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STRATEGYSESSION

## Discover, decide, do

Three steps to success at work, in school and in social situations

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**D**oing more, working faster and working harder are NOT the keys to achieving personal satisfaction and success. Many people have been misdirected into following someone else's path to these goals.

Striving to better themselves in school, at work, socially and economically, too many people measure their success with yardsticks such as grades, titles, recognition and dollars. Exhausted by endless hours of "doing," these haggard pursuers of success wonder why their diplomas, executive privileges, awards and paychecks haven't provided self-satisfaction. The answer to their unspoken question, "I've done it all, why don't I feel successful?" is simple: They have put all their effort into doing what they have been told would make them successful without considering who they are or what would make them happy.

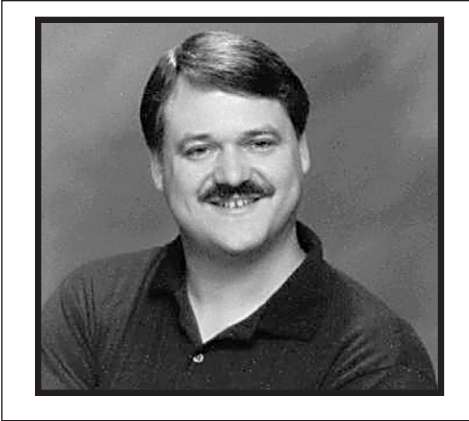
People measure and define success in many different ways. The best working definition I have seen is "the progressive realization of a worthwhile dream." Success is not a goal, an achievement or a destination predetermined by others or by society. YOUR success is YOUR "progressive realization" of YOUR "worthwhile dream."

### Step 1: Discover

Your journey to the elusive emotional pleasure of success must start at the beginning: defining your "worthwhile dream." Everyone must define "worthwhile" and "dream" in his or her own way. Personal values determine what is worthwhile. Personal desires fashion our dreams. The failure to personalize the definition of success is often the root cause of disappointment in the realization phase.

Discovering who you are, what you want from life, what makes you happy — independent of the social pressures and influences of family, friends, co-workers and bosses — is the key to appropriately completing this first step. If your greatest desire is to climb Mount Everest but you are spending 80 hours a week climbing the corporate ladder, the view when you reach the top is sure to lack the emotional impact your heart desires.

Answering Dr. Robert Schuller's question, "What would you do if you knew you could not fail?" is a great way to begin defining your dreams and desires. To ensure and increase your later satisfaction, answer the same question as it



relates to each of the following aspects of your life: family, social, educational, spiritual, health and career. Ask yourself, "What would I do for my family if I had unlimited resources?" "Who would I choose as friends, and how would I socialize with people if I weren't influenced by the opinion of others?" "What do I believe and how does it affect my actions?" Create and answer similar questions for the other aspects of life listed above and any others you consider important. The answers to these questions will reveal your personal values and desires and help you define your dreams.

Once you have discovered who you are and what you want from life, you are ready to take the next step.

### Step 2: Decide

In order to "progressively realize" you need clearly defined objectives with measurable steps toward their achievement. How many steps it will take and how much time will be needed are of little consequence. The key to experiencing satisfaction is to maintain focus: keep your dream firmly anchored in your mind, know where you are going, and make progress in the desired direction.

Deciding on a goal and the incremental steps necessary to achieve it will provide the structure to keep you pointed in the right direction and the map to chart your progress. Like a well-planned road trip, you will always be able to see where you are relative to where you are going and enjoy the successful completion of each segment of your journey.

Using affirmations is a simple way to maintain focus, remember the steps and build a mental image of success. Stating your goal in a positive

present-tense statement will keep it clear in your mind. A sample affirmation related to health might be, "I am healthy, eating good foods, resting when tired, and exercising three times a week." The goal is to be healthy: eating right, resting and exercising are the steps along the way. One affirmation for each of your goals, repeated three times daily, takes very little time and provides exceptional focus.

Once you have decided what you are going to do and how you are going to do it, you are ready to take the final step.

### Step 3: DO!

Implementing your plans may appear to be the most difficult task, but it is actually the easiest part of achieving the rewards of success. Discovering the path you're on doesn't lead to where you have decided to go may initiate dramatic changes in your life. Don't be frozen by fear. Action is the key to taking this step. Remember, success is a matter of making progress toward your worthwhile dreams.

Do whatever you have listed as the first step of your plan; then take the next; then the next. If any of the steps are too big, or too scary, break them down into smaller pieces until you have steps you are comfortable taking. If your goal is to earn a degree, but going to school on a full-time basis is too big a step or too disruptive to your family, go part time or start by taking a single class.

Reward yourself for every step that carries you forward, even if it is a tiny-little-baby step. The rewards don't have to be huge or expensive; they should be commensurate with the size of the steps. At a minimum, look in the mirror and say, "I did it. I am one step closer to my goal." Recognize, enjoy, even brag about every completed step, each small success.

Discover what is truly important to you. Decide what you want to do and how to do it. Do what will get you where you want to go. These three simple steps will result in progressively realizing your worthwhile dream. They will provide the feelings of joy and satisfaction that come with being truly successful. ■

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