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- 10th Anniversary Edition -

The Success Principles: How to Get From Where You Are to Where You Want to Be

Available from HarperCollins Publishers

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BE MINDFUL

The Role of Mindfulness in *The Success Principles*

by Dawa Tarchin Phillips¹

WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT

The fact is we all dream of a better, happier life. It is what makes us human. We just love to fix and improve things. However far you have already come in your life's journey, there is something more you hope to experience, to achieve and create. Something greater you want to bring about, share or understand. That's normal, and it's even healthy. There is something more you'd like to enjoy, something deeper you'd like to discover, something vaster you'd like to impact. There is something greater you want to pursue. Life has a way of moving you forward and onward. Call it evolution. It's doing it now.

At times, you can find yourself rushing toward your imagined better, brighter future like a hungry wolf. Fast flying toward it on your wings of desire and hope. And often it seems right there, just around the next bend, doesn't it? As if you have never been this close, you feel. Especially now, that you are reading this book.

AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

Here's the inconvenient truth: We've found that an often misunderstood and misinterpreted aspect of working with *The Success Principles* is the idea that you are engaging with these principles in order to create a better future for yourself or for others. Reader beware.

You can actually spend a lot of time daydreaming, strategizing, and planning for your future, which further intensifies your desire and belief that you need to get to that future, your successful future, ever faster.

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This can go far—so far that you experience quite a bit of confusion, stress and anxiety in your everyday life, just trying to improve things. You may even begin to feel as if you are not in the right place at all; that you are not doing the right things, not being who you need to be. And that only if you were someone else, doing something else and being somewhere else, you could finally experience the great future you are dreaming of, the one you feel you are meant to live and achieve, the one that speaks to you through the pages of this book.

It can be difficult to recognize this kind of thinking in yourself. It is a natural and habitual way of functioning in today's achievement driven postmodern world, in which many people experience constant stress and hurry without any clear destination. You too may wish you could magically wake up in a different world tomorrow, instead of powerfully making use of your life, and these great principles in the here and now, watching your present slowly, powerfully transform and evolve.

BEING HERE NOW

Ocean Robbins is the founder of The Food Revolution Network. Together with his father John, he is working on informing the public about the fact that toxic food is fueling epidemics of diabetes, cancer, heart disease, ill health and environmental destruction.

John and Ocean are no strangers to the subject. John's father, Ocean's grandfather, was Baskin Robbins Co-founder Irv Robbins, and both John and Ocean have renounced the family fortune and legacy to serve humanity with their dedicated work to promote the insight and wisdom of some of the top food experts on the planet.

But what most people don't know about Ocean is that he and his wife are also the parents of two autistic twin boys. And with all the success Ocean has had with his network, there is still the very real daily challenge of simply being a good dad.

"Sometimes they do things I don't like, such as screaming uncontrollably for long periods of time. It's easy to feel angry at myself, as if their struggles are somehow my fault, for not being a better dad. I am learning that instead of asking myself, *What am I doing wrong*, it's more helpful to ask myself, *What's the best I can do?* I'm learning that there's a world of difference between self-blame and self-respect. Self-blame just gets in the way of constructive action. Self-respect, on the other hand, gives me more confidence from which to make a difference in my kids' lives."

When it comes to applying success principles, nothing speaks louder than embracing and accepting where you are in order to build on it. If you start by accepting who and where you are now, you have something to work with. You can consciously evolve and intentionally co-create your world. But it all starts with actually being here.

DISCERNING THE PROCESS

Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.

JOHN DEWEY

American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer

Let's look at this process. The notion of the future as the place and time where your personal success takes place is misleading, and can grossly undermine your efforts in effectively integrating these important and indispensable success principles if you do not pay close attention.

Success at any level is always an experience of the present moment. You are either successful now or you are not, you either feel successful now or you do not, you either think and act successfully now or you do not.

To understand this requires your discernment. You are actually not engaged in creating a better, more successful future; that is simply a figure of speech. You are engaged in success-directed thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and behavior *in the present moment*—on a daily, moment-by-moment basis. These thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors will eventually, over time, result in your present moment experience being one of increasing success.

In fact, when you develop the intention to be successful you do it in the present moment. When you develop and exercise the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and behavior that lead to success and that are the content of this book, *you do it in the present moment*. When you visualize yourself as successful, *you do it in the present moment*. When you finally experience the results of these attitudes and actions, *you experience them in the present moment*. Your life—the ground, the path and the fruition of your practice—all take place in this unfolding present moment.

