

Power

Motivational superstars share 8 success secrets that changed their lives.

BY MICHAEL JEFFREYS

What do 15 of the nation's top motivational speakers and authors have in common? Author Michael Jeffreys found out when he interviewed Brian Tracy, Les Brown, Roger Dawson, Mark Victor Hansen and Jack Canfield, Dr. Wayne Dyer and others for his book *Success Secrets of the Motivational Superstars* (Prima Publishing). Here, Jeffreys shares the eight key secrets he learned from the motivational superstars.

My purpose in writing *Success Secrets of the Motivational Superstars* was to share with readers how successful people think and uncover what drives them. If you truly understand their belief systems, their levels of commitment, and their confident and positive attitudes toward life—and if you integrate these ways of thinking into your own belief system—you will be able to succeed at anything you put your mind to.

SUCCESS SECRET #1:

Take 100 percent responsibility for your life.

In a society where people blame everything from their parents to the government for their failure to get ahead in life, these men and women refused to buy into the mentality that says "I could succeed if only it weren't for ____."

They realized that when you say someone or something outside of yourself is preventing you from succeeding, you're giving away your power to that someone or something. You're saying, "You have more control over my life than I do!"

Successful people don't buy into this victim thinking. Rather, their personal credo is "If it's to be, it's up to me!"

Consider Les Brown. Abandoned by his parents at birth and labeled "educable mentally retarded" by his schoolteachers, he had every reason for giving up on himself and his dreams. But when a high school teacher told him "Someone else's opinion of you does not have to become your reality," Brown realized in that moment that his future lay in his own hands. He went on to become a state legislator and



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author, and today earns \$20,000 per hour as one of America's top motivational speakers.

What Brown understood was that there are certain things in life you can't control, such as nature, the past and other people. But there are things you absolutely *can* control, such as your thoughts and your actions. Taking 100 percent responsibility for your life is one of the most empowering things you can do for yourself.

SUCCESS SECRET #2:
Live your life "on purpose."

Perhaps what separates these motivational superstars from others more than anything else is that they live their lives "on purpose." That is, they are doing what they believe they were put here to do. These speakers will tell you that the time they feel most alive is when they are on stage, connecting with an audience. Says Wayne Dyer, "Having a sense of purpose in your life is the most important element of becoming a fully functioning person!"

The difference between living your life on purpose and not living it on purpose is like night and day. The latter consists of simply getting through the week with the least amount of problems while expending just enough effort to get by.

But, when you live your life on purpose, your main concern is doing the job right. You love what you do—and it shows. Your conviction is as evident as it is persuasive. And you will find that people *want* to do business with you because they sense your commitment to giving your all.

How do you live your life on purpose? By finding a cause you believe in and creating a business around it. For example, Mike Ferry, who was once a top salesperson selling audiobook programs, believed realtors needed help developing sales skills. So he started The Mike Ferry Organization,

a seminar and training company for the real estate industry. Today, he earns more than \$10 million a year from seminar and product sales. Like Ferry, once you get your life on purpose and focus on providing value for others, the money will take care of itself.

SUCCESS SECRET #3:
Be willing to pay the price for your dreams.

Wanting a big house, a luxury car or a million dollars in the bank is all very nice, but the problem is, practically everyone wants these things. The question is, Are you willing to pay the price to get them?

This is one of the major differences between the successful and the unsuccessful. Successful men and women find out what it's going to cost to make their dream come true; then they find a way to make it happen. Most important, they don't complain about the work it takes to achieve their dreams.

Les Brown has a callus on his left ear. Why? "When I decided to get into speaking, I had no credentials, no reputation, no credibility and no experience. So I had to call a lot of people," Brown explains. "I called over a hundred people a day, day in and day out, to ask for an opportunity to speak to their group. This callus is worth several million dollars!"

You can get practically anything you want in life—if you are willing to pay the price.

SUCCESS SECRET #4:
Stay focused.

Every day, we are bombarded with hundreds of tasks, messages and people all competing for our time. This is why the ability to focus on your goal is so critical to achieving it. Focusing requires giving up some things in the present because you know the time invested will pay off big-time down the road.

When Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen compiled their first *Chicken Soup for the Soul* book, they were turned down by 30 publishers. But instead of giving up, they stayed focused on their goal. "We did three to four radio or newspaper or magazine interviews a day, five days a week, for a whole year," Canfield



recalls. In every interview, they talked about why the country needed this book now more than ever.

Eventually, a small publisher called Health Communications Inc. decided to take a chance and publish the book. It not only became a number-one bestseller but also hatched an entire series of *Chicken Soup* books that have sold more than 10 million copies!

That's the power staying focused on your goal can give you.

Spend as much of your day as you can focusing on achieving your goals and dreams. Every day, ask yourself, "Is what I'm doing right now bringing me closer to my goal?" If it's not, do something that will. Focusing is like any habit; the more you do it, the easier it gets.

SUCCESS SECRET #5:

Become an expert in your field.

One striking factor about all 15 motivational speakers I interviewed is how seriously they take their profession. Their drive to be the best at what they do is phenomenal. They'll do almost anything if they think it will help improve their speaking skills.

For example, Patricia Fripp, who speaks to Fortune 500 executives on how to become more successful, took a comedy workshop and hired a private speech coach because she wanted to improve her speaking ability. Fripp did this after she had already been named "One of the Ten Most Electrifying Speakers in North America" by *Meetings & Conventions* magazine. To Fripp, being one of the best simply wasn't good enough; she wanted to be the best she could be.

If someone followed you around at your business all day with a video camera to make a how-to tape for people who want to do what you do, would it be a tape you'd be proud of... or embarrassed about? If the latter, make the decision today to work toward being the best in your field. How? By studying the experts. The quickest way to become successful is to find out what the best are doing, then do what they do.

SUCCESS SECRET #6:

Write out a plan for achieving your goals.

Taking the time to write out an action plan, or map, for how you're going to achieve your goals is one of the best ways to get there faster. Brian Tracy, one of America's most successful business sales trainers and speakers, points out, "Goals that are not in writing are not goals at all. They are merely wishes or fantasies."

Most people try to reach their goals without taking the time to write out an action plan. This is like trying to drive from Los Angeles to Denver without a map. Forget the fact that your odds of reaching your destination are extremely slim. The frustration and wasted time, energy and money will probably cause you to give up long before you get to the Rockies. With a map in hand, however, you'll not only enjoy the trip much more,

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SUCCESS SECRET #7:

Never give up.

It may sound simple, even obvious, but when you're truly committed to achieving your goal, giving up isn't even an option. You must be willing to do whatever it takes to make it happen.

In the mid-1970s, Wayne Dyer quit his job as a professor at Wayne State University to promote his new book, *Your Erroneous Zones*. However, no major talk show would book the then unknown Dyer. Did he give up? Not on your life. He loaded his car from floor to roof with hundreds of copies of his book, and then spent a year on the road traveling from small town to small town and appearing on any radio or TV talk show that would have him.

Once on the air, Dyer would give out the number of the local bookstore and say that his book was available there. After the interview, he'd quickly drive over to that bookstore, where the manager would say, "Oh, you're Wayne Dyer? We've been getting lots of calls for your book!" Dyer would reply, "Well, I have a case in the car—would you like some?" "Oh, yes! And would you sign some while you're here?"

By the end of the year, *The Tonight Show* was calling him. And by the end of the 1970s, *Your Erroneous Zones* had become the number-one best-selling nonfiction book of the entire decade. This is what the power of perseverance can do for you.

SUCCESS SECRET #8:

Don't delay.

In his book *Live Your Dreams* (Avon Books), Les Brown recalls talking on the phone one day with a friend named Marion. The very next day, Marion's husband called to tell Brown she had died.

A few days later, Les was helping the husband clean out Marion's office when he came across some notes for a play she had been working on. Unfortunately, the play would never be published. Marion was the only one who knew how it was supposed

to end, and now she was gone.

The lesson here is that Marion didn't know how much time she had left to accomplish her dreams, and neither do you or I. We must remember that we don't have forever. The clock is ticking, there are no time-outs, and sooner or later your number is going to be called. Top achievers know this, but rather than

seeing it as something negative or depressing, they use it to spur them on to go after what they want as energetically and as passionately as possible. E

Michael Jeffreys is a Los Angeles-based author of Success Secrets of the Motivational Superstars (Prima Publishing).

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