Summary of
The Success Principles

– By Jack Canfield

Summarized by: Nils Salzgeber

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The Success Principles
– By Jack Canfield

How to get from where you are to where you want to go.

This is not a book of good ideas. This is a book of timeless principles used by successful men and women throughout history. I have studied these success principles for over 30 years and have applied them to my own life. The phenomenal level of success that I now enjoy is the result of applying these principles day in and day out since I began to learn them in 1968.

~ Jack Canfield, The Success Principles

The Success Principles was written by Jack Canfield and looks a bit like the “SUCCESS BIBLE”. The book is absolutely MASSIVE as Jack Canfield covers a total of 64 Success Principles in over 400 pages.

The premise of the book is simple:

HOW TO GET FROM WHERE YOU ARE TO WHERE YOU WANT TO BE.

The way we can get to where we want to be is through the 64 Success Principles that are outlined in this book.

In this summary, we won’t look at all of the 64 principles. (Obviously not, right?) Instead we will focus on 8 of my favorite ideas. These are the ideas that have the biggest impact on my life, and can surely have a big impact in your life as well.

Let’s jump right in!
Key Idea #1

Become an Inverse Paranoid

I’ve always been the opposite of a paranoid. I operate as if everyone is part of a plot to enhance my well-being. – Stan Dale

My earliest mentor was once described as an inverse paranoid. Instead of believing the world was plotting to do him harm, he chose to believe the world was plotting to do him good. Instead of seeing every difficult or challenging event as a negative, he saw it for what it could be – something that was meant to enrich him, empower him, or advance his causes.

Many of us are afraid of the world. We somehow think that other people don’t like us, that they judge us, that they talk badly about us, or that they generally just don’t find us very likeable.

Why not do the opposite?

Instead of thinking that other people don’t like us, why not simply expect that they DO like us? Instead of thinking that others want to do us harm, why not think that everybody else wants to help us? Why not think that everybody is part of our team? Why not think that everybody loves us? Why not think that everybody would love to talk to us? Why not_ASSUME THE POSITIVE?

Wouldn’t we be much happier if we assumed such positive things? Of course we would, right?

Most of our assumptions are just fantasies anyway. Most of the time they have very little to do with actual reality.

One thing many of us do is to assume that other people somehow judge us. We wonder, “What will that person think of me if I do this? What will my family think? What will my co-workers think?” I mean… give me a freaking break!

_NOBODY_ is thinking about us… in fact, they couldn’t care less about us. Why? Because they are just like you and me! They are afraid that we judge them and that we will think badly about them. They have their own problems, struggles, and their own obsessive thoughts about what everybody else thinks about them.
Which face do you look at first on a photograph?

EXACTLY:

Yours! Then you may quickly look at the other faces, but mostly you will be looking at yourself.

And you know what?

Everybody else does the EXACT same thing. They don’t care how you look in that picture. They care about themselves, how they look, how they will be judged, and what others think about them.

My point is:

There is no need for us to be so self-conscious. Nobody will judge us because nobody is thinking about us anyway. They are busy with their lives, their problems, and their own struggles.

So instead of assuming negative things that aren’t even remotely true anyway, why not just assume positive things? Why not be an INVERSE PARANOID? Why not assume that others like us? Why not assume that others think we’re funny? Why not assume that they have our best interests in mind? Why not believe that they will like our ideas? Why not assume that everything will turn out great? Everything is amazing and everybody on this world is on our team and everybody is our friend.

I know this is probably easier said than done, but just try it.

Next time you catch yourself imagining that your speech will be terrible, everybody will make fun of you, and you will get embarrassed in front of the whole crowd, why not do the opposite? Assume that your speech will turn out great, you will get a lot of applause and compliments, everybody learned a lot, and just everything will turn out perfectly.

Next time you have a date, speech, test, party, or whatever, just assume that everything will work out perfectly. Become an INVERSE paranoid!
Key Idea #2

Look for the Opportunity in Everything

The supersuccessful approach every experience as an opportunity. They enter every conversation with the idea that something good will come from it. And they know that what they seek and expect, they will find.

Now, when anything “bad” happens, I remember that everything that ever happens to me has within it the seed of something better. I look for the upside rather than the downside. I ask myself, “Where’s greater benefit in this event?”

