



What would you say if a teenager walked up to you and asked “What’s the key to success in life?”

This question was originally posted on a LinkedIn Group (social media site) by Mark McIntosh, The Comeback Coach and author.



Mark McIntosh "The Comeback Coach" is a speaker, author, coach, KUSA-TV host, entrepreneur



Carl Nielson Founder and Chief Discovery Officer at Success Discoveries

This question is an ideal conversation starter. As evidence in these pages, successful people absolutely love helping young people. For those of you with teenagers, encourage them to interview successful people in any career area they are interested in.

Carl Nielson
Chief Discovery Officer
Success Discoveries
and creator of Career Coaching for Students™
<http://www.careercoachingforstudents.net>



Comments (80+)

Ian Smith at Coloursmith Management Ltd

Being happy where you are in life and in what you're doing.



Denise E. White Sr. Digital Project Manager at ITV

Question everything. Don't believe everything you're told. Above all, believe in yourself, know yourself and understand that your thoughts, motivations and desires (good or bad) manifest your reality.

LAVKESH BANSAL Owner, Durga Dental Care & Research Centre. <http://d2dental.com>

First define "Success" for you as it is different for different people.
Then start working for it.
There would be lot of up's and down in your way.
The "key" is that though you should:
--- enjoy your up's but should not be overwhelmed with small steps and---don't let the Lows take you into depression.
You should keep the flame of the success burning inside you and find a way out of every situation.
Do remember the famous Quote:"KEEP WALKING"

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Shree Nanguneri President and CEO, Senior Master Black Belt, Polymer Consultant, Millennium Global Business Solutions Inc. USA

Happiness is real only when it is shared (a quote from a recent movie closing lines - forgot the title). Become your best in what you enjoy doing and most of all be 100 % passionate in whatever you do.



Beth Erez Experienced Business Development and Marketing Executive in the International Marketplace as well as being a Sculptor

While continuing to strive for what you want, always making the best of what you have.

Chaitanya Nabar IT Professional

Agree with the comments from Denise & Lavkesh. Add to that, conquer fear. Do not go by stereotyped definitions of "good" and "bad". Decide based on your own experiences. And keep learning.



Bharat Lohani Associate Professor & Entrepreneur at IIT Kanpur

Especially to teenagers--Know the value of time. It is said "time and wisdom never meet". Better said in hindi: Akl aur Umr ki Bhent Nahi Hoti Hai. By the time wisdom dawns on one a lot of valuable time has already gone by.



Gurinder Singh MD at Meditech Advisory

Be it a humble assignment or a lofty project, to me the key to success, is to first define a realistic and achievable goal ("always start with the end in mind") and then follow it with a single-minded devotion.



Brad Thomas IT Entrepreneur

Health comes first.



Carmelo Walsh President/CEO at Arizona Information Technology Management

A loving, healthy family, awesome and loyal friends, a career that allows me to have a work life balance. work should be last, you should never lay on your death bed and say "I could have put in another day at the office".





Gretchen (Kain) Yankanich Owner, G. A. Kain & Company

Passion is the key to success in all things - passion makes you tackle all that is hard and enjoy all that is received.



Tonya Harmon Founder at Harmony Information Systems, Inc.

Dream big. Do what you think is best, regardless of what others might say. Keep putting one foot in front of the other, even when you think you can't take one more step. Don't be afraid of hard work and tough choices. Treat others fairly and honestly, and people will want to work with you. Keep learning.

If you do all this in an effort to chase success, one day you will look back and realize the entire journey was successful.



Brady Pevehouse Commercial and Residential Real Estate

Answer is more simple that most think..... take care of family and friends. Knowing that you are the person people can rely on and trust is the most important aspect of being successful. Honor your name and your word and people will respect you for it.



Bhaskar T American Express

**Motivation and Target.
These two things drive everything in life.**

**The below things are byproducts of your motivation :
belief,confidence,consistency in effort,strategy,hardwork,single-minded devotion,conquer fear etc.**

So just become self motivating and motivate others.



Wayne Stotts Regional Sales Manager at Altosoft Corporation

Persistence



Minoo Saboori Business Development Executive, Marketing Innovator

To thine own self, be true.





Darla Loflin Customer Relations Manager

Patience



Jennifer Davey Small Business Coach and Marketing Strategist

Believe in yourself and follow your passions. Success will follow.

I have found that there is a ton of room at the top, and not so much in the middle. If you go after what you want (your passions) and don't stop halfway there, you will succeed.



