

A photograph of a dirt path winding through a forest of bare trees. The path is the central focus, leading the eye into the distance. The trees are tall and thin, with no leaves, suggesting a late autumn or winter setting. The ground is covered with fallen leaves and patches of green grass. The lighting is soft, with a bright spot at the end of the path where the sun is shining through the trees.

# No Shortcut To Success ?

**John Watson**

**"There are no shortcuts to any place worth going"  
Beverly Sills b.1929**

# **No Shortcut To Success? by John Watson**

## **Introduction**

**All of us crave success of some kind or another. Many books have been written on the subject of success and many more will be written. This book provides some of my thoughts and the thoughts of others on this subject. I hope you will find several of them useful. My own definition of success is as follows:**

***Success is doing what you plan to do whatever the results***

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## Chapter One No Shortcut To Success?

**S**ometimes short cuts are not worth taking. They may bring you quick results but they do not make you become a better, stronger or more skilful person.

On the internet a lot of people are promoting private label products. You pay some money and get the rights to put your name on software or ebooks. In other words you claim credit for having achieved something you haven't.

So far I have resisted the temptation to buy these rights. I would feel uneasy about claiming to be the author of a book I had not written. What happened to honesty?

Another reason for not buying private label ebooks is that they take away your chance to become a writer. Why bother to learn the skills of writing if you can buy the fruits of someone else's hard work and claim their efforts as your own? You lose the incentive to become an expert author in your own right.

Some people are offering products in the rough. You do some work on these and then can put your name to them. This is more acceptable in my view since most writers borrow or adapt the ideas and occasionally the words of other writers. Few books are ever totally original.

The foreword to one of my books, "36 Laws To Ignite Your Power And Realize Your Dreams Now," is written by a copywriter. I offered to put his name to it but like many copywriters he preferred to keep his name out of the equation. Maybe he didn't like the book!

In the martial arts world, many students want to become black belts as soon as possible with the minimum of work. They show up to lessons before a grading exam is due and are content to scrape through and get their next belt and then they disappear until the next exam is imminent. Some even leave the class and give up because they think they are not being graded fast enough. They are interested in the appearance rather than the reality of success.

They do not realize that they are missing out on the satisfaction and power of becoming a real black belt. They think that having a black belt round their waist somehow makes them great. It doesn't.

You can tell the black belts who have really earned their black belt a mile off. They take your breath away with their power and skill or, failing that, with their determination and effort.

**I** was never very skilful at my gradings but I did, at least once, get an award for effort and, at my black belt grading, one person, at least, described my performance as 'awesome'. He wasn't a friend or relative! I was in some pain after the grading and had trouble lying down and standing up but the joy of achieving the belt lasted for weeks.

My Taekwondo Instructor, Master Hock Lye Ooi, once offered to give any one who wanted it a black belt:

"Here come and take it."

We all stared at him in amazement. He was making the point that being given a black belt for free means nothing. Any one can buy one in a shop or order one on the net. There is no emotional satisfaction in getting a black belt when you have avoided the hard work necessary to achieve it.

One of my Shotokan Karate teacher's favourite admonishments was that, if you are not working flat out:

"You are only cheating yourself."

He was right. You only feel good and make real progress after a hard work out either mentally or physically.

In the Contenders boxing reality show hosted by Sylvester Stallone and Sugar Ray Leonard, some of the boxers picked the toughest fighters as their opponents. They were not at ease with taking short cuts by picking a weak opponent. They knew that, if they faced up to the most fearsome opponents, they could walk tall anywhere. They would have paid their dues.

Others were more concerned to win the million dollar prize than they were to become great boxers by fighting great opposition. They picked the boxer they believed they could demolish easily.

These 'short cut' boxers will probably fail to win the prize anyway because they will not have become worthy of it.

In the long run, working hard and paying your dues is usually easier than doing things in a half-hearted way. If you charge into a rugby union scrum with minimum effort and aggression, you will probably get hurt.

If you do anything properly and thoroughly, you will feel much happier than if you are taking things easy at every opportunity.

**E**ven making your bed well can be satisfying and you will sleep better! The great Jim Rohn, as usual, sums all this up perfectly:

"The major value in life is not what you get. The major value in life is what you become. That is why I wish to pay fair price for every value. If I have to pay for it or earn it, that makes something of me. If I get it for free, that makes nothing of me."

If you win the lottery, you might be rich in money but you are not rich in skill and character. Rohn advises learning how to make a million not so much for the money but for what the effort will make of you. This puts a whole new and more interesting slant on the pursuit of riches.



It also puts a new slant on the pursuit of any goal. Achieving the goal is secondary. If you can achieve it without cheating or taking lazy short cuts you will make more of yourself. This is real success.

However, there are ways in which you can make any work you do much more effective and even easier. By using affirmation, prayer and visualization techniques you can enlist the aid of your subconscious mind and the power and abundance of the universe. This is not so much a shortcut as a way to row downstream instead of upstream!

Enlisting the help of a coach or mentor in achieving your goal is not a lazy shortcut. It is just using your common sense!

## Chapter Two Success Lessons From Josey Wales

The Outlaw Josey Wales is an interesting Western that I have watched many times. It is full of success lessons for the discerning!

A Missouri farmer joins a Confederate guerilla unit to avenge the murder of his wife and son and winds up on the run from the Union soldiers who killed his family.

Throughout the film, Josey spits chewing tobacco juice on everything that moves or does not move like the dead bodies of his enemies. He hits insects, dogs and a snake oil salesman who claims that his product can do 'almost anything'. Josey tells him to use it to clean the tobacco juice off his white jacket.

