

The Wisdom of Success: The Philosophy of Achievement

Author: Andrew Carnegie & Napoleon Hill

Book Summary

The treatise titled *The Wisdom of Success: The Philosophy of Achievement* emerged from an interview between Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish American industrialist and philanthropist and self-help author Napoleon Hill. Known for having led the expansion of the American steel industry, and reputed for becoming one of history's richest Americans, Carnegie invited the world's wealthy to utilise their riches to improve the society as a whole. He began his career as a telegrapher and created enormous amounts of wealth through investments in industries such as railroads, railroad sleeping cars, bridges, and oil derricks. He was also a bond salesman who raised large amounts of money for American enterprises in Europe.

As a self-made industrialist and philanthropist, Carnegie is renowned for his wisdom and achievement and his lessons on success are jotted down in the book *The Wisdom of Success: The Philosophy of Achievement* by Hill, well known for publications such as *The Law of Success* and *Think and Grow Rich*.

Key takeaways

- Definiteness of purpose is imperative to attaining success. If you want to work towards success then you must develop a definite purpose which fosters a burning desire, never leaves your thoughts, and becomes an entity to which you can devote your life.
- Nothing is as difficult as taking the first step from poverty to riches.
- You must develop a positive mental attitude to propel your thoughts and plans into actions aimed towards success.
- Money earned is infinitely more powerful than money being given away as charity.
- Success can be defined as the “power with which to acquire whatever you demand from life, without violating the rights of others.”
- The desire for knowledge and the willingness to work towards it is the greatest asset that you can possess.

The treatise is filled with practical lessons on how you can achieve success, and acts as a guiding light with its seventeen well-charted principles of success and achievement. These include the importance of developing definiteness of purpose, using the mastermind principle, fostering a personality that is attractive, going the extra mile and using organized individual endeavour, among many others. One major lesson offered by the book is that, unless you accept something as a failure, it is not permanent. Further, every failure and success in life is ascertained by your habits – and self-discipline involves the mindful adoption of constructive habits aimed at becoming successful. According to the authors, 98% of the world's populace has no definite purpose in mind, other than working for a daily wage, and this is the issue which sets them up for failure. Which means that, if you rethink your priorities and develop an actionable purpose, there is nothing stopping you from attaining all the success you ever dreamt of.

Overarching principles to which you must commit

There are a few things every individual must realise, and the first is that a majority of the people on this planet do not move beyond the wishing stage in their lives. Neither do they understand that no great achievement is possible without enlisting the help of other individuals. To create a definite purpose and achieve success, your mind needs to be free from negativity, doubt, fear, and the limitations you impose upon your own capabilities. Remember that when you have a goal in mind, you can achieve more with two minds, than when you depend only on yourself. You can arrive at personal power by creating a winsome amalgamation of individual traits and constructive habits as these will help you develop a definitive purpose and also help you achieve the same. Your personal power is composed of ten qualities and each of them are imperative to attaining your goal. These can be termed as the definiteness of purpose, promptness of decision, soundness of character, intentional honesty, strict discipline over your emotions, obsessional desire to render useful service, thorough knowledge of your occupation, tolerance of all subjects, loyalty, faith, unceasing thirst for knowledge, and the alertness of imagination. Once you begin abiding by these universal principles, there is no obstacle which is too big to overcome.

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Understanding the mastermind principle

As we have learnt, bringing two or more minds together will help you achieve success more sustainably than undertaking a lonesome journey. To leverage the mastermind principle, you must select others who have the ability to perform the necessary tasks while working towards a common goal. Since 98% of the populace is only interested in drawing a monthly wage, you can create a winning model collating their abilities while working towards communal wellbeing. You can do this by utilising the major motivators of voluntary action, which include the emotion of love, the strong desire for financial gain, self-preservation, and freedom of body and mind as well as the inherent need for self-expression and perpetuation of life in the aftermath of death. People are also driven by negative emotions like fear, anger, and jealousy and if you learn to harness these towards amplifying the greater goal, then you will be able to move unambiguously towards success. Further, you can also develop your knowledge and ability to leverage the mastermind principle by consistently reading constructive books and boosting your mental strength.

