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A Correct Mindset: The Key to Success

You are walking onto the stage, shaking your administrator's hand, and receiving your diploma. You load up the bar with more weight than ever before, get set up, then prepare for a heavy lift. You walk into the kitchen and see your favorite snack sitting on the counter, but you resist. Going against all obstacles, setbacks, and odds, you graduate from college, you push up the bar to complete your new personal record, and you resist the temptation of food to complete your week-long fast. All these situations display success in different ways. "Fame, prosperity, fortune"—these are all synonyms of the word "success" which suggest that success can have external rewards from events such as graduating ("Success," Thesaurus.com). However, success can be defined as "the accomplishment of one's goals" ("Success," Dictionary.com). This definition implies that a reward of internal or external nature can be received from success in events such as working out or fasting. Based on this definition and synonyms, the word "success" is very broad, so I am going to focus on the outcome of success and what is needed to reach it. Success is commonly thought of as having an external reward such as wealth and status, but it can also have internal rewards; both require the correct mindset and hard work to be achieved.

Of course, many people who achieve success do receive an external reward along with it. An external reward could be any physical item in the world, but the ones commonly thought of are wealth, promotion, and status. In *the Holy Bible*, when Saul gave David a task to do, "David

was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army” (1 Samuel 18:5). In this excerpt from the Bible, it explicitly notes that being successful in one’s position can lead to an external reward, as in this case a promotion. Similarly to David’s success in war, Tara’s success in school leads to a promotion of status by earning her Ph.D. In the book *Educated* by Tara Westover, Tara battles through many obstacles: going against her family’s beliefs, going to college, and dealing with her abusive brother, along her way to earning her Ph.D. and finally “In, January, nearly ten years to the day since I’d set foot in my first classroom at BYU, I received confirmation from the University of Cambridge: I was Dr. Westover.” Less than three percent of people in the world have a Ph.D. and as a result of all of Tara’s hard work, she earned the physical reward of having a higher status over people. In both of these examples, the characters received external rewards, but the success they reached was very different. One had to show his outstanding effort in war and the other went through a difficult life while growing up and had to finish schooling to reach success. Similar to earning a Ph.D., being in the hall of fame also takes time and hard work.

There is a hall of fame for almost anything someone could imagine, there is a baseball hall of fame, basketball hall of fame, actor hall of fame, musical artist hall of fame, etc. In order to be inducted into any hall of fame, one would have to put in a lot of effort to get better than everyone they are competing against then they could be considered for induction. In the song “Hall of Fame”, the lyrics say “Dedicate yourself and you can find yourself / Standing in the hall of fame / And the world's gonna know your name” (The Script). These lyrics help explain that from dedication, one can find success and end up in the hall of fame with the reward of being famous. Getting a status promotion, earning a Ph.D., and entering the hall of fame, all require effort and the right mindset to achieve. While all three sources point to external rewards, it’s

worth noting that the lyrics also illustrate that when someone dedicates themselves to something, they receive the internal reward of feeling accomplished by reaching their goal. Maybe there is some other type of reward other than external reward.

When reaching success, a reward that is not commonly associated with coming from success is an internal reward. During my interview with my teacher Mr. Lind, he answered the question “What brings you the feeling of success as a teacher?” He responded by mentioning how seeing the success of his former students and when they tell him how he impacted them is when he feels successful as a teacher. While Mr. Lind’s form of internal reward came from another person, Mike Ditka says internal reward can come from one’s self as “Success isn’t measured by money or power or social rank. Success is measured by discipline and inner peace” (“Mike Ditka Quotes”). It does not take the presence of wealth or status to identify someone’s success, it can be seen through one’s composure and commitment to a goal.