He also uses spit as a distraction before shooting down his foes. Occasionally he spits accurately into a spittoon. Practice makes you competent! Daily practice makes you an expert.



Pursued by the Union redlegs and his former Confederate leader, Josey Wales heads out for Red Indian country to escape capture.

His opponents chase him across a big river on a ferry raft. Josey stays cool enough to take a nap as his pursuers begin to cross the river. He then stays calm enough to shoot through the rope that is pulling the raft laden with horses and men. He gives them a 'Missouri boat ride' as they are swept away downstream.

This incident provides another great success lesson which is to *stay calm under pressure*. Everyone thinks, shoots and does everything better when they do not panic.

The young guerilla colleague, Jamie, whom Josey rescued from the redlegs, was wounded and is dying. Josey looks after him telling him not to look at the wound:

*"Don't look at it, boy."*

Great advice. Don't brood over your problem. Be aware of it but then get enthusiastic about how you will feel when your problem is solved.

Soon after the river escape, two bounty hunters, Abe and Elijah, sneak up on Josey. Both are excited at the thought of the reward for capturing Josey Wales but Elijah (Lije) is also full of doubts and warnings.

Elijah reminds me of Shakespeare's great lines in 'Measure for Measure':

"Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt."

Abe has to keep telling Lije to shut up so that he can concentrate on capturing Josey and getting the reward money. We all need to concentrate without allowing doubts to take over our minds.

However, in this case, Lije is the wise one and Abe loses his life and Lije's by not listening to his warnings.

In the film, Abe pulls his gun on Josey: "I've got him, Lije."

"It's him, Abe. It's him! We've got the Josey Wales, Abe! I've seen him ride side by side with Bloody Bill, Abe. We've got reward money coming. Watch it, Abe. He's mean as a rattler and twice as fast with them pistols."

Abe tells Josey to "Move on back; move on back!"

Lije comes up with more warnings: "Watch him, Abe! I've seen him do some things..."

"Shut up, Lije"

Abe explains why he isn't killing Josey immediately:

"Now, Mr Josey Wales, I'd just as soon shoot you now but it'd be harder to drag your body through the brush to where we can get a pound price for you."

Lije wisely disagrees: "Shoot him now, Abe. Shoot him, now!"

"Shut up, Lije." Abe is trying hard to concentrate on Josey!

"Move your left hand down and unbuckle that pistol belt. Make it nice and slow so that I can count the hairs on that hand. See, Lije. You pull his teeth and he's harmless as a heel hound. Always wanted to face out one of these big pistol fighters they raise all the fuss about."

Abe is on a roll! Lije is still rightly concerned:

"Watch out! He's probably got another pistol."

"Shut up, Lije."

Josey's young dying friend distracts the bounty hunters with the possibility that there might be stolen gold under his blanket and both of the bounty hunters are soon shot.

Lije was right Josey does, in fact, have an extra pistol in a shoulder holster!

Jamie wants to bury them but Josey is as practical and unsentimental as ever:

*"Buzzards got to eat; same as worms."*

Later in the film there is another example of successful self-defence. Josey is confronted by some Union Soldiers.

He again uses the 'distract them first' technique by asking them a question to engage their minds before he shoots them:

"Are you going to pull those pistols or whistle Dixie?"

I won't go any further in the film in case you haven't seen it but already there are some great success lessons in the story so far:

- 1) If you want to become a successful expert at something (even spitting) practise daily!
- 2) If you can stay cool under pressure and control the adrenaline surge that usually accompanies stress and danger you are more likely to deal with any problem (like pursuing soldiers) successfully.
- 3) Don't brood over a problem. Just take note of it and then imagine how you might feel if the problem had been successfully solved.
- 4) If you need to focus on a difficult task, it usually helps to avoid doubt and to ignore or shut up any distracting voices like Lije's.

However, occasionally, it is wiser to listen to the distracting or sceptical voices! Your mum is quite often right!

- 5) Defend yourself successfully by distracting your opponent before you strike!



## Chapter Three      **Success Without Whining About Doing Your Best**

**I**n the film 'The Rock', Sean Connery takes a dim view of those who claim to be 'doing their best'. He comments grimly: 'Losers always whine about doing their best.' Is he right? This chapter tries its best to give an answer!

In the film, two men are set the near impossible task of disabling rocket bombs armed with nerve gas on the island of Alcatraz which has been occupied by ace rebel special forces. The lives of the five million citizens of San Francisco depend on their success. Tension is high throughout.



Sean Connery is one of the two men. He is a tough ex con. He asks his inexperienced partner, a mild mannered chemist, acted by Nicholas Cage:

"Are you ready for this?"

His partner bravely replies: "I'll do my best."

Sean Connery immediately corrects him:

"Losers always whine about doing their best."

Is Sean Connery right? Yes and No

**Y**es, people sometimes say they will do their best but really mean:

"I will make some effort but I don't really expect to succeed."

They use doing their best as an excuse for failure and are not in fact planning on really doing their best.

On the other hand some people mean they really will do their best whatever happens.

Such people do not always win but they often do win because so few others do their best. Those who do their best soon stand out from the majority who are content with mediocrity.

Also, doing your best allows you not to worry about the results and frees you up to focus on the task in hand. Come hell or high water, you will do your best and leave the results up to the universe. More often than not you will win.

Just saying "I will win", instead of "I will do my best", doesn't guarantee you will win especially if the other guy says he will win.

In the recent fight between world heavyweight champion Valeri Klitschko and the British Challenger Danny Williams both men said they would win.

Unusually, Danny did acknowledge that his competitor also believed that he would win and that this would make for a great fight. Danny also had the grace to say he would only win 'God willing'.

