Year to Success

The complete course on success, including lessons, quotes, success biographies, and action steps, designed to help you achieve the level of success you deserve.

When it comes to success, there are no shortcuts.

Bo Bennett, PhD

Year To Success

Written By

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www.YearToSuccess.com

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First Edition: 2004
Last updated: October 26, 2018

Published for the Internet by eBookIt.com
http://www.eBookIt.com

ISBN-13: 978-1-4566-0003-7

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To my mother, who always knew I would make it, but didn't live long enough to see that she was right. I love you mom.

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About the Author

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my mother, Sandy Bennett, who was a great salesperson and a loving and caring individual. I would like to thank my father, Bob Bennett, for allowing me to work beside him while growing up. I would like to thank my brother, Stephen Bennett, for showing me how even dramatic changes in people are possible, and my sister, Debbie Lanese, for teaching me so many of life's valuable lessons and being there for me at a time when I needed her most.

I would like to give thanks and recognition to the many authors who have inspired me throughout the years. The authors who have most influenced my own success philosophy outlined in this book are (in alphabetical order) *Dale Carnegie, Napoleon Hill, Anthony Robbins, Denis Waitley,* and *Zig Ziglar*. I strongly recommend books and/or audio programs by any of these authors.

Most of all, I would like to thank my wife, Kimberly Bennett, and my two children, Annabelle and Trebor, for their support, encouragement, and inspiration. Thank you.

10 Year Anniversary Edition

I can't believe it has been ten years since I published the first edition of *Year To Success*. Much has changed in my life. I am ten years older and wiser, and I can honestly say that my sense of well-being is even greater today then when I wrote *Year To Success*. Despite how much I might have changed, the central thesis behind this book remains rock solid—success is best achieved by working on many aspects of personal development. I would be lying if I said that I still agree with everything I wrote in the first edition, and this, I feel requires some explanation.

Within the last ten years, I have had the luxury of focusing on interests outside of business. I spent years independently studying philosophy and religion, then I went back to school and earned a Master's degree in general psychology, and then a PhD in social psychology. I questioned my beliefs held since childhood and began to understand life from a new perspective—a *humanistic* perspective grounded in science and reason. Now, as a social scientist, I understand far more about the human mind and the importance of evidence. As a *humanist*, I understand the need and desire for that which cannot be measured scientifically. In this edition, I have rewritten some of the sections to be consistent with scientific findings, or have made it more clear when I am making statements from personal experience.

My focus these days is more on promoting *well-being* than success. Well-being is a measurable construct that is less nebulous than success and more comprehensive. In day one, I expand on this idea of well-being with the hopes that readers will incorporate it into their definition of success.

I hope you, the reader, will see these changes as a "upgrade" and not the reflection of a character flaw. As learning beings, we must be open to change our beliefs and views based on new information. This edition is not just the result of ten years of new information, but a far deeper understanding of principles, as well.

- Bo Bennett, April 2015

Introduction

The meaning of this book.

Have you been promised success if you follow a few quick and dirty "rules" or "secrets" of success? Are you tired of irrelevant analogies that do nothing for you but make you feel inadequate? Have you had enough of highly metaphysical concepts and not enough practical solutions? Have you had your fill of grossly exaggerated claims that try to trick you into thinking success is easy? Are you all "affirmationed" out? You are not alone.

Think of success as a game of chance in which you have control over the odds. As you begin to master concepts in personal achievement, you are increasing your odds of achieving success. *Year To Success* is a full year course in success, designed to be a practical guide to achieving your definition of success. Each day of this course will, through practical application, increase your odds of achieving success. It has been said that one line of wisdom can change your life more than volumes of books. Imagine what hundreds of pages of wisdom can do.

Why this book is different.

Year To Success is perhaps the most complete book on success ever written. It uses my "formula" for success: ***education + inspiration + action = success***. *Education:* each week starts off with two educational lessons and ends with two more educational lessons. *Inspiration:* the third day of the week is a success biography on someone I believe is one of the most successful people in history. These success biographies are full of inspiration to help keep your flame for success burning on high. *Action:* each of the educational articles has one or more action steps associated with it. Taking action is what this book is all about. It is doing the action steps that bring you closer to success.

How to use this book.

This book can be read from cover to cover, or by jumping around from topic to topic, depending on what interests you most on a particular day. However, *Year To Success* was created as a one-

year course in success with a total of 366 days (just to make sure we are covered with leap year). Most people start Day 1 on a Monday, so the two days of "R&R" (review and reflection) fall on the weekend. However, you can start on any day of the year you wish. You may choose to read through the book the first time as you would any other book, skipping the action steps, then beginning the course by reading one lesson a day and completing the action steps. To get the most out of this book, just be sure to actually do the action steps associated with each educational lesson.

I suggest you get yourself a "success journal" for this course. This can be any notebook or electronic document where you keep all of your written action steps organized and centralized.

