

You *Can* Climb The Ladder Of Success!

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Chapter I: Introduction To Success

Success is a perennially hot topic. Everybody talks about it, everybody wants it. But not a lot of people experience it in their lifetime...at least not to the extent that they may envision.

Why is that? And are you destined to be one of the majority who arrive at their end of their life feeling like they've spent the past few decades on a mouse exercise wheel? I hope that as you work your way through this book, you will pick up the insight you need to avoid being "one of the majority". Let's begin by looking at the main reason that success eludes most people.

Want to be happy? Discover your purpose!

You may have heard it said that the richest places in the world are cemeteries. They are filled with priceless treasure—the gifts, talents and dreams that were never released into the world, but died with each individual populating the graveyard.

Feeling successful and experience consistent happiness can come only if you understand your purpose, and are on a journey to fulfil it. In addition, having a sense of purpose in your life helps you feel more confident, secure and happy than you would if you felt your life were aimless.

If you have a sense of purpose, you have something to look forward to every day, as well as a reason for getting up out of bed in the morning with a smile. You become a more confident person, content with where you are in life.

Younger people sometimes tend to have a stronger sense of purpose than older generations. Just starting out, they dream of changing the world by getting a certain degree, entering a particular career, or raising a perfect family. They generally have a lot to look forward to and feel they can achieve anything.

Then they actually get into what they thought was their dream job, and ugly reality smacks them in the face. I graduated with a degree in elementary education, and couldn't wait to get my own classroom. Two months after starting my first full-time position, I wanted to quit.

As I learned the ropes, the job did get easier in some ways, but the longer I taught, the more disillusioned I became with the career of teaching as well as the institution of education. (I am homeschooling my son.)

I thank God I had the opportunity to leave the job and explore my true passion, teaching others how to uncover their full potential. However, for as many of us who become discontented with our career and leave it, twenty times more people stay with it, not wanting to bother with change.

Or, they've been beaten down by the obligations of their families and jobs and don't believe they have other options—or are too weary to check them out. Then they retire and, since their job had become their purpose, they die a few years later because the only thing that brought them any fulfillment—however slight—is gone.

If the meaning of your life ends when you retire from your job, you have not discovered your purpose. If the only reason you work is to pay the bills, and you get not satisfaction from your job, you are not living your purpose. My desire for you, no matter your age, is that you would discover your purpose. It won't necessarily be an easy task, but with persistence it will be fruitful.

Here are some things you can do to find out what you were designed to accomplish:

- Above all else, get into the habit of prayer. Your Creator is the One who gave you your dreams and instilled your purpose within you before you were even born. Regularly ask for guidance and wisdom, to be shown what it is you were created to do.
- Do you have an interest or passion but have never made the time to develop it? Set aside thirty minutes a day to work on it on the level of a hobby. If you find yourself spending more and more time on it, not noticing time pass while you are immersed in it, and beginning to wonder if you could turn the hobby into your career, you may have begun to uncover your purpose!
- Join an organization related to your interests in order to network and force yourself to spend more time pursuing them.
- Exercise daily. It gets your creative juices flowing and gives you the extra energy boost you need to have more hours of productivity.
- Visit family and friends on a regular basis and have them come over for dinner. Socializing opens up many doors of opportunities you may not have even realized existed.
- Volunteer for at least a couple hours a week. Serving other people provides a priceless sense of satisfaction. You will also meet new people and be challenged to solve new problems, both of which can facilitate your interest in life and spark creativity.
- Take a walk in the park and say hello to passers-by. This is a more casual, stress-free to meet new people who may eventually become friends. Again, the more people you can meet, the more doors of opportunity that will be open to you—and the more resources you will have.
- If you feel that part of your life's purpose is to get married and raise children, involving yourself in all of the above situations could also lead you into meeting "the one."

Personal Development for Prosperity

Whether you are just setting out to discover your purpose, or have already flung yourself into it head first, to reach the success level you desire you must continually be working on growing as a person.

Developing yourself spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically leads to a happier life. Learning to manage your time more successfully, set realistic goals, understand yourself and build up your self-worth and self-esteem are just a few keys to experiencing phenomenal personal growth.

The big question you need to ask yourself is, "Who am I...*really*?" You probably think of yourselves in terms of the various roles you play in society: you're a computer programmer, a mother, a Little League coach, a singer in the church choir.

But do you realize the huge potential that lies dormant inside of you? Consider all the gifts and talents you have, as well as the skills and knowledge you have obtained. Are you using them all to the fullest extent possible? Have you fulfilled all your dreams? (Hint: If you're still breathing on your own, you have not.)

Only by realizing the difference you make to the world and deciding not to let anything hold you back from achieving your goals can you begin the journey toward greater personal development.

Changes don't happen overnight

As you begin taking the necessary steps to improve yourself spiritually, emotionally, physically and relationally, patience will be your key to avoiding frustration and the temptation to give up. Changes require time and effort; they won't happen overnight simply because you want to change. You must set your mind to devoting your efforts to what you want to change and turning personal growth into a lifelong pursuit.

Once you develop a new awareness of who you are, you discover a whole new meaning and purpose to life. You bring out your creative side like you never have before. You open learn to hear and listen to your intuition and to more fully use your imagination.

Key points to personal development

Personal development is a many-faceted concept. Some of the key points to personal development include:

- knowing what it is you want from life and how you will achieve it; breaking free from the belief that you have limits, and letting go of thoughts and emotions that have held you back;
- becoming more in tune with yourself and letting your intuition and creative side out;
- understanding why you make a difference; and

- successfully changing your thoughts, feelings and way of thinking so you can continue expanding.

As a young child—unless you were abused—you probably didn't hold back or deny yourself any kind of experience while you were growing up. Because of that you continued to grow and develop from a child into an adult. You continually learned and adapted and bettered ourselves.

If you can get back into that child-like mindset, life will again begin to appear like an exciting and fun adventure. The world will seem less intimidating and more inviting, which will make your attempts at developing yourself all the easier and more fulfilling.

Chapter II: A Well-Managed Life Is A Successful Life

Do you consider yourself self-disciplined? Are you able to complete projects on time and to initiate habits you know will help improve yourself and your life?

