

iEvolve – Mastering Performance & Success

Karen Davies



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Preface and Biography

Personal Development is a hot topic right now and despite the market being awash with Self-help books, each author has their own unique angle on how to create success and high performance, based on their experiences. So you can never really have enough of this genre of material.

Personal development, as with many topics, has evolved over the decades, with today's view offering a more spiritual and inward perspective. Personal growth and expansion is no longer simply about adapting what we *do and say* to achieve better results; it is about recognising the influences that have shaped ***how we think, how we feel*** and knowing how to unlock our inner potential. It is only then that we can understand our true nature, see the path towards success and what is blocking our path.

Karen's experience of personal development is about connecting to an inner journey, as her Assertiveness Trilogy books have embodied. It is not until we are willing to go within; to access the very heart of us that we can really comprehend the full nature of our character. When we glimpse this, we can then begin to truly unravel the mysteries of our personal performance, achievement and fulfilment. The more tools we are offered that encourages introspection, the greater the chance of our personal potential being realised. This philosophy is gradually becoming the very cornerstone of thriving businesses, because personal development is about raising our game in authentic ways that enable us to fulfil our potential both personally and professionally.

We are in an era where achieving goals in a transactional way is no longer enough, if a business is to stand out amongst its competitors. Companies who are investing in their staff's development and nourishment are the legacy creators. That means providing employees with the opportunity to explore their behaviours and attitudes and supporting them to achieve high performance and personal excellence. This approach ensures that staff are at the top of their game, delivering results for the business whilst also achieving the personal recognition they deserve.

Whatever your background, seniority or expertise, this book will benefit you at so many levels. If you need to enhance your effectiveness, increase your business impact, lead more dynamically or sell more successfully, then investing in this development journey will prove a valuable asset.

Bringing you this fascinating topic is Karen Davies, who is passionate about her work in personal development, the art of creating authentic assertion and happiness; thanks to the very journey she herself has navigated.

Whilst Karen has been in the personal development and coaching fields for twenty-five years, it has been in the last fifteen that her work has had the greatest impact, thanks to her own self-discovery. After suffering from stress-related depression in 1997, Karen had a unique opportunity to explore herself profoundly and uncover the fundamental triggers that created her health situation. After a cathartic self-development process, she worked through her challenges and these have become the source of her own healing, her inspirational teachings and powerful coaching.

Through her Consultancy, Karen has inspired change in hundreds of executives, employees and aspiring leaders across the globe, achieving success for over thirteen years. Today Karen is role modelling her 'optimise your potential' teachings by shifting her focus from business to personal transformation, inspiring the fulfilment of individuals, through her new vocation – **Conversations with a Butterfly**, where she places *happiness at the heart of her business*.



Karen, as a self-confessed happiness entrepreneur and has a refreshing approach to development that is so far beyond the concept of the traditional 'training course'. She uses her coaching philosophy to guide people on a path of self-discovery, building on the notion that teaching is a passive activity; learning is active. You will not just read this eBook, you will take a journey and, engaged by her coaching exercises, have the opportunity to alter the way you think, how you feel and behave in all walks of your life. Your transformation and personal fulfilment is just around the corner.

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www.conversationswithabutterfly.com

"If you truly want to be happy, then get out of your own way."

Michael Nitti, Life Coach

1 Introduction – Today's Personal Development

When I first started work over twenty five years ago, one of the early courses I attended was a Personal Development programme. When I think back to what we covered, it focused on motivation, identifying training needs, goal setting, how to be enthusiastic and a range of personality questionnaires.

These are indeed sound topics and had their place in the late eighties, although I believe that today's world requires a far more profound development model than these potentially superficial offerings. As I describe in my Assertiveness Trilogy, I call this the *sticking plaster* effect. We try to make things better with a quick-fix approach, believing that this alone will improve a relationship, resolve a situation or alter a behavioural issue, long-term. I feel that until we get beneath the surface of what makes us do what we do, think the way we think and feel the way we feel, we will never achieve sustained change or reach our true potential.

For me, the prevailing view of Personal Development invites an inward journey that helps us to enhance our self-knowledge and peel away the layers that make up our character, our personality and our behaviour patterns. Through these insights, we can then create a genuine path for personal transformation and long-lasting change. This has certainly been my personal experience. All the time I focused on superficial topics, my engrained habits and conditioning continued to plague my work and life experiences. Once I explored the root cause of my challenges more deeply, then a big shift occurred and my potential really opened up.

Today, I base my development philosophy entirely on an inside-out approach, which has been inspired by author Stephen Covey and my own inner journey. I believe, before we can improve relationships, interact more positively, lead more dynamically or say 'no' confidently, we must first look within. We must be prepared to explore what influences us to behave in a certain way and consider what holds us back from being successful. We then have a significant and constructive way to raise our game and master our performance.

Without this *inside-out* approach, it is like trying to knit a jumper from a tangled ball of wool. It is a difficult task until it is unraveled. If we want more success, we can no longer rely on the *sticking plaster*. We need the courage to look inside and unravel the intricate web that makes us who we are. We can then make the profound changes that give us the basis for long-term change.

Whilst this may feel scary or may-be it is exciting; either way it will be an adventure. As author Eckhart Tolle says,

***‘Stop looking for scraps of pleasure or fulfilment, for validation, security or love.
You have a treasure within that is infinitely greater than anything the world can offer you.’***

1.1 Personal Development and Business

The commercial world generates a high demand for outstanding performance, driven by competition and customer requirements. We have seen an increase in Talent and Performance Management models, Target Performance matrices and Capability Review programmes, all intent on measuring achievement through a set of controllable mechanisms. Yet behind each of these lies one important component – ***people***. However solid an organisation's processes and procedures are, people are key to a business's success and without human dynamics, an organisation's potential can never be truly realised. With a highly attuned workforce, then *the sky is the limit* in terms of performance, success and stakeholder results.

In my experience, when organisations are willing to invest in their greatest resource – *their people*, real progress can be made and results achieved. Imagine if values and philosophies centred on how to get the best out of people – what could businesses achieve? If staff knew how to optimise their performance, develop strong self-esteem and interact with assertion, imagine what could be delivered. Staff succeed and feel fulfilled and the business produces results. This is a classic win-win outcome.

Add to this, the fast-pace of change that influences the corporate world, placing businesses and their employees under immense pressure to perform and adapt to the ever-changing environment. Change requires courage, willingness, resilience and self-awareness, all things that tend to subside behind the fear and anxiety that change can often evoke. When we invest in our personal development, through increased self-awareness, we soon harness our performance and capabilities, enabling us to embrace change more effectively. The insights we gain from this work opens up ability for us to succeed and realise our capacity to be leaders of change, not just compliant officers or silent saboteurs. Leaders of change are what businesses are crying out for.

1.2 Personal Development – What is in it for us?

Imagine for a moment; what if we knew more about what influenced our thoughts, feelings and behaviours? What if we knew our values, motivators and strengths? What if we knew the rules of engagement to the Game of Success and Fulfilment – what would life be like for us? And I don't mean just work life; I mean our life in its biggest, most holistic sense. Imagine how much more self-assured we could be; how much more we could achieve, how much happier we and our families could feel. Each new step we take could be one of conscious choices, assertive actions and courageous speech. We could be making choices because they were right for us (and the people that matter most to us), because they ensured a genuine, heart-felt result. What a wonderful world that could be.

Are you skeptical that this sounds like a, 'Once upon a time' fairy-tale? Well let me reassure you that these are some of the experiences that can be achieved when we invest in our personal development. Many past-participants have affirmed this from my Leadership programmes and I can vouch for this too.

One lady wrote to me recently to tell me that, thanks to the confidence she had built after a year-long programme she had attended with me, she had the courage to change the course of her career. She is now happier and more fulfilled than she has been in years. This was so lovely to hear and just goes to prove how investment in our personal development can achieve the most amazing results.

When you make the decision to engage with iEvolve, you are making a clear statement that you are ready to expand your self-awareness and learn about yourself in such a way that you can:

- Make better choices and decisions
- Have improved and more harmonious relationships
- Generate greater happiness because you are experiencing less internal conflict
- Be the artist of your future canvas, designing how tomorrow looks for you
- Experience greater success (however you may choose to define this)
- Encounter a more easeful flow to your home and work life because of your new level of awareness.

If these sound appealing, then you are in the right place. Here is what you can expect through the course of this Mastering your Success and Performance Guide.

Part 1 – The Science of Success – Five Laws

This first section creates a foundation for success based on the new science of getting the best from ourselves. This gives us a confident place from which we are inspired to continue our development journey.

Part 2 – The Journey of Self-Discovery

This next chapter focuses on the first of the three key ingredients of success that David Thomas, Founder of US restaurant chain Wendy's quotes as being, Inward, Outward and Forwards. From the premise that sustainable change has to come from a depth of inner knowledge, we can begin this self-explorative journey. A number of exercises help us uncover profound insights that will offer some 'Ah-ha' moments and begin our personal expansion.

Part 3 – Mastering Happiness – A Competitive Advantage

With a new paradigm in place, we can begin to explore how to create a competitive advantage that starts to make a difference in our lives. Real strategies that deliver results and create the basis for success.

Part 4 – Today is the First Day of the Rest of your Life

The final section of iEvolve offers specific and practical advice gathered from Happiness Entrepreneurs. This helps introduce a happier and more successful state into our professional lives, enabling us to make a difference to our lives right here, right now.



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1.3 Learning Desires

I have written this in the style of a workbook that encourages us to interact. As your personal coach, I guide you on this personal development journey and help you create a personal jigsaw that pieces together a picture of powerful insights and self-knowledge that enable you to take charge of your performance and success.

So with all this in mind, what excites you about this eBook? What do you feel inspired to achieve, as you think about your opportunity to expand your awareness, knowledge and success? Use the box below to think about what you hope to achieve and what your three desired outcomes are whilst engaging with iEvolve.

My Learning Desires

1.

2.

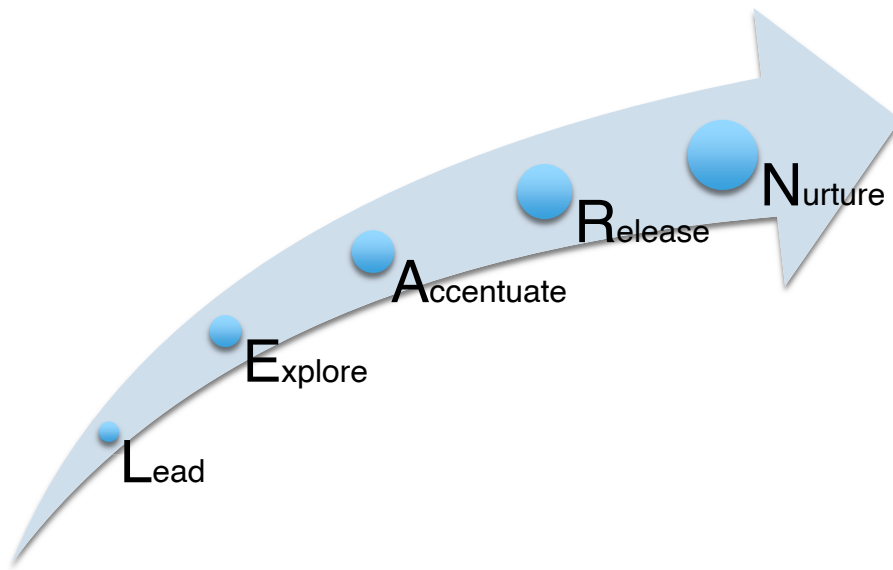
3.

We will return to these statements towards the end of the book as we begin to set a plan for mastering success in your world.

1.4 A Model for Personal Growth

Before we leave this section, I would like to offer a model I created, which I feel embodies my philosophy of personal development and is the basis of my iEvolve writing.

LEARN – A Model for Personal Development



Lead – Take responsibility for our journey of self-discovery and the vista that will emerge as we take each step. Look to no one else for the answers, as they all lie within and when we realise this, we become more empowered to change the things that will truly make a difference to our lives.

Explore – Courageously uncover the people and past-events that have influenced us, understanding what triggers our behaviour patterns and learn why we do, think and feel as we do.

Accentuate – Adopt a positive attitude by identifying all those parts of us that are strengths, qualities, talents and capabilities. Embody these qualities, express them and follow them with commitment.

Release – Learn to let go of the self-imposed doubts, negative stories and anything which no longer serves a positive purpose, which may have an impact on our success.

Nurture – As we learn to see our truth, we can begin to nurture all that is good about us rather than hold onto and project stories that have been created by conditioning from the past.

The LEARN model is at the heart of my personal development experiences, which have sometimes challenged me and, more often, accelerated my growth over the years. Although as I think about it, this model has been implicit in all my leadership and assertive work, giving it a robust authenticity. I hope that it gives you a basis for the journey, which I now invite you to take.

"The three ingredients to success; inwards, outwards and forwards."

David Thomas, Founder of Wendy's, US restaurant chain

“If the beauty you see with open eyes is the same as you feel with your eyes shut, then you are tuned into your heart.”

Karen Davies, Coach

2 Science of Success – Five Laws

Think about a hero or heroine who you admire, from either the past or present. Now think about what it is about them that inspires you. Write down what it is they do (or have done), how they think, how they behave and what it is about them that make them stand out from others.

My Hero/Heroine

There could be a whole range of names that came to mind with this exercise; Mahatma Ghandi, Richard Branson or Florence Nightingale to name just a few – and of course, a diverse set of reasons that they stand out. Although I am confident that there would be a number of traits common to virtually any hero or heroine listed, for example:

- Passion
- Integrity
- Commitment
- Talent
- Compassion
- Drive
- Capability
- Conscientiousness
- Determination

Yet if we examined the science behind their status, success or fame, I wonder what we would observe. Is there a formula we could follow or is it just luck and coincidence? This section aims to explore this a little using Five Laws to Success, which is based on the new science that surrounds how to master our success, happiness and fulfilment.

1. It is Personal.
2. Definition creates Mastery.
3. Success is Happiness?
4. Success, is it Luck or Creation?
5. Success must be Holistic.

2.1 First Law of Success – It is Personal

Firstly, I would like to explore what success looks like to see if there is some hidden magic we can access. For this exercise let us examine the characteristics of success, experienced through the eyes of three very different industries; ***Business***, ***Sports*** and ***Entertainment***. Using the three boxes below, consider what the Top 10 success characteristics might be from each of these worlds; consider their **behaviours/actions**, their **mindsets** and how they need to **feel** to achieve success in their respective categories.

