

# 5 Tips to Success and Being Who You Are



By Pam Macdonald

Hello!

This eBook is my own thoughts and experiences – please read it and take what fits for you. Each of us is a different person and what works for one may work differently for someone else.

Before we begin I hope you don't mind reading a quick who am I and what prompted me to write this book.

Before starting my own consulting practice (Broadspring Consulting) in 2008 I was a corporate career junkie. I had held quite a number of senior executive roles with some major blue chip companies in Australia and ended up being courted by an international consulting firm because of that broad and high quality experience.

While I had worked in a variety of industries (government, utilities, financial services, professional services, retail, and banking) and a variety of roles (finance, HR, IT, inventory management, learning and development, executive development, project management, change management, event management and consulting) there was always a constant theme.

People development.

I have always been passionate about learning and helping other people. Whether I was coaching a fellow classmate at primary or high school on how to solve a maths or accounting problem, to teaching a work colleague a certain process or how to solve a challenging problem I have always been focused on helping others.

Always a hard worker (my grandfather was a cabinet maker and taught me that “if you are doing to do something, then do it well” (as well as measure twice and cut once!) I believed that if I put my all into my work then I would be treated well and that good results would come.

Well that was disproved a number of times over my career and I've worked with some great and some terrible bosses. As an employee I learned what brought out my best and what did not. I learned that being good at what I did was not enough. That often led to me being taken advantage of and relied on to cover the tracks of others who were less skilled or less interested.

After burning out a couple of times and suffering some major health challenges, my biggest wake up came in 2007 when my delightful and loving partner told me that I was not a nice person while in the job I was in. I made a decision to live my life, including my work life, according to the principles that I held dear.

Great people equal great business – hire well and manage well and success comes.

Life outside work is essential.

Life is too short to spend it all at work.

If you don't like something, change it.

The way to avoid stress is not to worry. If I feel I am worried about something then I ask if there is something I can do about it? If so, then do it! If not, then let it go or change my level of involvement so it no longer worries me.

I've become qualified as a clinical hypnotherapist, career counsellor (or coach), adult educator, and learned lots about business and people along the way.

I'm accredited with a number of personality profiling tools – because people fascinate me.

And my major hobby and passion in life is motorcycle racing – I'm a volunteer official and help to run the events that deliver so much enjoyment to me and to others. I'm also a lover of walking and hiking – and went to Nepal in 2010 which was a lifelong dream come true.

Life is a journey, one that needs to be embraced and enjoyed.

Because you might only be here once, so make it a good one. And if I am to be reincarnated (depending on your beliefs) I want to enjoy each time that I am here!

I hope you enjoy and get lots out of my eBook.

## 5 Tips to Success and Being Who You Are

Hi and welcome.

Let me begin by sharing a personal belief with you

*Being yourself is less work and effort than trying to be someone else*



Think about going to a masquerade ball and holding one of those lovely, sparkly, colourful masks up to your face. You feel special and different and you will fit in with the rest of the folks who have assumed different characters or personas for the purpose of the party.

Now imagine yourself when you arrive.

Holding the mask is fun and easy.

Then you grab a drink or something to eat – but not both because you need one hand to hold that mask up. Hmmm.

Here is the first, albeit small, piece of evidence that the mask may have some challenges or personal costs that you didn't anticipate.

Even if you choose to abstain from eating or drinking – and if you do, what sort of party is that going to be for you? -consider the effort that holding that mask up is going to take. It may be fun and easy at the start of the night and for a while, but over time even a small load becomes wearing.

Imagine how you are going to feel after an hour.

Imagine how you are going to feel after two hours.

What if you meet someone that you think is special and worth getting to know better, won't both of you want to drop the mask and see who is really in there?

They will expect you to do the same.

So a mask may seem like a good idea at the start of the night, or at the time, however in practice you will probably realise sooner or later that you will reach the stage where the effort of sustaining the mask outweighs the benefit of the mask.

And so it is when we live a life, especially a work life, where we wear a mask. Now I'm not saying that it's ok to let everything about you to "hang loose" at work. It's not appropriate to go on about your personal life in loads of detail at work – these are work colleagues, not friends. And for some people sharing **all** the details of your personal (read intimate) life is not Ok even with friends!

So at work there will always be some things that you hold back, and that's ok.

As long as you are not holding back the real you or the essence of your personality.

For instance I am what could be called a bubbly and bright person, almost always with a smile and a happy disposition. I may not be well suited to working in a quiet, sombre or isolated work environment all of the time.

