

# **The Keys to Unlocking Success**

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A geek's guide to Self Development

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# Focus

Everyone wants success. Whether it's in the littlest act or in the big adventures that we can possibly experience in life. From the farmer growing crops during a hard season, to the business person trying to make a million; all of us want to achieve success in what we do and no matter what your success currency is, money, family, fame, survival, or recognition, the end goal is always the same...success. We're all brought up to strive for bigger and better things, constantly pushed on by others around us, including friends and family.

Without something to focus on you won't be able to achieve great success. Call it a goal; call it a vision of the future, whether big or small; simply focusing on your goal allows you to achieve more. You need to aim for something, whatever you want it to be, otherwise you could end up nowhere, having achieved very little.

Imagine if I met you and I told you we were going to have a race. What would be the sort of questions you'd asked before we started? Why? Where are we racing to? How long are we racing for? What other resources can we use? I really hope you wouldn't just follow me as I ran off into the distance shouting "don't worry it'll be fine, just follow me!"

Whenever I go into schools to talk to young people about success I always start by talking about having a focus, so it seems fitting that we talk about it here. Before you can rush off and start achieving success you

first need to have a focus. What is it you want to achieve? Where to do you want to go and how are you going to get there?

### **1. Decide what your focus will be**

Before you can start though, you first need have a really clear idea of what it is you actually want to achieve. Take the time to write it down somewhere; on a piece of paper, in a notebook or on your computer. Make sure though, that you flesh it out a bit and make sure you provide yourself with details because you're going to use this to refer back to it later to remind yourself of what you wanted to achieve (everyone forgets the details, sometimes.)

### **2. Break up the task at hand**

Once you've worked out what it is you want to achieve, you can then start to work towards your success. The best way to do this is to create some checkpoints that can break up your overall goal into smaller bits. By just focussing on the whole when trying to be successful at something, you can sometimes become daunted by the sheer size of what you need to do, if you break it up however, you can work through it one step at a time. This keeps your focus in the present and stops you losing your way.

### **3. Start today**

What can you do today to start achieving what you want to be successful in? There's always something you can start doing straight away, it's just that not everyone realises it and those that do, don't often do something about it. By starting today, you're instantly focusing your attention on that thing in your life that you want to be successful in, that one thing that you choose in step 1.

So....

If you want to achieve great success in some area of your life, you first need to focus your attention. Like aiming an arrow at a target, you need to make sure you're lined up straight before you start. When you've decided on your focus, break down the task into smaller bite-sized chunks that you can easily achieve before you move on to the next phase. Once you've focussed yourself, you can then start to go out and achieve your success but make sure you keep checking back from time to time to make sure you're still heading in the right direction.