Business	Sports	Entertainment

Comparing each list, identify what common themes arise, summarising the common characteristics in the box below.

--

Given that we have explored three different sectors and undoubtedly found that there are some cross-overs in terms of success characteristics, does this give us a formula for OUR success? What if I asked you to assess your current success against these criteria – how would they fit for you? I suspect it would not be a perfect fit, as there would be some characteristics that just do not feel right for you. They might well be a great fit for an entrepreneur, tennis player or even an actor, although when it comes down to it, often those criteria just do not cut it for us personally.

If we are going to truly be successful and perform at our best, then the first thing we must acknowledge is that our definition of success will be completely unique to each of us. So there is no one formula for us to follow – there is just *our formula*. This is such an important realisation, as we so often try emulating big sporting heroes or business gurus, and yet their perceptions, values and beliefs about what success looks like, will be completely different from each other.

Real Life Story

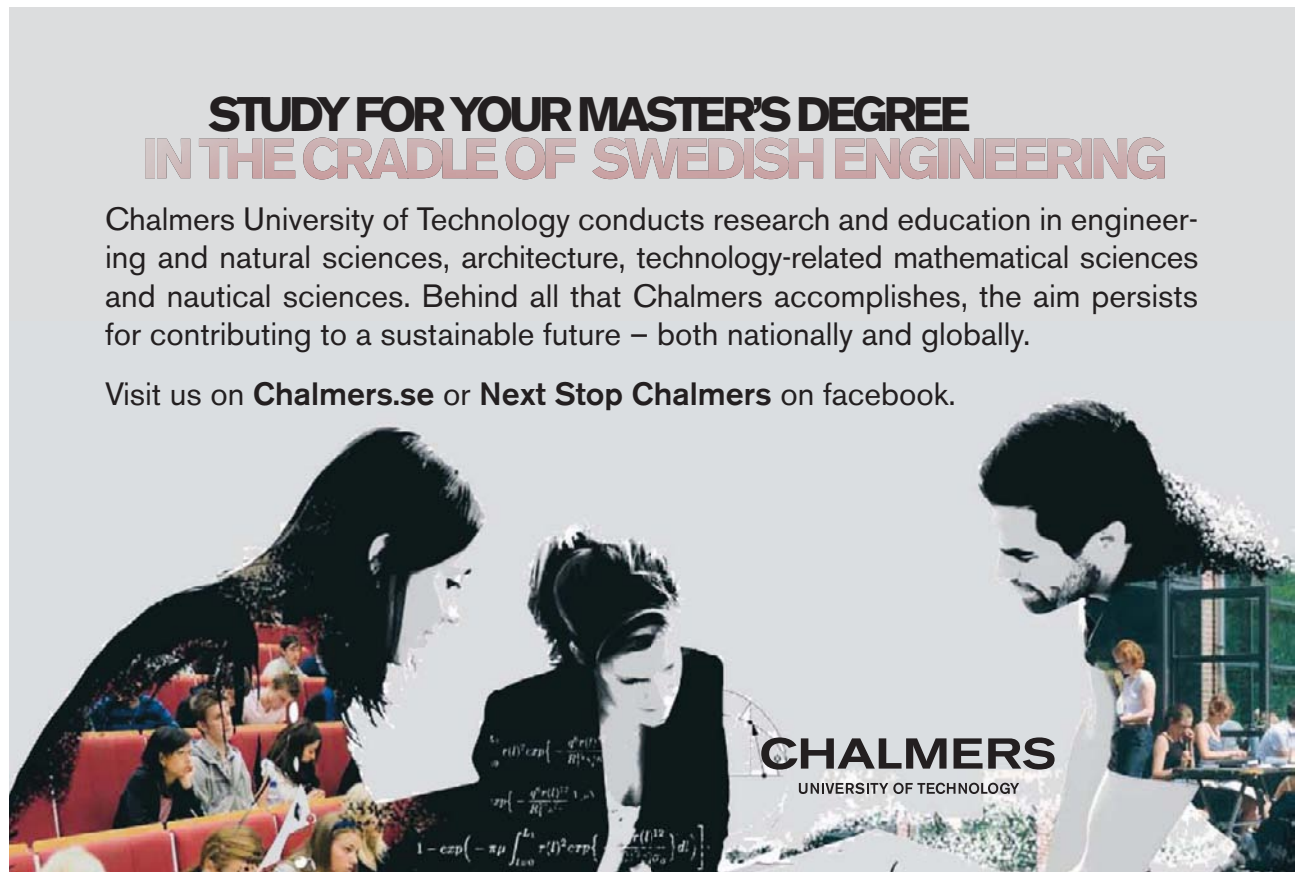
I recall a poignant moment in my development when I came to acknowledge this fundamental law; I invited a CEO of a local Financial Institution to a Leadership workshop I was running. His brief was to share with the group what he believed made a successful leader. For an hour he used language like ruthless, drive, long hours, aggression, competition, targets, deliverables and going the extra mile. Now there is nothing wrong with these characteristics per say, although I was really interested in my response to them. I felt really uncomfortable with his presentation and not at all convinced that he could be my role model or offer me his formula for my success.

The following month, I did the same exercise with a different group and invited a different leader to present at the session, with exactly the same brief. The story she shared about leadership success contained language like; collaboration, heart, holistic, passion, values, happiness, belief and commitment. Now this was the type of success I could sign up for.

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Listening to the two talks highlighted to me the stark differences in the two approaches; neither being right nor wrong, just simply what was right for each of them, individually. This taught me such an important lesson; the definition and characteristics of success are completely unique and a highly personal affair.

When we understand this, we begin to recognise that we do not need to measure ourselves against other's ideals. We simply need to focus on what success means to us and we are half way there.

2.2 Second Law of Success – Definition creates Mastery

Interestingly, when we follow the sound of another's drum, we tend to lose a little of ourselves and our potential with it. This is certainly something I can relate to as I spent many years putting people on pedestals, trying to be like them; then later in life, realising this was a fruitless task. When we learn to be true to ourselves, everything falls into place and success becomes effortless.

When we decide to take the reins of success and master the game of *our* life, then one of the first exercises we really need to do is define explicitly what success means to us. This isn't just a wooly excuse of a mission statement – this is a profound statement that declares clearly what success looks, feels and sounds like for us and states the results it would give us.

When we begin to play our game, we naturally find that our performance alters. When we rely on compliance to other's rules, we have to find energy to play, motivation to stay with it and 'blood, sweat and tears' to continue performing at their desired level. Whereas, imagine if we set our own rules and followed them passionately – what happens to our performance then? It raises a level and naturally develops a rhythm that takes us towards the very essence that is *our success*. Everyone is a winner when we engage with this game.

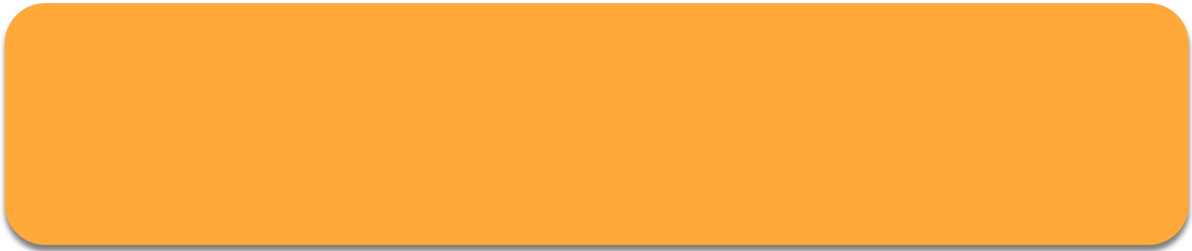
So my second Law of Success is getting REALLY clear on and defining what success means to us, which then gives us a robust starting point to our own, personal success formula.

2.2.1 Success Definition – 80th Birthday.

This is an opportune moment for an important exercise that helps define what success means to you as you begin this iEvolve journey and start to create some meaning.

I would like you to project forward to your 80th Birthday; a special party with all your family and friends present to celebrate – and what a celebration it is. Imagine that you are having a conversation that recalls the happy times you have experienced in your life; the joy, the achievements, the encounters that bring a smile to your face.

List below elements of the story you would want to share that best conveys your happiness and success.



Now, imagine that you were present at this party as your younger self – the self you are today. Ask the 80 year old version of you for *one* piece of advice that they could give you about the pursuit of success, based on their experiences. What advice would the older you offer?



Finally, reflect on these two exercises and, using that information, consider what your definition of success needs to be today that enables you to honour that advice and bring your story to life.



With this in place, you can now line up at the starting block with a meaningful target to head towards. It might confirm exactly what you have been thinking up until now, or it might be leading you towards something completely new. Either way that clarity will help you.

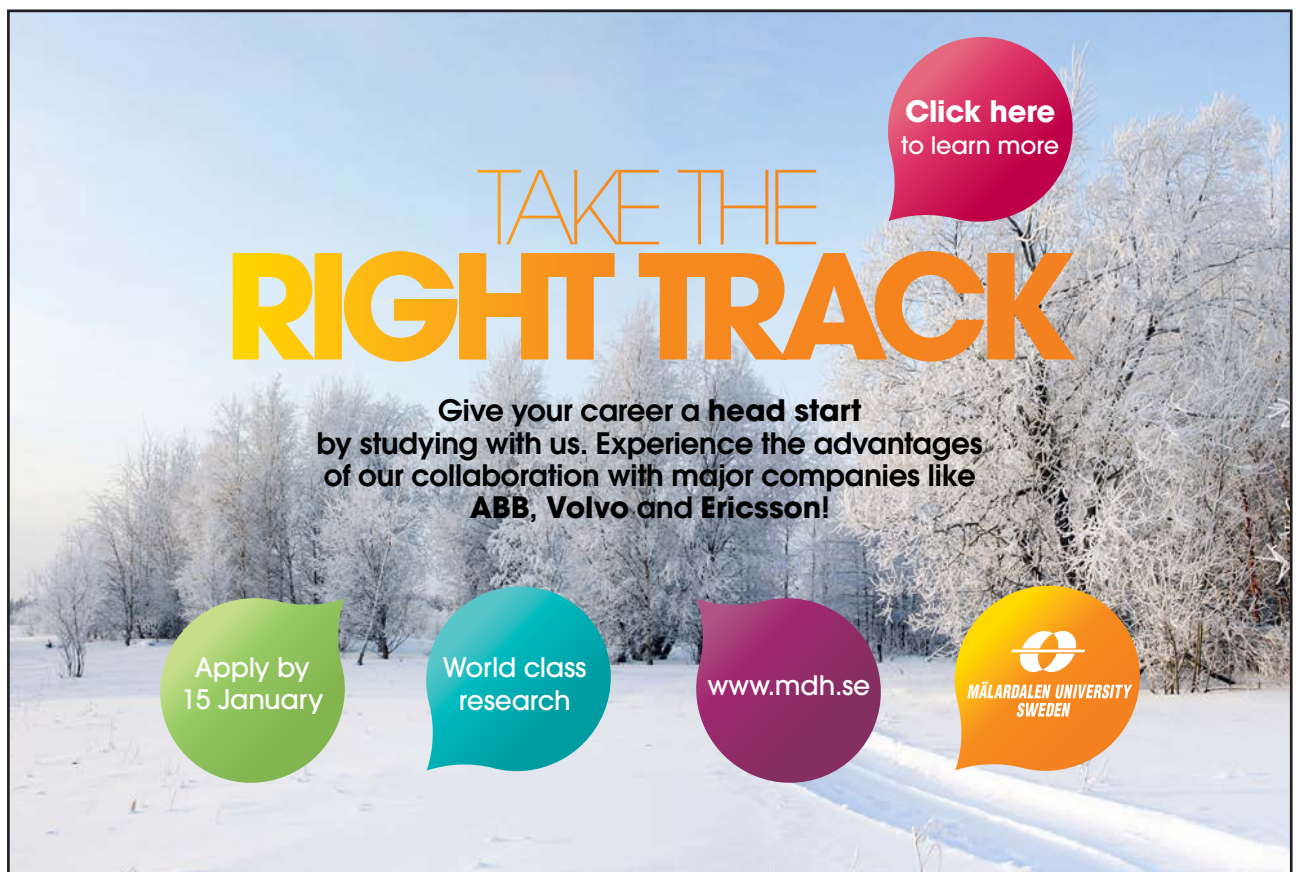
2.3 Third Law of Success – Success is Happiness?

We have been lured into a false sense of security that **when** we achieve success, **then** we will be happy, as if it were a final destination for us to head towards. When did we get the notion that success meant happiness? As if success were an object that once acquired would ensure a specific outcome – in this case, happiness!

Success is so often seen as something outside of us and is frequently attached to an object or a symbol that gives us ownership, power, status or position. Now it is not to say that they are wrong, although when we are misguided towards those being the result of success, then that is when illusion clouds our pursuit of happiness. When success is defined as the achievement of something outside of us, then our positive experiences are only temporary. Plus we are conditioned by society, well-meaning parents and organisations that if we, ‘Work harder you will achieve greater success, which will then bring you happiness.’ So we have created a false belief that hard work is the only way to happiness.

This belief is flawed because every time we achieve what we class as ‘success’, then we alter the benchmark of what success looks like in the future. For example being promoted means that we have to work towards the next promotion; achieving a qualification means stretching ourselves towards the next academic challenge. There will always be just one more goal for us to achieve.

As Shawn Achor, Positive Psychologist suggests that, if we believe that happiness is the other side of success, we will never get there. We have made happiness impossible to achieve because we have attached it to an ever changing vision of success.