Fostering an attractive personality

Many successful people attain their goals because of their personalities and the way they influence the individuals they meet along the way. You can foster an attractive personality by developing a positive mental attitude, ensuring pleasant facial expressions and body postures, determining the nature of every emotion, being flexible, and possessing the ability to modify every thought you release into the universe. If you have a sincere purpose and a courteous demeanour, you will find success easier to achieve. You must also work towards having faith and a sense of justice as these two aspects help mould your character and enable you to navigate failures with equanimity. Be mindful of your traits and habits and always strive to turn towards the constructive path.

Be creative while going the extra mile

Most people focus on doing the bare minimum possible – be it in their daily lives or their careers. Learn to render more and better service than what you are being paid for and make this a habit. Your capability for offering service should be the benchmark, rather than the least you can do and never do this in a boastful manner. Every individual today is controlled by the limitations they place upon their own minds and abilities. When you go the extra mile, and bring your creative abilities to the front, your actions will receive favourable attention and help take you ahead of the curve. Going the extra mile and understanding your innate capabilities will also help you arrive upon your definitive purpose. Unleashing your creative juices will also empower you to become a better leader.

Lessons in self-discipline, organised thinking, and failure

As a person aiming for success, mastering your own thoughts is an imperative because, if you cannot control your thoughts, you cannot control your deeds. Be self-disciplined and learn to organise your thoughts and emotions as there are energy forms distributed through your brain. Every thought has some intelligence behind it and if you can harness this while organising it, your path to success becomes easier. Alternatively, negative thoughts can prevent you from reaching your potential so you must be conscious of what leaves your mind and how. The next important quality is to learn from your failures. Realise that these are but temporary and only view them as a learning opportunity. You can train your subconscious mind to convert all your failures into an inspirational urge towards exerting greater effort.

Look for inspiration and stay focused

When you are inspired and have your purpose front and centre, you will be fuelled by passion and enthusiasm which will enable you to overcome the greatest calamities and fatigues. To remain inspired, you must, consciously, do away with negativity. In

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In addition to looking for inspiration, you must also remain focused as this is the only way to combine all the faculties possessed by your mind and concentrate on achieving your goal. If your attention wanders away from the purpose, you will lose out on valuable time and opportunities. You must prepare to remain focused and this can be achieved through ceaseless organisation and systematic planning.

Be a team player

To achieve the most successful outcomes, you must become a good manager capable of coordinating teamwork in an effective manner. In addition to teaming up with like-minded individuals, you should also budget your time and money in a manner that ensures sustainability. You must supplement your purpose with proper time management and rest to ensure that you do not get burned out on the road to success. Recreation can help you reenergise yourself while also boosting your creativity and focus so divide your day into work, sleep and recreation to remain motivated and focused. Look at your recreation time as a period of opportunity where you can assimilate new ideas and come up with new approaches to problems.

While there is no easy path to success, there is a way to achieve your objectives, as long as you have a clear purpose and know the way to the top. Never underestimate the power of becoming a mastermind and take all possible efforts and actions to become the elusive 2% of the populace that works towards achieving success rather than just surviving on their monthly wages. And, once you achieve your purpose, remember to share the fruits of your labour with the less fortunate as this will bring you great satisfaction and a sense of achievement.

While you create a clear pathway to success, you must also understand that achieving financial success is a key determinant of overall success. Further, the way you save and invest, and especially your investment vehicle of choice, can have a significant impact on your financial journey. In that regard, mutual funds can be an ideal investment vehicle that can help you achieve your multiple investment goals and get on the path to financial success. Mutual funds are an investment vehicle that pool investor money and then invest it across different asset classes like equity, debt, commodities, etc., and across varied strategies and themes. As a result, they help you achieve your multiple financial goals while meeting your risk and return requirements. They help you overcome your limitations in terms of knowledge about investments and behavioural biases by adopting a systematic and disciplined approach to investing. Thus, they can be a good vehicle to take you ahead on your path to success.

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