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Equipping, Enabling, and Encouraging Marketplace Leaders

12 Ways to Create and Enjoy Success in the Workplace

It's nice to be successful. We want to be successful. We want to be married to successful spouses. We want our children to be successful.

I've never met a teenager who said, "Yeah, 15 years from now I see myself huddled under a freeway overpass in worn-out clothes, freezing in the winter rain, using drugs, and waiting for the soup kitchen to open."

Read the newspaper or watch TV news and you'll hear about people who seem to be successful. They have money, power, and prestige yet they're in the throes of depression being admitted to drug rehab centers or worse, being carried to their final resting place, dead at their own hands.

If people with money, power, and prestige aren't successful then who is? What exactly is success? Ask a dozen psychiatrists and you're likely to get at least a dozen different answers. Ask a dozen laymen and you'll likely get answers focused on getting something they don't have. For instance a 16-year-old boy in high school may say a car signifies success. In college the same young man may say a 3.5 GPA is success. As he exits college the answer will likely be starting his own business or working for a fast-track company. By his mid-twenties this young man may think of success as being married to a wonderful, equally successful woman. As his career takes off success may include brilliant, athletically gifted children. Many of us define success in terms of what we want or what we have. It's not surprising many feel that way, even Mr. Webster defines success as, "the attainment of wealth, favor, or eminence."

So why is it that so many people who have achieved worldly success seem to be the least satisfied? Solomon was the richest man on earth. He built not just buildings but whole cities. He possessed great wisdom. World leaders came and fell at his feet marveling at his great wealth and wisdom. To the world he surely seemed successful, yet he said, "*when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun*" (Eccl. 2:11).



What's missing in the equation if wealth, favor, and eminence don't guarantee happiness, joy, or even contentment? Jesus himself taught the disciples, *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal"* (Matthew 6:19). He went on to say, *"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matthew 6:20-21).

The *reason* we work is more important than the work itself. If we work for earthly treasure we receive earthly reward. This doesn't mean we aren't to work hard, but that we should not work simply for the sake of amassing *things*.

Real success comes from a combination of planning, hard work, and a close relationship to God. Here are twelve steps to help you become successful in a way that will also provide lasting satisfaction.

Steps to Success

1. Begin and end every workday with God in your heart. Paul wrote to the Colossians, *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men"* (Col. 3:23). As you begin each day keep in mind that the purpose of your work is to glorify God and that you are working for His kingdom not simply to acquire *things*. Remember that whatever great things you accomplish on earth it is because He has gifted you.

2. Focus on a vision. Success begins in the mind. Jesus' vision is summarized in Luke 19:10, *"For the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost."* Develop a vision for your life. Every one of us was created by God with a unique set of gifts and skills. Spend some time figuring out what special skills you possess. Those special skills can be used by God to accomplish great things for Him.

What do you want to be remembered for? You want to be known as a great (*fill in the blank*). The vision you create is not a simple objective like, "I want to be known as a great car salesman." A vision is a broader statement that encompasses your reason for being. What do you think God wants you to do with your life?

3. Define your purpose or mission. Once your vision is established you need to develop a framework which will guide you as you achieve your vision. Your purpose statement should include a set of operating principles and values that help define you as an individual. As townspeople implored Jesus to stay with them He said, *"I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent"* (Luke 4:43). Note the difference in this verse versus the previous one from Luke. His vision is to save *"that which was lost."* His mission expresses how, *"I must preach the good news."*

4. Set and measure your own goals. Once you have established a personal vision and constructed a framework of guiding values in a mission statement you need to set goals. Establish long-term goals that will lead to the accomplishment of your vision. Set short-term goals that will accomplish your long-term goals. For example, if your long-term goal is to own a real estate company, a short-term goal might be to get a real estate license.



5. Think constructively. No great accomplishment in life comes easily. There will be times that you think the light at the other end of the tunnel is just another train approaching. Focus your mind on accomplishing the task before you and do not let others take you away from the work God has for you. *“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...”* (Prov. 23:7 KJV).

