



The Success Formula
Success = Results Delivered X Fulfillment Lived

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My professional purpose is clear – I am hired to coach people and organizations to achieve their highest potential in terms of success. Having facilitated this quest for several different organizations and individuals, I've realized that the overall process of success can be summarized by one formula:

$$\text{Success} = \text{Results Delivered} \times \text{Fulfillment Lived}$$

The first variable in the equation – *results delivered* – is obvious to most: to achieve true success, concrete and tangible results must be delivered: the corporation must post higher profits; the executive given the promotion; the Olympic athlete awarded the gold medal.

The other variable in the equation – *fulfillment lived* – is more fleeting in nature. It is challenging to identify those intangible elements that bring fulfillment to an organization or an individual. However, this variable is a multiplier, so there is a measurable value to engaging in "pragmatic imagination," or the act of giving a concrete definition to these fleeting, intangible (or so-called "soft") outcomes of success.

Let me use the example of an accomplished athlete who dreams of an Olympic gold medal. The recipe to deliver the result variable in our equation is straightforward: do whatever it takes to win – advanced training, increased strengthening, experience with world-class competition, etc. But let's imagine our athlete wants to go beyond these obvious results. Along with acknowledging the hard work required, she clearly identifies other elements of her long-term success. In that frame of mind, she chooses "life-long pride" as a critical factor of fulfillment that will enhance the value of the tangible results found in winning the gold medal. This act of consciously defining the full scope of what constitutes true success will enhance her quest for success. To explain a little bit further, if her focus were strictly to deliver the result of winning the gold medal, then taking illegal performance-enhancing drugs could be a viable and justifiable option for this athlete. Once "life-long pride" is identified as the critical multiplier within the success equation, doping is no longer an option.

There are two challenges to completing the "success formula". First, one needs to broaden his or her understanding of what constitutes true success. In our fast-paced world, the quest for success, both by individuals and organizations, is often fuelled by the pursuit of ready-made, easily identifiable but incomplete results, which lead to unfulfilling success, or even failure within the realm of the bigger picture.

The second challenge is to be able to conceive or envision the fulfillment part of the equation – to make the abstract components of success tangible and definable. Let's go back to our athlete. One of her challenges is to make tangible a somewhat subjective component called "life-long pride." To conceive the fulfillment side of her success, she could imagine the pride she will experience during presentations to school children and aspiring young athletes, to envision her impact on these thousands of children and youth by sharing the story of her quest. Our athlete can go a step further to keep herself on track by periodically evaluating how much pride she feels in her progression toward success.

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The process of seeking greater success is a courageous act of self-transformation. To achieve better results, individuals and organizations must change the way things are traditionally done. As difficult as change can be, our day-to-day actions are always defined by the end result we envision. The act of defining the fulfillment variable in the success formula is not a license to avoid the hard work required to deliver results. On the contrary, it involves sustained awareness, purpose and discipline leading to more efficient and effective actions. So, get out of your comfort zone and address both variables in the success formula. Take the time to identify the complete picture of what success will mean for you, or for your organization. The time and effort invested will be well worth it.