Why I wrote this book.

Since age 10, I have been fascinated with success and personal achievement. What makes some people achieve so much and others so little? This question continued to burn inside of me until I decided to commit my full attention to organizing my more than 30 years of research and experience into one complete collection that offered individuals a realistic approach to achieving success.

As a father, I wanted to put what I have learned in writing for my kids, for a time when they are old enough to understand the meaning behind the words. We never know when our time is up on this earth and I may not be around to share this essential information with them.

Why I waited 21 years to write this book.

The last thing I wanted to be was a successful author who became successful by selling books on success. Although I achieved financial success many years ago, it was not until recently that I began to discover how important personal development and personal achievement is in true success. I needed to first put my theories to the test before I shared these ideas with others.

My writing style.

When it comes to the English language, perfection is in the eye of the beholder, and it also depends on what century you're living in. I don't use words like "thither" and I don't mind ending a sentence with a preposition now and then (I paraphrase Sir Winston Churchill when I say that not ending a sentence with a preposition "is a rule up with which I will not put"). Even the God of the Bible ends sentences with prepositions: "Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" Genesis 3:10–12.

I have a casual style of writing that is meant to be more like I am speaking directly to you. My goal is to reach as many people as possible, not to impress a select few with my perfect grammar (which I don't have anyway). My professionalism should be apparent in the content itself. Communication is about being effective, not always about being proper.

Religion / God.

To some people, religion and God are very important aspects of success, and to others, they are not. I leave this to the reader and avoid the issue whenever possible. However, I believe that one's dependence on an outside force (God, the universe, lady luck, etc.) to bring one success will ultimately lead to failure. It reminds me of the story of the priest that prayed every day to win the lottery, then after 10 years the priest lost faith and starting cursing God saying, "Why God? I have devoted my life to serving you. Why will you not grant me this one wish?" Then, a loud booming voice came from the sky and said, "Priest, meet me half way. Buy a ticket!"

The whole he/she/his/hers issue.

I really wish someone of authority, like Mr. Webster or one of his offspring, would come up with a singular pronoun that was gender independent like "shis" for his or her. Until that time, we writers must play the "do not offend anyone" game and use the sometimes confusing "they," play switch-aroo and change genders, and/or use the "s/he" slash thing which you will never see me do.

I resort to both the "they" solution and the switching of genders just because this is what helps my writing flow. So I apologize in advance for offending the males when I use a feminine pronoun, the females when I use a masculine pronoun, and my fifth grade

English teacher when using plural pronouns when a singular is expected.

Why I chose the people I did for the success biographies.

The 52 success biographies in this course were chosen based on a number of factors.

- they all have very inspiring stories
- they are/were all tremendously successful at what they set out to do
- information could be confirmed by several sources
- they are people who have touched the lives of the majority of Y2S readers in some way

I would be the first to admit, that none of these people are perfect. After all, who is? I am sure anyone can dig up dirt on any one of these people. My success biographies focus on the positive contributions the person made to the world, not their faults. Get inspiration from how they mastered principles of success, and leave the dirt behind.

Offending material.

With over 250 lessons, I would be surprised if you didn't get offended by at least something I've written! If I attempted to make each lesson neutral and not offend anyone, I would have to leave out all humor, and I would not be able to communicate the true message. Trying to please everyone all the time is a recipe for failure. I apologize if you are offended in any way by one of my ideas, beliefs, or attempts at humor. Please accept my apology, and continue with the next day. I certainly do not ask that you accept all of my beliefs, but I ask that you accept my opinion (I hope that didn't offend you!)

Day 1: Why Success?

As humans, we are all driven by an inner desire to feel important. That is, we all want to know that our lives make a difference in a positive way. We want to know that in some way, the world is a better place because we are part of it. Success is another way of saying that we are doing just that.

Many people aspire to nothing more than going through a day's work and catching the game on the sports channel before passing out on the couch, while others spend 18 hour days in the emergency room saving lives, create works of art that touch the lives of millions, or donate hospitals to cities. Those who do not desire success will rarely achieve it. You must be ready for it and pursue it with a passion.

The definition of success is personal to each one of us. However, most people include the following in their definition of success:

- living your dream
- living every day with passion
- having true wealth; that is, knowing you have more than you need
- learning appreciation and gratitude
- positively influencing the lives of others in some way
- true happiness
- having loved ones with whom to share it all

Decades of research into what makes people flourish (another word for succeed) has resulted in the development of positive psychologist Martin Seligman's *Well-being theory* and its five dimensions: *positive emotion*, *engagement*, *relationships*, *achievement*, and *meaning/purpose* (PERMA). When thinking about your definition of success, I encourage you to consider each dimension and how you can incorporate it into your definition of success.

If you are currently only interested in financial gain, and that alone is your definition of success, that is fine. No matter what your definition and ultimate goal, pursue it with passion and determination. However, a word of caution: with the pursuit of money alone, you will find that once you have it, there is still very much missing in your life.

