

Chapter One

Why this book?



"The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential...these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence." Confucius

Understanding the purpose of this book

The subjects of personal success, business success and fulfilled living have a history going back to ancient times. However, in the 20th century, much has been written about the Laws of Success and what it takes to be successful. This book is intended to give you an insight into some of the ideas of a number of key writers on this subject and, at the end of the book, you will find a reading list in the Resources section which will enable you to extend your knowledge in whatever direction you choose. The point of this book is to short circuit the task of reading the many books on success and to distil the common thinking into one relatively compact volume which you can use as your personal template for success. A number of areas are covered which will enable you to move forwards in terms of success and, in doing so, give your vision and goals 'legs' by taking practical action. What is becoming abundantly clear is

that success is not just about having a vision but of taking the necessary actions to bring that vision into reality. We must not underestimate the role of vision because a clear vision charged with emotion tends to set up filters in our perceptual processes to identify opportunities to move forwards towards our goals through engaging our reticular activating system, the selective perception process. There is more about this in Chapter Three. What matters, as the American motivational speaker Zig Ziglar suggested, is to plan for success, prepare for success and expect success. That process is what will set up the filters so that we become tuned into opportunities to move forward.

We need to learn to manage our thought processes effectively because it is becoming increasingly obvious that we become what we think about. Think of bad things and unconsciously you will tend to make those bad things happen. Think of good things and you will tend to engage your unconscious mind to make them happen. You have the choice. One of the results of research into neuroscience is that when we have positive thoughts, our brains operate more effectively due to the greater conductivity through the neural connections. In addition we produce the biochemistry of success with neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine which seem to be contributors to feelings of well-being and happiness.

On the other hand, when we feel under pressure or stressed, our ability to be creative and generate ideas can be inhibited by cortisol, a stress hormone produced by the adrenal glands. Thus if we want to ensure that our brain works effectively, we need to focus on thoughts that make us feel good.

Gratitude and expectancy

It is helpful to think about gratitude and expectancy. We tend to focus on our problems much of the time and so put ourselves into a negative state, dampening down our creativity and our motivation. By thinking about all the things for which we are grateful such as where we live, our house, our family, our career and the other good parts of our life, we can shift ourselves into a very positive state. The other word we need to remember is 'expectancy'. We need to have a positive expectancy as we tend to create and become what we think about. A negative expectancy will close down our neural connections, we will feel bad and open the filters to ensure that what we do not want to happen actually does happen. It is all about the power of a positive vision of what you want to achieve and then taking the necessary actions to bring that vision into reality. An important point in this respect is to focus on the vision and the benefits you will experience from its creation rather than worrying about whether you are going to be successful. That worry will tend to reduce the effectiveness of your thought processes and thus work against you.

So who started thinking about how we can become more successful?

So let us now start to look at some of the writers through the past century on what it takes to be successful. It seems there is a core set of skills to ensure success and we can all develop those skills to become successful at whatever we want to do. The following are just some of the people who have made a great contribution to our understanding of what it takes to be successful. We will pull together the common themes and then set about helping you to use the ideas to develop some insights on how you can move forwards.

Wallace D. Wattles

One of the first notable writers was Wallace D. Wattles who proposed a number of Laws of the Universe which can help guide us in our efforts to achieve success. His approach was to suggest that it was not doing certain actions which make you successful but doing things in a certain way. He argued that we are all connected with the universe through an energy field and that human thought is energy. Focusing on something you wish to achieve impacts on the energy field, according to Wattles, and tends to result in what you are desiring coming to pass. He proposed several Laws of the Universe of which perhaps the most significant is the Law of Attraction. This formed the basis for the film *The Secret*, which inspired so many people to achieve their ambitions. The Law of Attraction proposes that thoughts are 'things' and that you create your own environment based on your predominant thoughts. Think of debt and you seem to acquire more debt. Think of illness and your health starts to suffer. Many world-class figures have identified this

fact. For example Winston Churchill stated, “Your thinking creates your world.”

