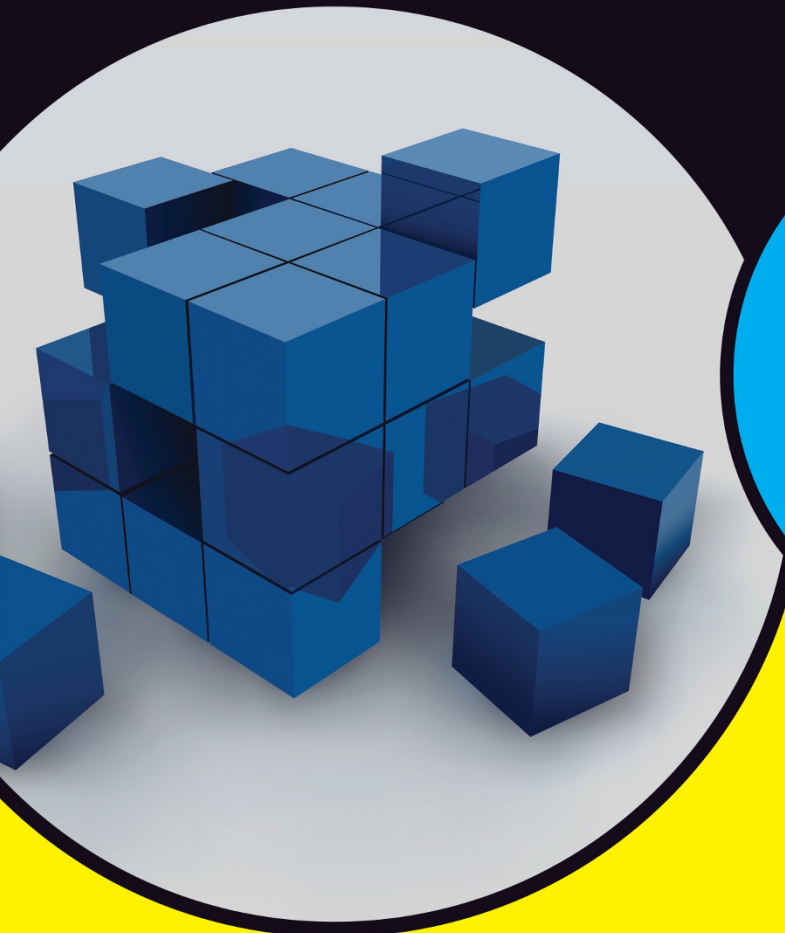


LEARNING MADE EASY



# Success Habits

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand



Reshape daily routines and  
improve time management

Achieve long-term success  
and job satisfaction

Change your life by  
changing your habits

**Dirk Zeller**

Best-selling author,  
CEO of Sales Champions and  
Real Estate Champions





# Success Habits

by Dirk Zeller

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

## Success Habits For Dummies®

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# Introduction

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Congratulations on making the investment in yourself and your success. The decision to take action to study and learn more about success and how to achieve it is one of the most important you can make in life. Most people want to be more successful, but they don't do anything to make it happen. You, my friend, are a doer!

I had a “line in the sand” moment with my lack of success. At 27 years of age, I was embarking on a new career hoping the next 5 years would not be like the previous 5 years. I was broke and in debt, wanting to earn a six-figure-plus income, but very behind on my goals. I decided I needed to study and read about success. I wanted to be successful but lacked a plan, strategies, and a system. I was a hard worker, but being a hard worker wasn't enough. I knew there was something more, so I set about to find it. That decision has changed my life, my income, my relationships, and my bank account. If you are having the type of moment that caused you to pick up this book, I applaud you.

Success leaves clues; it leaves a trail. Success has a recipe, just as making a Caesar salad has a simple recipe that anyone can follow. My objective is to share with you the recipe to success, to teach you the combination of ingredients and how to mix them in the right order. Once you learn and master the recipe, then you can make your own adjustments and change the recipe to your taste.

This book comes out of my passion to help people live the life they dream about. I want to help you define what you desire in life and then help you craft a plan to achieve it. I will coach you on the mindset, habits, skills, strategies, systems, and tools that will guarantee your success and speed up the timeframe to acquisition of it.

I am personally excited about our journey to success together. I frequently conclude correspondence with “To Your Success” before my signature. What I am stating is that I celebrate and cheer for you as you progress to greater success. So let's clink our glasses and celebrate success!

To Your Success!

# About This Book

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This book is about becoming more successful by building strong habits. It's also about clearly defining what success is to you so it's more easily achieved. The only definition of success that really matters is *yours*. This book is a guide that helps you achieve the goals and dreams that you have for yourself and your family.

