

A Personal Success Secret

Contributed by Steve Gillman
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{bot_wrgoogle}Finding a "success" based on the standards and opinions of other people means you are forever dependent on the approval of those people. You are only as successful as they say you are. A financial failing, a change of public tastes or even just growing old and less attractive will leave you scrambling to get back into their good graces. That isn't personal success. That's personal stress and spiritual corruption.

It isn't that there is anything wrong with money, homes on the beach or even fame. You can have all these things and be a successful human being too. But to base your life on a wealth that is defined outside you makes you a slave to both the whims of public opinion and your own mistaken ideas. Hopefully you already sense the futility of chasing other people's dreams, but the latter - the following of the one's own bad ideas - that is what the following secret of personal success addresses.

Personal Success Is Beyond You

The above may seem like a bold statement, or perhaps even rude, but let me explain what I mean. What you and I see as our "self" is often an identity created in our minds. I'm not talking about the conscious choice to maintain a certain "image." We all "play" roles at times. But how often are we conscious of the interior forces that "play" us. In other words, there are patterns of thought and ideas in your mind that pass themselves off as "you."

This isn't meant to be mystical in any way. I'm referring to a real phenomenon that you can verify for yourself, but to speak of these things requires a metaphorical understanding. So imagine for a moment that an invader has taken control of your mind. It tells you what you can and can't do, who to impress, why you should feel bad, and more. Now watch your own thoughts today and you'll see that this is not an invention, but a reality of how our minds work.

We all tend to identify with the thoughts and conversations which fill our minds. They tell us how to feel and exactly why we should feel that way, and we even repeat their arguments as though this is who we truly are. But if you do not consider a virus in your body to be you, why do you call those thoughts in your head "you." They seem to come and go without conscious decision and are contradictory and often self-defeating, aren't they? They are just thoughts, and you certainly are more than this collection of random ideas and repetitious programmed responses.

Perhaps this is easier to see in our friends, where we can easily witness bad ideas truly "taking hold" of them and leading them down destructive paths. But why would they hurt themselves if they didn't identify with these thoughts as their "selves?" They wouldn't.

Suppose a man told you to jump off a cliff or otherwise hurt yourself. You would ignore this advice, right? In fact, even if someone simply suggests why you should give up on something important to you, you probably dismiss it as rude. But when the advice comes from your own mind in the form of your own imagined voice, you jump, don't you? And you justify your actions and feelings using the arguments handed to you. How often have all of us missed opportunities or been lead to destructive actions or painful situations by the thoughts in our own minds? Yet we so easily believe that our busy mind is looking out for our own best interest, that it is who we are.

This secret to personal success, then, is to start to doubt your own internal dialogue. It will ramble on, but you can

mentally step back and see how much of it is nothing more than a mechanical reaction. You really don't even need to see what childhood experience created this or that mental "program" or pattern of thought and behavior. You just need to witness it and see it for what it is. Then reach beyond this false "you" for better answers.

This is a kind of self awareness that requires constant vigilance and continuing exploration. But it's worth it. You may be surprised to see how many things you consider valuable are actually just ideas that started from the people and environment around you and now are trying to perpetuate themselves in your mind, pretending to be your own. You can dismiss these bad ideas once you see them clearly for what they are, and then pursue what is truly valuable to your truest self. That is a powerful secret of personal success.

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