Every experience in our lives can either be seen as a complete disaster (something TERRIBLE) or an amazing opportunity (something GREAT).

The catch is this:

We never really know which one it will be. A situation that first might seem like a terrible disaster might turn out to totally transform your life for the better.

Let’s say you miss the train home and now have to wait for another hour. You start complaining, you get angry, frustrated and your mood is just terrible. It’s probably the fcking train operator’s fault, right? That douche should have waited just a little bit longer. Just 1 minute longer. Now you will be home late. What a disaster! Boo hoo hoo… Life fcking SUCKS!

Well… who are you to know? Who are you to foresee whether missing that train was so bad or not? What if that train now crashes and everybody in it dies? Still such a disaster? Still unhappy? Still complaining?

In our understanding of the world missing a train, bus, cab, or whatever sucks. It’s a bad situation. Or so it seems… In the aforementioned example it turned out to not be that bad after all. I mean that guy got to live instead of die… that’s pretty FANTASTIC in my books.

The point is this:

We judge all kinds of situations and label them (in most cases) as negative. Ugh, we’re so unlucky. Life’s so unfair. Why did this happen to me? Boo-hoo.
Fact is: We don’t know how it will turn out in the end. We don’t know if a situation will ultimately help or harm us. How could we ever know this? We can’t foresee the future. We can’t foresee the impacts of different events on our future. Every situation could turn out to be a complete disaster or a life changing event. We don’t know. We will never know.

So why not approach EVERY situation with an opportunity-mindset?

Why not assume that every situation will turn out to help us in some way? Why not see the possible OPPORTUNITY in every circumstance? Why not stop labeling things as good or bad and instead see and accept them as what they are? Even so-called “bad” events can turn out positive in the end, so why not try to see the opportunity in it?

This approach helps us complain less and be more satisfied with whatever is happening in our lives.
Key Idea #3

Unleash the Power of Goal-Setting

You have to decide what you want to do, be, and have. What do you want to accomplish? What do you want to experience? And what possessions do you want to acquire? In the journey from where you are to where you want to be, you have to decide where you want to be. In other words, what does success look like to you?

One of the main reasons why most people don’t get what they want is they haven’t decided what they want. They haven’t defined their desires in clear and compelling details.

The theme of this book is how to get from where you are to where you want to be. To accomplish this, you have to know two things - where you are and where you want to be.

Do you know what you want?

I mean, do you really know? Seriously.

What do you want to be known for when you die? What do you want to have accomplished by then? What do you want to accomplish in the next five years? What needs to happen so that you’ll be happy five years from now? What kind of car do you want to drive? What house do you want to live in? Where do you want to live? Do you want to have a family? Do you want to start your own business? Do you want to travel the world? Which places do you want to visit? What personality traits would you like to have? Do you want to be more confident? Do you want to be a good communicator? Do you want to be ripped?

The indispensable first step to getting the things you want out of life is this:

DETERMINE WHAT YOU WANT. – Ben Stein

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

You don’t know, right? Most of us have NO FCKING CLUE…

You might say:
“Well, I have a general sense of direction. I know approximately what I want to do in my life. I don’t need to know this stuff specifically.”

And you’re right. You don’t need to know every little thing you want. However, you should probably have some definite goals that you would like to accomplish in your life. If you’re not sure if that’s really necessary or even beneficial, let’s quickly look at why goal-setting can be so powerful…

The magic of goal-setting

Experts on the science of success know the brain is a goal-seeking organism. Whatever goal you give to your subconscious mind, it will work night and day to achieve it.

Jack Canfield compares the process of getting from where we are to where we want to go to a GPS technology.

To bring you to your desired destination, the system only needs to know two things:

- Where you are
- Where you want to go

It finds out where you are by itself.

All you need to do is set a goal. In other words, you need to type in your destination. Your inner GPS system will then plot the perfect course for you and you’ll just have to follow the instructions.

All you have to do is decide where you want to go by clarifying your vision, lock in the destination through goal-setting, … and start moving in the right direction. Your inner GPS will keep unfolding your route as you continue to move forward. In other words, once you clarify and stay focused on your vision (and I’ll be teaching lots of ways to do that), the exact steps will keep appearing along the way. Once you are clear about what you want and keep your mind constantly focused on it, the how will keep showing up – sometimes just when you need it and not a moment earlier.

