

Success Built to Last – Book Summary

Success Built to Last is based on interviews with over 200 people all over the world who have made a difference – large and small – in their field, profession or community, and who have lived a life that they believe mattered. The authors eliminated people whose success had lasted for less than 20 years. They call these high achievers “builders” since they do things because they want to build a meaningful life. These individuals do not use the traditional dictionary definition of success – wealth, fame and power – when they describe what success means to them. Rather they define success as the ability to “make a difference,” “create lasting impact” and being “engaged in a life of personal fulfillment”.

People Interviewed: Below are some of the people interviewed by the authors for the book, grouped into two categories:

People you probably know: Jeff Bezos – founder & CEO Amazon.com; Sir Richard Branson – Virgin Brands creator; Marcus Buckingham – leadership author; Warren Buffett – investor & world’s second richest person; John Chambers – Chairman & CEO Cisco Systems; Yvon Chouinard – founder Patagonia; Stephen Covey- author, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*; Peter Drucker – father of management science; Bill Gates – co-founder Microsoft, philanthropist and world’s richest man; Jeff Immelt – Chairman and CEO GE; Jack La Lanne – “Godfather of Fitness”; Nelson Mandela- former South African President and Nobel Peace laureate; Condoleezza Rice – U.S. Secretary of State; Charles Schwab – founder & CEO Charles Schwab

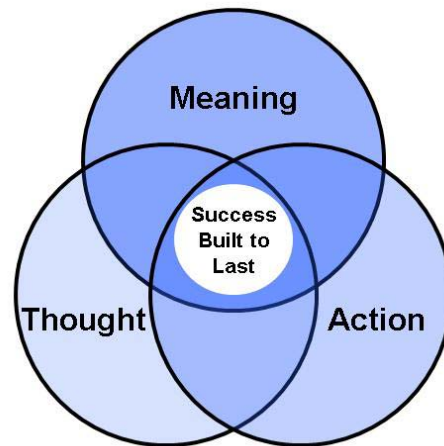
People you probably don’t know: Alan Bachman – conflict resolution mediator and former florist; Bonita Bergin – founder, Canine Companions & Assistance Dog Institute; Amber Chand – distributes art created by indigenous craftswomen; Jim Hake – entrepreneur and founder, Spirit of America; Norman Hotelling – founder of Sage, which helps women escape addiction and prostitution; Deborah Johnson – reverend and founder of Inner Light Ministries; Bill Nye – engineer, comedian and Emmy Award-winning producer; Wanda Whitehead – grade-school teacher, Casa di Mir

Indeed, too many people at some point in their lives set goals and go on to achieve them, often brilliantly, only to find that they are mysteriously disappointed, empty and unhappy. How is it possible to achieve the very definition of success and yet find happiness so fleeting? Builders say it’s a simple matter of being cheated by the absence of knowing what really matters to you in your life, not just for today, but for today and for the long term.

In hundreds of interviews, the authors learned that Builders find lasting success when at least three essential elements come into alignment in their lives and work.

Success Built to Last – Book Summary

The first essential element is **Meaning (How Successful People Stay Successful)**. What you do must matter deeply to you. It's something you're so passionate about that you lose all track of time when you do it. The bad news is that it's really dangerous not to do what you love. The harsh truth is that if you don't love what you're doing, you'll lose to someone who does. Your co-workers or competitors who love their work try harder, try more things, come up with more great ideas and get better opportunities than people who only do things for a living.



You will know that you have found your calling when you naturally obsess over what you love like a geek, as in a person who is single-minded in a pursuit, at the risk of being socially insensitive when so engaged. Finding and doing the thing you love offers you a very different experience of work. In fact it may not feel like work at all. It seduces you to the point where you lose interest in everything else. This is a totally different experience than you will have if you're doing what you're doing just because you think you should.

When you suppress your passion you are teaching yourself to be a cynic. You're cynical because you care and don't want to risk getting hurt. On the other hand, lovers win because they are willing to take that risk for the right reasons.

The second essential element is **ThoughtStyle (Extreme Makeovers Start in Your Head)**. This is a highly developed sense of accountability, audacity, passion and responsible optimism. Success comes from listening to that whisper inside your head that tells you to do what you love. The tragedy for most people is that there is a gaggle of other voices trying to drown out the whisper.

Steve Jobs insists, "Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice – and most important – have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary."

Also, whatever you want to become, you should become a great one. Opportunity comes from expertise, not just luck, talent and passion. If you find it impossibly tedious to become an expert about what you think matters to you, then you're not chasing a dream, you're just daydreaming. If you find you can't or won't persist in learning more about it, then it will be very hard to hang on when the inevitable obstacles get thrown your way.

Success Built to Last – Book Summary

The third essential element is **ActionStyle (Turning Passion into Action)**. Builders must move from thought to action so they can live their passions. Thomas Jefferson once said, “I am a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it.” If you ask Builders about their success, they will tell you it was a serendipitous journey, and the luck they enjoyed was usually earned, often at great cost.

Many Builders told the authors about times in their lives when they had a clear sense of meaning, but found it almost impossible to make things happen – to turn meaning and thought into action. When you envision something that is meaningful to you that seems to be ideal or perhaps even perfect, sometimes “it’s like a beautiful pastry – too lovely to ruin by eating it,” said Alice Waters, the restaurant and pioneer in organic cooking. Anyone who has “a perfect picture in his or her head of what must be done and what matters” also knows that the result of acting on that idea might “never be as perfect as that image in their mind,” Waters said. The reason this happens is because moving from thought to action puts idealism and beauty at risk as “your dream might lose something in the translation!” Builders told the authors countless times, “So, get moving and get on with what you really care about doing.” Serendipity comes to those who are prepared, who do their homework and have the courage to do reality checks to determine whether or not they are still on course to achieve what actually matters about their goals.

References:

Success Built to Last Book – Wharton School Publishing

Success Built to Last Summary (16 pages) - <http://store.audiotech.com/>

Available in both audio (CD or tape) and electronic (pdf)

Creating a Life That Matters TV Program (1 hour) – BetterLifeMedia (DVD)

<http://www.yoursuccessstore.com/shopping/shopdisplayproducts.asp?id=336>

Success Built to Last Web site www.successbuilttolast.com

Sample Interviews Video Clip

Video of a few of the people interviewed (4 ½ minutes)

<http://www.successbuilttolast.com/interviews.html>

List of people interviewed

Stewart Emery Video Clips

http://www.successbuilttolast.com/see_speech_Stewart_Emary.html

From an hour long TV program

- What is Success (4:33 minutes)
- What Successful People are Missing (3:20 minutes)

From promotional interviews

- Business Week Online Interview (8 minutes)

Jerry Porras Video Clips

http://www.successbuilttolast.com/Jerry_Porras_clips.html

- Follow Your Passion (1:40 minutes)
- Redefining Success for Yourself (1:45 minutes)

Mark Thompson Video Clip

- http://www.successbuilttolast.com/see_speech_Mark_Thompson.html
- Overview – Creating Success Built to Last (6:07 minutes)