

## LESSON 3

### **A worthy destination**

Earl Nightingale shared several stories of people who overcame incredible obstacles to succeed. He shared these stories because people that achieve unusual success despite all manner of obstacles grab our attention. They're inspirational but he believes there's even more to learn from them. Glenn Cunningham's legs were terribly burned as a boy and he was told he'd be lucky to ever walk again; he became a champion runner. Helen Keller, blind and deaf, became one of the most inspirational figures of the 20th century. Many people from disadvantaged backgrounds rise to fame and fortune against the odds.

In an age of unprecedented global migration, we see in the media examples of people who arrive in a new country without anything, with limited Native language or English, who go on to become wonderfully successful within a surprisingly short time.

Freedom – personal liberty – is the most precious thing on Earth. People who manage to get to the UK or UAE or USA despite almost insurmountable obstacles and miles of red tape, often find themselves free for the first time in their lives. UAE and Dubai in particular is becoming a land of opportunity to all human beings.

It's a joyous, wonderful experience for them. Earl Nightingale wrote in the 1950s about the approach these people take to work and the success they find as a result:

“In this newfound freedom they get to work, to find a place for themselves.

They go to work, serving their new country and its people. Time means nothing to them; but being free to pursue their own ends in one of the richest, freest countries on the planet is everything. They all go to work, and they work hard, and their work is excellent, first class, as good as they can do it. They don't demand higher pay or shorter hours; all they want is the opportunity, and once that's theirs, they make the most of it.

"In New York city, a Korean family managed to buy a small, convenience grocery store in midtown Manhattan. The first thing they did was clean it 'til it sparkled. Then they stocked it with everything they felt the people in their area wanted. They were open from early in the morning until late at night. They always smiled and had a friendly greeting for their customers. Naturally, they became wonderfully successful. They were open seven days a week.

"One day, customers coming to the store found it closed, and a sign giving the reason why. It read: "We've gone to Yale University to watch our son graduate". That's a success story – a story of people who found an opportunity and made the most of it."

What's different about these shop owners or any other successful person is simple. They have something the average human being doesn't have, but it's something we can all get: they have goals. They have a burning desire to succeed whatever. They know exactly what they want, they think about it each day. It's what gets them out of bed in the morning and it drives them to work hard all day, giving their very best. It's their last thought before falling asleep. Their vision of what they want to do helps them overcome every obstacle.

Our goals are invisible to everyone apart from us but they are responsible for everything humankind has achieved, every great advance, every great achievement. Goals are what motivate people to strive. Anything worthwhile that has ever been achieved began as a dream. It's been said that what the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve.

I believe that we become what we think about, and when we have an exciting goal, we will reach it.

Goals can take almost any form. It's been said that humans can have

anything they want; the trouble is they don't know what they want. It's easy to think of the little things they want like a new car, or new home. And it's relatively easy to get those things. But people don't understand that it is a system and that, if the system works for getting a new car, it will work for anything else they want.

Once you truly understand that the goals that are important to you can be realised, it's like opening a jack-in-the-box; all sorts of interesting and exciting things are possible.

The understanding often makes us come alive for the first time. We realise that before we were shuffling along with everyone else, each of us doing what the others around us were doing rather than forging our own path. We'd wrongly assumed that we're all alike, when nothing could be further from the truth.

We are certainly not all alike. We're all quite different and want different things in life. What will make one person happy and mean complete success for them would be a failure to another person. We all have different aspirations, enjoy different things in life. We have different lifestyles, upbringing, education. No doubt our environment as youngsters shapes us and the course our life takes.

A person who grew up in poverty might aspire to be rich, even overcompensating because of the things she went without in her childhood. Another person who grew up in an upper middle-class family, never wanting for anything, might be happy with a comfortable rather than wealthy adulthood.

I agree with Nightingale when he says that the things we've always had aren't as important to us as they are to those who've been without them. We talked about freedom earlier and how dear it is to those who never had it, I personally experienced war in my childhood, while many take freedom for granted, and never even think about it. If you were to ask most humans what the most important thing in the world is for a human being, chances are they wouldn't say freedom. But the secret of happiness is freedom, and the secret of freedom is courage.

Setting goals is the foundation of any success; it could even be described as the very definition of success. I agree with Nightingale's definition of success: "Success is the progressive realisation of a worthy goal, or in some cases the pursuit of a worthy ideal". Do you agree with me that this is a beautiful definition of success? What's so positive is that it means that anyone who's working towards their goal is successful!

Success isn't achieving a goal, although most of the world might consider that to be success. Success is the journey towards that goal. We can consider ourselves successful as long as we're working towards something we want to achieve in our lives. It's true that we human beings are at our best when we're working towards a goal that matters to us.