Today **is** the first day of the rest of your life and more important, day one of a series of 366 days that will have a significantly positive influence on your life. Mark this day as the day you made a commitment to change your life for the better and start embracing life rather than just living it.

ACTION STEP(S):

1) Take time to write down your definition of success. Be specific. Do not use phrases like "lots of money"... instead say "annual income of X and total net worth of Y." You must be able to know for certain when you reach your definition of success, at least your definition at the start of this program. Write this down and save it somewhere where you can access it one year from now.

"Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

- Calvin Coolidge (1872–1933)

Day 2: Remembering and Using People's Names

It has been said that a person's name is the most important word in the world to that person. Using a person's name in conversation is one of the best ways to build rapport. Sounds good, but if you are like most people, the names of people you meet go in one ear and out the other. So step one is remembering the name. First, however, a memory primer.

Memory works by processes called *encoding* and *decoding*. We encode information which is stored in our memories, then we decode the memory—a process more commonly referred to as *recall***.** Each time a memory is recalled, it gets re-encoded, meaning the memory can change (and often does) over time. The analogy that memory is like a video recorder is not a good one. A better analogy is that memory is like a Xerox copying machine where the accuracy of the copy is reduced as more copies are made.

There are dozens of techniques for remembering names; some work for some people and some do not. For this reason, I am listing many of them for you to choose the one that works best for you. You may want to adapt a few techniques rather than just one. For example, use a visual technique for those you meet face to face, and when they tell you the names of their children, use an association technique to associate the person you met with their children's names. The key again is to use what works best for you.

Here are some steps that should all be followed each time you meet someone:

1) **LISTEN AND PAY ATTENTION TO THE NAME.** This may seem so obvious, yet it is so overlooked. Pay attention to the name when it is given to you and make sure you can recall it 5 seconds later. If you can, you are halfway to putting this name in your long-term memory.

2) **Repeat immediately.** The first sentence out of your mouth after hearing a name should include that name. "It is a pleasure to meet you, Jennie." Use this instead of "Jennie, it is nice to meet you" because saying the person's name right after they say it is often a mindless automated response that does very little, if anything, toward helping you remember the name.

3) **Repeat often.** Be careful with this one. You do not want to sound like a psycho, or worse a pushy salesperson, by overdoing it. However, people love to hear their own name and this technique will keep your listener interested in what you have to say.

4) **End the conversation with the person's name.** This is the best way to end any conversation. "Jennie, it was great meeting you." This not only once more sinks their name into your memory, but says to the person that you have cared enough to remember their name.

5) **Comment on and/or ask questions about the name.** "Jennie, have you always been called Jennie or do people call you Jen as well?" or "Do you spell Jennie with a 'y' or 'ie'?" If it is a unique name, ask about its origin or say that it is a beautiful name (if you really think it is).

6) **Review.** After the conversation is over with the person, review their name and face in your mind several times. Do this frequently over the next 24 hours. As you get better with steps 1-5, this step will become less important.

Memory is linked to your senses and emotions. As you incorporate more emotion and more of your senses into remembering a name, the name will become more difficult to forget.

Now here are some techniques used to remember names:

1) **Face association.** Examine a person's face discreetly when you are introduced. Try to find an unusual feature, whether ears, hairline, forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, mouth, chin, complexion, etc. Create an association between that characteristic, the face, and the name in your mind. The association may be to associate the person with someone you know with the same name, or may be to associate a rhyme or image from the name with the person's face or defining feature.

2) **Substitution.** Take a person's name and substitute objects that you can visualize with that name. Then associate those objects with the person somehow. For example, "Murphy" can be substituted with "Murphy's oil soap." Visualize the person pouring the soap all over himself while dancing the jig. Why dancing the jig? The more outrageous you make the visualization, the better it will stick to memory. Just try not to laugh when making the association, especially if the person is in the process of telling you they have just been fired.

3) **Paint their name on their forehead.** Not literally, of course, but in your imagination. Use your favorite color paint and clearly see each letter as you paint it. If you are standing closer than a few feet from the person, do not look directly at their forehead but rather between their eyes.

4) **Association with someone you know.** Associate the person you meet with someone you know or know of with the same name. Then visualize the person you know in the same situation as the person you have met. For example, if you meet a "Will" picture your Uncle Will (assuming you have an Uncle Will) standing there, in that same spot. To make the association stronger, visualize your uncle Will doing something that he is known for doing—like his loud drunken laugh.

If you forget the person's name at any time during the conversation, THIS IS THE TIME TO ASK. Do not be embarrassed to say something like, "Forgive me but I've forgotten your name…" or "I am sorry, what was your name again?" Remember that most people forget names. Those who make it a point to humble themselves and ask for a name again are seen as someone who cares about learning the name.

