



Springboard

Launching Your Personal Search for SUCCESS

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Everyone knows that you are supposed to “follow your dream.” But where is the road map to help you discover what that dream is? In *Springboard*, award-winning author and teacher G. Richard Shell helps you find your future. His advice: Take an honest look inside and then answer two questions: “What, for me, is success?” and “How will I achieve it?”

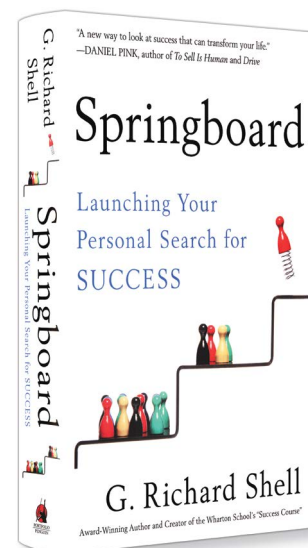
You will begin by assessing your current beliefs about success, including hidden influences of family, media and culture. These are where the pressures to live “someone else’s life” come from. Once you gain perspective on these outside forces, you will be ready to look inside at your unique combination of passions and capabilities. The goal is to focus more on what gives meaning and excitement to your life and less on what you are “supposed” to want.

Drawing on his decades of research, Shell offers personalized assessments to help you probe your past, imagine your future, and measure your strengths. He then combines these with the latest scientific insights on everything from self-confidence and happiness to relationships and careers.

Springboard will help you reevaluate your future and envision success on your own terms.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to discover your innermost desires and follow them to success.
- How to ask the right questions in order to discover what success means to you.
- How to craft your own goals and devise your own success based on your unique skills and personality.
- How to focus on what gives meaning and excitement to your life, not just on what you think you are “supposed” to want.



by G. Richard Shell

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: SPRINGBOARD

by G. Richard Shell

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com and www.grichardshell.com.

PART I: THE FIRST QUESTION: WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Examine your current assumptions and beliefs about success. Once you begin to think about it, you may be surprised at how many of your ideas about success originate from your culture, family, friends and exposure to mass media. As you become more aware of these sources for your beliefs, you can decide whether to embrace, reject or integrate them into new and more creative ways to approach your life. Life usually demands trade-offs. Where do you set your priorities? ●

The First Answer: Choose Your Life

Consider these four important theories about success.

First, finding out what success means to you often involves trial and error, not just theoretical contemplation. You have to take risks, try things out and experiment. Your search may involve flashes of insight that will turn out to be false signals. But you must nevertheless summon the courage to try out new roles, admit they do not suit you, and return to the search process.

Second, your goals do not just appear out of thin air. You need to become aware of the success values your culture and family endorsed. That way, you can be sure the ideals you are shaping your life around truly reflect *your own freely chosen* values.

Third, success is a multidimensional concept, not just a work-related one. Family and personal relationships matter too. Fourth and finally, success is not a single, once-and-for-all destination. It is a journey with way stations,

stopovers and campgrounds. You can get to one place, enjoy it and then move on.

Your Success Values

To help you understand your own intuitions about success, I have devised a values assessment called the Six Lives Exercise. This diagnostic will help you investigate where your ideas about success come from and lead you to more detailed reflections on all the topics ahead. Here's how it works: Read through all six of the following biographical sketches. Then, go back and think more carefully about them. Finally, rank them from most to least "successful," giving your top choice number "1" and your bottom choice number "6." No ties are allowed. Respond as honestly as you can. Once you have ranked them all, we will see what your choices may reveal about your current success thinking.

Teacher. Patricia Kelly teaches physics and serves as head coach of women's track at a suburban high school (children ages 14-18). Her spouse manages a chain of retail stores his family founded 30 years ago. Pat has led her school's "Science Olympics" teams to three regional championships and one National title over the past five years. Under Pat's guidance, the high school has placed a number of students in the country's top scientific universities (places such as MIT and Cal Tech in the U.S.). Pat has two daughters, one of whom earned a Ph.D. in physics and is now working for a high-tech company. The other ran into trouble in high school, never graduated, and lives in a distant city. She has rebuffed all attempts by the family to stay in touch with her.

