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How Successful People Think Differently

By Raghav Haran

Once upon a time, there was a little boy named Steve.

Steve was born to immigrant parents from Eastern Europe.

He had a lot of difficulty adjusting to society as a kid.

He was ashamed that his family was different from everybody else's. And because they were different, he got smacked and kicked around in school.

He was used to getting bloody noses.

Steve liked to make movies. He would make little films using his dad's old camera for his Boy Scout group.

Everybody loved it.

And in high school, he would write movie scripts for fun which he and his friends would act out on video.

Steve dreamt of going to film school. As he was graduating high school, he applied to one of the best film programs in LA.

But his grades were terrible. So he got rejected. He had to settle for another school that didn't have a good film program.

While in college, he got a job as an unpaid clerk at Universal Studios. He had to do a lot of grunt work that nobody else wanted to do.

But Steve didn't want to settle for that.

So every day, for three months in a row, Steve put on a suit, carried an empty briefcase, acted like he knew what he was doing, and strolled past the security guards onto the set where real movies were being filmed.

He made friends with some of the directors and editors.

He got to know what they liked, what they didn't like, what their problems were, what they wanted, and just absorbed the atmosphere in general.

And one day, when the time was right . . . he went for it.

Steve made a 28 minute film and sent it to one of the editors at Universal Studios. And that editor was so impressed with it that he sent it all the executives.

And then finally...

Steven Spielberg was given a seven-year directing contract with Universal Studios. He was the youngest director ever to get a deal like that in Hollywood.

Almost everyone who builds an incredible career breaks the "rules" at some point.

Alex Banayan interviewed some of the world's most successful people — like Lady Gaga, Steven Spielberg, and more — to find out the patterns in how they launched their careers.

And here's what he found....

> "[All highly successful people] treat life, business, and success... just like a nightclub.
>
> There are always three ways in.
>
> There's the First Door, where 99% of people wait in line, hoping to get in.
>
> There's the Second Door, where billionaires and royalty slip through.
>
> But then there is always, always... the Third Door. It's the entrance where you have to jump out of line, run down the alley, climb over the dumpster, bang on the door a hundred times, crack open the window, and sneak through kitchen. But there's always a way in.
>
> Whether it's how Bill Gates sold his first piece of software, or how Steven Spielberg became the youngest director at a major studio in Hollywood — they all took the Third Door." — Alex Banayan

Many of us dream about jumping out of bed every morning, excited to get to work. We would LOVE to look forward to Mondays instead of living for the weekend.

It's easy to look at these top performers and others who have dream jobs that the rest of us would kill for, and dismiss them as being "the lucky few."

But in reality, it's more achievable than you might think. After studying the best of the best and helping hundreds of people land incredible job offers, I learned that crafting a remarkable career isn't about whether you're "lucky" or not.

It's about mindset.

Here are 3 ways successful people think differently.

1. They don't care about "the odds"

People always default to cutting off the average odds of success when trying anything new. As if life is a game of Powerball where success is entirely based on random chance.

We hear things like:

- "People who go to college earn more money over the course of their lifetimes than people who don't."
- "95% of new businesses fail."
- "Don't apply if you don't fit the exact job requirements."

And when we hear stories about people who beat the odds (i.e. people who succeeded without going to college, people who start a successful business, people who get jobs they were unqualified for, etc) it's easy to assume that the variable is luck.

The truth is, you should only worry about "the odds" if you just go through the motions and approach a problem in the same way everyone else does.

Are you just dooming off a million resumes through CareerBuilder when looking for a new job? Then yeah, having credentials would give you better odds of landing an interview.

Are you trying to raise money from investors on a "great idea" you had after building a product without doing in depth customer research? Then yeah, there's probably a 95% chance you'll fail.

But if you approach a problem in a different way, if you question what everyone tells you to do and separate the good advice from the bad, if you learn from other people's mistakes — then you can shift "the odds" dramatically in your favor.