One of the key character traits of successful people is their ability to discipline themselves. In order to join their ranks, you must learn how to manage your life well, and in this chapter, we look at a few of the major ways to do just that.

How to manage your schedule

In today's busy world, being able to successfully manage your schedule is essential if you want to be more productive, have more leisure time and significantly reduce your stress level. When you have a schedule, you can plan your day more efficiently which ultimately ensures that you get everything accomplished that you want.

When you have children, advance planning is even more critical for having your days run smoothly. When I was pregnant and on maternity leave, I had a schedule of things to do so I wouldn't pass out from boredom. Now, to get my writing and online tasks completed, I need to have a schedule so that I can run a profitable business and still be able to spend quality time with my son and keep the house in order.

You should create two schedules, one for the week and one for each day. Spend thirty minutes or so on Sunday jotting down the major tasks and activities you have ahead of you in the next seven days, and write them on your calendar.

Then, every morning spend five minutes planning your day. Make a detailed list of everything you have to do that day, including "relaxation" as well as an activity that will head you toward a life goal that may not be related to your current job.

Determining goals and priorities

To be as successful as you can be, you must determine what you want out of life and what you need to do in order to reach what you want. Next, you need to develop a habit of prioritizing. If you work for someone else, obviously their top priorities become yours while you are on your job.

If you are self-employed or an entrepreneur, you need to determine what is the best use of your time each hour of the day. And whether or not you work for someone else, you need to include some time each day pursuing your passion.

Matching available time with your priorities

If you've been struggling with finding time to do the things that really matter to *you*, or even to finish required tasks, analyze what you do with your time. How

much time do you spend getting out of bed in the morning? Watching T.V.? Surfing the 'Net? Are you taking the time to exercise, relax, and prepare healthy food?

You will probably discover by cutting out a few unnecessary activities and rearranging a few others, that you can create a much more efficient and productive day for yourself.

Now that you have figured out how to put more time into your day, take a look at the detailed list you prepared and use your time to match your priorities. In addition to taking into account the amount of time you actually spend on each task, you should also ask yourself if you are spending enough quality time on a task.

For example, if you can't stand calling clients when you're tired, plan the calling around your biorhythms. A morning person might schedule calls to clients at nine in the morning; a non-morning person might be better off scheduling that at three or four in the afternoon.

Tips for managing your time more efficiently

- Break down large tasks into smaller ones, then tackle each individual part one at a time.
- Look at your routine habits to see if they could be changed. Can you wait to check your e-mail until after you've finished your first major task of the day? How about brown-bagging lunch and eating it at your desk while you relax with a good book, instead of spending time driving to a restaurant? Several small changes like these could add significantly more minutes to your day.
- Determine whether you are a morning person or night person and organize tasks so that you are doing the ones that require the most concentration and effort during the time of day that you will be at your peak.
- Learn to say the word "no". Don't allow yourself to be continually put upon by others. While you don't want to be rude and never do anyone a favour, you also don't want to let your time to be taken advantage of.

Top 10 Time Management Skills

The secret to managing time successfully is being able to manage *yourself*. You would like to think that you don't ever waste a minute of your time, but in reality, this is far from true. There are many ways to manage yourself more efficiently which ultimately leads to more successful time management. Following is a list of ten easily acquired skills to help you stay more in control of your time, and therefore your life.

1. **Don't put too much on your plate.** In today's busy world, many people want things done yesterday and this often leads to rushing, and therefore mistakes. In addition, if you constantly over-schedule yourself you will always have something left undone and never experience that satisfying sense of accomplishment.
2. **Prioritize.** Not prioritizing is the single biggest cause of wasted time. In order to successfully manage time you have to know exactly what your priorities are for the day. When you don't prioritize you spend too much time on the minor things and not enough time on the important ones.
3. **Learn how to efficiently handle interruptions.** If someone calls you or drops by your cube and asks for a minute of your time, make a point of looking at your watch and saying, "You have 59 seconds left." At least keep control of the conversation and make sure you are back to work in five minutes, if not fewer.
4. **Avoid procrastination.** Thinking about what you have to do instead of actually doing it is one of the biggest time wasters in your day. Once you begin to tackle that thing you are dreading doing, it usually turns out not to be so bad. And if it *is* that bad, you can get the worst part of your day over with.
5. **Set boundaries around your time.** Many of people just cannot say the words "no" when asked if they mind doing something, fear of upsetting the other person. If that's you, keep in mind that when you take on the responsibilities of others then you are taking time away from your own workload or tasks. Ultimately, it leads to more stress as well.
6. **Declutter.** Most people can't keep a perfectly clean workspace all the time. Every Friday, schedule in ten minutes in the afternoon to put things in their proper places. If you have something without a proper place, create one for it! This will save you a ton of time the next week when you return to work.
7. **Set deadlines for yourself.** Work out a reasonable deadline for a particular project and make sure that you stick to the deadline.
8. **Manage your e-mails and phone calls.** Set aside certain times when you check your e-mail and send replies, and return phone calls. Doing this will enable you to work without interrupting yourself, and therefore get things done faster.
9. **Use a planner.** Setting your day out in a planner can help you save time, as a planner will allow you to allocate tasks to time slots. This way you can plan your day out and maximize your time more efficiently.
10. **Avoid multi-tasking.** Starting many different projects at the same time is not a very efficient way of managing time. If you complete one project before starting out on another, you can give the first project your entire attention and do a better job with it.

There Is No “I” In *Team*: Team Building Basics

Behind every successful person is a team who have helped them reach their destination. Many of those team members may be completely unaware they were part of that person’s team—former teachers, coaches, authors, motivational speakers, etc.—but every person who touches your life has the potential of being part of the big team that helps you get where you want to be.

Of course, you also have team members that surround you daily, from your spouse and children to your friends to the people that you work with on the job. The question is, do you consider these people as part of your team? If you want to achieve a high level of success, the answer needs to be a resounding, “Yes.”

And in return, you should be a member of all those individual’s teams. The fact is, when you begin focusing on helping other people build their lives, they will help you, and the results will be much greater than any of you trying to go it alone.

What is a team?

Teams work together for one common goal. Every teammate has a shared responsibility for completing and meeting that one goal. Everyone in the team understands the goal and is highly committed to it. To improve teamwork you simply must make sure that everyone on your team understands the goal and are all committed to meeting that goal.

