

How to SUCCEED

Valerie Uribe

There is a marriage between failure and success. Following up on last quarter's article regarding failure, I thought it would be appropriate to discuss success. Success looks different for everyone. For some, it is making partner at a big law firm. For others, it is working at a nonprofit and making a difference on the lives of the people they serve. For yet others, success is facing and conquering a fear of heights. Everyone has different goals or images in his or her mind of what success looks like. A few years ago, I came across a personal success equation from a book by Sharon L. Lechter and Greg S. Reid titled *Three Feet from Gold* and released by the Napoleon Hill Foundation. The Personal Success Equation = ((P + T) x A x A) + F, which, broken out, is (Passion + Talent) x Association x Action) + Faith. Following is an in-depth look at the success formula.

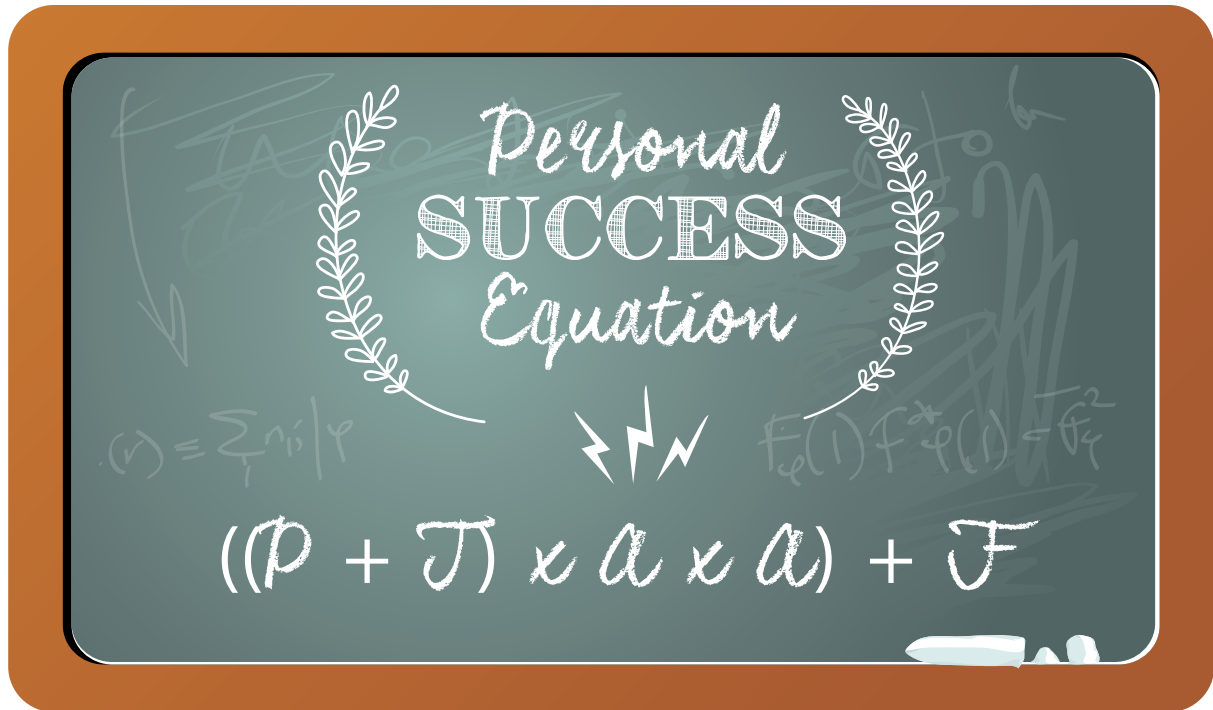
Passion: What excites you? We spend the majority of our time at work, so try to identify something you find inspiring. Pick a career, legal or otherwise, that is most likely to motivate you. Identify an area of focus that stimulates you, gives you a cause, and provides you with a sense of purpose.

