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The Success Principles™

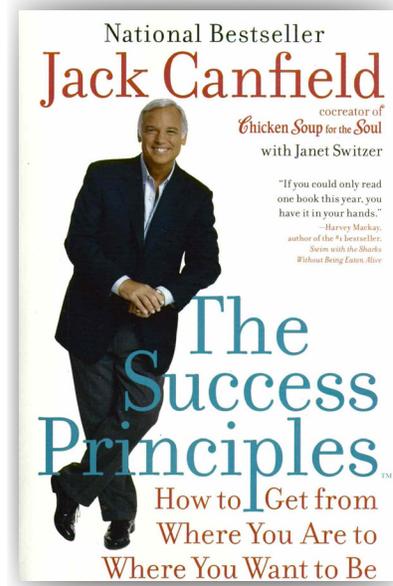
*How to Get from Where You Are
to Where You Want to Be*

Jack Canfield

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Published by arrangement with HarperBusiness,
an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

ISBN: 978-0-06-059489-3



INTRODUCTION

Everyone wants success. The good news is that achieving success is simpler than you think. The bad news is that simple does not necessarily mean easy. Success requires passion, enthusiasm, commitment, knowledge, and support from others. Luckily, all of these elements can be learned or acquired, given the right tools.

The Success Principles™ is one such tool. Written by *Chicken Soup for the Soul* co-author Jack Canfield, the book is a comprehensive guide to the timeless practices that have driven success for centuries. Whether your definition of success is a published novel, a million dollars, or simply a happy family life, **The Success Principles™** is sure to help you develop a plan to achieve it.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SUCCESS

The Success Principles™ is a collection of 63 principles that have helped drive the success of the world's most powerful, influential, and wealthy people. The principles described are not merely pieces of good advice; they are proven strategies that have stood the test of time. The first set of principles, *Fundamentals of Success*, explains how you can prepare yourself for success by changing your mindset and working through bad habits and limiting beliefs.

The very first step is also one of the most difficult: taking 100-percent responsibility for your life. To do this, you must acknowledge that you are the cause of everything that happens to you, even when it seems otherwise. Often, an undesired outcome is the result

of your *response* to a certain event, not the event itself. Therefore, if you do not like your outcomes, you must learn to change your responses. Successful people see every failure as a new opportunity for even greater success. To accept 100-percent responsibility for your life, you must also decide to stop blaming others and stop complaining.

Identifying your purpose in life is another early step on the road to success. Without a purpose, people tend to wander and accomplish very little. If you do not yet know your purpose in life, try to imagine a job you would love so much that you would do it for free. Your inner guidance system will help you in the identification process, as you will be able to “feel” when you are on the right track as well as when you are veering off it. Once you have identified your life’s purpose, write it down and read it aloud every day, ideally in the morning.

After you decide why you are here, you must decide what you want. This is the stage where you must define what success means to you personally. What do you want to accomplish? What possessions would you like to have? A key characteristic of successful people is that they do not settle for less than exactly what they want. Being clear about what you want may make you uncomfortable at first, but it will be a critical step in determining how to get it. One of the easiest ways to clarify your goals is to write them down. Try making lists of the 30 things you want to do, the 30 things you want to have, and the 30 things you want to be before you die.

Being successful requires that you make the choice to believe in yourself; this is an attitude that must be developed over time. You must eliminate the words “I can’t” from your vocabulary, and begin to replace all negative thoughts with positive self-affirmations. It is important to note that while continuous education is vital to success, you do not need a college degree to be successful. Many of the world’s most powerful people – such as Larry Ellison, Dick Cheney, and Bill Gates – dropped out of college; some even dropped out of high school. Successful people know that they can start from anywhere and ultimately become successful.

Truly successful people know how to set goals. Proper goals are based on two criteria: the *what* and the *when*. You must decide some measurable quantity to reach,

KEY CONCEPTS

To be successful, you must identify both where you are and where you want to be. Here are some tips to guide you on the journey to success:

- A proper goal requires a measurable quantity to reach (the “what”) and a specific time frame in which to reach it (the “when”).
- Visualization is a powerful practice that allows you to prepare for an experience and identify your true goals and ambitions.
- You can jump-start success by acting as if you already have it. Behaving and dressing like a successful person will boost your self-esteem and reveal opportunities for success.
- In the workplace, focus on your primary strength and delegate all nonessential tasks to others.
- Redefine your time by scheduling Focus Days, Buffer Days, and Free Days each week.
- Practice the *Rule of Five*: take five steps toward achieving your goal every single day.
- Show uncommon appreciation throughout your life, using a combination of auditory, visual, and kinesthetic rewards.