We will look in more detail at these Laws later in this chapter. The fundamental argument is that everything in the universe is really energy. If you look at your hand with an electron microscope and increase the magnification you first see molecules, then atoms and then...energy. Wattles was way ahead of his time in talking about energy and today quantum physics supports his idea that we are all manifestations of energy. The Law of Transmutation suggests that energy cannot be created or destroyed, the Law of Attraction states that like attracts like and the Law of Cause and Effect means we have to take action if we want to create outstanding results and bring our vision into reality. These three Laws are very powerful and there are others as you can see if you read Wattles’ book. We will explore some of their applications throughout this book.

Why don’t we learn about the Laws of the Universe at school?

The problem is that we do not often receive any guidance on how to use them. Certainly the education system in schools, colleges and universities does not cover them, preferring instead to focus on teaching people content and knowledge in order to pass examinations and gain ‘qualifications’. I have worked in a number of business schools as a professor, yet in none of them has the Law of Attraction ever been mentioned and, even worse, little teaching takes place on topics such as personal vision, goal setting, negotiation, selling skills and all the subjects we really need to be good at to survive and prosper in this increasingly changing and complex world. This book is going to correct that situation! We are going to work through

the really important topics to give you a toolkit for success for you as a business person, whether you intend to create and run your own business or achieve great things in the corporate world or the public sector. The material is just as important for careers in the third sector of charities and also non-government organisations, the military and the police. It is a recipe for outstanding success in whatever line of work you decide to undertake.

Think and Grow Rich

Putting aside the 'energy' model and the Laws of the Universe for the time being, perhaps the most read book about success in life is *Think and Grow Rich*, written by Napoleon Hill. This book has inspired thousands of people during the 20th century, particularly those in sales and direct selling organisations. Hill suggested 13 principles of success, which reflect Wallace D Wattles' theory, and put them into more practical terms. According to Hill, the 13 key principles of success are based on the idea that thoughts are things:

1. Desire to be successful - you need passion!
2. Belief that you can be successful and the faith to persist
3. Auto-suggestion and affirmations to support your belief and maintain your focus
4. Gaining specialised knowledge in your chosen area
5. Creativity and imagination to create your vision
6. Organised planning, goal setting and progress monitoring
7. Effective decision making

8. Persistence and overcoming 'bumps in the road' along the way
9. Tapping into the Mastermind Group principle
10. Energy transmutation through focus and a positive mindset 'I can'
11. Enlisting your subconscious mind to work with you rather than in opposition
12. Making the best use of your brain using the principles of neuroscience which has recently shed great light on how our brains work
13. The sixth sense and enlisting the help of your intuition

Hill also talks about learning to overcome fear and those concerns which can hold us back. The fact is however that *Think and Grow Rich* was written many years ago in a very different world and skewed towards the American culture. Nevertheless it still makes a major contribution to our thinking about how to become successful, particularly in business.

Some months ago I produced a series of short videos on leadership with the help of several highly successful Chief Executives and Managing Directors. The most inspirational of these was the interview with Bob Parker, Managing Director of Forever Living, a highly successful company in the wellness industry. One of the first things Bob told me was how he had been inspired by *Think and Grow Rich*. It seems that book has been the foundation for the success of many people through the decades and is just as relevant today as when it was written. If we now add the input of neuroscience, modern psychology and neurolinguistic programming to Hill's thoughts, then we truly have a powerful toolkit to help create our personal success in today's world.

Zig Ziglar

Zig Ziglar was a very inspirational American speaker on motivation, selling skills and values-based living. He suggested the idea of the Stairway to Success in which he promoted the idea of personal success being based on sound foundation values of honesty, faith, love, loyalty, integrity, and that old-fashioned word 'character'. He emphasised the importance of self-image, good relationships, goals, a positive attitude, hard work, and desire in the journey towards success. He had many insightful sayings such as: "You can get everything you want if you help enough other people get what they want." This is a great insight for the business person. Ziglar pushed the issue of positive belief rather than just positive thinking and his basic approach, as we have already mentioned, is to plan for success, prepare for success and expect success. What you plant today you reap tomorrow and you can start today with what you have got, develop your ability and go wherever you want with your life, your career and your business. This emphasises the importance of positive belief and how our beliefs play a major part in shaping our behaviour. Positive belief is based on reasons why you can 'move mountains' whereas positive thinking is just based on hope.