The point is this:
Your inner GPS will only guide you to your destination (your desired outcome) if it knows where it should guide you. If you don’t give it a destination, then it can’t help you get there.

If you’re not convinced yet, here’s what some other brilliant success coaches have to say about goals and goal-setting:

*A goal properly set is halfway reached.* – Zig Ziglar

*This one step – choosing a goal and sticking to it – changes everything.*
– Scott Reed

*People with goals succeed because they know where they’re going.*
– Earl Nightingale

*Success is goals and all else is commentary.* – Brian Tracy

*If you don’t design your own life plan, chances are you’ll fall into someone else’s plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much.* – Jim Rohn

You get it:

Goals will help you achieve MORE.

Let’s say you’ve got your goals. What are some techniques to help you achieve these goals? Jack Canfield recommends the following two…

(IMPORTANTE NOTE*: If you haven’t got any goals or are not sure how to set goals, check out the free bonus guide on Goal-Setting that you got with your purchase.)

**Create a goals book**

Another powerful way to speed up the achievement of your goals is to create a Goals Book. Buy a three-ring binder, a scrapbook or a journal. Then create a separate page for each of your goals. Write the goal at the top of the page and then illustrate it with pictures, words, and phrases that cut out of magazines, catalogues, and travel brochures that depict your goal as already achieved. As new goals and desires emerge, simply add them to your list and your Goals Book. Review the pages of your Goals Book every day.

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Let's be real:

Our society is pretty fcked up. One of the most annoying things is probably that we live in a world of MASSIVE distraction. There’s the internet, TV, text messages, cell phones, emails, Wi-Fi, access to the internet everywhere, iPods, and all kinds of other distractions lurking everywhere….

It’s fcking HARD to stay focused.

And so, it’s also hard to stay FOCUSED ON OUR GOALS. It’s too easy to get distracted and all of a sudden realize that we have completely forgotten about all the goals we want to achieve.

One good remedy for this is to have a Goals Book like Jack Canfield describes it above. We can look at this book every morning and evening and this way we can keep our minds focused on our goals. PLUS it serves as a great motivation BOOSTER, if you can look at all the amazing things that you still want to achieve in life.

The fact that it’s in book form is another advantage. Instead of watching some more TV, we can just take out the book and look at our goals. Then we see all of those exciting things we want to have and achieve, and all of a sudden we’re motivated and focused again.

A Goal Book is a simple, yet effective way to KEEP our goals constantly on our minds.

**Reread your goals three times a day**

Once you’ve written down all your goals, both large and small, the next step on your journey to success is to activate the creative powers of your subconscious mind by reviewing your list two or three times every day. Take time to read your list of goals. Read the list (out loud with passion and enthusiasm if you are in an appropriate place) one goal at a time. Close your eyes and picture each goal as if it were already accomplished. Take a few more seconds to feel what you would feel if you had already accomplished each goal.

Reviewing our goals several times per day serves several purposes.
First, we constantly remind ourselves of what we want. In a time and age of such distraction, this is important and makes sure that we don't forget about our AWESOME future.

Second, it creates motivation because we see how great our future could be. It reminds us of all the amazing stuff that we want to achieve. HUGE. Motivation. BOOSTER.

Third, as Jack Canfield says, this activates the creative powers of our subconscious mind. This is something that we'll talk about in Key Idea #5.

Fourth, it helps us control our thoughts. This is something Napoleon Hill talks about in his bestselling book *Think And Grow Rich*. He says that constantly reminding ourselves of what we want keeps our mind busy and makes sure that our mind is occupied with POSITIVE thoughts and emotions. In the end, it's our thoughts that create our reality, so constantly thinking about our goals is a GREAT thing.

All in all, reviewing our goals regularly is CRUCIAL if we want to stand a chance of actually achieving them.
Key Idea #4

Is Worrying About Making a Living Stopping You?

What often stops people from expressing their true desire is they don’t think they can make a living doing what they love to do.

Make a list of 20 things you love to do, and then think of ways you can make a living doing some of those things.

This is a GREAT exercise.

Most of us never think about it. It never comes to mind that we can earn a living doing what we love to do.

