

**The  
Success-Driven  
Life**

*Guides to Achieving a Life of Significance*

**Eugene C. Onyibo**

**The  
Success-Driven  
Life**

*Guides to Achieving  
a Life of Significance*

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## **Dedication**

*To my beloved wife, Ijeoma, for innumerable reasons.*

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## Author's Note

It is fun being a coach. Assisting people to achieve happy lives by setting and accomplishing the right goals is something I love doing. For me, being a life coach is not just a job. Rather, it is more of a hobby. It is what I can do in the absence of any financial reward. I am happy that I love what I do because I do what I love. Empowering people is a task life coaches/trainers perform as a professional obligation. Their success in their profession is largely determined by the impacts they make on people's lives. *Anyone who calls himself a coach but is not positively impacting lives should have a rethink because he is only bearing a title.*

Prior to my debut in public speaking, life coaching, training and mentoring; my interest was limited to being a speaker. I had no desire or passion of becoming an author. That was why I started a career in public speaking without any publication. Worse still, I also started the career without plan of writing any book. During those days, towards the end of each seminar, the audience would request that I recommend some publications that explain the subjects I taught them in detail. I would always do that, even with joy and gladness. Sometimes, I referred my audience to some bookshops. I also referred them to some online resources.

Some attendees of my seminars suggested that I should articulate my ideas in publications, as it is practically impossible to exhaust the content of a subject in a seminar. I was also advised to do so to make my teachings available to a wider audience, especially people who may never be able to attend my programmes. What was unknown to me then was that the suggestions of my students were invitations to another successful career. The suggestions made sense to me when I reflected on them. I became convinced

that becoming an author would be of significant benefits to my career in public speaking, coaching and mentoring.

Becoming an author is one of the best things that happened to my life. It has also been of tremendous benefits to my career in public speaking. *Writing and speaking are complementary and mutually beneficial careers because; while an author's programmes are the best platforms for promoting his publications, his publications are the best products for promoting him and his programmes.* Hence, there is a symbiotic relationship between writing and speaking. I will say authoritatively that each of the professions is incomplete without the other. Perhaps, this is why it is difficult, if not impossible, to see a successful author who is also not a successful public speaker, coach or trainer; or a successful public speaker, coach or trainer who is also not a successful author.

This observation and my experiences in both careers compel me to encourage public speakers or coaches who are not authors to consider building a parallel career in writing, because the merits of the career combination are innumerable. For instance, I have secured speech engagements effortlessly through my books. In addition, having publications is also a source of income to a speaker during every programme he speaks. The larger the audience is, the higher the probability of making more sales. The best buyers of an author's books are usually his audience, and the best selling opportunities are usually his programmes.

These were among the factors that motivated me to pursue a career in writing, in addition to my career in public speaking. This book, ***Pathway to Success: Roadmap to Unlimited Sustainable Success***, is the first in my series. It was written and published in obedience to the advice of the attendees of my earliest seminars. The first

edition of the book was published and released in 2010. I am very delighted with its reception in the market since its release. Between then and now, I have also written and published nine motivational books, which are also very accepted in the market. The fact that the book is the first in a successful series is one of the reasons I hold it in high esteem. Its release marked the beginning of a fruitful and profitable career in writing.

This is why I remain grateful to the attendees of my earliest seminars who spotted the gap and advised me to fill it. I am happy that I positively impact more lives through my books than through my speeches. Though many people who (have) attend(ed) my trainings have read my books; there are more people who have read my books without having any physical contact with me. Many of them get back to me through emails and telephone calls. Another reason I hold this book in high esteem is that it is the most general interest book in all my publications. It is a book for everyone irrespective of sex, age, complexion, profession height, religion, nationality, race, etc . While the contents of all the other books I wrote are relevant to specific categories of people (as they address unique problems and challenges), the content of this book is relevant to everyone, since its focus is *personal development*.

This is why I describe it as *the foundational knowledge for success*. It is the essential knowledge without which success cannot be achieved, no matter how it is pursued. One of the most significant observations I made from this book and my trainings is that though personal development is very vital to the success of any individual; it is one of the aspects of knowledge that is often most disregarded by most people, though to their peril. Indeed, this is most unfortunate. It is a pity that most people are hardly interested (or rather, uninterested) in this aspect of knowledge, despite their

passion for success. It is very worrisome that everyone is interested in achieving success, but most people are not interested in qualifying themselves to achieve success through adequate preparation. This is one of the reasons most people will never succeed in life, no matter how hard they try.

*Anyone who makes his personal development impossible makes failure inevitable in his life. By this token, anyone who prioritises his personal development makes his success in life inevitable. Anyone who makes personal development possible makes failure impossible in life. These are fundamental truisms about life. They are also obvious truths of life, though many people are ignorant of them. Indeed, personal development is vital and very essential for a successful life. It is a precondition for achieving a happy life. These are some lessons of life I learnt from experiences, observations and personal reflections. I also learnt that what people achieve in life is determined more by who they are, than what they want, and what they are is determined by what they know, while what they know is determined by their experiences, trainings and observations. This is why what you know and what you do with it, to a very great extent, determine how far you will go in life, and also how successful you will be.*

This edition of this publication has been upgraded and repackaged. Some ideas in the past edition have been reviewed in order to accommodate, or reflect, the remarks of some readers of the past editions. In addition, the deeper insights I got on my ideas in the first edition of this book while speaking to numerous audience have also been integrated in this edition. Besides, the ideas in this book have been reviewed to meet the developments in the ever increasing world of knowledge. As earlier remarked, this book is for everyone. As a matter of fact, it is the book for you! It contains

the foundational truths for achieving a happy and successful life. Indeed, this book offers you the blueprint for the journey to success. Consequently, digesting the content and applying it to your life will unarguably be a success catalyst dosage. It is a book for everyone who is sincerely, honestly, earnestly and conscientiously passionate about achieving a happy and successful life.

## Introduction

Though every success starts with desire, desire alone is insufficient to occasion success. Desire is a necessary, though insufficient, precondition for achieving success. *If wishes were sufficient to translate desires into realities, everyone would have been successful.* If wishes and desires were enough to make every human aspiration and ambition a reality, everyone would also have been successful. Every human being naturally desires, values, loves, appreciates and yearns for success.

Unfortunately, success is, and will remain, beyond the reach of most people. This is why successful people are exceptional and few. *There would be nothing special about being a success if successful people were common.* Though everyone wants to be successful, people's attitudes towards the pursuit of success vary. This is one of the reasons the results people get in the pursuit of success also vary. No one wants to be identified with (a) failure. *Failure is an orphan, while success is a child of many parents.*

But why do some people succeed while others fail? Why do some people succeed with very little effort while others work very hard but have nothing (meaningful) to show for their efforts, even year after year? Why do some people accomplish (almost) every goal they set while others cannot accomplish most (if not the least) of their set goals? Why are some people very successful while others are failures? What are the secrets of success? How can a person become a success? How can failure be avoided?

I am often confronted with the above questions by the attendees of some seminars when I speak. Very often, I have no difficulty

realising that the questions are usually asked by people who are (consistently) unable to achieve success, despite all the efforts they channel towards its pursuit. It is natural to be confused when you put in the best of your efforts in the pursuit of a goal; yet, the goal consistently and continuously proves unrealisable. Such experience can easily lead to frustration and depression in life.

*One of the most difficult pains to bear is working hard but achieving little.* Such experience is unarguably a source of sadness, depression and discomfort. However, it is not a surprise that this is the experience of most people. This is why poor hardworking people abound everywhere. Worse still, there are some people who work very hard but achieve nothing. For such people, their efforts towards achieving success is continuously unable to attract any meaningful value to their lives.

Though the above questions can be, has been, and is being, answered in different ways, as there is no single route to success or failure; one of the answers I usually give to the questions is that people should identify where they belong in life. *In the journey to success, there are basically twelve categories of people.* The people in each of the categories desire success, but differ in their attitudes towards its pursuit. The category you belong, which is determined by your attitudes, determines the results you get.

Perhaps, this is why it is usually said that what you get in life is not determined by what you want, but by who you are. Who you are determines what you do, and what you do determines what you get. Hence, who you are determines what you get. When you understand these categorisations of people, you may decide to change your present condition by migrating to a better group. This

involves a total change of attitude towards life. *It is a fundamental truism that nothing will change in your life until you change.*

This requires a high level of self-discipline to achieve. Perhaps, it is the most important war you will fight in life. The outcome of the war will determine your destiny. *Nothing will change around you until something changes within you.*<sup>1</sup> If you remain in the category you are, you will continue to do what you have always done and also continue to get the results you have always got. According to Albert Einstein, “Doing the same thing over and over but expecting a different result is one of the definitions of insanity.”

*The first category consists of people who have no focus, dream, vision, direction, ambition, target, goal, etc in life.* Such people never get started in life because they have no (clear sense of) direction. They live in the world of anything-life-offers-is-acceptable. They are on a journey to no destination all through their lives. They dream of success, but never go beyond wishful thinking. Sometimes, they fantasise about an amazing future. They live in a dream world. Though they have no focus, they desire success, even more than focused and hard working people.

One attitude some people in this category have is that they are very good at devaluing people’s accomplishments. For instance, when someone builds a house, they will say something like, “Why is that man being celebrated for building only a house? When I am ready to build, I will build an estate.” When they also hear that someone has bought a car, they will say something like, “Buying a car is not

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene C. Onyibo and Ethelbert Arua OSJ, ***Rich God, Poor Believers: The Secrets of Overcoming Poverty by God’s Children***, (Lagos: Skyheight Success Consult, 2013), p.108.

a sign of being rich.” This is why they have serious difficulty with celebrating other people’s achievements.

