

# SUCCESS

Jack Canfield, co-creator of the phenomenal *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, has a gift for translating spiritual concepts into practical steps we all can use to create what we want.

He shared his personal journey and talked about his new book *The Success Principles: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be with Science of Mind*.

**Science of Mind:** *You're known around the world as one of the Chicken Soup gurus, and you recently published a new book about attaining one's goals. How did you get from there to here?*

**Canfield:** I started my career as a high school teacher in Chicago, and after a year I became more interested in why kids weren't learning than I was in teaching history. About that time, I met a man named W. Clement Stone who was a self-made multimillionaire teaching a course called the Achievement Motivation Program. I took his crash course in the principles of success and it became the underpinnings of the self-esteem and peak performance workshops I gave around the world for the next twenty years. I believe that a high level of self-esteem is derived from being competent at producing the results you say you want in the world. Success is half about high self-esteem as a worker and the other half is about relationships—feeling worthy of having loving and fulfilling relationships.

At my workshops, people kept asking me if my stories were somewhere in a book, and I had to say “no.” Finally, I decided the universe was telling me to put these stories in print—that's how the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series was birthed. The original book sold over one hundred million copies in forty-one languages, and became a household brand according to *Time* magazine, so everyone knows me as “that Chicken Soup Guy.” It had been twelve years, and I felt an inner urge to teach these principles of success that I used but never captured in a book. I wanted to write a classic—a “success bible,” if you will. My intention was to capture that aspect of my life's work,

# Unleashed

DEBORAH SANDELLA

so other people could create the same level of success I've experienced—both in my personal life and in my professional life.

*So the Chicken Soup books were a result of applying your success principles?*

Yes. Absolutely! We have a Guinness Book record for seven *New York Times* best-sellers listed in the same week.

We used all the sixty-four principles to create that success. We started with being clear about what we wanted—we set a goal to sell a billion books

by the year 2020. Every day, we visualized books selling,



## Allow yourself to be your soul unfolding, to learn the lessons you're

we used affirmations, we prayed, we meditated, we built teams, we built networks, and we used mastermind groups. Everything suggested in the book, I could illustrate with a story from our own work.

To make sure these principles were universal and not just "Jack's path," I interviewed seventy-five other people. I spoke with a diverse group: from the vice president of the Orlando Magic basketball team, Pat Williams; to a successful Nashville songwriter, Jana Stanfield; to Chad Pregracke, who at the age of nineteen decided he wanted to clean up the Mississippi River. With no college education, he raised over \$2.5 million and with four thousand volunteers, achieved his goal. I wanted to show that career success is available to all of us. Ordinary people using these principles can do extraordinary things.

*What were the defining moments that have propelled you to this place of extraordinary success?*

When I was a teenager, I admired people who were changing the world for the better, and I knew I wanted to make a difference. This goal was supported when I received a scholarship to Harvard University. I studied with the intention of becoming a lawyer and perhaps a

politician. But I was drawn in a different direction after I attended Jesse Jackson's church. I became very involved in the civil rights movement and the fight for justice. I taught in an all-black inner city school and really loved it.

Then I met W. Clement Stone, who I mentioned earlier. Stone hired me to train teachers and this experience further solidified the idea that I could make a difference. So in addition to working with kids, I was also training teachers on how to be more effective in the classroom. My sphere of influence was expanding.

Also around this time, I spent three months in a van in Guatemala and Mexico. I had a long beard and a copy of *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda. As I learned about spirituality in India, the trip became a sort of vision quest for me. I was blown away by the description of people who could transmigrate their bodies, disappearing from one place and showing up in another. And breatharians who could live on air alone. I was amazed by the power of the mind, the power of Spirit. That sparked my interest in spirituality, so when I returned home, I began studying meditation, yoga, and Gestalt Therapy.

This new life direction caused me to tune into my feminine side.

ere to learn, to express what you're here to express, and success occurs.

Suddenly, I realized I had feelings, I had intuition, it was okay to cry; this was a big turning point in my life. I was also significantly influenced by the principles of psychology. When someone suggests you forgive another, it sounds nice, but how do you do it? What are the steps? We say, "release it, let it go, let go and let God." But *how* do you let go of resentment and anger and fear and hurt? I began learning practical methods that showed me how—it was very powerful!

My next defining moment was writing a book, *100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom*. It sold four hundred thousand copies and I was invited all over the country to teach. My self-image expanded from someone who could put on a small workshop to someone who could impact large numbers of people. As a result, I dropped out of my doctoral program because I realized that I intuitively knew what I needed, and I didn't have to acquire a graduate degree—another huge step.

