

The Success Principles (First 30 Principles)

By Jack Canfield. All Credits to Jack Canfield

Commentary by Leo Schreven

Hello and welcome to another exciting book-of-the month! I love the time we spend together each month! A special welcome to those who have just joined our team—we are so glad you are part of our world-wide family of high achieving, results driven, optimistic and positive people!

This month we are going to go through one of my favorite books by Jack Canfield. Jack is best known for his “Chicken Soup for the Soul” books that have sold by the millions. He has a talent to gather great stories and compile them into interesting categories. He has done the same with his classic book, “The Success Principles.”

The greatest challenge is, how do you condense all the wisdom of hundreds of pages into one hour? We can't, so I am going to do this book in two months. We'll hit the first 30 principles this month and the rest next month.

I'll begin with a favorite quote by Thomas Edison.

If we did all the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves!

So let's astound ourselves this month!

The book begins by going through more than 60 fundamentals of success.

Principle #1. Take responsibility for your personal life for everything.

No excuses. Everything you experience today is the result of choices you have made in the past. We teach this principle extensively in All Power. Most of us have been taught to blame something or someone outside ourselves for the parts of our life we don't like. George Washington Carver

said, “99% of all failures come from people who have a habit of making excuses.”

You have to give up your victim stories—why you can’t or haven’t done it, and all your blame, and give them up forever! From now on you are 100% responsible.

Jack then gives us the $E + R = O$ principle

E: Events in your life.

R: Response to the event.

O: Equals the Outcome in your life.

If you don’t like your outcome, you have two choices. You can blame the Event for your lack of Results, (example blame the weather, government, husband, wife, economy, lack of money, etc.) or you can change your Response to the Events until you get the Outcome you desire. So, if you don’t like your Outcomes, change your Responses.

A simple example: I was recently in Alaska when the people got their oil dividend check. It was about \$1,200 per person so a family of 4 got nearly \$5,000. I watched in total amazement as the stores were flooded, and people spent the money the same day they got it. Then I went to my friend’s home who told me, “We save ours every year for our daughter’s college and we already have over \$100,000 after carefully investing it over the last 14 years. So notice the outcomes here:

Event: A \$1,200 check.

Response: Spend it.

Result: You are broke.

Event: A \$1,200 check.

Response: Save it.

Result: College is paid.

If you don’t like what you are producing or experiencing, then change your responses. Remember, “If you keep doing what you have always done, you’ll keep getting what you have always got.

Closely related to all this is complaining. You have to make the decision to stop complaining and stop spending time with complainers and get on with creating your future! You either create or allow everything that happens to you. Remember that nothing “just happens” to you—there are always lots of warnings. Most people do not take responsibility for these warnings because paying attention to them would require them to get out of their comfort zone. Successful people confront these issues. You see, if you pay attention, your results don’t lie. If you are overweight, all the excuses in the world won’t change that! So, be honest with yourself, and if you take responsibility, you are on the way to total success.

Principle #2. Be clear why you are here.

What were you put on this earth to do? Without a purpose in life, you will never be successful. Creating a mission statement about your life is something we already teach you in All Power. Once you know your mission in life, you will then organize everything in your life around it.

This point in the book is one of my favorite. Jack suggests making a list of all the times you have felt most joyful and alive. Then ask yourself—can I make a living doing that? Jack then has a great exercise for you to do on page 23 that will help you discover this.

Principle #3. Decide what you want.

Don’t live someone else’s dreams. Don’t live to get someone’s approval. Stop settling for less than you want. One of the easiest ways to do this is to make a list of 30 things you want to do, 30 things you want to have, and 30 things you want to be before you die. Then make a list of 20 things you love to do and then think of ways you can make a living doing them. To be successful you have to know two things:

1. Where you are.
2. Where you want to go.

You need to know this in 7 key areas. Your career, finances, recreation, health, relationships, personal goals, and contribution to the community.

High achievers simply have bigger vision. They don’t let any one talk them out of their vision. They share their vision with everyone, and they attract people who can help them make it happen.

