

7 Mindset Tips for Success

In this chapter we will look at seven really important elements of success. None of them relate to knowledge, skill or experience and have everything to do with your attitude and approach. I will show you how to:

1. Eliminate Analysis Paralysis
2. Distinguish Real Fear vs Chemical Trickery
3. Act Like Anything is Possible
4. Be Persistent
5. Develop Selective Hearing
6. Be Generous
7. Trust Your Gut

Eliminate Analysis Paralysis

"action will remove the doubts that theory cannot solve."

- Tehyi Hsieh

If you have ever let a fear of the unknown stop you from doing something you really want to do or grabbing a great opportunity; you have probably suffered from Analysis Paralysis.

Those who suffer from Analysis Paralysis can spend months (or years) deliberating over decisions and actions to take, especially when starting projects that could be challenging and even life changing. It is an insidious condition because it gives sufferers many excuses for not taking action such as; "it is not the right time" or "I am not ready yet". These excuses can seem extremely valid so be on the lookout for them penetrating your brain or coming out of your mouth!

This procrastination is not to be confused with careful planning. Some projects require timing or experience to make the most of an opportunity. You might ask, how do you distinguish careful planning versus Analysis Paralysis. Someone who is genuinely planning their project is taking action, they have started, they are putting themselves at risk, whereas someone who has Analysis Paralysis is probably just thinking about the best course of action, they may be dreaming or talking but they are not taking action.

Every success you will have in life will be as a result of your taking action. If you quiz the most successful people in any field you will see one common thread, they had a vision and they took action to achieve it. They realised that failure was possible yet they took action anyway.

They realised that you do not need to know how to succeed; you just need to be willing to start and know that getting it wrong or failing are all part of the process of learning how to succeed.

Imagine if a baby decided not to try walking because they did not know how, or was scared that they may not get it right. Imagine if they didn't try for 10 years! I know it seems ridiculous but that is the attitude that many of us bring to discovering how to make our dreams come true.

Mahatma Gandhi once said that "you may never know what results come of your actions, but if you do nothing, there will be no results." So, if you find yourself procrastinating with concerns like; I don't know what to do, do I have the right tools, am I doing it correctly, do I know enough and am I the right person – you are probably suffering from Analysis-Paralysis and things will happen very slowly or not at all.

Taking the first step is what differentiates people who achieve big goals and people who do not. Your thoughts and dreams can only become real when you set yourself goals with deadlines and take action towards achieving them. Define your goal with a 'what by when' and then share it the people around you. For example, one *what by when* goal I created was to stage a concert featuring five bands to promote racial harmony in July 2006.

Understand Real Fear vs. Chemical Trickery

Analysis Paralysis stops you taking action and is usually a reaction to one or more of the following fears:

1. Failure
2. Success
3. Feeling or looking incompetent and/or inadequate
4. Being rejected or unloved
5. Making the wrong choice/s
6. Not getting the outcome you want
7. Not knowing what to do or how to do it

The reason these fears seem so real is that our bodies tell us they are! Our bodies trick us into believing that these situations are comparable to real physical dangers. The same chemicals are released from our brains when our lives are threatened by a gun wielding maniac as when we think that we have lost face with someone we are trying to impress!

When considering starting your dream project, some of the fears listed above can give you heart palpitations, panic and hot flushes in the same way it would if you were in physical danger. In fact, often the more important the project is to you, the more your body will test your resolve with chemical trickery.

You would have noticed a similar chemical rush if you have ever gone bungee jumping or parachuting, spoken in front of a group of people or waited for a job interview. However, although we were nervous at the thought of doing those things, *we did them anyway and lived to tell the tale...* Do we learn from this? No! We continue to let fear stop us in many other circumstances – including when we want to chase our dreams.

It is sad to see so many people missing out on the things they really want in life because of this. However, fear not (excuse the pun)! It is possible to put it into perspective.

Putting fear in perspective

One autumn afternoon I was swimming at Tamarama beach which is known for strong currents, and on this day it was particularly rough and choppy. Although I am not a bad swimmer I like calm seas

and to avoid the regular dump of waves we usually swim out past the breakers and frolic in deeper water.

On this day however the currents were strong and I spent ages navigating crashing waves and multi directional currents. Suddenly I realised that I was being dragged out to the side of the beach towards another bay but more worryingly, towards some jagged rocks looming in between.