Banker. Jane Ruly has worked for her entire career at a multi-national bank in a large city, where she has risen through the ranks to become a regional vice president for wealth management services. She is fiercely loyal to both her employer and its customer base. Jane is an accomplished marathon runner and a single parent who divides her non-working time between fitness training and her young child, Julie, who has severe learning and physical disabilities. Friends and family members have encouraged Jane to find an institutional home for Julie so she can "get on with her life," but Jane responds that "Julie



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is my life — I would never dream of letting anyone else take over her care.” Last year, Jane ran the New York Marathon while pushing Julie in a specially-rigged carriage — a feat that earned her a segment on an international news television program about parents of children with disabilities. She has dated several men over the past few years, but she has never believed in marriage — in part because her own parents were so unhappy together.

Wealthy Investor. Peter Taylor is a private equity investor who balances his mostly single life (he married once but divorced four years later) between homes in London, New York and Bermuda. He made his first fortune guiding a startup Internet company through its early stages and then selling it to a large competitor. His \$240,000 investment turned into a handsome payoff of \$50 million. It has been all “upside” since then. A leading business magazine recently published a cover story on Peter, revealing him to be an avowed free thinker, lover of freedom and committed libertarian. In the article, he said, “I love the excitement of placing a big bet and seeing it pay off.” His passions outside the office include parties in far-flung places (“I like to work hard and play hard”) and hang-gliding (“being in the air alone gives me a sense of freedom”). He donates generously to conservative political causes and is consulted by influential politicians across the globe for his opinions regarding the global economy.

Stone Mason. Fred Hampshire is a stone mason who has lived his whole life near a large city. A passionate student of historical architectural design, he has been married to his wife Mary for 52 years, and he has three children (a lawyer, a banker and a homemaker) and seven grandchildren. “Every piece of stone you pick up is different,” he once told a news reporter. “In my work, I can see what I did the first day I started and watch it grow. And I go back years later and it is still there to see. It’s a good day laying brick or stone. It is hard work, but you get interested in fitting each piece in just its right spot, and the day is over before you know it.” Hampshire admits that money has sometimes been a problem, but he proudly points out that he personally helped to build homes for each of his three children.

Tennis Pro. Janice Chung is a hardworking, professional tennis player who has won four major tournaments in her career and finished in the top 15 money-winners in seven of the past 10 years. She started playing tennis with her father at the age of 5, and, as a result of the relentless drills her father insisted on, she perfected her game. Tennis has dominated her life since then. A few years ago, she founded the Chung Tennis Institute, a group that provides free tennis instruction and “life skills training” to young women who live in a poor urban neighborhoods. She is married to a real-estate developer and, unable to have children herself, has adopted three Korean kids, now aged 2, 6 and 7. “It’s a tough life on the tennis circuit,” she told a tennis magazine recently. “You don’t get as much time with your children as you would like.”

Nonprofit Executive. Bill Paulson used to be an award-winning investment advisor for wealthy families in a major city, where he was well known for his ability to manage complex estates. He has been married for 20 years to his wife Terry (a child development counselor), and they have four children. Bill was considered a “top producer” in his office and earned more than anyone else in his group. But five years ago, Bill quit his job and took a huge pay cut to become a top administrator at a fast-growing nonprofit service organization founded by a charismatic religious leader from South Africa. “I heard God’s call,” Bill told the local paper, “and I answered.” Bill’s main project has been help to carry out the group’s “international mission” helping rural African villages secure clean water supplies. Bill helped to organize a coalition of religious charities to fund this work, and his investment skills have doubled the investment value of the money raised to date. The family is planning to take the next two years off to go live and work in a rural community in an impoverished African country, where they will run one of the coalition-funded water projects. Bill’s and Terry’s kids range in age from 8 to 16, and none of them want to go. But Bill and Terry are determined take the entire family.

