

## Your Personal Definition of Success

*How do you define success? Why does this matter?*

***Because happiness and success are intertwined.<sup>1</sup>***

A recent study examining short-term and long-term effects of happiness shows us that the jury is in: happiness is an important factor leading to success. Said another way, people who are successful—for the most part—were happy first.

### EXERCISE:

Think about the significant categories in your life, which generally guide your feelings of success and happiness.

### TO DO:

List 5–10 of these categories below in Column 1.

#### Sample categories include:

- Relationships
- Career/Business
- Health
- Personal (growth, hobbies, activities, etc.)
- Financial
- Spiritual
- Environmental (e.g., my current physical environment)

**Tip:** If there are subcategories (e.g., relationship with kids, relationship with partner), then you can add these in Column 2 as part of the definition or list them as an entirely separate category in Column 1.

## Example

Contributing to My Happiness and Success	How Would You Rate the Status of This Right Now? (#) 1 = lowest, 5 = highest	List Actions You Can Take to Help Achieve and Maintain Your Target Number. (Also List Time Period or Due Date.)
Health	4.5	By 10.31: No gluten
Relationship (significant other)	4	By 12.31: Plan weekend Daily = funny messages
Kids' happiness / physical and mental well-being	4.5	By 9.30: Sit down w/kids and outline to do, support, and fun plan
Relationship (family)	4	Weekly: Sun Football gatherings
Relationship (friends)	4	Weekly: Plan convo or activity
Financial stability	4.5	Maintain: Budgeting, investing
Spirituality	3	By 10.31: Plan dinner w/Sarah's friend
Contributing to society	4.5	Weekly: Discuss article w/kids
Personal growth	5	Daily: Continue daily gratification journal
Fun and adventure	3	By 1.31: Plan suitcase party

## Practice

Contributing to My Happiness and Success	How Would You Rate the Status of This Right Now? (#) 1 = lowest, 5 = highest	List Actions You Can Take to Help Achieve and Maintain Your Target Number. (Optional: Also List Time Period or Due Date.)

## Conclusion

In conclusion, consider the following questions.

1. For many people, success is not just about work. There is a broader definition of success that varies by the individual. **How do you define success?**
2. **What on your list would you like to most improve upon?**
3. It is important to take the time to define what success is for you. You can retake this exercise or a different exercise at another point in your life and find different results, but it's important that your definition of success be true to your goals and motivations. **How has your definition of success changed over time?**



## DEEP DIVE

For a deeper dive into these concepts of success and self-reflection:

- Read [What does success at work really mean?](#) from the World Economic Forum, a useful insight on new perspectives on success.
- Read [Success That Lasts](#) from Harvard Business Review, showcasing Howard H. Stevenson's significant research on success.
- Review "[The Wheel of Life](#)," a tool designed to organize your balance, happiness and success in your life.

## DID YOU KNOW?

1. *A study of entrepreneurs worldwide indicates female entrepreneurs are more ambitious and successful than male entrepreneurs.<sup>2</sup>*
2. *Other studies show men and women define success differently. "Even in the most progressive, gender-balanced households, on average, women seem to think about a greater diversity of pursuits."<sup>3</sup>*

### 3. Discussion:

- *In considering the above information, does your definition of success change?*
- *Do you consider the following quote true or false? “It’s time to change our out-dated ideas of corporate heroism. To become a hero is not a magic process reserved for the few, but something that is open to all of us if we strive to make the best of our circumstances.”<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Lisa C. Walsh et al., *Does Happiness Promote Career Success? Revisiting the Evidence*, *Journal of Career Assessment*, 26(2), 199–219 (Jan. 15, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072717751441> (accessed Nov. 20, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Molly Petrilla, *Women Entrepreneurs Are ‘More Ambitious and Successful’ Than Men*, *Fortune* (Feb. 29, 2016), <http://fortune.com/2016/02/29/women-entrepreneurs-success/> (accessed Nov. 20, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Carmen Nobel, *Men Want Powerful Jobs More Than Women Do*, *Harvard Business School* (Sep. 23, 2015), <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/men-want-powerful-jobs-more-than-women-do> (accessed Nov. 30, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Paolo Gallo, *What Does Success at Work Really Mean?*, *World Economic Forum* (March 2, 2016), <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/what-does-success-at-work-really-mean/> (accessed Nov. 30, 2018).