I'm delighted to share with you the keys I've found for success and to help you avoid the mistakes I've made along the way. (I'm a firm believer in the idea that we often benefit more from failures than from successes — but that doesn't mean you have to repeat my failures.) My hope is that you learn from both my warnings and positive examples.

The habits, techniques, skills, and strategies I present throughout this book are the same ones I've used and tested to perfection personally and with thousands of coaching clients and hundreds of thousands of training program participants. We certainly live in a technology empowered world today. The influence of social media is prevalent. But the foundational principles of success, personal habits, wealth, relationships, productivity, proper usage of time, and being healthy have not changed as much. This is not a book of theory but of “real stuff” that works and is laid out in a hands-on, step-by-step format. You'll also find time-tested tools, strategies, and systems, not fluff, contained in this book.

If you apply the information contained in this book with the right attitude, and if you're consistent in your approaches and in your success expectations, your success is guaranteed.

# Foolish Assumptions

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When I wrote the book, I assumed a few things about you, my dear reader. I assumed you picked up the book because you wanted to achieve a higher level of success. You want to earn more income, create wealth, enhance your family relationships, be more valuable at work, run your business better, and optimize your health. Any or all of the above may apply to you, or you might be on a quest to define success more completely and personally for you. As they say, you have come to the right place.

# Icons Used in This Book

To help you navigate this book a bit better, you can rely on icons in the book's margins. The icons are little signposts that point out the important info.



TIP

This icon points out little-advertised nuggets of knowledge that are certain to give you an edge in increasing your success in life.



REMEMBER

This icon denotes critical information that you really need to take away with you. Remember these points if nothing else. They address the issues that you will come across repeatedly in climbing higher on the mountain of success.



WARNING

Consider this the flashing red light on the road to success. When you see the this icon, you know to steer clear of whatever practice, behavior, or response I indicate.



ANECDOTE

When you see this icon, I'm giving examples from my personal life or from the lives of close family and friends.

## Beyond the Book

In addition to the material and content in the print or e-book version you are reading now, there are also additional resources that I created that you can access on the web. There is a valuable Cheat Sheet, a Dummies staple. You can access it by going to [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com) and typing for "Success Habits For Dummies cheat sheet" in the search box. The Cheat Sheet is a wonderful reference to keep handy and refer to frequently. It is comprised of key reminders, quick strategies, and focus points for achievement. It's a great tool to have on your phone, computer, tablet, or even printed out and taped to the mirror.

## Where to Go from Here

To tackle a book so packed with tools, techniques, and strategies, Part 1 is a good place to start. It deals with the formulas and principles of achieving success, and reading this section first will create a solid foundation upon which to build your success.

After that, you might use the table of contents or index to pick out topics that you have the greatest interest or need in. Select the chapters that are most important to your definition of what success is to you. Feel free to move around the book in any way that suits you. Even this approach will lead you to a vast array of new knowledge and strategies for success. If you feel well-versed in, say, your relationships, then you might want to dive into Part 5, “Success with Wealth and Money,” or Part 6, “The Time and Success Connection.” These two parts of the book cover the most common roadblocks to achieving success.

The truth is, no matter where you take your first plunge, the water is fine. You will find a vast array of valuable information that you can use to increase your performance, income, relationships, and quality of life.

# 1

## **Principles and Formulas for Success**

**IN THIS PART . . .**

Get familiar with the formula for success.

Learn success from the successful people around you.

Discover discipline's role in the achievement of success in life.



- » Defining success for yourself
- » Creating the habit of success
- » Staying on track

## Chapter **1**

# Success Is a Habit

**T**he pursuit of success is not new. People for all ages have been trying to unlock the mysteries of human behavior, peak performance, and success. Why is it that some people seem to, at first observation, achieve success easily while others try but repeatedly fall short? Just about everyone has the desire to improve their lives, but only a few of us actually achieve it.

Aristotle said, “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence therefore is not an act, but a habit.” He was using success interchangeably with excellence. While you might define them differently, they must be thought of as close cousins. Aristotle studied and wrote about success until his death in 322 BC. The big picture in this quote is the connection between repeatedly doing something and the establishment of a habit. The conclusion is that you can create the habit of success or you can create the habit of failure.