The Two Sides of Success

If you are like most people, you probably measure success in two different ways. The first is the private, “inner” perspectives of fulfillment, satisfaction and happiness. Each person profiled in the Six Lives Exercise has some claim to inner fulfillment. But most also have something missing. The Wealthy Investor has no family. The Tennis Pro’s work takes her away from her children. One of the Teacher’s children won’t speak to her. The Banker’s disabled child dominates her life, and she seems unable to commit to a long-term relationship. The Nonprofit Executive’s children are in rebellion about leaving their friends for an isolated life in rural Africa.

Against these compromised claims to inner harmony, only the Stone Mason appears to “have it all.” He has a stable, loving relationship with his wife of 52 years. His three accomplished children and grandchildren live nearby. And he takes a sincere, craftsmanlike satisfaction in his work — a job that he controls and which enables him to see the fruits of his labors every day. His work appears to be meaningful to him. There is almost a Zen-like, spiritual dimension to the Stone Mason’s life.

Thus, people who pick the Stone Mason’s life as number one or number two are usually voting for a life with more of this “inner” dimension of success. Most of us would be hard put to define anyone as “successful” whose life lacks joy or satisfaction.

But there is a second, more public “outer” perspective on success that motivates many day-to-day actions and decisions much more than the quest for inner happiness. These are desires for achievement, social recognition and respect.

Seen from this perspective, the Stone Mason’s life is missing something that all the other lives seem to have: a notable accomplishment that has been recognized by his society or his peers. All the other people profiled have achieved something that a broader social group has taken note of, ranging from quasi-celebrity status (the Wealthy Investor and Tennis Pro) to international media attention on behalf of a worthy cause (the Banker) to good works on behalf of the poor in Africa (Nonprofit Executive and Teacher).

People who rank the Stone Mason near the bottom of their Six Lives may admire the Stone Mason’s devotion to the satisfactions of a craft and a family, but they see overall success in life as including more emphasis on that outer-achievement perspective.

If one of these lives spoke much more clearly to you than the others, that may be telling you something about

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the direction you want your life to take and what, for you, constitutes the true measure of success.

Balancing the inner and outer sides of success is not always an either-or trade-off. If you pick the right work, for example, you can gain inner satisfaction from the activities that result in outer achievements. And if you seek the right inner satisfactions, work sometimes takes care of itself.

Success Step #1: Balance the two sides of success. ●

An Easy Answer: Be Happy

People often define success in terms of happiness, but you may be surprised, once you start to think about it, at how hard happiness is to pin down.

People use the word “happiness” to describe at least three different things: a momentary positive emotion, an overall evaluation of the past or hope for the future, and a deep sense of joy, connection and meaning.

Momentary Happiness

Happiness is one of life’s great positive feelings, an emotional experience of joy, love, warmth, rapture, pleasure, tenderness, intimacy or exhilaration. Momentary Happiness comes in bursts. It makes gloomy days brighter and sunny days sweet. No matter how you define success, Momentary Happiness ought to play some role in it.

Two simple ideas can increase your supply:

Slow down and pay attention. Increase Momentary Happiness through one simple adjustment in your life: pay more attention to the pleasant aspects of it.

Reframe your expectations. Research by Professor Dan Gilbert at Harvard reveals that expectations surrounding events such as weddings, graduations and birthdays that are grounded in cultural assumptions about what is “supposed” to make us happy often interfere with experiencing Momentary Happiness. When expectations run high, future events seldom measure up.

Just as mindfulness helps you focus more on the pleasant things that are already happening, it can also help cure you of unrealistic expectations and adaptations.

Overall Happiness

Raising your Overall Happiness is not the same as increasing the number of Momentary Happiness experiences you have on a given day. Increasing Overall Happiness can pay meaningful dividends.

