

LMI Journal



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Five Essentials for Successful Leadership

By Paul J. Meyer

You have probably heard the common saying that there are three ways to acquire great wealth: to be born into it, to marry into it, or to earn it. Unlike wealth, success comes by only one path: you must earn it. You cannot be born into success; you cannot marry into it; it is never a matter of luck. True success involves the development of your potential for personal leadership and achievement, and that depends entirely upon you.

People have frequently sought the “secrets of success” by studying the words and actions of those who have been great leaders. For the most part, their search proves fruitless because they look only on the outer person rather than examining thoughts, habits, attitudes and emotions – the intangible ingredients that make those who succeed stand a little taller than average. But a careful study of these qualities reveals certain success essentials common to all those who have achieved major success. These qualities are called by different names, they are expressed in unique manners, and those who possess them may even be unaware that they have them. But these qualities are present. If you want to develop the self-motivation necessary for effective personal leadership, you must also acquire these five success essentials.



Crystallized Thinking

You must crystallize your thinking to identify the specific goals you want to achieve and to identify where you stand now in relation to those goals. Like most people, you have probably had serious moments of soul searching

when you asked yourself exactly where you stood and what you wanted from life. But chances are you did not pursue these questions because the answers were vague, illusive and hard to pin down. It is not easy to know yourself because your personality is complex. Your motivation is subject to certain basic needs and drives that exert influence from inside yourself. You are also subject to many outside pressures – to the conditioning influences of family, society, environment and institutions. But even your conditioned habits are fashioned by your own free choice, and that same freedom of choice directs your goals program.

Knowing yourself and where you want to go involves decision making. You must make a decision and stick to it. Crystallized thinking is the process that makes it possible for you to reach confident decisions about the goals you choose to pursue.

Success comes in the progressive realization of worthwhile predetermined personal goals, one after another. A basic part of knowing yourself is knowing your present status and knowing what you want to achieve. Once you have crystallized your thinking to produce a clear and concise analysis of your present position and have determined your own value system so that you have a vivid mental image of your goals, you are ready to take the next step toward achievement.

A Written Plan

After you have crystallized your thinking and know what goals you want to achieve, the next success essential is developing written plans and deadlines for achievement of

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those goals. Although you have chosen a star to shoot at, a goal line to cross, or a hurdle to overcome, you must have some plan of action for realizing your dream. Set out workable guidelines that elevate your goals above the realm of daydreams. Make plans so detailed and so clearly drawn that confusion and conjecture are eliminated. Then you can put theory into practice, turn theoretical knowledge into pragmatic know-how, and convert thought into action.

Written plans and deadlines for their achievement minimize procrastination. They create within you an inspirational discontent with things as they are. They help you clearly visualize each goal as an accomplished fact before it is actually achieved. Writing crystallizes thought, and crystallized thought motivates action. The mere fact that you put your goals on paper serves as an act of commitment.

A Burning Desire

The third success essential is to develop a burning desire for achievement of your goals. Desire makes the difference between a goal and a wish. Desire puts action into your plans and intentions. Without desire there is no motivation to achieve, no matter how worthy your goal nor how workable your plan.

Although you were born with the desire for leadership in its broad sense, you have also experienced a certain amount of conditioning that has, to some extent, hampered the flow of your creativity and desire. Rediscover the freshness, vitality, optimism and enthusiasm of the desire you possessed as a child – before you lost some of your capacity to dream impossible dreams and to desire so fervently that you could feel, taste and see a dream as your own. Stoke the fires of desire with emotion, stir them deeply, and you can achieve success in personal leadership.

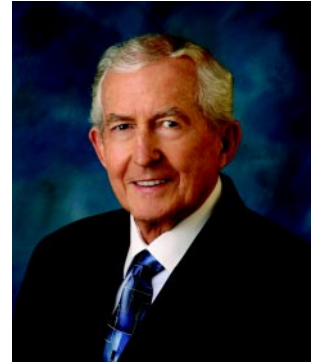
In the process of discovering how to arouse, develop, and test your desire against your value system, you learn to judge whether the goals you have written are real goals or mere daydreams. The intensity of your desire to achieve the goals you have listed determines their priority. Those you most desire will have the highest priority. They will operate as forces to provide you with dramatic self-motivation. Without desire, your goals are destined to remain unrealized.