Chapter 4 is about believing it is possible. I especially enjoy the first part about how the brain works. They have made such amazing advances in this study in the last few years. In a nutshell here is how it works:

Principle #4. Believe it is possible.

The human brain becomes “conditioned” by thousands of beliefs we repeat. So we achieve what we anticipate. That is why it is so important to hold positive expectations in your mind. The bottom line is that you get what you expect. This is the basic law of attraction. Jesus said, “All things are possible to him that believes!”

Principle #5. Believe in yourself.

Max Lucado wrote: “You weren’t an accident. You weren’t mass-produced. You were deliberately planned, specifically gifted, and lovingly positioned on earth by the Master Craftsman.” Believing in yourself is an attitude. You must choose to believe that you can do anything you set your mind to. You believe that it is not what life hands you, but how you respond to it that matters most. You let go of the words “I can’t, “I wish I was able to,” etc.

Look at the world’s most successful people! Twenty percent of American millionaires have never been to college, 21 of the 222 Americans who are billionaires don’t have a college diploma, and 2 of them never completed high school! What others think about you is none of your business! Quit worrying what others think about you and follow your dreams! People think about themselves, not you, so use your time to think about achieving your goals.

Principle #6. Become an Inverse Paranoid.

Rather than believe that people are out to destroy you, operate as if everyone has a plot to enhance and build you. Whenever something bad happens, remember that within that is the seed of something better. We have all had experiences where we thought what happened to us was the end of the world. But in looking back we see it was a blessing in disguise. The more you look for the good, the sooner you will find it!

What would happen if you began to see everything with the question, what potential opportunity is in this? Make a post card and put it on your desk or computer and see where it takes you.

Principle #7 is one we teach so much in all power. Goal Setting.

Neuro-science has discovered that the brain is a goal-setting organism. When the brain receives a goal, it will work night and day to achieve it.

A very important principle Jack brings out is how a goal must be very specific. Vague goals produce vague results. For example you can say, “I am setting a goal to lose weight this year”—that is not a goal. A goal says, “I will lose 50 pounds and weigh 140 pounds by May 30 this year.” Set big goals. Goals that push you. Read them three times a day.

By constantly repeating and visualizing your goal you will increase your motivation, stimulate your creativity, and strengthen your brainpower. Look at your goals often and carry the most important ones with you in your wallet or purse. Jack also brings out three things that stop most people when they set goals.

Three obstacles:

1. Considerations
2. Fears
3. Roadblocks

Considerations are the thoughts that come in your head about why you should not attempt the goal. So realize thoughts have been stopping you, brush them aside and go for it.

Fears are just feelings. We taught you in All Power how to control this so I don't need to go over that again.

Roadblocks are just external circumstances. They are the obstacles the world tries to throw at you.

So face these three things, recognize they are holding you back and just move forward. Review the All Power Seminar #12 on goals and go for it!

Principle # 8 is a practical, how-to chapter. It is the principle of breaking things down into smaller sizes.

A big goal is accomplished by breaking it down into smaller sizes and then doing one thing at a time. These bite-size pieces may be to talk to someone who has done what your goal is, or read a book, or listen to a tape on the goal. Make a daily “to do” list—plan your next day 24 hours in

advance. I have planned my days in advance for years. I go to bed with my list for tomorrow done. It makes a massive difference.

Principle # 9. Success leaves clues.

Everything you want to do has almost always been done by someone else who has the information available in books, seminars, tapes, etc. Once you have this, all you have to do is follow the blueprint and you are on your way. It is important to realize that successful people love to share what they do and how they did it. Don't hesitate to learn from them.

Principle #10. Release the brakes!

This is one of the best chapters. Jack gives the illustration of driving down the road with the handbrake on. We have all done it. But when you release it, everything accelerates and flows smooth. The same is true with your psychological handbrake—negative images about oneself, guilt, comfort zones. Think of your comfort zone like a prison you are in. This causes us to re-create the same experience over and over.

Jack brings out a really powerful point on page 72 on this and I invite you to study the illustration carefully. It boils down to this. By continually thinking, talking and feeling certain negative things, you reinforce those neuro-paths that got you where you are today. To change this you must focus on the reality you want to create. Jack calls this your internal thermostat. It is a great illustration. When your internal thermostat hits a certain temperature, many of us shut off automatically. You have to conscientiously change this with new positive thoughts and affirmations. Jack gives 9 tools to help you do this on page 75-80 and I urge you to do this exercise.

