

The Top 10 Traits of Highly Successful People

We have all read about people who are successful briefly. They win a gold medal, make a fortune, or star in one great movie... and then disappear. Or, there are those like Marilyn Monroe and Howard Hughes who achieve extraordinary success, at the cost of their own lives. These examples do not inspire me!

My focus and fascination is with people who seem to do well in many areas of life, and do it over and over through a lifetime. In entertainment, I think of Paul Newman and Bill Cosby. In business, I think of Ben and Jerry (the ice cream moguls), and a local business owner who is famous for the money he's given to children's charities. As a Naval Officer, husband, businessman, politician and now as a mediator and philanthropist on the world stage, Jimmy Carter has had a remarkable life.

We all know examples of people who go from one success to another. These are the people who inspire me! I've studied them, and I've noticed they have the following traits in common:

1. They work hard! Yes, they play hard, too!

They get up early, they rarely complain, they expect performance from others, but they expect extraordinary performance from themselves. Repeated, high-level success starts with a recognition that hard work pays off.

2. They are incredibly curious and eager to learn.

They study, ask questions and read - constantly! An interesting point, however: While most of them did well in school, the difference is that they apply or take advantage of what they learn. Repeated success is not about memorizing facts, it's about being able to take information and create, build, or apply it in new and important ways. Successful people want to learn everything about everything!

3. They network extraordinarily well.

They know lots of people, and they know lots of different kinds of people. They listen to friends, neighbors, co-workers and bartenders. They don't have to be 'the life of the party,' in fact many are quiet, even shy, but they value people and they value relationships. Successful people have a rolodex full of people who value their friendship and return their calls.

4. They work on themselves and never quit!

While the 'over-night wonders' become arrogant and quickly disappear. Really successful people work on their personality, their leadership skills, management skills, and every other detail of life. When a relationship or business deal goes sour, they assume they can learn from it and they expect to do better next time. Successful people don't tolerate flaws; they fix them!

5. They are extraordinarily creative.

They go around asking, 'Why not?' They see new combinations, new possibilities, new opportunities and challenges where others see problems or limitations. They wake up in the middle of the night yelling, 'I've got it!' They ask for advice, try things out, consult experts and amateurs, always looking for a better, faster, cheaper solution. Successful people create stuff!

6. They are self-reliant and take responsibility.

Incredibly successful people don't worry about blame, and they don't waste time complaining. They make decisions and move on. Sometimes they are criticized for taking this to extremes - Jimmy Carter carried his own briefcase and a President 'shouldn't' do that! Extremely successful people take the initiative and accept the responsibilities of success.

7. They are usually relaxed and keep their sense of perspective.

Even in times of stress or turmoil, highly successful people keep their balance; they know the value of timing, humor, and patience. They rarely panic or make decisions on impulse. Unusually successful people breathe easily, ask the right questions, and make sound decisions, even in a crisis.

8. Extremely successful people have a gift for living in the present moment.

They know that 'Now' is the only time they can control. They have a 'gift' for looking people in the eye, listening to what is being said, enjoying a meal or fine wine, music or playing with a child. They never seem rushed, and they get a lot done! They take full advantage of each day. Successful people don't waste time, they use it!

9. Living in the present gives them a unique ability to 'look over the horizon' and see the future.

They observe trends, notice changes, see shifts, and hear the nuances that others miss. A basketball player wearing Nikes is trivial, the neighbor kid wearing them is interesting, your own teenager demanding them is an investment opportunity! Extremely successful people live in the present, with one eye on the future!

10. Repeatedly successful people respond instantly!

When an investment isn't working out, they sell. When they see an opportunity, they make the call. If an important relationship is cooling down, they take time to renew it. When technology or a new competitor or a change in the economic situation requires an adjustment, they are the first and quickest to respond. These traits work together in combination, giving repeatedly successful people a huge advantage. Because they are insatiable learners, they can respond wisely to change. Because their personal relationships are strong, they have good advisors and a reserve of goodwill when things go bad. And finally, none of these traits are genetic!

They can be learned! They are free and they are skills you can use. Start now!

This piece was originally submitted by Dr Philip E. Humbert