How to improve teamwork

First of all, you need to make sure your friends, co-workers and family understand they are part of a team. I have a friend with four children whose life revolves around resolving conflict, laundry, meals and keeping her house in order. She regularly tells her children that they are all a team, and they need to do their part to make sure the home runs smoothly.

On the other hand, I used to teach at a school where teamwork was sporadic. The first grade teachers acted as a true team, planning together and doing the same activities. The teachers on the other grade levels—including mine—only held meetings because we had to. Heads butted much of the time, as we disagreed on basic educational philosophies.

Can you say, “counterproductive”?

On your job, take steps to ensure your colleagues realize and feel as if they are part of an important team. Then, make sure that everyone in your team understands the common goal and is fully committed to it. You can make sure your team is working together by:

Making sure the team's goals are clear to everyone.

If it's your family, your goal might be having everyone's schedule cleared so that you can eat dinner together every night. Or to work out a schedule so that Dad can work on the book he is writing every evening without interruption.

Among co-workers, the goal could be to make a certain profit in the coming quarter, or to win the bid on a big contract.

Making sure everyone in the team feels ownership and commitment to the goal.

This will only happen if all the members of the team have had input as to what the goal should be. If you are on a church committee and the chair has already decided that the goal is going to be to raise more money through the annual bake sale, but other people's goals are to raise more money by contacting businesses for support, commitment to the chair's goal will be weak at best.

Ridding the team of anything that is inhibiting them from reaching the goal.

Most likely, if you take the steps necessary to ensure that everyone is committed to the goal, you won't end up with baggage and torn opinions. You may have to deal with conflicting schedules or projects; for example, one team member might have to putting a presentation together at the same time the committee has been assigned to work.

Creative scheduling, or allowing team members to each miss a small number of meetings, can resolve such difficulties.

Perhaps a bigger challenge is when you have a team member who would prefer to work solo, and conveys an attitude that if only he weren't burdened by everybody else he could get the task accomplished single-handed in record time. This person might contribute best if given a role he perceives as important; otherwise the team leader needs to diplomatically make sure the independent person doesn't completely take over or cause resentment.

Regardless of the team, the most productive one will be that where the individual members respect one another's roles within the group.

Overcoming Stage Fright

As you move on up the ladder of success, be assured, you *will* be invited to speak in front of an audience. And it will be to your benefit to accept the invitation. But if you're like most people, speaking in front of a crowd—even of only ten people—is more than a little frightening.

You may be the life of every party you attend, and be able to wow everyone in the room with your charm and wit. In other words, you may be a great speaker. But as soon as you walk alone in front of a group of people, a line of sweat instantly pops out of your forehead.

Your legs shake. Your hands shiver. Your throat dries up. Your tongue turns to cotton. Your mind becomes blank. You may even feel a little nauseous. Really, you would rather die than be there because that seems like the only relief.

Welcome to the world of stage fright. The good news is that you aren't alone in your fear. The better news is that even the most polished and experienced speakers and actors continue to get nervous when they first begin their performance.

I love acting. I acted in 4-H, in high school plays, and in church dramas. I absolutely love getting in front of people and making a fool of myself. But during the first five minutes, I shake like a leaf. My pastor, who is the one of the best Bible teachers I've ever heard, confessed to me that she has the same experience every Sunday.

However, we have learned to overcome the fear and use the adrenaline to our advantage. You can, too.

Your first line of defense is to get to know your audience before you prepare your speech. Find out what kind of people will most likely attend the event at which you've been invited to speak. You may have to do a little bit of research to find out things such as their average age, education and level of awareness of the subject you have chosen for your speech.

If the topic is potentially controversial, it is also important to gauge their mood. The best way to do this is talk to the person who invited you. Don't overlook this step, because you don't want to inadvertently offend your audience at any point during your speech.

Understand what message they want you to deliver. Learn how best to package that message in your speech. Design your speech to suit your audience. What kind of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions are they used to?

Also, think about appropriate body language to fortify your speech. Give your speech with a few friends, practicing establishing and maintaining eye contact with the audience. This shows self-confidence, which in turn will cause your audience to have confidence in what you are saying.

Include humor. (There are entire books written just to provide humorous antidotes for public speakers.) Remember if the crowds think you are a bore, you may hear them snore. In certain circumstances, encouraging audience participation will keep their interest level high.

Speech organization

An effective speech is an organized speech. The opening of your speech should be such as to rivet the attention of the audience. You might begin with a relevant joke, dramatic story or thought-provoking question.

Next, let the audience know that main topics you're going to cover in the speech. As you write out your speech, present each topic and subtopic in a sensible order that is easy to follow. Use stories—humorous or emotional—statistics, little known facts, etc. to support your main points and keep your content interesting.

As you close your speech, include a summary of the main topics, as well as a compelling thought that will help your audience remember your speech as they return home from the event. As in the introduction, you may use another relevant joke or story, ask a question, or present a challenge.

Preparing yourself

The most critical factor in presenting an effective speech is how you prepare ahead of time. Follow these five steps whenever you are called on to speak, and you will become a success in the world of speaking:

1. Research your audience and topic thoroughly.
2. Write down your speech.
3. Read it aloud, and revise it until it sounds authentic and smooth.
4. Rehearse it in front of a mirror to observe your posture or nervous habits, such as pacing or scratching your ear. Work on using gestures and eliminating nervous habits.
5. Until you are comfortable speaking in front of a crowd, deliver it to some friends or family members. It are a few of the steps you can take in order to ensure your success as a public speaker.

The more prepared you are, the more confidence and less fear you will have. You will be able to stand in front of large audiences and captivate them with your well-rehearsed speech. You will receive your reward for your labor when they give you a standing ovation.

Improving Your Listening Skills

Listening is another skill that is critical to becoming a success. It is the key to effective communication, as you need to understand others as well as be understood in order to get your needs and desires met.

Most of us have, over the years developed poor listening habits. These include.