Success, or excellence, will always be created through establishing positive, repetitive habits. Unfortunately, almost anything we do repeatedly can lose its luster, passion, and energy. Without doing something repeatedly, you won’t establish it as a habit. When you focus on repeating the actions that lead to success, you create habits. So repeating and success are like peas and carrots: They go together. There is always a yin and a yang in the pursuit of success. Right actions repeatedly done create habits and guarantees success. That would be the yin. The yang would be not engaging in the right actions repeatedly over time, creating bad habits that guarantee failure.



We all will create habits in either direction in life. The establishment of our habits is inevitable. We are the ultimate arbiters of what those habits will be. First, we will create our habits, and then our habits will create us.

In this chapter, I will describe success from a number of different angles. My desire is to start you off with the broad brush strokes and give you a little background scenery. In subsequent chapters, we'll approach the painting with finer brushes and explore more specific aspects of the beautiful landscape of success habits.

## What Is Success?

Success is many things to different people. We all have our own personal and unique definition of what success is to us. The dictionary defines success as the fact of getting or achieving wealth, respect, or fame. It also defines success as the correct or desired result of an attempt. I feel those two definitions capture the essence and objectives of success. Earl Nightingale, who is called “The Dean” of the personal motivation industry, describes with a twist: Success as the *progressive* realization of a worthy goal or worthy ideal.

Too many of us attach the moniker of success to the end result of achieving success: the achievement of the purchase of a new Mercedes, the finish line of becoming a millionaire, our kids graduating high school or college, or the corner office in the company. Mr. Nightingale brings a new perspective to success through the word “progressive.” As long as you are progressing toward a predetermined goal, you are in fact a success. What is most important is not how I define success. I can certainly add ideas, insight, and guidance in your journey to achieving of success. What is more important and personal is how you define success for your life.

- » Success is you as a business owner providing valuable service to your clients, and that you enjoy helping your clients and customers. You go home content in the fact that you did a good job for each person you served, delivered value to, and treated with honesty.
- » Success is that you went home to meaningful relationships with people you love. You have community, communication, and fun with those loved ones. You have people you love and who love you.
- » Success is having interests that bring you joy, whether that is a serving opportunity at church, the community center, or a homeless shelter. A recreational interest creates success, whether that's golf, pickle ball, hunting, fishing, mountain biking, or more sedentary interests like painting or knitting.

- » Success is the feeling of security you have when you sit down to pay bills each month and there are funds left over. What you are doing in that moment is increasing your assets and reducing your liabilities. You are taking a few steps more toward financial security.
- » Success, at the end of the day, is being grateful as you turn out the lights. You are grateful to people who have helped you today or whom you have been able to help and serve.

## What Isn't Success?

The biggest *isn't* of success is failing to define it for yourself, as a couple, or as a family. It's easy to get sidetracked or pursue someone else's definition of success. Our brains are bombarded with images of success in social media, the news, the television, or even in the parent drop-off lane at school. We can't avoid seeing Sally's new Porsche or her daughter's new designer clothes. Or we notice that Amy looks so tan and rested after her family's trip to Barbados.



TIP



ANECDOTE

Observe others to encourage and remind yourself of what is possible. Don't observe to compare or keep score. The truth is, the only score card that matters is yours.

Being successful is granting grace to yourself and others when the achievement you desire takes a little while longer than you expected. I had a coaching call recently with a wonderful client, Sandy. Her goal was to sell enough homes to make \$250,000. She had a challenging year because she and her business partner decided to end the partnership. There was a lot of drama to say the least. We were reviewing what she had earned and what was still to be collected in income, and we came to the realization she would not make her \$250,000 goal. When that fact was confirmed, she didn't feel very successful. Frequently, our timeline for success can be slightly off. In reviewing her sales numbers, I ventured that her sales in escrow that were set to close by the middle of January would put her at that \$250,000 mark. So she missed her goal, but she only missed it by two weeks. In the overall scheme of things, that's nothing.

## The Only Thing That's Important: What Success Is to You

Success is personal. It's a personal experience of well-being, confidence, and accomplishment. That is why you must decide what success is for you. We all have wishes to lose weight, save more money, and improve our relationships. But

success is not in the wish business. It's in the desire, habit, and commitment business. The do it or else business. A wish has not morphed into desire, where you are willing to lay everything on the line to achieve it. It doesn't come with the resolve that causes you to say to yourself, "I will do it or else." In order for you or I to achieve success, we must have desire for something and a big enough reason why we desire it.



REMEMBER

You are in control of what you desire or wish. We all have the authority and power to decide what we want and then determine our motivation level to achieve it. You need to have clarity about what's important to you and who's important to you. What legacy you want to leave is the process of refining your definition of success.

