

Stay the course - a success principle

The life stories of successful business people often reveal many failures before they achieved success – in fact most experience at least 3 significant mistakes/failures before success. Failure really occurs when we quit or stop trying. Successful people understand the importance of the principle stay the course - to have stick' ability, to persevere.

Perseverance is the key to success. After thousands of efforts to make the electric light bulb, Thomas Edison said, “*I haven't failed, I've identified 10,000 ways that it doesn't work.*” Nelson Mandela chose a path that meant he was separated from being involved fully in actions for the things he was most passionate about – his persistence to stay the course regardless of years in prison is a true story of success. Read the stories of past and present great achievers and one common ingredient in their success was their ability to persevere – to stay the course.

*To make our way, we must have firm resolve, persistence, and tenacity.
We must gear ourselves to work hard all the way. We can never let up.*
Ralph Bunche

Ultimately, people who persevere don't just become successful. They experience success all the way along the journey. Why, because they are continuously learning what will succeed as they grow from each mistake. Do you stay the course? Do you have the stamina to *Stay the course*? Or, after meeting rejection or difficulties, do you quit?

Test Your Stay the Course Quotient

Rate yourself on a scale of one to three. 1 being low and 3 being high – on each of the following:

No.	Statement	Rating		
		1	2	3
1	I believe in myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I have clear career goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I address my limitations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I bounce back from disappointment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I have the stamina to persist.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	My family and friends support me in my pursuit of goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	I can adapt to change.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I focus and complete projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	My goals are consistent with my purpose and values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	I can take unpopular actions when I believe it is right.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Add your scores. The higher your score, the more perseverant you are.

Life is not a sprint, but a marathon. It requires training, conditioning, courage and a dogged commitment to *stay the course*. Running a worthwhile race requires an effective strategy that is both a *defensive race plan* (casts off things that hold you back) and *offensive race plan* (utilise things that help you to succeed).

Defensive race plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Know the cultural factors that drag on your 'right living', and don't let them seep into your attitudes and thoughts. Get an accountability partner. ■ Know your own negative tendencies (don't be held back by your own habits). Rebuild your mental infrastructure – challenge your thinking by using the litmus test for your thoughts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is this really true? ✓ Will it have a positive impact on my significant relationships and me? ✓ If spoken out loud would it show unconditional love for others and self? ✓ Will it help others to also be successful? ■ Know the factors that might slow you down or steer you in the wrong direction. Have a back-up plan that addresses these early – before they impact your success. ■ Train, nourish and discipline your attitudes, beliefs and commitments – build habits!
Offensive race plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop a specific strategy for each goal (that gets you started and helps you position yourself in alignment with your goals) ■ Set your radar each day so you see opportunities that align with your goals ■ Build your supporting resources (people, money, time, energy, equipment, materials etc.) – value each contribution others make to your goal ■ Find ways to work with or include others so the journey can become a team effort (family, work team, project team, friend team) – the race of life isn't an individual marathon. ■ Celebrate progress – not perfection – along the journey. ■ Journal your learning moments as your progress so that you see how far you've come

success tips to help you **Stay the Course**

Tip 1	Clarify your goals	Base it on your mission (or passion), values and uniqueness (strengths, gifts and soft spots). Know why you want your goal and how you and others will benefit. State your goals in the present tense. Journal success outcomes, what you progress will look like as you accomplish it. Be detailed, specific, and positive.
Tip 2	Intend to achieve your goals	For each goal have both strategies and timelines. Take time to list the resources that can help you attain your goal. Break the goal into small doable steps, working backward from your success outcomes and achievement dates.
Tip 3	Develop accountability and support partners	Meet regularly with positive, encouraging people who support your goals and celebrate your achievements – but who also hold you accountable to your intentions and promises. Select other sources of positive reinforcement such as books or tapes, quotes, music etc. with uplifting themes.

Tip 4	Choose right attitudes and behaviours	Don't dwell in the past, worry about what might happen or view yourself as a victim. Choose to <i>Make things happen</i> . Maintain your optimism by reinforcing the positives with your and others. Create an attitude of expecting good things to happen. Foster this daily through meditation. Keep a journal of each day's good → great experiences. Focus on what you can do – what is within your sphere of influence. Acknowledge your accomplishments. Evaluate your accomplishments against your personal standards for self-improvement. Have the courage to live authentically - don't change for others or compare yourself with others.
Tip 5	Develop the will to risk	Don't fear mistakes. Ask: ' <i>What's the worst that can happen?</i> ' Decide whether you could live with the worst or take steps to reduce the chance of it happening. Research your goal to reduce negative outcomes. For example, interview successful people who have achieved similar goals. Learn from their mistakes. Live in the present. Don't worry about what might happen. View mistakes as opportunities to grow. Let go of attachments. The more attached you are to something, the greater the fear of losing it.
Tip 6	Maintain an integrated and healthy lifestyle	Care for you mind, body, emotions and spirit. Schedule quiet times to think and reassess, to regenerate and refocus. Practice stress relievers such as deep breathing, exercise, meditation. Get sufficient sleep; eat healthy. Take time for fun and friends. Don't put family last in your list of priorities; let them have a priority place. Integrate your passions into every aspect of your life. Wake up each day prepared to live life to the MAX.
Tip 7	Practice imagery	Imagine yourself living your goal/s today. Hold your desired success outcome firmly in your mind. See, smell, touch and hear aspects of your goal. Each morning upon rising, review your goal. Repeat the process at night.
Tip 8	Persist – set your focus on goals daily	With every “no” of defeat you're closer to a “yes” of success. If you learn from setbacks and stay on course, success will follow. Every day, at regular intervals, ask yourself whether your activities are helping you attain your goal. Believe you'll attain your goal. Persevere. When your mind, emotions and activities focus on your goal, you can achieve the extraordinary.

Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.
Thomas Edison