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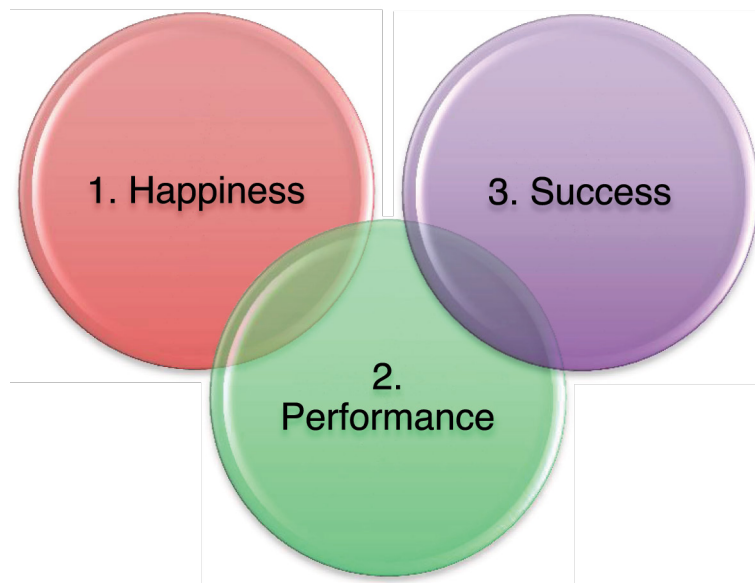
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So we need to redefine the *success = happiness formula* and focus on happiness being the fuel of success, not the other way around. **When** we invest our energy in doing what makes our heart beat, **then** we become happier. Our motivation, energy, inspiration and performance thereby alters, and so, by the natural order of things, we become more successful. Notice in the model below that the Happiness and Success circles are not connected. This is because success needs to be seen as a direct output of happiness and not an influential factor of happiness.

The Happiness-Performance-Success Interconnection



90% of our happiness is predicted by the way our brain processes the world. So if we can rewire the way our brain has been conditioned to see things, then we can begin to shape our own formula and ultimately design our own future. We will cover this in more detail later, although here are some tools that help us to rewire our brains and create a personal happiness = success formula:

- Experience gratitude for what we have.
- Become more positive about the good in our lives.
- Engage in more heart-centred activities that have meaning and purpose.
- Change our lifestyle to create more health, vitality and energy.
- Develop knowledge about how best to feel motivated.

Now success can flow naturally.

2.4 Fourth Law of Success – Is it Luck or Creation?

I am sure you have heard successful people say, ‘I was just lucky’ or, ‘I was in the right place at the right time.’ So is it luck, timing, other people’s influence or is it sheer hard work and determination? I would offer that none of these are true. The Happiness-Performance-Success partnership is one that is created by us. As the quote from the Hollywood Blockbuster, *Invictus* so aptly puts it,

‘We are masters of our fate and the captains of our soul.’

We have a choice about the way we experience the world, how we think, how we feel and how we respond to people and events. Whilst there is no doubting the primal, reptilian part of our brain that can keep us in a very reactive mode, this can be contained and minimised, allowing a huge potential for crafting our own destiny. When we let go of blame and victimising thoughts, we are free to take responsibility for our own actions and with this mindset, we can experience a reality that brings us the happiness we deserve. We are not dependent upon others or external factors for our happiness, however much we might think that this is true. Whilst they may well enhance our happiness, the truth is, that we alone are the captain of our life’s adventures.

The very pathway through iEvolve empowers us with the self-awareness, the personal insights and the confidence to seek our own Happiness-Performance-Success recipe and create the future we desire. As Arnold Palmer, one of the most popular Golf Champions responded to a reporter who commented on how lucky he was to win yet another championship, ***‘The more I practice, the luckier I get.’***

2.5 Fifth Law of Success – It must be Holistic

Happiness and success must be considered from all angles for it to be authentic and long-lasting. It must incorporate *Body, Emotions and Mind*. Imagine if we had a healthy body and lifestyle and yet had a mind littered with negativity. Such is the power of the brain that this would seriously impact upon our entire well-being, albeit at a subtle level. What if we had a fabulously positive mind in control of our emotions and yet had an unhealthy diet? That would equally be unbalanced and would not give us long-lasting happiness.

Learning to explore our happiness and success from within this intrinsic *Body, Emotions and Mind* triad is crucial if we are going to sustain a positive life experience. After all we are one whole being and neither part can afford to be ignored. Tuning into this fact means that we can become more aware of areas of unhappiness or ‘dis-ease’ and change.

This may be an alien concept, or perhaps it feels familiar, especially if you practice meditation. Either way, let’s explore this idea. Read the following statement:

I am a powerful and magnificent being.

Now notice what is happening in your body as you read the words two or three times.

Firstly, think about your **body**. Does it straighten up and feel powerful when you read this statement or do you sense yourself recoiling in discomfort?

Now what about your **emotions**? Does it feel uncomfortable, exciting or do you get a sinking or sick feeling when you acknowledge this statement?

Finally, think about your **mind**. What thoughts are you having around this statement? What internal dialogue are you noticing coming up here?

Note down what you experienced in this exercise, using the above questions:



If any part of our body, emotions and mind are out of sync they will have a subtle yet undermining effect on us, which will be evident in our performance. When we learn to tune into how our mind and body are communicating, then we can develop an extremely effective barometer that allows us to make intelligent changes to our performance and our life's experiences.

Imagine how much more effective we could be if we became aware of our *Body, Emotions and Mind* triad during an interview, an important business meeting or presentation. Rather than reacting to a primal set of internal triggers, we could instead, with awareness begin to harness our performance and potential. We can tune into the messages we are receiving, acknowledge them and then subtly rebalance any resistance or discomfort that our body is communicating.

When we accept the notion that creating happiness and success requires us to focus on our whole being, then we are ready to take the first step in our iEvolve Personal Development Journey.

So, there we have it – five Laws to Happiness and Success that, on my personal development journey, have served me well as I peel away the layers and take responsibility for my growth and performance. With these principles laid in front of us, we can set out on the path with our heads in the right space.

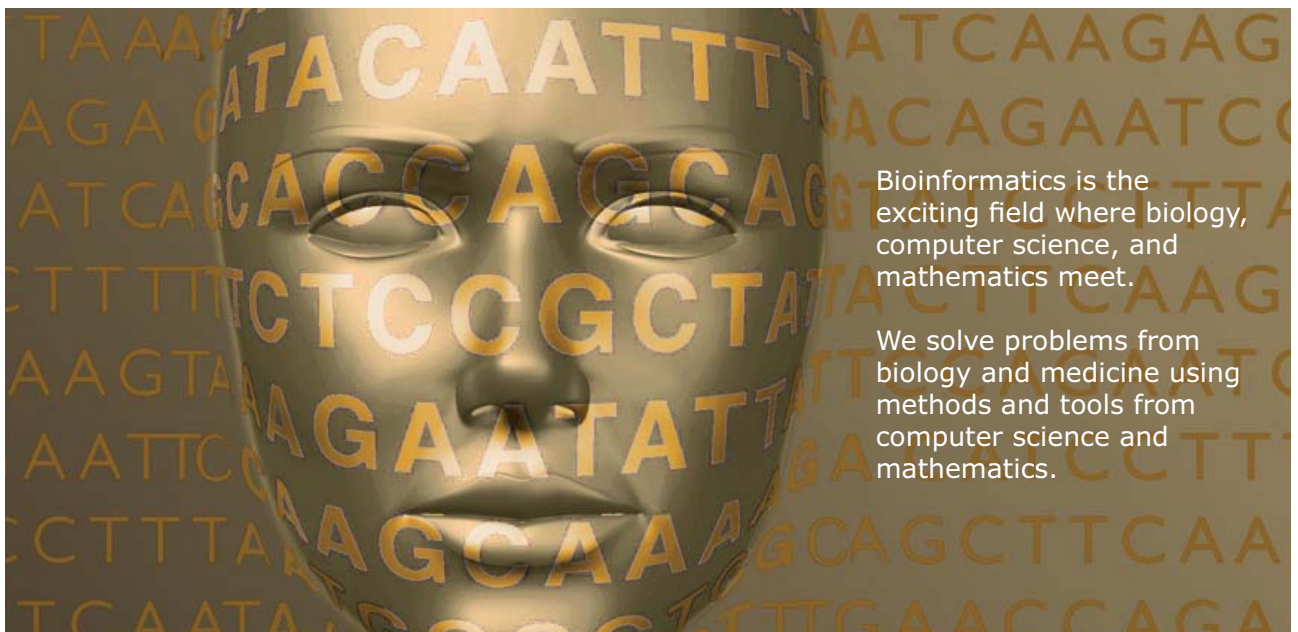
The next section embarks us on this journey, giving us tools, exploratory questions and insights that ensure this eBook is more than just light, reading material. This eBook is your Personal Development companion that begins to signal growth, change and happiness.

"Happiness resides not in possessions and not in gold; the feeling of happiness dwells in the soul."

Democritus, Greek Philosopher, 460 BC



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“What has gone before us, shapes us.”

The Lion King, Film

3 Journey of Self-Discovery

I hope you have been intrigued by the last two chapters. Whilst we may not have peeled away any onion layers as yet, we have most certainly got ourselves into the best possible shape for this iEvolve challenge. Over the course of the next three chapters, I will help you navigate your Personal Development path, with an *inside-out perspective* that helps create the happiness and success you deserve, inspiring you to raise your game at work, live a more contented personal life and optimise your potential. If this prospect excites you, then let us begin.

3.1 Self-Assessment – My Current Reality

The first step, as I alluded to in Chapter 2, is to understand what success means to us, especially in light of the *happiness = success* principle. A personalised definition gives us the starting point to identifying the specific characteristics that symbolise what success is like for us.

So please revisit page 13 and the 80th Birthday Exercise and start to think about the Top 10 characteristics that would most clearly describe what happiness and success mean to you. For example, some of mine are:

- Health
- Freedom
- Meaningful activity
- Balance
- Choice
- Nourishing relationships
- Adding Value
- Peaceful (i.e. stress-free)

Remember that this is about creating something personally meaningful, so please give it plenty of thought and make sure that each characteristic can be connected to your Success Definition. If a characteristic feels disconnected then either the definition needs changing or the characteristic needs refining.

List your Top 10 characteristics in the box below. I would suggest that you sleep on these and keep returning to this exercise, as the more you explore what happiness/success looks, sounds and feels like to you, the more your list will evolve and the closer you get to your truth.

Top 10 Happiness/Success Characteristics

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

If this resembles a robust list of characteristics, you can begin to examine where you are today, using this record as a Check List. Taking your success/happiness definition and your Top 10, start to assess your **Current Reality**. How happy and successful are you NOW? This will give you a really important starting point, from which you will have a better idea about how to adapt and adjust.

Review each characteristic and journalise the answer to the following questions:

1. Out of 10, how would I score my alignment to each characteristic? *10 = Completely Aligned* and *1 = Not even close*.
2. Based on those scores *under 7*, if I could raise my score by one point what would I need to do to enhance my happiness, given what this eBook has discussed so far?
3. For those scores *over 8*, what strategies am I currently employing that creates this alignment and that I need to sustain?

This exercise gives you some important data to assess what your happiness experience is, right now and gives you some sort of picture about what needs to happen for you to evolve.

3.2 Understanding your Inner Landscape – Past Influences


If I asked you to step back and articulate clearly what helps and hinders you to achieve your current level of success, I suspect you may struggle. This is partly because delving deeply into our make-up is not something we find comfortable, as we have boxes stored there that we would rather ignore. Yet avoiding an exercise like this does not breed success or long-term happiness. We can only go on disregarding the obvious for so long – eventually we have to face ourselves in the mirror if we want to be at our best.

So armed with courage, I invite you to explore your inner landscape, safe in the knowledge that what you uncover and learn will undeniably help you to become happier, healthier, stronger and more confident. Much like the caterpillar on its metamorphic journey, a certain amount of introspection and discomfort is required for us to emerge into our truest potential. As author Susan Jeffers says, “Feel the fear and do it anyway.”

3.2.1 What influences our success?

There are many deeply rooted elements in our characters that are shaping our present and future landscape, often without our knowledge. Each one has a role in creating fears, inhibitions and doubts that silently influence our thoughts, emotions and behaviours. They all hold the key to unlocking our potential when we surface their nature and reframe their tenuous rationale.

The first consideration to unlocking our door of potential is to understand the foundation on which all of the decisions we make and actions we take are based. This is a concept that I call our *Hilltop of Experiences*. If you have read my Assertive Trilogy with Bookboon, then you will be familiar with this idea.



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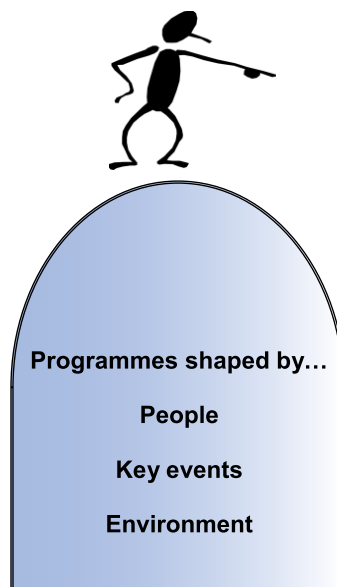


If this idea is new to you then; our Hilltop is a symbolic place where all our past experiences are stored, most significantly during the first seven years of our life. It is in this period where we are at our most impressionable, and like a sponge, we soak up all that we see, hear, experience and sense from parents, siblings, teachers, society and extended family. All these experiences start to create a platform of instincts, beliefs, values and needs that influence how we behave throughout our life. If you picture it, it is like creating an internal filing cabinet that stores specific programmes, which then become our references, through which we translate and make sense of the world.

As an example, we may come across a discourteous person in a meeting and instinctively we filter this situation through our filing cabinet, looking for the folder labelled *beliefs about how I allow others to treat me*. Once we have referred to our notes in this folder, we then make some unconscious decisions about how to respond; and there we have it, an interaction based upon a programme we created from our childhood experiences. Bear in mind that all this happens in a nano second and unconsciously, which hopefully highlights how unlocking our Hilltop can be so influential to our future happiness.

Unlocking our Hilltop is the first in a really important set of steps that helps us uncover our inner landscape and reveal why we do, think and feel the way we do. It often produces a set of ‘Ah Ha’ moments, as we make connections to today’s choices, shaped by the beliefs and programmes that were created eons ago. Let us take a look at this graphically.

3.2.2 Understanding what shapes our Hilltop



Four main factors shape our view of the world: *people, events, environment* and *culture*. Our experiences of these factors then influence our beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours, many of which remain with us throughout our lives if left unchallenged.

- People

Our parents or guardians are major influences. They are the first people we see, who are responsible for our upbringing and who start shaping how we see the world. They contribute to creating our ‘truths’.

We watch, listen, learn and even download their language to our subconscious memory. As a result, our parent’s beliefs and philosophies become our own.

Clients often ask how two siblings can have completely different beliefs, perceptions and behaviours. This is easy to answer. Child 1 is born to new parents who have no experience or training in parenthood responsibility. Child 2 is born to parents who have learnt and grown into their role, thereby influencing child 2 with a revised set of standards, principles and experiences. The result is that the younger child’s hilltop will be different to their elder sibling.

