

What is Success?

by Liz Gibbons

Since we live in a capitalistic society success is thought of as wealth and possessions. A person who has lots of money, a big house and a luxury car, or is famous, is considered successful. This person may be working themselves to death or feel miserable, but he or she is nevertheless labeled as successful. To aid us in becoming successful, book stores are filled with self-help books to assist us in learning how to reach our goals in order to succeed. Then there is the billion dollar industry of professional coaches and mentors eager to advise us on how to achieve our goals and dreams.

As many have sadly realized, having money does not automatically make you feel happy. This emphasis on material acquisitions makes life one-sided. It leaves out many other important aspects of life. What about purpose, fulfillment, legacy, love, wisdom and various other aspects of personal growth? Success is multifaceted. Each person needs to decide what success means to them.

One aspect of what I consider to be part of personal success for me that I am working on is to become more masterful of my thoughts and emotions. That includes not reacting to the chaos going on the world but quietly observing and trying to see the bigger picture and then choosing whether to interact in some manner. I am grateful that I grew up in a family that stressed high moral values, respect for others, and good manners.

Other characteristics I embrace as being aspects of a person leading a successful life are trustworthiness, patience, integrity, peacefulness, appreciation of earth's beauty, ability to laugh at oneself, a desire to leave the world a better place, and most of all, love for others. These are traits that money can't buy but for me define a successful person regardless of the person's monetary wealth.