
Keys For Success

KEYS FOR SUCCESS

by Kathleen Gage

Your success will be determined by your level of commitment. Commitment to yourself and your dreams. How often have you heard people say, “Why does success always happen to other people?” or “Successful people are born that way.”

There are certain keys to success. First of all, you must define what success means to you. What would that look like, feel like, and sound like? Often, when people are asked about success they immediately speak in terms of the material level. Success involves so much more than just one level. For some people, success has nothing to do with how much financial wealth they have acquired. There are also the physical, emotional, spiritual, relationships, and contribution to community levels.

Once you have defined success based on your values (what is important to you and what your core beliefs are) then you have more of an opportunity to achieve what you desire.

HAVE A PLAN - What are you willing to do in order to accomplish what you have determined success to be? Write down what you want to accomplish. Then break this down into a doable plan. What stops most people from achieving what they want is they focus only on the big plan without breaking it down into tiny steps. This is often very overwhelming. Let’s say someone wants to start their own business. So they write that down. If they do not break this larger goal into smaller goals they have no real direction to go in. If, on the other hand, they lay out a plan which would include getting a business license, determining the type of business, deciding on a name for the business, funding, location, marketing materials, advertising, etc., then

they are more inclined to tackle these steps. Once you determine the pieces to complete the project of starting a business take each individual piece and break that down. For example, the business license. What do you need to do to acquire the business license? How much money will that take? What agency do you need to go to? Who do you need to talk to? Get as detailed as possible. Ask as many questions as possible. If you are not sure exactly what to do then talk with someone who has started a business and find out how they acquired their license. Do this with each aspect of your business plan or whatever your goal happens to be.

LEARN FROM THE PAST - When and where have you sabotaged your success? What have you done that has supported your success? The best way to determine this is to write about your past. Include your successes and what you consider to be your failures. Listing failures is important because then you can determine what didn’t work. Most successful people have “failed” more than they have succeeded. What sets them apart from people who have not achieved success is they have learned from the experience. They have not let the obstacles stop them. If anything, when an obstacle has appeared, that is what has moved them to their next level of commitment.

BALANCE - The reason you want to define success in all areas of your life is to maintain balance. How often have you noticed someone who has achieved success in one area of their life, and yet, other areas are lacking? Maybe in the professional arena they are high achievers, but at home they can’t seem to make their relationship work. Or they are very committed to doing volunteer work and have achieved recognition for this, and yet, they can’t seem to pay their bills. Or they have financially succeeded, but one of the

determining factors to their success is to contribute to community and because they are so busy at work or with their business they are unable to fulfill that aspect of their dream.

ENTHUSIASM - Enthusiasm is probably the most important element to achieving success. Enthusiasm keeps us in a place of having a positive attitude about ourselves, others, and life. Without it, we can quickly become disillusioned during the rough times in life. I don't know of one person who can escape the happenings of life. With enthusiasm the rough times won't necessarily go away. They will simply become more manageable.

Seven years ago, due to a series of events, Chioma Ikejiani ended up on welfare. After collecting her first welfare check, the Nigerian-born 34-year-old made a decision to never collect another check from the welfare department.

She was penniless and single living in a rooming house in Toronto. What took Ms. Ikejiani from living in poverty to now raking in a six-figure income is her passion and enthusiasm. She set some clearly defined goals which included getting her real estate license. She took a big gamble in 1990 by enrolling in a three-month-long real estate course. To cover her tuition and living expenses she used her Visa card to get a large cash advance. A friend helped her get a second card which enabled her to get even more money for her living expenses.

After getting her license Ms. Ikejiani was turned down by 30 brokers. Her only mode of transportation in 1990 was either to walk, ride a bike or take the bus. With no savings and owing five months back rent she finally got a job with Canada Trust real estate office.

For the first two years Ms. Ikejiani's goal was to make 50 personal contacts a day. In 1991 and 1992 she earned \$13,000 and \$30,000 respectively - all without a car and with the market

in a downslide. She would walk, ride a bike and take the bus to meet clients. Her concern was that people would not want to deal with her because she didn't have a car and they might think she was not a good agent.

Today she drives a new Camry and has been pretty consistent in making six figures a year since 1993. She attributes her success to having goals and enthusiasm tied into her goals.

LET GO OF THE OUTCOME -Another important key, and probably the most challenging, is to let go of the outcome. Often, we short-change ourselves in life. If we are able to let go of the end result we may end up with more than we ever dreamed possible. As we are taking the steps towards our dream we will constantly be gathering new information. Allow yourself to integrate this information.

Set the goal, lay out the plan, have enthusiasm and don't worry about what is going to happen a month, six months, a year or five years down the road. Although we like to think so, we have no clue as to what life has in store for us. What causes frustration and stress is when we try to control things in life which are beyond our control. By taking steps towards your dreams on a daily basis you create what is often called your life. It is more important to be committed to the process of your dreams rather than to the end result.

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