With this kind of discernment, you may realize that you have not created a better or different future for yourself at all. You have simply transformed your present moment experience from one of being unsuccessful into one of being successful. And you have done so by working with the only aspects of life ultimately under your direct domain—your own intentions, thoughts, beliefs and imagination, your attitudes, words and actions in the here and now. Everything in this book is about mastering that process.

WHY MINDSET MATTERS

*My greatest challenge has been to change the mindset of people.
Mindsets play strange tricks on us. We see things the way our minds
have instructed our eyes to see.*

MUHAMMAD YUNUS

Bangladeshi social entrepreneur, banker,
economist and civil society leader

The foundation of this kind of capacity for change is what in popular scientific circles is referred to as *mindset*—mental attitudes that determine how you will interpret and respond to situations.

This understanding of the term *mindset* was made popular by Stanford psychology professor and researcher Carol Dweck, who has spent decades researching various mindsets and their effects on human development and success. In her research two pre-dominant mindsets stood out, and they could not be more opposed. A so called *fixed mindset* consists of our belief that our basic qualities, like intelligence and talent, are genetically and otherwise predisposed and fixed, traits we are either born with or not. And your life's purpose ultimately is thought of as capitalizing on these predisposed talents and traits as much as possible. If you experience set backs or failure, these are perceived as painful road blocks calling into question your innate intelligence or ability, not just as stepping stones calling for an additional investment of diligent effort.

In contrast to a fixed mindset, a *growth mindset* is an individual's belief in their inherent capacity for learning and growing, and an appreciation of their intelligence and talent as being malleable and subject to improvement through effort and dedication. Our current level of intelligence is simply considered a starting point from which to embark on a sincere path of development through an investment of time and practice. This mindset creates an openness to lifelong learning, and genuine resilience in the face of setbacks and challenges. Research has

found that when you fully understand and embrace the idea of *growth mindset*, you experience greater motivation and productivity.

Here is what the two mindsets look like side by side:

Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Intelligence is static.	Intelligence can be developed.
Leads to a desire to <i>look smart</i> and therefore a tendency to:	Leads to a desire <i>to learn</i> and therefore a tendency to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• avoid challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• embrace challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• give up easily due to obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• persist despite obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• see effort as fruitless	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• see effort as a path to mastery
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ignore useful feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• learn from criticism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be threatened by other's successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be inspired by others' successes

In order to overcome a fixed mindset you need to have tools to become self-aware. A Mindset Quiz accompanies this document at www.TheSuccessPrinciples.com/resources, which allows you to assess your own mindset in regards to learning, and let's you identify areas where you might be able to benefit from making a shift in your current thinking. Scroll down the page to Principle 47 and click on the link to download the Mindset Quiz.

THE "I'LL BE HAPPY WHEN..." TRAP

*Happiness doesn't depend on any external conditions,
It is governed by our mental attitude.*

DALE CARNEGIE

American writer and lecturer

Your attempts to create a better future can trap you in what we'd like to call the "I'll be happy when..." trap. This trap can keep success and happiness always just out of your reach because it is based on your personal identity as someone pursuing success, not as someone actually cultivating it, being successful or having success in the here and now. Those two identities though similar in appearance, are vastly different and have vastly different consequences.

In order for your "I'll be happy when..." attitude to remain congruent as your primary personal identity, the experience of true success in the present moment must and will continuously elude you. It is only when you are not quite happy yet and not quite successful yet, that the pursuit of happiness and success as your primary, future-oriented agenda makes sense and is still experienced as congruent within yourself.

If you do not feel successful and happy, pursuing these objectives as what you want for your future seems only logical, and like a very worthwhile use of your time.

However, this approach can keep the experience of success and happiness at arms length and just out of your reach. When your identity in the here and now is one of purely striving for success, not one of actually feeling successful or having success, your identity is tied to an inner experience of lack, not one of abundance and prosperity. Your identity is one of seeking, not one of discovering. Your identity is one of needing to create, not one of currently cultivating. With this attitude you will likely stay anxious about your goals and progress, and weary about your achievements. If you wish to get results with *The*

Success Principles it is vital to change your approach and cultivate success as an experience of the present moment—grounded in a growth mindset, mindfulness and the principles in this book being applied daily as a cultivation of success in the present, and not as strenuous labor aimed at a distant better future.

