



How to be Successful

A Guide to
Achievement

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How to be Successful

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How to be Successful

Chapter 1

Introduction

When we see someone we consider to be successful, we tend to think he knows something that we don't. We can see books advertised that offer to tell us the secrets of success. On the Internet, courses are offered that will tell us what these secrets are.

After we have read these books or taken the courses, we don't seem to be any wiser. The fact is that there are no secrets. Being successful is the same procedure as doing anything else.

Suppose someone wished to learn to drive a car. The first step would be to acquire the necessary knowledge. This would amount to learning the controls of the car and the rules of the road. After this, the next stage would be to put that knowledge into effect and practice driving. Assuming these two steps were adequately covered, that person would become a driver.

The purpose of this book is to provide the information required for success and it is then up to the reader to take the necessary action.

You may read this book and never take any action. That would be a pity since you have much to gain by being more successful. Think of the times each day when you use time and energy performing mundane and meaningless tasks. Why not use this time and energy to improve things for yourself? Take this book seriously and make the attempt to improve your life. You may just find that it is worth the effort to make a few minor improvements to make your life better. Remember, you have only one life, so why not make the effort. This book has been written to assist you, no matter what your aims are.

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Introduction

The language in this book has been kept simple and there are no technical terms: therefore, there should be no problem understanding everything the book teaches.

To be successful, we have to concentrate on three areas:

- 1) Your thoughts.**
- 2) Your actions.**
- 3) Your beliefs.**

These are of equal importance, and should be treated accordingly.

"We achieve everything by our efforts alone. Our fate is not decided by an almighty God. We decide our own fate by our actions. You have to gain mastery over yourself ... It is not a matter of sitting back and accepting."

Daw Aung San K

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Chapter 2

Your Brain

When we are born, we are given the most powerful asset that we will ever receive in life. That asset is our brain. How we use it will determine the life we have. You may find it difficult to accept, but the life you have now, is a culmination of all your thoughts and beliefs in the past.

You will probably have no trouble in accepting that it was your good thinking that gave you your success in the past. However, you will probably blame unfortunate circumstances or other people for your failures. No matter how it appears, you are solely responsible for the life you have now and your future will be determined by how you think and act now and in the future.

As we go through life, information is passed to the brain via our senses - taste, sight, touch, smell and hearing. Unfortunately, much of the information passed is wrong or flawed. The result is that our conscious and subconscious minds act on the information received and if this is wrong, we suffer the wrong

circumstances. We cannot filter all information passed to the brain, much of which occurs without our awareness. However, we can monitor what we think and determine as far as we can, if what we think is correct.

It has been proved that people use only a small percentage of their brainpower. Therefore there is plenty of scope for improvement for us all.

The brain is the same as other parts of the body in one respect - it functions better with exercise. In a later, suggestions are given regarding exercising the brain and imagination.

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Chapter 3

Your Potential

The first thing we have to decide is whether or not you are capable of being successful. Do you have the necessary qualities for greater achievements? Unfortunately, it is the practice of most people to underrate themselves. They achieve so much and decide, consciously or subconsciously, that they cannot go any further.

For example, they attend school and learn to read, write, count, etc. They may not gain any prizes, but they were successful in mastering these subjects. They, then, obtain a job which they manage to do satisfactorily. So once again they are successful. However, if the job supplies them with an adequate income, this is as far as they go. They make no further attempt to improve themselves.

The fact is that everyone, without exception, has had some success in life. On that basis, this book should have had the title, "How to be More Successful".

Hopefully, the foregoing has convinced you that you have had successes in life. If you take a few moments to go over your past life, you will no doubt

find other instances of success. This is important, since a feeling of self-confidence is required to be successful.

Most people have a feeling that they are capable of greater things. This feeling is true. We are all capable of more and greater accomplishments. You are no exception. Believe this with all your heart and you have taken your first and most important step towards improvement.

It should be noted that you are never too old for success. People in their 70's, 80's and even 90's, have created new successes for themselves.

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Chapter 4

Essential Qualities

There are certain qualities which you must have, or be able to acquire. They are necessary for your success. The stronger these characteristics are, the greater and easier will be your achievements.

These characteristics are:

- 1) Definiteness of purpose.**
- 2) Enthusiasm**
- 3) Willingness to learn**
- 4) Adaptability**
- 5) Determination to succeed**
- 6) Perseverance**
- 7) Ability to accept temporary failure**
- 8) Efficiency**

Definiteness of purpose

This simply means deciding exactly what you wish to achieve. For example, there would be no point in deciding you would like to excel at some sport. You would have to be specific and decide which sport was your specialty.

You can, of course, choose several subjects. However, in this instance, it would probably be better to concentrate on one at a time. Pick the easiest one first. When you succeed at this, it will give you confidence to tackle the next one and so on.

