



SEIZING SUCCESS: HOW MINDSET MAKES IT HAPPEN

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FOR MOST OF US, SUCCESS IS LIKE A MIRAGE.

We desperately need it, we keep on hoping that it is in our grasp, and it keeps on eluding us. Despite countless success stories and alluring success recipes from mystics, our journey toward this mirage goes on unabated, filled with wishful thinking and shattered dreams.

There are countless books on the subject of success, but with few exceptions, they approach success from the wrong angle. They preach about how success can be achieved quickly and retained forever, and they are hooked on the methodology and the management of success, not on the most fundamental piece of the puzzle: our mindset of success.

While methodology and management of success are certainly essential pieces, the total answer resides in attitude—the mindset that defines the quality of our life and is the architect of our successes and failures. A flawed mindset forces us to put the cart before the horse and tempts us to make our search for success a long, meaningless journey. Deploying a right mindset can start us on a thrilling adventure in pursuit of our genuine success.

Without the right mindset, methodology and management of success are wasted tools.

Ten Commandments for developing your success mindset

I. Revel in Your Uniqueness

“Every man and woman is born into the world to do something unique and something distinctive, and if he or she does not do it, it will never be done.”

—Benjamin Mays, an eminent sociologist

The first and the foremost edict for developing your authentic success mindset is celebrating your uniqueness as an individual. This is your starting point, without which the journey of developing your success mindset will be aimless and futile.

We humans are amazingly similar but precisely different from each other. Our uniqueness defines who we are. If you look closely at someone and think seriously about that person, you will invariably begin to see glimpses of his or her uniqueness.

Allow me to share with you my own uniqueness. I currently serve on the board of governors of a prestigious leadership organization (Leadership Rhode Island). In 2015, all fifteen governors of LRI took a strength-finder test developed by Gallup to determine their top five individual strengths (out of a total of thirty-four human strengths). On completion of the test, my top five strengths in descending order were: Strategic, Learner, Maximizer, Futuristic, Intellection

My first reaction on discovering those top five strengths was “So what?” Though the results correctly reflected my strengths in my day-to-day functioning, I shrugged it off, figuring there must be countless people on this planet with the same top five strengths as of mine. Lo and behold, I found out that only 1 in 178,000 people has the same top five strengths as mine and only 1 in 33 million has these top five strengths in the same order.

With a single stroke of knowledge, I suddenly and pleasantly began celebrating my uniqueness as the one, and the only one, in thirty-three million human beings on this planet. I am quite sure that someday, with ongoing research, my uniqueness will be further delineated, making me understand and revel in my uniqueness even more.

Most of the time, when we compare ourselves with others and curse our fate for not being like them, we make our lives miserable and meaningless. This mindset of despising our uniqueness keeps us far away from our true success. Celebrating rather than despising your uniqueness is a prerequisite for developing your success mindset.

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II. Discern Your True Success

“The Mocker seeks wisdom and finds none, but knowledge comes easily to the discerning.” —Proverbs 14:6

“My happiest days were when I used to earn 90 yuan (\$15) a month.”

Those are the words of Jack Ma expressed in his 2015 television interview with CNBC. Ma is the founder of e-commerce giant Alibaba, and his fortune ballooned after Alibaba’s record-breaking \$25 billion initial public offering on the New York Stock Exchange in 2015. The above agony of a highly successful man is a great example of success poorly discerned. For most of his life, Jack Ma had the utmost desire, determination, and discipline to climb the ladder of worldly success, but reaching the peak, he felt like an unhappy loser.

To avoid joining the ranks of Jack Ma and a myriad of others who have found only unhappiness after achieving their goals, you must always refresh and reinforce the following true meaning of success:

Dictated by our mind and guided by our heart, true success is the result and the reward of our continual quest for concurrent satisfaction and happiness.

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III. Know the Power of Your Mindset

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.” —Winston Churchill

To ensure and sustain the mindset needed to achieve your authentic success, you must comprehend and reinforce the following:

- You are your mindset.
- You are responsible for your mindset.
- Your mindset is crafted by your strong beliefs: Your values, convictions, and suppositions.
- Your mindset can and must be dynamic.
- Constant learning and adapting is essential to keep your mindset dynamic.