Duke Butler Strategy and Corporate Development at Duke Butler

Do what you love - just make sure you are well prepped to be the best. For example, if you love medicine, make sure you build a strong math/science foundation and attend the best program available to you. If you crave stability make sure you become a teacher, government worker, nurse, doctor, etc. These occupations generally have predictable income, stability and pension and on a per hour worked basis will provide a great return. If your passion is to innovate and you are comfortable with risk, definitely work for yourself and be prepared to work horrifically hard no matter what (and be prepared for times of little or no income)....



Randal Shepherd Veara, Inc.

Be persistent, get smart, save money, have choices and enjoy!



Nicola McAdam Co-Founder & Client Services Director, Defected.

Believing that anything you want in life is within your reach, whether it's money, love, or an amazing body. All you need is a strategy. Determine where you want to be, and make it happen, whatever the cost.



Kevin Finch Network Administrator / Business Continuity Planner at DST Systems

I'd say the same thing I tell my four year old _every_ night before she goes to bed: "You can do anything in this world you want to. ANYTHING. As long as you set your mind to it, and work hard."

I might also add the very next thing I'll tell my four year old, if appropriate: "If anybody ever tells you that you can't do something just because you're a girl, they're wrong. Girls can do anything boys can do, and some things girls can do better."

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Mike Kramer President/CEO of Synthetic Fuels Corp.

Do what you love and you will never work a day in your life!



Amit Singh CEO at Progressive Politics

Self Discipline



Jan Weiss Owner at Artprints-Online.com

Do not burn bridges - ever! Respect those you meet in any business including teachers, future employers, the person serving you food in a restaurant. You never know when you may need to call on them for help. Follow your passion, take baby steps when the whole picture becomes overwhelming and after all this - do what you love. The money will follow.



Ellen Friedland President of and Producer at Award-Winning Corporate Video Production Firm and Documentary Company

While always keeping your eyes on the goals ahead, don't forget to pay attention to the activities on the sides of the road. Sometimes the detours are more fulfilling than the pre-planned track and present new paths to forge.



James Matthews Electrical Engineer and Project Manager

Imagine your ideal career then align yourself with the best possible mentors and seek out like-minded peers for friendship. Then, work hard, work smart and never give up. Manage your finances well and learn to type at least 75 WPM so you can rapidly move through e-mail and reports. To this I would add the following quote.

"If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours." -- H.D. Thoreau



Evan Greenbaum President at Tru-Step Solutions Inc.

Though many believe "The Secret" to be some magical law of attraction, I believe "The Real Secret" is: Figure out what you love doing most, and then figure out a way to earn a living doing it. You may or may not be rich, but if you love what you do, then you'll be happy.





Ruth Anazia Owner at Best Business Solutions

If you help others succeed, then you will succeed. Don't be selfish and greedy. Don't be arrogant and prideful but be humble.

Gail Zabel President at Bellwind Consultants

Everyone has provided great responses but I think there is an essential ingredient to success that has not been mentioned. Integrity. You can never achieve personal or professional success permanently if you don't pursue your goals with integrity. I suspect there are a lot of CEO's sitting in prison who would agree with that including Bernie Madoff if they thought about it.



David Bassham Owner Bassham & Associates, Consulting, Training, Coaching

Great question Mark. I read through all of the answers you have already gotten and agree with each to a great extent. If I had to pick only one, it would be to Find something that you love and find a way to make a living out of it.

Sean Killen Domestic and International Sales at ClickEquations

I would first have to understand what that teenagers definition of success is, one can't give directions if they walk another path. If we agree that success in life is equal to happiness, then my response would be to do what you want, not what you think you're supposed to. It may not always be the easy choice, but it will always be the right one. It may not lead to money, fame or social recognition; but if you do this, you will be walking your own path to success, which is really the only one there is. You may one day realize that what you thought you wanted isn't what you want, thats okay. This is a necessary process of elimination, not a mistake or misjudgement. Knowing what you don't want is just as valuable as knowing what you do...good luck.



Tom McDonough Identity Theft Solutions, Group Benefit & Small Business Specialist

Work on your SELF. Become the best possible person you can be. Prepare yourself for success. Read "Success for Teens" by Jeff Olson and never stop learning from the masters. They have paved the way for you.



Tim Connelly EVP Sales/Business Development

"Attitude is Altitude"

I just came back from a industry conference meeting where the keynote speaker was Nick Vujicic. Nick was born with no arms and no legs. Yet he has accomplished amazing things in his life. Nick took the audience on an emotional and captivating journey that let us learn the tremendous adversity he has faced and how "Attitude" has helped him to achieve his goals and dreams and how it allows him to never give up.