Most of us just get a job, because we need to earn a living. Later in life we realize that we don’t really like what we do, but because we need the money, we never find a way to earn a living doing what we love to do.

When I did this exercise one of the things that I wrote down was soccer. And I found there are actually quite a lot of ways to make money in the football “niche”. I could become a professional player (meh, maybe that ship has sailed), a coach of a team, a journalist or photographer, I could become part of the management or the office of a football team, or I could become a scout.

The idea I liked most was to organize football tournaments. Depending on the size and frequency of such tournaments, I could probably earn quite some cash. It’s something that I want to keep in mind and probably try in the future.

Another thing that I love doing is to read great books about nutrition, self-improvement, mind control, high achievement etc. I LOVE to read about ways to improve myself, make myself better and ultimately live a great life.

And this is exactly why I founded NJlifehacks.com together with Jonas: So that we can earn a living doing something we enjoy doing.

I strongly suggest you try out this exercise for yourself:
Write down 10-20 things that you love to do and then let your mind come up with ideas to make a living doing some of the things. You will find that there are lots of ways to make good money doing things you love to do.
Key Idea #5

See What You Want, Get What You Want

Set aside time each and every day to visualize every one of your goals as already complete. This is one of the most vital things you can do to make your dreams come true.

Visualization simply makes the brain achieve more. And though none of us were ever taught this in school, sports psychologists and peak performance experts have been popularizing the power of visualization since the 1980s. Almost all Olympic and professional athletes now employ the power of visualization.

Visualization is the act of seeing and feeling yourself as if you had already achieved your desired outcomes.

It’s about creating VIVID and COMPELLING images in your mind about how you would like your future to unfold.

Research tells us that for our brain there is no difference between merely visualizing something and actually doing it. The brain uses the IDENTICAL processes during a vivid visualization as during the actual task of doing something.

Whether you just visualize something or actually do, doesn’t make a difference for your mind. It doesn’t know the difference.

Remarkable, right?

So, if we see ourselves winning a chess game in our mind, our brain actually thinks that’s real and thinks that we’re really winning an actual game.

Here’s a great example to illustrate this point from Maxwell Maltz’ book *Psycho-Cybernetics*:

> Research Quarterly reports an experiment on the effects of mental practice on improving skill in sinking basketball free throws. One group of students actually practiced throwing the ball every day for 20 days, and were scored on the first and last days.
A second group was scored on the first and last days, and engaged in no sort of practice in between.

A third group was scored on the first day, then spent 20 minutes a day, imagining that they were throwing the ball at the goal. When they missed they would imagine that they corrected their aim accordingly.

The first group, which actually practiced 20 minutes every day, improved in scoring 24 per cent.

The second group, which had no sort of practice, showed no improvement.
The third group, which practiced in their imagination, improved in scoring 23 per cent!

– Maxwell Maltz, Psycho-Cybernetics

CRAZY, right?!

No wonder that all the great athletes use this POWERFUL strategy.

Golfers see themselves first hitting the ball perfectly, and landing on the green in their minds, before they make the real life shot. Ski cracks always go through the race in their minds minutes before the race. The best basketball, football, and baseball players always see themselves winning their games a long time before the game has even started.

Funny enough, almost every success book out there writes about the powers of visualization, yet they all seem to have different explanations as to how exactly it works.

Here is Jack Canfield’s explanation…

When you visualize your goals as already complete each and every day, it creates a conflict in your subconscious mind between what you are visualizing and what you currently have. Your subconscious mind tries to resolve that conflict by turning your current reality into the new, more exciting vision.

This conflict, when intensified over time through constant visualization, actually causes three things to happen:
1. It programs your brain’s RAS to start letting into your awareness anything that will help you achieve your goals.

The RAS is the reticular activating system. Here’s how it works:

At any time, there are about 8 million bits of information streaming into our brains.

This is so much information that we can never “use” or perceive it all. We can’t possibly process all of it, so the RAS filters out most. It lets into our awareness ONLY information we need to stay alive AND information that is relevant to us, and can help us achieve our goals.

In fact, the RAS simply lets in information that is relevant and important to us.

Things we regularly think about are important and relevant to us. So, if we constantly visualize our goals, the RAS will let in information that helps us achieve these goals.

