

= Successful (song) =

" Successful " is a song by Canadian recording artist Drake . American R & B singer Trey Songz is featured as well as Drake 's mentor and labelmate Lil Wayne . It was produced by Noah " 40 " Shebib . The song was written by the trio and its producer , Noah " 40 " Shebib . The song served as the second single from Drake 's mixtape , So Far Gone , and was included on Trey Songz 's third studio album , Ready , sans Wayne and the addition of a new verse by Songz . Accompanied by a dark tone , the songs lyrics contain quips of self @-@ determination .

" Successful " received critical acclaim from critics , some of which referred to the song as a standout track on Ready . While reaching seventeen on the Billboard Hot 100 , the song peaked at two and three , respectively on the Rap Songs and Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs charts . The accompanying music video features Drake and Songz venturing off into Toronto nightlife , interspersed with contemplative scenes . The song received several accolades , including being ranked seventeen on Rolling Stone 's " 25 Best Songs of 2009 " list , and ranking ten on Spin 's " The 20 Best Songs of 2009 " roll . Complex named it the 82nd best song of the decade . Two years after its initial release , the track was certified Gold by the (RIAA) for sales exceeding 500 @,@ 000 copies in the United States alone .

= = Background = =

The song was first released as Drake 's follow @-@ up track to " Best I Ever Had " for his So Far Gone mixtape , with Songz and Lil Wayne received featuring credits . After the success of the two singles , Drake decided to release a retail version of the mixtape in the form of an extended play , including the song . On Songz 's third album , Ready , he included the track , however Drake 's verse was moved to the middle and Lil Wayne 's rap was taken out in order to include a new verse by Songz .

The song was originally set to be on Drake 's debut album , Thank Me Later , but after Drake forwent the song , he insisted that Songz include it on Ready . Songz stated in an interview what fan reception to the track mostly had been that he should put a verse in on " Successful " , but Songz told BallerStatus ,

" I was like , ' That 's my homie 's song . ' Then initially , Drake came up to me with the idea like ' Nah dog . That 's your song . I 'm not putting it on my album . So it 's going to be a waste . So it 's going to be a big record with no one to go retrieve it . ' So we put the verse on there just to give me a little more presence on the record for it to be on my album . "

In an interview with MTV News , Drake explained how the song came about , stating , " It has this pocket , and there was no melody yet . I remember [producer Noah ' 40 ' Shebib] kind of making the joint , and then he hit this sound , which is the chords that are in there . It was so eerie . Like it was haunting , almost . I was like , ' Yo , that 's it . You need to use that . ' He started playing this patch , and just every note that he played fell into place . I had this beat sitting here that I love so much , and I didn 't know what to do with it ... "

= = Writing = =

Drake then contacted Songz , who had been working with Drake back since 2007 on mixtapes . Songz said that Drake originally called him on advice of segueing his singing into rapping on interludes , then the terms of what records he would be featured on the mixtape , as he sent him the " Successful " track . After Drake still could not settle on the direction for the track , Songz came up with the his hook . He explained to MTV News , " The first thing that came to mind was ' I want the money , money and the cars / Cars and the clothes / The ho 's / I suppose I just wanna be , I just wanna be successful . ' When I 'm saying all that , conceptually for me , the deepest part of the record was when I say , ' I suppose . ' I supposed that 's what success is about . That 's what [we 're] led to believe . " After hearing the hook , Drake called it " powerful " , commenting ,

" And it 's like , it 's almost like it made me feel like it may not be right what I want , you know ? All

these things , it 's like it made me feel young . It kind of made me feel ignorant to the game . But it was an exciting record even though the tempo is slow . That 's what I want ... The ' I suppose ' moment in there is like , it 's almost like you 're doubting yourself for a second . But at the end of the day , I just want to be successful . So that 's what the record meant to me . "

= = Composition = =

Drake has described the song as " eerie " and " dark " , and as " simplistic " having a " reverb @-@ driven harmony . " Shaheem Reid of MTV News said this about the song : " Trey Songz 's hook expresses the dreams of a young black male coming from nothing to something , and Drake 's raps put the hip @-@ hop nation on notice , while conveying his own desperation and hope and revealing family struggles . Let 's not forget Lil Wayne 's magnificent at bat as cleanup hitter ... " An " endearing and revealing " moment happens in the record when Drake refers to an incident when his mother contemplated leaving home during family troubles .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical reception = = =

