

*The Success
Diaries*

*Chronicles of overcoming struggle and
achieving success*

Howard Rose, Jr.

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DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this book to my lovely, beautiful, joyous, supportive, wonderful, and always encouraging Wife, Patience Lavon Rose. To me, this book represents the epitome of the fruits of a successful relationship. You pushed and encouraged me to move forward with Success Thoughts and much of what I have written within the confines of this book, all of which is a part of Success Thoughts, is because of your encouragement and support to be all that God has purposed and called me to be. Baby, I humbly thank you for all that you are to me and pray for many, many more years to come with you and that you reap tremendously from every seed you have sown into me. You are the fruit of my love's labor.

I love you greatly, dearly, immensely, and intensely.

CONTENTS

	Acknowledgments	i
1	Chapter 1 - Milestones	3
	My Thoughts on Milestones	6
	Triumph	8
	Prominence	9
	Determination	10
	Perseverance	11
	Motivation	12
	Success	13
	Greatness	14
	Perception	15
	Resilience	17
	Valiance	18
	Evolution	20
2	Chapter 2 - Quotes	22
	My Thoughts on Quotes	25
	Stated Quotes	27
3	Chapter 3 - Blogs	53
	My Thoughts on Blogs	56
	Stated Blogs	58
	About The Author	122

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Chapter 1

≈ *Milestones* ≈

My Thoughts On Milestones

I wanted to entitle this section "*Milestones*" because these words have marked so many different places in my life. They are very indicative to times in my life where I was at low points and had to learn how to encourage myself in the midst of my circumstances.

It's not easy to find reassurance in the heart of adversity. In fact, it can be down right difficult. When you have pressure on you seemingly from every side, you have to come to a place where you find what I like to call "*your center.*" It's the place where you are able to dig deep inside yourself after having been beaten and life appears to be standing over you with a look of disdain, daring you to rise again.

While you're in that horrid and awful place in your life, you have to learn to find your center. You have to learn come to grips with several truths that exist beyond the confines of where you are:

1. You're not a alone in what you're going through, no matter what it looks like or how it feels.
2. What you are going through is only for a season.
3. If you continue to move forward, you will eventually come out of where you are as long as you maintain a healthy, positive attitude about your life and circumstances.
4. There is always better for you beyond where you are.
5. You *can* make it.

One thing you must realize about life is that it happens without your permission. Things happen, circumstances arise and appear many times beyond your control. Listen, you may not be able to control one single, solitary thing about the things that happen but the one and only constant that you can change in every given situation is you. You are the only thing that life cannot change, no matter what happens. I understand that circumstances befall us and they can be quite devastating to us but we determine the outcome of how we will turn out, whether good or bad.

Once you have made up in your mind that you will press forward with your life, no matter what, life can happen all it wants to. It's your response to life that will gauge your success and greatness or your defeat and demise. Holding to the words that are used to entitle these milestones can help solidify your standing in life's happenings whereby you achieve victory while in the nucleus of your trials. I urge you to take these words to heart and make them a part of not only your vocabulary but your lifestyle.

Triumph

Definition:

The joy or exultation of victory or success; a victory or conquest by or as if by military force; a notable success.

It's a wonderful feeling to experience accomplishing something. Whether great or small, feeling triumph gives such a sense of achievement that many times can be unmatched. Life will continually pose obstacles, many of which are purposed by design to bring out of you what was placed in you so that you could fulfill your purpose. One key thing to realize is that you have within you the ability to overcome every obstacle already, so therefore, attaining victory is inevitable (*incapable of being avoided or evaded.*)

The size of the obstacle doesn't matter. What matters most is your attitude toward every obstacle that postures itself against you. Once you begin to appreciate the smaller victories in your life, the larger ones are just a more “grand scale” event for you and every time you experience that feeling of triumph it will remain with you. It will serve as a reminder of what you are truly capable of when you determine to press through any and every adverse circumstance that comes against you and your life. The joy and exultation that sweeps over your soul will be what is waiting for you at the end of every trial.