When you give your brain specific, colorful, and vividly compelling pictures to manifest – it will seek out and capture all the information necessary to bring the picture into reality for you. If you give your mind a $10,000 problem, it will come up with a $10,000 solution. If you give your mind a $1 million problem, it will come up with a $1 million solution.

We can serve our mind any pictures we want.

If we give it pictures of a nice car, a beautiful home, a Malibu beach resort, a castle, a loving spouse, or a great job, it will go to work on achieving those for us.

This is mad cool stuff.

We just need to make sure that we serve it the right pictures. Because if we are giving it fearful, negative, or anxious pictures, then it will go to work as well, trying to achieve those.

It’s our job to make sure that we keep our mind positive and filled with positive, exciting thoughts and pictures about our future. That’s why we want to constantly visualize and review our goals (as discussed in chapter 3 about goal-setting)

(Now to the 2nd thing that happens after visualizing our goals:)
2. It activates your subconscious mind to create solutions for getting the goals you want. You'll start waking up in the morning with new ideas. You'll find yourself having ideas in the shower, while you are taking long walks, and while you are driving to work.

Honestly. I’m not really sure what the difference between this point and the first one is. I think it’s pretty much the same principle.

As I said, there are many explanations anyway, so we’ll just skip this part.

3. It creates new levels of motivation. You'll start to notice you are unexpectedly doing things that take you to your goal. All of a sudden, you are raising your hand in class, volunteering to take new assignments at work, speaking out at staff meetings, asking more directly for what you want, saving money for the things that you want, paying down a credit card debt, or taking more risks in your personal life.

OK. So apparently visualizing your goals also creates new levels of motivation. I guess this will happen automatically once our subconscious mind has been activated (by visualizing our goals as already complete).

Again, whether these explanations are super accurate or not, I don’t know.

I repeat:

The theory or science behind exactly how visualization works isn't so important…

I’m not sure how far science has come to accurately describe what happens in our brains during or after visualizing certain outcomes.

Let’s rather look at how to actually do this stuff.

Here’s Jack Canfield explaining it…

**How to visualize**

If one of your objectives is to own a nice house on the lake, then close your eyes and see yourself walking through the exact house you would like to own. Fill in all of the details. What does the exterior look like? How is it landscaped? What kind of view does it have? What do the living room, the kitchen, master bedroom, dining room,
family room, and den look like? How is it furnished? Go from room to room and fill in all of the details.

Visualization is pretty easy, and we actually do it all the time.

When I say to you, “DON’T think about a pink elephant!!” then your mind will instantly visualize/imagine a pink elephant.

Or when I tell you to bring one of your best friends to mind. Your mind instantly serves you an image of your best friend, right?

There’s no magic to it. There’s nothing to overcomplicate. What’s important is that we DO IT. Just like the best athletes in the world.

Jack Canfield advises us to do it at least twice a day. Once right after getting up and once before going to bed. We just take our list of goals and visualize one after the other as already complete.

Again, what’s important is that we DO IT.

The things that are easy to do are the things that are easy not to do.
– Robin Sharma

Come on. It’s easy to spend 10 minutes doing this in the morning and 10 minutes at night, right?

Unfortunately, it’s also easy NOT to do. And in this time of dramatic distraction it’s quite hard to stay focused. Most of us just forget to do it, become lazy, don’t feel like doing it, and then instead watch TV for another 10 minutes or check Facebook for the 100th time a day.

Let’s really try to apply this stuff. Morning and evening. Visualize our perfect future for a few minutes. Just like the Roger Federers, Kobe Bryants, Cristiano Ronaldos, Body Millers etc….
Key Idea #6

Plan Your Day The Night Before

One of the most powerful tools high achievers use for chunking things down, gaining control over their life, and increasing their productivity is to plan their next day the night before. There are two major reasons why this is such a powerful strategy for success:

1. If you plan your day the night before – making a to-do list and spending a few minutes visualizing exactly how you want the day to go – your subconscious mind will work on these tasks all night long. It will think of creative ways to solve any problem, overcome any obstacle, and achieve your desired outcomes.

2. By creating your to-do list the night before, you can start your day running. You know exactly what you’re going to do and in what order, and you’ve already pulled together any materials you need.

Planning your day the night before. I couldn’t agree more. This is a MASSIVE productivity BOOSTER.

