

How to ascend the stairway to success in just six simple steps

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Most people believe that success comes down to those with natural talent. They blame lack of a certain talent or natural ability for their failures. It is what the author, [Michal Stawicki](#), calls the slump of a loser- the kind of excuse that causes many people to miss their full potential. If you have ever done this kind of thinking, you will be glad to know that you have got what you need for success already. And it is never too late to change your attitude, no matter what the circumstances. The following six steps are the ones you need to take to become a high attainer and lead a life of enrichment:

1. Evaluate your self-image
2. Improve your relationships by looking for the good in others
3. Set specific goals that can be broken down into daily increments
4. Avoid “stinkin’ thinkin’” by adopting a positive attitude
5. A persistent work ethic is a key ingredient for success
6. A burning desire and intelligent ignorance are crucial for success

Evaluate your self-image

The first step to success on the ladder is to determine your self-image – that is, how you see yourself. Since it defines how you work, self-image is a key building block to success. Issues of self-image can be traced back to childhood for many people. Let us imagine that your son accidentally drops a plate; you tell him, without thought, that he is the most incompetent kid you have ever seen. You may not wish to be negative for your comment, but off-hand comments like this can lead to a complex of inferiority for many children. If parents, teachers or peers suggest that a child is incompetent, the child may come to believe that he does not deserve good things in life, such as love or achievement.

Imagine how you would feel if you got a phone call from someone who only wanted to tell you how amazing you are. If you are a doctor, a student, or an athlete, this kind of trust boost would probably help you work better. In reality, the connection between a positive self-image and high performance has an established track record – athletes frequently imagine themselves effectively in professional sports, to achieve real-life success. For starters, top golfers "try" to sink their ball into the cup before they even tee up.

However, it can be difficult to establish a good self-image. This is especially true for children, who not only face scrutiny from parents and teachers but also feel the weight of the focus on appearance from society. Several polls showed that more than 95 per cent of young Americans would like to change some part of their physical appearances. That dissatisfaction often leads to an unhealthy obsession with material possessions and body image later in life. Having a negative view of yourself in your professional life also informs your behaviour.

Imagine a salesman whose self-image is negative. He lives in constant fear of rejection, which makes him a nice guy. It not only undermines his ability to make sales – but his desire to be embraced by his colleagues also prevents him from taking on the leadership qualities that would enable him to grow to management. Unless he finds a way to alter his self-image, the salesman will never be able to envision personal or professional success for himself. Dress up and help others to make your self-image stronger. Have you ever experienced a negative self-image? If so, the good news is there is a variety of ways to change it.

Improving your self-image is not only about taking better care of yourself to boost your self-image – it is also about how you feel about others. Helping those who need help provides an overwhelming sense of fulfilment and can be a sign of feeling grateful. This, in turn, improves your way of looking at yourself. By volunteering with the Red Cross, meeting someone with a disability or disease, you will feel this. Start reading biographies or autobiographies of famous people who contributed to the well-being of others, if you need any extra inspiration. Talking about Martin Luther King, Jr., Abraham Lincoln or Booker T. Washington is a perfect way to encourage you to be altruistic in achieving success.

Improve your relationships by looking for the good in others

Helping others is important to improve your self-image. Yet what about the people who you care most for? The second step on your productive journey is to strengthen your ties. According to the author, if you make the time and effort to support others you can accomplish anything you want. What starts with your understanding of and care of the people around you? If they know it or not, the majority of people view others as they see them. And in some cases, your behaviour towards a person could have a profound effect on their future.

Two groups of students were assigned to two different teachers in an experiment led by Dr Robert Rosenthal at Harvard University. The first teacher was told their party came from average backgrounds and had mean intelligence levels. The second teacher was told her group was made up of geniuses. As it turns out, both student groups were truly average students. But at year's end, the students treated like geniuses were a whole school year ahead of the other group. Like for other things in life you reap what you sow when it comes to relationships. Because you should treat others the way you want to be handled, finding the positive in others is the best approach to establishing relationships.

Interestingly, in one of their most significant relationships-their marriage-many people treat strangers politically while also making sudden and hurtful remarks. But with a quick shift of attitude, keeping the relationship alive is simpler than you would think. Think of it as courting your wife or husband even though you're already married. By applying your mind-set when you dated your spouse, you will have an easier time to remember why you first married them. But there are also plenty of practical things you can do to make your marriage stronger. Seek to start every day by telling your partner that you love them.

You may also surprise them by calling them for a few minutes in the middle of the day-if their schedule allows-or by sending a letter of love. He or she will appreciate the gesture, especially when it is unexpected!

Set specific goals that can be broken down into daily increments

An important tool to get what you want out of life is to build goals. So other people don't control it, usually because of the way they do it. Setting goals-Step 3 on your road to success-requires hard work and concentration. Here is how you go about it. The first thing you need to do is be as realistic as possible. Vague or unrealistic targets like just wanting to lose weight or never materialize making a lot of money. That's why you need to calculate your goals: How much weight can you lose? How much money are you trying to make?

Second, on the list is giving yourself a timeline long enough to take into account unavoidable obstacles. Say you owe yourself a year to raise \$1 million – rather than two months. With the right mentality, you will continue to do this even after facing a big setback such as an illness. By these two caveats, start writing down your objectives. Consider your financial, job, physical, emotional, social, intimate, and family aspirations. Ideally, you will aspire in every category of your life to reach an objective and you'll feel happy. But if you're new to setting goals, it is OK to start with only one.