- Not really hearing what the other is saying, which often leaves us missing the point

- Allowing other influences around us to distract us and drift away from the conversation
- Pretending to listen when in fact we are thinking of something else and hearing only snatches of what is being said
- Interrupting the person before they have finished talking because we assume we know what they are going to say
- Filtering what we hear through prejudices or assumptions, instead of listening to what the speaker is truly saying
- Thinking about how we will respond, instead of actually listening

These are the most common mistakes you may make when it comes to listening. However, when you become aware of such bad habits you will begin to shift, and become a more effective listener, and thus more effective communicator.

To develop positive and effective listening habits you should follow the following tips.

- Focus on what the speaker is saying, and on the speaker him/herself. Watch their body language such as eye contact, hand movements and head nods, and mirror that nonverbal language. This will keep your mind from wandering and shows the speaker respect.
- Listen to everything they are saying even if this means acknowledging the unpleasant or what you don't particularly want to hear.
- Try not to draw any conclusions before you have heard everything the person is saying to you. Let the speaker finish before you reply.
- Ask the speaker for clarification of what they said. One way to do this is to say something like, "So you disagree with the current U.S. administration's policy on health care, is that right?" Or, "I hear you saying you're frustrated with your boss because he keeps passing you up for promotion. Never assume you completely understood their message; we all have different views and beliefs that can cause us to misunderstand the simplest of statements.
- When unsure ask them directly if what you think is actually what they mean. This can very often alleviate or stop any misunderstandings from occurring.

The more you practice improving your listening skills, the easier good listening becomes. After a time, these new skills will become second nature. You will then find that you get along with people easier and are less likely to get into conflicts through misunderstandings.

Learn How to Say No

Earlier, we touched on the importance of saying "no" as it pertains to better time management. Because establishing boundaries around your time is a big factor in the level of success you will ultimately attain, it's a skill worth going into a bit more detail about.

Generally speaking, people can't say no to someone asking them for something because they either are worried about upsetting the person, or lack the courage to turn down the request. People often dislike disagreeing, or find that saying "yes" is easier than saying "no."

Some people, for various reasons, cannot even find the word "no" in their vocabulary. However, there are often instances where it is best to say no to a request. If you struggle with articulating that small word, you would do yourself a grand favor by getting over that issue.

Adopt simple strategies to say no, politely but firmly. You don't need to cook stories up in order to refuse. You don't need to offer lame excuses. You can say "no" without being dishonest.

Look at some of the umpteen ways you can say no:

- No.
- I can't accept this, with my present commitments. I'm sorry.
- I'm rather quite busy now. I must decline.
- I don't think I have the time for it, as I am in the middle of something important.
- After looking at my calendar, I found that I already have prior commitments.
- No. I would only be able to do a mediocre job right now.
- No. I don't have any spare time right now.
- Not this time, please give me more notice next time and I may be able to work it into my schedule.
- I can't.
- Thanks for asking, but I don't think I'm the right person for this. Why don't you try someone else?

There are a hundred other ways of saying no without feeling hurting others or being rude. If you aren't sure, you can always ask for time to make the decision. Say you need to think about it. If somebody persists with the request when you want to say no, ~~ask them what part of "no" they don't understand~~ you may have to be assertive and firmly decline. Saying "yes" when you really want to say "no" increases your risk over-committing, which will hinder your progress toward achieving your goals.

What if you have a boss whom you believe is demanding much more work than you can reasonably manage? First, seriously and evaluate your work habits, schedule and work space. Is your boss being unreasonable, or are you disorganized?

If your workload really is too heavy, you need to drum up the courage to talk to your boss. If you can prove to him or her that you really cannot accept the extra responsibility, he or she may back off. You could make a list of all the projects that have already filled your plate, or suggest alternative strategies or deadlines for completing the additional project.

If you're really brave, you might even suggest to your boss other colleagues whose workload is lower or competence levels higher for accomplishing that particular piece of work. (In the ideal world, you would propose the idea to the person who's name you're going to drop and make sure they wouldn't mind doing it.)

While you want to be known as a "team player" and help wherever possible, you do not want to become a door mat. Saying "no" occasionally will even help you gain respect, since emotionally healthy people appreciate knowing where other people's boundaries lie.

Avoiding Temptations to Live a Better Life

A while back, when I was assigned to teach in a bilingual (Spanish) classroom, I decided I would spend some time each day watching Spanish television. I discovered a sensational news program that told of and depicted violence much worse than the major network news broadcasts would ever show.

At first, the scenes horrified me. But as the days passed, the horror diminished, bit by bit until one day, a couple months later, I realized that I wasn't feeling any emotion at all toward the violence.

I had become hardened toward tragedy. I no longer felt any compassion or sorrow for the sick, maimed and grieving. The realization frightened me, and I stopped watching the program.

If you watch T.V., play video games or look at R- and X-rated pictures on the Internet, your conscience has also become hardened and you don't realize it.

"But I only watch family shows."

So do my in-laws. And when I was at their house a while back, they had on some program during which a young woman who was barely covering her privates came on the stage to sing. Shocked, I made a comment about her clothing (or lack thereof) and my sister-in-law looked at me as though I were

crazy. Where I saw lewdness, she saw normal. Scary, considering she has two young, impressionable daughters.

In today's world, children are run around in their virtual world brandishing guns, knives, bombs and going on killing sprees in extremely gory detail. The newspapers splash headlines of murders, robbery and rapes, and the evening news is even more frightening.

Even some movies that are rated "G" contain content that is not appropriate for children under the age of eight or nine. And have I mentioned the Internet pornography that is ruining the lives of countless boys and men? (A-hem, as well the girls involved...)

What does all this have to do with living a successful life? Ever heard the phrase "Garbage In, Garbage Out"? What you look at over and over becomes a part of you. Watching horror flicks breeds fear. Playing war games breeds violence. Staring at the news night after night makes you lose your compassion for hurting people.

Fear, violence, no compassion...are these the character traits that come to mind when you think about successful people? The fact is, if you are serious about developing into your full potential, to experiencing the ultimate success, you have to get serious about resisting temptation.

Because that's what all of that is: the temptation to dunk your head into a barrel of feces for the sake of a few sparks of excitement.