I think it has a lot to do with managing distractions and prioritizing.

If we plan the day the night before, we can schedule in all of our important to-dos. We can put in time for high life-time activities like reading, meditation, reviewing our goals, etc… we can schedule time for important business tasks, and ultimately we can make sure that all of the important things get done.

It helps me tremendously with getting started in my days. By planning in advance, I always know what the NEXT STEPS are without wasting time wondering about it. I don’t need to waste any thinking or PRECIOUS willpower. I can just check my plan and move from task to task, instead of wondering what I should do next.

In the past, this “wondering of what to do” was a massive time killer for me, because what I would do in these situations was to check Facebook, check emails, read the newspaper, read online news, etc…. I used to lose hours in distraction doing this, whereas today I can just work from my pre-made plan.

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It doesn't take much time either. At night, we're usually very clear, motivated, and know exactly what we would like to do the next morning. If we write it down, the odds of us doing these things are greatly improved.

Takes 2-3 minutes and can drastically improve your productivity. I highly recommend you try out planning your day the night before.
Key Idea #7
Take Action (Lots of It!)

The world doesn’t pay you for what you know; it pays you for what you do. There’s an enduring axiom of success that says, “The universe rewards action.” Yet as simple and as true as this principle is, it’s surprising how many people get bogged down in analyzing, planning, and organizing when what they really need to do is take action.

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. Even if they don’t start perfectly, they learn from their mistakes, make the necessary corrections, and keep taking action, all the time building momentum, until they finally produce the result they set out to produce… something even better than they conceived of when they started.

To be successful, you have to do what successful people do, and successful people are highly action-oriented.

*The one thing that seems to separate winners from losers more than anything else is that winners take action.*

**WINNERS TAKE ACTION.**

Winners take some fcking action. Winners don’t sit on their couch all day long, wondering about their future, waiting for the perfect opportunity, the perfect time, or whatever. They TAKE MASSIVE ACTION.

Let’s say there’s a super cute girl at the bar and you would love to talk to her. You’re not sure what to say, so you decide to have a beer to help you come up with something. 20 minutes and one beer later you’re still not sure what to say and decide to grab another beer. All that beer makes you run to the bathroom for a quick piss, and when you come back…

BAM! Shocker! The cute girl’s gone. She left! Crap!

Bad luck…
No! Not bad luck… you just forget to TAKE ACTION.

Jack Canfield makes a great example in the book:

When Otis came home for the summer with his new girlfriend after his freshman year in college, they both began looking for jobs. While Otis just picked up the phone and started calling around to see who might need someone, his girlfriend spent the first week writing and rewriting her résumé. By the end of the second day, Otis had land a job. His girlfriend was still writing the résumé. Otis just got into action. He figured if someone asked for a résumé, he’d deal with it then.

Quite a badass that Otis…

Some people are just natural action takers. My oldest brother for example is a much more natural action taker than me. When he needs a job, he starts making some phone calls, sending out résumés, going to job interviews etc… and in no time he has a job. When something needs to be fixed, it’s his natural inclination to fix that thing right then and there.

For me, this shit was never natural.

For me, the default reaction was to procrastinate on it. For days and weeks and months. If it wasn’t an absolute emergency it could wait. I just couldn’t motivate myself to do it so I occupied my mind with other things like gaming, watching TV, listening to music, or whatever. My “thing” was to perfectly plan everything instead of just getting started.

My point is:

If taking action doesn’t come natural to you, that’s NO excuse. We all have to force ourselves to do whatever it takes. And action taking is definitely something that will always be a necessary ingredient of any noteworthy achievement.

Once you have some goals you want to accomplish, it’s time to take action. Make the necessary calls, enroll in the course, read that book, get some training, start working out, start changing your diet, sign up for those piano lessons, or write that proposal.

Bottom line:

Take action towards achieving your dreams.
Key Idea #8

The Daily Success Focus Journal – A Simple Tool to Increase Confidence and Self-Esteem

Research has shown over and over again that the more you acknowledge your past successes, the more confident you become in taking on and successfully accomplishing new ones. You know that even if you fail, it won’t destroy you, because your self-esteem is high. And the more you risk, the more you win in life. The more shots you take, the more chances you have of scoring.

Our society is such a bitch.

