

The Common Denominator of Success

Several years ago, I was brought face to face with the very disturbing realization that I was trying to direct the efforts of a large number of men who were trying to achieve success, without knowing myself what the secret of success really was.

And so I set out on a voyage of discovery. In short, I was searching for the common denominator of success. And because that is exactly what I was looking for, that is exactly what I found.

The common denominator of success – the secret of every person who has ever been successful – lies in the fact that he or she formed the habit of doing things that failures don't like to do. It's just as true as it sounds and it's just as simple as it seems.

Perhaps you have wondered why it is that your most successful peers seem to like to do the things that you don't like to do. They don't. And I think this is the most encouraging statement I have ever offered to anyone.

But if they don't like to do these things, then why do they do them? Because by doing the things they don't like to do, they can accomplish the things that they want to accomplish. Successful people are influenced by the desire for pleasing results. Failures are influenced by the desire for pleasing methods and are inclined to be satisfied with such results as can be obtained by doing things they like to do.

Why are successful people able to do the things they don't like to do while failures are not? Because successful people have a purpose strong enough to make them form the habit of doing things they don't like to do in order to accomplish the purpose they want to accomplish.

That is why behind every success there must be a purpose.

Your purpose must be practical and not visionary. But in making your purpose practical, be careful not to make it logical. Make it a purpose of the emotional type. Remember needs are logical while wants are emotional. If your purpose is in terms of wants, then your wants will keep pushing you long after your needs are satisfied.

If it's a big purpose, you will be big in its accomplishment. If it's an unselfish purpose, you will be unselfish in accomplishing it. And if it's an honest purpose, you will be honest in the accomplishment of it. Don't ever forget that you will never succeed beyond the purpose to which you are willing to surrender. Furthermore, your surrender will not be complete until you have formed the habit of doing things that failures don't like to do.

Excerpted from Albert E. N. Gray's *The Common Denominator of Success*, 1940