

# The two sides of success: dreaming and doing!

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## Abstract

Everybody is striving for success. There are many advisors, manuals, guidebooks and seminars which teach us techniques and tricks what to do and what not to do in our search for success. Opposed to that we will move in this article to a meta level at which we will address two fundamental elements of success: What are your dreams? And what do you do for reaching them? If we cannot answer to these questions, we will have problems to be successful. Why? First, because success is individual, and it cannot be generalized. Success is based on personal dream and desire. Second, even if we have an idea about our dreams: How should we succeed if we are unable to implement our dreams in reality? Although these aspects sound pretty simple, many people have not even raised these questions. This article tries to motivate you to consider these questions and to get started on your way to success.

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## 1. Dreaming and Doing

When you step into a bookshop you will find many guidebooks with the title like "166 rules for success". In this article will get you a little bit out of the labyrinth of too many questions and rules and it shortcuts all these questions down to the two (probably most important) issues: „Two Sides of Success“ – Dreaming and Doing!

Everybody is striving for success. The question for most of us is, however, how to do it. Many teach us techniques and tricks what to do and what not to do. Opposed to that we will move in this article to a *meta level* at which we will address two fundamental elements of success:

*What are your dreams?*

*And what is your doing for reaching them?*

If we cannot answer to these questions, we will have problems to be successful. Although these aspects sound pretty simple, many people have not even raised these questions. This article tries to motivate you to consider these questions and to get started on your personal way to success. And be sure: It will also foster your professional career.

## 2. Dreaming

### 2.1. The basis

Let me start with three quotes:

1. *"The key to happiness is having dreams; the key to success is making them come true."* This is from Allen James who lived in the 19th century, and he was one of the first authors and philosophers who dealt with personal development in modern times.
2. The second one is from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry who is the father of the "Little Prince": *"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."*
3. The third one comes from Mark Twain: *"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why."*

So, what do we take from that?

From Allen James we can learn that we need both elements to succeed: Having dreams *and* making them true. Success is a *combination* of dreams and implementation in reality. So, we will never succeed if we do not have dreams. And even if we have an idea about our dreams: How should we succeed if we are unable to implement our dreams in reality?

If you want to climb up to the Mount Everest, you first must have the dream to get to the summit. If you do not have this dream, why should you start? And even if you get somehow to the summit without dreaming of it – it will be meaningless to you. And you will not consider it a personal success.

So, the same is true for your whole personal and professional life. Now, here are a couple of tough questions for you to think about during the next days or weeks:

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- *What are your dreams and desires?*
- *Which ones are extrinsic and which ones intrinsic?*
- *What will be left from you when you will be gone one day?*
- *How much does your environment get in the way to fulfill them?*
- *How much do you look to others to define your way?*

Many people are longing for goals that do not match their dreams. They buy things they do not need, with money they do not have, in order to impress people they do not like. Or take this: A journalist once asked a manager of a huge company what most importantly mattered to him in his life. He answered: "My family." "So why do you spend so little time with them?", wondered the journalist.

So let us move to Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. He teaches us that *desires, emotions, and dreams* are much more motivating people than brain talk and technical tools. Dreams are motivating us – not the mind! Emotions are driving us, not rational concepts. This is an important insight for all managers who are trying to motivate there people. Successful companies have motivated people. Successful companies know how to motivate their people: Meeting their dreams – not bribing them by fringe benefits. It is true that this motivation is not everything. *But everything is nothing without a motivated workforce.*

Now we approach a little secret: You do not have to do a lot to motivate people. Mostly, it is sufficient not to *demotivate* them.

Example:

About 20 years ago, we had a kind of economic crisis in my law firm. The management decided to stop the practice that everybody in the firm could consume beverages for free. Nobody was happy with that, but our secretaries were upset. Can you imagine their motivation if a lawyer asked them at 5 p.m. to stay for two more hours in the office because of some urgent matter although they were not legally obligated to do so according to their employment contract?

Let us come to Mark Twain: This is the toughest quote! It is not sufficient to feel a desire but also to know the deeper *purpose* of everything you do and everything you are longing for. This is the meaning of your life! There is not a limited choice, anything can be your purpose: Freedom, Justice, Curiosity, Love, Relationship, Harmony, Family, Wealth, Status, Power, Service for Others and so forth. WHY is a really difficult question and it goes to the very core of your existence. Purpose is positioned in yourself even deeper than your dreams. So deep that many people do not even dare to approach it. Nevertheless, it is a worthwhile question to be raised – and answered: The German

philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said: *"If you know your WHY in life, you can bear almost every HOW."* (Slightly adapted in translation)

## 2.2. Finding your personal WHY

If you have found the WHY of your life it might also be a lot easier to find out more about your *personal potential*. In a way, you can say that the development of your potential is the basis of your personal success in life. There is no personal success without personal development. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes once said: *"Too many people die with their music still in them."*

Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient space here in order to elaborate this question more deeply and to find out more about your music. This is a process that takes some time and interested people often take even coaching lessons to clarify what is their WHY and their potential to develop. To give you a personal hint (for which I do not get any commission): Look up, e.g., to the so-called *Steven Reiss Profile* in the internet which provides a test to get some orientation. The Myer-Briggs-Test (MBTI) might be another point to start. And there are many others.