To accomplish your goals, break them into actionable steps that you can execute regularly. This made the author realize he was trying to slim down his 202-pound size. For the next ten months, the author realized he wanted to weigh 165 pounds. Yes, he also wrote this number in his novel, due to be published in ten months, to provide an additional incentive. Each morning, as soon as the author realized he needed to lose weight, he set out for a run to the sound of his alarm clock. He walked a little bit further each day, beginning with a block and working his way incrementally up to five miles. For certain callisthenics, he added later, and soon the effects became apparent.

Avoid “stinkin’ thinkin’” by adopting a positive attitude

Even if you make an effort to achieve your goals, life always brings in unforeseen challenges along your path. Although you can't avoid these situations coming up, you can monitor your reaction to them. This takes us to progress on the fourth step of the stairway: having a good attitude. In comparison to your self-image, which is about your self-image, your attitude is your response to the rest of the world. According to one Harvard University report, attitude can be traced to 85 per cent of our successes, while technological knowledge accounts for just 15 per cent. But more often than not, by engaging in unproductive thought, people sabotage this 85 per cent – or as the author terms it, stinkin' thinking.

Stinkin 'thought is exactly the problem faced by the minor league baseball team in San Antonio, Texas during a losing streak in the 1930s. The players started to blame each other for their blunders instead of working together. But after a particularly humiliating defeat to the weak-hitting Dallas squad, Josh O'Reilly, San Antonio's boss, went on to find a solution. O'Reilly told the players he had asked a faith healer named Slater to bless two of their bats to win the Texas League pennant series. The idea inspired the team, who scored 22 runs and 37 hits in their next game before they went on to win the pennant.

When you want a game-winning mentality, you don't have to wait until anyone else have you inspired. You just have to start the day with a positive attitude. Instead of moaning about getting out of bed when you wake up in the morning, channel the day ahead with appreciation and anticipation. Unfortunately,

we live in a pessimistic culture, pervaded by a mind-set which is half-empty of glass. So with the vocabulary, you are using, you can check-in and select positive terms over negative ones – even if that means making them up. Try to refer to a "stoplight" as a "go light" the next time you are waiting at an intersection while driving home from work.

Also if you have to describe your new vocabulary to strangers, in these tiny positive improvements you will find happiness and develop a constructive mindset that feeds on the rest of your life.

A persistent work ethic is a key ingredient for success

Have you ever heard of a celebrity running home making a name for herself as soon as the clock struck five per day? Likely not. Going beyond what they are expected to do is what distinguishes the successful from the average people. So the fifth step in our journey is to realize that it takes hard work to succeed. Funnily enough, the excitement of winning turns to crush frustration at the occasional times that someone gets a major break without waiting for it. John Stossel aired a program about multimillion-dollar lottery winners on ABC News on September 4, 1994. He found that the majority of these lottery winners were unhappier one year after their lucky draw than people who had been injured after a serious injury.

In reality, one study conducted in the 1960s regarding televised quiz show winners showed that those who had won more than \$75,000 from game shows within seven years were no better off financially than they were before their win. As the saying goes, "Give a man a fish, and you're going to feed him for a day, but teach a man to fish and you're going to feed him for a lifetime." Successful people know that if you want to make it to the top, there's no free lunch. Instead of expecting work to come to them or waiting for their big break, they apply their positive attitude and strive every day to excel in their professional life. So if you want to make it big, be prepared to work longer than the usual 40-hour week.

That doesn't necessarily mean you'll see immediate results. In reality, at the first sign of disappointment, many people give up, before their careers can start. All these people do not know is that failure is an inevitable part of the successful journey. Just think of President Harry S. Truman, who had struggled both in the oil industry and in the clothing business before making a name for himself in politics. The future president only split after one unsuccessful attempt. What Truman knew, however, was that you will eventually be rewarded if you bring a positive attitude and continue to work hard even when the projects fail. It's easier said than done, but the secret to a future you haven't yet dreamed for yourself might be finding new ways to turn your mistakes into achievements.

A burning desire and intelligent ignorance are crucial for success

You may wonder what motivates successful individuals to become overdoers. Of course, it's important to have a good attitude and a positive self-image. Yet the most successful people in our journey represent the sixth and final step – a relentless desire to succeed. Desire will in many situations allow you to succeed against the worst of odds. That is what happened to Billy Miske, the American boxer. Miske was diagnosed with Bright's disease in 1923 after being hospitalised with kidney failure. He realized he had less than a year to live so he felt obligated to give one last merry Christmas to his family.

But Miske was bankrupt. So he persuaded his boss Jack Reddy in November of that year to let him fight one last time.

Since Miske had no physical strength to practice, he was forced to stay at home until the big day. He flew that day to Omaha, Nebraska, where he was to meet Bill Brennan – a fighter who had gone beyond his prime but was still a formidable adversary. Miske's defeated Brennan in four rounds, against all odds. He was able to take home \$2,400 for his family just weeks before his death, because of his intense desire to win. Individuals like Miske can overcome the odds and achieve incredible feats because of what the author calls smart ignorance. Such people have such a deep ambition that they don't know what they can't do, and even in the most unlikely of circumstances, they find a way to succeed.

Smart ignorance and desire, of course, don't guarantee success. Yet even though you fail to accomplish your goal, you will face defeat when you put all of your energy into an undertaking, realizing that you gave it all. Furthermore, your experience of keeping a positive attitude following defeat will increase your chances of success next time. What this shows is that ambition is just one aspect of the path to success. This would mean very little if you don't have a strong self-image, healthy relationships, good attitude, clear objectives and a solid work ethic. And though success may not be a shortcut, don't be discouraged. You do have what it takes because you know it now!

If you want to be successful, there are six steps you need to take: enhance your self-image, improve your relationships, set realistic goals, adopt a positive mindset, work hard and be motivated by a burning desire. While you can't miss any of those steps on your way to the top, rest assured that you already have everything you need to continue.

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