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Enthusiasm

This is a vital requirement. You must be enthusiastic about your subject. The more enthusiastic you are, the easier your task will be and the greater your degree of success. To retain a high degree of enthusiasm, keep a picture in your mind of being successful.

Willingness to learn

If you are reluctant to learn new things, you will not make any progress. You may argue that you already have enough knowledge. There are then two possibilities. Either 1) you are not using the knowledge you already have or, 2) you have insufficient knowledge. In which case, it is back to the drawing board.

Adaptability

You must learn to become adaptable. Life is continually changing and we must learn to change with it or we perish.

Determination

This is an important factor. You will find that the greater your

determination, the easier your task will be. Determination can overcome many barriers.

If I had to select one quality, one personal characteristic that I regard as being most highly correlated with success, whatever the field, I would pick the trait of persistence. Determination. The will to endure to the end, to get knocked down seventy times and get up off the floor saying "Here comes number seventy-one!"

Richard M Devos

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Perseverance

Allied to determination is perseverance. When things are going well, perseverance is not an issue. But, having the ability to stick with it when things are going wrong usually determines whether success or failure is the result.

"Consider the postage stamp; its usefulness consists in the ability to stick to one thing until it gets there."

Josh Billings

Ability to Accept Temporary Failure

You must be willing to accept failures along the way. This is unavoidable. When you fail, you must determine why things went wrong. If you can find the reason, you can consider it a success, because you don't make the same mistake twice. Learn from your failures and, if you have the

opportunity, learn from the mistakes of others.

Common Sense

If anything was ever misnamed, this is probably it, Common sense is not so common. In any situation, where you have to make a decision, consider the situation carefully and methodically.

Efficiency

Since this item is important for your success, a complete chapter has been provided.

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Chapter 5

Other Desirable Ingredients

Besides the qualities outlined in the previous chapter, there are several other considerations which can be instrumental for success.

Opportunities

Do not sit around waiting for the world to come to you. It will never happen. You must constantly be on the lookout for opportunities to improve your life. You may say that you are never lucky enough to get opportunities. Opportunities tend to be rather elusive. They generally don't tend to jump out in front of you, you have to look for them. Alternatively, you have to create your own.

Route Plan

Plan your route to success. If you had to go to a certain destination,

you would not step out into the street and hope that you would magically be transported to your destination. You would decide how you were going to get there. Success is the same. You must plan and organise to get there.

A Step at a Time

When you decide to start, do not look upon your journey in total. This might seem to big to handle. Determine the steps you have to take. Then concentrate on the first one and get started.

Keep Pushing

There will be times when you feel that it is too much of an effort to continue or the next step is rather daunting. This is where you can fail unless you take control.

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Remember your schooldays when the teacher presented you with an exercise which you would have preferred to avoid

However, you had no choice. So you made the effort and you were pleasantly surprised to find that it wasn't so difficult after all. Now, of course, there is no teacher standing over you demanding results. Now you have to be your own taskmaster.

Habits

The things we do on a regular basis will contribute to, or deduct from, our efficiency and success. The ideal situation, therefore, is to eliminate those habits which are detrimental to us and cultivate those which are beneficial.

First we have to determine the present situation and decide what changes we will make.

One way to deal with this is to prepare two lists: one, containing what we consider to be bad habits and two, those which are beneficial to you.

It should be remembered that most of our lives are run on habits. Although, generally not thought of as habits, there are those things which we perform every day or several times a day. Examples are sleeping, washing, etc. These are necessary and for our purpose, can be considered irrelevant.

Take time preparing your lists You will find that you have more habits than you thought you had.

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Now, take the list that contains what you consider to be those practices that you feel are detrimental to your well being. How many of them can you eliminate or alter to your advantage? Certain practices such as smoking are taken to be bad habits. However, we are not really interested in this type of habit, only those that influence our success or failure.

Breaking a habit is not always easy. Therefore, it is probably better to work on the easiest ones first. This will give you the confidence to tackle the more difficult ones.

Once you have eliminated as many bad habits as you can, it is time to go on to the second list. Are there any practices here that you can improve on? Are there any new habits that you can introduce that would be to your advantage?

It has been estimated that it takes about three weeks for some action to become a habit. So it will probably require a little effort.

Have Patience

Do not expect to become an overnight success. Success takes time and the greater the goal, the longer it will take. If you feel you are making progress, settle for this and keep on trying.

Think Easy Success

Our minds tend to give us what we think. If you think your road to success is going to be long and hazardous, that's the way it will turn out. Tell yourself it will be easy and pleasant. When you have something to do, always tell yourself you will manage it with ease and it will not take long to complete the task. You will find that this will invariably be the case.

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Chapter 6

The Enemies of Success

Unfortunately, success does not always come easily. Certain factors always exist to throw a spanner in the works. The following must be rectified where necessary.