How to protect yourself—and your family—from temptation

There are plenty of ways to resist the temptations today's technology has made accessible 24/7/365. If you "have" to watch the evening news (or CNN), are addicted to pornography, have children whose sole idea of recreation is killing the enemy in a video game, or count on gory movies to get your thrills, you have a problem resisting temptation and need to immediately begin to put some of the following ideas into action:

- Put an Internet filter on every computer in your home. Set it up so that your children/spouse cannot access chat rooms or particular kinds of websites (porn sites are automatically blocked). And *monitor your children's surfing history*.
- If you have a family or personal blog, do **not** put personal contact information on it. Create a contact page using a free online contact form creator, or put your email in an obscure place using only letters (for example, "joetheplumber [at] gee mail dot com").
- Go on a fourteen-day media fast. No T.V., Internet or video games for an entire two weeks. Yes, your kids will complain (and you might, too), but at the end of the fast you will be surprised at how much that used to not bother you now is shocking and horrific.
- Get rid of the video games, and replace them with more wholesome family activities. More complaining, yes. Perhaps even outright

rebellion. But eventually, your spouse will see that you are right and stop protesting.

Okay, kidding aside, if *you* have the problem, take every step necessary to find another hobby. If it's your kids, remember that you are the parent, and you are responsible for doing all you can to ensure they grow into emotionally healthy, productive and compassionate human beings.

- Search “alternatives to watching T.V.” online and print out the various lists you find on websites. Gradually begin incorporating those activities into your family’s life so that eventually you are spending most of your time as a family participating in quality, uplifting and creative activities.

Chapter III: How Successful Do You Want To Be?

Are you ready to become the most successful person you know? In this chapter, we'll go even deeper into the world of success. We'll discuss the principles of success, how to think your way into financial prosperity, how to make right decisions, the need for taking risks and the importance of gratitude.

Principles of Success

So far, you've read about some of the vital skills necessary for success, such as effective communication, time management, saying no, and resisting negative temptations that can hinder your growth. Hopefully, you've begun to apply some ideas on how to discover your purpose.

However, you can know for a certainty what your purpose is and be the best communicator and time manager in the world, but if you don't follow a few basic principles, you still will not achieve the peak of success you might otherwise have.

Here are some of the more important principles to guide you down the path of success:

- **Perseverance.** If you don't give up at something you attempt, then you can't fail, it's as simple as that. If something doesn't work out as planned the first time then try and try again using different methods to achieve the result that you are looking for.
- **Change.** If you are not happy with what you have now, or the kind of person you are, then the only one that can make a difference to your situation or life is you. A change could mean changing your outlook on life, changing your priorities, changing your behaviour or changing your activities. Remember that you always have the power to change yourself and –to some extent—your circumstances.
- **You reap what you sow.** You only get back in life what you are willing to put into it. If you are helpful, honest, truthful and positive then you will get the same back in return. Zig Ziglar's most famous quote is, "Help enough people get what they want, and you'll get what you want."
- **No man is an island.** All successful people rely in part on others for their success. Every person has different skills, talents and abilities. When you discover you need something done that you can't do efficiently or effectively for yourself, seek help.
- **Stay centered.** Take time out during the day to center yourself, to re-focus and get refreshed.
- **Set goals.** This principle is so obvious, but the main reason most people never reach the level of success they might have otherwise. Write down both short-term and long-term goals, with short term being

no more than a month to completion and long term longer than 6 months. Always set realistic goals and give yourself a date by which to reach your target. Review your goals on a regular basis to make sure they are always attainable.

- **Don't strive for perfection.** A perfectionist never finishes anything because s/he can never do anything perfectly enough. As a matter of fact, many perfectionists can never even start, because they futilely wait for circumstances to be perfect in order to make their move.
- **Believe in yourself.**
- **Focus on what you want.** Worry is focusing on what you *don't* want to happen; successful people do the opposite, and focus on what they *do* want to happen.

Making the right decisions

Some decisions are easy to make: you'd rather watch this movie than that one, take the real estate receptionist position than the fast food cashier job, date a non-smoker than a smoker.

Other decisions—usually, the most important ones—are downright hard. You may be tempted to procrastinate such decisions, because they often alter the pathway of our life: whether or not to get married, to start your own business, or start attending a house of worship.

You realize the choice you make will affect your life, and the route you choose to go might not be easily reversible. If you stop and look back on some of the biggest moments in your life that went wrong, you may find that it resulted from faulty decision-making. Perhaps you went with common sense instead of your gut instinct, or you let others sway your decision.

Whatever the reason, you can choose today to begin to make better decisions. Here are some tips to help you do just that.

- Remember when making a decision, decisions are merely making a choice among alternatives.
- Avoid making snap decisions, unless it is one you are sure has little consequence. The bigger, more irreversible the decision is, the more time you should spend considering it.
- Jot down notes when making a decision. When you write down all possible solutions and include all relevant information, you may find the answer is staring you in the face.
- Write down all the pros and cons of the decision you make. This can help clarify your decision or help you to see any problems the decision might have.
- Make one decision at a time. A sure way to make wrong decisions is to try to make many at once.

- If others will be affected by your decision, then get their input on the situation.
- Once you make a decision, stick with it. Yes, you may later discover opportunities or choices that look better; but remember that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. Carry through with your commitment, and chances are your perseverance will eventually bear much fruit.
- Before making a decision, ask yourself if anything could go wrong if you followed through with this choice.
- Once you have committed yourself to your decision then go with it whole-heartedly, let go of all the “what ifs” and do not bother yourself anymore.
- Before committing to a decision, visualize it in your head and follow it through to its intended completion in your mind.
- Put faith in your ability to make a successful decision and your ability to follow it through.
- Review all the facts thoroughly before you make a decision. Once you have reviewed them allow yourself time to think about them before drawing any conclusions.
- Always try to base your decisions on what is right or what feels like the right thing to do.
- Remember to look at the objective of the decision, the alternatives to the decision and the risks of any alternatives to the decision.

Learning to make better decisions is vital to your success, so begin to develop the skill of good decision-making today.

Use a hobby to become successful

When you hear the word hobby, what do you envision? Someone puttering in the garage? A grandpa carving toys from wood? A group of ladies knitting? All of those things can be considered hobbies, but the word “hobby” encompasses a variety of activities, from sports to cooking to music to writing to making jewelry.

