

WORKSHOP&

THIS IS SUCCESS





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DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

For me success is when I manage to align what I am doing in my life with who I am being in life. The intersection of the doing and being is where the magic happens in so many ways.

What constitutes a successful mindset, in your opinion?

Success is such a fascinating subject, one that has consumed me for decades. When I sold my first company in November 2000 and others were seeing me as hugely successful I realised very viscerally that perception and reality were often continents apart.

On the exterior it looked like I had it all. I took the entrepreneurial plunge when I was 24 years old, in a country/city where I had no contacts - London. Pollyanna started her business operating from home, working long hours with as many failures as successes battling to keep the business afloat and growing. It was only after the company gathered scale that people started noticing success. That's what we do as humans, it's a normal response to see the successful side. By then, I drove sports cars, skydived most weekends and was in exotic locations around the world and dressed in the latest designer gear. Selling my 50% shareholding of a commercially successful business set me up financially and, yet, I felt nothing like the success others were seeing or perceiving.

This began a series of conversations with women about how they see success, themselves through this lens that has spanned 18 years. In 2006 I launched a survey asking 564 Australian women detailed questions about how they view success, their relationship with success and what this meant for their lives, the choices they made and the organisations they worked for.

The basis of this work led to my first book *Women & Success* in 2015. I am relaunching the *Women & Success* survey early next year on a global scale to continue to conversation. We will be looking back over the 2006 results to see what, if anything has shifted and what this means for the systems that women and men currently operate in. Too much attention is focused on 'fixing women' when it's the systems that we operate in that needs fixing'.

There is nothing wrong with us (women). When we adapt the systems we operate in (family, corporate, country etc), when we create an environment where women can thrive and achieve personal and career success, then all our lives improve.

Men are also struggling to operate in the current system in a healthy way. Over 65,000 Australians make a suicide attempt. In 2017, about 75% of people who died by suicide were males, the suicide rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was approximately twice that of non-indigenous Australians' (source Black Dog Institute <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/clinical-resources/suicide-self-harm/facts-about-suicide-in-australia>)

When you look at the stats, it might be that we are worshipping false success gods. Success is very personal, what it means and how we see ourselves through this lens. However, we do share some commonality around what constitutes as success. When thinking about what success means to you personally, connect with what you value in life. Then ask yourself what am I currently valuing? Where is the connection or disconnection?

How have you overcome challenges or barriers on your journey to success?

The barriers I have faced, and there have been many!, have deepened my understanding of what success means to me.

There are 3 things in my exploration of success that stand out:

- > Clarity around that fact that the metrics are ever changing. What I want and how I measured success is very different today than it was a year ago, 2 years ago and certainly 20 years ago. Understanding and measurement is not a static thing, it's ever evolving as we evolve.
- > Understanding that it's not a straight even road, there are many humps and bumps to navigate. The times you feel most in a ditch and far from what success looks and feels like, is often that which has you connect with what is truly important, hence the redefinition begins again. Which has usually resulted in a more congruent relationship with success. Because that's what we are doing, we are in relationship with this thing called success. In our society we are consumed by it, usually looking at others saying, they have it, why haven't I? Type success into google and 2,060,000,000 results appear in 0.64 seconds. Type Success titles amazon and 92,800,000 results appear

in 0.62 seconds. This will grow to more by the time this article is published. We have a lot to say, to read and to explore about success. I am deeply curious about this and the impact of this.

- > The paradox of success being deeply personal and individual to how aligned and common it is amongst us. For both the internal and external benchmarks/measurements. The importance of doing the work of exploring what success means to us individually and what that matters. Will what we are aspiring to and seeking give this to us, can we have these feelings of contentment and success now whilst still aspiring to make our mark on the world and achieve what we want to achieve.

In summary what this has taught me so far is that the work we do to explore ourselves, and our own relationship with success often surprises and yet doesn't.

What can we each do on an individual level to broaden the conversation around success and smash society's conventional metrics of success?

Connect with what matters most to us. What would we regret more if we didn't stretch ourselves. Challenge the current metrics of what success is from a place of deep curiosity, leave judgement at the door. I personally get very excited by the discovery that for me success is not a static thing, therefore the traditional metrics do not weigh me down, well mostly!

What's one piece of advice you can give to people aiming to be successful in either work or life?

Enjoy today, right now. Give yourself the same kindness and compassion that you would bestow on your best friend. Build experiences, skills, capabilities, connections and healthy personal and professional networks. This will be the foundation of what you create in life and how you view this.

Wishing you success your way.
Remember, what we deem to be successful evolves as we evolve.

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