

# Achievement – for the privileged or the masses?

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Intrinsically, everyone has the ability to succeed. It is said that a desire to pursue achievement is an inbuilt characteristic in all of us. If this is true, why do we all know someone who appears to be lacking the desire and commitment to achieve? There are a number of reasons why people don't recognise or meet their potential. Desire and commitment to achieve throughout life needs to be cultivated in order for us to recognise our natural ability to want to achieve. We also need to focus on what truly drives us. An inability to clearly define what we value can create disorganisation in our journey to success. Finally, we need to identify our own definition of success.

The cultivation of a sense of achievement begins very early in life. Your strongest role model in your formative years is your same sex parent. Having said that, both parents are important role models for all of their children. Take voting as an example. As a young person voting for the first time, who did you vote for? It is likely that the answer is – the same person your parents supported during that election. For this same reason, it is difficult for a child with two parents on long term welfare, to see the possibility of becoming, say, an entrepreneur, a physician or a teacher.

So, do we travel through life blaming our parents for our lack of will to soar to great heights? Conversely, do we consider them entirely responsible for our success? Do we accept no responsibility for our own destiny? Clearly the answer is no. We all know a person who is the first in their family to finish school, gain a degree, manage a company or own their own business. Certainly, those who have achievement oriented role models may be able to better understand what is possible. However, this doesn't necessarily mean they will achieve the goals that will bring them real happiness.

Focus is vital to achieving what you want. In order to know what you want in life, you need to understand what you value in life. Your values reflect your personal priorities. Our values make us who we are and express our fundamental beliefs. Things we can value are self esteem, love, knowledge, wisdom, family, independence, happiness, innovation, freedom, fun and recognition. Other values, which may be less altruistic but just as important to us, are money, power, possessions and ambition. There is almost no limit to your possible list of values. Your list of values says much about what is important in your life, and what you will tend to

prioritise and be thankful for. Before you define what you want to achieve, you must ensure it is in line with your values and fundamental beliefs. If it is, the journey to achievement will be fulfilling and enjoyable in itself. And achieving your goal will bring true happiness to your life. If it isn't, the journey to achievement can be a burden and a struggle, and reaching your goal can feel meaningless.

In order to understand what success will look like for you, to need to clearly define your fundamental beliefs. From these, your values will be clear. You will have many values. The key is to prioritise them. There will be some values that you find are essential to your core being. Others will be those things you appreciate in life. It is important to work through those differences, to identify the values most aligned with who you are.

This is where the person with strong role models can come unstuck. In order to experience achievement that leads to true happiness and fulfilment, you need to honestly define what success looks like to you. It can be whatever you want it to be. Whatever will truly inspire you. The key is accepting that what inspires all of us varies greatly between people. What inspires your parents, your partner, your friends or your colleagues, can be very different from each other, and from you. Adopting the priorities of others, when they do not resonate with you, is a recipe for an unsatisfied life. Your definition of success cannot be handed down to you. You cannot marry it. You cannot play golf with it. It can't belong to anyone else. It has to be your own. You can share it with others, and that is how successful partnerships are achieved; with shared values and purpose. However, it is crucial to ensure they are shared, rather than imposed.

Everyone has an inbuilt need to achieve. Achieving goals that bring meaning to our lives creates a sense of happiness and wellbeing, leading to further drive to achieve greater success. To bring out that burning desire to set and reach your goals, you always need to ensure that the goal itself upholds your personal priorities.

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