A point to acknowledge; we must not blame our parents for their influence. When we understand the roots of our programming and realise that we can change how we respond to those programmes, then we take responsibility for improving our ‘lot’ rather than becoming victims of the past or our parents.

We must, of course acknowledge the role family, friends, teachers and other authority figures have on our programming. Everyone we had a significant connection to in our childhood leaves an impression on our hard-drive. I found as an only-child that I came to value solitude and even today, my independent and introverted tendencies can be rooted to having no siblings. I also have a strong memory of my Geography teacher who had a fierce determination to ensure we all passed his exam – this reinforced my programme about not letting people down, fearing failure and which created a pressure to succeed, no matter what, at the cost to my health.

- Events

This covers a broad range of historical situations that can extend from family deaths, bullying, illness and some of those unspeakable events that haunt us; to less intense events like house moves, changing schools or rows with friends. Each event may just be a moment in time or months in its unfolding.

One powerful event I recall is of three inseparable friends at Primary School, who one day had a disagreement. In the heat of the argument, the two girls paired up and left me alone. Whilst we made up, the event left an indelible mark on me and I often return to this as a key event in the formation of my people pleasing and avoidance behaviour. Deep in my conditioning, I have a programme that says ‘people will leave you after a row, so avoid conflict at all costs.’ How interesting!

- Environment

This is all about the setting and atmosphere surrounding us as a child. For example, our family's size and gender make up, our position with our siblings, the family dynamic and culture.

Did you have a noisy, energising family environment, with people always moving, talking and playing? Or did you experience a peaceful home that brought out a reflective nature? We could extend this to cover the environment in which you lived; was it a village or town? How safe was your street – did you feel safe playing outside until dark? Did you live on an island, in the country, down a remote lane or inner city? All these affect the way you see the world today.

- Culture

Culture is the ideas, customs and social behavioural characteristics of a particular group or society who create a set of spoken or unspoken 'truths' about the nature of that group.

That definition provides good logic for why culture determines our subconscious programming. Depending upon our country or city of birth, our family's religious beliefs or clubs we join, each play a unique part in moulding how we think and behave. The group's collective 'truths' and rules provide a structure for how we operate together and so, through repetition, we begin to absorb those rules into our own philosophies and they provide a benchmark for how we live and behave in the workplace.



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3.2.3 Your Hilltop Exercise

Think about the composition of your hilltop, its reference points and the programmes stored in your filing cabinet. Identify some of the main influences and conditions that have been formed and shape the way you view the world. It would be useful to take some time to reflect on this and as you access this part of your inner landscape, allow insights and connections to arise naturally.

Make some notes in your journal around the following two points:

1. Identify the experiences that have created your conditions, belief programmes and attitudes.
2. Examine how they either help or hinder your happiness and success, as described in the exercise on page 25.

3.3 Four Cornerstones that Shape Today's Reality

Based on the last exercise, we now have a pretty good idea of why we do what we do and how that influences our happiness and success. Now we are ready to delve a little deeper and peel away the layers that reveal four factors that are the very cornerstones of our landscape, which have huge influence in our experiences of 'today'. These are: **Our Values, Our Beliefs, Our Needs** and **Our Language**.

3.3.1 Our Values

Values are like having a personal compass. They are deep-rooted standards that form in childhood and evolve as we age. They are the basis on which we structure our attitudes, are the source of our actions and the foundation of choices that bring us comfort and safety. Values steer us on the right course, as determined by our Hilltop's definition of 'right'.

When we are in conflict with something in our lives, we can be assured that there is a *value* out of kilter. If we are out of line with any of our values, then we feel a real dis-ease. As an example, our boss asks us to engage in something that feels wrong, yet we feel compelled to comply, because we may have little choice in the request. Although notice how it feels inside; notice where in our body that 'feels wrong' sits. What result does our compliance have on us? As we learn to tune into our body's communication and get to know our values, we become more effective and authentic as we talk about our discomfort and behave in a more assertive way that honours our values.

Let us explore this first important cornerstone of your landscape. Use the table below to select the values that INSTINCTIVELY jump out at you. It is important that you use your instinct and not your head so you can get a more authentic answer.

Your Values

Peace	Compliance	Variety	Independence
Adventure	Competition	Ambition	Innovation
Freedom	Friendship	Expertise	Power
Think things through	Flexibility	Creativity	Setting Boundaries
Solving Problems	Order and Control	Decisive	Collaboration
Taking Risks	Family and Friends	Safety and Security	Fun
Knowledge	Money	Integrity and Honesty	Attention to Detail
Challenge	Pressure	Kindness and Caring	Routine
Teamwork	Community	Leadership	Self-expression
Precision	Perfectionism	Recognition	Balance

Now prioritise just **SEVEN** of the most important values that you hold today from those that you have highlighted. And if I had to push you to select your top **THREE** from that group of seven that you would not be willing to compromise on, no matter what, what would they be?

These seven values are known as your **CORE** values and although they may alter in their order and the odd one or two drop off because of a major life experience, they stay fairly consistent throughout adult life. The remaining values you selected are referred to as your **PERIPHERAL** values. They are still important although they may be a little more transient in nature as you evolve.

Using your **Top Seven Values**, think about specific examples where you see those values being acted out in your day-to-day life. Again, like with all these exercises, do take time to reflect.

Top 7 Values – How they manifest

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Finally, have a think about the impact these values have on your level of happiness and success. Write down in your journal what you notice about the role they play in helping or hindering you.

3.3.2 Our Beliefs

Beliefs are truths that we form about something or someone around which there is no doubt. Beliefs are shaped by rationally and irrationally accepting that something exists, even if there is no evidence or proof. It is a faith, a reliance or confidence in something being credible in your eyes.

A belief though, is only a state of mind – it is not real and yet how many times do we see people acting as if it were real? We are influenced by the beliefs of the people closest to us when we are children and we cling onto those beliefs as if they are ours and the very essence of who we are. This is not completely true. They are only thoughts that we have created as certainty in our minds. Beliefs can change as we grow, learn and expand. Yet we are so attached to those certainties that we feel we will lose something of ourselves, if we let go of a particular belief.

We manage our relationship with the world and the people within it through our beliefs and they help us make sense of things. Yet some of our beliefs, particularly those we hold about ourselves, can be incredibly limiting and self-deprecating and it is only with tools such as this book, that we find the courage to tackle our beliefs head on and challenge their validity.



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It can be a scary proposition, to challenge the very foundation on which we understand the world. Although challenge we must if we are going to deeply and authentically experience the happiness we deserve. Many of our beliefs hold us back from being or having what we desire and by reviewing the way we contextualise the world, we can to evolve.

I invite you to review your beliefs and assess what impact they each have on your performance and on the happiness you experience. You might be surprised at the subtle influence they hold over you or the significant way in which they constrain you.

Beliefs that you hold about life

Beliefs that you hold about people

Beliefs that you hold about yourself

How was that exercise? I guess it could have been quite enlightening, showing where you are limiting your potential by the certainties you have chosen to live by. Finding a way of altering beliefs that constrain us is an important part of our journey to success. We can directly impact the degree of happiness we experience by surfacing a limiting belief, fading it or eradicating all together.

Here are some strategies for doing what is called, *dismantling our limiting truths*.

1. Assessing the evidence behind a belief.

The first step to dismantling a limiting truth is to find proof, data or rational thought that starts to erode its certainty. For example, there may be evidence that something we thought may never happen, does happen or that an expected event does not happen the way we expect it to happen.

For example, 'I will never get promoted because I am not clever enough.' And yet when you look back you have been promoted a number of times. Facts and evidence like this begin to make us question the validity of a belief that we have irrationally held and as a consequence, the belief starts to 'wobble'.

Also, for a belief that negatively impacts on our lives, we need to discover what evidence there is that it is true. For a belief to become certain, it needs strong validity, so if our evidence is insignificant and pretty weak, then it is enough for us to start questioning its credence.

2. Other people's beliefs.

Often other's opinions can have an influence on our state of mind. For example imagine the impact of this type of message from an old school teacher; 'Your job prospects are limited, because you are not academic.' I certainly had a couple of teachers that created some very negative beliefs for me. Yet when we review their opinions are they actually true? Are we holding onto a belief so out of date, yet still influences us?

When we start to question beliefs that others may have influenced by creating room for reservation, then that belief can shift from *certainty* to *opportunity for doubt*. Once again this dismantles our certainty sufficiently for it to wobble and weaken.

3. Belief revision.

When we begin to list the beliefs we hold and realise their power over us, it gives us a chance to revise those beliefs. With this awareness, we can begin to see beliefs in a new light and with a new perspective. It gives us a chance to explore what purpose this belief serves. If we feel that it no longer serves a useful purpose, then we can immediately begin to reduce its strength.

Once a belief has been questioned in this way and dismantled sufficiently, there is space for us to create a new belief, and a new state of mind. We generate certainty through repetition and embedding it in our thoughts, in the same way our original belief was first created.

4. Act as if.

If we suspend a belief for long enough and **act as if** a new belief were true, it creates enough space for outdated thoughts to become weakened and new evidence to be generated, which over time becomes our new certainty. Beliefs only work as long as we believe them – which sounds obvious. Although if we create a new state of mind, repeat it often enough and see proof that our new belief is credible, then this becomes our new way of thinking.

5. Repetition is the Mother of Skill.

When we repeat something over and over, we eventually create new neural pathways. These then work like a mechanical clock, driving our behaviour instinctively. So if this process is true and we believe it to be so, then we can use it to our advantage when building new beliefs. Keep repeating the belief thought, keep searching for evidence of its truth and it becomes credible.

3.3.3 Our Needs

Our reactions to people and life events are driven by so many subtle forces and yet when we begin to examine their nature, those forces are no more than words. Through awareness, we begin to choose what we wish to hold onto, let go of and be free from. This is incredibly empowering as it releases us from being victims to our thoughts, feelings, beliefs and values. We can choose!

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Here is another subtle force that shapes the decisions we make and the behaviours we act out during our interactions; our needs. Our needs form part of a subconscious network of intrinsic drivers that generate behaviour patterns at a primal level. They are more than, 'I need a new car.' They are yearnings created by our early hilltop experiences and create a reflexive behaviour – its sole purpose is to be fulfilled so that we can feel secure.

The following model, adapted from author Tony Robbins helps to explain the role our needs have in shaping our actions. When I first saw this, the penny dropped. It explained two things; firstly, why I was so passionate about my job, given the height of my **need for contribution** and secondly, why I needed so much structure and control in my life, given my **need for certainty**.

Six Basic Human Needs

- Certainty
- Uncertainty
- Significance
- Connection/community
- Contribution (adding value)
- Growth

Certainty: is the assurance of something happening or not happening. For example, the need to know that the car will start and get us to work on time or having a routine to our day that presents no surprises, therefore allowing us to perform at our best.

Uncertainty: conversely is the excitement of the unknown and the need for variability. As an example, you may go on holiday without booking any accommodation – you just 'go where the fancy takes you.' A leader would love the diversity of working with different cultures and would hate the regimented structure that others needing certainty would crave.

Significance: is the need to be remembered, to be important and for our lives to mean something. Examples might be former UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair and may be even Albert Einstein.

Connection: is the need to be part of a community or group and share in the meaning of that connection. This need is all about acceptance, inclusion and feeling cared for and loved. You will see examples of people joining community groups like work's Social or Charity Committee or Parent Teacher Associations and UK's Women's Institute as part of a need to belong.

Contribution: is the altruistic need to make a difference to someone or something. People with a high contribution need are driven by activities that add real value to someone's life.

Growth: is all about the desire to learn, develop and improve. You will often find people with a high growth need taking on extra studies or exams in their personal time, even when they seem overloaded with other responsibilities.

Use this box to think about your drivers. Using the six basic human needs, consider their order for you; *1 being the most important, 6 being the least important.*

Basic Human Needs – Your Order	
1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Now think about how significant your top three are on a day to day basis and the role they play, specifically in your happiness and success. For example, if you have a ***strong need for certainty***, consider what impact that has on your performance in the workplace and your interactions with family and friends. You may wish to journalise your observations.

3.3.4 Our Language

The fourth cornerstone is our language. This has such power and influence over us, our relationships and the outcome of an interaction, that we must give it some consideration.

Whether we are talking about the inner dialogue we use to speak to ourselves or the verbal communication we use with others, language is of paramount importance. My belief is that our internal thoughts are the most significant, as the delicate interaction between mind and body is becoming increasingly relevant in the science of psychology.

We already know that our brain capacity is underutilised. When we come to examine how our thoughts and verbal language affects how we feel about ourselves and how we ultimately then behave, we access a huge vault of potential to be happier and more successful.