To measure your Overall Happiness, imagine a ladder with steps numbered zero (worst possible life) to 10 (best). On which step do you stand at this time?

Most people rank themselves between six and 10 on Overall Happiness scales. We are not happy all the time; neither are we sad all the time. Like the earth’s tides, feelings of overall satisfaction ebb and flow.

Researchers suggest four ways to help raise one’s score:

1. **Make your health a priority.**
2. **Achieve some long-term goals.**
3. **Invest in your relationships.**
4. **Make enough money.** Research shows that wealth can improve your Overall Happiness. Achieving it produces a bump in Overall Happiness associated with conquering difficult-to-achieve challenges.

The Third Path: Wisdom Experiences

Wisdom Experiences may be more important to inner success than any form of conventional happiness. Marty Seligman, author of *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*, argues that the cheerful moods of Momentary Happiness and the positive memories that provide the sources for Overall Happiness are “not entitled to a central place in any theory” of the meaningful life.

Seligman suggests combining five elements to create a life worth living: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, a sense of meaning that comes from serving a purpose larger than yourself, and accomplishments, both short-term and long-term. When folded together, these create well-being.

Success Step #2: Define happiness for yourself. ●

Society’s Answer: Seek Status, Fame and Fortune

When everyone around you agrees on what success means, it is all too easy to join them. And if you allow others to define your goals for you, then there is a pretty good chance you will end up holding a prize you did not choose and do not want. At that point, you will finally have to define success for yourself. Examine two of the most important outside influences on success beliefs: culture and family. Each can pose unique problems.

Families sometimes complicate the journey to authentic success by laying a heavy burden of expectations on their children. Later in life, the habit of striving to satisfy other people’s aspirations can be hard to break.

Individuals take their cues about what is “good or desirable” in life from what they think their culture judges to be good and desirable.

Success values within any given community are often invisible because they are so little debated. Parents, siblings, coaches, bosses, clergy, inspirational speakers, lyrics to

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popular songs communicate powerful suggestions about success. All these cultural inputs work their way into the subconscious mind.

The invisible cues provided by your culture then set the benchmark that, when you meet or exceed them, give you a sense of achievement. Those same benchmarks also instill dismal, defeated feelings when you think you have fallen short.

The values your family and culture instilled in you will play a defining role in how you measure your success. To define it for yourself, you need to consider which of those values you endorse and which ones you reject.

Success Addicts: Hungry Ghosts

Those who acquire an obsession with symbols of conventional success turn into Hungry Ghosts, which is the name Buddhists give to people who cannot get enough status, wealth or power. The “Big Two”— fame and fortune — dominate mass media images of what success means. Anyone who relentlessly seeks status, recognition or power to bolster his or her self-image as a “somebody” is at risk.

As you consider your own ideas of success, keep these factors in mind:

1. You can never be successful if you spend your life living someone else’s dreams.
2. People who choose status, fame or fortune for its own sake will never feel secure enough, famous enough or rich enough.
3. When you get past all the cultural success symbols, two things stand out as worth achieving: financial security and the informed respect of people who know you well.

Success Step #3: Gain perspective on your family and your cultural beliefs. ●

An Inspired Answer: Find Meaningful Work

Your concept of success may be about more than work. But doing work that matters to you is probably a step in the right direction. Consider what deeply felt experiences may serve as sources of inspiration to find meaningful work.

The concept of meaningful work encompasses three interlocking circles: *Reward Driven Work*, which is work that others will reward you for doing; *Talent-Driven Work*, or work that uses your talents and strengths; and *Work That Ignites You Emotionally*, which is work you are passionate about, paid or not.

The place where all three circles intersect is where many people find the most sustainable forms of meaningful work.

Seven Foundations for Meaningful Work

Here are seven specific foundations on which to build a conception of work as more than just a job or a career. These are captured by the acronym PERFECT.