In the end Danny put up a very brave fight and lasted into the eighth round but Klitschko won and retained his world championship belt.

In my opinion there is a lot to be said for really doing your best. The result is in the lap of the gods and is not necessarily under your control. But, if you do your best you may well win. Either way you are not a loser.

If you want to see who won in the film 'The Rock', get the video or DVD and watch it!

## Chapter Four The Gift Of Success

Often just one self-help principle can increase your power to achieve your goals and can help your life take off. This chapter is about one such principle - success breeds success.

I once suggested that, if you don't feel like going shopping, just go and sit in your car with your car keys and some money! Once you are there, you will almost always take the next step and drive to the shops.

If you find drinking 8 glasses of water a day difficult, drink just one glass a day. I drink one glass a night. I am then more likely to drink more water later in the day.

The key in both the examples above is to achieve a small success like just sitting in your car or drinking one glass of water. Each success will usually lead on to another and so on.

Judith Wright gave a similar piece of advice to a man who had failed to use his expensive work out equipment. He was planning to ride his mountain bike 3 times a week.

She told him he would fail. Instead he should plan only to sit on his bike in the garage three times a week.

He resisted this advice for a while as being less than macho but in the end followed it. As Judith wisely predicted he not only sat on the bike, he went for a little ride. Pretty soon he was working out regularly.

One success breeds another. He had given himself the gift of success.

I too have an exercise bike I have barely used. It is set up in front of a TV set so that I could be entertained or even educated as I worked out. In spite of this inviting arrangement I have seldom used it.



Judith Wright's bicycle remedy would solve my problem. In fact, I tried it today and it worked.

I also have a stretching machine in my bedroom which I only rarely use. It is often covered with clothes and parcels etc. However, when I do actually make the effort to just sit on it, I usually do some stretching.

Lower your expectations until you achieve a very small success and then start raising your expectations. If you start with high expectations and fail, you are less likely to continue.

Success on the other hand, as is well known, breeds success. If you can't bear to sit on your exercise bike at least go and stand by it!

The principle of success breeds success can be applied to almost anything. If you are delaying reading a book, just put it on the desk in front of you. Big deal! But if you go on and read a life changing book, it will be a big deal.

I tell my martial arts students to kick low first and get the kick right. It is then much easier to raise the height of the kick and still perform it with power.

If you don't feel like doing the tasks on your to do list, just look at the list for a minute or so or rewrite it. This may sow the seed of action in your subconscious mind and even if you don't take action immediately, you may do so later.

If you are slimming, stay out of the kitchen for another five minutes. In the mean time you may well get interested in something other than food or may even get some work done. By the time you have finished you may actually be hungry rather than just bored.

Just this one principle of success breeding success can change lives! Give yourself the gift of success and expect the miracle of a life transformed.

## **Chapter Five Success After Failure - Even Genghis Khan Lost Some Early Battles**

**B**oth the worst and the best of the great achievers had the belief in themselves and the resilience to overcome early failures. One of these was none other than Genghis Khan. There are powerful lessons we can learn from him.

In 1162 a child, called Temujin, was born in Mongolia clutching a blood clot - a sign that he was destined to be a great warrior. Signs like these encouraged Temujin to believe in his own ability despite early defeats. We, too, need to believe in our own ability, power and destiny.

Temujin came to rule the largest land empire ever known. It was four times the size of the empire of Alexander the Great and twice the size of the Roman Empire. But success only came after failure.

Temujin, who later became known as Genghis Khan, was the son of a tribal warrior chief in Mongolia. When he was nine, his father was poisoned by a rival tribe. Temujin commented: "From that day I would never be a child again."

His tribe was little more than an extended family. They were at risk unless they forged links with other tribes. Temujin wisely enlarged his tribe through marriage with Borte.

However, even an alliance with Borte's clan did not make him safe. The tribes of Mongolia were locked in a spiral of vendettas. There was only one law on the steppes: "Take what you want!"

The Merkit tribe had once feuded with Temujin's father. Now Temujin was in danger and his new wife was especially vulnerable. The scene was set for his first failure.

The Merkit's stole Temujin's wife on a raid. Temujin failed to defend his wife and prevent her capture. He was faced with accepting defeat and escaping or staying and dying. Temujin escaped:

"They had taken my wife. I knew what I had to do. Only a fool fights a battle he knows he cannot win."

His wife too had to submit to her captor or die. She submitted. Temujin may have been beaten in a skirmish by the Merkit but he was not defeated. He made plans to get his wife back and take his revenge.

**H**e could rely on his blood brother, Jamuka: "I had just one friend I could trust." But he needed even more support. He and Jamuka sought the help of a khan or ruler who was once the blood brother of Temujin's father: "I told him he was as a father to me. A man who seeks power needs friends who have power."

He was accepted by the khan. Temujin was delighted: "My power had been increased by heaven and earth." The man who later conquered the world knew the importance of support from the powerful.

He now went looking for his wife at the Merkit camp, rescued her and took his revenge: "We made the Merkits pay for their deed. We destroyed their families and emptied their breasts."

Temujin was barely 20 and he had already eliminated one of Mongolia's great tribes, rescued his wife and had turned his first failure into victory. He had also begun to build his power base.

Nine months later Barta gave birth to his son. There was some doubt as to who was the father but Temujin again turned defeat into victory by treating him as his own son. His pragmatic, practical approach helped him throughout his life.

However, there was tension between Temujin and Jamuka who in the early days shared the leadership of the tribe. They disagreed over how you value a man's worth. Both were sons of aristocrats. But only Temujin had really suffered adversity.

