

What Determines Your Success?

Throughout the ages, the wisest and most profound thinkers have been trying to find the answer to one question: What determines success? Why is that some people enjoy deep personal relationships, close friendships, good health, a great income and all the other trappings of success while others are peering in through the shop window of life asking why not me?

Is it family background, heredity, or education? Could it be their level of intelligence, education or are they just plain lucky? Could it be a combination of the above?

On the surface, one can easily make the argument that all these factors, at least collectively, play a vital role in one's success. Let's examine them more closely.

Family Background

Generally speaking, kids raised in well-to-do environments tend to be exposed to certain behaviors and values that contribute to the development of positive success habits. On the other hand, those born in an impoverished ghetto environment are more exposed to situations and attitudes that lead to unsuccessful habits. Research has shown that children raised on the "wrong side of the tracks" are more likely to fail in school and engage in criminal activities when compared to their counterparts from middle and upper-class homes. Notwithstanding, there are many examples of individuals who had all the material and creature comforts they needed and yet turned out to be dismal failures. At the same time, countless others who were born into a poor environment, and thus given little chance of success, went on to make huge successes of their lives.

Heredity

Is success found in genes and handed from one generation to the next through procreation? We know that successful people come in all color, shapes and sizes. You can find successful people in every racial and ethnic group.

Intelligence

Our society has led us to believe that those who are deemed more intelligent are more likely to succeed. In 1928 Dr Lewis Terman conducted a study of 1,528 gifted students who had IQs at the genius level. The results proved the "Termites" (as they came to be known) to be remarkable in some ways and quite ordinary in others. Two-thirds of the Terman men and women earned bachelor's degrees - 10 times the national average for their time. Ninety-seven of them earned PhDs, fifty-seven earned MDs and there were ninety-two lawyers. On the other hand, some of them were representative of normal everyday 20th century Americans. Some died young as a result of diseases, accidents or suicide. A few were arrested; one went to prison for forgery. About 40% of the men served in World War II. As a group, Terman's kids got divorced, committed suicide and became alcoholics at about the national rate.

Success is Psychological

The consensus of all the sages, philosophers and thinkers is that success is primarily psychological. Upwards of 80% of the way you think is responsible for your success.

In his book *Think Like A Winner!*, Dr Walter Staples writes "The key to success lies in your particular manner of thinking. When you change how you think about yourself, your relationships, your goals, and your world, your life changes. If you change the quality of your thinking, you necessarily will change the quality of you life."

William James of Harvard said "The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings, by changing the inner aspects of their mind, can change the outer aspects of their lives."

The great Jamaican philosopher Bob Marley chimes in, "Emancipate yourself from mental slavery. None but ourselves can free our minds." It seems that no matter what hand life deals us at birth, ultimately we are the ones who determine our level of success.

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