

ABC OF SUCCESS

Dr.N. Raj Mohan
Behavioral Scientist & Director, BODHI



When you want to eat -eat and when you want to sleep -sleep!

I have not been able to discern the difference between success and failure. I have delved into a number of people and their lives across the world; I have come to know them and their path to success in their field. All of them have had their fair share of miseries, impediments and several setbacks – but yet they have succeeded. You know several of them too... Starting from Wright Brothers to Mother Teresa... From APJ Abdul Kalam to...to many more.

Surprisingly none of them ever whispered of their failures at any point in time. It is / was their ATTITUDE towards themselves and the cause they pursued. Our way of defining things make the difference in our lives.

Recently I had the opportunity to ask several MBA students from a reputed college the question: How many amongst you would like to succeed? Obviously everyone raised their hands in affirmation. I probed further: How? Their answers were along these lines: I want to become a GM of a big company, I want to own a home in OMR, and I want to be a successful entrepreneur. I explained to them about their non clarity and unawareness of the definition of success. The essence of their answers oozed from their fractured attitude and callousness in their approach. However, this turned out to be a meaningful dialogue later.

Most of us postulate the theory that positive attitude alone will bring success to us. Several rest in that belief forever! Positive attitude doesn't signify positive thinking alone. One might think and say "I want to become a renowned cricket player". But, after a few years he still continues to hum the same tune. The idea is good and doesn't harm anyone. But the idea remains an idea without any use. What most of us fail to understand is positive attitude has another component called "sound output" which simply means: you need to do what you wanted to.

People who have succeeded have unquestionable faith in themselves. Let us take our own example instead of looking at biographies of great leaders.

Assume you are being asked by your department to give a presentation in a seminar or you have to convey your love through a poem and hand it over to the person whom you have fallen in love with recently.

You review your writing after the first time and realize it belongs to the trash bin- but you have not discarded it yet. You instead take another paper and rewrite with some additions / deletions but manage to retain the core. You may do this act repeatedly and now get tired of ideas, style etc and wind up your creativity and present to the designated people.

After your presentation you are met with "Hey wonderful! It was a good presentation, good attempt".

Your love(r) says "I never knew you could write so well... I love this and will always cherish this" (You may write sad poems later but that's a whole other story).

Now let us look at the above experience a little more closely: Are you successful in what you did? Or did you fail? If so, in whose mind?

The question here is how do you see success? Which paper deserves the trash can or crown? The 1st draft you prepared the 2nd or the last one behind your winning? A much closer scrutiny of the entire process will reveal that it's not the first or the last writing; rather it is your preparation in its entirety that helped you achieve the desired outcome. None of your writing is isolated; all of it is integrated and gives way to the ripple effect.

All this could only be possible because of BELIEF in yourself and COMMITMENT in what you did.

To me, success and failure operate as the Yin-Yang philosophy. There is no one side as both integrate and disintegrate to integrate again. It draws energy and support from one another. I have defined success to myself as "experiencing experiences". It's like climbing / trekking on a mountain. The first 500 meters marks a record for you. Unfortunately this does not give you much happiness as you think someone climbed 3000 meters. Now you have defined success in a comparative mode. This is where you have a problem. At times, this can help you achieve more given your high motivation, but if the same motivation is low you will end up giving up on your dreams. Either way you may not be completely happy.

Your success matrix should have only your records for comparison. Life is anything but a competition... it is an experience. This forms the core of self development and points towards the need to tune your mind, to free yourself from limits.

Success is beyond comparison, limitations and competition. In the process of our journey we experience and learn that "obstacles are the path" which leads to success. Behind every tale of success there is an embarrassing first effort, a big stumble or setback like I mentioned earlier. A real successful person will see the success in climbing, not in reaching the top; because he would still climb further.

For our understanding and awareness we can receive feedback from other about our work. But remember not all bricks and bouquets are real. If the majority praise and appreciate it becomes a success else vice versa... but all the people who have succeeded have often disproved the theory of majority.

My young torch bearers of our future, consider your ATTITUDE, BELIEF in self and COMMITMENT will surely lead you to share your own success stories with others.

The Author can be contacted at raj@bodhi.co.in