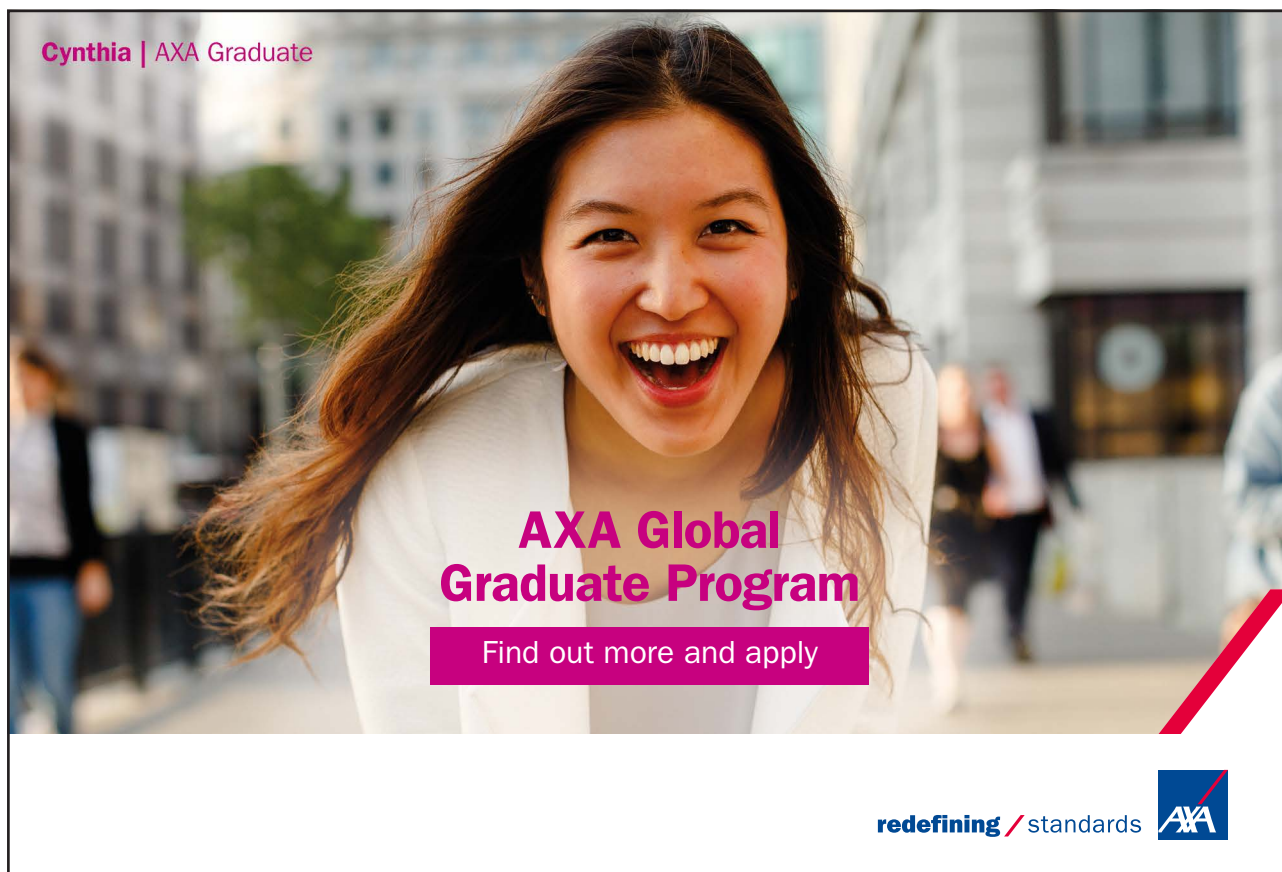
Let us look at the broad context of language and its impact on our success.

Read these words and tune into how they resonate with you.

Never	Can't	Won't	Always
Should/Shouldn't	Ought	Afraid	Whatever
I'm sorry, but	Impossible	Try	Perhaps/Possibly
Stupid/Silly	Sort of/Kind of	If only	I wish
Might	May be	Obvious	Assume
They	Unfortunately	What if	To be honest

Now compare those words with the following and see how they sound in your head.

Sometimes	Can	Will	Am
Could	Must	Yes	Together
I agree	I understand	I appreciate	I value
We	I commit	Experiment	How about
Need	How/When/Why/What	I noticed	Next time
I am learning	It is...	Thank you	Options
I prefer	I feel	Opportunity	Now or Later



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The first grid of words has a distinctively negative flavour to them, whilst this second set is much more up-beat, positive and has greater power. When we choose our vocabulary wisely, we subtly influence how others experience us and how our future shapes up.

Imagine we are hearing the negative set of words in our head. What impact would that have on our happiness? Here are some of the influences that negative vocabulary can have:

- Self-limiting words create self-limiting beliefs and these create our reality.
- Our physiology alters when we use this language, as our muscles match their vibrational quality.
- The science of the Self-fulfilling Prophecy kicks in and our energy flows where our energy goes.
- When we think a certain way, we attract the very thing we are thinking about – it is the Law of Attraction.
- Other people's energy is influenced by our projection as 'like attracts like'.
- Other people's low energy then compounds with our energy and we engage in an ever-decreasing cycle of negativity.
- Other people become less tolerant of a constant stream of negative language and this will influence their future decisions around us.

As we begin to see, negative language has a tremendous impact on our experience of the world and the people around us. So choosing the right language, primarily in our head, is an important step. Over the course of the next couple of weeks, start to notice the way you speak to yourself. What self-deprecating language are you using and how could this be impacting on your happiness? Notice other's reactions to you and the vocabulary you are using with them. Start to practise using different words and see how this changes how you feel and how others interact with you.

We have now identified the four cornerstones that influence our experiences today. When we become aware of the impact they have individually on our success, imagine what cumulative effect they could have on us. Start to consider the changes that you need to make and adjustments that will bring you more favourable results. I fundamentally believe that these subtleties are where our pursuit of happiness and professional success truly begins.

Before we move onto learning how to master our happiness, I would like to take a couple of moments to gather our thoughts about any insights that have arisen around understanding our inner landscape. Given the importance of how our happiness today is shaped by unlocking our conditioned patterns from the past, we have some incredible information that can truly help us design a successful future. So please take some time to reflect on your learning from this chapter and summarise some the adjustments that you feel inspired to implement that will bring you closer to the happiness you desire.

My Inner Landscape – Adjustments Needed

“The world is what you believe it to be and it changes as you change.”

Byron Katie

“Happiness is your competitive advantage.”

Shawn Achor, Positive Psychologist

4 Mastering Happiness – A Competitive Advantage

As we saw in the last chapter, self-knowledge and an intrinsic awareness of why we do what we do, gives us an amazing set of insights about how to craft our own personal *success formula*. From this vantage point, we are better equipped to learn what is influencing our happiness, or lack of it and make some fundamental changes to how we think, feel and behave to change the course of our life's experience.

Many personal development books offer classical strategies for self-improvement – and they certainly have their place. Yet I would like to offer an alternative paradigm during this chapter that moves beyond that conventional approach and that challenges us to think in a new way to stretch our possibilities for high performance and more fulfilled life experiences. I would like to meander through a set of development strategies that are rooted in the *happiness leads to success* philosophy and whilst subtle in their methodology, offer us more rooted and genuine results, as I can lay testimony to.



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4.1 New Paradigm for Success

More and more research and scientific revelations are showing us the power of our brains, thought energy and how these can be applied to harnessing our success. Emerging from the leaps made in fields such as Quantum Physics and Neuroscience, we are learning new ways of using our mental and emotional energy to live our dreams and enhance our performance.

These new platforms for personal effectiveness are offering us a Brave New World that moves us from a *fixed determinism* mentality to one of complete ownership and personal responsibility for creating the life we truly deserve.

As an example, the late Dr. Masaru Emoto, a Japanese author and entrepreneur studied the effects of human consciousness on the molecular structure of physical matter, most specifically, water. During his experiments he found the physical appearance of water molecules that had been exposed to different stimuli, looked radically different. For example, water exposed to a Rock song had a completely different composition to that of water subjected to a Classical piece by Mozart. Now, given the fact that we are made up of over 70% water, this opens up amazing possibilities of the impact that positive thinking, feelings and behaviours can have on us and the physical make up of matter around us.

We also know, intellectually and intuitively that music generates different moods within us and that even being out in nature can create a peace and tranquility that many other stimulants would envy. Scientists are quite clear now about the impact that thoughts have on parts of our body that are in pain. Placebo studies show the influence of the mind on the limitation or healing of a condition, which is giving us food for thought about the untapped potential and capability of our brains.

What do these new paradigms offer us in our pursuit of happiness, performance and success? Whether you believe or not, science is opening up a range of interesting possibilities from which we can *explore* and *discover* – two fundamental skills for the personal development entrepreneur. Personally, I believe that it highlights an exciting way of thinking about how we shape our destiny, how our dreams become a reality and how we can change our circumstances through positivity, intention and action.

One of the principles of Quantum Physics (QP) is that *like energy* attracts the same vibrational energy. *Like attracts like*, which is, of course, in opposition to classical Physics. This QP principle opens up a whole range of opportunities for us:

- What a positive mind could create for us.
- The impact of upbeat emotions over negative feelings.
- How to use our brains more creatively for a positive outcome.
- The influence of clear intentions on our reality.
- How dreams can be so much more than airy fairy notions.

So imagine this is the truth, irrespective of our beliefs, right now. Just think about how much more fulfilment we could be experiencing with this slight shift in perspective.

4.2 Crafting your Desired Future

I would like to reconnect with the quote I mentioned in Chapter 2, from the film *Invictus*, “You are captain of your soul and master of your fate.” No one else is responsible for our success however it might feel sometimes when we are waiting for a promotion. Our destiny is in **our** hands and **we** have total control over what we do, think and feel. We now know the direct impact that those have on our happiness and success; even though we may still blame other people and events for our misery. We have a choice and free-will. And so we have the most amazing opportunity of crafting the future we want with some simple and scientifically grounded techniques.

4.2.1 Power of Creativity and Intention

Many personal development guides talk about the science of goal setting, SMART objectives, Target Reviews and even suggest that we treat ourselves as a project to manage. We also know that in business everything is about the bottom line, strategy and Return on Investment. These approaches are by no means wrong, it is just that in the world of QP possibilities, there are different ways of looking at achieving high performance and happiness than the old paradigm models. Perhaps considering these alternatives gives us new dimensions of happiness. Surely it has to be worth considering? Let us take a different look at the power of intention using our creativity.

During our teenage years, we have generally shifted our brain power away from the creative, right brain to the more logical, left brain. After primary years, school disciplines are more focused on generating a rational and structured approach to thinking rather than favouring the cultivation of our imagination, which seems to be so natural to us in our formative years. Of course we need a left-brain development for our adult lives, although not, I believe to the exclusion of our creativity.

It is in our creative mind that we have the opportunity to craft dreams, believe in hopes and generate meaningful desires that our left brain simply judges and quickly dismantles as being foolish. Yet it is in the seeds of our creativity that our possibilities exist, giving us a chance to get excited and align ourselves to what truly drives and motivates us.

The late and brilliant author of *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey said, “Begin with the end in mind.” And never is there a truer phrase for us to use in this context. When we allow our imagination to jump into the future and start shaping how we would like things to look, sound and feel, then we generate an energy that in QP terms suggests we can begin attracting those things to us.

Let's clarify this with my **Six Step Process to Designing your Future**:

1. Montage/Collage – Picturing the Future.

First of all, think about all the things that you dream about or would like to DO, BE, HAVE in your future life that will bring you happiness and success both personally and professionally – remember happiness is holistic. You may wish to reflect on the 80th Birthday exercise to inspire you. Choose a point in time that feels right for you; that may be within the next year, five years or further if you wish.

Then with paper, crayons, coloured pens or pencils or even magazines that you can cut up, capture your DO, BE, HAVEs in a collage of images and illustrations that upholds the spirit of creativity. Give your inner child permission to play with this exercise and keep your rational adult at bay as it will judge and ridicule this exercise. This is all about working with our creative right brain, allowing fun and dreams to craft our desired future.

Keep this montage visible, as the more you can internalise it, the more you bring it alive. Getting clarity around what you want and why you want it is an important start in the creative process.

An advertisement for SKF. It features a woman with long dark hair smiling in the foreground. In the background, a large white wind turbine is visible against a blue sky. The text 'Brain power' is written in large white letters on the left. On the right, there is a block of text about wind energy and SKF's role. At the bottom left, there is a call to action to visit the SKF website. The SKF logo is in the bottom right corner.

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2. Focus on the Feelings and amplify them.

With that montage evolving, now focus in on how these images feel to you. Notice the feelings that come up for you such as inspiration, excitement or anticipation.

If there is anything other than a positive and high energy emotion, then explore why that might be. If it is frustration because you want that future now or you have a disbelief about its possibility, then acknowledge these feelings by writing them down on a separate piece of paper and allow yourself to move past your logical left brain. Explore the specifics of your discomfort and what evokes these emotions. Remember back to the language cornerstone we discussed earlier and tune into what your inner voice is saying. Are your emotions simply representing irrational fears that have little or no evidence to hold them up, or a belief in your capability or your deservedness that needs addressing? This is a good time to become aware of the resistance as they will become blockages that hold you back from the happiness you desire.

Once you have explored any discomfort, you are ready to re-engage with the positive emotions that your future happiness montage stirs up for you. Reconnect with each image and, like a Movie Director, start to imagine yourself doing or having these things. Focus on what each image would give you and see yourself experiencing these benefits. Create your own powerful movie, where you and those important to you play active roles in your happiness. Put colour to your movie, add in sound and animation and bring it to life in your mind. Really see your future-self enjoying these success experiences and begin to **amplify the positive emotions** that go with them.

Get in touch with your stomach area (the Solar Plexus), where our emotions sit and amplify the good feelings you have about your future possibilities. Feel that excitement, hope, desire, anticipation or happiness surge around you, as though it leaks into your veins and is coursing around your body. This is called **amplifying** and when we put ourselves in this positive state we begin to attract that same energy to us. When we combine a vision with a vibrant feeling we then create the perfect conditions for that future to manifest the way we desire it to.

3. Set Intentions not Goals.

Having produced a vision that gives clarity and positive feelings, we can begin to set some intentions. Notice the language I have used; intentions not goals. There is a subtle distinction between the two which makes a big difference to the outcome we experience.

Goals are created through our reasoned left brain, shaped by targets that are produced through the analysis of our current reality against our desired outcome. Goal setting is a highly cognitive exercise that rarely allows for life taking us off track. They often generate a sense of compliance and submission and have wrapped around them an accessory of emotional attachment that has us reeling in a pool of guilt if we miss its target. Goals are narrow channels that have little or no scope for deviance.

Intentions have a softer yet more powerful and purposeful energy, creating a greater commitment and responsive action. They are generated from the heart rather than the head and are more like wishes that describe what success is like for us, without the rigidity that features in goal setting. This gives the broader and more holistic nature of intentions a malleability that allows life to get in the way without there being any emotional attachment to them. Intentions are, therefore, less plagued with fear of failure as they create space for life's surprises.

I hear many managers criticise intentions, saying that they are too woolly, fluffy or unanchored to generate achievement and performance results. And yet this very observation immediately produces fear and a compliant response, which create neither happiness nor success. Intentions require a heart-felt articulation of what matters to us with sufficient energy to motivate action and yet permission to surrender to life's curve-balls, both of which ensure success, not fear of failure.

Here is an example:

Goal: To leave work by 6.00pm each night so I can have more quality time with my family.

This is a well-intentioned goal, although working for an organisation, irrespective of our role, makes committing to this untenable when targets have to be met or a crisis crops up. So the conflict of achieving the task versus being with the family creates a huge amount of stress.

Intention: To have more quality time with my family during the working week.

This creates so much more space for us to succeed. It offers the potential for flexibility and let's say, getting to work later because you needed to take your child to school. It also caters for the unexpected work situation to arise and be dealt with, without the emotional attachment of failure, fear of disappointment or internal conflict when tough decisions need to be made.

