

The Notion of Success

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The February 2004 edition of the *Harvard Business Review* has an article entitled “Success That Lasts” by Laura Nash and Howard Stevenson. The authors distinguish between the notion of a great achievement (creating a billion dollar company) and success.



Their research of highly successful people revealed that there were “four irreducible components of enduring success:”

1. **Happiness** – feelings of pleasure or contentment about your life
2. **Achievement** – accomplishments that compare favorably against similar goals others have strived for
3. **Significance** – the sense that you’ve made a positive impact on people you care about
4. **Legacy** – a way to establish your values or accomplishments so as to help others find future success.

The authors contend that: “Anyone who takes the four elements of success seriously soon realizes how complicated it can be to touch on all four with regularity.” Further, they found that those in their study who achieved satisfying, enduring, multidimensional success consciously went after victories in all four categories without losing touch with their values and special talents.

The Kaleidoscope Exercise

Nash and Stevenson include a tool called “My Personal Kaleidoscope.” The Kaleidoscope provides a way to organize a personal inventory of your successes with the aim of both acknowledging your progress and identifying the gaps.

Recommendation

Regardless of one’s stage in life and/or career, the perspective offered and the conclusions reached provide interesting grist for the professional’s personal mill in the new millennium.

Have you considered your success lately?

[See Harvard Business Review, Volume 83, Number 2, February 2004, pages 102-109. Reprint R0402H at www.hbr.org.]