IV. Learn to Reflect

In October of 2016, I attended an annual strategic retreat of Leadership Rhode Island (LRI). LRI is not the only organization to have this retreat every year; most, if not all, organizations do this consistently. In all my years in management/leadership positions, the annual retreat has been a mandatory ritual. Have you ever wondered why organizations do this yearly retreat—and usually in a secluded place? Is this an unavoidable formality or a rare chance to learn and adapt to making the organization and its people better?

The answer to these questions may surprise you. In my experience, and in the view of many authentic leaders, barring few exceptions, this get-together called an annual retreat has not only become a formality without any value-added benefit but also is usually an ostentatious display of executive power and privilege.

The good news is that a few organizations like LRI do understand the real meaning and purpose of their annual retreat and utilize this rare time away from their hectic lives to reflect and learn. By doing this, they inspire themselves as well as others (the literal significance of leadership) and establish meaningful and inspiring goals for their future.

This true understanding of the annual retreat ritual is the hallmark of benchmark organizations that have demonstrated sustained performance and laudable employee morale. Sadly, unlike LRI, most organizations and individuals do not understand the intertwining nature of reflecting and learning until they are hit with adversities.

Do we need to wait for adversity to reflect on our situation? Not at all. It is a lamentable fact that we reflect on our situations and our lives only when we are helpless. In other words, when our back is to the wall, we resort to reflecting. To avoid this trap, we need to make reflecting our normal habit.

How can we make reflecting our normal habit and reap its benefits on an ongoing basis?

The reason we resort to infrequent or no reflection at all is our poor comprehension of the anatomy and the power of reflection. Also, we shun reflection because we believe that reflecting is for the weak. By getting over that myth and understanding the true purpose and the power of reflection, we can certainly learn to make reflecting our normal habit.

Reflection and Its Power

Reflection is the art of thoughtful pondering about our self, our life, our choices/actions, and the configuration of our mindset (the driver of our day-to-day functioning). The learning we gain from reflection gives us the opportunity to create profound changes in the beliefs that craft our mindset. Those new beliefs will be exhibited in our new mindset—our new way of thinking and acting.

Even when they understand the brilliant power of reflection, most people continue to experience great trouble in making reflecting a habit. Often, they become discouraged, wondering if something is wrong with them. This happened to me numerous times until I figured out the following subtle difference between focusing and reflecting:

Focusing is all about paying attention, and reflecting is paying attention with the intent of learning and adjusting. In other words, focusing is like wishful thinking that the outcome will change automatically, and reflecting is a deliberate effort to change the outcome with learning.

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Having understood the subtle difference between focusing and reflecting, you are now ready to commit yourself to making reflection an integral part of your life. With that understanding, you can begin to learn reflecting with these eight simple steps:

1. Pick a time in your daily schedule when you are free from distractions and obligations. Keep a pen and a writing pad near you.
2. In a relaxed state of mind, please reflect on one past experience (success or failure) and ponder to know what went on. Increase your consciousness and observation of the results.
3. Write down your thoughts as they come. At this point, don't blemish your thoughts with your justifications and analysis. What you want to do here is to capture your raw genuine thoughts.
4. Stop capturing and writing your thoughts after five to seven minutes.
5. Breathe deeply and unwind yourself for around two minutes.
6. Begin reading your write-up and indulge in what, why, and how. Write down what you learned that could have made the event better.
7. Repeat reading and writing three times.
8. Let go and resume your normal activities.

This exercise should be done on a weekly basis. Prior to your next workout, if you feel lured to read your write-up again and luxuriate in your what, why, and how deliberation, do it by all means—but please don't start chewing over another episode until the following week.

Will this exercise change your world overnight? Not by any stretch of the imagination. But the first exercise will spray the seeds of genuine reflection in your mindset, and these will germinate over time—provided you keep your commitment (burning desire to learn, firm determination that you will, and steady discipline to do this exercise every week).

After doing this practice session every week for nearly a month, and based upon your honesty and commitment, you will start to see clarity and vibrancy in your mindset, and you will become anxious to reflect more. At that stage, you can gradually shift to twice a week and eventually to a daily routine.