4. Emotions and Thought partnership.

With a vision about our future in our minds, a strong and positive emotion that inspires us and clear intentions set, we can generate supportive thoughts that move us in the right direction. Learning to use affirmations is such an important practice, which is steeped in science supported by authors such as Louise Hay, Antony Robbins, Michael Neill, Wayne Dyer and Dr. David Hamilton to name just a few. Practising positive thoughts that can accompany proactive behaviour is really important when we are trying to reinforce beliefs about our capability and develop our happiness. As we saw in the last chapter, getting our internal language right is a critical cornerstone to our happiness. Experiment with partnering positive emotions with affirmations like:

- I am capable of achieving my dreams.
- I can achieve anything I set my mind to.
- I am already learning to be happy.
- I am excited about my future and trust my here and now.
- I believe in myself and my deservedness.

5. Acceptance and trust.

Happiness does not depend upon our achievement of the goal; instead our happiness depends on accepting whatever life throws at us whilst walking the path towards our vision. Sometimes those life experiences may be anything other than happy, although life was never meant to be fair and demanding that it must meet our expectations is a sure fire way to create suffering. When we learn to trust that each event has a lesson for us that move us towards achieving our vision, then we remove the roadblocks of our misery and can return to creating the positivity behind our desires.

This can be such a challenge for us in a world that has conditioned us to be in control, controlling and controlled. We fear the unknown and so create safety nets that keep us secure and catch us if we fall. Except they trip us up too and we get caught amongst them. That degree of control can be the very factor that creates our suffering and our failure to be happy. When things simply just don't go to plan or if our expectations are inflexible, then we will only experience stress and disharmony. And so learning to surrender, accept and trust are keys to authentic happiness.

Trust and responsibility

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Inés Aréizaga Esteva (Spain), 25 years old
Education: Chemical Engineer

– You have to be proactive and open-minded as a newcomer and make it clear to your colleagues what you are able to cope. The pharmaceutical field is new to me. But busy as they are, most of my colleagues find the time to teach me, and they also trust me. Even though it was a bit hard at first, I can feel over time that I am beginning to be taken seriously and that my contribution is appreciated.



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People often ask, “If I am thinking and feeling positive about my vision and I’m having challenging experiences, then am I doing something wrong?” Often we attract a situation to us that shows us a lesson we need to learn or that makes us validate our vision and the strength of our desire. Perhaps we have an underlying belief that is subtly affecting our achievement. The key is not to be distracted by it. Instead look for its message/lesson, trust it and then return to our desire.

6. Choose happiness today.

Happiness and success are a state we can create right in the here and now. It is not something we attain once we have achieved something. Our decision to be happy is an immediate action that we start in this present moment. Just decide this is the state you want to experience and start smiling. This might sound obvious, although notice what happens when we start smiling – our whole experience of that moment changes. We have been conditioned to see happiness as being difficult, only achieved by the wise, the hard-working and the lucky ones. I just do not buy this. Happiness is simply **a decision** to be this way and then **to act** in a happy way. Then we can observe how many more happy experiences come our way when we commit to this starting point rather than, ‘I’ll be happy when....’ Happiness can start right now, it is our choice.

Why not use these six points as an exercise and start to connect to your vision and see how it feels when you really engage with your heart. It is a powerful process and I encourage you to invest time in thinking this through and mapping out the six stages in a way that is relevant to you.

4.2.2 Alignment

When we think of alignment, what comes to mind? Perhaps it is a visit to the chiropractor to sort out our spine? In personal development terms it is all about ensuring that everything is lined up, all your ducks are in a row and that we are congruent.

We have already looked at the importance of values as a cornerstone to our self-awareness and now we have a new ingredient to add into the mix. Imagine for a moment if we had a vision that was out of line with one or more of our values – what would the result be? There would undoubtedly be some conflict lying somewhere in our body – a pain, a palpable discontent, an uneasiness that we are unable to put your finger on. Do any of these ring any bells? Perhaps you are experiencing one of these now. If so, then think about what may be out of line with a belief, a value or a dream.

Alignment is a new paradigm tool for the measurement of truth. If you are not experiencing success or happiness, then something is out of alignment. If we have a pain or a health condition in our body, then something is likely to be biologically out of balance. Our natural state is meant to be healthy, happy and contented and so if we are not experiencing these, then we have the opportunity to change.

Alignment allows us to speak our truth, act our truth and live our truth and when this happens, high performance is a natural bi-product. When all things flow, all things flow.

Take a moment to think about any mis-alignment that you may be experiencing, evidenced perhaps by a performance issue, a relationship discord, an uneasiness that is hard to articulate or a pain that you are currently experiencing. Note down below what the alignment issue may be about and, most importantly, what you could do to realign yourself.

Misalignment in my World.

4.2.3 Heart not Head

Cheryl Richardson, author of *Take Time for your Life*, is quoted as saying, “Listen to your Heart” This phrase may also be familiar; ‘Is this your heart or head talking?’ So what does all this mean?

From early teenage years we are taught to predominantly use our logical, rational left-brain as it is seen as the route to good quality decisions, problem solving, structured living and success. Business is based on rational strategies that are driven by market analysis and managers are assessed by quantifiable targets and deliverables. And so, as I mentioned earlier, there is often little room for our creativity to get a look in, let alone thrive. Sadly these out of balance, left-brain activities leave our right-brain under-utilised and we have come to believe that creative activities are only for Marketers, artists and those with a slightly weird ‘hippie’ feel to their life’s philosophy.

I believe that when it comes to our personal development, whether in a corporate or social environment, when we allow our creativity to come to the fore, we experience a very different outcome that just ‘feels right’. How many times have you found yourself drawn to a decision that logically makes no sense or an action that somehow feels good even though it may be out of character for you? Just because it lacks logic, does that make it ineffective?

There is undoubtedly room for both logic and instinct. Neither one approach is better or worse than another and we need both to navigate the river of life. I believe that we need to make more space for the creative heart choices if we want to be authentically successful. Success, as we are beginning to unravel is not the structured climbing of a ladder, driven by a rigid set of parameters that guarantees us happiness at the top. Success is the genuine alignment of all the things that are important to us that honour our values and motivates an authentic direction to satisfy all our needs, harmoniously.

In my business coaching and facilitator role, all too often I would see people describing success as the car, the house, the promotion, the position and the status – yet I would see them unfulfilled, unhappy and unwell. Creating a definition of success from the head, which is endemic in our modern society, has to change. We need to make a more heart-felt set of decisions that ensures we thrive personally and professionally. It is time to put a bit of heart into our work.

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4.3 Positive Psychology

There are a host of brilliant motivational speakers and authors around at the moment who are challenging us to think differently and opening up new doors of opportunity for us to be happy in the moment. Their science is based on positive psychology which is the ability to change the lens through which our brain sees the world and that shapes our reality. Science says that 90% of our happiness is predicted by the way our brain processes the world and so if we can change the way our brain interprets its experiences, we can shape our own unique formula to happiness and ultimately affect our reality.

Interestingly, it is only up until as recently as 1998 that psychological studies significantly focused on depression and disorder rather than how to thrive and be happy. In fact research was a 17:1 negative to positive ratio according to Shawn Achor, author of *The Happiness Advantage*. This tells us something about the messages we were receiving back then, about being unwell rather than how to flourish. Now we are hearing more about how to take control of our psychology and our well-being, which is so crucial to our happiness and success.

Statistics suggest that only 25% of our job success is predicted by IQ and 75% is predicted by our optimism and our ability to see stress as a challenge not a threat. Shawn Achor says, “Happiness and optimism actually fuel performance and achievement.” So imagine what we could achieve if we could focus our energies on developing and cultivating a positive psychology. Our brain is a muscle and therefore can be built and mastered.

I want to devote a section to this alone, because in my work as a coach I see, time and time again, the impact that positive thinking and an optimistic mindset can have on a client’s experience of the world and the challenges they face. **A health warning** though as we enter this domain; I am not suggesting a ‘believe everything is rosy’ philosophy as, in my experience, this is untrue. Life has its ups and downs and the skill is to navigate **the present moment** with dexterity and acceptance and **the future** with optimism and determination without allowing **the past** to plague us.

4.3.1 Happiness and Performance

Think back to a time when you felt happy, loved and supported – perhaps you are in this place right now. What impact did/does that happiness have on:

- Your work performance?
- Your relationships?
- Your health and well-being?

When we are at our best, we feel more motivated, inspired, energetic and full of vitality. These factors, without doubt, have a huge impact on the way we do our job, how we tackle problems and how we interact with people we work with. Life becomes just a bit more easeful. Conversely, when I think back to a period of stress and huge unhappiness in my past life – I can see a pattern of suffering. My health deteriorated because I had to work that bit harder to do a great job, (which given my perfectionism was exhausting), in turn my energy and motivation suffered because that effort drained me and my work suffered because I was not giving my whole self.

Our performance has everything to do with our happiness; our happiness has everything to do with our success. Some companies around the world are waking up to this concept and finding ways to enhance working lives with well-being talks, at-work massages and lunchtime social events that encourages recreation. Some cynics might say that these are simply PR stunts, although the more we realise the power of happiness on performance, the more we see the benefits of these well-being activities. Richard Branson says, “More than any other element, fun is the secret of Virgin’s success.”

Yet we cannot rely on our organisation’s ability to prescribe the happiness panacea; we must recognise that its mastery is within us and when we accept that the creation of our own happiness lies firmly within our grasp, we can succeed at whatever we put our minds to.

4.4 Power to Change – Happiness Strategies

So the golden question; how do we do it? After all we are already busy, working hard at being successful and keeping on top of all the roles we have to juggle to keep afloat in life; surely there is no more for us to do! Here are some subtle and yet incredibly powerful techniques that we can apply to raise our happiness baseline and alter our mindset, thereby enhancing our performance and ultimately increasing our potential for success.

4.4.1 Forgive and Be Free.

Thoughts and emotions all have their own unique energy, which is why when we feel down and have negative thoughts, we tend to become ill, hunch our shoulders and cry, shout or express ourselves negatively. Conversely when we feel buoyant and uplifted it is literally because we are experiencing an uplifting emotion, which in turn influences our body language and our self-expression.

Forgiveness is one of those deeply subtle emotions that is like a light switch; when we choose to press it, it illuminates our lives, allows us to see more clearly and move more freely. I commit to practising forgiveness and so can confidently report that it is a powerful emotion and it is in the forgiveness process that we find its true game-changing properties.

There are two types of forgiveness; forgiveness of others for wrong doing against us and forgiveness of self for an action or decision we made that was inappropriate or harmful to others.

When something happened in the past and we hold onto that memory, it slowly and destructively erodes us and drains our energy. Either through guilt, hate, anger, sadness, shame or disappointment, these emotional attachments keep us in the past as we rerun the event over and over, exacerbating how we feel. Yet that replaying does not change the event, however hard we try; all we can do is release ourselves from the situation by accepting it happened, learn from its wisdom and forgive whatever or whoever is involved. This gives us an amazing freedom.

Now it is important to state here that forgiveness does not condone a behaviour or action. It simply releases us from the emotion that we have attached to the memory of that event and allows us to take away whatever we learnt from the incident. I believe that every person who enters our lives and every situation we face has something to teach us if we listen well enough.

So learn to practise the art of forgiveness, release the unhealthy feelings that can overtake us and free ourselves from the memories so that we have space to feel happier in this present moment.



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4.4.2 Gratitude – the King of Happiness.

“Gratitude is the fairest blossom, which springs from the soul.” Henry Ward Beecher, Clergyman

One of the most influential factors that has shaped my happiness is my *Gratitude* practice. It is no secret that there is a direct correlation between life satisfaction and gratefulness. Those who invest in gratitude rather than other more negative emotions are being shown by Positive Psychology research to be generally happier and more successful.

Even in our deepest suffering, there are always things around us to be grateful for; we just need to adopt the mindset that considers them. Whether it is health, a home, a partner, our children, a job, our senses, our ability to move freely or a multitude of other things, learning to be grateful for what we have brings a natural lift to our life experience.

First thing in the morning as we wake, taking a couple of minutes to tune into our new day and be grateful for all things, gives us a great start to the day. Throughout the day we can continue taking opportunities to express gratitude for missing the rainstorm, getting to work in one piece in the rush-hour, hearing the dawn chorus or simply for someone bringing us a cup of coffee. So many small things that normally pass us by can bring a great lightness when we make time to think in this way. It takes no time to do and can make such a big difference to how we feel.

To get yourself into this mindset, start off with a **Gratitude Journal** that you write in once a day for a month as during this time the habit will become embedded. Think of at least three different things each day that you are grateful for or that have made you smile, and write them down. Within the month you will be able to remove the need for the journal and simply say it in your mind.

4.4.3 Acceptance, surrender and trust.

It is true that not many personal development guides will add this trio of verbs to our tool box repertoire, although in this new paradigm of *happiness leading to success*, they cannot be ignored.

Acceptance; can be defined as a person's assent to the reality of a situation and the recognition of its condition without attempting to change it.

There are many things in life, especially in the workplace, where we find ourselves unhappy or discontent with an approach or an outcome. I can think of many organisational decisions that were made in my employment days that I felt coerced into. Yet so many of those decisions or events are out of our control and the more we fight against it the more pain and suffering it causes us. Learning to accept a situation as it is and not worry, be angry or get stressed about it is incredibly empowering. I am not suggesting that we should not stand up for something that we are passionate about or believe we can influence, although I am recommending that there comes a time when accepting the reality and finding a different way of thinking could bring us huge freedom.

Surrender; People often think of surrender as submission to authority or giving in and therefore a sign of weakness. Yet they are in fact opposite ends of the spectrum in our new paradigm. Giving in is a passive activity that indicates a compliance or a collapsing of resolve. Whereas surrender is proactive, a decision made to let something go, through choice. Despite its dictionary definition and our perception of war surrenders with the white flag, surrender in today's new language is releasing a hold on something and allowing it to be as it needs to be. It is choosing not to fight, control or push for something to happen and allow it to flow as it is meant to.

Trust; the definition of trust is *the reliance on or confidence in the integrity, strength or surety of a person or event and having a confident expectation of something happening.*

For our purposes this is ideal, as when we trust, we relinquish control and allow things to move as they are intended rather than forcing something to go the way we think it should go. It is all about the difference between driving and allowing things to unfold. I am not suggesting that we become passive bystanders, as I mentioned in the section on Vision and Intention, it does require us to take some action. Although it is not forcing that action with a strong sense of ego; it is more about allowing the ego to fall away and gracefully trusting the Laws of QP to work its magic.