Learn to also recognize the notable successes in your life that give you the opportunity to relish in triumph. Again, from the smallest to the largest of circumstances in your life, every one is a mile marker. Continuing to press forward and continuing to keep a mindset of moving forward, always forward, will eventually give you one of the greatest feelings of accomplishment. Looking back over the things that you have triumphed over will give you such a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment nothing can compare to.

Seek triumph on a daily basis. Seek the victory that rightfully belongs to you as a result of your perseverance. Always remember the joy that awaits you at the end of your efforts.

Prominence

Definition:

standing out so as to be seen easily; conspicuous; particularly noticeable; projecting; leading, important, or well-known:

You must realize and understand that you were fearfully and wonderfully made. You have qualities about you that make you unique in your own right and some of those qualities make you stand out in a crowd. They make you noticeable in certain things you do. This is all a part of you being who you were destined, designed and created to be. You were created to be well-known by what you and who you are.

Learn to embrace those beautiful qualities about yourself that were made to cause you to stand out. You must learn to love you for you, love who you really are. If you've been told things about yourself that were negative, belittling, and demeaning, remember how bad those things made you feel? That is a clear indicator that there is just the opposite that lies within you. You have to be willing to invest the time in *yourself*, whether anyone else does or not. You owe it to *yourself* to make *you* a better *you*.

There are things about you that the world may have yet to see that have the capacity and potential to make the world around you a much better place but we will never know if you don't step out! The whole point behind personal development is taking from your personal experiences the fundamentals of how your life was developed and stepping out of the shadows into the limelight of your life and allowing everyone to see how *you* made it out from the dark places that sought to hold you captive.

Take your place in life and love who you were made to be. If you stand out, you do so for a reason. Be the leader that you were made to be. Take the lead where you belong. Denounce the lies that were told to you of who you are and begin to move with and in purpose of the important person you are. Remember that you are somebody. You are a leader. You matter, on purpose, with purpose! Stand out and walk with prominence!

Determination

Definition:

The act of coming to a decision or of fixing or settling a purpose.

Many people have a reference termed to them as being “strong willed” in nature. No matter what you say to them, they have their mind made up to press forward in what it is they envision in their mind. That is a clear sign of determination rooted deeply within them. So must you come to this place about your purpose and everything having to do with it.

I like this word because it has been one of my words of mainstay that captures the essence of my heart and mind throughout my life. I have seemingly seen more lows than highs, according to my own definition. But I have kept the same attitude about life in never giving up. Granted there have been *many* days that I felt like it. I could feel the innervation of defeat all around me but determination seemed to always stand far and above all else. In the midst of everything I have faced, I have had the hand of God The Father on my life reminding of the majesty of His presence near me, not allowing me to fall, pressing me to never give in, that there was always a brighter day coming.

You must come to a place in your life where you make a decision (a determination) that the things that matter most in your life is where you will begin to focus your effort and energy. You must have pinpoint and accurate focus and not allow anything or anyone to deter you from your destiny's path. You must determine (fixate) in your mind the one main objective and goal in your life: to fulfill your purpose to the fullest.

When you have come to your place of determination, that place where you realize that nothing else matters but you walking in your purpose, a transformation of the heart and mind will take place. No one will be able to sway you from you walking in your purpose. Know that distractions will come to try and dissuade you from the direction you should be heading, but as long as you hold to your decision of staying on course, success is ineluctable (incapable of being evaded; inescapable).

Perseverance

Definition:

Steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, a state, etc., especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement.

It's difficult many times to stay a predetermined course when things become difficult. But you must also understand and realize that the higher up you ascend in life and in your purpose, the more difficulty level only increases. The good news in this is that the lessons you encountered prior to the current ones you presently face are designed to assist you with finding the answers you need for where you are.

One thing you must be mindful of is not allowing discouragement to settle in due to the obstacles life throws at you. When you have an attitude of perseverance, it comes mostly from having faced many challenging and daunting conditions before. This also comes about from realizing that you were made to be a winner, no matter what the case.