However, they often believe that success can be accidentally achieved effortlessly. This is why they usually believe in miracle, luck, chance, fate, providence, destiny and fortune. In their opinions, successful people are so because of providence and luck, not because of their efforts. Indeed, this is self-deceit and a self-defeating philosophy. One of the reasons success remains beyond the reach of this category of people, even for the rest of their lives, is that reality starts and ends with dream in their world.

Though a dream may lead to reality, it is not, and will never be, the same with reality. No matter how good and beautiful a dream may be, it will remain a dream until it is acted on. Besides, you must wake up and go to work before your dream will become a reality. *No wishful thinking, desire, wish, expectation, aspiration, ambition, etc can translate any dream into reality without work.* Nothing will work in your life until you work. Their ugly conditions of living will last for the rest of their lives, except they change.

*The second category consists of people who have no personal focus, dream, vision, direction, ambition, target, goal, etc in life.* Consequently, they follow the wishes of others. The events of their lives are dictated by people’s opinions, wishes, expectations and preferences. People in this category live as others wish, rather than as they wish. This is a very dangerous category for any adult to belong because such life is best for underage children. It is a lifestyle that is most unworthy and most undesirable of any adult.

The difference between people in the first category and those in the second category is that while those in the first category have no focus, dream, vision, direction, ambition, target, goal, etc in life at all; the focus, dream, vision, direction, ambition, target and goals of those in the second category are not self-made. As an adult, though you should allow people (though not anyone or everyone) to advise you, you should not allow anyone to take decision on any issue that (directly) concerns or affects your life. *Life is best when it is lived on personal convictions, resolutions and decisions.*

Since you will be praised for your success, but blamed for your failures; you should take 100% responsibility for your life.<sup>2</sup> This attitude should start from taking decisions on issues about your life. *As a rule of life, decision on an issue of life should always be made by the person who will accept responsibility for it.* It is inappropriate to allow anyone to decide how your adult life will be lived. No human being is more qualified than yourself to take that decision. It is your responsibility to do so. So, accept it!

*The third category consists of people who set goals, plan, but do not act.* The factor that differentiates them from those in the former categories is planning, which is necessary but insufficient for success. Sometimes, people in this category have so many goals and plans that they are confused about the steps to take. They are usually excited about their dreams, visions, hopes, desires, expectations, goals and plans. This is why, sometimes, they even celebrate their dreams, visions and desires as accomplishments.

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<sup>2</sup> Jack Canfield, *How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be: The 25 Principles of Success*, (Great Britain: Clays Ltd., 2007), p.1-4.

They are often delighted with sharing their dreams with people, only to go back later to justify why they could not be executed. They are very energetic when it comes to talking, but very weak and incapacitated in taking actions. This is why they often waste a great deal of time talking, rather than taking actions. This is also why I describe people in this category as *talking people*. However, like people in the first category, there is no provision for action in their lives. People in this category are not candidates for success.

*The fourth category consists of people who set unrealistic and irrational goals.* People in this category fail because they set unreasonable goals. Some good features they have, unlike the people in the first and third categories, are that they are not only action-oriented, but also very hardworking. Unfortunately, their efforts towards achieving success are usually wasteful and unproductive because they always fail. This is why, like people in the above categories, they are also not candidates for success.

But why does this category of people also fail in life, despite having big visions, being very hardworking and action-oriented? The reason is that they do not believe that life's journey is one step at a time. They believe in starting from the top. This is why they always bite more than they can chew. According to Martin Luther King (Jnr.), "Nothing in this world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity." People in this category will never succeed, as success starts from setting the right goals.

*The fifth category consists of people who act with neither goal-setting nor planning.* People in this group always do things at random, though they may be working very hard. One of their unique features is that they are the most confused about success. The reason is that they often work very hard, even more than

necessary, but always achieve little, if any thing. They usually have no meaningful results to show for their efforts. They are usually disorganised, confused, uncoordinated and disordered.

They often waste their efforts by channeling them into the wrong directions. This is why they are unproductive or failures, despite working very hard. They have speed, passion, enthusiasm and energy, but lack direction, strategy, tactics and focus. According to Stephen Covey, “Where you are headed is more important than how fast you are going.” Their experiences show that working hard, the only skill most people know when it comes to the pursuit of success and excellence, is insufficient for achieving success.

*The sixth category consists of people who set goals and plan in ignorance before taking actions.* It is important to be mindful of the fact that people in this category are not lazy because they take actions on their set goals and plans. It is also important to note that people in this category also do not take actions with neither goal-setting nor planning. However, like people in the fourth and fifth categories above, they are also very confused about the fact that the efforts they channel towards the pursuit of success always fail.

However, it should not be difficult to understand the root cause of the problems of people in this category. To understand this, you should answer the question, “What is the difference between the man who has no tool and the man who has the wrong tool?” What is the difference between a man who wants to cut grasses but has no cutlass and another man who also wants to cut grasses but has a hammer or a ruler? *Acting on goals that are set in ignorance could be as good as acting with neither goal-setting nor planning.*

This is why such people are not candidates for success, no matter how hard they work. *It is very disappointing, painful, irritating*

*and worrisome to remark that this is the category most people belong. This is why many people work very hard but have nothing meaningful to show for their efforts. Since success is not a product of accident, it is irrational to expect a decision that was made in ignorance to produce a reliable guide to success. You must act on informed decisions before you can succeed in any endeavour.*

*The seventh category consists of people who set goals, plan, but never complete what they ought to do in order to accomplish their set goals. People in this category are better than those in the first category because they have focus and direction. They are also better than those in the third category because they act on their set goals. However, like those in the categories above, they are also not candidates for success because they always abandon their goals after acting on them for a while. They do not complete what they ought to do in order to accomplish their set goals.*

When they abandon a goal at the middle of the road, even the new goals that fascinate their attentions are also not completed before they are also abandoned for other goals. They have a reputation for attempting many things, but never completing anything. They are very excellent at trying many things, but failing in all of them. They just cannot get anything done. People in this category continuously remain unable to achieve success because it is difficult to succeed in something that is not completed. *Success necessarily implies accomplishment or completion.*

*The eighth category consists of people who set more goals than they can accomplish at a time, but strive to actualise all of them at the same time. The attitudes of people in this category are very closely related to those in the fourth category above. The people in both categories cannot get anything done simply because they*

always bite more than they can chew. However, the difference between them is that while those in the fourth category set irrational and unreasonable goals, those in the eighth category set multiple reasonable goals they cannot accomplish.

People in this category always strive to achieve beyond their natural and human capacities because they cannot *prioritise*.<sup>3</sup> They are usually perfectionists. They love doing things perfectly. They are hardly satisfied with other people's performance. This is why they believe that no one can perform any task better than themselves. This is also why they cannot delegate the least of their tasks, even when they have competent subordinates who are available to assist them. People in this group are not candidates for success because they waste a lot of time on simple tasks.

*The ninth category consists of people who set goals, plan but act without their plans. Can you imagine going to an examination hall, but refusing to write with your pen? Can you also imagine going to a farm with a hoe and a cutlass, but refusing to work with neither of them when you get to the farm? These examples best describe what people in this category do. They waste time setting goals and planning because they always do nothing with their plans and set goals. People in this category, like those in the former categories, are also not candidates for success.*

*In the tenth category, there are people who set goals, plan, act, fail but give up. They are convinced that the fact that they failed implies that they will never succeed. They have difficulty doing away with the past. As a result, they often live with the past in the present. This is why they are perpetually haunted by their pasts.*

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter Seven for a detailed discussion of *Prioritising* as a *Key Success Tool*.

They are yet to understand that winners never quit, and quitters never win. In addition, they often fail to realise that success is usually preceded by failures, and also that failure could be the ‘gateway to’, ‘foundation of’ and ‘stepping stone to’ success.

*The eleventh category consists of those who are not willing to accept responsibilities for their lives. Rather, they want others to take responsibilities for their lives, even as adults. They like to spend their entire lives as dependents. There are two features that are common to people in this category. The first is that they are usually sycophants, flatterers and praise singers. The second feature is that they usually want to get things of value from people in exchange of nothing. They always prefer to receive fish from people rather than being taught how to fish.*

*The last category consists of people who make informed decisions, set goals, prioritise, plan, act and persist with their dreams, even in the face of difficulties, challenges, obstacles, setbacks, mistakes and failures. It is imperative to take note of the fact that people in this category, like those in the tenth category above, also experience failures and setbacks. However, unlike them, they do not give up after failure. This category is the group of successful people. There are very few people in this category. The people in this category are uncommon. They are rare.*

When you make informed decisions, set goals, prioritise, plan and act, but unable to achieve success; it could be because you act wrongly. Acting wrongly is doing the wrong thing or doing the right thing in the wrong way. It could also be doing the right thing at the wrong time. It is easy to identify and correct your mistakes and failures if you review and evaluate your activities periodically, no matter the results you get. Otherwise, you will continue to repeat your mistakes because you are ignorant of them.