For example, if you press to bring managers that you can do the job beforehand, you can get away with not having many of the so called "job requirements."

If you understand marketing, product positioning, copywriting, and how to do customer research — all of which Silicon Valley shuns at their own expense — it suddenly becomes quite practical to start your own business.

The variable when it comes to success isn't luck. It's understanding how to dissect problems and figure out the right approach in a world where the blind are leading the blind most of the time.

2. They're risk averse

There's this weird notion that to be successful, you have to take massive risks.

We hear stories of people like Elon Musk investing virtually all their money into their businesses. Or people quitting a safe and secure job to go after their dream career.

When I ask people what the biggest barrier to landing their dream job is, many of them respond "fear of the unknown", "uncertainty", "fear of leaving my comfort zone", etc.

We think that we have to risk it all too, and we're afraid to do so. That's part of the reason why many of us stay stuck in so-so jobs for years on end.

But in reality, successful people are surprisingly risk averse.

In fact, Tim Ferriss once said that in an interview that he's very risk averse. He tests everything (his business ventures, life hacks, etc) rigorously on a micro level before actually investing time or money into them. So by the time he decides to go all in, he can virtually guarantee that it'll work out the way he wants it to.

But on the outside looking in, it seems like he's taking a big leap of faith.

Successful people go after what they want, but they mitigate risk as much as possible.

3. They play the long game

In the middle of my junior year of college, I decided I wanted to try and learn Spanish in 8 weeks.

I needed to complete 18 months worth of Spanish course work before graduating school. Since I didn't have a lot of time to do this before graduation, I had two choices: 1) take extended time to school so that I could finish my foreign language classes, or 2) take a placement test and get credit for the course (if I did well enough).

I figured I didn't have much to lose, so I decided I'd take a placement test.

But there was one problem. I didn't know any foreign languages.

So I did the craziest thing I've ever tried to do: learn 18 months worth of Spanish from scratch in 8 weeks.

Most people thought it would never work. Some of my friends told me it sounded like B.S.

Others told me I was wasting my time trying to do this and that I was trying to "take shortcuts".

It didn't feel good to hear any of that, but I already made a commitment — I even hired a native speaking coach and everything. So I followed through with the 8 weeks of studying.

I passed that placement test in flying colors. I studied a few hours a day, and learned more than 18 months worth of Spanish in 8 weeks.

I learned something else too: most people HATE the idea of trying new things unless there's a 100% guaranteed payoff in sight.

But people who operate under that mindset will NEVER live up to their full potential. Because there's never a 100% guaranteed payoff for anything outside of your comfort zone.

Successful people play the LONG game.

Check out this quote by Jeff Bezos, the CEO of Amazon:

> Chris Hale @chrisxhale · Mar 1
> "If we have a good quarter it's because of work we did 3, 4, 5 years ago. It's not because we did a good job this quarter." - Jeff Bezos
> 1K 2.5K 97 Tweet this

One of the biggest differences between top performers and everyone else is that they think in terms of months and years, while everyone else thinks in terms of days or weeks.

Life isn't short. We're probably going to live around 90-100 years or so. That's actually a pretty long time! You can do a lot even in one year.

If you mess up an interview, or try a new strategy that doesn't work, that's okay. It's not because you're a bad person. Set it aside, schedule a time to come back and look at what went wrong, and iterate.

When people try to forget on what their dream job is, a lot of people then get paralyzed by pressure because they think it's something they'll have to do for their entire lives — top performers who take the long view know that there's no reason to be afraid of closing doors.

When crafting a remarkable career, the most important thing to get right is mindset.

If you nail that, all the tactics just fall into place.

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Like this post? Its my jetpack email list. I share specific strategies to help you:

- *Figure out what your dream job is*
- *Make the right connections without coming off as "salesy" (even if you live in the middle of nowhere)*
- *Craft your application in such a way that the hiring manager can't ignore you (even if you're underqualified)*
- *Crush every interview*
- *And much more*

Most of my advice is very different from other career "experts". Sign up here

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