You again must find your proverbial "*center*" and buckle yourself down with the mentality that you will stay the course of your destiny, come what may. Life will always pose its challenges, each with its own entailments, nuances, and constant, continual moving parts. You cannot deviate from your purposed course that has been set before you. You have to maintain the consecution (*chain of reasoning*) in the direction you are headed, knowing that you will always face tribulations. There are always things that will come against you but have you a made up mind to press past the obstacles that betide you?

Determine in your heart and mind to be persistent with the successful course of action you have decided to take. The success of you fulfilling your purpose depends on this. Know that life's storms will come, but they're only temporary. You're the permanent factor in the equation. Do not allow life to cause you to quit because of impermanent troubles.

Motivation

Definition:

The act or an instance of motivating (to provide with a motive or motives; incite; impel), or providing with a reason to act in a certain way:

Have you ever looked at your life with deep insight enough to ask yourself why you do what it is you do? What is it that truly moves you, what is it that drives you in the current and present endeavors in your life? Are you presently motivated to walk in your purpose and have a successful life? Ask yourself a thought-provoking question: “What is the reason I do what I do?” In doing this self-evaluation, you begin to gain insight that causes you to change the course of your life for the better.

During this self-evaluation, you must also assess what motivated you in times past to make decisions and choices that were not conducive to your purpose in life. This may also require that you appraise current relationships that may have had a negative influence and impact on your life. You must also come to the place of a sort of grounding point, that is a place that becomes a constant in your life where you are purpose driven, and if you are purpose driven then your thought process will be one of constant self evaluation. This is a good thing because you will now become more and more conscious, aware, and cognizant of every thought and every action you portray. You will begin to ask yourself questions that you may not have normally asked yourself. It will cause you to think more purposefully.

The things that motivate you should be those that have everything to do with your purpose. Every thought you think must be monitored and those that will impede your forward progress must be eliminated. You must begin to partake of daily activities that have everything to do with you walking in purpose. This is what must motivate you: PURPOSE.

Let your motivation be what is good, healthy, and wholesome to your life's purpose. Strive to be motivated by that which is essential and nourishing to your spirit and soul, and make sure the reasons behind you doing what you are driven by what will ultimately be fruitful for the fulfillment of your purpose.

Success

Definition:

The favorable or prosperous termination of attempts or endeavors; the accomplishment of one's goals.

Having experienced all that I have in life, I've come to realize and understand that success is more than just the ascertainment of money, fine homes and cars. I believe those luxuries are, for the most part, the result of a successful mindset and lifestyle. When you set goals in your life and meet them, that's the achievement of success, no matter how small or large the intended goal. The goals could be minor in many cases and often times not even considered as anything that would merit the label of success, but they are goals nonetheless.

The Media has painted a picture of what success looks like and for many it portrays a façade that many cannot realistically achieve. Success for one may differ greatly from that of another individual. It could simply be, as I have so eloquently stated on many an occasion, a single Mother of three that has to get up every morning and make sure that everyone gets off to school on time, does their homework, and stays out of trouble. Then she has to go to work and deal with adverse co-workers and a Supervisor or Manager that does not care about her as a person but only the bottom line of the company, if he (or she) isn't trying to go after *her "bottom line."* Then she possibly has to pick the children up from school or meet them at home, cook dinner, make sure homework is done, get everyone ready for bed, get herself settled and ready for bed, all but to do it all over again on the morrow. For her, the success in reaching her goal(s) could be making it through all of the aforementioned without going off on someone, cracking under pressure, or freaking out in the event of a crisis.

We have to begin to retool our minds as to what success really is so we can teach the forthcoming generations the meaning and true value and worth of success. We have to do away with the false bravado of what success has been made to be and return it to its original luster so that it will maintain the value it so deserves. We have a responsibility to teach our children and grandchildren that success is not about how much or how many things we accumulate but what we did to effectuate positive change in the lives of those around us that will plant a seed to bring forth a harvest that will continue to perpetuate itself in the lives of those to come in the future.

Greatness

Definition:

Unusually or comparatively large in size or dimensions; large in number; numerous; unusual or considerable in degree, power, intensity, etc.

Many people don't realize the level of faith, strength, love, grace, character, and many other positive human qualities and attributes that lie within them. It takes going through trials, tribulations, and hard times to cause people to see what is buried on the inside of them.