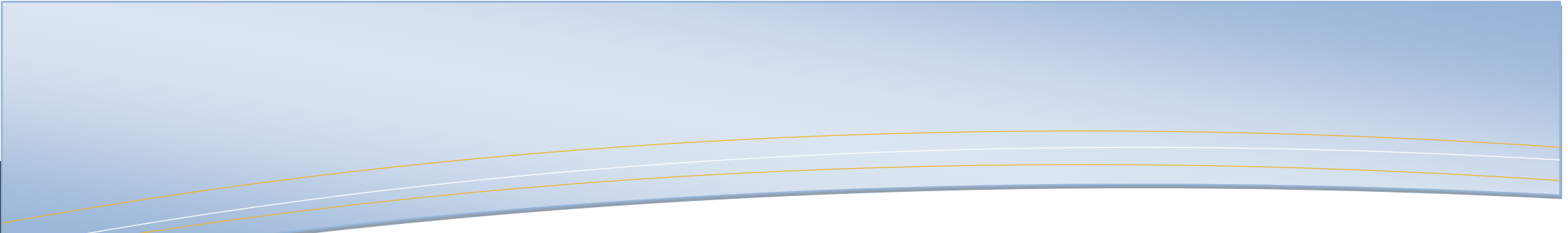
# Passion

Your passion is everything. And when I'm talking about passion by the way, I don't mean "roll around with the one you love" kinda passion. I'm talking about the sort of thing that is all engrossing and takes over everything you do. Take a moment to think about what you're passionate about. What is on your mind most of the day? Is it your work because you love it that much or is that one thing in your life you rush away from work early so you can engage in it? Do you spend every waking hour playing World of Warcraft or Call of Duty MW2? Maybe your passion is gaming. Do you obsessively follow a particular sports teams or music group? Then maybe you're passionate about sports or music? Your passion is that one thing you love to do and would happily do for free if you had to.

Now really, if you're trying to be a success at something, shouldn't it be in that thing you're really passionate about? What's the point in trying to achieve something amazing, if you're not really 100% into it?

To quote someone who, as we say in the north of England, calls a spade a spade...

“Go brush your teeth, look yourself in the mirror and ask yourself, “What the heck do I want to do?” because if you’re not doing that, you’re an idiot!” – **Gary Vaynerchuk**



One of the most important keys to success is passion. If you're completely obsessed with what you want to achieve, success will almost always follow - it's that simple. Here are 3 ways to develop and maintain your passion.

### **1. Be inspired**

Nothing boosts your passion for something more than being constantly inspired by it. You need to immerse yourself in your passion totally and you'll find success is something that becomes easy to obtain. Read about it, watch videos on it, search the internet for it, or listen to commentary about it. Do anything you can to immerse yourself in your passion and this will enable you to have more success as you ultimately learn more and more as time passes, making you better equipped to make the most of your opportunities.

### **2. Engage**

The fire up your passion try engaging with others who think and feel like you do. Find them online, in forums or via sites like Twitter or Facebook. Or go completely traditional and actually meet people for real and talk about whatever your passion is. Have a season ticket to your favourite sport? Always sit in the same seat, around the same people? Then get talking to them, learn from them, share your ideas with them. You can do

this anywhere, at any time. Start making friendships and connections in and around. Opportunities will start to come and success will always follow.

### **3. Celebrate your success**

Everyone gets knocked down at some point in time. You're working away really hard, starting to make some progress, feeling good and then BANG! Out of nowhere something hits you like a freight train and knocks you off your feet. At this point, most of us can easily embrace the failure and the negative. But do you do the opposite when you achieve a small success, like when you hit a [checkpoint](#)? Well you should celebrate your successes, however small they may be, as they will help to fan the flames of your passion, making you want to keep going even more (especially during the tougher times).

# Taking Responsibility

I want to share with you the reason why most people fail, not just at things they want to achieve but also at life in general. It's bred from a poor attitude towards life and fuelled by laziness. When I go and work with young people in schools all over the UK, it's always the biggest influencing factor in them not achieving success.

When you want to be successful at something you need to put 100% of the work in yourself. The only person responsible for achieving your success is you and you alone. Many young people fall back on expecting others to do it for them or by putting the responsibility on others when things start getting tough. Rather than taking responsibility for what they do and how they do it, lots of people just expect the world to do them a favour and give them success on a plate.

If you're going to achieve something amazing in life, then here's a little tip; go out there and do it yourself. No one will give you success so you need to go out there and work your socks off to get it yourself.

We are very good at taking responsibility for the success we end up achieving but we often struggle to see that we need to take the same approach when we have to do something, when things get tough and when we fail.

Here are some things you can do to take responsibility for achieving your success.