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as well as a specific time by which you plan to reach it. Writing down your goals is essential. Try creating a list of 101 things you would like to achieve in your life. You will most likely be surprised by how many you achieve over the next few years. Make sure you include a few “breakthrough goals”: goals that would completely change your world for the better, such as opening your own business, publishing a book, or winning a gold medal in the Olympics. The higher you aim, the better.

After you decide on your goals, begin working on one by breaking it into steps. There are several ways to do this, such as consulting others who have already achieved the goal, purchasing a book that describes the process, or assessing the problem yourself, beginning with the end and moving backward. Once you have decided on a process, create a daily to-do list describing the steps you will take each day to complete the goal in a reasonable period of time. It is especially helpful to plan your day the night before. Often, it is most effective to begin with the most important or most difficult step.

One of the best things about living in an information-rich society is that success leaves clues. If you want to do something, chances are someone has already done it. Finding a mentor or coach can be a great way to obtain feedback at each stage of the process, and to avoid the mistakes they made. If a long-term mentorship is possible, ask if you can shadow them for a day, or participate in a volunteer or internship program.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jack Canfield, America’s Success Coach, is the co-creator of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, which includes 40 *New York Times* best-sellers, and co-author of *You’ve GOT to Read This Book!* An internationally renowned corporate trainer, keynote speaker, and popular radio and TV talk show guest, he lives in Santa Barbara, California.

To be successful, you must learn to get out of your comfort zone on a regular basis. A great way to do this is to fill your subconscious with images and thoughts of your ideal life through a process called visualization. When you visualize yourself in a certain scenario, the brain functions as if it were really in that scenario, helping you prepare for it and grow accustomed to it. Visualize yourself at your ideal level of success. What kind of house will you live in? What will you look like? How will you act? When you visualize success, you begin to see opportunities all around you that can put you on the path to the life you want. Some experts have suggested that one hour of visualization is worth seven hours of physical effort!

Remember, the proper order of things is to start now and be who you want to be, then do the actions that go along with being that person, and soon you will find that you easily have everything you want in life – health, wealth, and fulfilling relationships.

One of the most powerful ways to jump-start success is to act as if you already have it. Even without wealth and power, you can begin living your ideal life by behaving the way successful people do and by associating yourself with other successful people. This prepares you for success and creates the self-confidence needed to pounce on opportunities and form powerful relationships.

Successful people know that while preparation and goal-setting are critical steps, nothing happens until they take action. Most people are afraid of taking action out of fear that they will fail. Successful people, on the other hand, see failure as an important part of the learning process. They feel the same fear as everyone else, yet they act anyway.

To be successful, you must be able to deal with fear effectively. Modern psychology teaches us that most fear is self-created; people often frighten themselves by imagining the worst possible scenario. When confronting fear, ask yourself what you are imagining and replace the thought with its positive opposite. For instance, if you are afraid of asking for a raise for fear of being turned down, imagine instead your boss happily fulfilling your request.

A downside to success is that it always has a price, which you must be willing to pay. Sometimes, success requires that you focus on one thing and put the rest of your life on hold. Often, it requires extra training, practice, discipline, or sacrifice. Almost always, the price of success includes a willingness to step outside of your comfort zone. To be successful, you must do whatever it takes to get the job done, without making excuses. When facing a particularly difficult challenge, it is important to remember that you will pass through an awkward phase. You must be willing to look foolish in the early stages of progress, much like when you learn how to ride a bike or play a musical instrument. Occasionally, you may discover that the price of success is higher than you are willing to pay – for example, if it would create a strain on your health or relationships. These types of decisions require that you know yourself well and understand how the road to success will affect you both physically and emotionally.

The one thing that seems to separate winners from losers more than anything else is that winners take action. They simply get up and do what has to be done. Once they have developed a plan, they start. They get into motion.

One of the easiest ways to obtain the things you want is to ask for them. Most people are afraid to ask out of fear of rejection, or fear of looking foolish, needy, or stupid. When you do not ask, however, you reject yourself before anyone else has a chance to. If you ask and are rejected, you are no worse off than when you started. You can learn to ask for things properly by following these guidelines:

- Be clear and specific about what you want.
- Ask as if you expect to get it.
- Assume you are allowed to get it.
- Ask someone who can give it to you.
- Ask repeatedly, if necessary.