People in this category do not believe in working hard alone because they know that it is a necessary but insufficient condition for success. They believe in applying good strategies in working very hard on good ideas. They believe that it is never over until victory becomes a reality. This is why they do not give up after failure, no matter how bad or hopeless the situation may (appear to) be. They are strongly convinced that winners never quit and quitters never win. They believe that success gives up on anyone who, for any reason, gives up trying.

Everyone belongs to one of these categories. It is your duty to identify the category you belong in order to understand why you are where you are, and why you get the results that are obvious in your life. This will also help you to know the future that awaits you. Examining your life in order to identify the category you belong is an obligation you owe yourself. As a matter of fact, no one should do it for you because no one can do it for you. Besides, it is a fundamental truth that you are the best person to do it. It could be demanding and challenging, but the end is worth the task.

Perhaps, you have been trying very hard to achieve success, but to no avail. You may have done everything within your strength to accomplish your set goals, but to no avail. Obviously, self-examination, in relation to the above categorisations of people, will unarguably unveil one of the secrets of your present condition. Failure, most times, does not result from lack of dream, goal-setting, prioritising, planning, self-discipline or action. Though they are necessary for success, as evident in the analysis above, their presence does not guarantee success.

Many people are still unable to achieve success despite setting goals, prioritising, planning and acting on the set goals because

they lack consistence, persistence, perseverance and endurance. They do not stay long enough in a field in order to learn the details. They do not stay long enough in a field in order to ‘learn from’ and ‘correct’ their mistakes. They are *nomads* in their quest for success because they always believe that the best is where they are not. As a result, they remain wanderers in life because they keep attempting everything but cannot excel in anything.

This book, *Pathway to Success: Roadmap to Unlimited Sustainable Success*, is designed to assist you achieve a successful life. It is designed to offer you a reliable guide and blueprint in your journey to achieving a happy and successful life. The fact that you are reading it suggests that you are passionate about success. It also shows that you are committed to achieving it, but have insufficient knowledge of how to make your dream a reality. If you digest the content of this book and rightly apply it to your life, you will find yourself on the pathway to success.

**Eugene C. Onyibo**  
Lagos, Nigeria  
February, 2017.

**Part One**

**Understanding  
Success**

## Chapter One

# Success Talk

Every intentional human act is meaningful but only in relation to its ability to contribute to the attainment of a specified goal (either directly or indirectly). Any deliberate human act that does not satisfy this condition is unnecessary, if not irrational. Any calculated human action that does not lead to the accomplishment of a set goal is uncalled for. Man's conscious acts ought to be rational because man is a conscious and rational being by nature. Besides, there is a purpose for human existence. Consequently, the meaning of life is in relation to the purpose of life.

The meaningfulness of any premeditated action of man is validated by its ability to foster the realisation of the purpose of man's existence, at least indirectly. This is the single feature that validates the rationality of human actions. This is why every reasonable conscious human action should be linked to the pursuit of the accomplishment of a set goal, at least, indirectly. *Success is the word that summarises the intended goal of every deliberate action of man.* It is the crown of man's efforts. It is the end product of calculated and intentional human actions.

Every human being desires to be a success, wishes to be a success, hopes to be a success, dreams of being a success, speaks of success and loves being a success. Desire, ambition, aspiration, dream, hope, expectation, optimism, etc are words that describe anticipated success. But failure is the most unwanted enemy of everyone, perhaps, because it is often considered as the opposite of

success. No one (even those who have indirectly chosen to fail through their actions) ever wants to be identified with failure.

Every day is a record of series of successes. Every day, people set goals and accomplish them. That is success. For instance, before going to bed, people plan to wake up at a certain time of the next day. They also have plans of what to do on every new day. It may be going to work, school, church, picnic, etc. Many people start a new day with prayer, after which they brush their teeth, have their bath before doing any other thing. All these are goals, and as long as they are accomplished, there is a record of success.

Hence, *everyday is a record of many successes because success is achieved anytime a set goal is translated into reality.* But is this what success is all about? Could this be what is meant when someone is said to have achieved success? Does one achieve success by merely translating a set goal into reality, irrespective of what the goal is? Does a person achieve success by praying in the morning, brushing the teeth or bathing simply because they are accomplished set goals? If this is only what success consists of, then it is obvious that there is nothing special about it.

*There is more to success than merely accomplishing a set goal.* Success is unique, distinctive and exceptional. It is uncommon. As a result, it should not be reduced to merely accomplishing any set goal, though it entails it in a sense. Such amounts to devaluing and undermining success, an enviable and admirable achievement. No one is celebrated or regarded as a success by any reasonable person just because he accomplished such common goals. However, this is the simple sense of the word - success.

There is, however, a more significant sense of success. This is the deeper sense of success. Success is not simple in this sense. It is in this sense that success is most desirable. It is also in this sense that success is a treasure that is achievable (or can be achieved) only by a few people. Success, in this sense, is unique, inimitable, exceptional, rare and distinctive. It is this sense that is meant when one talks about success, being a success, achieving success or being successful.<sup>4</sup> This sense is the popular meaning of success. It is also the common sense of success.

People who are celebrated as success are not those who accomplish any set goal, but people who distinguish themselves from others. *The two basic ways people distinguish themselves from others is either by doing extraordinary things, or by doing ordinary things in extraordinary ways.* There are few people who achieve this. This is why successful people are exceptional. This is also why successful people naturally endear themselves to people with ease, even unintentionally. Everyone loves being like them, talking about them and relating with them.

People naturally love being identified with successful people. As a matter of fact, being able to identify with such people is often considered as a rare privilege. This is also why people like taking photographs with them whenever they have the opportunity of meeting them. This is also why the pictures of (exceptionally) successful people are usually displayed in open places, even in the places of abode of people who have never seen them physically. Exceptionally successful people are loved by more people than they can ever see, meet or physically interact with.

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<sup>4</sup> Except otherwise instructed, success should be understood in this sense in this book.

Since information about them easily captivates peoples' attention, journalists, very often, feature news on them in the media. Some radio and television programmes, as well as some columns in newspapers and magazines, are exclusively devoted to them, especially those of them who are celebrities. Besides, business organisations also delight in taking advantage of their fame, and the respect and attention they command in the society in marketing their products and/or services by hiring them for advertisements and sales promotion programmes.

Successful people are easily taken as models and mentors by their admirers who, eventually, strive to pattern their lifestyles after theirs. Since they have accomplished what others desire to achieve, people easily look up to them (as models and mentors). People also seek the counsel of successful people to assist them in achieving specific goals in life, especially in the aspects of life the successful people excelled in. This is why they are easily adopted as life coaches. Indeed, Success is a crown everyone desires to wear, though only few people succeed in doing so.

If an individual is fortunate to be related to an exceptionally successful person; it is almost impossible for the person to introduce himself to anyone (or to any people) without making his relationship to the successful person known. If the person is humble enough to omit the relationship in the introduction, if he shares a surname with the successful person, he is often asked the question, "Are you related to ...?" In some instances, such a relationship can easily 'open doors' where it exists, just as a bad name can 'close doors'.

*Everyone desires success but only few people achieve it.* There are numerous reasons success remains, and will continue to remain, beyond the reach of many people. One of such reasons is that most peoples' desire for success does not reflect in their daily activities. The passion for success in the lives of most people is evident in their words alone. But neither desire nor words, without the right action, is strong enough to make an individual a success. Your success is not determined by only your desire or wish, but by what you are, what you do, and how you do it.

### **Things to Know about Success**

There are some things you should know about success. They are as follows:

#### **Success is Progressive**

Many people are in haste about success. They want to achieve success overnight. They burden themselves with thoughts about achieving success. They make themselves restless by their inordinate ambitions to become successful. They have sleepless and restless nights because of their immoderate and inordinate ambitions for success. If they would understand the laws of success, they would know that their problem (or worry) is unwarranted. This is one of the reasons success remains beyond their reach, despite their worries about achieving it.

According to Henry David Thoreau, "Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it." The most important thing in the pursuit of success is not thinking about success, dreaming about success, or talking about success, but doing what you ought to do to achieve success, when you ought to do it, and how you ought to do it. According to Arnold H. Glasow, "Success

is simple. Do what is right, the right way, at the right time.” *You waste time thinking about success and dreaming of being a success if you are not working towards achieving it.*

*Being inordinately ambitious for success could be a gateway to self-destruction.* As a matter of fact, it is inimical to success for several reasons. *Success is not a product of accident, fate, luck or chance. It is the product of conscious, intentional, deliberate and strategic actions and efforts.* Jim Rohn remarks that success is nothing more than a few simple disciplines practiced every day. Hence, success is the result of the cumulative events and activities of life. This implies that what you do all (or most of) the time, and how you do it, determines what you get in life.

*Being inordinately ambitious about success impoverishes you of the patience that is necessary for enduring, persevering, overcoming and learning from failures.* This is why impatient people are not candidates for success. Not being patient enough to allow things to work according to the dictates of time and law of natural order accounts for why many people go astray in the pursuit of success. When you are too fast, you may be running backwards. In addition, when you are too fast, you may also be heading towards doom and destruction.

*Do not bother about success because it comes at the appointed time, as long as you do the right things at the right time, and in the right way.* This is a fundamental truism. *If you take care of the right things, the right results will take care of themselves.* If you take care of the goals, success will take care of itself. If you take care of the seconds, the hours will take care of themselves. Success is progressive. If you focus your efforts on the right things, the

right results will focus on you. If you are in haste about success, you may be in haste to nowhere, if not to self-destruction.