Most people think of a hobby as something that you enjoy doing in your spare time to avoid boredom and/or relieve stress, but not something that could spiral you upward into the atmosphere of success. However, you can take some hobbies and develop them into successful businesses. Some people have taken a hobby and turned it into a successful business. This could be done with many hobbies, although some hobbies have more potential to thrive and expand than others. There are some points to consider when you are thinking of turning your hobby into a business.

Do you have the commitment?

While your hobby is something which you enjoy doing now in your spare time, would you have the commitment needed to stick with it if you were doing it full time? Furthermore, do you have the time needed to commit to make a

business work? Because, likely you will begin converting your hobby into a business at the same time you are still going on with your day job. Doing something when you feel like it for fun is a totally different thing than if you are relying on it for an income.

Financing

How will you finance your new business, and how much will you need? Some hobbies can be converted to a business at a very low cost, others may cost thousands of dollars. Also ask yourself whether you have a head for business, or are you going to need help; if so, how much help will you need and what is it going to cost?

Business management courses

If you have a head for business, then you may need to take a business management course at your local community college. While you may have what it takes to manage a business successfully, you may need to get qualifications or learn skills in order to run your business more efficiently.

Attracting customers

If you are going to successfully turn your hobby into a thriving business, then it is essential that people know about you and what you are offering. The Internet provides an excellent opportunity to widen your customer base internationally, delivering what you have to offer to millions of people around the world by advertising your business on your own website.

If you are not a web designer yourself, the easiest and most cost-efficient way to set up a site is to purchase a domain name at a domain registrar such as GoDaddy.com, get webhosting (GreenGeeks.com is inexpensive and uses sustainable practices), and install a blog. With a blog you need no knowledge of coding, although you may want to hire someone to create a header and perhaps a few other graphics for you.

Make your business known by joining [Twitter](https://twitter.com) and gaining some followers (follow them first!), writing articles and posting them at ezinearticles.com, and buying advertising space or pay-per-click advertising.

Preparing yourself for success

If you plan well, ask for counsel from experienced entrepreneurs and follow your plan, your new business will likely bloom and blossom into a success. When this happens you will have to be prepared for the transformations that will take place. If your business expands, then it may become too large for a one-man operation and then you will be faced with a whole new set of problems to contend with such as finding bigger premises, hiring extra staff and meeting greater demand.

On the other hand, you may be able to turn your hobby into a nice stream of income without needing any employees or extra space. It's your dream; you control the direction you want it to go.

Why you need to think like a success to be a success

Being positive and building up your self-confidence is the combination which will help you get the most out of life and lead you to success. Believing in yourself and your ability to accomplish whatever it is you want to do is key to achieving as many of your goals and dreams as you can.

In order to develop that high level of confidence and belief, you need to keep your mind focused. Ever heard, "What a man thinks in his heart, so is he?" (It's a proverb from the Bible, by the way.) Well, thinking success leads to success. Most things that happens in your life is dependent on how you think and what you think. Begin to think positively, and your mind will automatically be inclined toward thoughts of success. And once you start to think successfully, you have the power to change almost any aspect of your life.

Shaping your life

Every thought you have shapes your life and determines to an extent the outcome of a situation. If you go into something thinking negatively, then the outcome will be different than had you gone into the same situation thinking more positively. The way you think and talk to yourself determines how you go into a situation and respond to it. Simply by changing the way you think can change the outcome of that situation.

When you fail in a situation this is largely down to your self-limiting thoughts. Negative thoughts that you allow to creep into your mind lead you to thinking that you cannot possibly succeed. In order to change your circumstances or the outcome of a situation, you have to change the way you think, which then changes your outlook and in turn alters the situation into a more positive one.

Although it may seem that a small percentage of people actually ever obtain success, it is not out of your reach. You have as much power to succeed as the most prestigious leader you've heard of and admire. When you begin to realize this and alter your way of thinking, begin to believe that you are able to achieve and be successful in whatever you do, you will gradually begin to shape your life in the way you want it to go.

There are two excellent to develop this kind of belief. First, begin to use positive questioning. Turn the goal you want into a question: "Why is it so easy for me to lose weight?" "Why am I able to live such a luxurious lifestyle and still have tons of money to give to charity?" "Why am I such a loving, nurturing parent?"

When you offer your mind questions, your mind begins to seek out answers. With very little conscious effort, you begin to encounter resources and people and develop insights that lead you toward the fulfilment of your goals.

A second way to begin changing your pattern of thought is to acknowledge yourself daily for all your little accomplishments. Many of us are so focused on beating ourselves up over mistakes that we forget about the many strides we made during a particular day.

Spend a few quiet minutes at the end of each day giving yourself mental pats on the back for what you *did* accomplish, and learn to let go of the things you did not. Did you smile at the gas station clerk this morning? Hold a door open for someone with their hands full? Entertain a crying child while his mother was busy in the grocery checkout line? Write one page in the novel you started? Pray or meditate instead of watching T.V.? E-mail a friend you'd gotten out of touch with?

When you begin to focus on the positives in your life, you will be amazed at how your confidence and belief in yourself will grow. And those positive thoughts will lead you right down the road to success.

Success does not happen in your comfort zone

Your comfort zone is exactly what it sounds like, places or situations where you feel comfortable. You're used to a particular circumstance or routine, and you enjoy the security of its familiarity. Even if you know it may not necessarily be healthy for you physically or mentally, it's what you know, so it's the place you're inclined to stay.

While there is nothing wrong with comfort zones—once in a while you need to stop at a place where you feel secure and relaxed—in order to expand your potential and achieve your goals you often have to move out of your comfort zone and into unfamiliar territory. Only by pushing yourself to do something new or which you are afraid of can you develop and improve ourselves.

The first step to take in venturing outside of your comfort zone is to decide what you want to change about yourself or your life. Make a list of everything that you want to do or change, what you'd like to accomplish, the places you would like to visit and what it is you want out of life. When you have determined your goals and objectives you can then take the next step in making them reality. Here are just some of the ways in which you can step outside your comfort zone.

Your self-image

How long has it been since you last changed your appearance, such as your hairstyle? Ladies might try going from long hair to short, or from straight to wavy. Guys might try shaving off a beard or growing a mustache. You could also try a completely different style or color of clothing.

Giving yourself a new look is not only a relatively non-threatening way to step out of your comfort zone, but also has a way of boosting your self-confidence.