While his message is applicable for all ages, it is especially important to teenagers today. For an excerpt of one





of his speeches, go to: <http://www.attitudeisaltitude.com/store-heartheheart.php> .

Truly inspirational!



Varun Chandra Research Associate at IIM Ahmedabad

I will say that you need to have a LEG where L stands for Willingness to Learn , E stands for enthusiasm , and G stands for Goals
If you have these 3 things there can be no one who can stop you from achieving what ever u desire



Steve Gamlin Owner, Inspired By Steve

- 1) Decide what you want your life to mean, and what you wish to create and receive
- 2) maintain a positive attitude (do no harm)
- 3) surround yourself with the right, positive people
- 4) always remember to express gratitude



Todd Bagley Keytro.com ... where businesses in need find, meet, and buy from solution sales professionals

Most of the key ideas are already stated above... here is another layer...

read your history books... develop a deep appreciation for all that you have today (through understanding what those before us did not)... treasure the legacies of our countless forefathers from which you derive benefit every day, yet you did not build or create yourself... and remember always that this world is not about yourself, it is about "us"...

... and remember that the people living 100 years ago lived were people too, they dealt with pretty much all the same issues (perhaps in a different context) that we deal with today,... and they survived and thrived.

you can too!



Van Warner President at Warner Telecom, Inc.

Set goals, work hard, persevere, surround yourself with succesful people, have integrity, even when it's not convenient or popular. Thank your Creator every morning and night for your blessings. (ie; be humble)



Mike Moore BDO Seidman, LLP - Cost Segregation Services

Follow the Golden Rule always
Stay humble yet remain confident.
Always take the difficult right over the easy wrong.

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**Promise to learn something new each day.
The rest will fall in line**



Brenda Krueger Huffman President, Dona, LLC, a business development, business analysis & growth, business strategy & marketing company

Be open - to new people, new places, and new thought with new knowledge. Realize that new anything brings new energy to your life. Embrace change and risk. Do not make fear based decisions for your life. Know that the worst that can happen is you will hear no or not like a choice you made after all, and more times than not you will hear yes and you will love the choice you made.

Treat others as you would like to be treated. Do not allow fear or peer pressure to stop you from standing up to the bullies you may encounter in life and for what is right for you and others. Doing the right thing will always make a difference.

Be open especially to who you will become as you experience life and make choices in your life. Know that who you are today will not be who you will be in 5, 10, 15, 20 years from now.....and that is a good thing that reflects your growth and evolution. Never stop learning, and never judge a book by its cover. Life really is an adventure and attitude is everything!



Steve Stokes Your Friendly Neighborhood Inventor -- LinkedIn Q&A

How much are you willing to pay to know the answer to that question, kid?



Nancy Jalaty Environmental Industry Executive Recruiter 3000+

Never quit!



James Brown Copywriter, "LION,"web copywriter, marketing

Find people who are successful at what you want to do and copy what they do. Also decide early in life-what are you passionate about and how can you make a living at it.

Spend a lot of time at the library. Everything you need to know about success has already been written.

Look at the law of attraction and the so-called secret. This is nothing new. "The science of getting rich." was written around 1910. Elements of the book were then used by others in the motivational and self-help field. Tony Robbins tells you that when he says he read over 700 books on success and such.





Jarie Bolander VP of R&D, Tagent Corporation

Be Persistence, Be Patient, Be Fair and Be Helpful.



Robert Graydon Experienced, innovative Supply Chain and Consulting Professional seeking a new opportunity

First, I would be shocked if a teenager diverted their attention away from texting or tweeting long enough to ask the question.

However, if it did happen, I would tell them (as many others have mentioned above), be true to yourself. Pursue your dreams.

Anita J Manager-HR/Client Relations/ Business Development at Miracle Software Inc

Fear of God..

Anita



John Tschurjumov Sales Engineer

Be yourself



Kash Vyas Sales Executive

Goals!

"Success is Goals....everything else is commentary."



Tobi Awoyemi DIRECTOR at ENTERPRISE CRAFT

Believe that with God, all thing are possible, SO GO FOR YOUR DREAMS!



Tom Chambers, MBA Chief Executive Officer

Become aware... the unexamined life is not worth living.





Laura Canales CPA Business nurturer, advisor and educator

Do what you love and love what you do. Underpromise and overdeliver. Remember that a good reputation is your best asset, and that a bad reputation precedes you everywhere.

Richard Beauchamp Founder & CEO, Networking Minds Inc.