I can do it sometimes but doing it all the time would be like holding that masquerade mask up 24/7.

Does that make sense to you?

Sometimes people find success in roles or types of work that are just not suited to them and their personality. I used to be a very good events manager which required lots of attention to detail and lots of hours working on my own and staying back late to make sure things were organised for the team the next day. It was ok for a while, and I can do it now and then, but as my full time permanent role it was not a good mix, or a happy match.

What you are good at may not be what you want to do.

The challenge for some of us may be that we either

- Believe we are strong and can persevere through any challenge, or
- Become afraid of letting that mask fall because we have become habituated with the mask and don't remember what life was like before we held so tightly onto the mask

I'm one of the first type. Proud of being a strong person. And yes that has led me to the second one where I was afraid of what others might think if they could see a "chink in my armour" or a weakness. Would that undermine all of their faith in me because I was not strong in every area, all of the time?

And now welcome to my eBook.

Being successful by being yourself is about you and your comfort in your own skin, however it is also very much about the likelihood of you building effective relationships with others by being who you are rather than staying behind a mask.

We are on a journey and that can involve twists and turns, ups and downs, and unexpected events. Overall though we need to remember that it is our journey and we can choose to alter the route.

Staying with the theme of feeling fatigued or uncomfortable about the effort of holding up a mask for any length of time, did you know that we humans are quite good at sensing discomfort or inconsistency even if we cannot label it as such? Your discomfort will be sensed by others, but they (and you) may not

*If your feet hurt, it shows on your face.*

realise what causes that discomfort – they will only feel that emotion from you.

When you meet a person or deal with them you often get a sense of how they are feeling from subtle hints in their body language and eye movements. (You

can read a whole lot more on this in NLP books or counselling guides if you have not done so already, if you are curious). When we are uncomfortable our body language is different from when we are at ease. Others will pick up on that sense of unease, but not always the cause.

As a professional speaker and presenter I have always worn comfortable and not brand new shoes when in front of an audience.

Why?

*Because if your feet hurt it shows on your face.*

Who wants their audience to see pain on their face? The trouble is that a facial expression may be recognised or labelled as pain, but how likely is it that the audience will realise that the speaker is feeling “ouch, my feet hurt”?

Let me tell you, it’s not very likely at all.

Your expression is merely one of discomfort. And when others pick up on discomfort they start internally speculating about the reason for that discomfort. Too many people in our society today experience low self-esteem, which makes them highly likely to blame themselves in some way for the discomfort on the face of the speaker. An audience may wonder if they are not what the presenter expected or if the presenter would rather be somewhere else, or if the presenter is delivering a message that they do not believe in. They may also wonder if they are responding in the right/expected way.

Those feelings then influence their behaviour and responses to the session.

Can you see now why comfortable shoes are important?

Am I the only one thinking now of the House of Mirrors on sideshow alley? The ones where your image is reflected back to you all distorted? That’s very similar to what I am trying to describe here – your emotions are observable by others, although not necessarily accurately because they will interpret your body language through their own perceptions.

What goes on inside me is only seen by others in my behaviour which they then interpret through their own belief and experience patterns.

This is one of the major reasons for misunderstanding and miscommunication.  
Especially at work.

Someone who is working hard (Jo) may be frowning with concentration and a co-worker (Pat) with whom they have just had a meeting may look over, see the frown and think that they (Pat) did something wrong in that meeting. Perhaps that Jo (who may be their boss) is now unhappy with Pat or Pat's work. This creates doubt and the desire to re-check their work. Which takes time and may mean that another piece of work is late. At which time Jo will be frowning and it will be because the work was not done by Pat as was expected.

All from a misinterpretation of a frown – and the inability to ask for confirmation (but that is another eBook)

This is what is known as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

What I'm saying is that you will be more successful being yourself because you will be authentic and genuine, and others will feel that from you. If you are frowning because the job fit is not right for you, then others may not know this. If you hate some of your work and avoid it at all costs, co-workers may see that as malingering or goofing off rather than understanding that you don't like that set of tasks.

If people know truly who you are and you have shown your true spirit to them then they will generally trust you more and be more comfortable being with you.

Another disclaimer – you will not be able to get on perfectly well with every single one of your co-workers. Personality clashes do happen and this is not about liking everyone. Now THAT would be a mask! It's about being in a place and a role where you feel that you fit and reaping the results of that comfort.