Perhaps, this is why David Frost remarks that you should not aim for success if you want it. Rather, you should just do what you love and believe in, and success will come naturally. Success is progressive. It is achieved gradually. The journey to success is also progressive. It is one step at a time. The journey to success is very much like a child's experience. He first learns how to crawl, learns how to stand, and learns how to walk before he starts running. *Anyone who tries to run while he cannot walk ventures on an impossible mission in life.*

### **Success is a Process**

Success has a starting point, but no end point. This is why every individual, even the most successful person, can always become more successful than he is. Simply put, success has no limit. Every individual can always become 'more' or 'less' successful than he is. This is because of the imperfect nature of the universe. The word, 'perfection', simply means tendency to become something else (which may be better or worse). Hence, someone/something is perfect when he/she/it cannot be better or worse, bigger or smaller, etc than he/she/it is.

Hence, anything that is subject to change is imperfect while anything that is not subject to change is perfect. Since everything in the universe is subject to change, nothing in the universe is perfect. God is the only (infinitely) perfect being that exists, as he alone cannot change. Every other thing/being is imperfect because they can, and actually do, change. Consequently, when the word perfection is used to describe things in the finite world, it should be

understood in the analogical sense. In the strict sense, it is applicable to God alone.

Imperfection in the physical world means that things are not stable in value. This simply means that they change. They have the potential to become better or worse than they are. The closer they are to what/how they ought to be, the better they are, but the farther they are from what/how they ought to be, the worse they are. Nothing is perfect in the physical world. Consequently, every human being, as well as his condition of living, is imperfect. This is why everyone can always become good or bad, better or worse, richer or poorer, more successful or less successful, etc.

The reality of imperfection in life makes room for improvement and depreciation, and everyone, as an imperfect being, has the natural tendency for both of them. There is no stability of value in human nature. *At every point in time, you are improving or depreciating, succeeding or failing, etc.* Stagnation is the beginning of retrogression, but contentment is often the beginning of stagnation. To remain good (without getting better) is to start getting bad. This is why it is said that to stop being better is to stop being good. To stop improving is to start depreciating.

When you are static, you are actually moving backwards because the world and the things in it move ahead of you. To stop being more successful is to start becoming less successful (or unsuccessful). *You should strive for perfection in life, not because you can attain it, but because the closer you get to it, the better your life becomes.* According to Vince Lombardi, “Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.”

Success is a process, not a destination. It has a starting point, but it has no limit. It is continuous by its nature.

You should continually ‘aspire to’ and ‘strive for’ (greater) success. If you are not getting better, you are getting worse. The world gets more advanced always. Consequently, if you remain where you are, no matter how good the place is, you will soon be left behind. The only way to avoid being outdated is updating yourself continually. When your personal value appreciates, your condition of living also appreciates. Many people want to violate this law by expecting an improvement in their conditions of living while their personal values are not improved on.

This is why different people get different results from the same endeavour, even at the same time and place. For instance, this is why different people get absorbed by an organisation at the same time, but after sometime, some will be at the top, some at the middle, and the remaining at the bottom of the organisational hierarchy. This is also why different people go into business at the same time, but after a while, some people’s companies will be expanding, the businesses of others will be surviving, while the businesses of the remaining people will be out of existence.

Success is a process. It is a progression. It also has a procedure. The journey to success starts with a step, and continues with other steps. As earlier remarked, success has a starting point, but no end point. In other words, it has a beginning but no end. *In the success process, the raw materials for the procession are picked from the past and present.* Hence, your past and present achievements are raw materials for processing your future achievements. *Your past and present successes are the foundations of your future success.*

There is a very important feature of a process that is worth mentioning at this point. Every process has a beginning and an end. However, the end of every process marks the beginning of another process. While the beginning of the new process also leads to another end. The point being argued is that the accomplishment of every set goal marks the beginning of the pursuit of a new goal. This is why success is continuous.

### **Your level of success influences your relationship with others**

One of the most significant things about success is that it affects every aspect of your life. Your level of success determines the way you speak, the house you live in, the places you go, the way you dress, the food you eat, the car you drive, etc. Your relationship with others is also affected, or determined and influenced, by your level of success. Birds of a feather flock together. People are naturally expected to identify with those at the same level of success with them in friendly relationships. This is why friendship is always best among people at the same level.

There can neither be strong nor cordial friendship among unequals, no matter the standard with which the inequality is judged. Even interactions among blood relations are adversely affected by differences in their levels of achievements. Besides, among young people, one's level of success usually determines his/her choice of a life partner. A successful person, all things being equal, naturally desires a fellow successful (or at least a potentially successful) person as a spouse. This is why educated people usually marry fellow educated people.

The claim that there can neither be strong nor cordial friendship among unequals has been challenged by some attendees of my seminars. It has also been challenged by some people during informal discussions. However, I still hold on to this view because of some observations and practical experiences. For instance, no matter the level of relationship between a multimillionaire and a poor person, the former cannot reveal the amount of money he makes in business to the latter for several reasons, as he may risk the relationship.

It is very likely that doing so will provoke jealousy from the poor person. Besides, such information may induce the poor person to make irrational financial demands from his wealthy friend or relation. The relationship may eventually break down if the request is not granted for any reason. This is one of the reasons rich people keep information about their financial success away from poor people, irrespective of how close they are to them. I sincerely believe that this observation validates the truth that there cannot be intimacy among unequals.

Besides, communication is usually more effective among people at the same level of life and success, as their experiences are (very likely to be) similar. For instance, discussion on marital life between a married man and a bachelor, a married woman and a spinster, or a married person and a divorcee will likely be from different perspectives. This also applies to discussion between the rich and the poor, a landlord and a tenant, a male and a female, an adult and a child, an employer and an employee, a worker and a retiree, a worker and a job seeker, a student and a teacher, etc.

The place of success in human relationship should not be difficult to understand because peoples' lives are under the irresistible influence of their relationships; hence, the popular expression, "Tell me your friend and I will tell you the type of person you are". Relating with people above you has the tendency of assisting you grow higher in life, if you are willing to do so. In a similar vein, relating with people below you has the tendency of dragging you down, if you are not careful. This is why you should be mindful of your relationships. They affect your life in different ways.

*Your life is influenced by the relationships you keep.* Your relationships are among the factors that will determine whether you will succeed or fail. This is why there is usually a correlation between people's level of success and their relationships with people. As a matter of fact, your companions determine what you are, what you will be, and what accompanies you. You should not expect to have focus in life if your closest friends are people who have no focus. Your choice of friendship also influences, affects and determines, your destiny in life.

### **There is Fulfillment in being a Success**

There is joy that naturally flows from being numbered among successful people. Success naturally breeds happiness, bliss, fulfillment, satisfaction, self-confidence and self-esteem. Success is a source of great delight, joy and gladness. This is why successful people are happy people. Indeed, success is the means to happiness. To be where others desire to be is to be ahead of them. It also, very easily, qualifies you to be a model/mentor. However, it must be remarked that the pleasure of being a success is neither pride nor arrogance, but a reward for excellence.

Though there is fulfillment in being a success, success can easily evoke jealousy and envy. *Good and/or wise people admire successful people, while bad and/foolish people envy them.* There are some reasons people jealous successful people. The first reason is when they feel that they are better qualified for success than the successful. Another reason is when they are unable to achieve what a successful person achieves. The last is when they have acquaintance with a successful person. These conditions are usually necessary before there can be jealousy or envy.

However, jealousy should not militate against the happiness of being successful, though it has the tendency to do so, especially when it leads to physical attacks. Some people have difficulty rejoicing with others. They are happy when others are failing, but unhappy when they are succeeding. You will always get what you wish others. If you cannot rejoice with others for their success, you should not expect anyone to ever rejoice with you because you alienate yourself from success. *You should not expect to enjoy what you do not wish others.*

*An enemy of success is not fit to be a success because he should not expect to have what he does not wish others.* Even if success comes the person's way, people will likely not be willing to rejoice with him because life is a mirror; how people relate with you is always determined by how you relate with them. If you want people to celebrate your success with you, always celebrate other people's success with them. If you want to have good friends, be a good friend to others. Human relationship is governed by the principle of reciprocity.

### **Success is as important as how it is achieved**

According to Niccolo Machiavelli, “The end justifies the means.” Though this expression has become a maxim to many, especially political scientists; it does not excel the test of a critical ethical examination. *A positive end does not justify an evil means; neither does a negative end invalidate a positive means. Success is as important as the means through which it is achieved.* People are successful in different fields and in different ways. In the life of every successful person, responsible people are interested in his success and the means through which the success is achieved.

No one is celebrated as a success by a responsible person (or a responsible society) if the means through which his accomplishments are made are unknown or morally and socially unacceptable. The reason is that the moral value of an end is as significant as the moral value of the means through which it is accomplished. *An achievement qualifies as success if the means through which it is attained is morally and socially acceptable.* Any achievement that does not excel the test of moral and social examinations does not qualify to be considered as success.

Every success is an achievement but every achievement is not success. All achievements are not success because success necessarily has moral and social credentials. Consequently, it is not just the end (success) that is important, but also the means through which it is achieved. No end can be justified by a wrong means, no matter how good the end may (appear to) be. This is why the *Machiavellian Principle* - the end justifies the means - is an unacceptable ethical theory. The end is, and will always be, as significant as the means through which it is accomplished.

