



Dear Dr. Mazie,

I'm at a point in my career where I feel a need to move forward and grow. I've asked for a promotion and more job responsibilities, but my supervisor doesn't think I'm ready. I have a great job, but I want to become more successful. Can you give me some guidance?

Maureen in Houston

I'm pleased that you're taking a proactive approach to advancing your career. Too many employees simply think that a certain amount of time on the job is a sufficient reason for a promotion and they do little, if anything, to make it happen. These are the folks that develop negative attitudes, become complainers and blame everyone else for being stuck in a rut.

While we all have some basic inherited traits and propensities, it's actually the choices we make that determine who we become. We are all living and growing organisms, created with free will and capable of changing our behaviors if we so choose. It may not always be easy, but it certainly is possible.

Several years ago, the Gallup Organization conducted a poll to identify what successful business people say about the important choices they have made. This poll, first identified individuals that were perceived by others as being successful. Success was defined not only in terms of significant accomplishments in a particular field, but the individual also had to be viewed as living a balanced and healthy life. Once the successful leaders were identified, they were asked to make a list of actions, choices and behaviors that they believed were crucial to their success.

Here are the top 15 actions rated crucial to success:

DO:

1. Having a personal faith in God is at the core of true happiness.
2. Find purpose and meaning in what you do or you will have no passion for life.
3. Understand that happiness comes from within yourself, not from external things.
4. Don't expect high achievement to bring supreme happiness.
5. As you become successful, share your success with others.
6. Understand that you can be successful in more than one field.
7. Fall in love with books; learn to enjoy reading.
8. Look for mentors that will guide you.
9. Don't allow yourself to be discouraged by obstacles.
10. Develop a clear set of goals.
11. Don't expect success to fall into your lap.
12. Place a high premium on developing common sense.
13. Know that success isn't necessarily a matter of genius.
14. Don't plan to rest on your laurels.
15. Regard material rewards as a byproduct of success, not a goal.

The National Speakers Association conducted another survey of successful business people to identify what they thought was the cause of other people's failures. We can look at the results of this research as the "don'ts" for personal and business success.

DON'T:

- Worry about things you cannot change
- Fail to live within your income
- Believe that success is measured by wealth
- Try and force your thoughts or attitudes on others
- Forget that forgiving and forgetting is the best way to get even
- Fail to put aside trivialities in order to accomplish the greater good
- Waste your time reading worthless books and magazines
- Think that others cannot get along without you
- Live without finding the purpose of your life
- Forget about your need for spiritual connectedness

What is particularly interesting is that these two very separate and secular organizations came up with complimentary results – a testament to their research methodology and the relevance of the findings to true success.

As we begin the new year, it's a perfect time to look back and review what has worked for us in the past and what hasn't. It's also the ideal time to decide what you are willing to do differently as you take control of your future success.

A nationally recognized speaker, workshop leader and trainer, Dr. Mazie Leftwich, Psy.D has a clinical background in applied psychology with expertise in organizational and personal development. She is Senior Vice President of Contract Land Staff, LLC, where she oversees training and team excellence programs.

