

Searching For Success – Meet the ‘Real’ You on the Road to Success

– *Ellen A. Miller*

In the minds of many, synonyms for success are words such as "happiness", "fulfillment" and achievement." The dictionary suggests that success means the favorable termination of an effort. So, every time I chew and swallow a mouthful of food I achieve success but I don't feel inclined to offer that fact as proof that I am successful.

I tend to equate success with happiness and I believe happiness is an attitude. I can choose to be essentially happy by maintaining a positive outlook or I can choose the unhappiness resulting from a negative attitude. It's my choice as to whether I view the proverbial glass as "half full" or "half empty".

To achieve any happiness or success, we must attain a true understanding of ourselves and how we interact in the world. The mind is like a computer that acts upon what is programmed into it. In other words, your thoughts become your reality. Your thoughts, mental pictures and feelings you have about yourself become your self-image of the "real" you and you act accordingly. Obviously, you need a "real" you that is totally, or near totally, acceptable to you. How can you be happy or successful unless you have a self-image of a person you can like, trust and believe in?

If you take a personal inventory of yourself and you are not well satisfied with what is in stock there are two paths to a solution. First, you must be able to change factors you don't like. Overweight? Shed pounds. Lacking in knowledge? Obtain it through formal education or other available means. Overly shy? Join Toastmasters or take a course in public speaking. Second, imagine yourself as you would like to be, doing what you want to do, and each day, take one step...toward your dream.

It seems logical that you alone should set your own standards of success. Many people, successful in the eyes of others because of their social prestige and six-figure incomes, are miserable because they actually despise their occupations, are unhappily married and have never in their lives done anything significant that they really wanted to do. Are you living your definition of success or somebody else's? It is your choice if you want to be a wife, mother, a dynamic, high-powered career woman or all the above.

So, it's imperative that we know ourselves and our goals if we want to effectively work towards success. But, since none of us operate in vacuum, we must take into account our interaction with others. To the degree that you give others what they want, you'll likely get what you want. And first, you must understand what they want. The boss wants outstanding work. The employee wants praise and recognition. Who is going to "give" first in order to "get"? The wise boss "forces" opportunity to praise anticipating outstanding work will follow. The enlightened employee may strive to do outstanding work to get recognition in return. But if neither "gives" neither "gets". Giving in order to get often takes patience, understanding, and concerted effort in order to provide for the wants of those around you.

My consulting work entails mechanisms to help people understand people of other personality types become aware of their wants and needs and learn how to meet those, so that an effective and harmonious interaction is developed for the good of all concerned. If you judge others by your own motivations and objectives you may be creating more conflict than harmony. This misunderstanding can stand in the way of your success and theirs...in customer relationships, boss/employee interactions, situations involving co-workers...and certainly all sorts of personal life relationships.

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Early in life I would allow my feelings to be hurt because I mistakenly assumed other peoples' actions toward me meant the same things they would mean if I were the one directing such actions to them. Once I learned that some people are cryptic in their speech to everyone at all times, that some people feel that sarcasm is always meant to be humorous, and that there are those who don't want their "personal space" invaded by anyone, not even their own mothers, I was much better off. These actions weren't meant to show dislike of me personally; they were simply indicative of the personal style of the actors...styles a lot different than my own.

Searching for success starts with your realistic understanding of who you are and what your life goals are. Success is almost always dependent upon the cooperation of others so help them succeed by being understanding and giving. Remember—to the extent that you give others what they want, you'll get what you want.

Of course, just as you can choose to be positive or negative about yourself, you can choose to be either way regarding others. If you have a need to manipulate and dominate others for your own selfish reason or if you are looking for tricky ways to maneuver people into buying things they don't need, you may be the type who is willing to resort to any means to have your way with little regard for the wellbeing of others. If that's the case, then, of course, these principles will not work for you.

You and you alone make a decision every day—it is the greatest power you have and that is the power to choose your attitude. Choose wisely.

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