We don’t care if someone did something well or achieved something remarkable. No, no, no, no… we say they were just lucky, had rich parents, cheated somehow, or slept their way to that accomplishment.

Yet, if someone fucks up, we’re all over it. Ha! What a loser. Such a FAIL. FAILURE!!!!

We always seem to focus on the negative. On the failures. On the bad news. On what went wrong… Rarely do we acknowledge the good things in our lives, the good news, the AWESOME accomplishments.

Think about it.

Do you ever hear that a politician is doing a good job? Almost never! According to most people, all politicians are morons that can’t do anything right.

For most of us it already starts as kids. Most parents barely lose a word when the kids are doing something right, yet will immediately tell them when they’ve done something wrong. And boy will they tell them… not in a nice and calm tone… No, but with a lot of EMOTION. To make sure that the kid understands it, right?

So when we did something bad, we got punished with all those bad emotions, yet when we did something good, we barely got any attention at all.

Here’s a quick example in a father-daughter relationship:
Daughter: “Daddy, daddy, look! I can do a little spin dance”


Daughter: lets daddy’s car keys fall on the ground

Dad: “What are you doing?!? Put that down!! That's not yours! Go to your room!”

Our brain more easily remembers experiences that were accompanied by strong emotions, so most of us have many more memories of failures than successes.

Let me ask you a question to illustrate this point…

Can you list 10 successes that you’ve had in the past week? Seriously. Think about it…

HARD, isn’t it?

Now, what about failures? Can you list 10?

Much easier. Most of us can easily remember how we messed up. We’re trained to do that. We’re a failure-oriented society.

Anyway… where’s the problem with that? Why is this failure orientation, this focus on the negative so harmful? The reason why it is so harmful is because of its detrimental impact on our self-esteem.

Imagine for a moment that your self-esteem is like a stack of poker chips. Then imagine that you and I are playing a game of poker and you have 10 chips and I have 200 chips. Who do you think is going to play more conservatively in this game of poker? Yes, you are. If you lose two bets of 5 chips, you’re out of the game. I can lose 5 chips 40 times before I’m out of the game, so I am going to take more risks because I can afford to take the losses. Your level of self-esteem works the same way. The more self-esteem you have, the more risks you are willing to take.

The more self-esteem we have, the more poker chips we have.

In other words, the more self-esteem we have, the more risks we’re willing to take.

And the more risks we take, the more we win in life. The more shots we take, the more chances of scoring we have.
I mean… just ask yourself: Do you prefer playing poker when you’ve got a lot of chips or just a few? Do you prefer playing the game of life with a lot of self-esteem or just a little?

That’s why this failure orientation is so terrible. It DESTROYS our self-esteem…

To improve our self-esteem we have to do the opposite. We have to become success-oriented. We have to become success-focused. We must ACKNOWLEDGE our past successes to become more confident in ourselves.

The more we acknowledge our past successes, the more confident we become in taking on and successfully accomplishing new ones.

So how do we do it?

Well, one way to do it is through Jack Canfield’s *Daily Success Focus Journal*. This exercise is all about acknowledging our small daily successes.

**Daily Success Focus Journal**

> ...you need to acknowledge your small daily successes…

*A powerful tool to keep yourself focused on the positive and your eye on the prize is the Daily Success Focus Journal. If you do this exercise every day for a month, you will increase your self-confidence as well as improve your performance in all areas of your life.*

Here’s how it works:

At the end of the day you write down 5 small things that you did well on that day. (Canfield calls these small successes.) Then you write down for each success why it was important (REASON), how you can do even better (FURTHER PROGRESS), and what the next action will be (NEXT ACTION).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUCCESS</th>
<th>REASON</th>
<th>FURTHER PROGRESS</th>
<th>NEXT ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I conducted a great staff meeting</td>
<td>It created the team spirit we were lacking</td>
<td>Plan an off-site staff development plan</td>
<td>Form a committee with Ann and Bob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I booked a long weekend at the Ojai Spa and Inn for Inga and me.</td>
<td>We really need to get away and rejuvenate our relationship.</td>
<td>Start planning summer with Patty and Jeff</td>
<td>Talk to Patty about best time to get together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did 30 minutes on the stair-stepper</td>
<td>It’s important to my health and to my weight loss goal</td>
<td>Add weight lifting to my routine</td>
<td>Talk to Martin about his personal trainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a great dinner conversation and homework session with Christopher</td>
<td>It’s important to deepening and sustaining our relationship</td>
<td>Do it again on Wednesday</td>
<td>Check up my calendar and free up my time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I finished editing the tech report for my boss.</td>
<td>It helps get the upgrade we need on the office computer systems</td>
<td>Get approvals for the expenditures</td>
<td>Schedule a meeting of the executive committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the way these 5 successes can be anything.

