

Success – what does it really mean?

What will you look like when you are a “success”? Will you have lots of “toys” and status symbols to alert others to your success? Will you have multiple investments and be comfortable financially? Will you lead an enviable lifestyle? Will you be famous?

Something that’s been bothering me for a while is the question of what I am working towards. How will I know when I reach it? What will it mean when I do? This article poses the question “what is success and how can I be successful?”

The dictionary meaning of success is *favourable outcome or attainment of one’s aims*. Before we can achieve aims, we must set goals. We must know what it is we want to achieve in order to feel successful when we do. Then we must establish what needs to be done in order for those goals to be reached. Success is about looking at yourself honestly – taking a look at where you are and where you want to be. Steven Covey talks about “beginning with the end in mind” – all things are born twice – first in the unconscious and then in the conscious and it would appear that all “successful” people do just that.

So step 1 on your journey is to set yourself goals and then work out how you will achieve them. Decide what you want out of life and write it down. Break the goal down into bite sized chunks and work backwards. What do you want to have achieved this time next year? What do you need to do in the next quarter that will move you towards the achievement of the goal? How about next month and then next week? The whole purpose of setting goals is to achieve them and you will only achieve them by doing something TODAY towards the achievement of the goal.

Oscar Wilde said in 1883 that ‘*Success is a science; if you have the conditions, you get the result*’. He believed that everyone was good at something – the tragedy in life is not

discovering what it is. So step 2 in becoming a “success” is to understand that success is actually an attitude of mind. Take that thought one step further and quite simply, enjoy what you do. If that is too difficult a mind shift initially, then focus on the things you like about what you do – play to your strengths. Start feeling good about yourself, your life and your journey. Focus on the positive, be optimistic. Start thinking like you are a successful person.

Step 3 is being emotionally intelligent. Living by Daniel Goleman’s principles means firstly being aware of what is going on around you. Being up to date with what is happening in your external and internal world. Next is using restraint in your communication with others. That is, identifying and restraining your negative emotions that can cause damage. Resilience means having a positive and optimistic attitude regardless of the circumstances in which you find yourself. Developing an emotional radar is about understanding what it is like to walk in another’s shoes. Finally building and maintaining rapport – even when challenged. Successful people are fun to be around, they radiate optimism and always attract like-minded people.

Next, become an expert time manager. Successful people fit lots in. Focus on everything, not just work. The more you do, the more you can do. Most of us simply do too little – we probably only operate at about 40% capacity. Read lots of books, get lots of exercise, and lots of sleep. Successful people have incredible energy. It’s a known fact that the less you have to do, the more tired you get and the more tired you are, the less you get done! So step 4 is getting to grips with the fact that successful people work hard and manage their time effectively.

Learn to be more self confident. Spend more time thinking and less time doing. Don’t get too busy *doing* that you have forgotten

how to *be*. Self confidence is about learning and developing as a person. If you are not reading a book a month, then you should be. Step 5 then is being self confident – not arrogant (and there is a big difference). Act successful and those around you will believe you are a success.

Finally, successful people understand failure. They respect it and learn more from it than from their success. They acknowledge it but try not to repeat it. Understand your weaknesses whilst playing to your strengths. Learn from your mistakes and move on. Don’t dwell on your failures and don’t allow others to either.

Back to my original question. What does success look like for you?

For me it’s a mixture of market circumstance, my competence, my personality, my desire to achieve what is important to me as well as lots of hard work. It’s my peers recognising that I’m good at what I do and me feeling that I add value at every opportunity. ■



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