Zig Ziglar emphasised the importance of self-discipline and planning. To help you move forward in this area, the performance planning tool which appears later in the book in Chapter Eleven will help you create that discipline and high level of productivity. As Ziglar once said, "Life is tough. When you are tough on yourself, life will be infinitely easier on you."

Jim Rohn

Jim Rohn was also a very successful motivational speaker, business philosopher and sales professional who rose from humble beginnings in the United States of America to be a world-class celebrity and ambassador for business. One of the major contributions he made was the idea of how to develop your business and work philosophy. The starting point is to understand some of the factors in your development and conditioning by the people with whom you grew up and the experiences you went through during life. This conditioning leads to the creation of your set of beliefs about yourself, your abilities, about the world in which you live and so on. The beliefs process the events you experience and create thoughts, feelings and behaviours about the event. This is the basic idea of cognitive behavioural psychology which has become very popular in the therapeutic context. Your beliefs determine how you respond to opportunities and threats and lead to the formation of your attitude with regards to the event and the actions you subsequently take. We will look at this idea in more detail in the next chapter.

Jim Rohn wrote a number of books and made many videos. One of his most useful books is *7 Strategies for Wealth and Happiness*, first published in 1985. While the book is orientated towards the American public, the ideas and strategies quoted do help us work towards creating our plan for success. His seven ideas were:

- Create your strategy – create your plan, your vision for the future and set goals
- Seek knowledge – develop that Growth Mindset we talk about in neuroscience
- Develop change skills – become a master in handling change at all levels

- Take control of your finances – this builds psychological security
- Manage your time effectively – this is the key to focus and adding value
- Network widely – develop relationships with positive people who will help you
- Create work-life balance – build exercise, relaxation and pleasure into your life as well as work

Earl Nightingale

Earl Nightingale has been perhaps the most enduring thinker and speaker on personal and business success. He was an accomplished broadcaster in the United States of America and subsequently internationally. Two of his major achievements were the audio programmes *The Strangest Secret* and *Lead the Field*, initially produced as long-playing vinyl records and available today as CDs, ideal for playing in the car on the way to work!

His *Strangest Secret* programme was based on the idea that we become what we think about. It is, however, *Lead the Field* which has inspired many people to achieve great things. His philosophy starts with the importance of what he calls the Magic Word – attitude. He emphasises that it is your attitude at the start of a task which, more than anything else, will bring about a successful outcome. Your attitude to others determines their attitudes towards you. People do not develop a great attitude when they achieve success. Instead they achieve the success because of their great attitude. Recent research at Harvard University suggests that 85% of the reason individuals

are appointed to jobs is as a result of a positive attitude rather than technical ability. Other topics Nightingale addresses are goal setting, realising the potential in whatever work you are doing at the present time, your attitude to money and the importance of understanding what he calls the Miracle of Your Mind. Details of his audio programmes are given at the end of this book.

Are you reaching your potential?

So how do you feel you are doing in terms of becoming successful, however you define success? Are you doing the things necessary to help you reach your potential?

The fact is that most people only tap into a tiny fraction of their potential abilities and we are not really given any guidance on how to do this during our education in schools, colleges and universities. Modern approaches to psychology and neuroscience, the science of the brain, teach us that our potential is virtually unlimited, only held back by our belief system of what is possible. As we have already suggested in modern society, it is estimated that only about one in 20 individuals is passionate about the way they earn their living. A recent survey by the UK's Chartered Institute of Personnel in the UK suggested that over 85% of employees would change their job and way of life if they felt it were possible. In an ideal world, people in the workplace should be exhilarated by their jobs, authentic and genuine in their working relationships, receptive to new ideas, emotionally involved in their work, proactive in terms of sorting out problems, good achievers and advocates of the organisation in which they work. It is within your power to become one of the 'one in 20'.

The problem is that most often they are not happy with their work and leave either due to frustration or disenchantment with their immediate manager or a sense of a lack of fairness in how they are being treated. The reasons why people actually leave organisations are interesting:

- Poor management and leadership and not trusting their boss
- Inability to use their core skills
- The work is boring or not stimulating
- Feeling unappreciated and not valued by the organisation
- A lack of personal development
- Frequent reorganisations
- Not feeling involved in core issues related to their job role
- Feeling that the job is 'time hungry' compared to the overall remuneration and benefits package they receive

Do you relate to any of those issues?

