



Success Where it Really Counts

Most people who have achieved success as the world defines it (careers, homes, vacation properties, cars, travel, etc.) realize that there is more to life. Beyond success is the term *significance*, or believing that your life has made a difference.

A couple of years ago, I conducted a study group of high-end producers that wanted to earn more money while keeping their lives in balance. As we went around the room discussing the objectives of the study group, most producers talked about spending more time with their family, the importance of exercise — keeping their body healthy, time for volunteer work, and satisfying their spiritual needs. There was one lone exception that said, "You guys are into all this 'feel good' stuff, but not me. I'm in it for the money. I'm in it to see how much money I can make and how many nice things I can give myself and my family." Ironically just two years later guess which member of the study group appeared to have a drinking problem and had significant financial problems? It is possible that this person clearly failed to understand the cost of his definition of success.

Many top producers and top executives are driven to succeed at all costs. While we say our families, health, friends and faith are important, where we spend our time tells a different story. Many high level executives are undone in their quests for success. They feel that the money will anesthetize their pain. *If I could just get to X level of income or position, I'll be satisfied.* Survey after survey of these high-level achievers show a high degree of burnout, low job satisfaction and a growing problem with depression in our most "successful" people in business.

The pursuit of success is pure folly. As the wisest man in the world, King Solomon, noted, "I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind."

So many believe that success requires that someone else must lose. The old adage, "Business is war" is alive and well today. Another myth of success is that you must be the best when achieving your goals in business to be successful. The most dangerous definition of success is the "I'll show them" person. This person has a chip on their shoulder, because they were slighted at some key point in their life. Many times the driven achiever will believe they can impress those who hurt them earlier in life by their accomplishments. These shallow goals will not satisfy the deep interpersonal needs of all human beings.

Real success is based on a balanced life that is in harmony with family, health, business and our deep spiritual needs. Neglecting any of these areas leads to a sense of loss and leads to future problems — not *success*. You simply can't categorize your life as successful if you have money but little else. The pleasure of the achievement is fleeting, as the pain of the sacrifice is not quenched for long.

Real success is a natural by-product of:

- 1. A sense of peace or contentment about your life.** Many people seek happiness as a goal, but if you pursue happiness, you won't find it. Happiness is a by-product of pursuing service to mankind, pure relationships, family and a growing faith.

2. **A sense of achievement.** Content people always reflect on a life of achievement. Success at work is a component here, but other areas of achievement are also vital.
3. **Believing your life has stood for something — a sense of significance.** Content people look back on their life and believe that they have made a positive impact in the world and have helped others around them.
4. **Investing in something that will last beyond the grave.** A study of people age 95, when reflecting back on their lives, said they wished that they had done more that went beyond the grave. As we age our generosity will touch others in a way that touches our lives. Content people are almost always generous people with their time, talents and money.

There is more to life. You can make a difference. You will be better able to make a lasting difference by achieving *real* success. Focus on the things that *really* matter, and find success where it *really* counts.

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