

The Four Easy Steps That Guarantee A Successful Life

A special report by Phil Mattingly LHA E.Hyp

Have you ever wondered what it is that makes some people so successful while others struggle just to stay afloat? Why it is that some people live lives filled with peace, joy and wellbeing and others find themselves mired in stress and depression?

Throughout the ages, philosopher, priests and wise men of every kind have tried to answer these kinds of questions and some enduring answers have emerged. There are some systematic, key differences between those people who are successful in life and those who are not. The good news is that those differences can be studied, learned and applied by anyone.

Let us begin by defining success. Some people equate success with making or possessing a lot of money. But money, in and of itself, is useless. It's just paper or numbers on a screen. What money is really valuable for is how it makes you feel – important, respectable, secure – or what it can get for you – a big house, a new car, beautiful clothes and so on.

And those things are only important because of how they make you feel – beyond a certain size, having a bigger house won't make you any more physically secure or sheltered but it will make you feel more important, comfortable, happy and so on.

Each us is very different. Mother Theresa cared very little for material wealth and comfort, but I'm sure she considered herself a success and most of the rest of the world did too. The truth is simple:

Your life is successful when it is filled with the kind of experiences that you enjoy.

If you enjoy making and spending money, great. Your life will be successful when you can do that. If you don't, be honest with yourself, and give it up in favour of those things you value and enjoy more. If your idea of success is tending a vegetable patch, or writing poetry that never gets published or owning a garage full of classic cars then accept that and work toward it. Let others pursue their own ideas of success, only you, ultimately, can know what is best and most appropriate for you in your own life.

Whatever your idea of success is though, there are four key steps that will deliver, no matter what. Whatever you want to accomplish, whatever experiences you want to have, following this success master plan will deliver it. It has been used by successful men and women throughout the ages to build wonderful and satisfying lives. Although it is simple, it is profoundly effective when properly applied. It takes a short time to learn and a fulfilling life time to master. Those who follow it prosper, and those who do not perish.

In detail, the four steps to ultimate success are:

1. Know What You Want

Sounds simple, doesn't it? Well, most people spend their lives talking and thinking about what they **don't** want. 'I don't want to be fat', 'I don't want to be poor', 'I don't want so much stress in my life.' They fall at the first hurdle.

Instead, talk and think only about what you do want in positive terms – 'I want to be slim, I want to be wealthy, I want to be relaxed.' But this is the second hurdle – most people's wants are so vague that they never materialise. You must use the power of clarifying questions to build a detailed representation of what you want.

- How will you measure whether you have got what you want?
Use a scale. 'I want to be 120lbs, I want to have £20,000 in the bank'.
- What will you see, hear and feel when you have got what you want?
'I will see myself in the mirror as a size 10', 'I will see my account balance.'
- Is this something you can do by yourself? Depending on others is risky.
Let 'I want my husband to be cheerful' be 'I want to be cheerful despite my husband.'
- How will getting this outcome affect the rest of your life? Is that okay?
Think about how the outcome impacts your health, finances, relationships etc.
- Is this something I want or is it something I think I should do?
Don't let others tell you what you should do to be successful, decide yourself.

The more detailed and specific you can be about what you want, the more easily and rapidly you will attain it.

2. Take Action

Again, so many fall at this hurdle. They procrastinate about acting on what they want, telling themselves there is plenty of time. The only way to change your life from what it is to what you want it to be is to take consistent, powerful action.

It has been said 'It is wise to learn from your mistakes, it is genius to learn from the mistakes of others.' So find someone who has what you want and look at what they did to get it. Get skills and training to make your action more effective. But above all, persist in taking action until you get what you want.

Once upon a time, a man received his first pension cheque from the United States Government. He knew it wasn't going to be enough. He thought, 'what can I do to make the money I need to keep me in my old age?' The one resource he had was a recipe for chicken and he decided he would take it to local restaurants and sell it to them in return for a share of the profits. All of them said refused. So he got in his car and drove to more restaurants. They refused too. For two years, he criss-crossed America receiving 1,002 rejections until finally someone said yes. Colonel Sanders sold that man his recipe for Kentucky Fried Chicken and the rest is history.

Why is Colonel Sanders unique? Because most people will not take action on that scale. But if you do, you'll be rewarded as he was.

3. Notice the result

It is vital that you have a measure for whether you have achieved your goal. You can use that measure to determine the effectiveness of the action you take. Be aware of whether the action moves you closer to your outcome or further away.

Many people fail because they do not closely monitor what effect their actions are having. Frank Bettger, a famous American life-insurance salesman who raised himself from nothing to become one of the most successful salesmen of all time kept detailed records of all his sales calls and business activities. He discovered that 70% of his sales were made on the first meeting but only 7% were made on the third meeting or subsequent. Noticing this helped him realise that a first meeting with a new client was always more effective action than a third meeting with an old client. He became aware of just how effective each of his actions was and his income skyrocketed as a result.

Many unsuccessful people are frightened of failing or making mistakes. But the truth is that you have not failed until you give up. Did Colonel Sanders fail the first time he was rejected? No. It was simply a stepping stone on the way to his inevitable, eventual success. Like Bettger, he noticed what worked and what didn't, and used it in the final success step.

4. Alter or refine your action

If the action you took moved you nearer to what you want, celebrate. Congratulate yourself on a job well done. Then ask yourself, 'how can I do this even better next time?' and return to step 2 to take that action.

The principle that many believe raised Japan from being a defeated nation at the end of World War II to one of the world's strongest economies was its commitment to the principle of 'Kai-Zen' or continuous improvement. Simply put, the Japanese continuously strived to make all their manufacturing processes more efficient, cost-effective and productive. They always believed it could be done better and that belief helped them find ways to do it.

If the action moved you away from what you want, be glad that you learned something useful. The key now is to be flexible in your behaviour, to be willing to do something different or unusual compared to what you have done before.

It is said that 'insanity is doing the same thing again and expecting a different result.' Yet many people are insane in just this way and unsuccessful as a result. Thomas Edison was flexible. He had to come up with 10,000 different ways to make an electric light bulb before one of them worked.

Was he a failure? Hardly. At one, fully a fifth of all products on sale in America were Edison patents. He learned from his mistakes and put them to work for him.

This simple, four step formula can be applied whether what you want is to write a novel, lose thirty pounds or build a vast business empire. Using it is a skill like any other. Practice it, apply it consistently and you'll find yourself reaping the benefits in a short time.