6. Keep the vision in mind. Every day you make choices about what you will do. Those choices determine whether you will move closer to achieving your vision. Paul, writing to the Corinthians said, *“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize”* (1 Cor. 9:24).

7. Reward and discipline yourself. Some people reward themselves whenever they do something well (cheerleader types). Others punish themselves whenever they do the least little thing wrong (perfectionist types). Strive to create balance in your life; reward yourself when you accomplish something meaningful and hold yourself accountable for missing important goals. *“Let us discern for ourselves what is right; let us learn together what is good”* (Job 34:4).

8. Create energy for success by staying physically fit. You don't have to run a marathon and have a 3% body fat ratio to be considered physically fit. Fitness creates energy reserves to combat the effects of long work days and stress. Also, God created us to rest one day in seven and to take vacations from work to rest our minds and our bodies. *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body”* (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

9. Develop, protect, and maintain your integrity. Personal integrity is the foundation upon which others base their trust in you. Maintain your integrity and people will trust you first with small things and then with big things. It takes years to build a reputation of integrity but only seconds to lose it. *“Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another”* (Lev. 19:11).

10. Learn from adversity and failure. As busy as we all are we just don't have time to make all the mistakes ourselves, and we certainly don't have time to make the same mistakes over and over again. Making mistakes is a certain sign that you are alive and that you're doing something so don't be concerned when you make a mistake unless: 1) you make the same mistake again, or 2) you don't learn something from having made the error. *“Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise”* (Prov. 19:20).

11. Motivate yourself. The world is full of people who have failed and are ready to provide you with plenty of reasons why what you want to do can't be done. Learn not to listen to such naysayers and to motivate yourself. *“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men...”* (Col. 3:22-23).

12. Develop your skill set. For every second that passes man's knowledge increases. You need to set out on a formal program to develop your skills as well as prepare yourself for future skill needs. If you don't in a few years you'll be as useful as a mimeograph machine in a world of high-speed copiers. *“If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill*



will bring success” (Eccl. 10:10). “Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men” (Prov. 22:29).

One Final Thought

There are lots of ways to lose in business. There are lots of ways to win and not feel satisfied. True success comes from fulfilling God’s plan for your life. What are you waiting for? Get started today!



Ten Rules for Losing

Donald R. Keough, President of Coca-Cola, Inc. said in an article published by *Personal Selling Power* in 1993 that there is no one single formula that leads to success. However, in his 40 years at Coke he has assembled the following ten rules for losing:

- 1. Quit taking risks.** After achieving an element of success the organization or the individual will become complacent.
- 2. Be content.** Stop challenging the status quo. Accept things just as they are. The discontented just stir up trouble and extra work for everyone anyway.
- 3. Always ask yourself, “What would the founder have done?”** Don’t think about the current situation. Make decisions based upon what you think the founder might have done 100 years ago.
- 4. Rely totally on research and experts to make decisions for you.** Why think for yourself when you can get others to do it for you? Research and experts are never wrong, only mistaken.
- 5. Be inflexible.** Don’t let knowledge, understanding, facts, or logic get in the way of your opinion.
- 6. Concentrate on your competitor instead of your customer.** Your competitor knows everything worth knowing. Don’t worry about what your customer wants, follow your competitor.
- 7. Put yourself first.** Don’t worry about anyone else as long as you’re being taken care of. Assume that you’re smarter, faster, and better than everyone else.
- 8. Protect the bureaucracy.** Burden the organization with record keeping and reporting so that they don’t have time to do anything constructive.
- 9. Ignore customers and employees.** What customer or employee ever came up with a good idea? Ignore them all.
- 10. Memorize the motto, “That’s good enough.”** Why try to do better? Lots of other losers say things like, “that’s good enough” and “I’m sorry that’s not my job.”