

Sweet Success

By Kim Dannies

One of the first things I do when I meet a client is ask “what is your definition of success?” Sounds like a simple question — until they have to write it down. It’s the critical question that mirrors a personal life vision. It is the decisive factor in life alignment, getting the “right ladder on the right wall.” Do you know why you are doing what you do? Do your actions reflect your true desires?

We have all been culturally programmed to recognize certain measures of success: a big income, fancy car, fine home, prestigious education, gifted kids... the list goes on. The problem with “success stereotypes” is that for every individual there is a unique set of criteria that defines success for them. When we get into the habit of comparing our perceived shortcomings to another’s strengths, we set ourselves up for a lifetime of compromised self-esteem.

There is a great book called [If Success Is A Game, Here Are The Rules](#) by Cherie Carter-Scott. She writes “when success is pursued as proof of your worthiness, you are giving your life and your efforts over to the assessment of others...but when success is pursued as the alignment of your innermost values, and your goals become the validation of your inner truth, you honor your authentic self.”

So what are the elements to consider in creating an authentic definition of success? First, take some time to reflect upon and articulate your innermost values; write them down. These are the “non-negotiables” that rule your existence. Use your list as a tool, a filter for making choices: are your values consistent with your actions? Secondly, articulate what you want your life to ultimately represent and reflect this vision in a written success statement.

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