Foundation #1: Personal Growth and Development

“Jobs are like college courses. Each one you take teaches you a set of new skills and offers a fresh perspective on life. They aren’t meant to be permanent, most of them. They are only stepping stones.” Holly Robinson, *Huffington Post*

Foundation #2: Entrepreneurial Independence

Meaningful work can be as simple as “autonomous work.” People find their way into a life of entrepreneurial independence from almost any imaginable background.

Foundation #3: Religious or Spiritual Identity

Religious faith is not required for work to have meaning, but vocations that embody commitment to religious or spiritual values can and do constitute meaningful work for millions.

Foundation #4: Family

The right kind of parent-child relationship can foster a deep sense of vocation-based meaning, promoting growth in parent and child alike. Children given the freedom to choose their own path often find meaning in the work they select by striving to justify the confidence their families placed in them.

Foundation #5: Expressing Yourself through Ideas, Invention or the Arts

For those with creative talents, history suggests that work involving personal, original expression — whether through music, painting, words, designs or inventions — can be deeply meaningful. The people who choose a life of self-expression are the creators of culture in each new generation.

Foundation #6: Community — Serving a Cause, Helping People in Need

Work that serves a purpose bigger than yourself, whether it is helping people in the community or serving a cause you believe in, can be a source of deep meaning.

Foundation #7: Talent-Based Striving for Excellence

Aspire to the highest standards of excellence in any field for which you have talents. Start with a passion and develop it into a lifelong commitment to excellence. Or start with a talent, commit to developing it, deepen it with hard work, and finally arrive at a passionate commitment.

Final word of advice: The distance between a job or career and “meaningful work” is often shorter than you

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think. Consider the “sweet spot” where talent, passion and your ability to earn a living overlap.

Success Step #4: Seek meaningful work. ●

PART 2: THE SECOND QUESTION: HOW WILL I ACHIEVE IT?

Discover What You Can Do Better Than Most: Capabilities

Julia Child, the world’s first television food celebrity, once summed up her success in a single sentence: “The more I cook, the more I like to cook.” When you enjoy some activity, you tend to practice it. And when you practice hard at something, you keep getting better. Eventually, it is something you do better than most. Sometimes it becomes something you can do better than anyone else in the world.

Success starts with the thing you do better than most, whether that is writing, working with your hands, doing calculations in your head, making a tight and convincing argument, cooking or creating designs. It usually resides in the unique *combination* of capabilities you bring to what you do.

Capabilities: They Are Always Closer Than You Think

The tools you need to make a more satisfying life are usually close at hand. Success often comes from building on what you already know — and know how to do.

In his famous Acres of Diamonds speech in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Russell Conwell, one of the most famous motivational speakers in America and founder of Temple University, told of Ali Hafed, a wealthy, happy farmer who went on a fruitless search for diamonds throughout the Middle East and all across Europe. Finding nothing, he was reduced to rags and threw himself into the ocean, dying a broken man. Meanwhile, the new owner of his farm came across a “curious flash of light” in the stream. It was not long before he discovered that the river in Ali Hafed’s backyard was littered with diamonds. The farm went on to become one of the largest diamond mines in the world.

What exactly is involved in looking for diamonds? Be self-aware and honest about two things. First, you must pay attention when you feel dissatisfied with the status quo. Without some measure of dissatisfaction, you lack the motivation to start your search. Second, you must tune in to your inner voice — your intuition — and monitor the excitement you feel about your new directions.

Start looking for four diamonds — capabilities that are

in your own backyard and that will create your bridge to the future.

Diamond #1: Interests and Passions

No matter who you are or what stage of life you are in, you have natural interests and passions for particular activities, subjects, sports, people, careers, purposes, shows, media or even games.

Start your diamond hunt by surveying passions and interests. Do not leave anything off the list, even common interests. These activities become the foundations in some successful lives.

Diamond #2: Aptitudes and Skills

The search for your capabilities also involves cataloging the things you do “a bit better than others” — your natural talents.

