

Your Personal Definition of Success

We are the most satisfied and fulfilled and able to unleash our greatest potential when we are aligned with not only what we want to do but also who we want to be. Right now, I want you to open yourself up to the process of discovering your *personal definition of success*. Move into these exercises from a place of possibilities, not limitations. You might be able to have much more of what you truly want with much less sacrifice than you might think.

Start Pondering

- Describe a time when you felt really successful.
- What activities or situations fill you with energy?
- What motivates you?
- What causes you stress?
- Are there any traditional measures of success (e.g., many direct reports, large salary, lots of travel) that don't fit with your personal definition of success? If so, what are they, and have you been feeling badly for not achieving them?
- What makes you afraid either about maintaining the status quo or about changing something?
- Who do you consider a professional role model, and why?
- Who do you look up to as a personal role model, and why?
- When do you feel most at ease and natural both personally and professionally?

Write Priorities

- List and rank the different aspects of your life in order of importance.
- Write out the specific actions you would like to see happen in relation to those priorities. For example: If friends are a priority, a related action could be one get-together with friends per week.
- Describe the benefits you hope to achieve from making your priorities a priority. In other words, what will success with effective time investment look and feel like? For example: When I wrap up work on Friday afternoon knowing that everything else can wait until Monday, I will feel peaceful and happy.
- What are you willing (or not willing) to sacrifice?

- How fast do you feel you need to achieve your goals?

If you struggled to answer the above questions, try out the following exercises to get inside your subconscious mind and help you to discover what you truly want:

- Imagine that you're an old man or woman sitting on a porch reminiscing about your life over the last 70 years. Describe what has made you proud, sad, disappointed, or elated about what you did (or did not do) and who you are and were.
- Pretend that a reporter is interviewing you 5 or 10 years from now. She asks you these sorts of questions about the past few years: What have you learned? What's happened? What would you change?
- Picture a fairy godmother, a genie, or whatever other magical being you prefer, waving a wand and creating your dream lifestyle. What would happen? What would stay the same? What would change? What would other people say? What would it look like, taste like, and smell like?

I encourage you to record your thoughts on at least a few of these questions in a place that you can refer back to on a regular basis. As you build your routines and assess your progress, you'll always want to check back to make sure that you stay true to your personal definition of success. You want to captain your ship, making course adjustments as the wind changes but ultimately ending up at the destination you chose in advance.