After his father was murdered Temujin experienced betrayal by his own people: "Our tribe deserted us. Men are loyal only to a strong leader. They left us with nothing. We had no friends but our own shadows. Like the wolf, we endured and from hardship I grew strong. Now I cared only for the strength in a man's heart. A warrior does not win a battle by virtue of his birth."

Temujin rewarded ability and loyalty alone. One of his most promising warriors, Subuday, was the son of humble herdsman. Jamuka, however, believed high rank should only be reserved for aristocrats His blood brother was throwing out the old ways. The gulf widened between them.

A shaman said that Temujin and his sons would rule the whole surface of the world. This was a decisive moment for Jamuka who now wished to move away from their homeland. Temujin realised that disunity would follow. It did.

Two years later Jamuka's men ambushed Temujin's tribe. It was a huge defeat. **Again the future world conqueror had failed.**

"My army was unprepared, outnumbered and outwitted; the earth was soaked with the blood of my warriors." Temujin knew how to face reality and admit his own responsibility but the worst was to come.

Jamuka lined up the generals of his blood brother and had them thrown alive into a cauldron of boiling water.

When Temujin heard of the atrocity he swore a vow: "By the power of heaven, I swore to gain my vengeance. Never again would I be defeated nor my loyal warriors so dishonoured."

Pivotal moments of humiliation like this one can provide motivation for the rest of our lives.

Temujin told his warriors: "They say the Mongols are descended from the wolf. Like the wolf we are famous for our ferocity and courage but to win a battle we have to fight fiercely not as individual warriors but as parts of a whole."

Temujin trained his warriors to a high standard and in 1204 rode west in search of his blood brother and his army.

Jamuka was the first to face an army that eventually conquered much of the surface of the earth. Temujin's men advanced in silence saving their battle cries till the last. He used discipline, teamwork and controlled tactics to defeat Jamuka.

Arrows were released and then "my cavalry attacked without mercy." Each tactic was meticulously planned. One squadron fled luring Jamuka's men into a trap.

Jamuka saw his army destroyed and ran. His men lay like "felled logs in the forest." He hid through winter of 1204. In spring, he reappeared escorted by two of his generals who expected a reward.

Temujin rewarded the two generals with death for their disloyalty to their khan and gave Jamuka the chance to rejoin him. But Jamuka knew there could only be one ruler so he simply asked for a noble death in which none of his blood would be shed.

Temujin granted his blood brother's final wish. Two warriors bent him backwards over some logs breaking his back. Both early failures had been revenged. Defeat had been turned into victory.

**T**emujin was declared universal ruler in 1206 at the age of 44. A new title was created to honour him which meant "Ruler of all men" i.e. Genghis Khan. It was declared that: "All who hear him shall obey him."



Temujin had paid his dues from the age of 9 when his father had been murdered. He had to learn fast that powerful allies can help you survive and that teamwork and being united can bring you success beyond your wildest dreams.

He had been motivated by his failures rather than demoralized by them and had achieved much of what he had planned although he died unhappy that he had not conquered the whole world!

Yesterday I went to the dentist and the hygienist lectured me about the importance of disturbing the teamwork of the bacteria in your mouth. Once you neglect cleaning your gums, the bacteria have time to unite and attack your mouth.

If you clean your whole mouth and not just your teeth, you will disturb the bacteria so that they become harmless individuals once more and will take time to regroup!

The power of unity and teamwork made Temujin into Genghis Khan, the man who destroyed one country after another but who succeeded beyond all expectation in his plans for conquest.

The same power can destroy your gums and then your teeth!

## **Chapter Six Success By Performing Without An Audience - Is Anyone Listening?**

**T**o achieve success it can be important to keep going even if no one seems to be appreciating or even noticing what you are doing. Some people are not appreciated until after they have passed on into the next life. Hopefully, it won't take that long for the rest of us.

"A Night To Remember" is a 1958 film which tells the story of the sinking of the Titanic in a powerful and moving way. It stars Kenneth More as the dedicated officer who does his duty in putting women and children only into the life boats as the Titanic starts to sink and then manages to save a group of men who were amongst the last survivors.

As the boat is sinking, a legendary act of heroism takes place. The musicians keep playing on deck rather than taking care of their own survival.

One of them says "What's the use? No one is listening." Another comments "Well, no one is listening when we play at meals."

Even the Beatles must have thought no one was listening. In 1962, four years after the Titanic film was made, Decca recording turned them down:

"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out."

Obviously in both stories someone was listening. Both the musicians on the Titanic and the Beatles became legends. Many people go through times when they feel no one is listening and they are wasting their time. However, if they keep going, they may just become legends too.

Any kind of performance usually involves the homework and the boring practice sessions when no one is watching or listening.