Procrastination

The problem for some people is getting started. They resolve to do something and then decide to start tomorrow or next week. When tomorrow or next week arrives, they find another excuse for further delay. The result is that they never make a start at all. Whatever you have decided to achieve, start now, Once you have started, that will give you the incentive to carry on.

Fear of Failure

Fear of failing can deter some people from even starting. Failure is

part of life By failing, we can learn where we went wrong, rectify our errors and move forward. Just remember, you have the potential to reach your goals - so go for it.

Listening to Adverse Comments

When we tell others of our aims and intentions, we sometimes receive unfavourable comments. We tell someone that we intend to do a certain thing. We then receive replies like, "You will never manage that", or "You don't have the talent for that". Although the speaker may just be giving his honest opinion, such comments tend to dishearten us and may result our abandoning the project altogether. It is, therefore, a good idea to keep your intentions to yourself until you have proved you are capable of succeeding.

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Acting on Inaccurate Information

When you receive information and advice, it is advisable to check, as far as you can, that the information is accurate. Acting on faulty information can have disastrous results.

Lack of Faith

You must retain your belief that you can attain what you set out to do. If you start to have doubts, you will fail, unless something happens to restore your faith.

Giving Up

It has been said that the easiest thing to do in life, is to give up, a practice which most of us have succumbed on occasions. Try not to quit - you may be nearer success than you think.

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.

Thomas Alva Edison

Past Failures

Memories of past failures will inhibit your chances of future success. Unfortunately, you cannot eradicate them from your mind. The only thing you can do is neutralise them. This you do by going over past failures, one by one. Determine why you failed. There could be various reasons: you acted with inadequate information, you weren't really interested in what you were doing, you gave up too easily, etc. Do this and you will realise that your failure was not due to incompetence. Your mind will then be free to concentrate on future success.

After you have considered your previous failures, think about past successes and what you did to achieve them.

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Chapter 7

Preparing for Success

If we want to be successful in life, we must be worthy of success. This does not mean we have to acquire a university degree or be highly skilled in some particular activity, although these things may help in certain circumstances. We are seeking success in all walks of life and should prepare ourselves accordingly. To put it another way, we want to be the kind of person who can attract and accept success. Being efficient is the starting point. If you practice the following, you will find that efficiency will come automatically.

1) Get all your work up to date. All those things that you have to do and have been putting them off, face up to them and get them done.

This does not mean that you have to overwork. Make a point of getting more up to date each day. The things that you should pay particular attention to are the things you have been putting off because you fear that the outcome might be unpleasant. The official form you have to fill in; the phone call you don't want to make; the visit to the dentist or whatever the case may be. In my experience, the things that we are reluctant to tackle usually turn out alright - the official form is easier to fill in than we expected, the phone call does not have the repercussions that we dreaded, the visit to the dentist turned out to be a painless experience.

Once you have completed the above, you will feel a lot better and your mind will be more at ease. After you have achieved this, you should make a point of keeping your work up to date.

2) Decide that everything you do, you will do well. This may appear difficult with the things you dislike doing, eg, mowing the lawn, cleaning the car or washing the dishes. The secret is to take away the feeling of dislike and replace it with enthusiasm.

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This may seem difficult to achieve, but it can be done. Whenever you have to perform a chore you dislike, change your viewpoint. When you have to clean the car, think "the car will look well when I am finished" and go out to prove it so.

Washing the dishes several times a day does seem a monotonous routine, but think to yourself "when I am finished, these dishes will be clean and sparkling". You may find that taking a pride in the result may change your attitude in the future.

3) Always look for ways to do your chores with less effort. This does not mean that you are to become lazy. You are looking for ways to

do the job more efficiently and easily.

Suppose, for example, you have some painting to do. Would a bigger brush or roller do the job quicker and produce a better finish. If you continually look for ways to become more efficient, you will be pleasantly surprised how ideas come to you without any effort on your part.

With your mind's eye, see yourself as being an efficient person and keep telling yourself that you are continually improving.

4) Avoid, at all costs, the words "I can't" and "I couldn't". These words will inhibit your efficiency and stifle your ability. You will never be efficient while you humour them. When a thought enters your mind containing these words, immediately cancel it out with a positive statement, eg, if your thought is "I can't solve this problem", change it to "I can solve this problem, or "I will find someone who can".

The same applies to "I couldn't", although you may not have to prove it, eg, you may see someone twenty feet up a ladder and think "I couldn't do that". Instead say to yourself "I could do it if I wanted to".

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Develop Your Mind and Imagination

It has been determined that people use only a small fraction of their brainpower. Presumably this is because most of our lives are routine and not much thinking is required. Nevertheless, if one desires to become more successful, it is beneficial to increase one's brain -power and imagination.

Basically, the idea is to exercise the mind. Like other parts of the body, the mind functions better with exercise. There are a number of ways for improvement.

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