**Hmm, now where to begin this eBook and five tips?**

Most of us have had an upbringing that encourages us to do one or more of the following:

- Be the best you can be
  - Work hard
  - Be nice
  - Play by the rules
- Play hard and reap the rewards
- Go out there and get what you want

Or something close to that.

I know I was raised with an ethos that good things come to those who work hard – or study hard as it was when I was at school.

And yes I was one of “those” kids who actually enjoyed school and did not have to be prompted to do my homework. At times my mum used to complain that I needed to be prompted to eat. Honestly!

But I wasn't just a bookworm, I also loved playing sport. Pretty much any sport – tennis, softball, netball, badminton, track and field events, and golf.

I used to represent my school in at least three sports each carnival as well as being on the debating team. Yep, combining high performance in the classroom and on the sports field.

What I am saying here is that we all begin with what we learn in our childhood. So I worked hard at what I wanted to do whether it was studying or playing sport and I was busy. And in many ways I was successful.

Beliefs such as good things come to those who wait have a really major impact on us later in life.

Especially if we have what seems to be a good job in a secure company. That is when people (read your family and close friends) may tell you to be patient, or be happy with what you have because good things are coming.

I know I heard that message – you've worked hard and got good results, you'll be recognised for it soon. Just wait. And I also heard how well I was doing

because I was paid well and in fact started getting some negative comments because of all the tax I must be paying! (That was confusing to me.)

In my mind if success means earning good money then that also means paying my fair share to the community and taxes.

Yet the same people who had told me to work hard and wait for the rewards were now telling me to pull back and stop paying so much tax.

That felt like conflicting information.

Success and good things in my mind meant contributing to my community and those less fortunate (another of those quietly and effectively instilled beliefs) and also being fairly rewarded or paid for the work I was doing.

Surely the two could co-exist.?

Not according to the messages and feedback I began to get. On the one hand I was encouraged to do well and yet it seemed that on the other I was being encouraged to not earn too much money and stay connected with the “real people”.

Well, sometimes we learn not only from what we are told, but also from what we observe or what we try to avoid.

You see my parents could be described as the opposites attract couple. Mum was smart, had been good at school, and is a quiet and reliable personality – with a cheeky sense of humour.

My father by contrast could be described as being loud, street smart rather than book smart and with an attitude that varied from work hard play hard to resisting expectations. He was confident too, to the point of being arrogant at times and held strong views, which often came across as bullying.

And so I entered the workforce with a belief set that was close to “when you work hard good things will come to you.” There was also a play by the rules mindset that also included playing to the limits of the rules.

It’s a combination that has worked for me and one that I hope you will find helpful for you as you begin to work with me.

## Successful or Ambitious?

I must admit that I never really looked at myself as successful in my early career. I'm not sure if that was because of my self-esteem or not being able to see the forest for the trees. It doesn't matter.

I had been raised to be modest and quite frankly being smart at school had taught me the hard way that standing out is not always a good thing, so sometimes it is best to stay quiet when you can do something easily. Yes I was bullied heaps at school, especially in primary school and the first couple of years of high school.

I changed high schools when my family moved and made a conscious choice to be different and let more of myself show, including the strong Pam, the smart and funny me who also held strong views on certain things and was willing to stand up for those views. And the people they affected.

And so I finished school having done ok and started work. No college or university for me, straight to work.

I put my head down and worked. In fact my first job was in accounts payable for a government agency that had a pretty strong union culture. And quotas for how many invoices each person should process for payment in a day. Pretty early on in my role I had got into the routine, was good with numbers and took pride in my work.

So I was working well and fast. In fact so fast that I was regularly exceeding the daily target by 50%.

Now I thought that would be a good thing because this agency had been understaffed for a long time before I joined and there were invoices that had been sitting there waiting to be paid for 15 months.

In my late teenage mind, I thought it would be seen as a positive to get things up to date.

Here I learned lesson number one. What does success look like? I thought I was successful until the union delegate for our office sat me down and told me off because I was making the other staff look bad.

What I had missed was:

- When there were lots of overdue invoices staff could easily get overtime approved, and hence earn more money  
(sometimes the reward is in not doing the job well)
- When I was processing so far above the average it caused questions to be asked about whether the average paid per day was too low  
(companies often like consistency of performance levels)
- That if i/one person could consistently process such a high rate, why could others not do the same  
(it is never only about the work, there is always someone comparing themselves to you)

So was I successful? In my mind I was because I was doing well. But that was not success in the eyes of others. And it wasn't really success for me because it had singled me out for some clear and negative feedback.