Adrenalin kicked in as I tried to swim sideways out of the current, but no luck. I was being dragged backwards faster than I could swim. I looked out at the lifeguard station and it seemed very far away. My immediate fear was being smashed onto the rocks but my focus quickly shifted to the speed and power with which the next set of waves pounded upon me. Dive through, gasp, dive through the next one too late, the world spinning around me, water, sand, get my bearings and then open my eyes long enough to see the next wave breaking above me before tumbling again.

Luckily a passing knight had noticed my predicament and was able to pull me to shore; shaken and tired but physically fine.

As I recovered on the sand, I realised how infrequently I encounter genuinely dangerous situations and how lucky that makes me. I realised that the fear I feel in my day to day living is a luxury compared to millions of people around the world whose daily fears come from real dangers like being killed in civil warfare, starving to death, not being able to get medical care for sick family members or being homeless.

Suddenly my fears seem rather trivial and I now have a fear barometer that I can measure my daily fears against. Compared to possible drowning, my daily fears of “am I able to do this? or, will they say no?” do not get as much attention as they would have in the past.

If you find that unnecessary fear stops you from doing what you want to do try to compare it to the last genuine fear you had to put them in perspective. If you can't remember any major fears perhaps take the advice of marketing specialist Kerwin Rae and get out to an airfield and go skydiving.

Act Like Anything is Possible

What separates where you are right now and where you want to be, is a series of actions. Every goal you have is achievable by fulfilling all of the actions necessary to reach the goal.

When I decided to stage a music concert, I had no idea how to do it, very little spare time in which to organise it and no finances with which to set it up. It was not an industry that I knew anything about and I had no idea who could help me. I knew I needed a venue, bands and people, but that was about it! I had no idea what to do and how to do it which would have been plenty of reasons just to turn on the TV and forget about it, but I was determined that anything was possible and I was going to hold a concert!

I started to speak to everyone I knew about the plan for the festival, including complete strangers at the pub. One night I went to a gig and met two guys Alex and Gordon. I told them about the project and they said “how do I join?!” Suddenly I had a team and we set to work on figuring the rest out.

Sometimes the actions are not clear straight away, and in these instances all you can do is take the actions you know to take. At a basic level we knew that we needed a venue, bands and people, but what happened was that every conversation I had with people expanded the idea and opportunities further while making it clearer what we needed to do.

For example, I rang my local radio station manager to seek advice about how to approach radio stations to help with marketing. Instead of just giving me his advice, he said he wanted to broadcast live coverage of the event. Similarly, when I contacted the venue I wanted to use and told them of

my plan for five bands, they offered to help by providing four stages and a budget for twenty bands. My concert turned into a festival in two conversations!

What this made me realise was that every action created opportunities far greater and more interesting than my original goal was! But I would never have known that if I had not taken action and called the people who I thought may be able to help.

Within 6 weeks of outrageous action taking we had sponsors for a venue, 20 bands, staging and marketing, a core team of seven people, partnership from the local radio station, a compilation album underway and a feeling that anything really is possible. We even started to aim for 1,500 people to come to the festival and this was an exciting prospect!

For the first time in my life, I was genuinely acting on every one of the “should do’s” that were on my list and the experience was magic. I was completely open to creating something huge and I was unstoppable in finding what we needed to make it work. It’s an incredible way to spend life, and generates an enormous amount of positive energy.

On July 30 2006 we had the chance to find out if our work had paid off, and we were dazzled with the day of all days! The bands played their hearts out, the people danced and sang and shared the love, the venue had experienced their biggest day ever and by the time the last band on the last stage finished and the calls for encores subsided over 8,000 people had come through the doors.

If I look back and analyse the source of the magic I can see that we had the attitude that we would seize the day and take action. We acted like anything is possible and for the first time in our lives, we found all the evidence we needed to believe it!

As a result of the festival’s success and my new-found mindset that anything is possible, I resigned from my job and career to pursue my passions. I look back on this time and see that I was probably running nearly entirely with the mindset that anything was possible and for this reason, it was. It was all fresh because I had no idea how to make it work, so my only tool was to take every action I knew to take at the time.

The pitfall is that if I don’t keep fresh and take these types of actions all of the time, I will fall back into mindsets of what is logical and “possible” and the results of those actions are more logical and realistic... BORING! To combat this I am constantly searching for new challenges that require me to refresh the notion that anything is possible if you take the actions needed to achieve it.