Please take your time to get to reflecting as your daily routine. Do not rush it, as there is no one standard time frame for everybody. What you should be aiming for is learning from your reflection and not simply reflecting. If it takes a longer time for you to go into the daily routine, so be it.

You will notice that as you continue reflecting daily on your situation and discovering avenues for making changes, you will start to know yourself more and more. Reflection requires you

to use your senses and increase your consciousness. That brings your mind and your heart closer and increases their harmony and balance. This increased harmony and balance will lead you to indulge in self-reflection more often to experience the genuine reality of yourself.

V. Discover and Scrutinize Your Values

“Values are like fingerprints. Nobody’s are the same, but you leave them all over everything you do.” —Elvis Presley

Our values are our learned governors of right and wrong. Since our mindset is crafted by our strong beliefs based upon by our values, the authenticity of our success mindset is highly dependent on the authenticity of our values. The following is a great insight by Dolores Cummins, the author of a great book, *Altitude*:

Values and beliefs are among the most powerful directing forces in human behavior: operating at an unconscious level, they dictate our successes and our failures. They can underpin or undermine the success mindset. They are the filters through which we interpret and make sense of the world, reflecting what we consider to be important and what we hold to be right and wrong.

Core values are the foundation upon which our identity is built formed before the age of seven and reinforced throughout life by significant relationships, people, events, and the media. The process of socialization and the environment in which we grow up influence what we believe as adults, which in turn can empower or limit our sense of self.

How we value ourselves impacts our self-esteem, our confidence, and ultimately our success. What we hold to be true about ourselves is communicated at an unconscious or nonverbal level, in turn influencing how other people value and believe in us.

You should not wait for adversity to uncover and scrutinize your values; on the contrary, you must constantly pay keen attention to your conscious values in your decision making and constantly uncover your subconscious values through your daily reflection.

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VI. Unveil Your Passions and Your Purpose

“The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.”

—Pablo Picasso

Your success mindset must understand the following facts about your purpose and your passion:

1. Your passion is what you love to do to achieve satisfaction.
2. Your purpose is the reason for your existence—to make a positive difference in the lives of others and experience true happiness.
3. Your passion can be selfish; your purpose cannot.
4. For your genuine success, you need both (passion(s) and purpose.

In the fourth commandment, “Learn to Reflect,” you were encouraged to reflect daily. By now, reflecting should have become a habit for you, and you are continuing to learn more precisely about your feelings for your actions/choices. It is time to go a step further and seek your passions as well as your purpose in your actions and choices.

In addition to your daily writing and reflecting, please start exploring which actions and choices make you feel satisfied (gratified) and which ones give you genuine happiness.

This can be really subjective—and it should be, because you are a unique person and the sources of your satisfaction and happiness will be subjective.

In your passion(s) resides your satisfaction, and your purpose satisfies your happiness.

Constant observation of your actions and choices is a nifty way to discover your satisfaction and happiness. Knowing your passions and your purpose is not only exciting, but also vital in building up your authentic success mindset.

VII. Align Your Passions and Purpose

By this time, you must firmly believe that your satisfaction lies in the pursuit of your passion(s), and your happiness resides in your purpose. For further development of your success mindset, you must now understand that you have to make your passions and your purpose as willing allies, not competing rivals. Without this bond, your success mindset will not be balanced.

“I yearn for more business because I see a world of opportunity to grow the business further and in turn change people’s lives.” These words from Sanjiv Dhar (a budding small business owner operating in Providence-Rhode Island) say it all about aligning our passion with our purpose to improve the quality of our success mindset.

Here is a man who is extremely passionate in growing his business and deeply fixated on using his hard-earned success to fulfill the very purpose of his being: making a positive difference in the lives of others. By doing so, he has been able to make his passion and purpose allies rather than rivals.

Unlike the vast majority of us, Sanjiv has learned to keep his passion healthy, controlled, and focused on his purpose. Sure, he is highly ambitious to grow his business, but not at the cost of diluting the very purpose of his life: happiness of self and others. In other words, he keeps his passion well aligned with his purpose, and he uses the wisdom of that alliance in making his choices. That explains why he is so selective in growing his business.

