

# A New Definition of Success at Midlife

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Your ability to identify and "own" your own 'successes' gives you a tangible "leg-up" in the process of finding your authentic work in the second half of life. Finding success is a fundamental human need. Those that can discover their personal and professional success ... achieve more; those that can't ... don't.

It turns out that success is a requirement for living a fullness of life. Once you identify your past successes and embrace them, you're healthier, happier, and more whole almost automatically; you're better prepared for making the transition to a new life adventure of finding the kind of work that re-energizes your inner strengths.

Success perception is the foundation of a positive self-esteem. If you 'see' success in yourself ... then you are! Gaining a clearer vision of what kinds of activities, settings, relationships, and dreams motivated you most in the past is a good place to start to discern your own 'success formula,' the unique combination of factors that you use to engineer your own success. Uncover your success formula and you've discovered a key essential for moving forward in your life regardless of your goal.

Success means getting in touch with yourself and discovering your unique 'heart's desire,' that which motivates you best.

Your parents wanted you to be 'a success' and perhaps now, when you're beyond life's midpoint, you have achieved that status. But many mid and later recareer seekers want more than simply replicating past successes, they want instead to activate that 'deeper you' that yearns to 'come out', they're looking for a new success, one that builds on former success but brings them to satisfy a self of 'significance.' In the second half of life we seem more interested in our own definition of success rather than trying to pursue someone else's definition.

## ***Success means ...***

- Being present to the reasons why you're doing what you're doing.
- Focusing the 'all that you are' on something with deeper personal meaning.
- Achieving an overall new freedom to be.
- Seeking a new formula for the 'good life.'

But identifying past successes isn't an easy job, even though the time and effort is worth it. One place to look is in those past 'life snapshots.' Have you ever thought why you remember some events and can't remember what happened five minutes before the event? It's like a particular point in time is imprinted on your brain. These 'life snapshots' may hold the promise of finding what's really important to you. That time, at age 15 when you looked out over a nearby lake and realized that you were capable of making a decision; or the time at age 21 when it dawned on you that you worked faster than others, or when you concluded, at age 35, that you understood your co-workers deeper motivations for action than others did. These times, and many others, offer insight into the true you.

## ***What to do ...***

Take the time to inventory those memories that still bring a smile to your face; itemize those times when you just 'felt good' about whatever; review what you thought of yourself, as well as what others might have thought of you. Make a list of all your successes, both public (those events that others viewed as successful) and private (events you thought were

successful. Now study your list, connect the dots by pulling out any patterns that may exist in how you achieved what you did, who might have been with you, and under what circumstances. What you're doing is constructing your success formula. If the formula worked for you before, chances are that it will work for you again.

Success, like beauty, is in the eyes of the beholder. As a second half of life seeker, get in touch with what you truly behold as successful now that you're seeing your life differently than you did in the past. This will position you now to approach your new life transition with a clearer understanding of what's important for you now, and a bolder resolve to pursue it with courage.