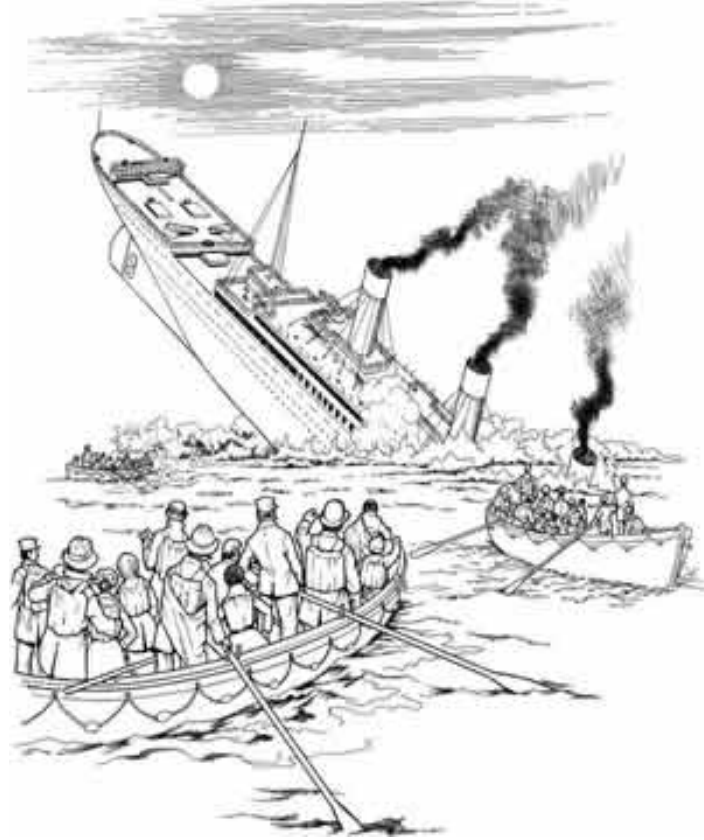
Those who can keep motivated during these practice sessions will usually get their reward when the audience finally arrive and they put in an astonishing performance.

As the film "A Night To Remember" nears its end, the lead violinist tells the musicians:

"It's the end, boys, we've done our duty. We can go now."

The musicians start to leave but the lead violinist starts playing on his own: "Nearer my God to thee."

The others rejoin him and one of them starts singing the hymn. The sound reaches the survivors in the life boats.



Whether things happened the way the film shows does not really matter. The lesson is the same. Keep taking action; keep praying or visualizing a great future.

The universe is quite probably taking note of your efforts and thoughts and will respond in its own good time. What you are doing will make some kind of a difference. Someone is noticing. Someone is listening.

## **Chapter Seven Success Through Clear Dreams - I Won't Be Lying On My Death Bed Saying I Wish I Had Done That**

**M**any UK citizens want to settle or retire in Spain the land of sun, healthy food, villas and blue swimming pools. Only a few of these actually achieve their dream. What makes the difference?

Those who succeed can teach the rest of us a lot about courage, determination, drive and self-respect. They also teach the power of a dream and the power of taking action to achieve it.

Louise Mariott, at the age of 38, went off to Spain with her three daughters and without financial help from anyone including their fathers.

Louise is a beauty expert who beautifies the beautiful (both men and women) but she needed to make money fast. Money was going out but very little was coming in.

If the worst came to the worst, she would have to return home in a few months to live with her parents but she did not plan to do that:

"I have more self-respect and more drive. How many women would have come out to Spain with no help and three kids?"

She had no regrets about her move to Marbella. The family oriented life style suited her. The food was healthy and she loved the Spanish people. She commented:

"I won't be lying on my death bed saying I wish I had done that."

Louise eventually found a partner, Nancy, who is a fashion adviser and she also found a location for a salon.

There were problems but she was excited by the possibilities. She kept her dream in mind.

The salon was called "Posh". This logo was placed on the side of her new car. Louise also planned to market by word of mouth and a few fliers.

However, few plans reach completion without a lot of hassle. At one point, Louise was feeling so stressed that she said that POSH stood for "Peed Off Stressed and Hormonal." At least she had kept her sense of humour.

Cards arrived saying "We are so happy that your dreams are coming true."

At the time, they seemed to be mocking the dire situation she was in.

Despite all the stress and tension, hundreds of people showed up to the opening of "POSH". Her business had got off to a great start.

Louise could comment:

"Now my dream has come true!"

Sarah, an estate agent, provides us with another role model. At the age of 7, Sarah wrote in her exercise book:

"My name is Sarah and I want to live in a white house in Spain."

She was already, at a very early age, using the power of setting and visualizing goals clearly. She is now living this dream. At 26, she has a successful business with a partner.

She has a lifestyle of parties, swimming and the freedom not to worry about the weather or crime. She finds that people in Spain are much more relaxed and can enjoy their lives.

Probably the key to her success is knowing clearly what she wanted at the age of seven.

Many people never stop to think deeply about what they really want from life until they reach the age of 70.

If you are 70, it is not too late. Imagine yourself at 80 wishing you had started to achieve you're dream at 70. As you are still 70 what is stopping you?



## Chapter Eight Success Through Enthusiasm Rather Than Cosmetic Surgery

*"Enthusiasm is worth any pot of cream ever offered."*

Can you be a President or a Prime Minister if you are bald? Many political advisers suggest that a Presidential or Prime Ministerial candidate should have plenty of hair and an attractive, youthful image. They see image as a very important part of success.

Bill Clinton has plenty of hair. So do George Bush and Tony Blair. How important is a young and attractive image for success?

Recently, there was a discussion in a TV program about the value of cosmetic surgery. One speaker, Anna Raeburn (the broadcaster and journalist) commented that:

"Age is like the weather; you can't do much about it and need to make friends with it. I cannot see myself choosing to have a knife in my face. *I would prefer to work at my diet and so on.* I'm 60 and I prefer to focus on more important things."

She added later: "I refuse to disappear because of my birthday. I do not need to compete with younger people."

Anna believes, like her mother, that the secret to looking good is enthusiasm not cosmetic surgery:

"My mother used to say: 'Enthusiasm is worth any pot of cream ever offered.'"

However, an increasing number of people are turning to cosmetic surgery to improve their image.

Some have been called names like 'big lips' because their lips were abnormally big. Surgery can mean freedom from verbal abuse for people like them.

Others are not happy with themselves even though others do not notice. It matters to them what they think of themselves.

