



BECOMING SUCCESSFUL AND HAPPY

We all strive for happiness. Most everything that we do on a daily basis we do to achieve a state of happiness. Knowingly or unknowingly, it is what drives and motivates us. Whether it is in our careers, studies, or family lives, happiness is what we ultimately want to achieve.

Success and happiness are often thought of as the same thing. There is sometimes the misconception that success will lead to happiness. Though the two principles are related, they are not the same. Most of the time, success will lead to happiness, but not all the time.

In our journey toward success, we must never forget the purpose of the journey. This is why knowing the meaning and purpose of your life is important. Everything that we do should be aligned with our purpose. Being happy is the ultimate success that we are trying to achieve.

A lot of people, many of them smart, well-educated individuals, do not fully understand this concept, though they think they do. Happiness is about being content while pushing yourself to be your best.

When trying to find a balance between happiness and success, you will discover that there are three states:

1. Being truly happy and being content.
2. Being successful at the cost of happiness.
3. Being happy at the cost of success

You can draw these three states on a spectrum as

shown below:



Being happy and content is the midpoint on this spectrum. This life is a privilege, so you don't want to live without achieving your potential. At the same time, you don't want your life to fall apart. True success is the middle path, because you would be both successful and happy in this state.

Happiness is not about taking things easy. Yes, it is very easy to be lazy by saying we want to be happy. We might be happy, but we would be wasting our lives by not reaching our potential. To reach your potential means to push yourself to the limit to achieve your dreams. It will be stressful. Stress is a fact of life. You will have difficulty and rough spots in life. Life is painful, and success can be extremely painful. Being happy does not mean that we avoid this pain. Of course, being lazy would bring certain benefits to you, but it is a superficial form of happiness. True happiness comes from success in all aspects of your life.

A very intelligent colleague of mine was recently talking to me about her future. She is fully capable of reaching much higher in her career than where she is now. When I recommended that she should attempt reaching higher, she mentioned that reaching higher would mean additional stress and additional work hours, even though in reality it didn't mean compromising her family life by working a few extra hours. I felt that this was just a self-fulfilling excuse given to run away from the pain of reaching higher. Though she was telling me that her personal life might get compromised, I think she knew that pushing herself a bit more wouldn't make a difference. Every



time I meet her, she asks me how difficult it is to be a few levels higher in my career than she is so that she can justify to herself why she is not pushing herself to the limit.

Similar to my colleague, there are many who justify themselves and stay within their comfort zones by saying that working hard will be stressful and unhappy. You need to push yourself to achieve great things. Achieving great things requires hard work. You cannot sit on your couch and expect great things to happen.

The other extreme is that you would work so hard that other areas of your life are falling apart. I have met a few colleagues who have made this mistake. Their families are not happy because they work too much and pay too little to what matters the most. For them, achieving great positions in their careers is worth any cost.

To be truly happy and successful, you should not fall into either of these extremes. Success should come from holding your life together while pushing yourself to excel. The middle path is not easy.

The purpose of the journey should not be forgotten. At the end of the day, I'm sure all these people will wonder where their years have gone. Passing time cannot be regained. We all have a finite number of years in our lives, even if we like to think otherwise.

Success should be viewed in a holistic way where you succeed in all aspects of life, instead of a few. For example, working hard and ignoring your health will lead to bad repercussions later in life and cause unhappiness, even though you would have great resources as a result of your success.

Happiness is the end, while success is only a means to an end. Success should not be viewed as having the top job or the biggest house. It is not about going to the top at any cost. When you succeed in only a few aspects of your life, you create tremendous vacuums in other areas of your life. You need to avoid vacuums and pursue balance. Real success is achieving in all aspects of your life and enjoying yourself along the way. This is what I call happiness.

We all strive to achieve what makes us happy. For example, you might be striving to achieve a top job that will pay you a million dollars a year. The reason that you are trying to achieve that job could be that

you will have plenty of money to enjoy your time with your family and lead a comfortable life. But in the process, if you ignore the balance, you might actually end up alienating your family. When you do attain the job you desired after years of hard work, you might realize that your kids have grown up and you have lost the family you always wanted to enjoy. So, what's the point of working so hard to achieve that top job? You wasted the most important years achieving nothing.

Happiness is when you balance your success and do things that you love to do. Finding what you love and creating a balance is challenging. For most of us, the journey starts when we are growing up. We get pushed into different career streams. At that time, there is little information about how it is going to be when actually we get into a career. However, in our immature states of mind, we are compelled to make choices, and we spend a lot of time preparing for the careers we chose. It might be several years, after college and perhaps graduate school and postgraduate studies, before we realize whether our choices were good or bad. For too many of us, it ends up being the wrong choice, because we have changed as people, matured and discovered new things. Or we realize it wasn't something we wanted to do in the first place. By this time, it might be too late to go back, or we just don't want to start all over again. We might have children or other responsibilities that prevent us from returning to school, so we continue down the same unsatisfying path. Was it worth it?