To overcome your fear of asking, try making a list of things you would like to ask for, in the following seven categories: financial, career, recreation, health, relationships, personal projects, and your community. For each item, list the potential benefits of asking. Then, list the potential benefits of *not* asking.

The fear of rejection is an issue that permeates all aspects of personal and work life. Successful people accept rejection as part of the process; they do not take it personally, and they are not discouraged by it. Many of the world's most successful ideas were realized only after a long string of rejections; if their creators had given up after a few rejections, they would have never happened!

As soon as you take action, you will begin to receive feedback, both verbal and nonverbal. When you receive feedback, you have two choices: ignore it or respond to it. Successful people see feedback as an invaluable tool, allowing them to improve their product and gain insight about the people that might be using it. Feedback can be positive or negative, and both types are equally useful. Most people will not give feedback voluntarily; it is up to you to ask for it. To obtain helpful feedback in a variety of situations, try asking this

simple question: "On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate the quality of our relationship (service/product) over the last week (month/quarter)?" If the answer is anything less than a ten, ask the person, "What would it take to make it a ten?" Simply knowing a person is

unhappy is not enough; you must learn exactly what it will take to satisfy them completely. Not all feedback is accurate (you must carefully consider the source), but you can be sure that if several people tell you the same thing, there is probably some degree of truth in it. Look for patterns and trends in your feedback.

A great way to get the ball rolling on any project is to practice the Rule of Five: Commit to doing five things a day that will move you closer to your goal. One consultant compares the Rule of Five to cutting down a tree: "If you would go every day to a very large tree and take five swings at it with a very sharp ax, eventually, no matter how large the tree, it would have to come down." This is an important lesson on the journey to success.

Successful people tend to exceed expectations and give more than they promise. If you make this a habit, you will be more likely to receive promotions, raises, bonuses, and other extra benefits. When you go the extra mile, you will be the first to be hired and the last to be fired. You will make your company more

money, and you will feel more satisfied at the end of the day. If you sell something, try including extra services or perks, such as free car washes with a new car, or a bottle of champagne with a new house. If you are an office employee, always be the first to volunteer for extra responsibilities without demanding extra pay.

TRANSFORM YOURSELF FOR SUCCESS

The second set of principles, *Transform Yourself for Success*, includes several ways to change your behaviors and sustain success. One of the first changes you must make is to begin surrounding yourself with other successful people. You must also begin to eliminate the negative relationships having a toxic effect on your life. Try making a list of everyone you interact with on a regular basis; put a plus sign next to the people who have a positive effect on you, and put a minus sign next to those you consider negative. By doing this, you may begin to see patterns – for instance, you might find that most of the negativity is focused in your workplace, among your friends, or even among your family.

Another important practice that should be used on a daily basis is to acknowledge your successes throughout the day, as well as the major successes in your past. A good exercise is to divide your life into three equal time periods (for example, if you are 60, divide your life into 20-year periods) and list your three most important achievements in each of these periods. Additionally, you should log your successes by writing down five things you achieved during each day, ideally right before you go to bed. This will give you the self-esteem you need to create success throughout the next day.

To be successful, you must learn to embrace change. There are two types of change: *cyclical change* and *structural change*. Most people accept cyclical change, such as the up-and-down nature of the stock market, or the predictable changes in weather that come with each new season. Structural change, however, is more difficult to predict, and more difficult to deal with. Structural change includes innovations that alter how we work and live; after a structural change, there is often no going back. Embracing change means becoming aware of the trends that lead to structural change and preparing for them.

Success also requires that you transform the way you talk to yourself throughout the day. Studies have shown that people talk to themselves upwards of 50,000 times a day, making intrapersonal communication a critical driver of both good and bad behaviors. Most harmful self-talk falls under one of the following categories:

- **Catastrophic predicting** – Predicting the worst possible scenario and acting as if it were a certainty.
- **Mind-reading** – Believing you know what others are thinking about you, even though the person has not told you.
- **Guilt-tripping** – Thinking of words such as “should,” “must,” or “ought to,” creating a subconscious resistance to accomplishing the task.
- **Labeling** – Attaching negative labels or stereotypes to yourself or to someone else.

Change is inevitable. At this very moment, for instance, your body and cells are changing. And though you can resist that change and potentially be swept away by it, you can also choose to cooperate with it, adapt to it, and benefit from it.

Another way to transform yourself for success over time is to develop four new successful habits a year. Scientists have suggested that over 90 percent of our behavior is habitual, making good habits a powerful tool for achieving success. If you work on four new habits a year (only one per quarter), in only five years you will have 20 new behaviors that will boost success, without you even thinking about it.