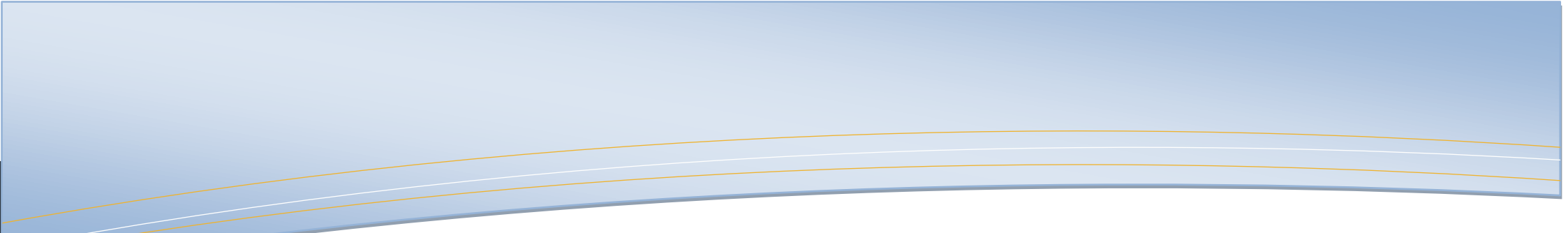
### **1. Change YOUR language**

A lot of the language that you use on a daily basis directly influences your mind set. For example, if you're collaborating on a project with someone and when you're asked how things are doing you respond with "well I'm waiting for Mr.X to do his bit so I can finish mine" then your subconscious reads that as "it's ok, we need to wait before we do stuff." If you change your language though to something a bit more personal and positive something a bit like this "I need to do A, B and C to help Mr.X to get his bit done," then your brain reads that as a call to action.

By changing your language to include words like 'I' and 'me' then you'll start to talk more responsibility for what you want to achieve.

### **2. Set yourself a plan of what YOU'RE going to do**

So many people give up on trying to achieve some form of success when they expect others to pick up the slack for them. I've already talked about having a focal point for what you want to achieve and setting up some check points of how you're going to reach your overall goal. You need to take full responsibility for achieving each of those steps. Sure, ask for help along the way, but the person who needs to actually get the job done and tick all of the necessary boxes is you, not the person who's helping you.



Your plan of how you're going to achieve success is just that; your plan. It needs to come from you and be implemented by you, no one else.

### **3. Fess up when YOU get it wrong**

Online these days, businesses are admitting to mistakes and foul ups to show that they aren't faceless corporations, but in fact, only human. By showing their customers and the general internet public that they have messed up and demonstrating how they are going to remedy the problem, they are building a respect and trust between themselves and the people buying their products or services.

You need to have the same mindset when trying to achieve success in something. If you make a mistake, which we all do from time to time, then just own up to it; take responsibility for what happened and how you're going to move forward. If you're the only person who knows that you're trying to achieve something amazing, then simply admit your mistake to yourself and take responsibility for the actions to rectify it. You, your friends, family, work colleagues, partners and clients will respect you more if for.

### **4. Stop falling back on others**

It's really easy when you hit a stumbling block or a problem along the way to immediately default back to either needing someone else to do it for you or worse, blaming someone else to take the heat off of you. This is frighteningly easy to do, which is why so many people do it.

When times get a bit tough and it looks like you can't carry on, then stop and assess the situation. What can you do right now to change the situation? What could you do to see the problem from a different angle? How have others dealt with this situation?

Sometimes it's better just to stop and take stock of your options and how you can move rather than banging your head against a brick wall that isn't going anywhere.

### **5. Realise it's all down to you**

The unfortunate truth of trying to achieve success in something is that it all comes down to you and how much you put in. The old saying of "you only get out what you put in" completely applies here. You need to realise right from the very beginning that whatever you're trying to achieve, no matter how hard it may be, will only be got by you working hard for it.

Success isn't given to you on a plate. If it is, then it's not called success it's called luck. Success is hard work, not only achieving it but also maintain it and the person who needs to be responsible for that **MUST** be you. Always.

Do you always take responsibility for what you need to do?

# Being Positive

In part 3 of [The Keys to Unlocking Success: Taking Responsibility](#), I said that;

A lot of the language that you use on a daily basis directly influences your mind set.

This kind of thinking isn't just important to encouraging you to take more responsibility, but also in creating a positive mindset to help you be more successful.