Jack then takes this concept to the next level in Chapter 10 when he talks about visualization. Visualization is the skill to create vivid pictures in your mind of what it is you want. The brain does not know the difference between what you visualize and what is reality. I think this is one of the most powerful, but under-used thing in the world. We teach a lot of this in All Power when we study the sub-conscious mind and you may want to review that lesson. The key here is this:

Your subconscious mind does not think in words, logic or language—it only thinks in pictures. So holding pictures in your mind (visualization) is more powerful than words or language.

Think how many things you did through life that illustrate this. (Your career, spouse, car, heaven, etc.) Train your brain for your future in every area—add sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings. Add lots of emotion because the subconscious is only driven by emotion. Use printed pictures to help you in a dream board. Do this every day.

Principle #12. Believe and act as if it is impossible to fail.

“Acting as if” also sends powerful commands to your subconscious mind to find creative ways to achieve your goals. Again we deal with this in the All Power 60-day program. It is your identity. Create your identity and then be that person.

Principle #13 is about taking action.

Don’t get bogged down with analyzing, planning, and organizing. Take action. The world does not pay you for what you know—it pays you for what you do.

Winners take action, they start, they get into motion, build momentum and produce the results they want. Enroll in a course, get trained, call the travel agent, start writing the book, start saving for the home, join the health club, write the proposal, sign up for the mission trip, etc. There is rarely a “perfect time” for getting started.

Most people fail to take action because they are afraid to fail. But failure is part of our learning experience. You don’t have to be afraid of making mistakes—it is just an opportunity to learn something new.

Principle #14. Lean into it.

You simply start. See what it feels like. No deliberation, reflecting, contemplating, just lean into it and start building momentum. Be willing to start without seeing the whole path clearly. People are often afraid to start or commit because the path is unclear and the outcome is uncertain. One of my favorite sayings is,

“I’m not lost, I’m just exploring!”

This often creates the turning point. When you lean into it the fog clears and the path appears.

Principle #15. Feel the fear and do it anyway.

I love this chapter. Once again we teach this in the 60-day program but Jack brings out some great points.

Some people do anything to avoid the feeling of fear. But success involves taking risks. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Jack has a great tool here on pages 116-117 to make a list of things you are afraid to do. **Not** things you are afraid of, like a rattlesnake, but things you are afraid to do. When you do this exercise you will see that you are the one who is creating your fears.

Jack then gives several practical tools to overcome the fear:

1. Replace the fear with the positive opposite.
2. Replace the physical sensation with courage, self-confidence, joy, etc.
3. Remember past experiences when you faced the fear and triumphed.

Remember, “If you can’t, you must, and if you must, you can.”

This chapter has story after story about how different people overcame fear and succeeded. Read them, they will inspire you!

On page 128 Jack also brings out one of the most powerful principles in the book. Do everything you can to create your desired destiny, and if it does not come, or sidetracks, stay calm and keep moving in that direction. Disappointments are new opportunities in disguise.

Jack adds the phrase, “This or something better” to his affirmations and goals. It is like Jesus when he prayed, “Thy will be done.” There have been a thousand times this has happened in my life, but every time something better happens or a new opportunity comes of it. Keep this attitude and you will be successful.

Principle #16. Be willing to pay the price.

Willing to do what is required is what helps you overcome overwhelming challenges.

Remember, pain is only temporary, the benefits last forever. Again, this chapter is filled with powerful stories. But they all teach the same lesson. You have to be willing to go the second mile, sacrifice, give time, and give

blood sweat and tears at first to succeed. We often look enviously at successful people and think they have it easy. But behind nearly every successful person there is a story of incredible sacrifice, time and commitment. The same is true in your personal life. If you are going to be successful and truly affect your world you are going to have to make a total commitment, and pay the price. But once you do, the reward is unreal.

Principle #17. ASK!