Too many people get caught up in the *how* of reaching success or even a specific benchmark or goal of success. They spend little time focusing on the clarity of the *why*. Why we want something is the power source. If the why is large enough, the how becomes easy. We often focus on the wrong end of the equation. Why do you want to be financially independent? Why do you want to build a business to a large scale? Why do you want to be married and have children? Why do you want to lose weight? Why do you want the luxury house or second home? Why do you want to retire early?

I don't think there are hundreds of whys in our life. I think we have a handful of whys that can interconnect to our goals and dreams. This small handful of whys create the power source in our life to become a good spouse, parent, child to older parents, business owner or employee. It helps us establish a legacy of service and love even after our journey on Earth is over.

A why can come from a past positive or a negative experience. There are thousands of stories of successful people who grew up in abject poverty, and that fueled their why. There are stories, like my own, where I grew up more privileged, and that also fueled the why. There is really no difference between the two pathways to the result. Each person taps into their unique why to power themselves to achievement to their desired life. The why can come from a desire to achieve the highest level of personal performance. Some people are motivated to excel, but the question is always, "Why?" Why do some have a passion for improvement and others don't?

No one else can give you your why; you must discover it for yourself. As a coach, I can ask questions and guide clients to their unique set of whys. I can't give them their why, though. That is one big value to having a coach in all the stages of your career, as they have the ability to help you draw out the whys buried inside of you. Your why can come from your envisioned future of your life and business. Your why can come from your love of another and the devotion and commitment you have for them in areas of your life.

I learned from my late friend, Jim Rohn, that life is not about what you acquire but what you become. We set goals to become the person we need to become to accomplish the goal. I had to become a different person to attract the success that I had in real estate sales. I've had to become a more skilled and more knowledgeable person to become a coach, speaker, and author. A specific example is that I had to become more disciplined to become the author of ten books and counting. As an author, you must be free to remove distractions, sit in the seat, and write, type, or speak your thoughts into words.

The important whys are like a magnet that pulls you to success. The more compelling the whys of your life, the more bumps in the road and adversity you will face. You might be asking, why more adversity? Because of the clarity, you recognize and are bothered by the distractions, and you are aware that they are taking you further way from your goals. A powerful why doesn't remove the challenges; it just renders them to being less important. The clarity of why fires up your resolve to overcome any obstacle to achievement. You recognize the obstacles and your sense of urgency dispatches them.

## The Different Categories of Success

Success can be evaluated through different lenses. I find that most people want to achieve their definition of success in these categories:

### Health

Success in the health area of life means to be reasonably healthy and free of ailments, to be physically active, free of pain, and able to enjoy activities that require movement. One could determine success in the health category with numbers if you are more analytically inclined: your cholesterol number, waist size, minutes of cardio exercise per week, your weight, your body mass index, and so on.

Your definition of health might be affected by a chronic disease that you merely need to manage well rather than cure. My definition of successful health has evolved since being diagnosed with Meniere's disease more than eight years ago. There is no cure for Meniere's disease, so my expectations of successful health is focused on reducing the vertigo episodes and lowering their intensity so that I can enjoy work, family, and life's other pleasures more completely. Along with the weight, cholesterol, and exercise levels, the controlling of the Meniere's is a big marker in being successful in my health.

## Financial

We all need to achieve some level of financial success. What constitutes success financially can vary widely from person to person. Some attach success to a large lifestyle of luxury homes, automobiles, and exotic trips. For others, financial success is humbler: having their home paid off and being reasonably prosperous. If you don't take the time to evaluate your desires in the financial category, it's easy to wander in the wilderness, pursue stuff, and develop envy of others that have achieved more financial wealth.

There are two realizations that I have come to in achieving financial wealth. The first is that there will always be people who have acquired more wealth than I will. The second is that I won't be taking any of it with me when I die.

## Relationships

Being successful in your key relationships in life can bring the greatest joy. We are made for relationships with others. Our significant others, children, parents, siblings, friends, and coworkers are all key relationships that need to be developed and maintained to create meaning in our lives.

## Career

The average person invests more than 90,000 hours of their lifetime at work. For many, a third of your life is invested in work. Some of us work more than 40 or 50 years of our life until retirement. Advancing your career, becoming more valuable, and embracing new challenges at your job, career, or business can bring definition and clarity to how you define success.

## And more . . .

Health, wealth, relationships, and career are just a few examples of success categories. You may have different measuring sticks for success: happiness, peace of mind, security, length of life, a nice home, personal growth, and freedom.

These categories all could be developed into primary aims for your pursuit of success.