The more you practice these techniques, the more second nature they will become and remembering names will be an automatic process for you. Using names in conversation will take you a long way in building and maintaining rapport, as well as helping others to both remember you and like you. You will soon find that remembering names becomes a game and it is really quite fun, not to mention a great skill that anyone can possess!

ACTION STEP(S):

1) Go through a magazine and learn the names of all the people for which there are photos and names. It is best to use a magazine that does not have many movie stars or famous people whose names you already know. Or if you prefer go through your friend's/spouse's high school yearbook and do the same. Remember the names (first name only is fine) of at least 50 people.

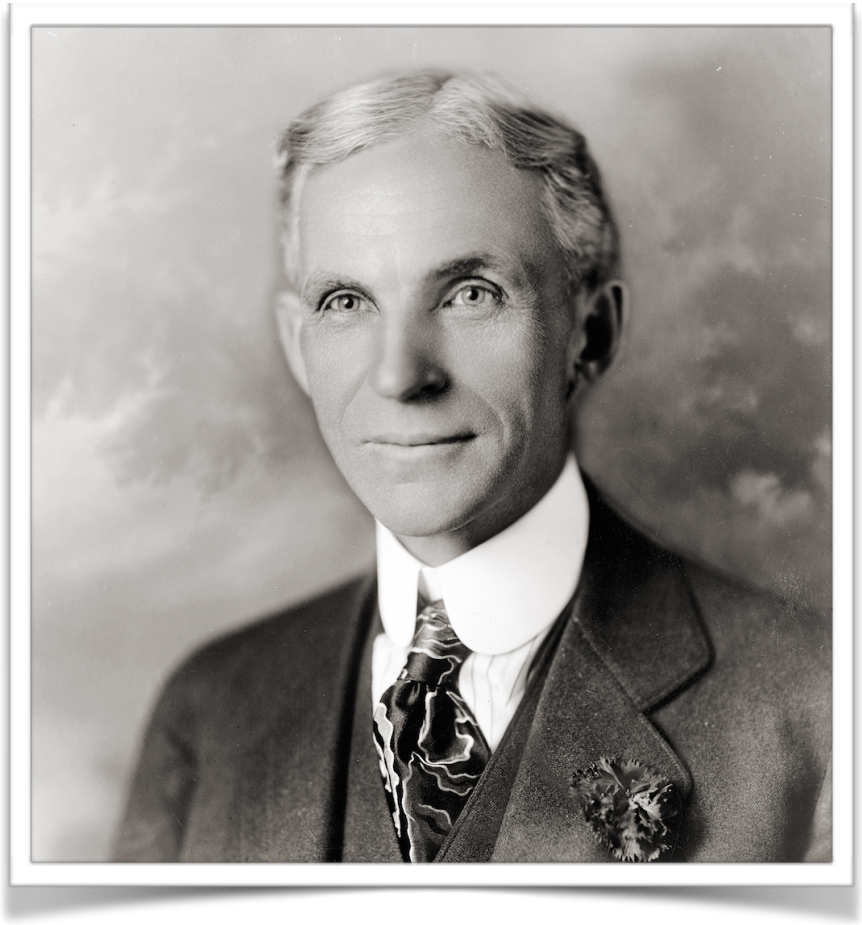
2) Commit yourself to remembering the names of all the characters introduced in movies you watch.

3) Make your best effort to remember the name of every new person you meet, simply because it makes the other person feel special and important.

"The secret of a good memory is attention, and attention to a subject depends upon our interest in it. We rarely forget that which has made a deep impression on our minds."

- Tryon Edwards (1809–1894)

Day 3: Inspiration from Henry Ford



Henry Ford (1863–1947) was the founder, vice-president, and chief engineer of the Ford Motor Company.

Success is age independent. Henry Ford constructed his first steam engine at the age of 15.

Success is not formal education. Ford's formal education was limited to what is rumored to be about three years.

Success is fueled by failure. After two unsuccessful attempts to establish a company to manufacture automobiles, the Ford Motor Company was incorporated in 1903 with Henry Ford as vice-president and chief engineer.

Success is problem solving. By early 1914, Ford's innovative assembly line had resulted in a monthly labor turnover of 40 to 60 percent in his factory, largely because of the unpleasant monotony of assembly-line work and repeated increases in the production quotas assigned to workers. Ford met this difficulty by doubling the daily wage to $5 and shaving one hour off the workday.

Success is overcoming competition. In 1905, there were 50 start-up companies a year trying to get into the auto business, and Ford succeeded.

Success is doing what you feel in your gut is right, despite public opinion. The Wall Street Journal called Ford's daily wage increase plan "an economic crime," and critics everywhere heaped "Fordism" with equal scorn.

Success is seeking out those who can help you with your goals. In 1903, Ford found twelve people willing to invest a total of $28,000 in another motor company. Ford was then able to begin production of the Model A car. The car sold well and the company flourished and by 1907 the profits reached $1,100,000. In 1909, Ford made the decision to manufacture only one type of car, the Model T, which changed automotive history forever.