The happily ever after in a fairy tale is usually when the prince and princess get married. In life that's not the end, it's just the beginning of the story. In the US when a young person receives their qualification it's called commencement, in other words it's just the beginning. There are many such important milestones in life and these need to be recognised and celebrated but what you do next matters more. Once you've achieved the goal you've been so diligently working towards, that's great. Take a break, pat yourself on the back, enjoy your achievement. But to continue to be successful by our definition, you need to set a new, more challenging goal to work towards. I believe that we're our best when we're striving, thinking, planning, working towards something we want to achieve. That doesn't mean we should work to the exclusion of all else, become workaholics, not at all. In fact, the most successful men and women balance their lives and make time for fun. They also rest; our minds can't work their best if we're not properly rested and, whatever your goal, your mind is your most important tool in reaching it.

Did you ever hear an athlete say: "It's about 90% mental"? The actual percentage is hard to know but it's certainly very large. As you saw in *lesson 1*, our attitude makes all the difference.

Making our definition of success "the progressive realisation of a worthy goal" covers all the bases. The student working towards graduation is as successful as anyone on Earth. The employee training and learning, getting

closer and closer to a particular role is just as successful. Set yourself a goal that is worthy of you, a goal that brings you joy when you think of it, and you'll reach it. As that goal comes within reach, start to formulate the next goal you're going to work towards.

We're at our very best, we're happiest when we're absorbed by work we enjoy, striving towards the goal we've set ourselves. Work on our goals gives more meaning to our down time and allows us to sleep soundly. Pursuing meaningful goals makes everything else in our lives worthwhile.

For most people success probably means lots of money. Yes money can be part of a goal and a sum of money might be a measure of how we're progressing towards our goal. But money is by no means an essential part of success. Success can be anything we want it to be as long as it is worthy of us.

Here are the 12 great riches for you to familiarise yourself with, all of which you need if you are to have a well-balanced life, with money being the least important:

1. Positive mental attitude
2. Sound physical health
3. Harmony in human relations
4. Freedom from fear
5. The desire for future achievement
6. The capacity for applied faith
7. Willingness to share one's blessings
8. To be engaged in a labour of love
9. An open mind on all subjects towards all people
10. Complete self-discipline
11. The wisdom with which to understand people
12. Money, to top it all off

That's why it's important to define success as the pursuit of a worthy goal or ideal. Who could disagree that an outstanding teacher striving to know more about the art of teaching and the subject matter that will catch the interest of his or her pupils, who understands that every student is different, and learns at a different rate is successful?

As human beings serving others brings us huge satisfaction, and there are millions of ways of doing that. For many, their goal is a certain salary or income, or a sum of money invested or saved. Goals are individual, as individual as the person. Since no two people are exactly the same, no two people's goals will be the same.

Whatever your goal it must fill you with positive emotion when you think about it; it must be something you really want to bring about. The more strongly we feel about a goal, the more our subconscious will guide us to its fulfilment.

Earl Nightingale once used the quotation: "No one gets rich without enriching others". When asked: "How about those who get rich in the drug trade, or those who produce and sell pornography, how do they enrich others?" he answered that the definition of success is the progressive realisation of a *worthy* goal. As such, people in the drug and pornography business do not qualify as successful. What they're doing is counterproductive, destructive, and involves, in the case of drugs, the death of thousands.

He continued to say:

"It is possible to get rich without enriching others, but for most of us, it's not the way we want to go. It's nothing to take pride in. Why bother when there are so many positive, excellent and productive ways to serve others? But whatever our goal happens to be, if we stay with it, if we're fully committed to it, we'll reach it. That's the way it works."

"It's estimated that about 5% of the population achieves unusual success. For the rest, average success seems to be good enough. Most people drift along, taking life as it comes, perhaps hoping from time to time that things will get better. Most people, are like rudder-less ships without the means to steer their own course. They hope to drift to money or success but don't take control themselves. And without steering our own lives, it's unlikely that we'll achieve money or success or whatever our goal is. The kind of people who leave their lives to chance are those who hope to win the lottery or win at the slot machines. They don't realise that the odds are stacked against them, that the lottery or casino are steering and the

house always wins. By contrast the minority, the 5% who are in the driving seat of their lives, who are steering a course to achieve a challenging goal they have set for themselves, accomplish more in a few years than the rest achieve in a lifetime.

Ask the captain of a ship what his next port-of-call is and he'll tell you without hesitation in a few words. He can't see his destination but he knows that's where he's going and how to get there.