Successful people gain an advantage over others by increasing their knowledge. There are several easy ways to continue learning while on a busy schedule. First, replace an hour of TV time with an hour of reading time every day. This creates 365 extra hours per year – over nine additional 40-hour work weeks! If you read just one book a week, you will read 520 books in 10 years – enough to put you into the top 1 percent of experts in your field. Biographies about successful people are often great ways to learn behaviors that will create success in your own life.

In order to sustain success, you must learn to work with both passion and enthusiasm. To do this, you must eliminate distractions so you can spend your time doing the things you love to do. If your passion begins to wane, try to reconnect with your original purpose and motivation by asking yourself about the underlying reasons for your behavior. When you rediscover *why* you want to do something, it will be much easier to discover *how*. If you are not skilled enough to work in a field you are passionate about, educate yourself until you are. When you express your passion through your work, others become attracted to you and help you achieve your dreams and goals.

In life the spoils of victory go to those who make a 100% commitment to the outcome; to those who have a 'no matter what it takes' attitude. They give it their all; they put everything they have into getting their desired result.

BUILD YOUR SUCCESS TEAM

The third set of principles, *Build Your Success Team*, includes advice on how to create and manage a small group of professionals who will help you achieve your goals. The first step in building an effective team is to focus on your primary strength, or your *core genius*. The best way to sustain this focus is to delegate all nonessential tasks to others. Many leaders are hesitant to delegate relentlessly, worrying that employees will think they are lazy or incompetent. In reality, the most successful leaders are those who place work in the hands of those who will complete it passionately and enthusiastically, no matter how small the job.

Another preparatory step in building your success team is to redefine your time; the Entrepreneurial Time System is an effective way of doing this. This system places each day into one of three categories: Focus Days, Buffer Days, and Free Days. During a Focus Day, you spend 80 percent of your time operating in your core genius, doing the things that yield the highest return on the time you invest. Buffer Days are days spent preparing for a Focus Day. Buffer Days may include learning a new skill, locating resources, training your support team, or delegating tasks to others. The purpose of Buffer Days is to make sure that Focus Days are as productive as possible. Free Days are days in which you are not available to your staff or clients, except in

the case of a real emergency. Free Days extend from midnight to midnight, and allow you to rest and return to work with renewed enthusiasm and vigor. Notably, more than one-fourth of all Americans do not use *any* of their vacation time; this is often the cause of poor productivity due to high stress at work.

A good way to start building your team is to find a mentor. Begin by determining what you want out of a mentor, and then select a few possible candidates. Do your homework by researching each candidate and preparing a list of topics you would like to cover in your introductory conversation. When you believe you have found a suitable mentor, ask them if they would like to advise you and help you achieve your goals. Finally, be prepared to act on your mentor's advice, as he or she will not appreciate having their time wasted.

With the help of your mentor, create your success team by selecting five or six highly successful professionals from a variety of backgrounds and areas of expertise. Ideally, this team should meet every week or every other week, for one to two hours. During this meeting, each member discusses their recent roadblocks or successes, and the other members weigh in with advice or considerations. This type of meeting will allow you to gain perspective on complex situations and also discuss ideas from outside your industry that could be adapted to solve your problems.

CREATE SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS

The fourth set of principles, *Create Successful Relationships*, describes several ways to build and sustain the personal relationships needed to achieve your goals. The first step in building such relationships is *listening* rather than just *hearing*. While hearing is simply receiving communication, listening is the art of paying thoughtful attention with the goal of understanding the complete message. The complete message involves more than the words being spoken; it also includes body language, eye contact, and subtle inflections of the voice.

Many people spend a great deal of time trying to be interesting rather than being interested in the lives of others. Being truly interested in others is the best way to establish a rapport with them and win them

over. This is because active listening allows you to determine what makes people happy or unhappy – information you can store and act upon when the opportunity arises.

Effective relationships require that you tell the truth often, and quickly. Telling the truth can sometimes make you uncomfortable, as it may hurt someone's feeling or provoke their anger. However, without the truth, people are unable to deal with problems realistically. Acknowledge that there is never a "perfect time" to tell the truth; simply do it as soon as possible, face the consequences, and move on.

Successful people are the masters of their words – that is, they speak deliberately and use words that will build self-esteem and confidence. They also use words of inclusion rather than of separation, acceptance rather than rejection, and tolerance rather than prejudice. You must eliminate lying from all aspects of your life, as it is based on low self-esteem. When you lie, you do so because you feel your abilities are not enough to get what you want. You must also work hard to eliminate gossip, as it says a great deal about you and gives off an air of judgment and negativity.