If your thoughts, speech and actions are positive then you'll see more opportunities, which will help you to achieve your success faster as well as making the whole ride a lot easier too. If you walk around in a massive cloud of negativity, only ever seeing things that happen as holding you back or causing you more problems, then obtaining that success that you desire will be much harder. You'll fail to see opportunities that will help you to take a step forward. You'll also be less likely to engage and tackle problems as and when they arise; and ultimately more likely to give up when you can't see a way to win through.

Here are some ways to be more positive.

## **1. Change your language**

Just as in part 3 of The Keys to Unlocking Success, your language directly influences your state of mind. If you think negative thoughts then you'll also see things in a negative way. If you always respond to people in the same negative, noncommittal kind of way then you'll be less likely to have help and support from them in the future. If you're always moaning about things or putting people down then you'll just never get to where you want to go in life.

The words you use, as well as what you tell yourself directly influences your mindset and approach to situations - so be careful what you say and think.

## **2. See every problem as an opportunity**

Do you know someone who always sees every situation as the biggest inconvenience on the planet? I bet you do. I know quite a few myself and have been known from time to time to be that very person.

Rather than seeing everything as one big problem try turning the problem around to see it as an opportunity, something you can gain from as opposed to something that sucks the life out of you.

If you can get into the habit of seeing opportunities you'll move towards success much more quickly than if you only ever see problems.

### **3. Keep revisiting your plan**

Keep your motivation up by regularly revisiting your plan of action that you created before you started. Are you still on track or do you need to adjust what you're doing slightly?

If you regularly recheck your plan you'll keep heading in the right direction and you'll therefore be much more positive.

### **4. Hang out with positive people**

There's nothing better for keeping you motivated and enthused than hanging around with and speaking to other positive people. They might not necessarily be into what you're into but the positive energy they give off will be more than enough to keep you going.

Find inspiration in them and what they do. I often speak to people, usually online, about what they're doing and even though they're not into what I'm into I still get a really good buzz afterwards which makes me want to go out there and do really cool things myself.

# Determination

What is it that Billy Ocean song says? "When the going gets tough, the tough get going?" He's got a point you know?

When things are tough in life, we tend to fall into 4 groups of people.

1. We run away
2. We find others to offer support and comfort
3. We do nothing, unable to process what's going on
4. We fight through to win the day

Most of us know these as the flight, flock, freeze and fight response that make up the automated survival instincts programmed into all of us. They stop us from being run over by a bus (most of the time) in the same way as they kept us alive when confronted by a Woolly Mammoth.

When you watch a successful person who is confronted by problem you'll notice that rather than throwing their hands in the air and running away, they actually fight their way through. They may seek advice from others to help them on their way, but they'll always attack the problem rather than running away from it.

When successful people are going through one of those general, non-specific rocky patches that we all go through, you'll never see them fade away. Instead you'll see them fight on, determined to resolve the situation.

That determination, along with their passion, their positive attitude, the fact they take responsibility and their focus is what makes them a success.

You see, determination is one of the big keys to success that you need to develop to achieve those amazing things you set out to do. You need to be determined to keep pushing through when the going's getting tough, when you're faced with an insurmountable problem, or when your back's against the wall.

But how do you develop and maintain determination?

### **1. Fire up that passion**

Think about it like an epic battle. If you were a warrior standing in front of your troops on the eve of an immense fight, you wouldn't turn to your fellow combatants and say (in a quiet voice) "right chaps, lets just go out there and do the best you can. Remember as long as your try that's all that matters."

You'd be laughed off the field if you did that.

You need to rouse yourself from the beginning and fire up that passion deep inside you. You should be so fired up that people will struggle to hold you back. This passion will stay with you and will fuel your determination in the future.

## **2. Set yourself a mantra**

Come up with a short saying that you can say to yourself all the time. Everytime you doubt yourself or things get a bit tough then shout that mantra out! (If you're more self conscious about that kind of thing, then say it quietly to yourself).