Natalie Turner, a model and presenter, had a bump removed from her nose. She also had breast enlargement. The surgery increased her confidence. She believes that God gave us brains to decide what to do about our own bodies.

The emails into the program also had mixed viewpoints:

- Every one should go for it because it makes you feel wonderful.
- People who have plastic surgery are deluding themselves. Grow old gracefully.
- People are too obsessed with their bodies. They are trying to become perfect in an imperfect world.

**M**y personal preference would be for enthusiasm without the surgery. I have attended several martial arts seminars where some instructors looked like true martial artists i.e. slim, fit and muscular. Others looked unfit and even overweight. Once they started speaking and instructing, I no longer cared what they looked like.

Some of the most overweight and ordinary looking turned out to be full of enthusiasm for what they were teaching. They were brilliant instructors and that was all that really mattered. I won't mention their names as it might be safer not to insult their looks!

In the world of politics, Eisenhower was a great President and he did not have much hair. Atlee was one of the greatest British Prime Ministers and he was practically bald. Churchill was no male model.



Obviously, it would be good to have enthusiasm and good looks but, given a choice, I would take enthusiasm every time. The spirit within is far more important than the shape without.

## Chapter Nine Success Lessons From TV - What Key Life Skill Did Sugar Ray Teach?

**S**ugar Ray Leonard and Sylvester Stallone have recently hosted a fascinating reality show called "Contenders" in which sixteen top middleweight boxers gradually eliminate each other from contention until the final two get a great opportunity to show their skills in Las Vegas and the winner gets 1 million dollars.



Every week two boxers fight it out. The loser goes home. The boxers learn and teach great lessons which apply not only to boxing but to life in general.

The fourth week which this chapter is about is no exception and Sugar Ray, himself, teaches one of the greatest life skills of all.

In the third week, Ishe Smith had defeated his hated enemy Ahmed Khadour. He was delighted to send Ahmed home because they had grown to hate each other during their three weeks in the Contender Academy. Ishe did not forget to thank God for his victory. An attitude of gratitude is said by many gurus to bring even more blessings into the grateful person's life.

In this case the reward was immediate. Sylvester Stallone congratulated Ishe on doing a good job by defeating Ahmed: "You delivered the mail."

He gave Ishe a golden glove to hang round his neck and a large poster of Ishe was hung up in the gallery of heroes. Ishe, himself, regained his confidence and self-esteem which had been shaken by a period of insecurity when he had delayed facing up to Ahmed.

Ishe's team were taken by Sugar Ray to an exclusive restaurant in LA which gave them a taste of the life they would lead if they became champions. A taste of life at the top can be a great motivator; so can a taste of life at the bottom. Fear of loss is said to be a greater motivator than the desire for gain.

Each week the contenders had to face the possibility of losing and being sent home to obscurity.

Alfonso, one of the boxers who had already won a bout, commented:

"Every reward we get is a glimpse of what we will get if we become super champions."

Last week the team from the West of the USA had been taken to a top shop where they could choose whatever clothes they wanted. Some of them bought the first suit they had ever had. They were now starting to visualize the success that could be theirs. *This kind of forward looking visualization is a key element in any success.*

At the meal in the exclusive restaurant in the fourth week, Sugar Ray served up a dish of pure wisdom which was far superior to any food on the table. He told the young boxers:

*"All you guys can fight. The problem is that sometimes you guys question your own ability and when you question that, you've already lost; you've already lost."*

We have to have confidence in our own ability or we will never try to achieve anything. Without it, we have already failed. Most of us tend to underestimate the ability we have.

During the fourth week Jeff Fraza, the smallest boxer in the group, fell ill with a fever and spots on his legs. Jackie Kallen, the Contender den mother, was worried. She commented that Jeff already had one strike against him by being small: "The last thing he wants is to be perceived as ill, sick and weak. He already knows that everybody is gunning for him. If they know he's sick, he's gone."

Successful people want to be seen as healthy and strong. Bill Clinton was often seen out jogging when he was President. This is not just a matter of image. Healthy people have more energy and drive than someone who is sick.

Health should be a priority for any one who wants to be successful. *If you want to reach the top take plenty of vitamin C daily!*

In the end, Jeff had to go because he had chicken pox which was contagious. His dreams had ended in disappointment because of ill health. But his disappointment meant that Peter Manfredo who had already been eliminated was given a second chance.

**N**ajai Turpin from Philadelphia had worked at three jobs when his mother died and had still found time to train. He had had to become a man very quickly.

His main source of motivation as with most of the boxers was his desire to provide really well for his family especially his little daughter. "She is my reason for everything I do." He also had a lot of pain in him which he wanted to pass on to his opponent!

Sergio Mora from East LA felt he would be stereotyped as an ignorant kid. In fact he loved reading Sun Tzu, Oscar Wilde, Emerson and Nietzsche. He was also a good boxer. He too fought for love of his family, especially his mum. He also feared failure: "I am definitely scared to go home; I am definitely scared of failure."

In the fourth week Najai and Sergio fought each other. Sergio won the first round. Najai won the second easily. Sergio's cornerman urged him: "Get your ass back to work, baby."

The third round was Najai's but Sergio probably stole it with a late flurry. Round four was Sergio's. "Your kid is out there looking at ya" said Najai's cornerman. Round five was Sergio's. Sergio won by unanimous decision.

The fight was very even and the fifth round was decisive. By round five it looked as if Najai had lost faith in his own ability to win and Sergio had gained faith. Sergio won. Sugar Ray was right.

Many fights come down to who believes in themselves most. However, Najai won every one's respect and affection. He was devastated:

"I left everything in the ring. I came up short. I came up short."