Supreme Self-Confidence

Making the changes necessary for growth in personal leadership is difficult if you try to change conscious actions without changing attitudes and habits that automatically trigger behavior patterns. It is necessary to begin first to alter attitudes and basic habits of thinking as a key factor in activating your plan. When you are purposely working to develop success attitudes, you begin to believe that achieve-

“No one else can determine your desires, needs, or wants because no one else knows your priority of values or understands your potential.”

– Paul J. Meyer



ment of your goals is possible. You develop great self-confidence.

Self-confidence allows you to be realistic instead of dependent on vague hopes. When you are realistic, you do not wait for time and circumstances to come along and transform your dreams into reality. You take the lead and work progressively toward achievement; and most important, you have confidence in your own ability to lead, to grow, and to make the internal changes necessary to reach your objectives. You believe in the concept of continual change. You know that you are indeed a creature of change. Your response to new experiences is that they are natural and to be expected. They pose no threat to you.

Unshakable Determination

Develop an unshakable determination to follow through on your plan regardless of circumstances, criticism, or what other people say, think, or do. This is often the breaking point for good intentions. Many people live their lives in the shadow of public opinion, drifting with the tide of criticism, and wind up wallowing in the backwash of mediocrity. Set a realistic standard for yourself. No one else can determine your desires, needs, or wants because no one else knows your priority of values or understands your potential. Once you know yourself and set your goals accordingly, determination is natural because you know that you are right and you know why you are right. You have information no critic can ever have, and armed with this inside information, you are impervious to unjustified assaults. Determination is neither stubborn defiance nor unreasonable inflexibility. It is, rather, firm resolve, quiet confidence, and unshakable persistence.

These five success essentials are inherent in every great leader. Follow all of these five success essentials as a general plan for living and your proficiency in goal setting will increase by leaps and bounds.

Taking a Risk

As a decision maker and problem solver, be prepared to risk change. Be willing to pay the price of disturbing your own psychological comfort by choosing to change. It may become necessary to defend yourself against traditional ways of thinking and acting, and you may have to do without social approval for a time. You may also encounter resistance, especially if you are young and new at the job. Not only do people instinctively resist change, they may actively insist that they are unable to learn a new procedure or change an old habit. When you believe in your decision, simply insist, even if you must do so repeatedly. As a leader, you are a role model. Remain calm and unemotional, but determined.

People will be more likely to accept change when they see you embracing it with enthusiasm. When they see you not only survive, but thrive, they will be more willing to take the risks associated with a given change. Let your team members know that change is inevitable, and your organization can either capitalize on change or be swept away by it.

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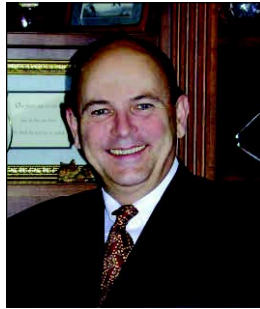
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The Power of Vision



David Byrd
President, LMI

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of humankind is the creative gift of imagination. Humankind was uniquely created with this ability and was given the faculty of imagination for a purpose. There is significant, creative power in the ability to imagine your ideal future. This ability is referred to as vision.

One of my favorite stories demonstrating the power of vision is about Florence Chadwick. In 1952 on a foggy Fourth of July morning, 34-year-old Florence Chadwick waded into the water off Catalina Island, California. She wanted to become the first woman to swim the Catalina Channel.

The water was numbingly cold that morning and the fog was dense. Fatigue had never been her problem; the bone chilling cold was to be her biggest challenge. After 15 hours, she succumbed to the icy waters. Her trainer told her that she was near the shore and urged her not to quit, but when Florence looked toward what should have

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been the California coastline, all she could see was the dense fog. A few minutes later she was taken out of the water. It was not until hours later, when her body began to thaw, that she felt the shock of failure. She had quit just one-half mile from the California coast. She told a reporter, “I don’t want to make

excuses, but if I could have seen the shoreline, I would have made it.”

I have observed that most people will quit just short of their desired outcome if their mind is limited by lack of vision. I have also observed that lack of vision will cause top leaders to experience burnout and stagnation. Without vision, people perish. Without vision, people quit. Without vision, organizations become disorganized, inefficient, ineffective, and filled with fear. Clear vision is the key to a full, dynamic, and abundant future.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What vision do I hold for my future?
- How much time do I spend imagining my future as I want it to be?
- How clearly and vividly do I see my future?
- How do I feel when I take time to think about my future?