Many people create conflict by assuming they know what others are thinking or feeling; you can avoid these types of problems simply by asking. Often, people are afraid to ask others how they feel because they are afraid of hearing bad news. Again, however, the truth is necessary to face problems in the context of reality. When in doubt, just say, "You don't look happy. What's going on?" Many times, you will find that their emotions are not directed toward you at all.

Highly successful people practice appreciation at an extraordinary level. A recent study showed that 88 percent of people leaving major companies felt they were not being acknowledged for their work. Another study showed that appreciation is employees' number-one motivator at work; interestingly, appreciation ranks number eight on the list of things supervisors believe motivate employees. This mismatch illustrates the desperate need to increase appreciation at work.

There are three types of appreciation that can be used by leaders in the workplace: auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. Each employee is especially motivated by one of the three. Auditory-type employees need to be appreciated through face-to-face conversation and words of encouragement. Visual-type employees are more motivated by letters, cards, flowers, plaques, or certificates. Kinesthetic types are motivated by touch or physical experiences, such as a pat on the back, a hug, or taking them out to dinner or to a show. When in doubt, use a combination of all three types, and observe which type the employee responds to most.

When you realize how important your integrity and self-esteem really are, you will stop making casual agreements just to get someone off your back. You won't sell your self-esteem for a little bit of momentary approval.

To sustain relationships, you must also keep your agreements. In the past, giving one's word was considered a sacred bond; today, employees and supervisors remain suspicious even after they create a written agreement. You must commit to keeping all your promises, without exception. For many leaders, this often means making fewer promises. Some tips for making and keeping agreements are:

- *Make only agreements that you intend to keep* – Do not make agreements just because you are looking for approval; trust your intuition.
- *Write down all the agreements you make* – This can help you keep track of agreements and remind you to honor them in a timely manner.
- *Communicate broken agreements at the first appropriate time* – This demonstrates respect for the other person's time and needs, and allows them time to make other arrangements.
- *Say "no" more often* – Give yourself time to think over an agreement. If it is unrealistic, respect the other person by declining.

SUCCESS AND MONEY

The fifth set of principles, *Success and Money*, includes advice on how to make and keep the finances you need to achieve your goals. First, you must identify your limiting beliefs about money. Most people are

familiar with phrases such as “money is the root of all evil,” and “money doesn’t grow on trees”; while these phrases are not meant to be taken seriously, they do say something about the public’s perception of money. You must believe you can make money doing what you love, and you must also move past the negative connotations of wealth.

If you want to be wealthy, you must first determine what wealth means to you. Figure out your own net worth (this can be done with the help of an advisor, or with a free online calculator) and then determine how much money you will need to live the life you want. For many people, this means determining how much retirement will cost. Use these numbers to create and write down goals for yourself, such as, “I will have a net worth of X by the year Y.”

A crucial practice at any level of wealth is to be aware of how much you are spending. Excessive spending keeps you in debt and destroys your financial goals. To get an idea of your excessive spending habits, try this exercise. Go through your house, room by room, closet by closet, and collect all of the belongings you have not used in the past year. Then add up the price you paid for each and every item. You may be surprised to find expensive items that have not even been opened yet, and you will probably find that the cost of these items combined is greater than your total credit card debt.

If you want to spend more money and live a more extravagant lifestyle, you must either save more money or make more. The single best way to make more money is to become an entrepreneur. Start your own business by identifying a need and filling it. Today’s technology makes this easier than ever, as Internet businesses are a great way to start serving customers right away and experimenting with new products and/or services.

One final way to make the most of your money is to share it. By supporting and investing in your local community and those in need, you will build a strong reputation and inspire others to do the same. When you give freely, you send out positive energy that will ultimately come back to reward you, financially and otherwise.



FEATURES OF THE BOOK

Reading Time: 10-12 hours, 473 pages

The Success Principles™ is a collection of 63 simple practices that can help anyone achieve any goal. The book is divided into six parts, each of which deals with a specific set of behaviors that make up a successful individual. The book is appropriate for anyone who desires success in any aspect of their lives.

Each chapter offers several practical exercises that can help boost confidence, gain perspective, or take action. Each principle is illustrated by inspirational stories, which range from wealthy CEOs to average people who have fulfilled childhood dreams. The author also includes anecdotes from his own highly successful career as an author of more than 40 *New York Times* bestsellers.

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