[Sources: http://www.hfmgv.org, http://www.biography.com]

"If you think you can do a thing or think you can't do a thing, you're right."

- Henry Ford (1863–1947)

Day 4: General Life Purpose

What is your general purpose here on the earth? Does your existence make the world a better place? Consider the statements below and think about where you currently fit in. There is no right or wrong answer.

1) I am here to live the highest quality life I can. This includes working toward constant self-improvement and engaging in leisure activities such as golf and fishing. My time on this earth is limited and I will do what I can to get the most self-gratification possible.

2) It is my purpose to provide for my family and give my family the highest quality of life possible. My "free" time should be spent with my family, for my family.

3) My purpose on this earth is to do as much good for as many people as possible within my lifetime. I realize that there is a world beyond myself and my family that needs something that I can provide.

Don't confuse general life purpose with just "life purpose." General life purpose is a starting point for determining your life purpose that helps you decide who and what is most important in your life right now.

See this as a scale with your typical self-centered individual on one end and someone like Gandhi on the other end. Where do you now see yourself on this scale? Would you like to be somewhere else on the scale? Before you blurt out an answer somewhere near a Gandhi, be realistic and consider the sacrifices and lifestyle of each step in the scale. Consider what is "socially acceptable" and if you are willing to defy social boundaries by living your life differently than most. If you are a family-oriented person and you wish to shift more to #1 or #3, how will your family react? Will they support you? What if they don't?

This exercise in finding your general life purpose is one of the many very important first steps to success. You must be at peace with yourself and feel no guilt as to what you desire from life. Once you have this confidence, the pursuit of your goals becomes easier and more enjoyable.

ACTION STEP(S):

1) Decide what people or groups of people you want to spend your life (or at least this part of your life) benefiting. Be honest with yourself. Write down in a paragraph who will benefit from your life purpose.

2) Now write down the reasons why you are focusing where you are on the scale. For example, if you are 16 years old and your current life purpose is to have fun and do all you can while you are young, then add that as a reason. If you are just starting a family and your focus is on your family, you might put down that your family needs you most at this time in your life. Or if you have been there, done that, and feel it is time to give back to the world, list that as a reason. The goal is to remove any guilt you might otherwise feel by not focusing on your own needs, your family's, or those less fortunate.

3) If you have a significant other in your life, be sure to discuss this with them. A relationship is a partnership and both parties must be in agreement on expectations. After your discussion, alter your purpose if necessary and/or your relationship.

"Many persons have a wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification but through fidelity to a worthy purpose."

- Helen Keller (1880–1968)

Day 5: Positive Mental Attitude

One of the few things we have a great sense of control over is our attitude. When faced with adversity, we can choose to focus on the negative in the situation or the positive. A positive mental attitude, or PMA, is something everyone can adopt with a little practice. The benefits of a PMA are beyond comprehension, and according to many achievers, a significant factor in their success.

A positive mental attitude is seeing the benefits, opportunities, and good in situations rather than the setbacks, problems, and bad. More important, it is focusing on this positive and using it to your advantage. Having a PMA is asking how something can be done rather than saying it can't be done. It is the driving force behind persistence and perseverance.

There is a belief that nothing in this world is "good" or "bad," but rather everything is balanced and it is only our perception that makes good and bad. Whether you believe that to be true or not, it is hard to debate that perception and attitude have much to do with how we view the world.

Shortly after adopting a positive mental attitude you will find more opportunities, successes, and "good luck" in your life than ever before. The main reason for this is not some mystical force, but has to do with focus and perception. PMA is a snowball effect that, once begun, builds and grows stronger with each positive event in your life. Conversely, negative thought does the same, which is why it can be very difficult for negative people to change.

The list of benefits of adopting a positive mental attitude goes on, however, one of the most compelling reasons for adopting a PMA is that it is the major part of having an attractive personality. Most people do not like to be around negative people. A positive mental attitude shows in everything you say and do from casual conversation to your performance at work. A PMA will help you in just about anything you do including increasing your income, being promoted at work, getting a new job, and in strengthening your relationships. With these kinds of benefits, why would anyone choose negativity?

Developing a positive mental attitude, like everything else, takes practice to master. Here are some suggestions to help you build your PMA.

- Scrutinize every event in your life that appears negative and look for the positive. Make a written list if you have to of all the good that resulted from the negative event or situation. Do NOT give up until your list of positives is equal to or greater than the negative. After forcing yourself to do this for a while, this thought process will happen instantaneously.

- Surround yourself with positive people. Negativity is even more contagious than the common cold. It spreads like a wildfire that is out of control and the best way to avoid it is to stay out of its path. However, I am not a believer in ditching those you spend time with, unless necessary. Instead, be extra positive when around these people and watch it "rub off" onto them. You can also start spending more time with positive people and less time with those whom you find negative. The right on-line communities are great places to meet those who share the same positive mental attitude goals.