The most recent significant event came when I saw the *Chicken Soup* book could become a series and that it could impact the world in a huge way. When Mark [Victor Hansen] and I set the goal to sell a billion books, I saw myself being able to make a difference at a new level.

*Ernest Holmes believed that the divine plan is one of ever-increasing expansion. Do you share that understanding of what you could accomplish?*

Yes! My life has been a constant unfolding. Joseph Campbell said, "Follow your bliss," and I have. I would pick up and move whenever I sensed there was an opportunity that would allow me to fulfill my potential. I've always given myself permission to do what felt right, whether it was as simple as taking a seminar, or as complicated as starting a new company.

*You've described the powerful influence of spirituality in your life. How do your success principles relate to spiritual principles?*

I believe all the success principles flow out of the spiritual teachings I've studied. For example, the first principle is to take 100 percent responsibility for your life. Spiritually, we are responsible for our own inner practice, the development of our own consciousness. I believe in grace, and I also believe in self-effort. There's many times I've thought—wow, I feel blessed! And, I decided to claim that blessing (if you will) and do the work—to meditate, to keep my body healthy, to surround myself with enlightened people who are being of service and growing spiritually. I wouldn't say I'm

unconditionally loving, but I consistently work toward it. A Native American by the name of Dave Anderson recently shared a story with me: A preacher was going through a valley and there were farms that looked dry and brown and untended because there had been too little rain that year. He turned a corner and saw a farm that was beautiful and well tended. Everything was blooming and growing. He approached the farmer and said, "Wow, God has certainly blessed this land." The farmer replied, "It's true; God and I have had this land for thirty years. You should have seen it thirty years ago when God had it all by himself."

We're all given "land" in the form of talents and opportunities. The question is, what do we do with it?

Another important success principle that flows directly from spiritual principle is, "Be clear why you're here, what's your life's purpose?" Many people haven't sat down and done the introspective work to uncover their life's purpose. If you're aligned with your purpose, decisions get easier. Things flow to you more quickly when you're focused. Jesus said, "All I have done, you will do and more." All the healing powers of the great spiritual leaders are available to all of us. Buddha got to be Buddha by sitting under a tree and meditating for a long, long time. Christ went

## GET INTO COMPLETION CONSCIOUSNESS

Continually ask yourself, *What does it take to actually get this task completed?* Then you can begin to consciously take that next step of filing completed documents, mailing in the forms required, or reporting back to your boss that the project has been completed. The truth is that 20 things *completed* have more power than 50 things *half completed*. One finished book, for instance, that can go out and influence the world is better than 13 books you're in the process of writing. Rather than starting 15 projects that end up incomplete and take up space in the house, you'd be better off if you had started just 3 and completed them.

—Jack Canfield, *The Success Principles*

into the desert. I believe he was doing his spiritual work, and moving to the next level of his conscious evolution. Allow yourself to be your soul unfolding, to learn the lessons you're here to learn, to express what you're here to express, and success occurs.

*Many people think of success as money. Yet, we all know money doesn't buy happiness. How do you keep balanced, so you don't get seduced by having another Lexus in the garage?*

I have two approaches. One is inner-focused, and the other is outer-focused. The inner-focused approach is really a spiritual discipline, whether

it's meditation, yoga, tai chi, or any combination of practices, through which we can stay centered. When we're centered, we're in touch with our natural rhythm, and we know naturally how to balance our lives. It's different for different people. Some people need to stop every hour and take ten minutes to relax. Others work solidly for days, but then take three or four days off. Some people work intensely for a month and follow it with a three-week vacation. We all have these different rhythms of contact and withdrawal, and if we're paying attention, we can honor them. There is a great Buddhist saying, "You know you are enlightened when you eat when you're hungry, you sleep when you're tired, you drink when you're thirsty, and you work when you feel like it." The idea is that when you are in touch with who you really are, you are naturally following your inner spiritual directives.

The second way I create balance

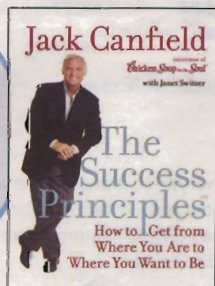
in my life, and something I teach, is a structured way of setting goals in seven different areas of one's life. Most people set goals in the financial and career areas. If they meet these goals, they consider themselves successful. I believe setting goals in the additional five areas is essential because it forces us to focus time and effort into these areas that are naturally nurturing.