Be Persistent

“Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.”

Sir Winston Churchill

Being persistent and unstoppable is an essential trait for success in life. Regardless of your skill, experience, intelligence or fabulous good looks, unless you are willing to persist with what you are committed to, you will struggle to achieve many of the things that are available to you.

Sure, there are some great things that you can have given to you on a plate, but on the whole, most of the things that are really worth having require some commitment and effort to achieve or maintain. Even with just a quick look at my life, I can safely say that my persistence and determination has been the foundation for the majority of the amazing experiences, discoveries and love that I now enjoy.

When I was young for example, I was part of the school Christmas show, which I thought was very exciting. However, this was not enough for me. I wanted to host my own production - if the school can do it, why couldn’t I? I got 15 kids together from our street and we created our own concert.

This consisted of translating music for the instruments we could play, designing costumes, choreographing skits and songs.

We rehearsed for months, every day after school in the garden of our building. Three 11 year olds and a raft of younger kids, practicing instruments, creating and rehearsing every part of the show over and over until we were happy with it. Our rehearsals battled dinner time, homework and ultimately survived a massive family feud (but that's another story).

We advertised our show with posters on notice boards and the event was set. One of our parents kindly let us use their house for the show and the night brought a crowd of parents, siblings and neighbourhood families. I still vividly remember the candlelight flickering on the face of one of the boys when we started our rendition of the first song "Gaudete" and how excited I was to wear my florescent orange 'band aid' jumper on stage! We asked for donations for Oxfam at the end of the night, and counting up the \$1,103 we had raised was the best feeling in world.

Fast forward a few years and I am in the workplace; an independent woman of the world. My adventures lead me to Wellington and I'm in one of the hardest jobs I can think of: telephone sales. If there was ever a need for persistence in life at 17 years old, I had found it... a commission only job making appointments for sales reps to sell \$4,000 vacuum cleaners to pensioners.

Luckily this progressed to a much more palatable job and I entered the world of business to business sales. Compared to hassling people at home for their time and money this was a breeze!

My career in telecoms and IT sales spanned a decade, my tenacity and friendly persistence making up for what I lacked in confidence, finesse and structured sales skills. I seemed to be 'lucky' and trophies and awards for being the "top rep" started to collect in my wardrobe.

So how did persistence help me in sales? How was I so lucky?

At the time I didn't think much of it, but in hindsight it was fairly common for my clients to call me as they faxed their order and confide with a smile that "the only reason I am signing up is because you are so (damn) persistent!"

Then after 10 years of sales I organised the music festival and the next day, quit my job. This period became the beginning of the most exciting and challenging part of my life. I call it 'the training' and I have been unstoppable learning by trial and error what does and does not work in business. Persistence has driven me through the hard times, particularly when my first business was failing. The challenges I navigated during this period were the turning point in my life. With every failure, I experienced being one step closer to achieving the vision that I have for my life, at times stripped of everything but sheer determination.

Now, when coaching small business owners I can give real examples of what does and does not work, more often than not because I have tried it. I love that Sir Thomas Edison said when inventing the light bulb that; "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

It is the juice of the challenging, sometimes seemingly impossible situations that have made me understand what it is to be flailing in the swamp of failure, to grit my teeth and emerge the other side, into a incredible land of anything is possible. This is something only the persistent get to experience. As Sir Winston said; "If you're going through hell, keep going".

You might be saying that persistence is not something we are all born with or that it takes a certain type of person to be persistent...Wrong... We can all be persistent. All you need is to ask a simple two-word question, the answer to which that will provide everything you need on your journey to great adventure and fulfillment. The question is: *What's next?* and this is how it works. Look at your current situation and just ask yourself... what's next?

You are one step closer to your goal... what's next?

You feel like you have done everything you can and you are about to fail... what's next?

You don't know what to do... what's next?

You are overwhelmed and it is all too much... what's next?

By asking yourself what's next and having the courage to take action with the answer, you have the key which unlocks your universe as powerfully as asking 'why?' did when you were three years old. Asking 'what's next' acknowledges that there is always something more, that there is always another step that you can take if you choose to.

To show you that anybody can develop the persistence required to achieve their goal, there are two special people, I want to tell you about:

The first, Charlotte, has created a wonderfully positive internet community [Happyzine](#), whilst raising her young son. Each time we speak I am reminded that managing energetic toddlers and managing the finer details of a business are each, no mean feat - let alone doing both at the same time. Yet her passion for the business and love for her son sees that everything is looked after with a level of energy, grace and humour that constantly amazes me.