Do something different

Make it a weekly goal to do something completely different to what you would normally do. Start with making smaller changes at first, such as going to a different restaurant for lunch, or ordering something from the menu which you have never tried. Read a genre of fiction you normally avoid, or a non-fiction book on a topic of which you know little. Eat something new for breakfast. Try

a new exercise. There are many ways you can make gradual small changes to your daily life to keep you out of a rut and growing as a person.

Take up a new hobby

If you don't already have a hobby, you need one! If you have one, throw another one into the mix. Join your library's book club or Toastmasters (an organization that teaches people to be better public speakers). Take a healthy cooking class and start reading up on nutrition. If you've always wanted to learn to sew or knit, find a club or class where you can get your feet wet.

Choosing something which is out of character—and which will get you meeting new people and going to new places—is an excellent way to move out of your comfort zone.

Meet your fears head on

I'll never forget the day, as a mid-teenager, that I finally slid down a pole on a playground set for the first time in my life. Until that day, I had been afraid of missing the pole and falling—SPLAT!—to the ground.

I first watched as a little girl, around seven years old, stood at the top of the pole, uncertain. Then her mother uttered some of the wisest words I'd ever heard:

"It's scary the first time, but once you do it, it'll be easy afterward."

The girl promptly jumped to the pole and slid down with a smile on her face. As a fourteen or fifteen-year-old, I couldn't let a small child be more courageous than I. I went up the ladder to the top of the pole. My heart beat faster, and my palms began to sweat. But I summoned all the courage I had, and slid down that pole. I remember grinning victoriously as I hit the ground. It had actually been fun!

Any kind of change is like that—frightening at first, because you don't know what the results will be. But you can only improve yourself and your life by meeting and greeting your fears head on and passing through the fear. As I discovered as a teenager, once you have met it head on you find it isn't so frightening after all. Try to make a point of doing something that's new and at least a little scary every week.

Why you need to go out on a limb to be a success

Just like getting out of your comfort zone, constantly challenging and pushing yourself to grow and achieve is essential for success. *Never* be content with what you have achieved so far in life. That isn't to say that you can't be satisfied with what you've accomplished, or that you should be a driven perfectionist; rather, you should continually be looking for ways in which you can improve yourself to achieve and get more from life.

Think of yourself as tree. A tree starts out as a sapling, growing upward and expanding outward, continually branching out in all directions as it lays strong foundation roots deep underground.

It never stops growing, and neither should you. Revise your goals and write new ones on a regular basis. Expand your circle of friends. Read at least one non-fiction book a week, and apply any new knowledge to your life. If you are going to fulfill your potential, you need to be ever moving forward. Following are steps you can take to make sure you never stagnate.

Understand what you have in life

What are your best qualities, what are your particular talents and how could you develop further? Sit down and write an honest assessment of each area of your life. Ask family members or friends to give you some insight, as many times other people who are close to you see things that may be in your personal blind spot.

Determine what it is you want to expand upon or develop in certain areas, as well as where you could improve and what skills you may need to learn in order to be able to accomplish your goals.

Take small steps

Once you have created goals in the way of self-improvement, break each goal down into bite-sized steps. For example, you may have determined that you want to double your income. Don't go asking your boss for a raise, joining three MLM companies and starting to buy houses to flip all at the same time. Decide which income stream you want to work on first, then take the necessary steps to implement it. After one gets off the ground, then you can work on a second, and so forth.

Reassess your situation

From time to time, reassess your situation to make sure you are still going in the right direction. It is better to find you are wandering off track early than to get sidetracked and end up totally losing the direction and way you intended to go. If you are expanding on several areas of your life at once and have several goals in motion, you might want to keep a written journal of your goals and achievements so you can keep track of what you've been doing and how much you've accomplished.

Reward yourself for your achievements

Knowing that you will give yourself a treat when a goal is achieved can be a great incentive to keep moving on the days when you feel like giving up. And actually participating in the reward will propel you to create new goals, just so you can experience the reward again.

Include a period of rest as part of the reward, so that you can get rejuvenated and avoid the risk of burnout. Then get back up on your feet and continue down the road toward success.

Self-discipline for a healthier lifestyle

When you hear the word “discipline,” your first thought probably involves children, time-outs, stern lectures and spankings. Although your discipline should begin when you are a child, you continue to need it all your life. In fact, if you were disciplined in a consistent, loving manner and your parents provided clear boundaries around your life, your self-discipline skills are likely well-established and are part of why you’ve been able to get as far in life as you have.

Because it involves giving yourself structure and healthy boundaries, self-discipline helps you to lead a happier, healthier lifestyle. The lack of self-discipline leads to wrong choices being made, often related to getting instant gratification instead of sacrificing immediate pleasure for long-term goals. An individual lacking self-discipline suffers in his or her relationships, health and personal fulfillment.

Self-discipline is about making wise choices for your own benefit. In the health realm, the food you eat everyday and the amount of exercise you do depends on how disciplined you are with yourself. While you all understand that the choices you make comes down to how healthy you are, you may not always make the wisest choices. This will lead to more frequent illnesses as well as weight gain and lethargy.

Being self-disciplined isn’t easy—it requires a lot of willpower—but it’s not impossible. Here are some tips to help you stay on course and develop more self-discipline in all aspects of your life.

- Understand that the choices you make in life are yours and yours alone. Don’t blame others for mistakes and failures that stem from a lack of self-discipline.
- If you make mistakes because you slacked off in self-discipline, learn from them, pick yourself up and practice being more self-disciplined with yourself in the future
- Set yourself goals that are realistically achievable, then stick to them and methodically work to achieve them. Having specific goals go a long way to encouraging you to discipline yourself.
- Always finish any task you set about doing before moving on to start another. (Unless you’re a stay-at-home mom. ;))
- Learn to recognize, then avoid, any temptation to deviate from your goals.
- Take up a new sport—particularly one that requires a lot of self-discipline, such as the martial arts or dance.
- Notice the benefits you have gained from practicing self-discipline, and write them down.
- Imagine the consequences that being undisciplined brings.
- Stress weakens your willpower, so learn how to reduce and manage it well.

- Take notice of when and why you start to go off track and deviate, and commit to getting back on the right path.
- Use affirmations to help you in times when you are frustrated or doubt yourself.