When we learn to trust that all will transpire as it is intended, we change our whole energy and become less like *warriors* that feel the pain of defeat and become more like *receptive magnets* for the right outcome. It leaves so much more space for happiness.

4.4.4 Be present – no past, no future, just now.

There is a revolution in mindfulness and meditation techniques sweeping the western world, taking some valuable lessons from Eastern traditions. Interestingly, for many decades meditation has been perceived as a 'woo woo' pastime for hippies and not something mainstream. Yet with stress related illness on the rise and increased demands on performance from all walks of life, we find ourselves looking for new ways to feel better – and meditation is having a very credible appeal in many quarters.

Cognitive studies are now demonstrating the ways mindfulness can create changes in the brain to improve focus, creativity, decision making and reduce stress. The term coined is Contemplative Practices and research is showing how mindful-based interventions are improving mental and physical health compared to other psychological strategies. Studies are concluding that meditation can help people regulate their emotions and control their experiences of pain. In a recent study, cognitive psychologist Lorenza Colzato and Dominique Lippelt at Leiden University found that divergent thinking was improved after just a short 25 minute meditation.

In some ways, for me as a meditation practitioner and teacher of both adults and children, I find it sad that we have to measure and analyse something to death before we believe it. Meditation and mindfulness is not a new concept; it has a history spanning centuries in eastern communities. Although this is our conditioning; unless it can be quantified, we will not believe. So what can meditation help us to achieve?

Our minds are filled with over 50,000 thoughts a day; many of these are regrets about the past, others are worries and fears about the future and what has yet to happen. Stop to think about this fact for a moment – how much energy do we put into this type of thinking? Let us face it yesterday has gone and there is nothing we can do to change it, yet we still feel guilt, shame, disappointment and anger. And whilst we are on the subject, tomorrow is not yet here, so any degree of worry, fear or anxiety is simply unproductive.

Both of these wildly insane activities are taking away our focus from our current reality – the NOW. If we continually waste our thoughts in the past or future, we are missing the magnificence of this moment, which once past, can never be regained. The current moment has so much richness and wonder and yet we are distracted by ego thoughts that leave us feeling unhappy. What a paradox.



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Meditation and mindfulness help us to appreciate the NOW, which is, after all, all that we have. It helps us stay focused, grounded and value the present moment rather than get lost in the delusion of past and future. This practice then allows us to feel:

- Calmer and more peaceful when we let go of past emotions and future expectations
- Rested in a way that not even sleep can create
- Balanced and harmonised
- Accepting and less judgmental
- Still rather than insanely active
- Creates space where our busy mind can be still, allowing us to tune into silence
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Can induce sleep and relaxation because of a less frenetic mind
- Moderates intense behaviour and creates a calmer mood and outlook on life.

So how do we meditate? Does it need a special room, an altar, a cushion, the sound of crashing waves? **No** to all of these as they are the stereotypical creations of those who fear the practice.

Meditation, at its simplest level, is the practice of giving ourselves permission to connect with our natural state of stillness by sitting or lying quietly and focusing on the breath; watching it as it flows inwards and outwards; allowing all thought to come and go, not inviting it to stay or engaging with it. And all this in just five minutes; that is all it takes, so excuses of insufficient time or opportunity are simply that – excuses and fear.

Meditation can be extended to focus on words such as, breathing in the word **peace** and breathing out the word **love** – or other gentle words that resonate with you.

Meditation can be a visualisation, where we use our mind constructively to create a story that we follow. The visualisation can be anything that brings us a sense of peace and calm – a favourite place that we love to visit, a room in our house that feels safe and comfortable, a holiday destination that brings us happy memories. Or we can simply make up a story that takes us into the realm of our creative right-brain imagination.

Whichever style of meditation you decide upon make sure that you:

- Are undisturbed for whatever period of time you intend to invest in.
- Dress comfortably – I wore jeans once and it was not a calming experience.
- Turn off mobiles or devices so that alerts don't distract you.
- Ask your family for some quiet time.
- Try it at the same time each day to help you get into a routine.
- Decide which style of meditation you wish to engage in.

Mindfulness is a great route into being in the present moment, if meditation doesn't feel appropriate. Jon Kabat-Zinn who is the Mindfulness king, says, "Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally."

To help you explore the idea of mindfulness, read this example and then try it out.

Mindful Eating

Choose a piece of fruit from your fruit bowl and be aware of the choice that you made. Pick it up and feel its weight in your hands, notice the texture of its skin on your hand. Look at the fruit's colour; look at the shade, the light and its markings. Perhaps this fruit needs peeling before eating, if so do this with dexterity and awareness. Notice the ease with which it peels and how much lighter it now feels. Now start to eat the fruit; take a bite. What is it like as your teeth sink into the flesh? How does the flesh feel in your mouth? What is the taste, the texture like to you? Be aware of swallowing the fruit and taking your next bite. How does it feel eating your fruit in this way? How much longer did it take you to eat it mindfully?

How was that exercise? What was it like to be completely present and undistracted by other things, thoughts or noise? As we begin to master a mindful practice, it becomes easier to see how we can integrate this activity more into other daily activities such as driving! Perhaps walking can become more mindful – I know how much more I get from my cycling when I do it mindfully. Interactions with people could be more mindful – imagine how the quality of our relationships could increase with mindfulness. What about mindfulness applied to each task, the staff briefing or customer telephone call? Paying more attention to the here and now can have a huge impact on the quality of our performance and our experiences, so it surely has to be worth experimenting.

Mindfulness and meditation are thankfully being accepted as more mainstream activities. When we are fully aware of what is going on around and within us, we can begin to do our best work. I encourage you to experiment and see how it benefits your development and, more particularly, your calmness, peace and happiness. If it can give you just a modicum less stress, it has to have an amazing potential on your performance and on your happiness!

4.4.5 Kindness and compassion – fuel for happiness

If you are a fan of Facebook or YouTube, you may have seen the videos that illustrate the effect that showing someone kindness has on the giver – and receiver. Typically we go about our days with our heads down, focused on our own agendas, often with little thought to those around us until we come into direct contact with them. There is a high street banking advert on UK television right now that suggests that *it is not money that makes the world go round, it is people*. And this ideology gives us something to think about when it comes to our happiness. Of course, in the workplace, we know that we cannot achieve our goals alone and that the influence of others in the global pursuit of success is paramount.

Imagine if we ditched the judgments, the blame, the criticism, the transactional style of interaction and instead adopted a more compassionate approach that demonstrates benevolence towards our fellow workers. What could that achieve when it comes to success? If we thought about other's stories, considered their hilltops (as we saw in Chapter 2), considered what values and beliefs they are presenting and gave them a bit of understanding – what might these do to our life experiences?

Finding a compassionate route does not mean that we condone someone's behaviour. It does mean that we find as many opportunities to practice kindness and generosity, both in thought and deed, and then notice how our interactions change as a result.

Kindness and consideration for others is a much nicer place to operate from and whilst it is by no means a panacea, it does make for a calmer and generally, less stressful lifestyle.

I hope these new paradigm options give you some food for thought about how you can apply the *happiness leads to success formula*. The best way of finding out is to try them out for a month and note down your experiences. The next chapter aims to summarise the key habits of Happiness Entrepreneurs and how to apply these specifically to your performance.

"Whatever you can do with unhappiness, you can do better when you're happy."

Michael Neill, Author

“Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they can’t lose.”

Bill Gates, Co-founder of Microsoft

5 Today – The First Day of the Rest of your Life

So there is my take on personal development with a modern twist to it and not a ‘goal setting’ exercise in sight. I recognise that this eBook may come as a challenge, although my own experience of personal development leads me to these topics each and every time. More importantly, I am still living and breathing these ideas right now to ensure my happiness continues. I have therefore not offered these thoughts as *self-help regurgitation*; instead they come from the very heart of my own experiences in my coaching, facilitation role and in my own personal growth.

From this point forward then, you have some choices to make. You either download another, more traditional personal development book, which will undoubtedly be full of amazing ideas that are equally poignant to the author, or you give these thoughts a chance to make a difference to your evolution. Whichever route you choose is perfect, and your choice in the matter is all that counts. I simply encourage you to consider whether, in any of the previous pages, there feels to be any truth in the practices I have suggested. If you hold any grain of possibility, then I encourage you to embrace these ideas and, not just take my word for it, experiment for yourself. This is the only way you can truly judge what personal development means to you.

5.1 Twelve Habits of Happiness Entrepreneurs

As some final words of inspiration before we sum up the purpose of this book, I wanted to offer you a check list of Effective Habits of a Happiness Entrepreneur and show you how to apply these ideas specifically to your work-based performance. This ensures that you have something tangible to help you evolve. Thanks to my journey and to the many books and articles I have read, here are twelve habits that I believe Happiness Entrepreneurs adopt and which I honour myself:

1. View life as not always being fair, although believe in the best.

Those who practise happiness realise that life is not always going to be perfect and whilst this is not intended as negativity, it is a clear assessment of life's natural ups and downs. Even Buddha realised that suffering would naturally follow happiness. When we understand this fundamental truth, we can detach ourselves from the notion that 'life owes us something' and 'why does this always happen to me.' There is a yin and yang in life and when we accept this, we are free to exist in this moment and trust all that comes our way. Those who practice happiness have built up resilience that enables them to cope with the downs, see these for what they are and move on in a positive direction towards their dreams.

2. Seek learning from every event, especially the difficult ones.

Everything we experience presents some kind of learning. Our ego is quick to say that an argument or drama is someone else's fault, although when we choose to explore the situation and its lessons from inside of us, then we grow, with humility.



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3. There are no pre-conditions to happiness.

Happiness is not something to pursue, follow, seek or find when a specific condition has been met; ‘I’ll be happy when...’, or ‘When I get my promotion, then I will be happy.’ The thunderbolt of awareness is that happiness is a choice; it is something we do, right now and is within us, not outside of us. The minute we release ourselves from the burden of later, if or when, then we allow ourselves to be happy in this very moment with all that we are currently experiencing. Don’t put off happiness, do it now.

4. Practise gratitude as a regular habit.

Those choosing happiness know that the fundamental ingredient to their success formula is learning to be grateful and appreciate the learning from every situations they are faced with. Despite the twists and turns of life, true happiness entrepreneurs seek to find the silver lining in all things and use this as a way to manage their suffering as well as promote their happiness.

5. Happy people trust in what happens.

Learning to trust what comes our way is a crucial element to our evolution. When we find acceptance of a situation, it alleviates our suffering of *what should/could be*, shaped by our ego’s expectations. Learning to trust is an important skill to master as it releases us from attachment to outcomes and allows us to be free of frustration and disappointment.

6. Think positively about self, first and foremost.

Irrespective of what happens, happy people focus on positive thoughts rather than indulging in dramatic ones that get caught up in a loop of self-deprecation. This attitude is a choice and a reprogramming that is available to us all – starting with self-affirmation. They say that we cannot love others fully until we learn to love ourselves. Happy experts know how to acknowledge themselves in a constructive and self-appreciative way, affirming their strengths and capabilities.

7. Practise compassion, kindness and patience.

When we see through compassionate eyes and find ways to be kind to others rather than adopt the *survival of the fittest* mentality, then we find our relationships changing and our performance altering. If we focus only on being competitive, edgy and driven, then we attract either the same energy or the polar opposites from others. Either way, it creates a less than harmonious environment in which to work. Learn to be patient with customers, colleagues and bosses. We all have a journey to take and seeing through other’s eyes creates a much softer environment with which to do business.

8. Happiness is an investment.

When we accept that happiness takes commitment and is generally not a naturally assumed position, then our well-being is assured. Happy people are not lucky people. They invest, work conscientiously and create positive habits that cultivate happiness in all situations. Happiness is as easy as we believe it will be, although we still need to develop Good Practice to ensure that our suffering default does not lure us into old habits. We too must commit to daily routines, adopt positive mind-sets and invest in reflective, quiet time to assume a happy stance throughout life.

9. Happy people focus their attention on the present.

Those who decide that happiness creates greater returns than sorrow, make a conscious effort to focus on positive outcomes and intentions rather than being suffocated by regrets and disappointments. When we make a decision to accept, trust and learn then the...

- *could have, should have* gone better and the...
- *what ifs* and the *if only's*

...begin to fade into obscurity, replaced by acceptance and learning. Science shows that all the best athletes learn how to focus on the NOW and remove blockages about yesterday or what may happen in the next few moments. They simply get in the zone.

10. Cultivate meaning in their lives.

Happy entrepreneurs take actions that are driven by *meaning*. This might be about attracting and nurturing meaningful relationships, to invest in meaningful daily activities that are joyful or to commit to a meaningful vocation – all of which are inspired by the *heart* rather than the *ego*. Whilst it may not always be realistic to do everything that is meaningful – let's face it supermarket shopping is a necessary evil – it is about making big, life decisions in alignment with the heart and not the head. That said, even shopping could be seen as a purposeful activity that provides us with the fuel for well-being. Focus on *meaningful* more often and pleasure and joy will visit often.

11. Surround themselves with loving and supportive connections.

Happiness comes from within, although surrounding ourselves with loving relationships will help us to enrich our well-being. Happy people see toxic and negative relationships through compassionate eyes, although they choose to engage safely in them. They recognise their suffering although choose to put their energy into fostering positive relationships and so find a safe and transactional space from which to operate in those less positive interactions.

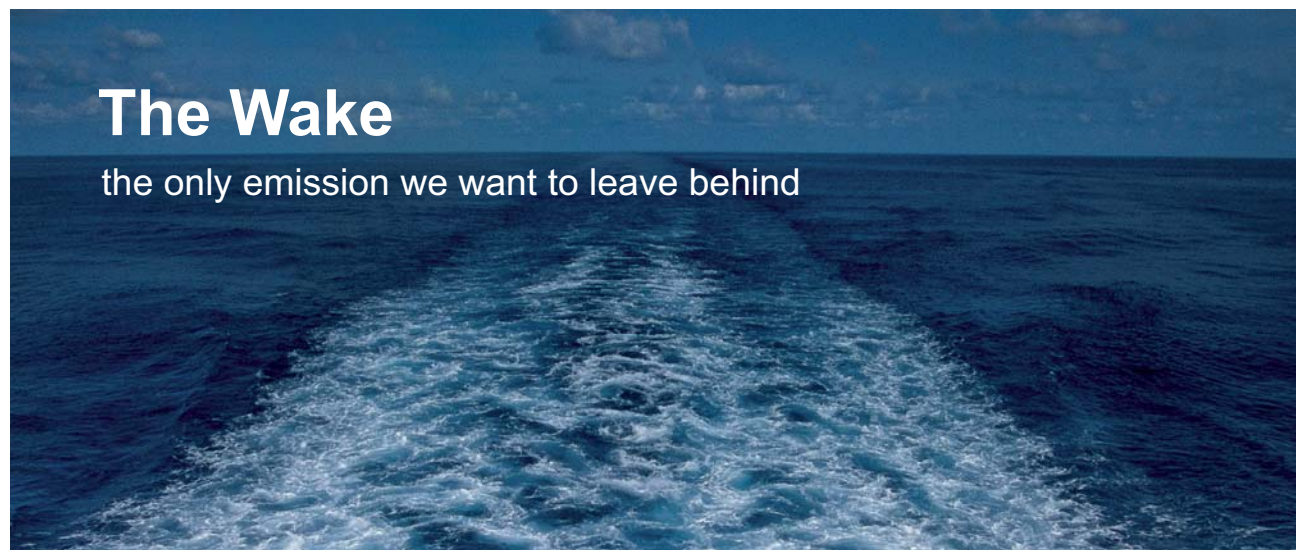
12. Embraces all forms of emotions and expresses them appropriately.