The second, John, had an epiphany at 54 and decided to tackle the issue of reducing carbon emissions in Australia. He created a project [Ride The Talk](#). In July 2010 he left his family, mounted his bicycle and rode for six months around Australia giving talks in over 70 cities on how average people can reduce their energy consumption and bills. His goal is to reduce carbon emissions in Australia by 50% by 2020. I have had the honour of witnessing John's pursuit of this goal from the outset. His passion and dedication to the outcome is transforming him into someone who is courageously unstoppable.

Develop Selective Hearing

Even the most persistent among us can get thrown off course by negative opinions, judgments and assessments about what we are doing. Every person you come into contact with (and some you will never meet) will have a view about who you are, what you are doing and what you should do. This can be disheartening especially if you are feeling vulnerable when, for example, your dream project is struggling to work or you are trying something new, big and scary. To deal with this positively, you need to develop selective hearing. Selective hearing enables you to listen to people who have good ideas and new opportunities or who support your efforts so you can smile and nod at all the people who try to scupper you and your ideas.

It may take you some time to develop the skill of avoiding this 'noise' as first you need to realise and accept that people who you think *should* and who you want to support and understand you, may not. This might be difficult to deal with, but remember that some of the people closest to you, will feel like it is their duty to protect you from harm, and these people may not be operating from the same sense that anything is possible.

Add to that the possibility that they may be suffering from their own form of Analysis-Paralysis and it is no surprise that you may be steered back onto a more logical and reasonable course with all the best intentions. This is a conversation I remember word for word from a well-meaning person in my life...

"Serena you shouldn't quit your job, it's a good job."

"But I don't want a job; I want to try my hand at business."

"But it's a good job, and it is good money."

"Yes I understand that it's a good job with good money, but it's not what I want to do. I want to do something more fulfilling."

“BUT IT’S A GOOD JOB. You are CRAZY to quit your job!”

I have found that the more outrageous your goal, the bigger the noise; it’s natural for people to have an opinion. I now accept that many people I know and love do not understand or care about what I am doing, but I still love them and enjoy their company, we just talk about other things.

What works is to find a few people who understand your project, business or vision, who have your success at heart and with whom you can create an environment where they can support you. I have two or three people who I can go to any time I feel that I am lacking confidence, positivity or motivation, safe in the knowledge that they believe in me and support me in all of my endeavours.

One of those people is my husband John, who I am lucky enough to have support me in everything I do. Once when I was suffering from moment of quashed confidence he quoted Irish poet, writer and novelist Brendan Behan and said: “Fuck the Begrudgers!” I hope you will excuse the language, because as well as making me laugh, these three words provided such a huge lift in my confidence and freedom, they have become one of my key tools for self-motivation . As long as I am on the path to achieving the goals I have set for myself I do not concern myself with how I am perceived. If you find yourself going for some great goal when people unwittingly take the time to dissuade you, take a few moments and say to yourself: “fuck the begrudgers!” You will feel a surge of self-confidence... I promise!

Be Generous

Generosity is providing something to someone without expecting anything in return. Think of generosity as the opportunity for you to share positive energy with another person or group. The great things about generosity is that it is free, there is no right or wrong or measure of it and it takes the focus away from our own crazy self-talk for at least a few moments!

Whether it is your clients, friends, partner, family, a sales person on the phone or a complete stranger; when it comes to generosity you have two rather Shakespearean choices... To be, or not to be.

Generosity is a warm smile to a complete stranger, holding someone in high esteem when they are down on themselves or sharing your expertise and knowledge with someone who needs it. It is helping someone solve a problem or being sweet when dealing with difficult people.

We often have the opportunity with people we are close to, sometimes all it takes is a few moments each day to acknowledge or understand your loved ones to refresh or transform a relationship.

Being generous is different from *giving*, and this is very important to distinguish. Some people define themselves as being givers but this is generally conceived of in the world of give and take, where resources are limited. Generosity does not *count* for anything and it comes from a place where it can be infinitely replenished. I love the advice of American author Og Mandino who said; “Beginning today, treat everyone you meet as if they were going to be dead by midnight. Extend to them all the care, kindness and understanding you can muster, and do it with no thought of any reward. Your life will never be the same again.”