- Read and listen to positive, motivational and inspirational material. Bookstores and libraries have a wide selection; you just need to know where to look.

- Avoid the morning news and news before bedtime. It is often morbid and depressing. Instead start and end your day with inspirational music or just good conversation (even if with yourself!)

- If you catch yourself thinking negatively or especially projecting a negative attitude STOP IMMEDIATELY, take a deep breath, and do everything in the first suggestion.

With a positive mental attitude on your side you will find yourself seeing the good in situations that you would have otherwise missed. This will improve your quality of life and the lives of those around you. A PMA will certainly bring you one giant leap closer to success.

ACTION STEP(S):

1) Write down all the negative events surrounding your life right now, one negative event at the top of each page. Then do your best to fill the page with positives that come from the negative.

2) Commit to making an effort not to give in to the negativity of others. Do not feed their negativity with negativity of your own. When you are around a negative person, use your PMA and watch hope and inspiration begin to show on that person. If you find they are in too deep and you cannot help them, excuse yourself and walk away.

Days 6 and 7 are for "R&R"—review and reflection. Spend these days reviewing the last five lessons and reflecting on the information and how it relates to your life. Now is also a good time to make sure all the action steps for the previous days have been completed.

Day 8: Using Humor Effectively

Laughter is said to be the best medicine known to man. With that in mind, the development of a good sense of humor and the ability to make people laugh can do more good for those you come into contact with than an entire pharmacy of drugs.

Besides just making other people happy and feel good, humor can be used to make light of an otherwise awkward situation, and ease both tension and ill feelings while building rapport. In a speaking or writing situation, humor can keep an audience interested in what you have to say, thus helping you become a better communicator. If popularity is one of your goals, then humor is a very effective tool. It is difficult not to like someone who makes you laugh.

People have different senses of humor; this is why not all people find all the same comedians funny. Some people (such as myself) just about lose control of bodily functions when watching movies like *The Naked Gun*, while others just roll their eyes. Despite these differences, humor is recognized and the effects of humor remain.

Here are some different kinds of humor that you can use. You may find that you are better at delivering some kinds of humor than others. If you have a natural talent at one kind of humor, work on developing it. You may find a good backup career in the process!

- **The Joke.** This is a fictitious story or question that has most likely been told to you. Jokes are most appropriate when the content relates to your current discussion or the situation you are in. However, joke tellers are like delivery boys who just carry the message and don't write it, and most people recognize that.

- **The Funny Story.** This is a true story (or one you believe to be true) about something that has happened to you or someone close to you. Try to avoid funny stories that happened to a "friend of a friend" because most times they are just not believable. Use the universal "humor license" and just say "friend"—the closer the relationship to the person or persons in the story, the funnier the story.

- **The Impersonation.** Impersonations are only funny when you are impersonating someone who or something that your audience knows. Impersonations are also a bit

risky especially when you do not want to offend the person you are impersonating.

- **Physical Comedy.** If you have ever seen Chris Farley, Chevy Chase or Steve Martin in action, you have seen great examples of physical comedy. Physical comedy usually involves an exaggeration of the body and deliberate clumsiness to make others laugh. It is important with physical comedy to be deliberate enough so others see you as funny, rather than just clumsy.

- **What Ifs.** What if after reading the above paragraph on physical comedy, you got up to use the restroom and tripped? The thought of that is funny (unless of course you are at the fragile age where a trip means trip to the hospital —in which case you should avoid physical comedy all together). "What Ifs" are great for a chuckle and to lighten situations.

- **Sarcasm.** If you have ever seen David Spade in a movie or TV show you have seen sarcasm at its best. Or someone like Rita Ruder who says, "I love being married. It's so great to find that one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life." It is important to note, however, that sarcasm should be used carefully with those you know who can take such comments lightheartedly. Sarcasm is not generally seen as a positive quality and very often it is used to express negative emotions.

- **Slapstick Comedy.** My favorite example of a classic slapstick comedy is *The Naked Gun* series with Frank Drebbin, or just about any movie where Leslie Nielsen is the star. An example of slapstick comedy is when Frank is searching through an office for clues, opens a drawer and says "BINGO" then pulls out a Bingo game card. Slapstick is also known as excessive silliness, but I admire slapstick for its inherent genius.

Here are my ten "Rules of Humor." Follow them and humor will serve you well. Break them, and you will be the subject of other people's humor.

1. **NEVER EVER take credit for someone else's joke.** Not only is it just wrong, but if you try to pass a joke or funny comment off as your own and someone hears you that knows it is not yours, it will make for a very awkward

situation that even the best sense of humor may not be able to get you out of. If you repeat something funny that someone else has said, start with "As _____ would say…" or somehow otherwise make it clear that the joke is not your original thought. You can still use humor and maintain your integrity.