For instance, being wealthy (an end) is good, but stealing in order to become wealthy (the means) is bad. To say that the end justifies the means is to admit that it is good to steal if it can assist someone to become rich. Indeed, this is unethical. Even committing such wealth at the service of humanity (by assisting those in need) does not justify the means through which the wealth was acquired, though it is a positive end. This is why there are some people who are wealthy but are not numbered among successful people (by an objective standard) in the society.

Though they have everything money can buy, the society does not want to associate with them. Such people are not, and should not be classified among successful people. As a matter of fact, they are failures. *To fail in your moral life is to be a failure in life indeed.* Little wonder the cash cows who amassed stupendous wealth by looting their country's treasury are not numbered among the richest people in world records. Only those whose sources of income are morally and socially acceptable and justifiable are recognised and honoured as rich people.

### **Your success does not depend on your background**

The belief that an individual's success depends on his background is not only wrong, but also deceptive. There are numerous people who have the best of family backgrounds; yet, they make nothing meaningful out of life. But there are also some people whose backgrounds are nothing to write about; yet, they make the best out of life. As a matter of fact, most exceptionally successful people are from nameless families. This observation is valid across the globe. How many people who enjoy exceptional success were born of wealthy or famous parents?

*There are more successful people from poor family backgrounds than those from wealthy family backgrounds.* Though this claim can neither be conclusively verified nor falsified scientifically, daily observations lend credence to its truthfulness. In addition, daily experiences further validate the truthfulness of this claim. Perhaps, the fact that there are many successful people from poor backgrounds accounts for why a writer remarks that *you should not allow your background to keep your back on the ground.*

One of the factors that accounts for why there are more successful people from poor backgrounds is that *poverty is usually an incentive for greater commitment in the pursuit of success and excellence.* Children from poor families are usually convinced that the quality of life that awaits them in the future will be determined by what they are able to achieve with their personal efforts, since they have no back to fall on if they fail in life. Consequently, they are usually challenged to channel the best of their efforts into the struggle for achieving success.

On the other hand, children from rich families, despite having all the advantages life can offer, usually have the tendency to pursue matters of success with less commitment, as they usually believe that such will not make any difference in their lives. They usually do not bother about their futures because they believe that their parents have secured them. This is why they usually waste time bragging over their parents' achievements, rather than striving for their own achievements. They forget that they should strive for their own success because their parents' success is not theirs.

People should be praised because of their achievements and those of their children, but not because of the achievements of their

parents. *A child's success is part of his parents' success, but a man's success is not part of his child's success.* While children should ensure that their parents' success does not constitute a threat (or obstacle) to their future; parents should also ensure that their success does not constitute a threat to the future of their children. Children should be encouraged to pursue their own success, rather than celebrating their parents' success.

### **Success is a Personal Property**

Success is a personal property that can neither be transferred to another person<sup>5</sup> nor borrowed by another person. You may enjoy from another person's success, but you cannot borrow (from) it. Besides, success is not transferable. Any person who desires the joy and glory of success should be willing to pay the price in order to achieve it. No one can achieve success for another person. No one becomes a success by/through another person's success, though you may achieve your own success through the help of a successful person. Success is a personal property.

It is imperative to remark that there are numerous successful people whose fans know nothing about their family backgrounds, parents, spouses, siblings, relatives, friends, etc. It is also worthy of note that most times, the world does not care about the people who played very significant roles in the lives of successful people. How many successful people does the world celebrate their parents, guardians, spouses or siblings? Is the celebration of the accomplishments of any individual considered incomplete in the absence of any individual?

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<sup>5</sup> An exception to this is Inheritance. However, inherited success of any type is usually difficult to sustain because it has no solid foundation.

You have your own success to build. You have an obligation to strive towards accomplishing your own success. Otherwise, there will be nothing to be celebrated about you by others. The (auto)biography of a successful person is not considered incomplete because the names of the parents, guardian, spouse, coach, benefactors or relations were omitted. This shows very strongly that success is a personal property. Everyone should be relentlessly committed to the pursuit of his success more than (or rather than) celebrating the success of another person.

### **You should pursue your own success**

Everyone has unlimited potentials. One of the potentials every human being has is the tendency to become successful. Most unfortunately, most people fail in life. They are failures because they do not optimise their potentials. *Your success does not depend on your potentials alone, but on the results you produce with them.* You cannot build a reputation on your potential that has not produced any result. Your achievement is your potential made visible. It is your duty to pursue your own success.

People who aspire for success should solicit the assistance and mentorship of successful people rather than trying to enjoy from their success. In a culture like mine, anyone's success is everyone's success. In a similar vein, anyone's challenge is also everyone's challenge. The culture obliges people to be one another's keeper. Consequently, people often request numerous things from their successful relations. Observations show that most times, most of such requests are unnecessary, as most people always ask for the wrong things.

Such culture should not be encouraged in contemporary times for several reasons. People need different types of help from different people at different times, and in different conditions. In some countries the government has no welfare programme for the less privileged citizens, especially the aged, the handicapped and the sick; such people can look up to some people around them to, at least, grant their basic needs. But this should be unacceptable for healthy and able-bodied people, especially youths.

*You waste your creative potential and impoverish yourself of the capacity for success when you decide to become a liability to others.* There is dignity in financial independence and financial autonomy, especially as an adult. Adults devalue themselves when they decide to depend on other people for the provision of their daily needs. It is folly to decide to be a beggar whereas you have the strength and capacity to earn your daily bread through labour. No one gets satisfied with whatever thing that is acquired through begging, as there is no way for replacing it.

Rather than asking for bread, it is better to ask for an opportunity to earn bread with your labour. In God's relationship with man, when man asks for bread, God provides a job. In other words, when man asks God for bread, God provides a means for him to earn a living with his labour. One of the greatest blessings you will enjoy is good health. A healthy person should be productive, not dependent. One of the problems in some societies today is that they have more able-bodied beggars than sick beggars.

Successful people should strive to teach others to fish rather than giving them fish. According to the old dictum, "When you give a person a fish, you feed him for a day; but when you teach the

person how to fish, you feed him for life”. Anyone who gives a fish to a healthy person, whereas he can teach the person how to fish, does not really love the beneficiary of his generosity. As a matter of fact, giving an adult a fish is an insult to him, if he recognises that dignity and integrity are conferred on him by nature, irrespective of his status. You are expected to live on the fruits of your labour, not on the fruits of another person’s labour.<sup>6</sup>

Successful people free themselves from unnecessary requests from friends and relations if they assist them to become established. *It is better to assist people discover the success in themselves than to share the fruits of your success with them.* Besides, a successful person is great, not by his personal abilities and achievements alone, but more by his ability to help others become successful. This is one of the most cherished characters of successful people. “A man who lives for himself”, as Norman Vincent Peale remarks, “is a failure”.

Some adults expect to depend on others for the provision of everything in their lives, even the least of their financial needs. Such people are yet to come to terms with the fact that *the more financial success one achieves through hard work, the more difficult it is for the person to give out money to lazy people and those without focus.* Successful people are not easily generous with the fruits of their labour because they were not received on a platter of gold. They believe very strongly that people must work hard for what they desire, as they do.

Successful people are convinced, from personal experiences, that success and failure are self-made. They know that anyone can

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<sup>6</sup> Psalm 128:2.

become successful by doing the right thing. This is why it is usually easier to get financial assistance, especially when it is unnecessary, from poor people than from rich people, though the assistance the poor offer will always be insignificant. Successful people also know that nobody can succeed through another person's effort. Hence, they want everyone to understand that their destinies are in their hands.

*No one can be assisted to succeed if he decides to fail. No one can be aided to excel if he decides to fail. Your decisions determine the results you get in life. This is why they (your decisions) are the parents of your destiny. In the journey to success, nothing is more important than your decisions, choices and resolutions. According to Abraham Lincoln, "Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other." You can take a horse to the river but you cannot force it to drink.*

No one can also be made to fail if he decides to succeed. This is a fundamental truth. Your decisions today are your realities tomorrow. Nothing is impossible before a willing heart; though the willingness must be obvious in the decisions and actions of the person. The decision to succeed and the willingness to follow the path that leads to success are personal responsibilities. Your ability to accept these responsibilities determines your destiny. *The most important things that must be done before you will succeed are things only you 'can', 'will' and 'should' do.*

### **Success is a Matter of Choice**

Success is not by fortune, luck, chance or fate. It also does not occur by accident or probability. Failures often blame fortune and luck for their conditions. They describe failure as ill-destiny, ill-

luck, ill-fortune, etc. They believe that they are yet to succeed because fortune is yet to smile on them. *To consider success as a matter of fortune or luck is to consider success as a matter of chance.* This implies considering oneself as not having any role in shaping his destiny. To believe that success is a product of chance implies a disbelief in oneself.

*Everyone's destiny (to a very reasonable extent) is in his hands, not in fate, fortune, chance or luck.* Everyone is a product of the ideas he lives with. You cannot change your life without changing your thinking. You also cannot change your thinking without changing your life. However, you must change your thinking before you can change your life. The quality of your life will never be better than the quality of your thinking. Every conscious action is an idea made visible. Hence, positioning yourself for success starts with changing your thinking.