Or was I ambitious? I didn't consciously think so, although I knew this was not the job to see me to retirement, but others certainly saw me as ambitious and as a threat.

My response to the union guy was that I believed that what I was going was right, it was good for the companies who had supplied goods and were now getting paid and that if there was a problem with my performance then my manager/supervisor and not him would be the one who should talk to me.

Yes who I am is a strong willed woman able to speak up – firmly and yet politely.

And so my career continued with me moving in that company every couple of years and doing OK, getting pay rises with every move, hearing my colleagues joke with me about how I'd end up their boss. In hindsight I don't think they were joking when they said that, and nor was it always meant as a compliment.

I left that company and moved to a private sector company, then to another private company, then to contracting, then to a bank and then to a major consulting firm. Each role allowed me to learn something new, build on the expertise that I already had and provided me with a new challenge.

Could be considered successful? Especially when all but one earned me a fairly significant pay increase with each move.

Can you be unhappy and unaware of it?

If you've read my chapter in Secret of Success then you will know my answer to that question.

In the mid-2000s I was working an 80 hour week (every week for 10 months), travelling more than I should and not liking the people I worked with. Those all seem in hindsight to be signs of not being happy.

I viewed it as a challenge and one that I as a high energy and high producing person ought to be able to manage.

It is interesting though how we get ourselves into those situations and also how we keep ourselves there.

You see when I left one key role I was on a very healthy six figure salary and I had only just turned 30. I had an MBA and a resume that included the names of some of the best recognised companies in Australia, as well as a couple of internationally known ones.

On the face of it I had a plum position and all the trappings of success.

But I took a 30% pay cut to take a consulting job. Because I thought it was the right job and the right company for me.

It turned out that I was wrong about that. Not only did I work like a slave, I had some other experiences that were pretty terrible. I broke my leg while overseas on a work project. Sure their insurance covered me and my medical expenses, and I was helped by colleagues. But I did not miss a single day of work.

When I broke my leg, I worked all day and had it seen to at the end of that work day (yes an untreated fracture while delivering on major client project meetings – I am determined!) and then continued with my scheduled meetings for the rest of that week long assignment.

I then flew home, total of 23 hours flying time plus layovers and went straight to work on my arrival home. Not even a day off. No medical follow up or sick leave. Sure I was “allowed” to work from home while I was in plaster. I ought perhaps to explain that I had plaster from my toes up to my mid-thigh. So walking was out of the question, as was driving or using public transport to go to the office, and catching a taxi was hopeless as I had to sit sideways with my leg up on the back seat – causing much back pain. So I kept working, helping the company to meet the needs and expectations of their client.

And my usual routine on that project included one day a week of teleconference calls from 7am to 11pm with a 40 minute break in the middle of the day. It can be hard enough to eat and go to the toilet when you are fully mobile on days like that let alone when 80% of your leg is in plaster.

### Success

To me success is about doing the best that I can for what I believe to be the purpose of the work.

How would you define success?

Success for me is not about the money (although that IS a nice recognition) or about recognition or publicity. I feel a deep sense of satisfaction when I know, and get feedback from an appropriate source, that I have done the right thing for the right reason.

**Tip One is to know yourself.** This is the first tip to being successful by being yourself.

What truly does success look and feel like for you?

Reflect on the things that have made you proud. What were they and what specific aspect were you proud of?

Was it serving your community? Was it applying your knowledge or expertise?

Was it solving a problem or doing something that others could not? Was it staying calm in a crisis and being the go to person for others? Was it helping another person to solve a challenge for them?

You might want to take some time right now to jot some things down. How you define success is an integral part of feeling that you are being yourself and also enjoying the success.

All too often I work with people who define their success with the words and beliefs of others. Success to you and I will mean different things. Sure there will be some similarities, but too often people who don't know their own version of success chase after success as it has been defined by someone else.

Then when they get there it is unfulfilling and disappointing.

For me success is doing the best I can with the resources I have in that moment and doing least harm. That may not be enough for a person who believes that environmental protection is the only true measure of success.

**Tip two is making the effort to articulate what success is for you.** Yes these tips are close, but there is a good reason for that.

You may choose to write it down, or not.

At the very least you ought to sit for 10 minutes and deeply think on what success is to you.

Some people will suggest that you can get to this by thinking what you would like on your headstone, or what you would like people to say about you at your funeral.

