

## **Five Traits for Success**

*by David B. Burns*

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Every person measures success differently. For some, it is measured by their bank balance. For others it is measured by their latest job promotion or athletic achievement. Still others measure success by being able to earn a living doing what they love, regardless of the financial rewards. No matter what your personal measure is, long-term (and guilt-free) success can be attained only when you embody these five character traits common to people of high achievement.

**Courtesy** - Never forget the lessons you learned when you were young. You are never too old or too important to say please, thank you, you're welcome, and I'm sorry. Success in any field cannot be achieved without the help of countless other people. By making courteous acts your habit, people become more willing to lend a hand. And when others do help you out, be sure to be courteous and reciprocate.

**Integrity** - Another childhood lesson worth remembering is - tell the truth. People feel comfortable with people they trust. If you are known as someone who is trustworthy, others will be more eager to work with you, spend time with you, and even go out on a limb to support you. The instant they perceive you as someone whom they cannot trust, all of their help and support will disappear. As important as being honest with others is, the most important person to be honest with is yourself. No matter how magnificent your goals and plans, they will never be realized if you lie to yourself. Even a self-lie as simple as pretending calories don't count when no one is watching will undermine your weight loss goal.

**Perseverance** - Obstacles will invariably appear on your path to success. Expect to encounter them and be determined to finish what you start. The lives of successful people are filled with stories of failure before triumph. When Abraham Lincoln first ran for elected office, he finished

number eight out of 13 candidates. For motivational help in overcoming your own obstacles, examine the lives of others who have accomplished great things despite setbacks.

**Self-control** - You and you alone are in charge of your actions. The habit of sticking to your diet, completing your workout, or saving part of your paycheck, even when you would rather gorge, nap, or spend it all builds success. Many of the behaviors that create success are not immediately pleasant, but accrue to big results in time. Starting today, cultivate the habit of doing what you know you should do, even when you don't feel like it.

**Indomitable spirit** - Resolve to do what is right, regardless of any opposition you might encounter. As a successful person, you can count on nay-sayers, wet blankets, and similar types trying to derail your efforts. Even Noah faced laughter while building the ark. Whether you are a teen resisting the peer pressure to smoke, a business owner resisting the temptation to cut corners, or an inventor thinking about giving in to a relentless chorus of "it will never work," demonstrate courage in the face of the opposition. Doing what is right, even when it is tough, will steer you to ultimate success.

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