Success is a matter of choice, a decision between alternatives. You become a success by deciding to be so. People live as they choose. The choice must be evident in your behaviour. If you take a closer look at the lifestyles of successful people and failures, it will not be difficult to observe the wide differences in their attitudes to life. This is why there are also differences in their destinies. It is often said that one's attitudes to life determines his altitude in life. *A change in attitudes to life will inevitably necessitate a change in altitude in life.*

Success is governed by the same principles all over the world at every time. It (success) is an output. Since output is determined by input; the acquisition, development and practise of success-inducing attitudes are requisites and preconditions for achieving

success. *Success is the product of strategic intelligible actions that are consciously performed.* A firm resolution to succeed, backed with strategic actions, positions you on the pathway (if not fast lane) to success. Your destiny is in your hand, as only you can make the resolution and take actions.

### **Failure is a step to Success**

Success is often achieved after series of trials, failures, disappointments, mistakes, errors, etc. *Many of the earliest efforts that are geared towards achieving success often culminate in failures.* The failures, however, are often ‘preparations for’ and ‘stepping stones to’ success, but only when the lessons they teach are learnt, understood and applied in the subsequent efforts in the pursuit of success. This is why failure is not final. According to Winston Churchill, “Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

### **Success has a price**

There is a price for every prize. Success has a price, and anyone who cannot pay the price of success is not worthy of the prize of success. The road to crown is filled with thorns. Anyone who cannot endure the pains of the thorns on the road to success will not enjoy the pleasure of the crown of success. You must pay the price of success before you will wear the crown of success.

### **The Starting Point of Success**

What should I do if I want to be a success? Where do I start if I want to succeed? When do I start if I want to be a success? How should I start the journey to success? *The best place to start your journey to success is where you are, and the best time to start is now, as tomorrow may be too late, if it will ever come.* The best

time to have planted a tree was some years ago, but the second best time is today. *The more you delay the take off of your journey to success, the more the likelihood that it will never take place.* As always said, the earlier you start, the better for you.

No one was born with the success he enjoys. Do you know that some (exceptionally) successful people were considered failures at some points in their lives? Do you know that Abraham Lincoln failed many times in politics before becoming the president of the United States of America? Do you know that Michael Jordan was rejected by the basketball team of his school as a student? Do you also know that Thomas Edison was rejected by his school as a child because he was considered addled (mentally ill)? But that did not stop him from becoming the genius of the century.

These world heros succeeded because they always believed in themselves. They also succeeded because they never gave up. Do you also know that there were times famous people were unknown to the world? They became famous and successful because they took the first step in the journey to success one day. Famous people were not born so. Celebrities were not born so. Successful people were also not born so. It is their achievements in life that confer on them the success and fame they enjoy.

There are many people who are numbered among common people today but who will have the best of success and fame in the future, only if they will start doing the right things now. A truth that may be unknown to you is that you could be one of such people. This message may be your wakeup call to pursue your destiny in life. *Today is early enough to start searching for the purpose of your existence, and start making conscious efforts to fulfill it, but*

*tomorrow may be too late. Besides, you may never have another opportunity to start if you do not start today.*

*Procrastination and fear are twin enemies of success. They keep you away from where you could succeed. They are among failure's most successful strategies. Procrastination prevents you from attempting what you could succeed at by making you postpone your decisions, planning and action steps, while fear compels you to accept defeat in the battle of life before the war begins. Do not procrastinate what you can do today because tomorrow has its own challenges. As a matter of fact, *tomorrow has enough challenges for itself.* This is why it is irrational to add the burden of today's challenges to tomorrow's challenges.*

Today's challenges are good enough for today while tomorrow's challenges are also good enough for tomorrow. *If you put off to tomorrow what you ought to (and which you can) do today, chances are high that you will also put them off again when tomorrow comes.* Even if you do not do so, today's assignments, which are put off for tomorrow, will make you unable to take care of tomorrow's challenges. Do today what you have to (or ought to) do. This prepares you to face tomorrow's challenges by eliminating carry-over tasks from your life.

In the words of H. Jackson Brown, Jr., "The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today." *Doing your best today makes room for having the best tomorrow.* You should not expect the best tomorrow if you are not doing the best today. *The best way to destroy the future is to waste the present.* The results of tomorrow are buried in the activities and events of today. What you do today

determines what you get tomorrow. The best preparation for tomorrow is performing today's tasks before tomorrow.

One of the differences between foolish, average and wise people is that while foolish people perform yesterday's tasks today, average people perform today's tasks today. However, wise people have a different approach to life because they perform tomorrow's tasks today. This is why they are proactive, while others are reactive. This is also why they achieve more than others. The implication of this is that foolish people live in the past, average people are preoccupied with the present, while wise and successful people are future-oriented.

*The things you do today are the foundations of tomorrow's success. Hence, your inability to do them (very well) today will obstruct the potential successes of tomorrow. In a similar vein, the things you do not do today (which you ought to do) are the foundations of tomorrow's failure. Your inability to do them today will be responsible for your failure tomorrow. Your inability to do them today will also guarantee your failure tomorrow. Besides, the things you fail to do today, and put off may never be done.*

From the above, it is obvious that the things you do today are the foundation of tomorrow's success, while the things you fail to do today are the foundation of tomorrow's failure. The future is buried in the present. *Fear is an enemy of success you should avoid at all costs because it drains you of courage to confront the challenges of life with bravery.* It makes you see problems in opportunities rather than see opportunities in problems. It also prevents you from making attempts, forgetting that no one will ever succeed in what he did not attempt.

### **The Motivations of Success**

There are many tools for achieving success, though they play different roles in the pursuit of success. One of the tools is *motivation*. Motivation is a very powerful tool in accomplishing a set goal. It is a precondition for achieving success. This is why every achievement is preceded by motivation. As a matter of fact, there can be no success in the absence of motivation. But what is motivation? What is the meaning of motivation?

*Motivation can be defined as the enthusiasm for success.* It is the stimulus to the pursuit of success. It is also the drive force for success within an individual. If you are not motivated you will lack motivation. The more motivated you are, all things being equal, the more likely you will succeed, for as long as you take the right actions on the right tasks. This is why it is very difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish any set goal without motivation.

The implication of this is that you cannot succeed in the absence of motivation since success is not achieved by accident. Just as goal-setting precedes success, motivation precedes goal-setting. Hence, just as success cannot be achieved without goal-setting, goals cannot be set without motivation. The logical implication of this is that success cannot be achieved without motivation. This is why motivation is a precondition for achieving success.

The term, motivation, has assumed a pride of place in scholarship in contemporary times, especially in management studies. Managers at all levels are becoming increasingly aware of the need to extort optimal productivity from their employees through motivation. They have also realised that their organisations have

very high probability of enjoying the optimum productivities of their employees if they are adequately motivated.

Motivation usually comes from within, though it can also be induced externally. However, since you are the best beneficiary of your success, but the worst victim of your failure, you should not expect to be motivated by others before you strive for achieving success. *Success belongs to the self-motivated.* If you expect to be motivated from external sources before you take the right steps in life, you may never succeed because such may never happen.

*The two basic motivations for success are the fear of failure and the pleasure of success.* The shame, disgrace, embarrassment, discomfort, dishonour, humiliation, pain and sadness of failure and the joy, pleasure, delight, bliss, ecstasy, elation and happiness of success are the incentives for greater commitment in the pursuit of success. They are also the enthusiasms, incentives, inspirations and stimulations for the pursuit of success.

People who are afraid of failure always do everything within their strengths to ensure that they escape it. This could be the benefit of fear. This shows that fear is not always negative, as many think. Observing the pleasure and happiness of success in the lives of successful people can also kindle the fire of passion for success. This is why ‘interacting with’ or observing and studying the lives of successful people could be very profitable.

### **The Challenge of Success**

It is a pity that many people are yet to realise that success is a challenge. This is why many people cannot manage their success. Success is a challenge because it is tough and difficult. Success

also constitutes a challenge because it is demanding, taxing and testing. It is noteworthy that ‘challenge’ is not the same as ‘problem’. The difference between ‘challenge’ and ‘problem’ is attitude. While optimists use ‘challenge’ to describe a difficult situation, pessimists use ‘problem’ to describe the same situation.

*Success constitutes a challenge in two ways: becoming a success and remaining a success.* Every individual is confronted by either of these challenges at every point in time. *At every point in time, everyone is either striving to become a success or striving to sustain a success and remain a success.* While successful people combat the challenge of sustaining and retaining their successes; failures and average people confront the challenge of achieving success. One of the reasons success is celebrated is because neither of these challenges is easy to manage.

According to the late reggae legend, Bob Marley, “Everyman thinks his burden is the heaviest”. This is why people who are still struggling to achieve success believe that the challenge of becoming a success is more difficult than whatever challenge successful people undergo. But on the other hand, successful people are unhappy that most unsuccessful people do not realise that there are challenges in their world. They are unhappy that others have no sympathy for the burden of challenges their achievements place on their lives.

Indeed, achieving success is an uphill task. Channeling one’s effort towards the pursuit of success without accomplishing the set goal is unarguably very frustrating and discouraging. Many people who are still struggling to succeed are convinced that achieving success is an uneasy task. Some of them believe that becoming a success is

the most difficult goal to accomplish. For some of them, after their successive efforts at achieving success continuously fail, they believe that they require the knowledge of some mysteries, not just secrets, to accomplish success.<sup>7</sup>

However, people who are successful consider their burden of challenge to be proportional to the heights they attain. Though becoming a success and remaining a success are challenges, the burden of the latter challenge is heavier than that of the former. If you observe closely and cautiously, you will realise that it is more difficult to maintain being a success than to become a success. This is also very applicable to celebrities. This is why there are numerous people across the globe who failed after attaining very reputable positions and heights in (different aspects of) life.