Asking is one of the most powerful and neglected secrets to success in the world. Why are people afraid to ask? Because of rejection and someone saying NO. But did it ever occur to you that **not** asking is saying NO to yourself first? Think about it. If someone says NO, you are no worse off than before. If they say YES, you are light years ahead. Jack has a whole book on this called “The Aladdin Factor” which you should read. Even Jesus said, “Ask and it shall be given unto you.” This skill can make all the difference. So make a list of things you are afraid to ask for. Next, write down what that fear is costing you. Then turn it around and just go for it. You have nothing to lose.

Principle #18. Reject Rejection.

We deal with this in All Power but let’s review. Remember, rejection is a myth, it does not exist. It is only a concept you hold in your head. Jack gives a great tool here I have used many times. It is called, SWSWSWSW.

“Some will,
Some won’t,
So what,
Someone’s waiting.”

It’s really a numbers game—just ask till you get a yes. Get used to rejection. There are 7 billion people so you won’t run out of people to ask. Nearly everyone who has made it to the top has had to endure rejections.

Principle #19. Use feedback to your advantage.

First recognize there are two kinds of feedback—positive and negative. Both are extremely valuable. We tend to shy away from the negative or let it destroy us. There are 3 ways you can respond to negative feedback.

1. Cave in and quit.
2. Get mad at the source of the feedback.
3. Ignore the feedback.

Successful people appreciate feedback. Ask those around you how you could do better. How might I be limiting myself? On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate me or my company in this area? If they tell you it is less than a 10, ask what you need to do to make it a 10? Remember, you are better off knowing the truth than not knowing it.

Don't get defensive, be grateful for it. Recognize also that not all feedback is useful or accurate. People have hidden agendas, hang-ups, jealousy, etc. But if you see patterns or several people communicate the same thing, then you know you are on the right track.

Principle #20. Commit to constant and never-ending improvement.

It is a great principle. It is why we created this Growing God's Talents program. Change is happening so fast in our world, it is hard to keep up! Improving today is necessary for survival.

Remember this: Becoming a Master takes time. Major improvements don't happen overnight. It takes practice. Every day improve at least one area of your life.

Principle #21 is to keep score. Just like when you grew up you kept track of your height each year, the same in your personal life, business, marriage, etc. If you keep score of anything you really want more of, you will get it! God designed you that you always want to improve your score. Now, here is a very important principle as you do this.

Measure what you want—not what you don't want.

Think about it. All successful people keep score—from athletes, to business owners, to parents with kids. The same with you. Keep score in the most important areas of life—financial, spiritual, professional, school, recreation, health, contributions to others, etc.

Principle #22. Practice Persistence.

This is such a powerful chapter. Persistence is likely the most common quality of successful people. Most successful people I have met achieved it because they refused to become discouraged by their defeats. They never give up on their hopes and dreams. They know if they hang in there long enough they will reach their goal. Remember for every failure there is an alternative course of action. When you come to a roadblock, take a detour. When one door closes, another opens.

Principle #23. Remember the “Rule of Five.”

The “Rule of Five” is simply every day to do five things that will move you closer to completing your goal. Use it in all kinds of areas. How about saving \$5 a day? Doing 5 random acts of kindness every day, making 5 new contacts each day—it is limitless!

Principle #24. Exceed Expectations!

Successful people simply do more. One of my favorite quotes on this is:

“If you are willing to do more than you are paid to do, eventually you will be paid to do more than you do!”

What is simply happening here is that you are earning an impeccable reputation and that is one of your most valuable assets. Jack gives some fascinating examples in this chapter. I really encourage you to read pages 181-186—they will inspire you. As you read these stories, ask yourself, how could I follow the same in my life and business?

Principle #25. Drop out of the “Ain’t it Awful Club.”

Surround yourself with successful people. The bottom line is this: We become like the people we hang out with! If you want to be successful, you have to start hanging out with successful people! Pay any price to stay in the presence of extraordinary people. Make a list of everyone you hang out with. Then put a ‘+’ or a ‘-’ by each one to show if they are positive or negative. Stop spending time with people with a ‘-’. Stop spending time with people who complain, blame, judge, gossip, or sap your energy. Stop spending time with the dream stealers, and toxic people. Stop spending time with people who are mediocre and victims. Then start spending time with people who are positive, nourishing, uplifting, who believe in you, encourage you, people who are possibility thinkers, and visionaries!