The first area is body—physical fitness, and health. We can establish goals that support our vitality and well-being. The second area is recreation and fun time. Unfortunately, most people schedule their work goals and not their fun time. My wife and I schedule our vacations at the beginning of the year; then we build our work around them. Otherwise, our play-time gets filled up with work. We also schedule ways to stretch into new kinds of recreation, so we might take tennis lessons, salsa dancing lessons, or a cooking class.

The third area is called personal goals. This includes things you want to do just because you want to do them. You might want to visit the Great Wall of China, or learn to play the piano, or grow a garden, or maybe act in a play.

The fourth area covers relationships with family and friends. We examine which relationships we may want to increase in number or deepen in depth. So one year, every

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Friday, we took someone we wanted to meet out to lunch. Another year, we went on hikes with people we already knew but with whom we wanted a deeper relationship. This year my relationship goal was to deepen my relationship with my two oldest sons who were very young when I got divorced. I've reconnected with them over the last eight years, but not as deeply as I've wanted, so I recently took one of them to Ireland for a week. Last summer, I took my youngest son to Europe for twelve days, and next year, we're taking the oldest to Africa with us. I've also been reaching out in other ways, like calling and visiting them more often.

The fifth area is called contribution—what legacy do you want to leave—for example, we've given away millions of dollars to eliminate illiteracy, stop child abuse, and provide prosthetic devices and wheelchairs for kids in need. We also do volunteer consciousness-raising work for prisoners, so they don't re-offend.

*What you've said reminds me of one of your success principles, "You have to say no to the good in order to say yes to the great." What does that mean?*

This idea is based on what is called the Pareto Principle, the 80/20 rule, which says that 80 percent of everything we want comes from 20 percent of the things we do. We get 80 percent of our satisfaction from 20

percent of our friends, we get 80 percent of our payoff from 20 percent of our activities, 80 percent of accidents are created by 20 percent of drivers. In other words, many of our activities are nonproductive. The more we can prune those things away the more space we have for what we love. A friend of mine writes in his book, we must have "say-no-to lists." For example, "I'm not going to open joke e-mails," or "I'm not going to deal with certain client questions that can be answered by my staff."

One statistic I saw recently stated that 50 percent of Americans don't like their jobs. When you feel dissatisfied, resentful, or envious because "they have it and I want it," that's a sign there's something you want that you're not willing to risk creating. Many people are afraid to take the risk. Life's already a risk. Every morning you get up is a risk. Why not say, "no" to the job that provides you with an income, but isn't providing passion and fulfillment, so you can say "yes" to something better. I've seen hundreds of people who in retirement finally feel free to do what they really want and end up making ten times more money than at the job they left.

Right now, for example, I have a great life and I've always wanted to impact the world on a much bigger level than I am currently. I'm being courted by Fox television to do my

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own talk show. Although I don't know if it will come to fruition, if it did, I would have to say "no" to my speaking schedule, my books, and my ability to go grocery shopping without being recognized. On the other hand, I would have the opportunity to affect millions of lives every day. It would allow me a platform for doing even greater philanthropic work.

*What is the one most important thing someone can do today to foster personal success?*

The one thing is actually a system. It's like opening a combination lock. You have to have all the numbers to the combination. If there are four numbers on that lock, but you only have two, you're not going to open that lock. If you've got all four but you've got them in the wrong order, the lock's still not going to open. Basically, you must have a system of interlocking principles and strategies carried out in some kind of orderly fashion to produce extraordinary success. The most important ones are clarity of purpose, vision, and goals.

Next, you must learn how to enroll other people into supporting your vision. Build the needed communication skills or team up with someone who has them. Then take

action. Many people know what they want, but are afraid to act. If fear is stopping you, then you must learn how to overcome fear. If negative beliefs are stopping you, you have to change those beliefs. The Science of Mind principles and my success principles really come into play here, because they teach how to do this. Once you take action, you must be open to feedback; if you're taking the wrong action and it's not working, you have to adjust. After that, you must persevere. Most people give up too soon. One hundred forty-four publishers rejected the *Chicken Soup* book, but the one hundred forty-fifth publisher said, "yes." If we'd given up after seventy attempts and said, "This is too hard, no body wants it," we wouldn't have a best-selling series.

Seek out those who have already done what you want to do and find out what the steps are. If you want to open a beauty salon and don't know how to begin, find people who have a beauty salon and ask how they got their start. Buy a book on it, listen to a set of tapes on it, and interview someone who has been there. If you do all those things, generally that's enough to initiate some major movement toward getting what you want in life. •