You success depends on how self-disciplined you are willing to become; continually stretch yourself in this area.

Think your way to becoming rich

If you have researched success and financial prosperity for any length of time, you have surely heard of Napoleon Hill's famous classic, *Think And Grow Rich*. The small but powerful volume highlights the habits of wealthy people, and one of the most important habits is how they think.

How you think about finances will determine how big your personal and business accounts will eventually be. Of course, merely thinking about your desire to be a millionaire is not necessarily enough, but it can greatly improve your situation. In addition, when you believe that financial prosperity can be yours, opportunities to make more money will practically fall into your lap.

Have you ever stopped to think why those who are rich keep on getting richer? One of the reasons is that they think differently about money to those who have not got money. Robert Kiyosaki, for example, was taught as a teenager not to say, "I can't afford it", but instead to ask, "How *can* I afford it?"

Here are some other examples of how people with money and those without money think about the same situation.

The average person – If it sounds too good to be true then it probably is.

The rich person – It sounds interesting, please tell me a little more.

While we should all be wary of scams, the rich person is more willing to seek out an opportunity to draw more money in than the person with little money. Sometimes the saying "You have to spend money to make money" is true.

The average person – 95% of all new businesses fail within the first five years. Why should I bother trying to start my own business?

The rich person – I am going to be part of the successful 5% by doing my homework, then starting my own business.

If you are serious about turning your passion into a successful business, you can! Just make sure you seek out wise counsel, get your resources in order and learn whatever additional skills are necessary. However, if you let negative and small-minded thinking run your life, you will never fulfill your potential.

The average person – The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence; I might as well stay where I am.

The rich person – There is a whole world of opportunities out there just waiting for me to discover them.

The average person always allows themselves to think that they cannot do better and that dreams are only unrealistic fantasies. You need to decide that you are “above average.”

The average person - You have to have money in order to be able to make money.

The rich person – You have to have a great idea in order to make money.

In some circumstances, to get an idea off the ground costs a good deal of money; however, many ideas cost very little to put into motion. For example, the publishing of a book requires only the cost of paper and postage necessary to mail out manuscripts to agents and publishers. Or, if you decide to self-publish, whatever fees the self-publishing company charges per book.

Regardless, a positive attitude towards the outlay of your money and the rewards it will bring you will make a big difference in how successful you become.

The average person – I tried that before and only failed, so it will again.

The rich person – What do I have to do differently and change this time in order to for it to be a success?

Just because something didn't turn out as planned doesn't mean that you shouldn't try again. Sit back and consider what you could do differently to make it succeed—sometimes all that is required is waiting for the right timing—then revise your plan of action accordingly.

In short, simply changing your perspective about prosperity, opportunities and finances opens up a whole new world, as well as many more possibilities for you to change your financial situation.

Count your blessings

I once heard it said that you won't get what you're after until you learn to be thankful for what you have now. While you never want to accept mediocrity, you do need to be grateful for the good things God has given you so far.

How often do you actually sit down and say, “Thank you” for the many gifts you have received in life? And I'm not talking about material possessions and money, but the small, everyday things that so very often the majority of us take for granted.

Do you have a roof over your head? Decent clothes to wear? Electricity in your house? Good health? Do you get to eat three meals a day? You are

more blessed than the majority of the world's population. Let your mind dwell on good things, and you will attract good things. Dwell on what you don't have and all your many complaints, and you will shut down the flow of blessings to your life.

Saying thank you

From the moment you awaken you should give thanks for what you have. If you have a partner and/or children, tell them "thank you" frequently, for being there for you, for helping with household chores, for putting up with your bad habits. Work on expressing gratefulness at least twice as often as you nag or criticize.

Remember to express gratitude to your co-workers, boss, the clerk in the store, and everyone else you run into. You will not only make their day, but improve your own mood and overall well-being. And when your mood is positive, so will your mind be, which in turns open your life to success and fulfillment.

Blessings can be found in the smallest of things

There are many things that happen throughout your day which you don't pay attention to but which are blessings. Some events may not even seem like blessings at the time, but later on you realize were blessings in disguise.

Choose to become more aware of what is happening in your life and to notice and appreciate all the little things. Very often it is the smallest things in life that can bring the greatest joy, and these are you should cherish and give thanks for each and every day.

List your blessings

If you are not in the habit of walking in an "attitude of gratitude", and/or you know you complain a lot, I submit this challenge to you: every day for the next thirty days, write down five things that happened in the past twenty-four hours for which you are thankful. Do your best not to focus on money; if all you ever think about or are thankful for are things related to money, your life is way out of balance and you will never have the fulfillment you are seeking.

The things you write down don't have to be big things. Perhaps it's the sound of your grandchild or child's laughter, or an unexpected phone call from a friend. Perhaps your boss recognized you in front of your colleagues, or you picked the first ripe tomato off the vine. All of these are the little joys that make life special and meaningful, and can make you feel rich and successful even before your net worth hits six figures and more.

This chapter begins with a question: "How successful do you want to be?" Cultivating a grateful heart in your soul will make all the other tips, skills and principles of success that much easier to incorporate into your life.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

From discovering your purpose, to learning to manage your time, to improving your decision-making skills, to pushing yourself out of your comfort zone, you have become familiar with the keys to living a life of success—whatever that word means to you.

Certainly, this book has presented a lot of information to chew on. You may even be feeling a little overwhelmed at this point, wondering if you have what it takes to make your crazy dreams come true.

If that's the case, start at the beginning, and work on one skill, one principle, one habit at a time. The hardest thing you will ever try to change about yourself is your mindset. It takes time, effort and perseverance. But over time, the positive, growth-promoting skills will become habit, until finally you wake up one day and realize that you don't think the way you used to think, and you don't respond the way you used to respond.

You will find yourself on the road to success, and will know that all your hard work and commitment has been worth it.

To be the most successful you can be requires simplifying your life. If you need guidance in that area, please [click here](#) to have a look at the various resources I have available on that topic.

Need to make a little more money? Check out my Kindle book, [Home Sweet Work: 17 Ways To Make Money In Your Pajamas](#). Finally...

Get more great info to help you simplify your life, delivered straight to your inbox!
[Click here](#) to subscribe to my blog.

Hope to see you there soon,
Emily ☺