It almost goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway, that those who believe in their own ability, or their own capacity to learn what they need to know, win in ordinary life as well as in boxing.

## Chapter Ten Succeed By Looking Forward

**W**e all want something to look forward to. The best way to attract it into our lives is to look forward to it. By looking into the future with expectation and hope we are more likely to work with energy and even excitement to make that great future come true.

However, far too many of us waste our time fearing the worst and reflecting on the worst moments of our lives from the past. When I reflect on my past I am amazed at how much time and money I have wasted. If I were to spend most of my time regretting this I would feel too depressed to try to achieve anything worthwhile in the time left to me.

Incidentally we can always find some one who has far more to regret than we have. A few years back I lost £27,000 (about \$48,000) investing in what turned out to be a scam. Today I read about someone who had lost \$48,000,000. Some difference!

Many people become almost suicidal when they rerun sad or disappointing events from their past. They program their minds with the failures of the past and keep replaying these failures in the cinema of their own minds. These failures can so dominate their thinking that they no longer wish to live.

Robert Ringer, the best-selling self help author, makes this point well:

"We all have experiences in our past, and especially our childhood, that have left painful memories. There is, however, nothing we can do about them. History is written in stone. But we do have the capacity to control how we think and act today. This capacity is known as 'free will.' We are the only living creatures who can change the nature of our existence by altering events."

Instead of analysing and brooding over our past, we need to focus on our future and how it can be improved. It helps to visualise the future we want as vividly as possible and with as much joyful emotion as possible. This will assist our subconscious mind to give us the drive and energy we need to take action towards this glorious future.

A future oriented attitude will clear our minds of much heavy weight from the past that can push us down into a state of hopelessness and helplessness.

**I**f you are facing a problem, don't spend too much time thinking about the problem.

Instead focus on the solution and imagine what it is like to have overcome the problem. Look way beyond the problem.

I was at a seminar in London recently where a board was used as a symbol of obstacles and problems. Attendees were invited to break the board.

They were told not to focus too much on the board (the obstacle) but to imagine their hand passing through the board and beyond it.

To succeed in breaking the board you also need to hit the centre of the board accurately and with your maximum force. It is no use being half-hearted.

I was amazed at how many people, including some fragile looking members of the audience, rushed to the front to break the board. Surprisingly, some of the more fragile looking succeeded whilst some of the tougher looking people failed miserably!



It makes sense, then, to fill our minds with thoughts of a great future. It's foolish to worry too much about the obstacles and problems which might destroy that future.

With faith and determination we can break through these into clear space.

**I**t is a good idea to start celebrating this great future now and to let our positive and cheerful attitude attract our desired future towards us. It is also a good idea to work with 100% effort and commitment.

It has often been said that we attract what we think about most often. This is good news. Instead of dwelling on what we fear, let's think daily and hourly about what we desire. We will then have great things to look forward to which we will eventually experience. In the mean time we can remain cheerful and expectant of good things.

It helps to recite some great affirmation like "Nothing is too good to be true" or "With God, nothing is impossible." Let's expect miracles and then, hopefully, we will see miracles.

When we were young, we all expected miracles. Let's try to keep that same mindset as we get older. If we fill our minds with happy thoughts, like Peter Pan, we too can fly.



## Chapter Eleven Step Up To Success

Sometimes it is better to just get on with doing something rather than thinking and planning for too long.

Philip Humbert makes an interesting evaluation of the race for the South Pole by the Norwegian Roald Amundsen and Robert Scott (Scott of the Antarctic).

Scott spent days in planning and preparation for the trip whilst Amundsen set off quickly with far less preparation. Not only did Amundsen get to the South Pole first. He arrived back safely.

Scott reached the pole second and was hit by cold weather on his way back. He and his brave band of heroes died eleven miles from their home base. If Scott had set off earlier he might have missed the cold weather on the way back.

Another key factor was Amundsen's reliance on dogs for pulling his sledges; Scott did not use dogs.

I do not entirely agree with Philip Humbert's assessment since Amundsen had already done his preparation some time before his assault on the South Pole. On his successful trip to find the North West passage through the Arctic seas north of Canada some years before, he had spent over a year living with the Inuit.

They showed him important tips like how to coat the runners of his sledges with ice so that they would slide easily over the snow and help the dogs to make fast progress.

He learned on the job and not by reading and planning from a distance and he did prepare in the best way possible in the type of freezing cold environment he would later face in the Antarctic. He did his planning and preparation by learning from the experts who actually lived in a freezing environment.

However, planning and preparing for too long can allow negative thoughts to creep in. And negativity can kill off any project. Amundsen's crew were not at all happy with their long stay in Arctic conditions while Amundsen learned from the Inuit.

Sometimes action is king. You can always learn as you take action and create your own mistakes and successes. Eva Young sums up this point cleverly:

***"To think too long about doing a thing often becomes its undoing."***

**A**nother succinct comment on the same point comes from a minister called Vance Havner:

"The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps - We must step up the stairs."



If we spend too much time thinking about our potential we may never turn that potential into reality. Fear often makes us pause and cogitate for too long before taking action.

Michael Dell of Dell computers puts his success down to the fact that he was not afraid of making mistakes.

He did not wait for perfection before he took action to produce and sell his computers. He took far more action than most people and made more mistakes than most but he learned from the mistakes and corrected things as he went along. I am using a Dell computer right now.

If we are following a how to do it manual, it is probably better to read a bit and then put that bit into action before going on to the next bit. Few people can read a manual straight through and, if they do, become so bored or overwhelmed with information that they lose their focus and enthusiasm for implementing it.

In life we can both think and do. Most of us spend too much time thinking instead of doing.