It is not surprising that so many people are thinking of starting their own business and becoming their own boss. The problem is that most people have never had any training or experience in running their own business and so find it extremely difficult. In Chapter Two we are going to look at the underlying issue of whether you really are suited to running your own operation or whether it would be more in keeping with your abilities to develop your knowledge, skills and attitudes as an employee. Not everyone is suited to becoming a self-employed entrepreneur but for those that hold the idea as part of their dream, great experiences await! This book will position you to be either

a very successful entrepreneur or a top-class employee, sought after by many organisations because of your reputation.

So let us proceed!

Let us start by summing up some of the ideas in this chapter and then getting you to think through how you can apply them.

Summarising success

You should create your personal strategic plan and have a clear vision of where you want to be in, say, three to five years. Plan for success, prepare for success and expect success. This book will give you a toolkit for doing this work.

Focus your thinking on what you want to achieve, not what you want to avoid. The vision board idea mentioned in Chapter Three will help you with this process.

Set goals. Do so in the creative and scientific way outlined in Chapter Three and then link those goals to your vision board.

Work on developing your networking skills and associate with positive people who are already achieving success. This will motivate and inspire you to go the extra mile in your work.

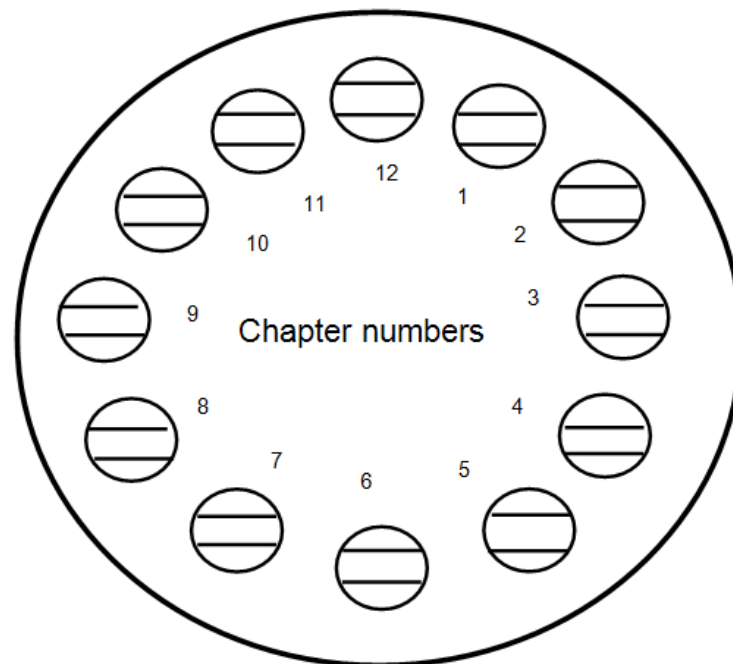
Remember, life can be tough and it is important to develop resilience to cope with the setbacks which will invariably occur along the way. By setting goals effectively, such setbacks become simply 'pebbles on the beach' rather than brick walls in the way!

Development questions

- If you knew that you could not fail, what would you try to achieve?
- What are you most passionate about in your life?
- Where would you like to see yourself in five years' time?
- Which three motivational writers and speakers listed in the Resources section will you focus on by acquiring either their books or their CDs?
- What is your definition for success as it relates to your life?
- Have you created your 'gratitude list', that list of things for which you are truly grateful?
- Have you noticed examples of the Laws of the Universe at work, that is, the Law of Attraction, the Law of Cause and Effect and the Law of Transmutation?
- Do you understand that another Law, the Law of Gestation, means that things do not tend to happen instantly but they take time, just as nature takes time for plants to grow and for animals to develop before they are born?
- Can you identify any negative beliefs which you feel are holding you back?
- Taking each of those beliefs individually, what would it be more useful for you to believe?

Now please rate your progress for Chapter One and complete the first mini circle 1 on the Progress Dashboard.

Your progress dashboard



I understand most of the ideas in this chapter and intend applying those which appeal to me



I fully understand the ideas in this chapter and having made some progress in applying them



I am fully committed to applying the ideas in this chapter and have made great progress and I am moving forwards with achieving my goals as I set new ones