Understand the role genes play in abilities. Your ultimate income level, educational attainment and professional status will have a lot to do with the genes your parents passed on to you.

Experiences in life — both inside and outside the home — interact with genes to bring out those capabilities so they can become skills and talents the outside world observes.

You can choose to expose yourself to new experiences and environmental pressures throughout your life. Rapid progress in any new activity triggers a new genetic “expression.”

Diamond #3: Past Experience

Each stage of life builds on the last. Successful people find constructive ways to repurpose what they have already done to launch into the next stage. Capabilities change and expand as you move from first jobs through later career moves, hobbies, additional education and training.

Successful people are smart about reaching out to create the experiences they need to give them credibility for the leap.

New experiences — especially those associated with getting trained and credentialed — frequently open up areas of activity never explored. It is the combination of these activities with your prior experiences, skills and aptitudes that offer fresh, potentially satisfying ways to spend time.

Keep in mind that the process of gaining experiences usually involves improvisation and trial and error. You need to be ready to change direction as you figure out which aspects of a new activity actually suit you and which do not.

The Final Diamond: Your Personality Strengths

One of the most important capabilities you bring to any activity is your unique combination of personality-based strengths. Four key aspects of personality that relate most directly to success are your attitudes about other people (Social Styles), your drive to achieve (Action-Orienta-

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tions), inclinations toward intellectual or creative activities (Mindsets), and your emotional response system (Emotional Temperaments.)

We learn a lot when we see ourselves reflected in the looking glass of other people's perceptions. And you will be surprised to learn about the different versions of "you" other people reflect back to you based on the social role you play when you interact with them.

Of course, in the end, you — and only you — get the last word on defining yourself.

Success Step #5: Look inside to find your unique combination of capabilities. ●

Set Yourself on Fire: Motivation

To motivate yourself to succeed, you need two kinds of energy. First, there is the slow-burning fuel of innate, satisfaction-based motivation. Second, there is the hotter, more urgent energy of competition for resources, rewards and recognition. The first kind of motivation aims you in a direction and gives you a reliable, steady, renewable supply of energy to keep moving. The second turbocharges your performance, adds adrenaline and powers you up when you need a motivational surge.

Satisfaction-based motivation is critically important to sustaining any interest or activity for a long time. But without reward-based drives, you may lack the intensity needed to do your best work. The highest levels of performance result from a combination of *both* satisfaction and reward-based motivations.

Staying Motivated: Six Renewal Rituals

No matter what your sources of motivation, you need ways to renew it as you move through a day that poses different challenges and calls on different levels of effort. Here are six techniques that can make the difference between success and failure.

1. **Make yourself accountable:** Bring your posse. Set up a support group.
2. **Connect with role models:** Find people who inspire you.
3. **Create a motivational ritual:** Make it a habit.
4. **Compete with yourself:** Make up a prize. Create your own reward-penalty plan.
5. **Prove someone wrong:** Show them what you've got. "I'll show them!"
6. **Channel your strongest emotions:** Turn up the heat. Achieve a level of "creative stress" based on strong emotional energy.

Success Step #6: Energize yourself by combining satisfaction-based and reward-based motivations. ●

Learn to Fail: Self-Confidence

The right kind of self-confidence is central to achievement. Confidence operates on two levels.

Level One Confidence relates to your basic and deepest sense of self — the belief in your own autonomy, moral character and ability to take action in the world. These beliefs can be forged at any stage of life through successfully overcoming a challenging obstacle that life throws in front of you. Level One Confidence can also be instilled through respect shown to you by people whom you yourself respect — based on their genuine accomplishments and character. Finally, this basic form of confidence sometimes develops through sincere faith in powers beyond your own if you are a person inclined toward such faith. The best kind of Level One Confidence combines a secure belief in yourself with an equally firm commitment to high standards of personal character.