Talent: What are your skills? Casey Berman, a li-

censed attorney, is currently a tech executive and also a career coach who helps lawyers find alternative careers that better match their skill sets. Berman recommends not going after just any job, but rather finding jobs that are compatible with your strengths and jobs that you enjoy. This is what Berman calls "turning the 'job' on its head." Instead of trying to fit our skills into a job posting, turn the job on its head, and have the job posting fit your skills.

First we have to determine our unique genius, those skills we are good at, and those things we enjoy doing. Take meaningful time to reflect and discuss your unique genius with those who know you well, and write down what you learn. This can be difficult; one actionable way to identify these skills and traits is to ask your friends/peers/family members to compliment you. As you see traits begin to emerge from these compliments, you will begin to trace your talents and skills, which will lead to discovering better-fitting potential jobs and roles.

Ensure that a job corresponds to your strengths. This may seem obvious, but many of us take on careers that do not suit our skills/talents/personalities for status, money, or because of family/societal pressures. While these roles may feel like success at first, they will cause you to burn out quickly. Once you have ascertained your unique genius, you will be better informed on which jobs



to pursue, which career paths seem interesting and authentic to you, and the networking activities you should strategically pursue.

Association: Once you decipher your unique genius, you can then turn to networking and researching the jobs and careers that best suit you. Start to build your professional networks. Building your “army” is particularly important during a bad economy or highly competitive job market. This does not mean one should join every available bar association or club—you will spread yourself too thin. Be tactful and purposeful in your associations.

Action: Move! There are a multitude of ways to act. One example is networking, which builds upon the association piece of the success equation. If you are learning a new skill, you can start by volunteering. Remember that it takes time to learn a craft/skill. Do your research, and work smarter, not harder. Put in the time to act accord-

ingly. Actively keep your mind open to new possibilities, opportunities, and contacts.

Faith—Mindfulness: Have faith in yourself and in your goals. Faith will help you persevere and remain resilient during trying times and during perceived setbacks and failures. Mark Perlmutter (see page 52), a former civil trial lawyer turned mediator and therapist, recommends the following:

Essential to success is a commitment to personal evolution, that is, the ability to adapt to what our experience teaches us. To do so, we must continually be conscious of our thoughts and underlying emotions, understand how they sometimes lead us to bad decisions, and most importantly, be able to put aside the pain of admitting our imperfection to learn and adapt.

FLEXIBILITY

Be flexible and open to the infinite possibilities you encounter. The goal you set may not be the exact one you originally envisioned, but with work and creativity you can achieve your new goal and thrive. To illustrate this point, I am going to use an example that I have found useful when explaining the personal success equation. Picture a man in college (we will call him John) who wants to play for the National Basketball Association (NBA) and let us further examine his personal success equation.

- *Passion*—John has been passionate about basketball for as long as he can remember. He has lived and breathed basketball. John played in junior high, high school, and college.
- *Talent*—John had done exceptionally well in basketball. Unfortunately, in his senior year of college he suffered a major injury that destroyed any chance of playing in the NBA. During high school and college, John was active in his debate team and won several highly esteemed awards.
- *Association*—The press heavily interviewed John throughout his college career. He built a great rapport with the media and sports broadcasters. He also kept active in his associations with the debate team.
- *Action*—While John was devastated about his injury, he turned to his other talents; he began broadcasting sports events at his college.
- *Faith*—John was heartbroken when he first learned about the severity of his injury, but he opened himself up to other opportunities around him. With the help of his media contacts, and through his ac-

tion, he slowly started picking up broadcasting gigs and climbed his way up the media ladder.

- *Success*—John is now a highly regarded sports broadcaster. He followed his passion, was realistic about his talents, networked, took control and action over the future of his career, and did not lose faith. While he did not feel successful after his injury, he was open to career opportunities other than professional basketball, and built on that to become the successful sports broadcaster he is today.

Having this equation will serve you with your career, or with any other goal you may set for yourself.

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