I prefer to think about what someone would say when they introduce me to

someone very special in their life. Or perhaps what would be said at an award ceremony where I was to be presented with a life well lived award.

To be successful by being you, those are the two essential start points.

Are you unaware that you are unhappy?  
Perhaps after doing those first two activities you are feeling a bit more unhappy than when you started reading.

In a way that's a good sign.

Because it means we are closer to helping you make a shift.

You see we humans are hard wired to avoid pain. Even though we will seek pleasure, if a context is held between finding pleasure and avoiding pain we will avoid pain almost every time.

Just ask anyone who has joined a gym to get fit and lose weight. The pleasure of fitting into that old favourite outfit is not enough to overcome the perceived pain of working out.

That's why effective fitness is often more about the just doing rather than thinking about it. I tend to get changed into my gym gear and then I'm ready so it is much easier to work out. If I think too much about it then my workout rate is much lower. Dr Stephanie Burns completed a PhD in goal achievement and studied that very fact.

Back to my question. You might be aware now that you are unhappy. But what did it take for you to become aware? It can't have been this book because you signed up for it, suggesting that somewhere inside you were already searching for something more or something better.

Oh, is this perhaps the first time that discomfort or searching has been labelled as unhappy?

Take a moment. Breathe. It's ok.

Even if you are ok with feeling unhappy, take a moment to breathe and relax anyway.

It's ok to be unhappy.  
What is not ok is to stay that way!

As has been said before, it's ok to visit sadville, just don't buy a house there! Or take out a long term lease.

If you've read my story in Spirit of Success, then you'll know that I didn't know how unhappy I was.

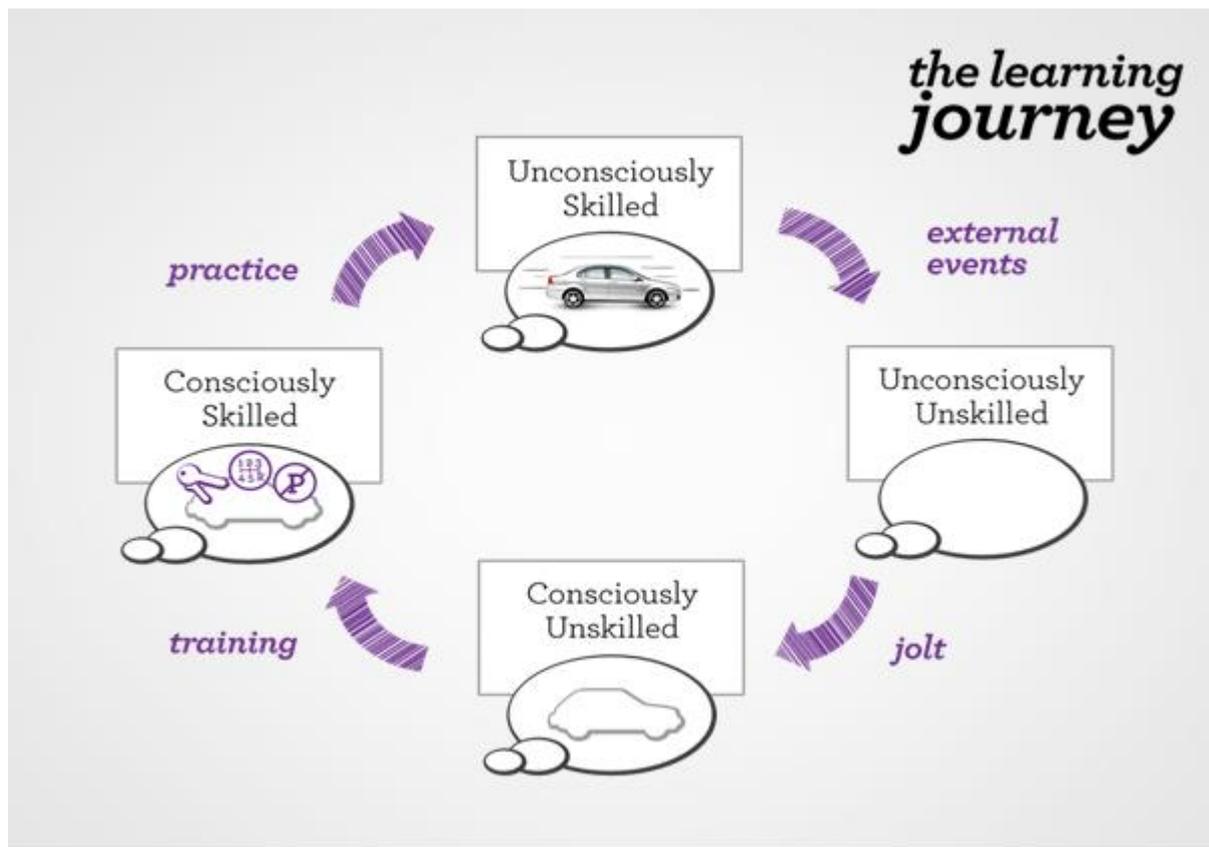
When I look back on that time I find it hard to believe that I did not know. In some ways I did know, but I kept telling myself stories. Things like, it will pass. Or it's not so bad. Or everyone has bad days/weeks. Or, what else can I do because jobs are scarce. Or, no one has said anything so maybe it's just inside my head.