Instead of thinking too much, let's do some preparation and planning and then just get going and take action. We need to step up the ladder to success and not just look at it.

## Chapter Twelve Success Without Excuses

**I**f we hope to achieve any worthwhile goal it will be necessary to throw out the excuses. The excuses usually do not deceive others but they may well deceive ourselves.

In England today, several national services are of a poor standard. One reason they are so poor is that the people responsible for providing the services always have an excuse ready. One year when the trains were delayed, the excuse was that there were too many leaves on the tracks! Why didn't those in charge make sure the leaves were cleared off the tracks?!

Bill Bailey, an English singer and comedian, has commented ironically on the fact that the English don't expect too much from life. They almost rejoice in the fact that services are useless. Bill told one of his audiences:

"I'm English and, as such, I crave disappointment. I actively seek it out. It's one of the reasons I continue to use public transport because, you know, we are guaranteed disappointment, aren't we?"

"I was on a train a while back and we made one of those hilarious unscheduled stops in the middle of nowhere. It's so rubbish on the trains now that we don't even bother to listen to the announcement. It could be anything. We just zone it out. It could be something like the following:

'We apologize for the delay. A very, very heavy flood from Saturn has formed an impenetrable casing around the driver's brain. We'll try and get that chipped off as soon as we can.

'We appear to have driven into the belly of a dragon. I don't know how that happened. It must have been hiding in the tunnel. We're sorry about that. Let's hope he passes us out at Crewe.



**T**he driver has pulled in to play a game of Tetris on his game boy. He has never got to this level before. So good luck, eh!

Bill explained what had really stopped the train:

"The actual reason we stopped was that the buffet car was on fire. We got a tantalizing glimpse into the chaos on the trains. All we could hear on the speakers was 'Gary! It's burning! What are we going to do?'

"Everyone in the carriage cheered: 'Hurray! We're rubbish.' That's the British characteristic."

In fact, the British are anything but rubbish. Bill Bailey himself is an outstanding comedian and musician, but there is an amazing tolerance of low standards in public services unless they involve fatalities.

It is probably a good idea to laugh at the things we have no control over like the trains stopping unnecessarily but there is no need for us to accept low standards in our own lives. We, and no one else, have control over our own lives.

However, if we come up with too many excuses for not doing what is difficult and challenging, we will end up like the railways and achieve mediocrity.

We can choose to be disappointed with our own lives and make lots of excuses for our failures or we can ban the excuses and work around them to achieve success.

Pat O'Bryan of Milagro World was impressed by the way the Beatles turned potential excuses for failure into opportunities. If the drumming was weak on a particular song, they would add in other percussion instruments to make the drum track more interesting.

If the guitars were weak, they would bring in a great guitarist like Eric Clapton to play brilliant lead guitar. They could have blamed the drummer and guitarists for the weak sound and accepted a mediocre standard. Instead, they refused to make excuses and worked around their problems and achieved huge success.

Pat comments: "Excuses are wonderful, aren't they? Once you've got a good one, you can hide behind it for years. Recognize excuses for what they are, delete them, and turn your problems into opportunities. If you don't have money, a huge list, or a clue, team up with someone who does, and succeed anyway."

I teach a great kicking martial art but have never been good at kicking high. To get round this I tell my students to start by kicking low! This is far more effective in the street than kicking high. If I want a great demonstration of a high kick, I get one of my best black belts to provide it.



The students are able to view a great demo and the demonstrator is inspired to do even better in future. My lack of flexibility is no longer an excuse for giving up teaching. It becomes an opportunity for a higher standard of teaching. It also encourages others who realize they don't have to be flexible to learn effective self-defense. In other words, work around your limitations and if possible use them to help yourself and others.

So forget the excuses about being too old or too young or too unfit or too stupid. Find ways around these problems and press on to achieve your success goals.

## Conclusion

**Of course, this book is nowhere near being the last word on success but it does contain some key ideas which could help you and me to succeed**

- **Do what you plan to do** whatever the results!
- **Pay your dues.** Enjoy the hard road. It will make you a greater and more skilful person. Avoid the shortcuts but make sure you are rowing downstream!
- **Practise daily.** It will help you hit your target!
- **Stay calm under pressure.**
- **Don't brood over a problem.** Just take note of it and then imagine how you might feel if the problem had been successfully solved.
- **Focus on a difficult task** by avoiding doubt and ignoring distracting voices.
- **Defend yourself successfully** by distracting your opponent before you strike!
- **Do your best** and you will stand out from the majority who don't!
- **Give yourself the gift** of a small success!
- **Allow humiliating failures** to motivate you rather than to demoralize you!
- **Keep working hard** even if no one appears to notice your efforts.
- **Visualize your dream** clearly and go for it now!
- **Your enthusiasm** is more powerful than your good looks!
- **Don't question** your own ability to get the job done!
- **Succeed by looking forward** to a great future!
- **Focus on solutions** and not problems!
- **Fill your mind** with happy thoughts and fly!
- **Learn on the job.** Don't wait for perfection before you start!
- **Throw out the excuses.** You, alone, have control of your life!

Good luck and God bless!

John Watson

N.B. If you enjoyed this book check out my site [www.motivationtoday.com](http://www.motivationtoday.com) for further books by me and others on the subject of motivation and success and goal achievement. If you have time to send me an email to [jwatson301@btinternet.com](mailto:jwatson301@btinternet.com) or [john@motivationtoday.com](mailto:john@motivationtoday.com) and say what you enjoyed about the book or learned from it, I would be grateful. I could then use your comments to recommend the book to others. Thanks to [www.clipart.com](http://www.clipart.com) for some excellent graphics.