Happiness gurus learn to express their emotions and give each of them the space they need to communicate how they are feeling. They have learnt to accept the full spectrum of emotions that colour our lives and realise that we are a kaleidoscope of natural, emotional expressions, such as joy, happiness, love, anger, envy, grief, sadness. Yet choosing happiness is not at the exclusion of those repressed and destructive emotions. *Christian Pankhurst* says that,

“All emotion is healthy, unless we are suppressing them and pushing them down.”

So it is only when we feel an emotion, do not own it and then suppress it, that it morphs into something unhealthy. Unexpressed envy turns into jealousy; suppressed anger turns into rage and resisted sadness turns into depression. Christian suggests that there is no such thing as a negative emotion, just a repressed version of an emotion that comes out unconstructively and that is toxic to us and each other.

The reality is that we will always experience a range of emotions – the trick is for us to learn to see them for what they are and find a constructive way of expressing them without pushing them down. Emotions are a highly intuitive way for our body to tell us what is going on at a profound level and ignoring them is self-defeating. When we tune into this, we then become more resourceful in deciding how to handle our emotions, can begin to express them more healthily and, through this, lessen the suffering produced by our repressed feelings.




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5.2 Translating Happiness into Performance

As I have already pointed out, there is a real simplicity to performing more effectively at work – be *happier*. When we choose happiness and let go of things that make us sad, frustrated or angry, then we automatically become more effective, are easier to get along with and become more productive.

When we decide to adopt the *happiness leads to success* approach, everything flows more easily. I have worked with many clients who after applying a change to their mindset have commented on how the issue with their colleague has disappeared, or how much more co-operative they have found them to be. Of course it is not their colleague mysteriously changing; it is the effect of their change in mindset that has brought about the improvement. Change from the inside and the outside shifts!

In this final section I would like to focus specifically on the workplace and how applying the strategies laid out in this eBook can help you find professional happiness. Now it is fair to say that every single one of the discussions we have had so far are totally inclusive, although I would like to add an extra special piece of sparkle to the performance topic.

1. **Happiness = High Performance.**

When we are happy and satisfied in life, then we are more likely to be happy at work. Our happiness vibe radiates through all areas of our lives, giving us a significant boost to our professional reputation. Performance is the outer expression of what is on the inside. So when we have a calm, peaceful and aware inside, then the tools, skills and resources that we choose will be delivered with greater confidence, capability and aptitude.

2. **Find meaning in your job.**

When we engage in meaningful activities we feel more inspired, satisfied and motivated. Remember *meaningful* means adding value, having significance or purpose or being aligned to our values. If the job itself lacks any type of meaning, then look for opportunities to get involved in a Charity or Social Committee that feels more meaningful. Be aware of what meaningful looks and sounds like to you and gear your job around this clarity with your manager's help.

3. **Be future-oriented with an eye on the NOW.**

Much of what I have discussed encourages us to stay in the here and now. Although if our jobs are a cause of our suffering, then we need to apply the *Six Steps to Designing your Future*. This is where we channel our energy into focusing on the type of job that will bring us satisfaction in the future and taking action to bring it about. The positivity we feel by taking control helps us cope with the ups and downs of our current role and we are able to use the here and now as stepping stones to our desired role. This is a healthy way of coping with our current unhappiness whilst moving us forward to something that will generate greater satisfaction, which is a more empowering approach than getting caught in the trap of 'It's not fair, why me?'

4. Coping with challenges.

If a colleague is causing us unhappiness, then take time out to reflect on the Hilltops exercise and understand what might have created their behaviours. Whilst we may never get to fully understand their past influences, by showing them compassion we alter the nature of our interactions. Learn to connect more with them, get beneath their behaviour and look for a collaborative approach to our shared challenge. Alternatively, focus on a safe and transactional interaction and realise that we cannot change their behaviour, only our reaction to their actions.

5. When the going gets tough...

Remember to focus on our strengths, talents and qualities. Learn to believe in ourselves and dismantle self-limiting beliefs that create doubts, hesitancy and under-performance. Focus on positive outcomes in meetings or difficult situations and put the mind in a positive state of expectancy and notice how our physiology changes as a result.

6. Learn to validate your own work.

If we constantly look for recognition and appreciation from others, we may be waiting a long time. Be aware of our needs and think about why we exhibit this need. Perhaps we could instead learn to appreciate our own efforts and acknowledge our strengths and capabilities. If we constantly look to others for our worthiness, then we will always walk in the shadow of unhappiness and disappointment.

7. Schedule personal reviews.

Whether we adopt personal reviews as Appraisal Best Practice, taking responsibility for our performance is key to professional success. Our leaders and managers are simply facilitators – we are the instigators. Schedule in time, at least monthly, to review successes and accomplishments, learn from our challenges and set an improvement plan.

8. Make your well-being a priority.

Start to tune into our body's messages that indicate what is happening at an intrinsic level. When we become aware of the impact that stress is having on us, we can become more resourceful in nipping it in the bud. Understand our stress triggers and the way they manifest, then we can find ways to tackle those triggers. Be courageous enough to talk through with others how we are feeling and enlist their help in our well-being. Learn to put our needs higher up the list of priorities and, if things are not going well, address them quickly. Make time for lunch, manage our hours to fit into the bigger context of our life and do not suffer in silence.

9. Work to live not live to work.

Whilst it may be honourable to work long hours, we and the important people in our lives will suffer. Outside of work, ensure that we are living life to the fullest, having fun, enjoying the moment and taking as many opportunities to feel our heart beat as possible. Choose activities that bring us happiness, peace and meaning and the world will feel like a much better place to be in.

10. Develop self-awareness.

The more we invest in understanding what makes us tick, the greater our chances of living and working in a fulfilled and joyous way. As we peel away the layers and work out why we do what we do, we find clues to help us maximise our potential. Keep focused on self-awareness exercises as each one helps to know ourselves just a little deeper than before and so with wisdom we can navigate our success more skillfully.

11. Forgive quickly.

Holding onto grudges just promotes negativity and if we suppress them, they compound into resentment and anger. These are not emotions to help us succeed life or business. If instead we can learn to let go and forgive someone's indiscretions or behaviour and practise compassion, then we take control of our emotional attachments and begin to master our performance.

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12. Do what you love or love what you do.

The demands of life lull us into a false sense of security that forces us to believe that we ‘have to’ stick with what we know. It is very easy, in our uncertain world, to be driven by that conditioning and allow it to shape a miserable lifestyle. If we are unhappy at work, then think about tuning into what you love to do, what makes you excited and generates a positive energy. Then look for work that delivers those opportunities. Make courageous changes and our happiness will reap huge rewards.

If this feels unobtainable and too fear-based right now, then learn to look at the job we have right now in a more positive light. Rather than focus on what is making us miserable, look for what it gives us and remind ourselves of these factors daily. When we can accept where we are right now, then the suffering is replaced by acceptance, which reduces our conflict and creates space for improved performance. When we are dissatisfied, it affects the way we do our job and how others experience us, thereby affecting our reputation. These are all factors within our control, so if we are unable to do what we love, then love what we do.

13. When you feel stressed, breathe.

Let me be clear, there may be days when we feel stressed and anxious. Although by adopting these strategies, we learn to cope more effectively. If we notice tension and tightness, then focus on the breath. Feel it in the belly and take three deeply nourishing breaths in and allow the tightness to lessen with each breath. On the out-breath, imagine the stress leaving the body. If it helps, imagine breathing out through a straw as this slows down the heart and breath rate very quickly and brings us back into equilibrium. A strategy that takes just seconds to carry out.

As I hope you are beginning to acknowledge, happiness is a choice not a purchase or achievement. It is a commitment to ourselves and a decision that we can make when we release the belief that happiness is driven by an external deliverable.

Therefore, our definition of success can now be adjusted to one of understanding what happiness means to us and as we begin to refine our thought processes and behaviours, then the rewards are awaiting us at every junction. People around us will begin to notice a difference and will start to adjust their behaviours with you and so the flow of life starts to move differently.

There are no short-cuts to happiness; there are no cheat sheets to give you. Only through learning about yourself and realising that happiness is an inner choice, you can begin to craft out the future you desire and deserve. It is no more complex than that and you can start today – right now!

“Holding onto anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intention of harming someone and yet you get burnt.”

Buddahgosta, 5th Century Commentator

“It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.”

J.K. Rowling, Author

6 Creating Happiness

Much has been reported about Harvard studies that show the correlation between goal setting and success achievement. Whether we believe these studies to be truth or fallacy, matters less than the premise that if we want something to change, we need to focus on what we want to be different.

In my coaching experience, when there is enough desire to change, then this creates a momentum that requires no pressure, forcing or pushing. Desire creates innate propulsion that carries us forward. Armed with a clear focus on what we want to be different, commitment to see it through and diligent application, we can turn our intentions and dreams into reality.

My highest achieving clients and participants have been those so determined to change that they don't need to make pledges to anyone else except themselves. They have reached a point where there are no doubts about whether to take action – it has been about **what** action they will take.

This section is short and sweet and helps us reflect on the true nature of this eBook and what meaning it has created. Taking time to now personalise the insights that have arisen for us from our reading is crucial if anything is going to change. Of course we could just complete this book, put it to one side and tick the Continuous Professional Development box. Or we could make a real difference to our life and start to translate these words into something meaningful that cultivates the happiness and success we deserve.

This final section, therefore, helps us to fine tune what we want to be different and the intentions we will set to make them happen. I believe that these steps make the real difference to our life experiences.

6.1 Making Change Happen

There is a process that I would like to offer that I hope will help turn our reading inspirations into clear intentions that we can commit to easefully.

6.1.1 Step 1 – Review your Learning

Reflecting back on the exercises you have completed, think about what stood out, resonated or meant something to you. There has been plenty to contemplate, so collecting your thoughts and gathering up what have been the most useful discoveries is an important step before you begin translating those into clear intentions. Look back at your Learning Desires and review your intentions.

6.1.2 Step 2 – List Inspirations and Intentions

When we are inspired to do something then nothing stops us. Think back to a time when you had a real passion and energy to do a marathon, prepare for a promotion interview or work for a charity that's close to your heart. Even though you are busy, you make time for inspirational activities. Think about what you feel inspired to do differently as a result of this eBook and what will give your life greatest meaning when you think about your happiness and success. Once you have summarised those, you can begin to think about turning the most important inspirations into heart-centred intentions. Just choose three main ones so that they become manageable.



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Note down your key inspirations and the intentions you wish to set below:

My Inspirations

My Intentions

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

6.1.3 Step 3 – Magnetising your Intentions

Taking the three most relevant intentions that you believe will have the greatest impact on your life, make sure that they have the right energy around the words you have chosen:

What: will you specifically do differently and what will it give you?

Why: is this action important to you?

How: will you approach achieving this action, how often, how well, how many?

When: will you do this, over what period?

Who: will need to support you and who is involved?

Where: will this goal take place, home, work, socially? Be specific by stating whether it is at meetings, talking to your boss, when handling a difficult customer.

This now gives your intentions some structure and a clear focus, which helps them become meaningful statements.

6.1.4 Step 4 – Do and Review

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit.” Aristotle

It is now time to take action and repeated action at that. Inspired by your commitments, you need to go forth and apply yourself. To help you, here is some guidance about making it a long-lasting change and not just a ‘five minute wonder’.

- **Focus only on three commitments.** If you adopt any more it will become like a shopping list, often overwhelming and soon forgotten. When you have changed those commitments into new habits, then you can identify your next set of actions.
- **Repeat your actions regularly.** The more you repeat, the more you hone and gain in confidence. After all, *‘Repetition is the Mother of skill’*.
- **Involve others in your changes.** Talk to people close to you about your changes, especially family and friends. With their inclusion you secure their support rather than create fear, suspicion or threat. When I implemented a big change to my language, I asked for my team’s help in spotting when I used negative words and they became a factor of my success.
- **Carry out regular reviews and document your successes.** The more you assess your progress and celebrate what is going well, the more momentum you will experience. You will also be more in tune with what is working less well and be able to make adjustments. During a twelve-month leadership programme, I encouraged participants to produce an Evidence Portfolio that recorded specific examples of their progress. They collected samples of emails, wrote situational summaries, asked colleagues for feedback and copied letters of thanks they received. This review mechanism helped them produce long-lasting behavioural changes.
- **Celebrate your successes.** It is important to acknowledge what is going well. Share those successes with colleagues, friends who will be interested, your partner or boss. The act of sharing itself reinforces the positivity of the action and inspires you to continue.
- **Let go of any attachment to the outcomes.** Enjoy the process of ‘doing’ and trust that with the right intentions, the right emotions supporting them that everything will unfold as it is meant to.

6.1.5 Step 5 – Commit to Paper

Commit your intentions to paper and be sure to keep them visible somewhere. You can put structure to them, although for the purposes of this eBook, I would like to keep the traditional Goal Setting practices to a minimum. So use any piece of paper, write your intentions in a style personal to you and then place it anywhere where you can read it regularly and remind yourself daily of your commitments.

Now armed with a dash of knowledge, a splash of hope and a pinch of inspiration, you have all you need to create transformational personal development. May your success be determined by your happiness, your heart and your intentions and may the results of this be realised all around you.

“If we study what is merely average, we will remain merely average.”

Shawn Achor, Positive Psychologist



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