2. **Make sure if you tell a joke or say something funny it is to a new audience.** Learn a lesson from your over-intoxicated relatives at parties. A joke may be funny once, but try to pass it off again to the same audience and you will be on your way to comedic purgatory.
3. **Be appropriate.** There is a time and place for everything and humor is no exception. For example, humor can be very effective at a funeral to make others feel better but telling jokes at the guest of honor's expense may not be a good idea.
4. **Keep it short.** Long-winded jokes and stories do more damage than good.
5. **Be smooth.** Often the delivery is more important than content. Stuttering and messing up words can really make a mess of humor. My favorite example of this is Chris Farley in *Tommy Boy* when he is attempting to repeat his father's "Bull and T-bone" joke (if you have not seen the movie, rent it!)
6. **Timing.** Even the funniest joke delivered at the wrong time (too late, too early) can flop.
7. **Relevancy.** Make sure the humor is relevant to the conversation or situation. Starting an insurance speech with a joke about getting a haircut just does not flow.
8. **Do not make jokes at other people's expense.** This can be very tempting at times, especially with "easy targets." Hold your tongue and use your creativity to redirect your humor elsewhere.
9. **Don't overdo it.** Be funny, have a good sense of humor, but do not be a comedian. This is true for everyone except comedians who make a living by making people laugh. In everyday life, and especially business, you want people to take you seriously. Know when to be serious.
10. **Don't be corny.** Unless the members of your audience are frequent patrons of "Chuck E. Cheese," stay away from the corny jokes. If you want to know what I mean by corny, pick

up a package of kids' Dixie cups—the ones with the "jokes"—and read the cups.

Realize that even professional comedians deliver jokes that fail. We often do not see these because their televised jokes are collections of their best jokes that have been proven. If you know how to properly respond to a failed joke, you can end up with a situation more humorous than if the joke had succeeded. Here are some things you can do when people fail to find humor in your joke:

- Pretend you are holding a microphone in one hand, and while tapping the hand with your other hand's two fingers, say, "Hello, is this thing on?"
- Quickly cover up by asking a question.
- Don't laugh at your own jokes and people may not think you were trying to be funny.

Using humor effectively requires practice and self-confidence. Remember, with every joke that does not go over well, your art of humor will improve.

ACTION STEP(S):

1) Do one of the following in front of an audience as soon as you get a chance (audience can be business associates, a group of friends, or just your spouse). a) Tell a joke. If you do not know one, use the Internet to find one, b) tell someone a funny story, c) do your best impersonation, or d) pretend you hit your head on the door when you open it, using your hand to make the bang sound, then hold your head and do your best groaning.

2) Write down three not-so-devastating "unfortunate events" that happened to you in the past–the more recent the better. What was humorous, ironic, or just plain funny about those events?

"A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done."

- Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890–1969)

Day 9: Perseverance, Persistence and Determination

If the "how to" for achieving success had to be summed up in just one single word, that word would be **perseverance**. It is the one characteristic shared by all successful people throughout history. Perseverance is the true essence of success.

There are three words in the English language that are often used synonymously, yet have slightly different meanings when referring to success. They are:

Persistence. The act of holding firmly and steadfastly to a purpose, state, goal, or undertaking despite obstacles, warnings, or setbacks.

Determination. The quality of mind which reaches definite conclusions; decision of character; resoluteness.

Perseverance. Persistent determination.

I find it quite ironic how similar persistence and insanity can appear from a spectator's point of view. Einstein said that the definition of insanity was doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. When I think of insanity, I picture a guy in a straight-jacket banging his head against the wall, or Jack Nicholson in *The Shining* banging out on his typewriter, "All work no play makes Jack a dull boy" over and over. Then there is a story about Walter P. Chrysler who, in 1905, bought his first car, which he immediately took apart in order to see how it worked. After putting it back together again, he repeated the process - rumor has it several times. Chrysler's friends and family thought he had lost his mind. Needless to say, Chrysler's persistence allowed him to create one of the largest automobile manufacturing companies in the world and realize success beyond his dreams.

Persistence is NOT insanity. Giving up your purpose or goal due to obstacles—that's insanity! In the case of Chrysler, although assembling the car over and over did produce the same apparent results, there was a learning and thought process going on in Chrysler's head. As for Jack in *The Shining*... well, he was just plain insane.