Often times you don't know what's inside of you until you're faced with adversity. But if you allow them (the trials, etc.) they will bring out of you a strength in character that you didn't even know existed. Often times one would be surprised as to the amount of courage that is actually in them until they're faced with one of the greatest challenges life can bring them.

One thing about life is that it doesn't need your permission to happen, to bring challenging circumstances, or the like, to your door; it just happens. What you have to learn to do is just deal with it but from a perspective of retrospect. The retrospect is remembering what you've already come through and the strength that was built in you before that will aid you in dealing with your present-day problem(s).

Life is not meant to crush you but make you better. The trials that come your way aren't meant to overtake you but make you stronger. They're all designed for one thing and one thing only: To help positively define the greatness that's already in you. You just have to learn to let it. You have to learn to deal with the pressure that life brings and many times it will happen at seemingly the most inopportune and inconvenient times. It is in times such as these that you must retrain your thought process to focus in on the fact that this is "*making time*" for you.

So no you have a decision to make: will you allow the circumstances that have presented themselves make you into what you were destined to be, shaping and forming you in the process? Or will you fold and crack under the pressure and ball up into a corner and cry, whine, and complain about how bad things are and be defeated? Greatness, many times, is made underneath the greatest of pressures, like a very valuable diamond. Make a conscious decision to be that jewel of great price.

Perception

Definition:

To become aware of, know, or identify by means of the senses; immediate or intuitive recognition or appreciation, as of moral, psychological, or aesthetic qualities; insight; intuition; discernment.

One of the main reasons many people feel defeated in their lives is because of the way they perceive their circumstances around them. They look at what is presented to them and either think that their options are very limited or none at all when the fact of the matter is that many times there are options; you just have to be willing to think beyond what you see.

How you see yourself, your circumstances, and your relationships often times can be skewed and obtuse due to past life experiences. The trauma of these experiences may have left you in a fragile and broken state, feeling as though you are ill equipped to handle what is presently before you. This is where expanded thinking comes in.

You must begin to realize that there may very well be other options availed to you that will aid you in making the right decision for your life. When faced with life scenarios, it is always imperative that you focus on making the right decisions. Your decisions can have a major impact, directly or indirectly, on the lives of others and your perception of the circumstances presented to you makes all the difference in the world between you making a good decision and a poor one.

You must begin to go through a process of life evaluation and look at all the experiences you've had before in the past. Look at what your thought process was at the time of a given situation. Think back on what state of mind you were in. Were you in total control or did you panic and react chaotically? Look at every detail. These particulars will help you in future cases where one degree of movement in a different direction can change the whole course of history for yourself and others.

In many, many instances, your perception of the situation means everything. Just remember that there could very well be more than one way to view your position. In the setting of two people looking at a chair, they are both looking at the same chair but they are seeing it from two different perspectives. You may see only three legs while the other could be seeing two or possibly all four. Does that mean that you're right and the other

person is wrong? Absolutely not. It means that you both are looking at the same thing but one person has a different *perspective* than the other. And in many circumstances, the perspective of another individual can be very helpful and many times can help you make a better decision than what you would have made in viewing the scenario alone.

Resilience

Definition:

The power or ability to return to the original form, position, etc., after being bent, compressed, or stretched; elasticity; ability to recover readily from illness, depression, adversity, or the like; buoyancy.

Life has a way of knocking at your door only to knock you down. The key is to have an attitude of always getting back up again. You have to remember that these types of circumstances will forever be in your life. You will always be faced with some situation, some scenario or other. But your position must remain constant and that is one of focus, persistence, stability of composure.

If you are determined to fulfill your life's purpose and truly walk in your destiny, then the position you choose to take in your life must be one of being an unmovable object and your objectives and goals must persist at the forefront of your mind. You must have the attitude that nothing will move you off of your proverbial square.

You must also realize and understand that life is filled with peaks and valleys, like that of a mountainous range. You will be up one minute and can quickly, easily, be down the next. What makes a tremendous difference and can be the turning point in any and every given scenario is how well you take the situation in bouncing back and the mind set you have in continuing to move forward; how quickly you recover.