If you can answer these questions with clarity, you are using the power of vision as an advantage over the forces of apathy. If, however, you have difficulty with these questions, at least you are now aware of the significant importance of vision, and effective change always begins with awareness.

With Positive Expectancy,

David Byrd
President, Leadership Management Institute™

Communicating the Total Message

Skillful communication is the essential human connection. Sound communication techniques enable leaders to meet this most basic human yearning of people. Using constructive communication and persuasion skills saves time and effort, encourages cooperation, and reduces stress and friction. These skills are invaluable in handling and preventing crisis situations, fostering self-esteem, generating mutual respect, increasing productivity, and enriching relationships.

Planning the Total Message

Because communication is such a vital element of your personal and organizational success, take time to plan how you will deliver important messages to the members of your team. Effective planning considers the total message: content, method for delivery, and accommodation of the message to the unique personality of the receiver.

Be sure your thoughts are clearly presented, your reasoning is logical, and the message is complete. Check for unsupported assumptions or skipped steps in the reasoning process. If your own thinking is unclear, the content of your message will be unclear or confusing to the receiver. If you cannot crystallize your message, you may need to ask instead for information or a problem-solving discussion.

Adapt each message to the personality of the receiver. Knowledge of team members and your past experiences with them provide clues to the best structure for each particular message. Consider personal feelings, attitudes, and what may be occupying their attention when you attempt to communicate. All these factors affect how the individual is likely to respond; they strongly influence the manner in which you present your message.

Choose the words, rate of speaking, body movements, and the type of questions you ask to fit into the style of the person with whom you are communicating. Be willing to adapt your own communication style to the style of your listener. By doing so, you demonstrate basic concern for the needs of others and your desire to accomplish the goal at hand.



Environmental factors affect how the message is transmitted or received. Plan communication to minimize potential obstacles. For example, conduct complex, important communication away from noisy areas or excessive heat or cold. A paved parking lot in the middle of a hot summer day, for instance, is a poor choice of location for delivering any message other than a greeting or a quick, “Call me this afternoon, please.”

Both the meanings and the emotional impact of words, phrases, and other references are perceived differently by people with different experiences. Choose expressions that carry no emotional overtones that might cause ambiguous interpretations.

Be sure that the method you choose is the best one for the message you wish to send. Some communication is effective when verbal, either face-to-face or by telephone, while communicating in writing is better for other types of messages.

Listening for the Total Message

When you ask a question, listen creatively to the answer. Become an expert in listening not only to the words themselves, but to the manner of delivery as well as to what is not said. Observe and evaluate body language, emotion, attitudes, and other external or internal factors.

An obstacle to effective listening is that you can think faster than someone can talk. Most people speak at approximately 125 words per minute, but you can easily think at the rate of 400 to 600 words per minute. Use the extra time to organize and analyze what you hear and to consider cause-and-effect relationships.

Avoid selective listening – hearing only what pleases or fits into preconceived ideas. Listen with an open mind; resist any tendency to overreact. Making snap judgments or losing control of emotions, especially before you hear the entire message, destroys mutual understanding and cooperation. Control nonverbal behavior. Maintain comfortable eye contact and pay close attention to let others know you care about what they say.

Your skill in asking questions and listening attentively creates a climate of open communication in which team members feel that they have something valuable to offer, that there is much to learn, and that everyone shares common goals. As your verbal and listening skills improve, you improve your ability to get results through people.

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Improve Your Decision Making Skills

Success as a manager depends upon accepting your responsibility as a leader. To function effectively as a leader, you must make some choices about your role within the organization, your priorities as a manager, and the values by which you live. You must know who you are, both personally and as part of the whole organization. Without such self-knowledge, it is difficult to make good decisions and take action on them. Successful management grows out of a consistent and constructive attitude toward other people and how they should be treated.

The Manager as Decision Maker

When you make good decisions, you influence morale, overcome obstacles, solve problems, and increase productivity. You select among various options. You create opportunities. You often make one decision after another from the time you arrive at work until you leave at the end of the day. Even while you sleep, your subconscious mind, like a high speed computer, sorts data, arranges facts, rejects and accepts possibilities, and arrives at decisions that you will make “instinctively” the following day. Under pressure, your mind works rapidly to sort and analyze the information you need to make an immediate decision in a crisis situation.