Some people believe that they can remain at the top if anyone can assist them get there. This is very incorrect because *it is more difficult to remain at the top than to get to the top*. The implication of this is that if you can remain at the top if you were there, then you can get to the top if you are not yet there. In other words, if you can remain being a success (if you were a success), then you can become a success. If it is more difficult to remain successful than to become successful, then whoever can maintain being a success can also become a success.

There are many people who (have) tasted success but are failures today. There are many people who were once rich but very poor

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<sup>7</sup> See Eugene C. Onyibo and Ethelbert Arua OSJ, ***Rich God, Poor Believers: The Secrets of Overcoming Poverty by God's Children***, (Lagos: Skyheight Success Consult, 2013.), p. 29 - 31 for a detailed discussion on Mystery and Secret.

today. There are also many people who were the bests in their fields at a time, but have been displaced and rendered irrelevant. The realisation of this truth speaks very eloquently on the fact that everyone who achieves success may not be able to remain a success. The implication of this is that the failure of some successful people is only a matter of time. It is a pity that many successful people are ignorant of this truth.

*Success, like power, could be transient.* Like a liquid, success could evaporate with time. This is why there are many people who are celebrated today but will not be celebrated tomorrow. Not everyone who achieves success will die a success. By the very nature of some success, they are transient. For instance, being the best athlete of the year is a success that lasts for a year, except it is renewed. However, there are some successes that can be sustained for the rest of one's life, if they are properly managed. Examples of such are marital success, financial success, etc.

The road to success is filled with the thorns of failures, mistakes, setbacks, etc though they are usually helpful in acquiring the expertise for managing and sustaining success (later). You will easily admit the truth of this claim if you observe the histories of most people who became rich suddenly (e.g. through lottery, inheritance, etc.). They usually go back to where they started after a while because they are unable to manage their fortunes. They cannot sustain their success because it has a weak foundation. Every sustainable success is built on a solid foundation.

Success is a challenge. It could be the beginning of failure, if it is not properly managed. It is much easier to become a success than to manage success. This is why many people are usually unable to

sustain and retain their success. The beginning of the failure of many successful people is often the conviction that it could not have been, and cannot be, otherwise. Many people forget that success is a challenge. This is why they are easily carried away by their accomplishments during their days of glory.

Success has a power of its own, and it usually affects the subject's sense of reasoning in negative ways. Many people cannot sustain their success because they cannot manage it. They are controlled by their achievements because they cannot control them (their achievements). Many people change after becoming successful, and the change is usually not for the better. This is a challenge of success. Many people easily acquire failure catalysts (arrogance, pride, extravagance, rudeness, etc) after becoming successful.

One success can be the foundation of another success, as success begets success. But this is possible only if the successful person is able to manage his success. There are also people, though a few, who remain successful after getting to the top. Such people keep getting better and more successful as days grow older. Anyone who has once tasted failure will never love to be identified with it again if he ever becomes a success. In a similar vein, anyone who has once tasted hardship will never want to be identified with poverty, if he ever becomes rich.

But this is a condition that can be sustained only if the success is able to resist the negative effects of the pride of success. Most unfortunately, most successful people are usually unable to achieve this. This is also why their success stories end as once upon a time. Success is a challenge. It is up to you to determine whether you will achieve it. Even when it becomes a reality in your life, it is

also up to you to determine whether you will sustain or lose it. These will be determined by your attitudes to life. The more successful you become, the more careful you should be.

## Chapter Two

### The Meaning of Success

The word, ‘Success’, does not have a homogenous definition. It can be reasonably argued that there could be as many definitions of success as there are attempts to define success. Any teaching on (how to achieve) success that does not give attention to the meaning of the concept should be considered inadequate, if not unserious. Teachings on the meaning of success should precede any serious effort to assist people (learn how) to achieve success.

It is only when such is done that the audience will be afforded the opportunity of knowing and understanding what they are pursuing, so that they can pursue what they know and understand. Though there are many definitions of success, all of them are not, and cannot be, acceptable. When people are taught a pathway to success without the meaning of success, they may pursue what they do not know; since many people have wrong notions of success. This could be, and is actually, very dangerous.

Indeed, many people have fallen victim to this ugly situation because their conceptions of success are not only erroneous, but also very misleading and deceptive. This accounts for why, after labouring and struggling for years, if not decades, to achieve (what they misunderstand, misconceive and masquerade as) success, some people end up being unhappy after attaining their set goals. The accomplishment of their set goals lacks the capacity to increase their happiness.

Such people waste their precious time, treasure and abilities pursuing illusions they masquerade as success, though with sincerity of intention and purpose. Indeed, such experience is very painful, worrisome and disappointing. Perhaps, this is why Stephen R. Covey remarks that you should ensure that the ladder is leaning on the right building before you start scrambling up. This is why teachings on success should (or ought to) commence with teaching on the meaning of success.

### **Common Wrong Notions of Success**

It was remarked that every intentional act is meaningful but only in relation to its ability to contribute to the attainment of a specified goal (either directly or indirectly). It was also remarked that success is the word that summarises the intended goal of every deliberate act of man. Success is a word that is employed to designate accomplishment, the intended goal of every pursuit. It implies the successful completion or execution of a set goal.

Since every human being naturally desires success, most people are deceived into taking the meaning of success for granted. Perhaps, one of the reasons the meaning of success is often taken for granted by most people is that success is a common word that is relevant to daily human endeavours. Hence, *though the word 'success' is common, its true meaning is uncommon*. As a matter of fact, many conceptions of success are unacceptable.

If you ask many adults the question, “What is Success?”, chances are high that you will be very disappointed with the responses you will get from most of them, even the very educated and intelligent people among them. I conducted the exercise with the attendees of some of my seminars, but was disappointed with the responses I

got from many of them. I then asked myself, “If people cannot define success, how can they achieve it?” Let us consider some common erroneous definitions and notions of success.

**Success is having more money than others**

*One of the most common definitions and notions of success is having more money than others.* Perhaps, this is the most common and most popular definition of success. Many people strongly believe that success is all about having more money than others. By the standard of this definition, anyone who acquires material wealth more than others is automatically regarded as a successful person. But to what extent is this belief right?

Does success really mean having more money than others? Is success all about the accumulation of material riches? Is the accumulation of material wealth the only standard for ascertaining who successful people are? Is success all about (making) money? Is every rich person necessarily successful? Is every successful person rich? The answers to these questions are very important because, to a very great extent, they assist in having a clearer view of this notion of success.

*The belief that being a success is having more money than others is wrong in its entirety.* This notion of success is not only incorrect, but also very misleading. This is why it is unacceptable, though it is the right meaning of success in the opinion of many people. *Success is not all about having more money than others.* Success is also not all about money or material riches. As a matter of fact,

being a success may not have anything to do with money.<sup>8</sup> This notion of success devalues the concept of success.

It is obvious that whenever a discussion on success (or successful people) is raised, one of the most common thoughts that often flash through the minds of most people is the amount of money people have. Hence, once an individual acquires more money than he needs, or more money than others, he is easily considered a successful person. This is why people who are rich in material possessions are easily considered as successful people, while poor people are easily regarded as failures.

But does money play any role in ascertaining who successful people are? Or better, what is the place of money in success? It is a pity that money has been erroneously employed by many people as the only criterion for ascertaining who successful people are. *Financial success is only an aspect of success.* There are other aspects of success. *Equating financial success with success amounts to equating a part to the whole.* As earlier remarked, success is not all about money or material possession.

The belief that being a success is all about having more money than others, or about having more money than one needs, is a popular error. However, truth does not depend on popularity or convention. The existence of truth is independent of people's

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Pope John Paul II, Mother Teresa, Winston Churchill, Helen Keller, Martin Luther King Jr., C. S. Lewis, Abraham Lincoln, Nelson Mandela, Sir Issac Newton, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, etc are celebrated as exceptionally successful people globally. But their success has nothing to do with the accumulation of material riches.

opinions. Besides, the truth value of a belief is not determined by the number of people who subscribe to it. The fact that a belief is common does not necessarily imply that it is right. *A common belief could be wrong, while an uncommon belief could be right.*

However, though success is not all about having more money than others, there could be a financial dimension to success.<sup>9</sup> This implies that there is a minimal financial requirement for becoming a successful person (especially in the secular world). This is why success in other aspects of life should be balanced with basic success in an individual's finances before he can be truly considered a successful person. Otherwise, the person's success status may be questionable or dented.

### **Success is being a celebrity**

Another common notion of success is that it is about being a celebrity. In many people's belief, anyone who is a celebrity automatically becomes a successful person. This is why celebrities like movie stars, musicians, athletes, models, etc are easily seen as successful people by many people. A common assumption is that an individual cannot be a celebrity without being a success. But to what extent is this notion of success acceptable? How rational and reasonable is this belief?

If you ask an average adult to list the names of successful people he knows, chances are very high that he will recite the names of rich people and celebrities he knows. But are all celebrities successful, or are all successful people celebrities? What is the relationship between being a celebrity and being a successful

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<sup>9</sup> This rule is not applicable to people in the consecrated life (Jesus Christ, Buddha, Confucius, Tao, Mother Theresa, etc).

person? *Being a success is not about being a celebrity; neither is being a celebrity about being a success.* It is important to correct this erroneous assumption because it is very deceptive.

