

The Key Elements of Determination and Self Discipline on the Pathway to Success

By Craig Lock

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We hope that the following article (an extract from Craig Lock's manuscript on sport psychology 'The Winning Mind', or his "zany" self development work Steps to Success, Happiness and Prosperity, he's not sure which - sounds "funny, that") may be informative and helpful to your e-zine readers, or on your web site. You have permission to publish this article (formatted to 60 characters, approx) electronically or in print.

If Craig's articles help others "out there" in any way down the "river/rapids of life", then we're very happy.

"We share what we know, so that others may grow."

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THE KEY ELEMENTS OF DETERMINATION AND SELF DISCIPLINE ON THE PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

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"If a man has talent and cannot use it, he has failed. If he has a talent and uses only half of it, he has partly failed. If he has a talent and learns somehow to use the whole of it, he has gloriously succeeded and has a satisfaction and a triumph few men ever know."

- Thomas Wolfe

I think the key words in the path to success are:
DESIRE, DETERMINATION, DEDICATION and SELF DISCIPLINE.

Because everything starts out with the "seed of desire" - the reason why I started out writing - wanting to make a difference through my words. Others are FOCUS and a SINGLE-MINDEDNESS (in pursuit of one's goals). PERSISTENCE TOO - in large "heaps". The words 'determination' and (by association) 'ruthlessness', suggest a person who wants success and power for its own sake. This is another sort of obsession. However, a desire for power, riches and fame may have virtually nothing to do with it. By the way, I feel that not all successful people and business executives are ruthless - they are not all "money grabbing corporate raiders". Most of them are "normal and good family men", who have perfectly natural reactions in that they hate firing employees. "Soft gentle souls!"

Determination is often at its greatest, when a person is enslaved by an idea and wants to see the idea work. That's definitely me! There is a further sort of determination: the determination to see things through, to finish the job. For example, a compulsion to qualify for the PGA golf tour in America, to finish a building, or in my case to finish writing this manuscript...and then get it published... which is the hardest part of all. Especially with the way I write!

I suppose all these characteristics are somewhat abnormal; because so-called "normal" people are more passive and less focussed than us "obsessive types". They are regarded as being less "mad" by the majority of the public, who engage in more ordinary activities and have more "normal" occupations.

This thought leads me on to another question: Is the top-most level of success the only one worth having, or is it sufficient to merely enjoy sport for its own sake (even the professionals)? Does every player entering Wimbledon really think he or she is going to win the Championship? Or is it success itself just to play in the Wimbledon tournament? How realistic is the vision of success to YOU? It all depends on how you define success for yourself...which is the thought with which I introduced this chapter.

I believe that a strong SENSE OF DIRECTION or PURPOSE IN LIFE is a very important ingredient for success. So too is a persistent personality.

To be successful in whatever endeavour one chooses, first of all requires a great deal of talent. It might be latent, waiting to be uncovered. Perhaps, you are not even aware of it. I wonder how many budding Ayrton Senna's and Michael Schumachers there are around, who just have never had the opportunity (mainly in the form of money) to race cars? Motor racing is certainly the "ultimate rich boy's sport".

To finally reap the rewards of success, obviously talent has to be there on the long slow road to success - and at the

time of success...but has it always been there? Chess geniuses, athletes, tennis players, architects, athletes, scientists, dress designers and advertising creative directors. These "creative types"! There can be talent deep within; but there has to be hard work and training before the talent bears fruition - so that it can succeed against (all) others...and this often takes a great deal of time to bear fruit.

I believe in life it's firstly a matter of finding your "niche", then unlocking your unique talents...and finding it is the most difficult part. You may not even be aware you have any special gifts. That is the "key" to success. As I mentioned, I found whatever little ones I had through a process of serendipity... and it's probably my one and only talent! My writing, I mean. Once uncovered, it's then a question of building on it and maximising it. Maria Callas, the opera singer with "a voice like an angel" put a great deal of effort into maximising her talent. Sometimes a phenomenal talent, like a Juan Manuel Fangio*, Jim Clark or Ayrton Senna soars above all others; but in most cases it's the effort and total dedication put in to make the most of one's natural talents, that puts an individual into the realm of a superstar - someone who is on a different level, a cut above the best of the rest.

* Fangio won the World Driver's Championship five times.

One can sometimes substitute hard work, training, experience and strategy for flair. Nice word that 'flair'. Could be a girl's name. Some detectives are like "Mr Plod", while a few sleuths have the natural insight of a Sherlock Holmes. Most others have to get results through hard detailed work in uncovering cases. I don't yet know whether I'm a "natural" writer or a methodical plodder, a "gatherer and passer-onner of useless" information through a great deal of effort. Perhaps only time will tell!

I might have mentioned before (once, twice or ten times) that this manuscript has been written for anyone: from the most lowly amateur to the real 'pros' in the sporting world. No matter how lowly your abilities, make the most of them. As I mentioned already, a positive attitude to life is all-important. A positive attitude says that your natural talent can be maximised. It also says that without further effort, natural talent will be wasted. I do like repeating myself: for emphasis primarily and as a sign of oncroaching senility too.

Sometimes persistent effort alone won't succeed in getting you to the top - only sheer talent will do that... together with consistent effort to keep you at "the top of the tree". Never mind - no matter your field of endeavour in life,

JUST TRY TO IMPROVE yourself and simply DO YOUR BEST at all times.

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Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to use the Internet and he won't bother you for months...or perhaps even years!
(Sorry men!)

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