Prior to 2008, I had no clue how to align my passion with my purpose. Then I read an excellent book titled *Health and Happiness* written by two psychologists, Rick Foster and Greg Hicks, and an MD, Jen Seda. While that book explores the relationship between health and happiness, it also provides a remarkable insight into creating personal intentions to achieve satisfaction as well as happiness.

*“In your passion(s) resides your satisfaction,
and your purpose satchets your happiness.*

This book encourages us to identify our passions and purpose, and to create intentions for their alignment and deployment. These are called core intentions, and once identified, they become the key drivers of our life: our mindset. In order to transplant our core intentions into our daily life, another set of intentions called daily intentions are created to keep us focused on our core intentions.

Greatly inspired by that book, I started to think about creating my own core and daily intentions aimed at aligning my topmost passion with my topmost purpose. Over time, it dawned on me that if I wrote a book, it would provide me with an excellent avenue for aligning my topmost passion of learning with my topmost purpose of sharing (giving), and I would feel more satisfied and happy. It took me a few months to give that thought a practical shape, and by late 2008 I had firmly decided to write a book on organizational turnarounds, covering my successful experiences around the globe. Writing and publishing that book became my firm core intention.

To transform my core intention into reality, I created a daily intention of writing and researching for the planned book by earmarking a specific time in my daily routine: seven to eight thirty in the morning. Was it all too hard? You bet! But my steadfast determination and discipline to stick to my daily intention of writing and reading every morning kept me going.

To make a long story short, in mid-October 2010 I was holding the completed manuscript of my first book in my hand and was feeling few inches taller and a few years wiser. Even before releasing the manuscript for publishing, the amount of learning I gained in the writing and reading of many other books and articles for my research made me extraordinarily proud of myself, and I experienced great satisfaction.

Subsequently, when the book was published and made available in the marketplace, the favorable response from many readers brought an unexplainable happiness to me. Witnessing the sharing of my knowledge with others made me happy beyond measure.

Your genuine success will materialize only when your passion(s) is well aligned with your purpose.

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VIII. Embrace an Authentic Success Mindset

Up to this point, you have acknowledged your uniqueness, understood the true meaning of your success, grasped the necessity and the power of your mindset, mastered reflection, and used its power to uncover your values, passions, and purpose. Through that exposure, you have also figured out how to align your passion(s) with your purpose.

After all that laborious work, and with all that accumulated wisdom, you may be thinking that your journey of developing your success mindset is over. Not yet. You are close, but still not there. Until and unless you make sure that your success mindset will always operate within the time-tested truths about success, it will be incomplete and unsound.

The following five truths of authentic success must become the five strong beliefs of your mindset. Your honest and unflinching dedication to these five beliefs will dictate the quality of your success mindset, and the caliber/speed of your success journey.

1. **Success is highly personal.** This is the bedrock belief of an authentic success mindset. What makes you happy and satisfied is influenced by your uniqueness. It is imperative on your part to find the origin of your unique happiness (your purpose) and your unique satisfaction (passions), and pursue them to achieve your own personal success.

2. **Success is essential.** Our success is an essential medium for fulfilling the very purpose of our human life: to accomplish something worthwhile, to grow, and contribute by making a positive difference in the lives of others. In the absence of this belief, you will be obsessed with your self-centered ambitions and will marginalize your potential.
3. **Success is a constant quest.** As both happiness and satisfaction—the key ingredients of real success—are limitless, our journey of success cannot end with a single achievement. To affirm this truth, consider what happens to a mountain climber who has finished climbing the highest peak in the world, or an ambitious businessman who has amassed money beyond all expectations, or a sportsman who has broken an all-time record, or a philanthropist who has helped wipe out a virulent disease in an impoverished land. Will they sit idle now, bask in the glory of their accomplishments, and declare themselves eternally successful? Not at all! On the contrary, they will be eagerly looking for and jumping into the next challenge or opportunity with increased anticipation.”
4. **Success must be earned.** In a short and sweet way, Colin Powell says it all about earning success: “There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.” Believing in the truth that success is earned and making it a strong belief of your mindset will keep your success journey on track.