The second type of self-confidence — Level Two — applies to specific skills and activities you undertake. Level Two Confidence, built on the belief that you can "get smarter and better" when you set your mind to it, can literally transform your actual capabilities, including problem-solving ability, academic performance and work outcomes.

A success "mindset" includes the willingness to learn, challenge your skills, focus on effort more than results, and treat failure as a stage on the journey rather than as the end of the road.

Success Step #7: Cultivate Self-Confidence ●

Focus Your Mind: Passion, Imagination, Intuition and Reason

There are four distinct personal powers everyone uses to get things done. Think of the four forces of Passion, Imagination, Intuition and Reason (PIIR — pronounced "peer") as your achievement team — a group made up of four talented specialists each offering something unique and valuable.

When it is aroused, your Passion is the strongest, most dominant member. Your basic needs, fears and desires provide the impetus for everything you do — and play special roles in keeping you excited about long-term projects and pushing you across the finish line.

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Reason contributes the analytic, logical planning skills you need to craft and carry out the goals your Passions dictate. Imagination and Intuition provide creative and integrative talents. They help you envision the future, create new solutions, and make lightning-quick adjustments when unexpected problems arise.

With these four mental powers at your command, the achievement process can get underway.

Step #1: Consult Your Passions — Identify a Worthy Goal. What do you want that could make your life more fun, purposeful, interesting or challenging?

Step #2: Let Your Imagination and Intuition Generate Ideas. To engage the powers of the subconscious mind, frame a good problem, load up on data related to it, and trust the intuitive powers to start coming up with ideas. Ideas often occur when the intentional parts of the mind either are shut down entirely or are in a distinctly relaxed state: during sleep and during relaxed moments of daydreaming, meditating, bathing, walking or driving.

Step #3: Commit to a Specific, Challenging Plan. Consider a set of criteria used by many businesses called SMART: A SMART plan is one that is Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant and Timely. Bring more commitment to your goal: write it down, talk to others, announce it in public, and acquire a sense of accountability for it.

Step #4: Break it Down into Small Steps. Big goals are inspiring but are also daunting. Break them down into small, manageable chunks.

Step #5: Improvise and Adjust — Then Close the Deal. Life rarely works out exactly as we planned it. Successful people understand that chance and serendipity play an important part in life. When one plan falls through, step back, remember your focus and take another path.

Success Step #8: Focus the powers of your mind to achieve long-term goals. ●

Influence Others: Credibility and Dialogue

Nobody achieves success alone. Sooner or later, you need to influence other people to make things happen. When you do, the most important tools you bring will be your credibility and your ability to engage others in genuine, give-and-take dialogue.

A large part of your success in dealing with others derives from your awareness of the automatic, semiconscious

reflexes that enable humans to signal to one another that they are willing to engage in everyday cooperation.

Getting Things Done Through Working Relationships: Credibility

Building rapport is key, but to influence someone about an important idea, you need something more than rapport. You need the substance that comes with having credibility. Credibility arises from other people's perceptions of four things: your formal and informal authority, knowledge, reputation for getting things done and your trustworthiness.

Think of credibility as a chair supported by four legs. The more secure your credibility is on each of its four supporting columns, the easier it is for your audience to take you seriously on an important matter. Your influence starts to wobble — or collapses altogether — as you take away each leg of the chair. If your audience thinks you lack relevant authority, are poorly informed about a subject, have never handled a similar problem or cannot be trusted, then you will have a much harder time being heard.

Success Step #9: Engage others; exercise influence. ●

Conclusion

Defining and striving for success give you the opportunity to think about your life, relationships, talents and future goals. That kind of reflection, when focused on the right subjects, almost always yields substantial dividends. It can help you recognize which pathways have a better chance of leading you toward your own vision of success. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Springboard*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Art of Woo*** by G. Richard Shell and Mario Moussa. The authors explain how to strengthen persuasion skills in every aspect of life by using the four-step Woo process.
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