MINIMIZE YOUR COLLATERAL DAMAGE

If you do not make this shift in how you perceive and approach success, your attempts to create a better future may bring with it many unwanted results—the consequences of your willingness to compromise and sabotage yourself, and accept greater *collateral damage* in the present in order to create a better future, because in your mind the superior end you are pursuing justifies the mediocre daily means.

Many of your own personal challenges, as well as many of the world's challenges, are fueled by people intent on creating a better future for themselves or the people they care about, without paying attention to the unwanted consequences this can create.

This can take many different shapes and forms. You may neglect your marriage or personal friendships and relationships because you feel you need to get just one more important project done, or close just one more important sale. You may neglect your personal health because you feel you just don't have the time to exercise or eat healthy on your way to greater financial security or global impact. You may overspend and accumulate personal debt because you feel you absolutely need to impress people with your clothes, the brand of your car or the size of your estate, on your way to making a name for yourself in the world.

These are just examples where if you are too focused on creating a better, more successful future for yourself or others, you'll engage in irresponsible, unsuccessful behavior in the present—continuously sabotaging yourself and accruing collateral damage on your way to what you think will make you "*happy when...*"

Since you are focused and committed to make the world, or at least your world a better place in the future, you can all too often and all too easily justify damaging or harming the quality of the present moment. All in order to get to where you think you are going to finally achieve your results. This is damage that in time will catch up with you. "The chickens come home to roost," as they say. When they do, success and happiness once more may seem far away or just out of reach. You know this is true, because you've been there many times before.

The instructions that follow can aid you in sidestepping this misunderstanding. It is important to learn about Mindset and Mindfulness and their benefits, and why Mindset and Mindfulness training play a key role in being successful with applying the success principles in this book. Why rather than using these principles to *try to create a better future for yourself or others*, you want to view your work with these principles from the perspective of mindfully *cultivating a better present*, and starting with that work right here and now, and right away.

This is a significant shift in perspective. One that will empower you and can be the difference between getting caught in the never ending pursuit of happiness and success and the "I'll be happy when" trap, or experiencing growing personal fulfillment on a daily basis, as you cultivate a meaningful and successful life every moment of every waking hour of every day.

TOOLS FOR CULTIVATING MINDFULNESS

Presence is more than just being there.

MALCOLM S. FORBES
American Publisher

The following tools are based on mindfulness, a time tested practice to cultivate focused attention, presence and self-awareness right where you are.

Like most things of value, Mindfulness is best learned from a qualified teacher or mentor, one that is experienced in the practice and science and can transmit that understanding to you initially and over time. Yet there is absolutely no reason why you should not get started right away and honor the things you learn from reading and elsewhere.

Mindfulness can be defined as "bringing one's complete attention to the present experience on a moment-to-moment basis," and "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally."

I hinted at why mindfulness is a skill you need to cultivate if you want to be successful with the principles discussed here. As a skill it has far reaching benefits beyond the scope of this book. Not only will it give you greater clarity on your predominant mindset, it allows you to move from a future oriented approach to success to one that incorporates ever-greater access to being in the present moment. Now that you're ready to undertake the first action steps around these important concepts, follow these guidelines:

Cultivate mindfulness every day. Do this consciously and by choice. Like compounding interest, it will pay you back handsomely over time. The value and benefit of five minutes of practice of being more mindful today grows exponentially, and will pay you back multifold over a year, five years, or a lifetime.

When I started practicing being more mindful, sitting still for just five minutes without moving my body or engaging my mind was difficult. I was a young student with a summer job that required me to lend a hand to some demanding physical labor. Though fit and athletic, my body was not used to being still. I started with small steps, a few minutes here, a few minutes there. Over time things got easier and eventually I spent many years in meditation retreat. Today, these same five minutes bring me profound relief, and a deep sense of peace, joy and fulfillment that would be hard to fake if I tried.

The important point is to start where you are and to bring your growth mindset—the belief that you will improve with time—to the practice and stick with it. It is not how quickly you become good at it or how fast you show results; it is about how willing you are to keep cultivating the skill, a little each day. It is about quality over quantity. If you let your mind enjoy it, it'll want to do more of it all by itself.

Sit or stand in an upright posture. Find a comfortable seat or posture that allows you to have a straight spine, which quickly translates into greater mental clarity and allows you to stay alert longer without becoming drowsy or dull.