Do any of those sound familiar?

And all the while I was not being myself. There was no laughter, no smiling, no helping people, only the process and the work.

Yikes.  
That's a bit scary.

And I know I was not alone. I also know that some of you are in that place right now.



Life is a journey – a learning journey in fact.

Just like this model shows, sometimes we do not know when we are unskilled at success by being ourselves. It often takes an external event to make us aware of a skill we do not have, or a jolt to compel us to take action and become skilled.

Being consciously skilled can be uncomfortable as we are learning to do things differently. While you are getting into a new routine and a new way of being you also need to let go of and stop the old routines. I admit that found it hard at times to let go of being busy all the time, to stop and reflect on why I was doing what I was doing and the impact it was having on me, my health and my relationships outside work.

It can often take a jolt or an outside influence for us to recognise that change is needed.

If you have recognised that change is needed on your own without any external input, well done.

If you needed an outside input, congratulations for responding to it.

To be blunt, I told myself that this was the job I had chosen for myself and therefore how could it be wrong?

Well, it could be wrong for a number of reasons. And it was wrong, but it took me a little while to see it. Almost two years. And it had to be pointed out to me.

If that is you too, then that's ok.

No, really it is ok.

Because life is about learning and trying things and doing the best you can. The hard part comes when you are unaware of something that is very obvious to others. And our families and loved ones are usually those who see it because they usually suffer the impact of us being unhappy.

Time to wake up

When you feel unhappy and recognise that things are not right, that is the best wake up call. It is your way of telling yourself that something needs to change.

So what might that change be?

For me it was to change job and industry.

For some of the people I have worked with it has been to change job within the company. Others have changed the way they view their work. Still others have changed the time they share with their family and friends.

The wake up is to accept who you are and what your needs are.

The key to being successful by being you is to know who you are. Being unhappy tells you what you are not! And at least that's somewhere to start.

Once you know what you dislike, you can start to identify what you like.

Ask yourself, what brings a smile to my face. Don't worry if it is not work related, just focus on something that you enjoy.

Ask yourself what you are proud of at work? What are the things that you have done or achieved or contributed to that you feel proud of? They can be from any period in your working life, just list them.

Now you will have a list of things that you like and things you are proud of.

Yes that is another opportunity to write some things down. Get them out of your head and into action.

What you need to do now is look for trends and themes in the things on that list.

And get a little bit creative.

Things you enjoy may not be associated with work, but they may be the hobbies or things you can do outside work that bring a smile to your face.

And when you feel happy in yourself then you will enjoy more success.

Honestly – I am known for my smiles and enthusiasm. And yes while I love the work that I do and the clients that I help, it is also because I love the time I spend on my hobbies, with my wonderful partner and good friends. I smile because my life is full of good things. That overflows into my work. I am successful because I know what I like, what I am good at and have blended

work and personal activities to provide more rather than less of those things.  
And because I approach my clients with obvious happiness and peace, they  
respond in kind and choose to work with me.

A true win-win situation.

Be successful being yourself and finding your strengths.

In a work context this can be identifying what roles or types of work your likes  
may lead you towards.

One man asked me for some career coaching because he didn't know what he  
wanted to do in the coming year and couldn't set his performance plan with his  
manager.

We worked through his likes and dislikes and he said he loved being a chef, yet  
was working in an unemployment service provider role. Not sure there is any  
real overlap there, so we explored what he liked and disliked about being a  
chef. He said he disliked the need to be away from his family and four children  
in the evenings.

We worked on ideas that if he ran his own place he could hire someone in for  
the evening or just open for breakfast and lunch.