Through the discipline of continuing to create videos and inner peace to deal with the hate comments, the popular YouTube content creator Dream built up a following of 31.4 million subscribers. Dream has experienced a good amount of external success from YouTube, but when he posted a video titled “hi, I’m Dream,” Dream would reveal his face for the first time on the internet. From this video, Dream had success that led to an internal success of being able to connect with his viewers better now that they have a face to associate with the name Dream. The three sources used in the paragraph above and this paragraph all give a different example of an internal reward. Mr. Lind has an internal reward of a feeling, Mike Ditka said success can be measured by an internal reward of discipline, and Dream feels a closer connection with his supporters. All of these examples do not need money or wealth to reach that reward, they just

need the right mindset. These three sources support the idea that success can have internal success, but they also support the idea of needing a good mindset to reach success.

Success may have both external and internal rewards, but neither can be achieved without the correct mindset. The movie *Glory Road* is about the Texas Miners' 1966 basketball team. The team, which had a majority of African-American players, had to go against adversity such as racism, and well-skilled teams along their way to winning the NCAA national championship. In the movie, the team has to be determined and dedicated to winning their regular season games if they even want a chance to win the tournament. For example, after the basketball team went out for dinner, they returned to their hotel rooms being broken into, trashed, and vandalized with some derogatory words written on the walls (Gartner). Despite the team's adversity, they put the experience behind them and focused on improving during their practices and games that are leading up to the tournament. Their dedication is what allowed them to overcome the racism they experience from others during the time period and win the tournament. The article "Secret Ingredient for Success" by Camille Sweeney and Josh Gosfield is about the use of self-examination and the basketball team had to go through the process of self-examination on their journey to the championship.

When the authors surveyed some successful people, they "all had similar responses when faced with obstacles: they subjected themselves to fairly merciless self-examination that prompted reinvention of their goals and the methods by which they endeavored to achieve them" (Sweeney and Gosfield). The successful people surveyed hit a block in what they were doing and the mindset they had to get past the block was to examine what they had done and try to come up with new ideas that would bring success like previous ones. In *Glory Road*, after the team encountered adversity from the trashing of their hotel rooms, they did not let this affect them as

they moved on and just used it as fuel to keep practicing and breaking the boundaries people put on them. The self-examination that they went through was to think about if they wanted to continue fighting for the tournament or to give up and secede from their goals (Gartner). This article gives an example of a good trait, self-examination, to have when seeking success, but the Icarus myth exemplifies a non-beneficial trait to have.

In the myth of Icarus, Icarus and his father get imprisoned but then his father crafts them some wings to escape with. Then Icarus and his father “flew out of the tower towards freedom, leaving Crete. However, Icarus soon forgot his father's warnings and started flying higher and higher, until the wax started melting under the scorching sun. His wings dissolved and he fell into the sea and drowned” (“Icarus”). In this myth, Icarus got too caught up in his success of escaping that he tried to do more than he could and it backfired. Icarus experiences overconfidence when he starts to fly closer and closer to the sun, but then the overconfidence catches up to him and he ends up failing. Earlier in the myth, Icarus and his father reach success by helping Theseus escape the labyrinth and this could make Icarus crave the feeling of success more and more. In this myth, Icarus demonstrates the trait of being overconfident and as a result of his overconfidence, he dies. There are some beneficial and non-beneficial traits that people should use and avoid for their mindset on their road to success.

Throughout the essay, success has been proven to have commonly thought of external rewards and not-so-commonly thought of internal rewards; it has also been proven that it takes the correct mindset to reach success and the given reward. There is not always a straightforward way to reach success, it takes time, dedication, and the overcoming of obstacles to reach. In an interview with my grandpa, I asked him the question “Do you believe that success always has a physical or external reward?” He answered this question in an interesting way, he said that there

can be physical and internal rewards such as feelings, but after every little success, a reward is not needed. He believes that if someone does their job correctly then there is no need to be rewarded, only if you are going above and beyond does someone deserve a reward. Rewards are only for the hard-working and determined to reach their goals. The next time you reach success, make sure to note if you receive internal or external success.

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