The benefit of good posture can't be overstated. When you are cultivating a posture that allows the spine to be upright, it helps the mind to be clear and calm. I had a hard time with this as a child. Because of my posture I had to go to physical therapy and spend many summer afternoons doing exercises to practice standing, walking and sitting straight. Not something fun for a five year old, yet it instilled in me an appreciation for the benefits of good posture. There is no short cut here. A colleague once put it best when he said, "Sitting straight comes from sitting straight."

Connect with your physical sensations. Whether you are walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, place your awareness on your physical sensations in the present moment. This not only grounds you, but also strengthens your empathy for those around you and their experience.

Being aware of our physical sensations anchors us in the present moment. The body naturally always abides in the present, while it is the mind that constantly wonders into the past and future. For that reason, connecting to your own physical sensations is one of the quickest ways to becoming centered again and staying grounded in the present moment.

Cultivate trust. Nothing distracts and clouds the mind like ongoing distress, worry and anxiety. Choose to cultivate trust instead. Invest in a *growth mindset* and your ability to be human and simply do your best. Be inspired and aim high, but don't entertain delusions of egoic grandeur, deny your own vulnerability, or hate yourself for your own human imperfections. Those feelings are based on a fixed mindset—the belief that you are stuck with your current traits. Instead, choose to develop a growth mindset and to enjoy the journey at least as much, if not more than, the destination.

Change is the essence of life. Be willing to surrender what you are for what you could become.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

American theologian, ethicist and commentator

If you want to transform your present moment experience you have to develop trust. Trust is what let's you release your attachment to what and who you think you are now, so that you can become what and who you will be in the next moment. At the heart of every successful transformation lie trust and the act of letting go. If you are willing to release where you are coming from, you are going to get to where you are going. You need to leave New York behind to travel to Los Angeles; you need to leave Chicago behind to make it to Pittsburg.

The good news is you are already more trusting than you think. If you look closely you'll find that trust is at the heart of every change you engage in every day. You open the fridge because you trust you will find food in it. You go to the store because you trust it will be open. You turn the ignition key because you trust the car will start. You put your clothes on because you trust they'll keep you warm. It doesn't matter what you engage in, trust is always part of the equation when you expect a certain result from your actions.

"Anchor" your attention. Take time everyday to focus on your breath, your sensations, or simply a spot on the wall; anchor your attention in the present moment for minutes at a time by returning again and again to the object of your focus. Do this until it becomes easy and you can do so at will.

What works best for me is using my breath and/or my physical sensations, which is why I recommend that here. In time, you will be able to anchor your attention in the experience of mind itself, but for now, anything you can be aware of on a consistent basis and without too much additional tension works great. The breath is easy because your body is breathing while your mind is free to be aware of it or not. Focus on the sensation of the in and out breath at your nostrils or the sensation of the rising and settling of your chest and abdomen. Physical sensations are great because of the additional benefits described earlier above.

Cultivate nonjudgment. Also called openness or acceptance, this is the decision and ability to suspend self-judgment about your own present mental and emotional state. Shift your focus to being fully present with your own state, as it is. When self-judgment arises, acknowledge it, but return your attention to your anchor. Allow the stream of consciousness to keep moving. That will weaken and

eventually eliminate the tendency and open your mind. The more you can do that the more choices you'll have in life and when you want to make a shift.

In order to develop this skill you have to develop a healthy sense of curiosity about what it means to be human. Strangely, I have found actors, politicians and good teachers to be particularly skilled at this trait. Maybe because they need to wear so many faces and play so many roles in life. Either way, the more open and accepting you can be to yourself physically, mentally and emotionally, the quicker and deeper your mindfulness will develop.

Cultivate kindness. Kindness can be summarized as a commitment to not abuse yourself or others for the sake of money, image, or status, but to engage in big-picture thinking that sees your own well-being aligned not only with your success but that of those around you as well.

It is easy to understand that a mind that is kind will have an easier time being present. It's just a better experience. It's hard to be content with a mind engulfed in envy, jealousy or resentment. But when you can let your heart connect with the experience of openness and kindness, you will find your stress levels drop and your vital signs normalize.

To begin to assess your current mindfulness levels, you can use the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale that accompanies this document at www.TheSuccessPrinciples.com/resources. Scroll down the page to Principle 47 and click on the link to download the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale.

Should you find your awareness and attention lacking, reach out to one of the qualified Mindfulness teachers, coaches and consultants who can help you tap into this critical ingredient for success and well-being. You'll find a beginning list of these resources at the same website.