené Brown. Brené has spent decades looking at human behavior, listening to the stories we tell ourselves and others, and trying to identify what makes us feel whole and connected to others. To the surprise of many of her readers and listeners, Brené Brown’s

findings show that it’s not our successes—our wins and trophies, if you will, or our great achievements that truly matter most. Rather, her research points to our vulnerability, and our willingness to be open with who we are. I call that vulnerability and openness ***showing your cards, not your trophies.***

## Show Your Cards, Not Your Trophies

What does this phrase mean to you? To me, this phrase means not being afraid to show our humanity—our flaws, our imperfections and our limitations. It means not being afraid to share the truth of ourselves with others. I’m not talking about sin here, as Christ Jesus has dealt with that fully, and is working continually to transform all darkness into light. Thankfully, he is doing so in all of us one day at a time. What I am talking about here is being open, humble, and transparent. In Brené Brown’s words, ***we need to allow ourselves to be seen, deeply seen, vulnerably seen.*** We need to ***show our cards, not our trophies.***

## The Meek Will Inherit the Earth

I’ve wondered about this statement as found in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:5, NIV). I’ve struggled somewhat to understand what Jesus may have meant when he used the word “*meek.*” At face value, there seems to be a paradox at work here. In general, most commentaries agree that the Greek word for *meek* conveys a sense of strength; strength while being humble, gentle, patient, and open or vulnerable in suffering. But, rarely does it seem that these

characteristics are of value in the world around us. Strength could certainly lead to an inheritance of the earth, but how could being humble, gentle, patient and vulnerable in suffering help to that end? Clearly, Jesus saw things differently.

## Strength in Vulnerability

There is something so beautiful about the *internal intersection of Jesus’ indwelling divinity with our own inherent humanity*. Jesus has dealt with our sin, of that we can be sure. What’s left is to let his light shine on us, in us, and through us to others. That light can show our successes and achievements, our wins and trophies, if you will. That Light can also reveal our flaws, our imperfections and our limitations. We can use the Light of his divinity and the honest reality of our humanity to connect with others. His strength can cause our vulnerability to be a light for others, to be impactful in our community. We let others see us as we are and thereby know they are not alone.

As Christ-followers, there is nothing wrong with success and achievement. To win a few trophies every now and again is a wonderful part of life. But, it’s our cards—our humanity, vulnerability and that which connects us with others—that truly matter. Our flaws, our imperfections and our limitations are made perfect in him. And, he will use all that we are to help unite, strengthen and connect the parts of his spiritual body. Thanks be to our Lord and Savior for that! □

—Ed Dunn