If you can't come up with a mantra, then go find a motivational quote online or in a book or in a film. My all time favourite that always gets me going is (unsurprisingly) a Star Wars one.

Do or do not. There is no try.

It always fires up my determination.

## **3. Constantly revisit that goal**

Periodically go back to the goal or vision that you wrote down. Use it as, not only a reminder as what you want to achieve, but also why you wanted to start this journey in the first place.

When you do, not only will your determination be replenished but you'll fire up your passion, further fuelling your determination.

#### **4. Rinse and Repeat**

When you are really struggling in the tough times, keep going through revisiting your goal, repeating your mantra and firing up your passion.

Remember why you started this in the first place. What were you trying to achieve? Do you want to change something in your life for the better? Did you want to achieve greatness? Did you want to prove a point to yourself?

You started this for a reason. Don't forget that. At one time and place you wanted this badly. Don't give up now. You can do this, you just have to practice determination.

# Learning from Life

Lots of people start off by setting themselves a focus. They're passionate about that focus and subsequently take responsibility to go out there and realise it. They become the most positive person you've ever met as well as the most determined.

But they still ultimately fail. Why?

## **Banging your head against a brick wall.**

When people try and achieve success in something they race off into the distance and think that if they stick to their way of thinking that they will eventually reach their goal.

They'll come up against a problem and won't be able to solve it so they'll back off and try another way. After a while they come up against a similar problem to before. They'll try to solve it in the same way and again will end up with the same result.

They'll get to a point where they can't move anywhere for problems that they can't solve and will ultimately, not seeing a way through, give up.

They did everything right. They had focus. They were passionate and positive. They had buckets of determination and took personal responsibility for everything they did. So what went wrong?

They forgot that one of the biggest players in success is the ability to learn as you go. I'm not talking about learning the skills needed to perform the task necessarily but more being able learning from what they experience.

If you come up against a problem and you can't solve it, why try and solve a similar problem in a similar way if you know that it isn't going to work?

You need to learn from what you experience and what you achieve as you go. You'll be able to solve problems much more easily in the future if you learn from the past.

Here are some great ways to foster a learning mentality when trying to achieve success in your life.

### **1. Immerse yourself in your passion**

You need to find out everything you can about what you want to be successful in. Want to learn a new language? Go and get all of the self help materials you can find and spend all your spare time going through them.

Not a fan of reading? Find some videos or audio online then and immerse yourself that way. The more you learn the more excited you'll be to learn more.

## **2. Learn from success**

This one is relatively easy for most of us. We love to relive the moments of success and little victories. We play them over and over in our minds, remembering every little detail. By doing this we can easily replicate similar successes in the future.

If you can systematically break down your successes then you'll give yourself the ability to achieve more success in the future by replicating some of the previous actions and decisions which made you successful.

## **3. Learn from failure**

Where as people can easily learn from success, what a lot of us do is struggle to learn from the times when we fail. We would rather push them to the back of minds and not have to deal with them because that's generally easier and less painful.

Don't!

Learn from what's gone wrong, so you can change it in the future. Ask yourself things like.

- What happened?
- What did I not do that could have made a difference?
- Did anyone else's input cause the problem? (Be careful with this one - don't just blame others)
- What resources / attitudes did I not have?
- What stands out as creating the shortfall?

When you can ask yourself these questions and honestly answer them, you'll be able to put into practice some really powerful things that will help you be more successful in the future.

#### **4. Learn from others**

What's everyone else doing? Are they getting it right or just making a hash of it? What can you learn from their experiences?

There are some amazing people out there who are doing just what you want to do. Find them, learn from them, go out there and do your thing to achieve success.

# Go and realise your dream.

Everyone is different. Everyone has a different idea of what they want to be successful in as well as what success means to them.

For some people, success is about being happy with where you are. For others it's about achieving greatness. Whatever your idea is, your success lies within your reach, you just have to realise it.

You already have passion deep down inside of you. Find it and let it out, then you'll find that positivity, personal responsibility, focus and determination will all fall into place.