Are you like the captain of a ship? If asked what your destination is, what your goal is, could you say? Your goal needs to be clear in your mind. It should be expressed concisely. It's a good idea to have your goal written down. To keep it clear in your mind you need to remind yourself of it, to reinforce it. Stick your goal to your mirror or somewhere else you'll see it frequently. Many successful people carry their goals written on a card in their wallets or purses. Could you make yours your screensaver on your phone or computer?

If you ask most people what they're working towards, they'll give a vague, general answer. They might say they're working towards good health, or happiness or lots of money.

These are not good goals. Good health should be a given, something we all want and do our best to achieve and maintain. Happiness is a by-product of our actions and lots of money is too vague – money is the harvest of our production anyway. Better to choose a particular tangible goal. The clearer our goal is, the more defined, the more real it becomes to us. Such goals are ultimately more attainable.

It's important to set new goals as soon as one is realised. This process should never end. Every day of our lives we should be working towards and looking forwards to a new height to reach, a new goal to achieve. If you, like so many millions of people, don't know what you really want enough to articulate a main goal, write a want list.

Take a digital notepad, find a space where you can sit quietly alone and write down the things you'd most like to have or do. It could be a beautiful new home, or a round the world trip, or a visit to a particular country

or place. You might dream of a sailing boat or a yacht, or of starting a business of your own or reaching a particular position in your company. It could be a certain income that will allow you the lifestyle you want, or a specific sum of money in savings, investments or a pension. How about a particular car, or something for your home? Write down everything you would like to have in your life.

When you've run out of wants, review the list again and rank the items in the order of importance. Number 1 on the list will become your first goal. As I described above, write that goal down and put it somewhere you will see it regularly – you need to be reminded of it frequently.

Review this lesson often, indeed all these lessons, until they become a habit and way of thinking and doing things. The system works; millions of people succeed and so can you. Let me assure you: you will become what you think about. Nightingale explains that if your thinking is circular and chaotic, your life will reflect that chaos, but if your thinking is orderly and clear, if you have a goal that's important for you to reach, then reach it you will. One goal at a time – that's important.

Where most people fall down is that they don't concentrate on a single goal for long enough to achieve it. Instead they head off after a second goal and then a third, all the time achieving nothing but confusion and excuses.

I started looking for the secret of success when I was 36 years old and I lost my dad in an accident. I read every book I could find on the subject; I studied accountancy in the UK; I studied human potential and I read the world's greatest philosophers. And all of a sudden, many years later, I realised that in the hundreds of lives I'd studied, in the countless books I'd read, a plain and simple truth kept appearing.

It's said that no one can learn anything until he or she is ready for it, and apparently I was finally ready in my thirties, to finally see for the first time the answers I'd been looking for for so long. Quite simply it was this: we become what we think about.

As Nightingale explains it:

"You see, you are at this moment the living embodiment of the sum total of



your thoughts to this point in your life; you can be nothing else. Similarly, five years from now you'll be the sum total of your thoughts to that point in time. But you can control your thoughts; you can decide upon that on which you wish to concentrate, about what you think about from this point forward. And you'll become that; you'll realise that goal, as sure as anything on Earth can be sure. That's why having a goal toward which to work is so very important - it give our minds a focus and our lives direction.

“By thinking every morning, every night and as many times during the day about this exciting, single goal we've established for ourselves, we actually begin moving toward it and bringing it toward us. When we concentrate our thinking it's like taking a river that's twisting and turning and meandering all over the countryside, and putting it into a straight, smooth channel. Now it has power, direction, economy, speed.”

It has been said: “There is no road to success but through a clear, strong purpose. Nothing can take its place – a purpose underlies character, culture, position, attainment of every sort”.

I urge you to set your goal. Make it yours, own it. Look at your goal (whether a digital goal card or something physical) every morning and night and as many times through the day as you realistically can. Your goal will seed itself in your subconscious mind and you'll start to see yourself as having already reached your goal. Do that every single day and it will become a habit before you know it.

This habit will steer you from one success to another throughout your life. It's the secret of success, a route to everything you'll ever have or can be.

You are now – and you most certainly will become – what you think about.

When my father died, I reached a crossroads. Should Tharshiny, my life and business partner, and I continue with Regent Group or wrap it up? I thought long and hard about what my goals in life were and, once I'd identified them, focused on how to make them a reality. We decided to keep Regent Group going and grew it from a college in north-west London to a global education business worth millions in 2023. As we reached each goal, I set another. Now I am working

towards Regent Group becoming a British unicorn, I think about that every day. And, once I have achieved that, yet another goal will become my focus and drive me forward.