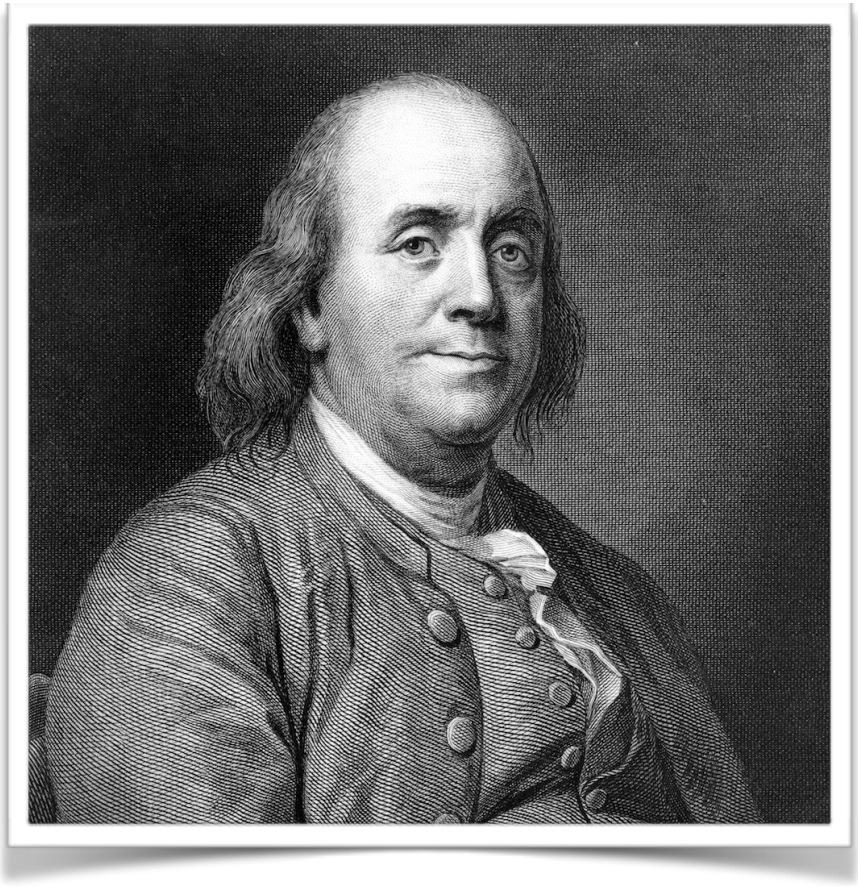
The key to determination is the word “decision.” You must decide what you want before you can get it. Despite the sanity and perfectly legitimate reasoning behind back up plans, I admire those who refuse to even think of a backup plan because they are so determined that their plan is going to work. Determination takes great self-confidence and decisiveness. You must be willing to completely disregard all alternatives to your decision and set it clear in your mind that you MUST and you WILL.

Perseverance is a great word that is defined by persistent determination. It is such a powerful word that once you experience true perseverance, simply reading, saying or hearing the word will energize you.

ACTION STEP(S):

1) Take time to think about your own life and where you are today. Write down some of your past goals and dreams that you have either given up on, or “put on the back burner.” Now think about any obstacles that may have gotten in the way. Was your decision based on reason and a legitimate change of goals or did you use those obstacles as excuses not to persist? This exercise will give you a good idea of your current level of persistence.

Day 10: Inspiration from Benjamin Franklin



Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) was perhaps the most famous American in history who was best known for being an American statesman and inventor.

Success is not limiting yourself. Franklin became famous for being a scientist, an inventor, a statesman, a printer, a philosopher, a musician, and an economist.

Success is turning frustration into opportunities. Franklin had poor vision and needed glasses to read. He became tired of constantly taking his glasses off and putting them back on again.

Franklin used this frustration to create a way to see both near and far without the need for taking off his glasses. He had two pairs of spectacles cut in half and put half of each lens in a single frame. Today, we call them bifocals.

After Franklin's "retirement," he spent much time reading books. However, he found he had great difficulty reaching for books high on his shelves. He created a long wooden arm with a claw on the end to assist him with this task and ease his frustration.

Success is doing what you feel is right in your heart despite public opinion. After both physical and mental abuse by one of Ben's older brothers, Ben decided to run away to Philadelphia in 1723, even though running away was illegal at the time.

Success is work. Franklin had a simple formula for success. He believed that successful people worked just a little harder than other people.

Success is knowing when to move on. In 1748, Franklin's business was flourishing so he retired, turning it over to his foreman in return for a regular stipend. He did this so he would have more time for his scientific pursuits.

Success is spawned from the desire to help others. Ben's older brother, John, suffered from kidney stones and Ben wanted to help him feel better. Ben developed a flexible urinary catheter that appears to have been the first one produced in America.

Success is not about being an only child or about getting attention from parents. Ben was one of 17 siblings!

Success is living usefully. Franklin had a strong belief that good citizenship included an obligation of public service and served his state and country for most of his life. To Benjamin Franklin, there was no greater purpose in life than to "live usefully."

[Sources: http://www.ushistory.org, http://www.lucidcafe.com, http://www.biography.com]

“Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.”

- Benjamin Franklin

End of the free sample

You have just read the introduction and the first eight daily lessons of *Year To Success* by Bo Bennett, PhD.

The complete ebook (EPUB and PDF) is available direct from the author at

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