Many of the decisions you make every day can be made quickly and efficiently with little conscious effort. Your former experience, the knowledge you have about the organization and the people in it, and many other factors have produced habit patterns that enable you to decide immediately what should be done in specific situations. Occasionally, however, a much more important decision must be made. Because it will have far-reaching effects on the success of the organization, the lives of individuals, and the productivity of your team, you realize that it is important to make the best possible decision.

Good decision making follows a precise pattern. For relatively routine decisions, the pattern may be followed

mentally in a matter of seconds. An associate may ask, “Who needs to receive copies of this schedule?” You can make an instant decision because you already know who and what are affected. For major decisions, however, each step in the process may involve time, thought, research, and analysis. Six basic steps lead to good decisions:

- ◆ Define desired results. Determine the purpose you want to achieve and list the criteria by which you will judge the effectiveness of the results. Criteria that must be met might include cost considerations, time limits, and quality. All further steps in the process will conform to these criteria.

- ◆ List options. Brainstorm a list of possible decisions that might achieve the desired results. Be creative. Write out the list of possible decisions.

- ◆ Project possible results. For each option, determine the results you could anticipate. For important decisions, make a chart. List the options down the left-hand column; add a column for each of the criteria you developed in Step 1. Rate each option on expected performance in regard to all criteria.

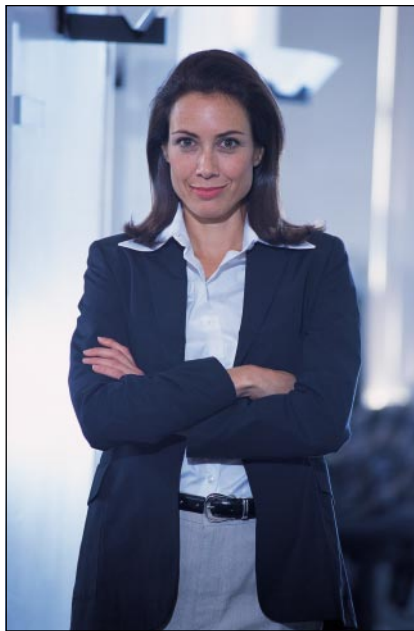
- ◆ Request feedback. Request feedback from affected team members. Remain open to their ideas, basing your judgment on the merit of the feedback rather than the personalities involved.

- ◆ Choose the best option. Make your choice with confidence. You have thoroughly studied your options, you have exercised your creativity and experience, and you have tapped the expertise of your team members. You are ready to move forward.

- ◆ Implement the decision and request feedback. Once you have chosen the best option, immediately implement it. If necessary, develop a written plan for taking action. Tell

everyone affected what decision has been made. Be sure to include in the action plan a provision for tracking results and making any adjustments needed.

In conclusion, when facing even the most weighty decisions, “common sense,” or practical judgment, plays an important role. Common sense involves the capacity to see the big picture, to be realistic and reasonable, and to use sound judgment. Common sense involves the ability to set priorities and to put first things first.



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Success Transformation

By Bill Moyer

The road to success is to completely and intentionally transform yourself from the person that you are today to the person that you are called to become. This success journey means risking the success that you already have and moving toward the impossible. The power to make the impossible happen has nothing to do with authority or influence. It has nothing to do with competence. Authority is bestowed on you by others and therefore can be taken away. Influence is based on current relationships that can change through outside circumstances. Competence is earned by producing results, but can be lost the moment you stop producing. Only the power of personal responsibility for making the impossible happen is permanent and within your control.

Success transformation requires you to become an expert in being, rather than in doing. You must transform your way of being by creating a new way in which you relate to

the world. This new way in which you view the world changes your current reality from the limited view of possibility thinking to the unlimited view of impossibility thinking. Developing a winning life strategy demands a total commitment to lifelong learning. The world is constantly changing. You must be “sold out” to the concept of changing

who you are and who you are becoming.

What is the desired outcome of your life? What do you believe in your heart will make you feel fulfilled? This most cherished dream may also represent your worst nightmare. It serves as a constant reminder of the “failure” that we often see in our lives. We view this dream as an impossibility in our lives and settle for our current reality. The power of goal setting can set us on a path of making the impossibility of our dreams a possibility.

