

[Rethinking Success – 3 Strategies to Change Your Career From a Noun to a Verb!](#)



All of us are striving to achieve success. Like the degree we hang on the wall or the nameplate we put on the door, success is something that we've been taught to understand as a tangible *thing*. In other words, success is a noun, right? Wrong!

Ok, maybe in the world of Schoolhouse Rock it is, but I can tell you from experience that in the realm of professional and personal development, success is a *verb*! Why? Because success is action - planning, working, connecting, choosing, deciding, risking and re-imagining. *Living Success* means being engaged in every aspect of our lives and our careers.

Whether or not we realize it, thinking of success as a something we'll eventually achieve actually causes us to push success out of our way so that we can focus on our immediate responsibilities, get our day-to-day work done and, some days, just plain survive. It becomes the future carrot that makes us willing to endure all kinds of sticks and yet, as we work harder and harder, it always seems to move further and further away. Why?

Success is not a thing we can *get* some day; it's a state of being in which we must *live* every day.

How do we *Live Success*? There are many small steps we can take each day, but here are a few tips to get you started:

1. **Own Your Career *Now*, Not Later**

Living Success means taking responsibility for ourselves and our career whatever our circumstances. I often hear disgruntled employees say, "I'll never be successful in *this* company." Translation? I'm going to wait to "find success" once I find a better job. With all the writing and speaking I've been doing about companies who don't foster employee engagement, I can understand this defeatist attitude. But when we *Live Success* rather than look for it, we remain open to learning about ourselves, our colleagues, management styles and the best way to build relationships in every kind of work environment. Feeling disengaged at our workplace doesn't give us permission to be disengaged from our career.

2. **Make Performance Count**

My friend Pam is a top executive within a firm overseas. She's also an African-American from a family of five who was raised in the 1950s rural South. I can't tell her story here, but I can say that she never set out to *find* success. Rather, she chose to live it every day through her job performance. Facing unimaginable obstacles, she focused on her ability to perform rather than the limitations of her environment. That's what living success is all about: finding the opportunities to become the exception rather than the rule in our every-day work experience. Pam's performance got her noticed by future mentors and gave her enough confidence in her abilities to launch her amazing career.

3. **Take Calculated Risks**

Success doesn't stand still and successful people don't either. *Living Success* means always looking for the next challenge. Many people create plans to achieve success, like it's a box to be opened sometime in the future. But changing our mindset from understanding success as an *action* rather than a *thing* gives us courage to move beyond plans, trust our guts then take the leap. Each time we change positions or companies we're [taking a calculated risk](#) that brings with it the possibility of failure. But the flip side of the risk of failure is the opportunity to succeed. When we *Live Success*, we keep our careers in perpetual motion.

Pablo Picasso once said, "Only put off until tomorrow what you are willing to die having left undone." When we think of success as a thing we'll *get* one day rather than a way we'll *live* every day, all too often it becomes the thing that is unfortunately "left undone."