## 2.3. Finding the WHY in business

Finding and communicating the WHY is also important in business. For the business world you might find some inspiration in Simon Sinek's *"Golden Circle: Why – How – What"*.

### Examples for WHY in the business world:

- *We aim to challenge the status quo. We aim to think differently. (Apple)*
- *To connect millions of people in real life all over the world, through a community marketplace– so that you can belong anywhere. (Airbnb)*
- *To empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more. (Microsoft)*
- *To organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful. (Google)*

The organization's **"HOW"** factors might include their strengths or values that they feel *differentiate themselves from the competition*. So, an iPhone is not just a "normal" smartphone, it was a quantum leap when it entered the market. Whenever the latest iPhone is going to be released, people will stand in line in front of the shop from 3 a.m. in the morning. In the same way Airbnb is not a "normal" hotel chain.

And the **"WHAT"** element is quite easy: Regarding an organization, the WHAT describes "what they do". This can be expressed as the products a company sells or the services it offers. And for an individual person, it would be his or her job title on his or her business card.

The important thing according to Sinek is that the "WHY" and the "HOW" are strongly linked to the limbic system of our brain which is competent for feelings, desires, and motivation. The "WHAT" is opposed to that because it is mainly linked to our neocortex which is responsible for rational and logical processing. So Sinek concludes: *"Successful people and organizations express why they do what they do rather than focusing on what they do."*

### **3. Doing**

#### *3.1. Implementation – the power of failure*

Let us come back to the second part of the quote of Allen James: Making dreams come true. Now we enter the "Department of Doing". If you do not come to implementation of your dreams, then your dreams are void and meaningless. They remain mental illusions that might make you depressed at the end. So, if you try and fail – so what, get up again and try another time. Even if you fail at the very end, you still can be proud of having tried. Then you are a hero – remember all the heroes in history, movies and theatre and how many of them have failed at the end: Alexander, the Great; Achilles; Cesar; Napoleon – and recently even James Bond was killed (although the title of the 007-movie was "No Time to Die"). Be aware that failure is not the opposite of success but an important part of it (Eckard Tolle). Failure is the basis of success. Edison failed hundreds and thousand times before he came up with a lighting bulb fit for the market. The basketball legend Michael Jordan said once: *"I've failed over and over again in my life. That is why I succeed."* Only if you do not dare to try you will be forced to consider yourself as a coward one day when the final curtain falls.

#### *3.2. Implementation – all your goals and actions must be linked to your dreams*

If your dreams, your desires and your purposes are your personal drivers, then you need goals to implement in reality whatever you desire. This sounds easy. But get clear what it means in practice: Whatever goals you are going to reach and whatever actions you take, they all must be linked – directly or indirectly – to your dreams, desires and purposes. If you follow goals or take actions that you cannot be aligned to your dreams and purposes – think twice. You might run into a burn-out on the long run. If you like to buy a bicycle, buy one – not a Ferrari (because your friend has one).

### *3.3. Implementation understood – dreams come from your heart, strategy and action come from your mind*

If your goals are clear, you have to find a strategy, make a planning and get through with implementation. Realize the difference: The dreams, desires and purposes come from your *heart* – goals, strategy, planning and implementation come from your *mind*. Successful people do not mix that up! Also, there is another difference: Your goal will be obsolete once you have reached it – your dreams, desires and in particular your purposes will stay and hardly change.

We have said that your dreams, yours desires and your purposes are your personal drivers. So, in the course of implementation all the supporting factors like motivation, commitment, toughness, discipline, resilience are all nurtured by your desires, dreams and purposes – and therefore mostly emotional. Your mental mind will never motivate you, it will never make you committed and it will never support your discipline! This is why dreams, desires and purpose are so important. And it explains why so many rather technical tools of the management in so many companies do not really work to get the people of the organization on the boat. It is because they neglect the “dreaming side” of the people.

### *3.4. Implementation comes easy now*

If you have managed to get aligned with the dreaming side of yourself respectively – as a manager – with the dreaming side your employees, then all the other usual practical recommendations for implementation (which are probably well known to you) come along a lot more easily:

- Do not procrastinate and get started
- Set priorities
- Keep up your motivation
- Stay committed
- Keep up with discipline
- Work hard
- If you fail stand up again
- Be resilient
- Go the extra mile and so forth.

### *3.5. Implementation Plus – do not forget the cooperation with others and stay humble*

If we talk about implementing your success we should never forget: There is nobody really successful in this world who has not looked for and found support of *others*.

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Success is individual and personal – but we are always depending on the *support* of or *cooperation* with other people. Support and cooperation are tremendous boosters on our way to success. It is true in every family, but it is also true for any CEO and even for the president of the US. This insight should make us all a little humble, particularly in these difficult times.

So, let us start dreaming and doing!