



Success Is No Accident

Wishful thinking no more—here are eight steps for creating faster success in your life.

By Brian Tracy

There is a lot of discussion and controversy today over the book and the movie titled *The Secret*.

The central message of *The Secret* is that you can have everything you want in life by visualizing and thinking happy thoughts about it. This will supposedly trigger the law of attraction, which enables your goals to miraculously appear. It's a wonderful idea that has been embraced by millions.

Alas! Success is not as easy as that. If it were, everybody who thought positive

thoughts would be happy, healthy, thin, rich, and enjoying a wonderful relationship. So if *The Secret* is not the real secret of success, what is? Let us look at some of the factors that are indispensable to your achieving your goals and realizing your full potential.

Step 1: Decide exactly what you want.

You cannot hit a target that you cannot see. You can't go through life with vague or contradictory goals and expect to accomplish anything worthwhile.

Here is part of the real secret: When you decide exactly what you

want in each area of your life (career, family, health, and long-term financial goals), you increase the likelihood that you will achieve these goals five- or tenfold.

Just as if you set out in a strange city to find a specific address, but you have a clear map, directions, or a GPS system, you will be able to move faster and more dependably from wherever you are to wherever you want to go.

Step 2: Write it down.

A goal that is not in writing is merely a wish or a fantasy. A wish has been called "a goal with no energy behind it."

When you write down your goal, you activate your three learning modalities: auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. You envision and subvocalize the goal as you write it. And because you are using your hand, wrist, and arm to write it, you are activating your kinesthetic sense as well.

As a result of activating your three learning modalities, the writing down of your goal actually transfers and programs it into your superconscious mind. The process is like saving it to your hard drive. It becomes a permanent part of your mental operating system.

A written goal gives you a target, as well as greater clarity, purpose, and direction. It also activates your reticular cortex, the part of the brain that alerts you to people, objects, and situations in your environment that can help you achieve your goal.

Let's say that you want to buy a red sports car. From that day forward, with your reticular cortex now activated, you will see red sports cars wherever you go. You will see ads for them in newspapers, and pictures of them in magazines. You will develop ideas and insights on how you can acquire that car, which you will eventually do.

Step 3: Set a deadline.

Most people allow the fear of failure to dominate their thoughts and actions. Subconsciously, they avoid the pain of failing by either not setting a goal in the first place, or leaving its achievement open-ended. But when you set a specific deadline for your goal, you place yourself in the balance.

The good news is that your subconscious mind loves deadlines! A deadline serves as a forcing system in your brain that motivates, drives you forward, and inspires you with ideas for actions to achieve your goal on schedule.

If your goal is big enough, set a subdeadline. If you want to earn a certain amount of money or lose a certain amount of weight during the course of a year, break your goal down into monthly, weekly, or even daily

increments. Just like a traveler driving a long distance, you can set daily mini-goals for the distance that you want to cover that day.

The more specific and precise you are about your deadlines and subdeadlines, the more rapidly you activate your mental powers to move you toward your goal, and your goal toward you.

Step 4: List everything that you can possibly do to enable you to achieve your goal.

The greatest enemies of success are our own doubts and fears. We aspire to better things in each area of our lives, but we doubt our ability to achieve them.

When you write down your goals and set a deadline, your conscious mind may desire those goals, but your unconscious fears of failure and loss may cause you to doubt yourself.

But when you make a list of every single thing that you could do to achieve the goal, something happens to your fears; they begin to dissipate. Simultaneously, your confidence and faith in the attainment of those goals increases.

The more small items you write on your list, the more you realize that you may not be able to achieve the large goal overnight, but you can do this one thing, followed by one more thing, and another.

As you take the first steps, your confidence begins to increase, your doubts dwindle, and your fears subside. With each step toward your goal, you become more confident. At a certain point, you move from "positive thinking" to "positive knowing." You absolutely know, deep inside, that you can attain this goal.

Once you have composed your list, organize the items by sequence and priority. Determine what you have to do first and what you have to do second.

Consultant Tom Peters once said that all of business is the starting and completion of projects. A project, by definition, is a multitask job. It is a job with a series of steps that must be

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accomplished through order and clarity to complete the final project.

Your ability to set proper priorities on a list of activities is the essential skill of time management. There will always be tasks and activities that are more important and more consequential than others. Your ability to decide what they are, and then discipline yourself to work on them single-mindedly is a vital part of attaining success.

Step 5: Take action.

Successful people are intensely action-oriented. Unsuccessful people tend to be more talk-oriented and end up procrastinating on their tasks and responsibilities.

If you take action in the direction of your goals, only two things can happen: success or failure. If your action is successful, you do more of it and probably get better at it over time. If your action is unsuccessful, you learn from it, try again, or try something else.

You benefit either way by making faster progress or by learning critical things you need to be successful later. The only way that you can lose is by not taking action at all. Unfortunately, this is the default setting for most people.

Step 6: Take daily action to advance toward your most important goal.

This simple principle will guarantee your success at any goal that you set for yourself.

As Sir Isaac Newton described the law of inertia, “A body at rest tends to remain at rest unless acted upon by an outside force; a body in motion tends to remain in motion unless acted upon by an outside force.”

In terms of momentum, this means that it may take you a lot of energy to get going initially. But once you are moving forward, it is much easier to keep moving toward your goal.

Most people underachieve or fail because they never get going in the first place. And if they do get going, they allow themselves to slow down and stop, making it almost impossible for them

to get up the energy to get going again. Don't let this happen to you.

Step 7: Determine the additional knowledge and skills that you will need to achieve your most important goal.

For you to achieve something new, you have to learn and practice something that you never learned and practiced before.

So ask yourself, what one skill, if excellently developed and used, would help you the most to achieve your goal?

It seems that your weakest key skill in your field sets the heights to which you rise in your field. You may be good at a lot of things, but the one area where you are weak tends to cause problems and hold you back. Fortunately, all business skills are learnable. You can learn any skill you need to accomplish any goal you set.

Whatever the skill you require, write it down as a goal, set a deadline, and make a plan to achieve it. Take action on your plan, and do something every day that improves your skill level in that area. In no time—a week, a month, or a year—you will have mastered that key skill. You will have stepped on the accelerator of your life and career, moving more rapidly toward your goals and creating the life that you want.

You must realize that success is not a straight line. Cross-country flight is off course 99 percent of the time. The entire journey is a matter of making “course corrections.” In your life, no matter how skilled you are, you will be off course most of the time. The real secret of success lies in your ability to make continuous course corrections, accepting feedback from your environment, and changing direction when necessary.

Step 8: Keep persevering.

The most important part of the real secret of success, once you know exactly what you want and take all the requisite steps to achieve it, is persistence.

“Persistence is to the character of man/woman as carbon is to steel,”

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said personal success leader Napoleon Hill. Your ability to be absolutely clear about what you want and to throw your whole heart into achieving it, backed by relentless persistence and determination, is the final element in the real secret of success.

You have within you, right now, more talent and ability than you could use in a hundred lifetimes. Your job is to unlock your full potential for success and achievement by deciding what you want and then by never giving up until you reach it.

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