Most of this problem exists because we equate success with money. We gravitate to choices that have the most money attached to them and not the ones that we love doing. We work very hard day to day to please our bosses, keep our children healthy, and manage our lives. At the end of the day we're exhausted and haven't achieved anything. What did we do all day? Where did we spend all our time? We just ran in the same place.

To solve this problem, or avoid it in the first place, you need to understand the root causes of your own happiness. What are you really trying to achieve with all the effort that you are putting into becoming successful? You need to really look hard at what you want in your life, irrespective of the effort. This is really important because you might be striving very hard



to achieve an interim goal that would get you only halfway to happiness.

Understanding root causes means understanding what makes you happy deep down inside. Finding the causes of happiness for each of us is different, and how we go about it is different. We all think differently. Understanding causes comes from having a deep understanding of yourself and what makes you happy. Nobody can dictate to you what will make you happy.

Searching for this cause means understanding your purpose. All our efforts should be connected to our purpose, which is what drives us. When we don't make a connection to our purpose, we feel depleted and used.

As long as our hard work is connected to our purpose, it does not feel like hard work. For example, you might be writing a book about something you love and driving toward a deadline to get all your material published. If it is connected to your purpose, no matter how many hours you put into writing, even without a break, it would not make you feel depleted; you would feel fulfilled. Compare this to someone who is working for a paycheck and doing a couple of hours of e-mails. That person would be exhausted. Work is not work as long as you are enjoying it!

You need to strategize to achieve this state of happiness. You need to strategize on how you are going to juggle your existing lifestyle and achieve your goals. Strategy is one of the most important tools to help us lead a very successful life. We grow up instinctively knowing how to strategize, but we rarely cultivate this skill. To achieve your happiness, you need to have a strategy. Once you know where you are heading, then getting there can be achieved through your strategy.

At one time I was going after the top job because I wanted to be somebody. Reason: I wanted to make a difference in the world. Over time, however, I realized that I didn't have to have the top job to make a difference for people. It was only one alternative. To get to the top job, I might have wasted a lot of time and effort. Creativity was the only factor I was lacking finding the answer. I was looking for happiness in the

wrong place. Sometimes the most obvious place to find happiness is not the best place to look.

To understand what makes you happy, you need to understand your purpose. It stems from what you feel is the reason or your existence. In order to understand this, you need to forget about what society would say about what you want. Look deep in your heart at what you are trying to achieve. To understand your true motivations, your spouse, partner, our friends can really help put things in perspective. Whatever approach you take, try to understand the real drivers of your happiness and what you are trying to achieve.

Ideally, your definition of success should be the same as your purpose. Unfortunately, we tend to gravitate toward money and material possessions, because they can be seductive and addictive. You need to have two steams in your life – one to satisfy the world and the other to satisfy yourself. This will bring a sense of great achievement. Not only will you be able to enjoy the world, but you will be very happy as well.

You also need to cultivate your creativity to achieve happiness. There are thousands of ways to achieve your goals. Sometimes you might need to cultivate a parallel stream of activities to achieve your happiness. Creativity is very important when it comes to your success and happiness. I cannot stress enough the importance of creativity in every aspect of your life and career. Like my daughter's children's movie says, "Think, think, think." We all need to think and let our minds run free.

To be happy and successful, you must have ideas. You need to trust your ideas and have faith in them. Once you have faith in yourself and your ideas, your mind will start generating great ideas. Your mind seems to operate on your command and how you treat it. If you treat it well, it will provide the creativity you need to generate wonderful ideas.

You have to let your mind run free without judgment and give yourself time to think. Sometimes we are so busy that we don't give ourselves time to think. I have met so many people who are running around trying to finish jobs, do children's chores, fix houses, and try to feed their families, but few actually stop and think. Giving yourself time to think is really important.



Working hard without being creative is like trying to cut a tree without sharpening the axe. You'd be hitting the tree very hard but making very little progress.

Try to define success as things that make you happy.

You will feel much more fulfilled than a lot of people. And once you define success, you will then be able to strategize on how you can get it.

Need Help? Have a Question?

Call Greg's "Wonder Woman" assistant Christal. She will assist you in with booking information or answering your questions.

Call her at 304.400.4703

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Passion
Chase Your
Dreams**