Note however that generosity is a two-way street. It is equally important to allow others to be generous with you, and this is what allows for incredible relationships with friends and colleagues and in my experience is the foundation for the best life partnerships imaginable!

In a world of so many automated and faceless transactions you can never be too generous, and with the bonus of the energy you create around you it is worthwhile getting in the habit for the start of your new business adventure.

Trust Your Gut

Intuition, also known as your gut-feeling is when you experience an inexplicable urge to do, not do, agree or disagree with something. It gives you a feeling, but it is not a feeling. It is a knowing without knowing. It means everything and nothing. It is a judgement without emotion. We are all gifted with intuition, but the extent to which we use it depends upon the extent to which we are aware of it. Some of us 'tune-in' regularly and others have fleeting and occasional moments of clarity or certainty, but few of us really harness its potential to guide us.

I have only become aware of my intuition in the last few years. I found that my willingness and ability to listen to and trust my intuition came hand in hand with my sense of inner-peace, personal growth and happiness.

When I analyse this and break it down I start to realise that trusting my instinct has directed me through many of my life challenges. I can relate most of my moments or periods of stupidity with when I didn't trust my gut instinct and went with an option that seemed easier or more logical.

I also see that it is easier to trust my gut feeling when my head is not cluttered with problems, emotions and drama. When I was in my teens and early twenties I was insecure, lacking in confidence and self esteem. Emotions like fear, uncertainty, jealousy and sadness add clutter and confusion to intuition and it is easy to lump them all together in the broil of inner voices.

As most people experience a similar mix of emotions at some point in life, it is not surprising that we begin to distrust our intuition!

Here are some suggestions for how you can start to develop your intuition:

1. Ask yourself "what is my gut telling me?"

This question, as simple as it sounds is usually answered by your intuition. I ask it all the time of people who are struggling with decisions and the answer is always there, yet often clouded with arguments, logic and fear.

If you are at any crossroads in decision making ask yourself "what is my gut telling me?" and then acknowledge the answer. A good practice for this is actually in asking other people who are struggling with a decision. You get to see intuition at work and it is great to watch! If asked, people will answer immediately with their instinct, then add reason and logic afterwards.

Get in the habit of asking the question every time a decision needs to be made regardless of what decision you make. It is important to notice what your instinct was in the first place.

2. Develop *listening* rather than *hearing*

Listening is something that we vastly under-utilise! Do you listen for the communication or do you 'hear' what is being said? Many millions of communications each day are misconstrued because we are hearing the words but we are missing the communication. Add to this the complexities of communicating by text messages and email and you have a recipe for disaster!

Communication is made up of many things including action, body language, speech and intent. If you are just hearing what is being said, you are missing out on many parts of the communication and this is where problems arise. Try to listen to communications you receive with your gut.

For example if someone you love is often saying words that nag you, use your intuition and 'listen' for what the real communication is... For example, a friend of mine used to visit his mother every few weeks, and every time his mother would start up with the questions the moment he walked in the door:

Have you got a girlfriend yet?
What are you doing with your life?
You look too skinny, are you eating properly?

This incessant nagging caused frustration and arguments from as far back as he could remember, until the day he realised that her communication was not the words she was saying. Her communication was that she loved him and wanted him to be happy.

From that moment, every time he 'heard' the nagging questions he would smile and respond "I love you too Mum", and she would smile and say "good".

If you have relationships where the conversations do not work, try listening for the whole of the communication rather than just the words said. You may be surprised how different the message is!

3. Challenge Yourself

Personal development is very important when it comes to developing your intuition. There are thousands of ways you can expand yourself and grow as a person including: travel, meditation, courses, retreats, books and DVD's, all manner of adventures, public speaking and starting a business.

Anything that puts you out of your comfort zone will help you grow as a person. Experiences like starting a new job, moving to a new country or bringing home your first baby create a heightened sense of awareness. Have you noticed that when out of your comfort zone that things sometimes look different? Putting yourself in challenging situations and environments will give you more opportunities to listen for your gut is telling you and act upon it. It is exactly in the moments of not knowing how things work that we want to be able to trust our gut and so grabbing opportunities that challenge you will give you plenty of practice.

Starting your dream business is the perfect way to learn! Anything that makes you feel a little uncomfortable will help you gain confidence, inspiration, self expression and self awareness. All these things will contribute to the peace you need listen to and trust your intuition, as well as a greater capacity for satisfaction, happiness and love.