

Six Habits I've Learned From Everyday People Who Became Super Successful -- They Can Work For You Too

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For the last 20-plus years, I've had the good fortune of speaking with thousands of successful people. Now, they're not Mark Zuckerberg or Jeff Bezos, but rather everyday people who have intelligently navigated their careers and run thriving businesses. These folks earn \$500k to over several million dollars a year and have accrued multiples of this amount. I've conducted this research in my capacity as an

executive recruiter, interacting with corporate executives, and as a business owner of a search firm involved with networking groups of entrepreneurs.

Many articles will share the stories of billionaires, stars and top professional athletes to motivate you toward success. This minuscule .01% of the population are an anomaly. There is a better chance of emulating the “millionaire next door” to learn how you can achieve greatness in your own career.

I have no shame in asking people how much they earn, the reasons for their success and how they have attained it. I’ve noticed that you if you show genuine interest in someone and ask about their profession or business, they are glad to share their stories. Over the decades, I’ve kept notes and I’d like to share some of the commonly held traits that these people possess and what personal habits have allowed them to succeed.

1. Get off social media. Almost everyone has told me that they deliberately avoid Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms. They contend that it is an utter waste of time and energy. The only exceptions are those who use social media to actively promote their business, career or cultivate their brand. Otherwise, they have no time or tolerance for the vacuousness of these sites. It is a time bandit and—to these people—time is money. They’d rather spend their precious little time on fruitful endeavours rather than arguing politics on Twitter, commenting on someone’s cat pictures (full disclosure: I have two cats and two dogs and they will make your heart melt) or coveting someone else’s perfectly cultivated and contrived life.

2. Defer Gratification. Brian Tracy, the self-help and motivational guru often says, “The ability to discipline yourself to delay gratification in the short term in order to enjoy greater rewards in the long term, is the indispensable prerequisite for success.” In today’s culture, everyone feels that they are entitled to a McMansion, a brand new leased BMW every three years, sending their kids to Ivy League universities, taking three exotic vacations every year, employing nannies, gardeners, tutors, life coaches

and chefs, wearing the newest fashionable clothes, ordering in or eating out half the week and the list goes on. This lifestyle is in direct conflict with building wealth. If you spend two dollars for every dollar earned, you'll never get anywhere financially. When you factor in mortgages, your college debt, your kids' college debt, property and individual taxes and saving for retirement, you're in the red and losing money. You are doing the exact opposite of what should be done. These people are able to put aside their egos, assiduously avoid competing with their neighbours and the phony poseurs on Facebook and live below their means. This entails a smaller home with a lower mortgage with less real estate taxes, cheaper cars, reasonable vacations and other frugality. Their major goal is to save and accumulate money, in addition to earning it. These funds will then be wisely invested. Then, the money compounds and works for you. You now have a second income stream. The more financially stable you are, the more freedom you have with your career and life. You're not held prisoner by your own consumption.

3. Be skeptical of the news and politics and pay attention to how you allocate your free time. Spend a few hours of listening to cable news or reading comments on Twitter and you're ready to start arguing with someone or feel bad about yourself. Engaging in Twitter and Facebook battles is a destructive time suck that drains your energy and only serves to create enemies. The same holds true for attending or watching every single baseball game of your favourite team, incessantly playing video games, binge-watching too much television, smoking too much weed or going out drinking on a regular basis. Instead of carrying out these unproductive habits, they spend their time reading books and articles, listening to podcasts and watching YouTube videos that offer advice, guidance and information to improve their lives, business and careers. Successful people recognize that time is much more valuable than money. They know that money can always be made, but you can't make more time.

4. Hard work and hustle wins out in the long run. Don't worry about the college you attended or how the first phase of your career started out. Take active

control over your future. Figure out what you're good at, what you enjoy doing and what you can actually get paid well for doing, then work like hell. It may take years of coming into the office early, staying late, working once you get home and logging in over the weekend, but it will pay off. As the writer Henry David Thoreau wrote, "Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it." The time and effort will make you an expert. It's the Malcolm Gladwell rule of putting in 10,000 hours to become awesome at what you do. This is the unglamorous stuff that nobody talks about or wants to hear. We all want the quick fix or instant gratification. The reality is that successful people grind away—without any recognition—for years until they finally make it. They sacrifice family, friends, going to movies and sporting events during this time. That's just what it takes and what you have to do. There is a trade off. If you decide that you want to reach the pinnacle of success, there will be sacrifices to be made. If you don't want to, that's okay too.

5. Embrace failure. Failure is not your enemy; it is actually your friend. We are taught to look down upon or be embarrassed by failure. This is the furthest thing from the truth. By trying and failing, you learn. Every failure teaches you something. Successful people take those lessons and improve. They fail again, learn and improve. After a while, as Winston Churchill said, "Success is walking from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm." You keep moving forward. Ignore the negative comments and those that may snicker behind your back. Have the confidence to keep boldly moving forward toward your goals.

6. Change your mindset and attitude. Immediately stop with all of the negative thoughts. Replace them with positive mantras of affirmation. If you think you can do something, you'll find a way to make it happen. In your own mind, visualize yourself as the person you want to become and be that person right now. If you want to be the CEO of a successful tech company, then start acting like one—not just acting, but doing as well. It's easy to come up with excuses not to do something. It's hard to push yourself to become the person you want to be. It's worth it in the long run.

I recognize that this is not easy and there is much more to do, but it's a great way to start. In addition to the six pointers, here are some additional bonus things that successful people do and you can too:

- They surround themselves with people smarter and more capable than themselves.
- Embrace ambiguity and constantly adapt to changes.
- Set goals and build a system of daily habits to work toward achieving them.
- Let go of the past and focus on the present.
- They exercise their minds and bodies.
- Recognize fear, live with it and learn to overcome it.
- Constantly listen and learn from others.
- Train yourself to become comfortable with what's uncomfortable.
- Enjoy and make the most out of every moment of your life.

To start, I suggest that you try this for three months and I guarantee you will see the biggest difference.