5. **Success is fragile.** I have still to meet an individual or organization that has not experienced the cruelty of fleeting success. Sooner or later, our hard-earned success will slip away from our grip, leaving us perplexed and helpless. The earlier we believe in the ageless truth that success is fragile, the better off we will be in extending the longevity of our subsequent successes.

Transplanting five eternal truths about success into the firm beliefs of your mindset will make your success mindset authentic.

IX. Cultivate a Harmonious Response to Success

The only way to safeguard your hard-earned success and continuation of subsequent successes is to fan every facet of your success with the winds of a harmonious response. The three Hs of the harmonious response are: humility, healthy anxiety, and humor.

Being cognizant of your success and not blemishing it with your ego is the trademark of your humility. Yearning to learn from your success as well as your failure is the manifestation of your healthy anxiety, and reading your success lightly through constructive mirth is your humor.

Humility sands the edges of your ego, Healthy Anxiety minimizes your complacency, and Humor keeps you balanced at all times.

X: Delineate Your Own Authentic Success Mindset

The last but not the least important commandment for developing and keeping up your authentic success mindset is to encapsulate the combined wisdom of the preceding nine commandments into a precise format called My Authentic Success Mindset.

The following is the delineation of my success mindset, which is based upon my values, passions, and purpose discussed in these nine commandments. This will function as a prototype for you to formulate your own authentic success mindset.

My Authentic Success Mind-Set

- My mindset is the architect of my life and the driver of my success journey.
- My success mindset is crafted by my firm beliefs that my success is indeed personal, essential, endless, fragile, and must be earned and protected every step of the way of my success journey.
- To maintain the sanctity of my firm beliefs about success, I will always uncover/scrutinize/modify all my values, convictions, and assumptions.
- Reflecting with the logic of my mind, and with the guidance of my heart, I will constantly discover/reinforce my passions and purpose and will keep them aligned at all times.

- To experience genuinely lasting happiness through my success, I will constantly seek avenues to create a positive difference in the lives of others by sharing my successes, and expressing my gratitude for the good acts of others.
- To experience genuinely lasting satisfaction (pride/pleasure) in my success, I will constantly pursue my passions of learning, strategizing, and maximizing with unwavering determination and discipline.
- Lastly, I will fervently demonstrate harmonious response to all facets of my success and failure through my humility, healthy anxiety, and humor.

This precise delineation will not just be useful for refreshing accumulated wisdom, but will likewise function as a constant reminder for you to apply that wisdom in all triumphs, trials, and tribulations of your success journey.

Success is a choice: You can choose to follow the greatest, the strongest, and the smartest people and keep on wishing that you could become just like them so that the rest of the world would look at you with admiration and envy. You may still prefer to call forth the almighty to alter your luck so that your success manifests overnight, or you may sabotage others' success by stealing their methodologies and management skills, and you may erroneously believe that your success will be instant and everlasting.

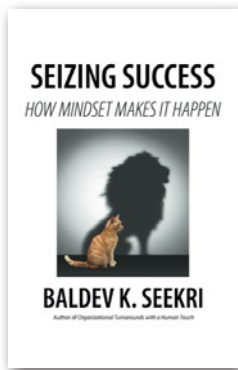
All these wishful aspirations to experience blissful success are nothing more than the fables of a fallacious success mindset that does not bring you anywhere near what you really deserve. It keeps you on a wrong path following the mirage of success by putting your horse behind the cart in your success journey.

Or:

You may choose to develop and nurture your own success mindset with the guidance of ten commandments. This choice will inspire you to understand your uniqueness, your values, your passions, and your purpose. It will enable you to charter your own course to success that is both real and rewarding. This choice will involve celebrating rather than despising your uniqueness; building your success mindset on the foundation of the five eternal truths about success; and trusting yourself to keep your success mindset genuinely dynamic by constantly reflecting on your values, passions, and purpose. It also entails committing to relentless learning and adapting; sharing your knowledge and your resources candidly with others; and demonstrating harmonious response (humility, healthy anxiety, humor) in all facets of your success.

The choice is yours! 🏡

Info



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR | Baldev Seekri is the author of *Organizational Turnarounds with a Human Touch* and the writer of two previous manifestos on [Perceptions](#) and [Inspiration](#).

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