Any achievements count (business, educational, personal, financial, physical, or emotional). Any personal disciplines you kept count (dietary, exercise, reading, meditation). Any temptations that you didn’t give in to count (eating dessert, lying, watching too much TV, staying up too late, drinking too much).

I’m telling you, this exercise is pretty cool once you’ve tried it.

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Yesterday I wrote down as one of my small successes that I meditated for 20 minutes in the morning. The magic happens when you ask yourself WHY (powerful word!) this is important.

So for meditation I wrote down all kinds of reasons:

- HUGE lifetime value
- increased focus & concentration
- increased happiness
- more compassion
- more creativity
- improved ability to stay present

Meditation has endless benefits.

So when you stop and think about it during this exercise, you remind yourself of all the benefits you’re getting. It becomes CLEAR why you do it and this creates motivation and discipline to do it again the next day.

Further progress is also helpful. It shows you how you could improve EVEN MORE.

For me this could be to add 5 more minutes to the meditation or add a second meditation somewhere during my day. And lastly, the next ACTION just shows us how to move forward.

I highly recommend you try out this exercise.

This is very similar to an exercise that neuroscientist Mark Waldman recommends. His recommended exercise consists of writing down 3 things you did well and briefly explaining why. And then writing down several things you’re grateful for. Studies show that just doing this little exercise for 7 days in a row will cause self-esteem and confidence to gradually increase over the next 3 months.

There’s really no reason why you wouldn’t want to give this a try…

How about TONIGHT as part of your evening routine?
Conclusion

Success isn’t something mystical.

In fact, it’s quite the opposite.

Jack Canfield has found that success is created by consistently applying a certain set of principles in your life. He refers to them as the *64 Success Principles*.

Applying just some of those principles will help you get from where you are to where you want to go.

We’ve looked at 8 specific ideas that impressed me the most from all of his 64 principles.

Some of them are very practical and you can start using them IMMEDIATELY. You can for example set goals, create a Goals Book and reread your goals several times a day. This helps you stay focused and motivated in a world full of distractions.

Another practical idea is to plan your day the night before. By doing that you can prioritize and focus on truly important activities, start your day without wasting any precious willpower, and MASSIVELY increase your productivity.

You can also start using the Daily Success Focus Journal to increase your self-esteem. Having more self-esteem means you will take MORE RISKS in your life. And the more risks you take, the more you win in life.

Some ideas are less practical and are instead concerning your mindset and general approach in life. It’s for example a smart idea to start seeing the opportunities in every situation. Enter every conversation with the idea that something good will come from it. You will find that what you seek and expect, is generally what you’ll get.

You can become an inverse paranoid and expect the whole world to be on YOUR TEAM. If you think everyone is here to help and support you, that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, which in turn helps you succeed more easily and effortlessly.

The point is:

By implementing just a few of those ideas, you dramatically increase your levels of happiness, fulfillment, and success in your life.
Now, it’s time to follow what you’ve learnt in Key Idea #7:

TAKE ACTION and implement what you’ve learnt.

Peace,

Nils
About the Authors

Hey champ!

You made it.

Congrats.

You just learned a TON of information that will help you master your life. It definitely helped us.

Us? Who are we anyway?

We are the brothers Nils & Jonas Salzgeber, and we’re the founders of NJlifehacks. Our goal is to live a legendary life and we believe that continuous self-improvement is the #1 way to get there.

One of the best ways to improve oneself is reading books. Because reading many books takes a lot of time, we thought we can provide value by summarizing our favorite books and therefore saving YOU precious time.

We hope this summary provided some value for you.

Let us know if something was unclear or if you have any question or feedback or whatsoever.

Contact us under support@njlifehacks.com

Keep on reading and improving yourself!

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