Principle #26. Acknowledge your positive past.

Most people spend a lot of time remembering their failures. A neuroscience fact is that the brain remembers events that are attached to strong emotions. If you celebrate and focus on past successes the brain receives it and then it moves that direction rather than self-sabotage. When this happens, you will find that the more self-esteem you have, the more risk you will take. So a great exercise to help you do this is to make a list of 100 successes you have had in the past. Think on those things. Then create a victory book and write in it all the victories gained through life. Then focus on this. Create your workspace or office to reflect this.

My office space is filled with photos from around the world of places I have been, marriage photos and Western Art and sculpture. I have dozens of mounts of animals I have hunted and fish caught. Why? Because when I go in there, all these things are symbolic of life achievements and success. This has a huge psychological impact on my emotions and future vision.

Do the same for your kids—surround them with their successes. There is an inner child in all of us that needs affirmation and reward. So remember this:

“A big part of creating more success in your life is rewarding yourself when you succeed.”

Principle #27 is to keep your eye on the prize.

Jack brings out a really important tool in this chapter I want to emphasize regarding the last 45 minutes of a day. Whatever you read, see, listen to, talk about, or experience during the last 45 minutes of the day largely influences your sleep and productivity the next day. Here is why:

During the night your subconscious replays and processes the last 45 minutes up to six times more often than anything else during the day. That last 45 minutes is critical. This is why it is important to read kids good stories just before they go to bed. Most adults watch TV before going to bed—scenes filled with hatred, violence, war, crime, scandals, rape, and immorality. Compare that to reading a good book, or making love to your spouse. The difference is amazing. So, keep your eye on the prize and create your ideal day in advance by choosing carefully how you spend the last 45 minutes.

Principle #28. Clean up your messes and your incompletes.

When you don't complete the past, you can't be free to embrace the future. There are 6 steps to this.

1. Decide
2. Plan
3. Start
4. Continue
5. Finish
6. Complete

What stops most people from completing? Most of the time there is too much on our table and we lack time, or simply do not have the knowledge or expertise to handle it. Sometimes it is our bad work habits, or simply burn out. To turn this around begin with what you can do for sure. Remember that 3 things done have more power than 30 things half done. Then let go of the clutter. I love to throw away. I follow what is called the 4 D's.

Do it.
Delegate it.
Delay it.
Dump it.

Jack provides a helpful list on page 211 of 25 things you can do to free up more time, energy and space. Once you get rid of the disorganization it is amazing how fast your life can move forward!

Principle #29. Complete the past to embrace the future.

This is a strong Bible teaching—putting the past behind. This is actually one of the hardest steps in the book. To forgive and forget and move on. Jack teaches it in 6 simple steps on page 215-216 and I urge you to memorize the 6 steps.

When you forgive it puts you automatically in the present where good things can happen and where you can take action to future gains. When you are angry, negative and unforgiving you attract more of it—even I struggle with this. In 48 years I have been taken advantage of so many times, sued in frivolous lawsuits, people have stolen money from me over and over, corrupt church leaders have spread lies and gossip about me,

and I could go on and on. But I know if I did not let go, it would eat my soul and prevent me from focusing my full attention on the life I want to create.

So, I learn from each experience, and when I forgive and move on I feel great. Believe me, I know the hurts, disappointments and pain, but I also know holding resentment, anger, and bitterness is like drinking poison and hoping it kills your enemy. I can't tell you how many people I have met over the years who just forgave and moved on and then became successful—in a few weeks their health improved and life became wonderful.

On page 218-219 Jack goes through 6 steps to forgive. I want to encourage you to seriously take this chapter and work on it. Why? Because I have seen it transform people's success in ways you can't imagine. You won't be able to truly accelerate your success till you master this chapter.

OK, that is a lot for this month! Next month we will complete the next 30+ principles.

I hope you have enjoyed this and I wish you a wonderful month with all of God's blessings,

Leo