(That's where the creativity piece comes in)

A year later his company made his role redundant and he used the payout to  
open a cafe that is open from 7am to 3pm.

Success.

You too can be successful by being yourself.

**Tip Three is to accept who you are and  
what makes you who you are.**

Learn to embrace your characteristics, your strengths and areas you may not be so proud of.

That means that I am comfortable to share my motorcycling hobby with you. Not in huge detail or as the only analogy in this eBook. But I am comfortable enough with myself to share that with people in a business context.

It does not mean that I gain instant rapport with everyone, and there are some situations where I never mention it. In some cases it helps me bridge the surface differences between me as a successful corporate professional (read suit wearing female) and clients from non-office backgrounds. It can also set the tone for how open and earthy clients can be with me.

For you, could your artistic flair be a hobby that you mention to show a creative side to you that may be needed in a project or a role?

Could your love and care for your family be an attribute that you refer to in ways that position you as a great builder of teams?

Has your experience working for many companies clarified common problems or attributes of success that you can share with a new employer or client?

Yes I am being creative in the way that I express the attributes of who you are in a business or professional context.

I'm sure that you have attributes that can be positioned and presented in a way that will enhance your success. Don't be afraid of them anymore.

Be yourself.

We are all human and none of us are perfect and we have attributes that could be described as the weak underbelly of our strength. And in fact a strength that is overused is actually a weakness. Just like the tradesman with only a hammer in the toolkit – hence every problem appears to be a nail and the only solution is the hammer.

I like to describe areas for improvement as opportunities to work with other people.

You see if a business owner is not good at, say doing business tax submissions, then that is either something they could criticise them self for. Or it could be used as an opportunity to work with a great accountant.

Personally that is what I do, because whilst I am good with numbers they don't make me smile as much as my client work does. I have had a business accountant since I very first started my business. In fact I arranged an accountant before I had my first client!

What areas of improvement do you have that could open you up to opportunities to work with others?

What strengths and attributes do you have that others may now? Who might be out there right now seeking the personality or skill set or experience or world view that perfectly matches the one you have?

Learn to appreciate who you are and what strengths you have. I love the book StrengthsFinder for that reason. It is listed in the References section.

Learn to leverage your strengths and work with others who can help you by using their strengths.

In an employment situation where you have a job, it may be more awkward to accommodate any gaps. Go deep within yourself and consider if the gaps are large enough for you to want to seek out another job.

You will be happier and thus more successful if you play to your strengths.

Maybe you could find a way to openly talk with your manager or boss about the strengths that you have which are not being utilised fully by the company. Most companies hate to think that a staff member has a skill that is not being used fully in the business, especially if it is relevant to client service or making a profit.

Not everyone feels comfortable changing job, and that's ok. The core message here is to know yourself. Do what is right for you.

One of my clients worked in a specialised field in a small town. She was very unhappy in her job, so much so that she was being treated for depression while I was working with her. Her options to leave were limited, and leaving to be unemployed may have actually made her mental health even worse.

So we needed to take a different approach.

Together we discussed what else in her life she enjoyed. She had become so enmeshed in hating her work that she had isolated herself from everything else, except the couch and the television.

We talked that through and I asked her

"On a perfect weekend, what would you like to be doing? Where would you be? Who would you be with?"

She disclosed that she was very spiritual and wished more than anything else to be able to do more for her spiritual community.

Aha. Here was the opportunity to access her strengths and who she really was as a human being.

So we drew a map together that showed her doing what she wanted, what it was that she needed to do that – which included money or an income – and ways that she could generate or provide what she needed.

Aha!

For her, work was clearly a means to an end.

Yet until our sessions, she had been looking for her work to provide here with fulfilment across several area of her life. Once she had work repositioned in her mind as a means to an end, she was able to regain her enjoyment of her work (which she was quite skilled at and quite good at) and also get closer to the activity that gave her joy.

Is there something that you are now thinking of in a different way?

Do you have a work skill that you can apply to your favourite hobby or sport?

Find a time and place to put those skills to use in a context that makes you smile and feel proud.

For some of you reading this, you may now be thinking that you just need to get out of where you are right now.

I've had that feeling too.

You are probably thinking, If not now, then when will you live the life you are meant to?

The consideration is about risk and reward. There is a big risk associated with leaving a job with no plans. It is ok for some people as they see that as their motivation to take action or the business market and mood is strong enough to mean that income will soon flow in again. Or you may have enough financial reserves to live off while you work things out.