*There are numerous celebrities who are not successful people, just as there are numerous successful people who are not celebrities.* Hence, all celebrities are not successful people and all successful people are not celebrities. This implies that there are some celebrities who are successful people, and there are also some celebrities who are not successful people. As a matter of fact, there are numerous celebrities who are woeful failures in life, despite excelling in their various professions.

The above argument also implies that there are some successful people who are celebrities, and some celebrities who are successful people. As a matter of fact, most successful people are not celebrities. The above argument implies that being a celebrity is not synonymous with being successful, neither is being successful synonymous with being a celebrity. Hence, you can be a success without being a celebrity and you can also be a celebrity without being a success.

### **Success is being famous**

In the opinion of some people, success is being famous. In the thinking of people who subscribe to this view, anyone who is famous is successful, and everyone who is successful is famous. Proponents of this view believe that no one can be successful without being famous. It is worthy of note that this notion of success, to a reasonable extent, is very common in the society. This is why famous people are easily regarded as successful people by many. It is high time this view is reconsidered.

This notion of success derives from the notions of success discussed above (“*Success is having more money than others*” and “*Success is being a celebrity*”). The reason for this conclusion is that many people who have more money than others (i.e. the rich) are usually famous, at least within their environments. In a similar vein, many people who are celebrities are also famous, at least within their environments too. As a matter of fact, being a celebrity is incomplete without being famous.

The critiques against the above notions of success are also applicable to this notion of success, since they are its foundation. It is irrational to conclude that someone is successful simply because he is famous. Besides, some people become famous by accomplishing immoral and socially-unacceptable goals. Indeed, such people cannot be classified among successful people, though they are famous. This speaks very eloquently on the fact that an individual can be famous and still be a failure.

### **Success is being powerful and influential in the society**

Some people believe that successful people are those who are powerful in the society. People who belong to this school of thought believe that successful people are those who are influential in the society. In their opinion, anyone who is powerful and influential is successful, and everyone who is successful is powerful and influential. Proponents of this view believe that no one can be successful without being powerful and influential.

This is why great men and people who have heroic accomplishments are easily considered as successful people. Since the powerful people in the society are usually those who occupy

public positions, this is also the reason such people are also regarded as successful people. It is worthy of note that this notion of success, to a very reasonable extent, is very common in the society. It is an obvious truth that many people who are regarded as successful people belong to this category.

This notion of success derives from the notions of success above (“*Success is having more money than others*” and “*Success is being a celebrity*”). The reason for this conclusion is that many people who have more money than others are usually powerful and influential within their communities. As a matter of fact, being rich is usually considered incomplete without being powerful and influential. In a similar vein, many people who are celebrities are also influential within their environments.

However, it is irrational to conclude that someone is successful simply because he is powerful and influential. It is worthy of note that some people who are powerful in the society use their powers only in performing evil acts. There are many influential people in the society who cannot be identified with any good thing. Indeed, such people cannot be regarded as successful people because success necessarily has moral credentials. This shows that an individual can be powerful and influential and still be a failure.

*A major mistake most people make in ascertaining who successful people are is using a single standard in making their judgments.* This is very erroneous, though it is a common error. This is why most people’s judgments on successful people are wrong. Many people are regarded as successful people simply because they distinguished themselves in a field, or because they excelled in an aspect of life. This is not an objective criterion for making such

judgement because being a success in life is not all about an accomplishment in a single aspect of life.

It is a faulty standard for ascertaining who successful people are. Someone may make more money than others and, as a result, be judged as a successful person. Another person may become a celebrity because he distinguished himself from others in a field and, as a result, be judged as a success. Someone may also become more famous than others and also be considered a successful person. Yet, another person may be considered a successful person because he is very powerful and influential.

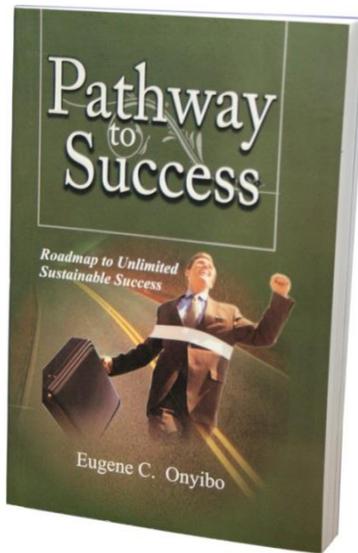
As earlier remarked, a major mistake most people make in ascertaining who successful people are is using a single standard in making their judgments. The above accomplishments (on their own alone) are insufficient to make an individual a success because they are mere accomplishments in an aspect of life, and an accomplishment in an aspect of life is unarguably not all that there is to success. At best, it is only an aspect of success and also success in an aspect of life, but not success in life.

Consequently, such should be judged as success in an aspect of life, but not as success in life. It is one thing to be a success in a field (or in an aspect of life), but another thing to be a success in life. *Equating success in an aspect of life with success in life amounts to equating a part to the whole.* It is obvious that this is one of the worst and most common mistakes many people make in ascertaining who successful people are. In the light of the above, how can success be defined? What is the acceptable, or at least, (more) objective definition of success?

### **The Definition of Success**

The above views unveil some difficulties and challenges in attempting to conceptualize the term ‘success’. It also shows that some conceptions of success are unacceptable because they are misleading and deceitful, despite being common. Success is what we believe we know, but which we cease to know when we are asked what it is. This is why many people become speechless when they are asked to define success, despite the fact that they desire it, speak about it and assume that they know the meaning.

It can be reasonably argued that many people who desire to be successful in life really do not know or understand exactly what they want, though they easily assume (or believe) otherwise. The above definitions, notions and conceptions of success, as seen, are vulnerable to some criticisms. Critics may query the rationale of these views. If there is no generally accepted definition of success, then every individual should have the right to define the concept as it pleases his thinking.



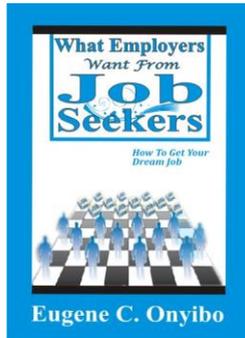
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## Recommended Books by the Author



Numerous job seekers stare helplessly at amazing job opportunities slip through their fingers because they are least informed (or uninformed) on the basic things they ought to know in order to get their dream jobs. This is why many of them are ignorant of employment opportunities until they cease to exist. This is also why many of them send job applications that are not, and can never be, considered by prospective employers. Furthermore, this is also why they cannot convince prospective employers that they are the best candidates for the positions they applied for during job interviews. This speaks very eloquently on the fact that inadequate job opportunities is not the only factor that is responsible for high level of unemployment in different parts of the world, as most job seekers think. Getting a job requires specialized knowledge and skills. Most unfortunately, many job seekers are ignorant of these knowledge and skills. Worse still, these specialized knowledge and skills cannot be acquired by intuition or reasoning. The Book, [What Employers Want From Job Seekers: How To Get Your Dream Job](#), is designed to enlighten job seekers on the things they should know before they can get their dream jobs. It contains detailed information and guides on how job seekers can easily become employees. The book is concluded with best answers to 55 Most Frequently Asked Job Interview Questions.

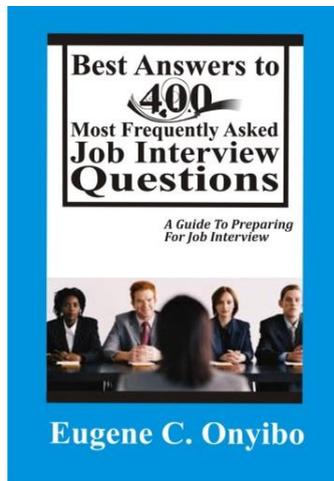
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Job interview is usually the last and most difficult stage in getting a job. Most job seekers are rejected after successive interviews because they cannot justify why they are the best candidates for the positions they applied for. Consequently, they stare at amazing job opportunities slipping through their fingers, despite the fact that they are in dire need of the jobs. Worse still, some organizations are unable to employ most (and sometimes, none) of their applicants after their screening because they are unable to convince them on why they need the jobs. Many job seekers, even those who graduated with good grades, will remain unemployed because they are ignorant of the expectations of prospective employers from job seekers during job interviews. This book, *Best Answers to 400 Most Frequently Asked Job Interview Questions: A Guide to Preparing for Job Interview*, offers a reliable guide to job seekers on how to excel in job interviews. It is recommended to all categories of job seekers. This book is also available online at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) {in soft copy (<https://goo.gl/NmUTmM>) and hard copy (<https://goo.gl/K7nwbq>) formats}.



## **Skyheight Success Consult**

This is a Non-Governmental Organisation that was established in 2008. The organisation empowers people for optimum success by assisting them discover and develop their latent potential, and leverage them for success by committing them at the service of humanity. Skyheight Success Consult, under the leadership of Eugene C. Onyibo, believes strongly that ignorance is the oldest and worst problem of humanity.

The organisation was born out of the conviction that one of the best solutions to the challenges of humanity is knowledge. Hence, the organisation is relentlessly committed to improving man's condition on earth through information dissemination and intellectual / mental empowerment. The key areas of interest of the organisation in her training and services are (though not limited to):

1. Leadership Education
2. Recruitment Education
3. Career Improvement Education
4. Personal Financial Management
5. Personal Development Education
6. Practical Entrepreneurship Education and
7. Management Consultancy

Our objectives are achieved through:

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2. Products in digital formats,
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