

# Writing your success story

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Everybody has their own vision of what success looks and feels like. Yet, as different as our ideas may be, the pathways are often alike. There are certain strengths and skills that help pave the way.

## Tap into your potential

Does it sometimes seem that others succeed more often or easily than you? Success can seem out of reach. It's easy to feel frustrated and disappointed.

But the fact is, we can all succeed. Success often stems from learning, developing and building upon a set of skills and traits.

## Build skills that spell victory

What are some strengths successful people share?<sup>1</sup>

- **They're good communicators.** Speaking and listening skills are critical to success. Good communicators can speak to almost anyone and present a positive image. Listening creates rapport and helps you learn from others.

Consider joining a debate club or a Toastmasters<sup>2</sup> group to improve your speaking skills. Work on paying attention when others talk by taking a class on active listening. Improving in these areas can help make you a better networker. That puts you in a position to meet and connect with others in both the social and business worlds.

- **They make decisions.** Self-confident people are willing to make decisions and see them through. Is every decision a winner? Of course not. But making a mistake is not the end of the world. There's a lot to learn from missteps and failures.

- **They accept responsibility.** Successful people hold themselves accountable. Own your errors rather than blaming others when things go wrong. Become known as someone who's "true to your word." That can be a big step toward success.
- **They're disciplined.** To be successful, it helps to have a sense of where your attention is needed most. Then it's a matter of keeping focused to stay on track.
- **They're upbeat and resilient.** What baby learns to walk without falling down time after time? What inventor, business person or athlete succeeds without trial and error? Your ability to persist counts for more than your ability to take flight the first time you spread your wings.
- **They're honest.** Honesty isn't just the best policy. If you want others to trust and value you, it's the only policy.

## Use success strategies

Personality traits are part of the success equation. But most success stories also include careful planning and plain old hard work. Read the next article in this month's bulletin to learn how good planning can help you write your success story.

<sup>1</sup>[www.about.com](http://www.about.com)

<sup>2</sup>[www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)