The key to success in life is balance and harmony with the magic seven:

- 1. Health
- 2. Family
- 3. Friends
- 4. Knowledge
- 5. Time
- 6. Money
- 7. Philanthropy

Once you achieve a balance in the magic seven you will find true happiness in life.

This is your master key to success!

Success = True Happiness

Find mentors to help you unlock the doors to the magic seven.

Health always takes priority! If you take care of your health, you will be able to take care of others.

I wish you a long happy life!



Richard Beauchamp Founder & CEO, Networking Minds Inc.

"The Magic Seven", now that sounds like the making of a good inspirational book!

Go ahead somebody please use it. Just remember where the idea came from and make a donation to a new international non-profit organization that is launching this year Seebix International with the mantra "Creating Jobs to Combat Poverty". Thank you!



Thomas F. Reaach Business Development Talk 2 Brazil

Enjoy each phase of life as you evolve through it. Remember, follow and interact with the people you meet in each phase, starting at 13 !





Gregg Salser, MBA Experienced Training, Sales & Marketing Leader

Finding a career you really enjoy, living your life with ethical and moral standards, Follow Christ in your daily life, Love and show respect to others, Have no expectations from others, Give to others, Show compassion for others, Treat everyone as equal, & PRAY.



Dr. Alexander Stein Clinical and Business Psychoanalyst + Consultant/Coach + Psychoanalytic Journalist + Independent Scholar + Entrepreneur

First: "Hello. It's really good to meet you. What's your name?" (being social is not trivial) Then: "It seems like you already have a keen instinct for one important answer: asking good questions." I might also add something about listening, thinking critically, and being curious about the why and how of everything. I'd probably also offer that there's a lot to be said for being non-conformist but involved with people and society, and that, maybe most importantly, ideas like "being successful" are best embodied and achieved when primarily self-defined. And before we parted ways, I'd probably ask if there are any other questions (and the whole time I'd be wondering where such a teenager came from!)



Celeste Tyree Owner, A Better Fundraiser, Inc

I am sure that teenagers right now are not too concerned with their future but some are lucky at a young age to know their passion. I did not find mine until late in life and I will say that persistence and passion are key. Every thing we see in the news about success makes it appear to be something that happens overnight. My advice sit down and talk to a successful person...overnight is not reality. Persistence and passion are what it takes.

**Celeste
President and CEO
www.abetterfundraiser.com**



Steve Kelly COO

Remain Teachable.



Hortense HALLE Management of Artistic and Cultural Projects

success is not a destination, it's a journey





Ben Gillis Principal at Industry-Strength Solutions

Follow your passions. Don't follow the "rat race" for "success" with something your heart's not into.



Harriet Diamond Health & Vitality Educator/Coach

Discover your uniqueness and get comfortable with it no matter what it is. Make a business out of it so that you feel excited and passionate everyday and make sure that it contributes and adds value to the world.



Anjali Bansal Online Marketing & Market Research

"Mistakes Increases the experiences & Experiences decreases the mistakes". Follow this & Develop Positive Attitude towards life.



Mark Montanaro Legal Consultant

"There is only one success - to be able to spend your life in your own way." - Christopher Morley



Venkatesh Krishnamurthy Program Manager at Mahindra Satyam

Success is relative word, once success in life could be others first milestone in life. So be happy in what you are doing or would like to do. If thinking and doing are balanced success is a milestone in life.



Jason Wei Vice President

"What do you mean by "success"? I have a very good friend who is a famous mathematician, but chooses to be a homeless person. He is happy both academically and sleep under the bridge."



Deepti Kolte Assistant Manager, SCM at Maersk Logistics

Never let your dreams go..





Leo Nacelli Senior Systems Architect and Entrepreneur, with a focus on Media and Web technologies.

Stay healthy, take care of family and friends. Think before you commit and when you do, deliver. Your word and your name are your best billboard. Don't be afraid to fail, most successful people have many times. Be charitable and live each day like it's your last. And for my teens, don't worry, you will always have a place to come home to.



Abhijith Nandakumar Team Lead @ PSI Data Systems (Aditya Birla - Minacs)

Work with desire and not with an aim
A man of ability and the desire to accomplish something can do anything



Thomas B. Donohue, Jr., CPA Certified Public Accountant specializing in the direct selling industry

Be willing to do what the majority are NOT willing to do.



Gary Lahti Business development professional

The foundation of success is built on drive, dedication, education and integrity.



CHUCK DUNCAN EVANGELIST for RIGHT CAUSE

Curiosity.