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– Bill Moyer



As you master the skills of goal setting, the possibilities become probabilities and the probabilities become reality. Goal setting at its very essence does require risk. You must be willing to move forward with no guarantee that you will succeed. Samurai warriors used to call

this “dying before going into battle.” Success transformation means accepting three basic facts:

- ❖ Life doesn’t turn out the way it “should”
- ❖ Life doesn’t turn out the way it “shouldn’t”
- ❖ Life turns out the way it “does”

When you accept these facts of life, you are free to make the choices that are necessary to empower yourself to build the kind of life that you want and that you deserve.

Develop a dream list for your life. Set goals to turn these impossible dreams into reality. Commit to a system of lifelong learning and transform your life into the impossible success that is yours to seize!

Finding New Frontiers to Conquer

Once you have tasted the joys inherent in realizing your full potential, in developing personal leadership, and in savoring the rewards of success, you will never be satisfied to slip back into the brooding gloom of mediocrity. You will continue to grow and to explore new possibilities. You will push on past the horizon of today’s vision with eager anticipation of finding new frontiers and new worlds to conquer. There is never a need to share the experience of Alexander the Great, who, it is said, wept because “there are no more worlds to conquer.”

Attitudes Toward Planning and Goal Setting

Because actions come from attitudes, increasing productivity may require reshaping some of the attitudes that now dictate how you use time. Consider these time use practices that affect productivity and see how attitudes are involved:

▲ **Concentrate on high priority activities.** The quickest and most effective route to increasing productivity is to spend time on tasks that advance important goals. Make certain you spend your time on work that really matters; otherwise, you may be completely consumed by trivial details. Hours may be spent solving problems that can be solved by others. Respond to concerns expressed by various team members through empowering them to solve their own problems. This approach saves you valuable time and gives others the opportunity to develop commitment, a sense of ownership, and skill to solve significant problems. Help others spend their time on their high priority activities, and concentrate your time and effort on high priority activities that lead to the achievement of your goals.



▲ **Exercise self-discipline.** Self-discipline enables people to stay focused on a task and work on it until it is complete. Establish your priorities and then refuse to let distractions, interruptions, or happenings of the moment destroy your concentration. Discipline yourself to give tasks only the amount of time and effort they truly deserve from you, or delegate them to other appropriate team members. Either alternative requires thoughtful evaluation and consideration – and conscientious self-discipline. Perfectionists especially must learn to exert the self-discipline to delegate selected jobs to someone else who may not do the job quite as well as they would but who can still meet essential quality standards. How else will another learn to perform this job? In such cases, perfectionists must learn to accept less than perfection in the interest of increasing the contributions of others, creating new opportunities, and maintaining overall effectiveness and productivity.

▲ **Be persistent.** Careful planning and goal setting, determination to achieve, and recognizing the benefits of reaching a goal are all vital to personal productivity. This combination of factors enables one to be persistent, and persistence is always characteristic of the successful

individual. Many people eagerly take on new jobs, new responsibilities, and new assignments, starting with a great splash and making quick progress, but they soon lose momentum, never finishing the job. In contrast, productive people set definite goals, plan carefully, and concentrate their attention on the action required to meet each goal. Persistent individuals keep their goal in mind and work tenaciously toward it until they savor the success of achieving it.

▲ **Get started!** The best way to guarantee completion of a project is to get started on it – now! Two reasons account for failure to accomplish important jobs – people either never start, or they never finish. Both of these unproductive time patterns fall under the debilitating umbrella of procrastination. Several patterns of faulty thinking account for most procrastination. Following these guidelines will enable you to avoid these pitfalls:

- Begin on required work and continue without relying on “feeling like it.” Getting started is often the most difficult part of a project; once begun, “inspiration” often follows. Thomas Edison, the famous American inventor, put it well when he said, “Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration.”

- Face the fact that some jobs will never be “easy” – now or later. Break the job down into logical steps to make it more manageable at each stage. Get started on the job, working in a systematic method, and you will enjoy a sense of mastery that enables you to complete the job!

▲ **Strive for results – not perfection.** Overemphasis on perfection nearly always renders negative consequences – immobilizing fear of making mistakes, discouragement, and preoccupation with what others think rather than genuine productivity. Productive people distinguish between what is important and what is not. They set aside a reasonable amount of time to accomplish a specific task; then they stick to their deadline. They recognize some tasks simply are not important enough to lavish too much time or effort on them. Even on genuinely significant projects truly productive individuals simply strive for results – not perfection.

The goal-setting process offers the most effective method for putting into practice time patterns that produce results. Goal setting enables you to identify the accomplishments most important to you, to establish priorities, and to put into action the steps required to reach your goals.

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