It is also said that it is easier to get another job while you have one. As mentioned way back at the beginning of this eBook, people can sense things about your feelings from your body language and subtle cues. One of those things is a sense of financial desperation and yes that can come across as desperate which is not the impression you want to create in the mind of the marketplace or a potential employer.

Please talk any such big decisions over with someone before you up and leave a job. Whether it be someone you trust at work, a family member or a career coach, you must get some external input before you take the major step of leaving a job and income without anything to go to.

**Tip four is to assess life as a whole.** You are more than your work. There is more to life than work.

Sure I love my work now running my own business, and I still invest time in my hobbies and myself. Much as I love my work, I am more than my work.

Being myself includes playing sport, watching sport, reading, being fit, and having a great relationship with family and loved ones. It also includes doing some things that may seem like work to others (volunteering as a racing official means 5.30am starts and 12 hour days out in all the weather. But I love it and that's what counts.)

My life now is so much better, richer and fuller than it was when I had my wake up call.

Because I took action.

It was not easy, nor quick. Yet it was one of the most important things I have ever done.

Sure there may be more prestige flying around the world in business class and working for an internationally known firm.  
Not if it means that I was not being myself.

Now I have much more satisfaction, better health and relationships. And I am being myself, being true to myself. Every day.

Be like my spiritual client; consider how and where work fits into your life.

Ask if you truly, deeply believe that you are being yourself as much as you need to be.

Sure we all have times where we play different roles in life, but I am talking about those people who seem to set aside their personality when they walk into work.

That is not living or being true to yourself.

## Tip five is that people connect with other human beings, not the awards or job title.

When you are being yourself, that is honestly showing other people what you are like and letting them get to know and trust you.

Now for some practical tools and tips.

There is a reference book list at the end of this eBook. These are some of the books that I have read that really helped shape my thinking and views. You might also find them useful.

If where you are now and where you want to be seem too far apart, then

Be patient with yourself and consider setting progressive goals.

Many clients who have worked with me on their career planning come in with a clear goal of where they want to be, but because it is so different to where they are right now they feel they have lost hope or need to set a more realistic end goal. They soon find out that I disagree with that view.

My advice is to dream big and aim for the stars.

Then be prepared to reach those stars in a series of steps or phases rather than only in one big leap.

Remember that the best goal, the best dream is the one that you can achieve while still being true to yourself and who you are.

If that means you decline the big pay rise or the move to an exotic location, then so be it.

If success to you is close personal and family relationships and those people cannot relocate or the new higher paid role requires an extra 10 hours of work a week then it is better to achieve success on your terms than to sacrifice yourself for someone else's idea of success.

Anyone who says you are mad or criticises you should be responded to with a smile and a "thank you for sharing your view". Then you need to keep doing what you are doing and start sharing time with people who understand you and what success means to you.

On the next page is a goal setting worksheet that I always use with my coaching clients.

It asks a series of questions that get right into the heart of not only what you want to do, but how to get there.

Feel free to print that page and fill it out.

Consider what will help you and what barriers might exist.

Who do you know, what do you have that will help you overcome those barriers?

Be more afraid of living a half-life than of asking someone to help you to live the life you are here to live.

Being successful by being yourself is a realistic and achievable outcome.

Initially it may create some butterflies in your belly.

But anything that is worth it does that.

Enjoy.

I wish you every success.

On your terms.

Be successful by being yourself. And please let me know how you go.

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**Goal/Aspiration**

What current behaviour/  
experience/ skills/ habits  
will help you achieve this?

What current behaviour/  
experience/ skills/ habits  
will hold you back from  
achieving this?

What evidence will  
convince you of your  
success?

Who else will be impacted?

If there were no restrictions  
on you, what would you  
do?

What obstacles do you see  
to achieving your goal?

Who can help you  
overcome those obstacles?  
What else would help you?

What would energise you to  
persist with this goal, or  
about achieving this goal?

What avenues or options  
have not been considered?

What criteria will you use to  
choose the best option?

Do you have any other  
comments, thoughts or  
feelings about this goal?

## References

These are in no particular order, nor is this an exhaustive list. I love to read and aim to learn something from every book that I read.

Martin Seligman – Positive Psychology

Marshall Goldsmith – What Got You Here Won't Get You There

Shawn Achor – The Happiness Advantage

Tom Rath – Strengths Finder

John Medina – Brain Rules

CD Adele 21 – really listen to those lyrics

Peter Thurin – Be The Best You Can Be

Richard Bandler - Get The Life You Want