Leah de Souza Company Director / Workplace Learning & Development Professional

Key to success in all areas of life? I would have to say discipline. You can be as smart, courageous and ambitious as ever, but discipline allows you to stick through the hard times and keep you focused on your goals. It is fueled by your passion, drive and enthusiasm yet keeps you on track. Of all the skills, this is the one I come back to most when I want to achieve something.

Naveed A. Khan Corporate Strategy Analyst at Xerox

I like Mark Montanaro's comment. Mine is: Do the right thing.





James W. (Jim) Rodgers Experienced Systems Developer, Electrical Engineer, and Senior Technical Management Consultant

So many wonderful remarks. I especially liked several of them. Now, let me offer a different kind of answer; perhaps, it is one you would not expect in this discussion.

We have mentors, teachers, counsellors.. and, especially, HEROes. We admire heroes, and often we hope to be like one of our heroes. And, in the semi-conscious daily practice of self-improvement, we not only want to be like these ideal persons, but we may even believe we ALL should be like that. In other words, we develop a sense of right and wrong based on our admiration and respect of our heroes.

But this perspective or attitude or habit or whatever... it is not all good. Frankly, I am sick to hell of people trying to tell me what to do. People who do not want what I want think I am wrong-headed. And when others reveal their bad habits in this way, we realized that it is they who are unhappy... uncomfortable, afraid, unsure, worried.

The following quotation is about this problem. It says, in a sublime and slightly indirect way, simply this: you NEED to be YOURSELF and others need to be themselves. It is necessary, by the Grace of God; and it is a good thing.

Now, the quotation:

"It is not our purpose to become each other;
it is to recognize each other,
to learn to see the other and honor him for what he is."

— Hermann Hesse



CHUCK DUNCAN EVANGELIST for RIGHT CAUSE

I love Hermie!



Kathryn A Pusch President & Broker, ConsultKAP, Inc.

Wow, what a great question. Not that a teenager can really "hear" and understand what we each learn as wisdom through our own experiences . . . BUT, I would say:

Be introspective enough to learn about yourself, love and respect yourself.

Listen to others who love you and not those who do not.

You "get" out of any relationship commensurate with what you "give."

Be persistent, patient, and tireless in pursuing what you are passionate about.

Have faith, hope, and charity.

Love BIG.

Don't look back, except to learn.

Remember what Winston Churchill said:

"Success is not final;

Failure is not fatal.

It is the courage to continue that counts."

Also, read the Desiderata Poem by Max Ehrmann.

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Nikhil Shah Experienced RFIC/Mixed Signal/Custom Analog Layout Engineer looking for Layout Work.

All of these responses are fantastic. I would like to further that with my 2Cents. Be in touch with top guys who make the decisions. Be opportunistic and remember the two lines below very well. Many will disagree with me, but I am writing these two lines from my experience.

"It's is not how much you know, It's who you know that matters." also "It's what you know about, whom you know."

... BTW, I am going to take this opportunity to market my skills in RFIC, Custom Analog and Mixed Signal Layout design, if any one know any company/manager, who might need a good layout engineer, I am looking for work, please send me an email.



Nikhil Shah Experienced RFIC/Mixed Signal/Custom Analog Layout Engineer looking for Layout Work.

The town in India, where I am from, the movie theaters would send many people out on the street with drums beating and the advertisement of the movie with hours of show. And as a result, the movie theaters would have a houseful show.

Hence, the conclusion, if you want to be successful then,

"Beat up your own drums, cause no one else will do it for you.



Gabrielle Yetter President at The Brightside Group Inc

I would tell them to believe in themselves and that anything is possible. Always do the right thing. Treat people fairly. Live each day with passion and focus on the positive. And whatever you put out there always comes back to you.



Lopa Patel MBE Digital Media Entrepreneur

"10,000 hours of practice is the magic number to greatness" (Malcolm Gladwell)

Juliana Triadafilopoulos Project Manager at KZero, a virtual worlds consultancy

Having no regrets and going after everything you wish for. There is no way of getting "it" if you do not try!



Lalit Kumar Verma Research Fellow at National University of Singapore

HARD WORK! there is no substitute for this one.





Rahul Johri DGM Broadband at MTNL

I agree 100% with what Gabrielle has said . Don't let success go to your head. Keep your life style simple and your attitude down to earth.

Srikanth RS at Help Station

**Never stop learning:
No matter if it is your own blunders!!**



Patricia Jackson Leadership Expert; Business Consultant, Trainer, Motivational Coach and Speaker

My answer to the teenager would be; "they are the key to their success,"