David Jeffries of Allmusic noted the song as a standout track from *Ready* . Andrew Rennie of *Now Magazine* called a " cautionary anthem " and the song the top track on the album . Rennie also said that " Successful " and " Black Roses " , showcase Songz 's developed , more mature side . Sean Fennessey of *The Village Voice* said , " The calm , yearning song is a bona fide hit , and also the best example of where r & b lives today . " DJBooth said that there was " no reason to doubt that this track will become a mainstream smash . " Shaheem Reid of MTV News said , " It 's not a record that will kill the clubs , but when you just want to listen to superb lyricism and enthralling harmony , it 's a must have . " *Rolling Stone* ranked the song seventeen on their list of " Best 25 Songs of 2009 " list , and *Spin* ranked it the tenth best song of 2009 on their " The 20 Best Songs of 2009 " list .

= = = Chart performance = = =

On the week labeled August 1 , 2009 , the song debuted on the *Billboard* Hot 100 at number eighty @-@ eight . Weeks later , the song peaked at number seventeen , where it spent one week . The song spent eighteen weeks on the chart dropping off on the week ending November 28 , 2009 . Additionally the song reached three on the Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs chart and two on the Rap Songs chart .

= = Music video = =

The music video for the *Ready* version of the song , filmed in Drake 's hometown of Toronto , Ontario , was directed by Jake White . An on set video and stills were released on August 12 , 2009 , followed by a preview of the clip on August 27 , 2009 . The full video was released on August 31 , 2009 . The video was nominated for MuchVIBE Hip-hop Video of the Year and Cinematographer of the Year the 2010 MuchMusic Video Awards , winning both awards . It ranked at number eight on BET : Notarized Top 100 Videos of 2009 countdown .

While accompanying Songz on 106 & Park when promoting , *Ready* , Drake explained the video , stating :

" The concept of the video is the fact that ' successful , ' it applies to so many people that me and Trey just want to get the point across that we see ourselves and we see success in other individuals so really , it 's a video about potential . It 's a video about understanding that no matter what you do , there 's a way to be successful doing it . It 's one of those motivational videos . It actually ends with a quote from Barack Obama which is one of my favorite quotes I 've ever read , so we decided to put

it in the video . It 's vivid . "

The video begins with Drake going up an elevator while Songz sings shirtless on the edge of a bed with a woman laying on the other side looking on . Drake then ends up on a balcony singing in front of the Toronto skyline . Both are shown in scenes contemplating intermixed with Songz joining Drake on the balcony . Subsequently scenes are shown of Drake and Songz riding through Toronto nightlife , along with the contemplative scenes , such as a young boy playing basketball in which Songz has an illusion that it is him , and little girl blowing a dandelion . The video ends with the skyline and a quote stating ,

" Making your mark on the world is hard . If it were easy , everybody would do it . But it 's not . It takes patience , it takes commitment , and it comes with plenty of failure along the way . The real test is not whether you avoid this failure , because you won 't . It 's whether you let it harden or shame you into inaction , or whether you learn from it ; whether you choose to persevere . "

- Barack Obama

= = Live performances = =

Songz and Drake performed the song on 106 & Park on September 2 , 2009 , as a part of a medley of " I Need a Girl " and " LOL Smiley Face . "

= = Remixes = =

The song was remixed and renamed " Stressful " by Joell Ortiz & Novel for their critically acclaimed mixtape Defying the Predictable .

T @-@ Pain made a remix called " More Careful " as an apology to Jay @-@ Z. There was an unreleased version with a phone call instead of Trey Songz 's intro and a new Drake verse .

= = Track listing = =

7 : 27 (alternate mixtape version)

6 : 15 (mixtape version)

5 : 51 (EP version)

4 : 26 (Ready / video version)

3 : 25 (Radio edit)

2 : 02 (good version)

= = Credits and personnel = =

Songwriting ? Noah " 40 " Shebib , Tremaine Neverson , Aubrey Graham , Dwayne Carter

Production , recording and mixing ? Noah " 40 " Shebib

* A ^ Exclusively for the original single and So Far Gone mixtape and extended play versions .

Source

= = Charts = =