Recovery is all about maintaining a level of control over yourself, your mind and your thought process in realizing that loss is not always a bad thing. In life, you will lose things, you will lose relationships. Some intentional, some not. You can always get (more) things back. You can always replace a house, cars, money, things. You may have had people to walk away from you, walk out on you. It may have been for the best or maybe their *perception* of you and your situation was more than what they could handle. Learn the lessons from every given scenario that has taken place in your life. Make sure to assess every situation properly and to the best of your ability because there is surely more to come and how you handle now will determine the success of what comes your way in the future.

Valiance

Definition:

Valiant nature or quality; valor; bravery; courage; boldly courageous; brave; stout-hearted; marked by or showing bravery or valor; heroic; worthy; excellent.

In the day and age we live in, it is greatly important to develop, as the Elder Generation would put it, tough, thick skin. This means that you develop an outer shell to your character that is not easily penetrable. Going through life and all of its oddities will make or break you in this regard. This is where learning to deal with life and all that it brings counts, and it will teach you how to be brave if you allow it and pay attention to the lessons.

There is much that will transpire in your life that will present itself with an aura of fear and intimidation. But you must learn to look life square in the eyes, dig your heels in the dirt where you stand and tell it that *you will not be moved*. You will learn and will be taught in the coming days ahead of you how to be brave and have courage. It is important that you learn to do so.

Many people around you are looking at your life for an example that you may not even be aware of, many who may never come out of the shadows of their self-induced disillusionments. They may never tell you how they looked to you for strength, courage, and fearlessness. They may never tell you that because of the audacity that you walk in by not allowing or letting life toss you around aimlessly like a rag doll how it helped them to stand and break free of the chains of despair in their own lives. It may never be for you to ever know, but know this: someone is watching how brave and courageous you are.

In times where bravery is to be made manifest, fear will *always* present itself. I know that many have ascribed to the acronym of F.E.A.R. being **F**alse **E**vidence **A**ppearing **R**eal and that may very well be so. And understand this: there is nothing false about the evidence that has presented itself to you. Everything you see is apparent and brings along with it its own array of emotions that want you to believe them. The circumstances are quite real but your decision to embrace them and how to move past them and move forward is the *real* issue. But those who are of a Kingdom mind set know that there is wisdom and instruction available on how to deal with what has been presented and lies before us in a given situation.

But fear is something that you absolutely *do not* have to embrace. Some may say that fear or being afraid in a given situation is ok or a good thing and it absolutely is not. No level of fear at all is a good thing. It is an emotion that brings about distress by impending danger. At the heart of Valiance, bravery incorporates courage which is a quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to stand and face difficulty, danger, or pain *without fear*. So the two cannot coexist together. It's either one or the other. Be brave. Be courageous. *Be Valiant.*

Evolution

Definition:

Any process of formation or growth; development: the evolution of a language; a product of such development; something evolved; to develop gradually; to come forth gradually into being; develop; undergo evolution; to develop by a process of evolution to a different adaptive state or condition.

There is a baseline to who we are as individuals. That's what makes each and every one of us unique. Our personality is who people think we are, but our character is truly *who* and *what* we are. As we grow in life, it is our character that should continue through the process of evolution. Our character should continually be changed, shaped, formed into that which is conducive to the positive forward progression of who we are as it relates to our purpose.

You should be able to look back over your life at some point, whether now or later, and see a progression, an evolution of who you were then and who you are now. You want to see positive progress in your life from who you once were and who you are now becoming.

You should also be mindful that your process of evolution should always cause you to adapt to the elements and entailments that revolve around your purpose. Your personal development should always be pushing you in that direction which will in turn cause you to tailor your thought process and actions in that aspect.

Your personal evolution should always be about growth and development: Growth from the standpoint that you are always in a continual ascent from one level to the next, getting better at becoming a better you, and development that drives you to want to learn more, know more, be more of who you were destined to be. This comes with the never-ending pursuit and quest for knowledge and never settling for anything less than excellence in your life.

Be the product of the epitome of your life: the sum total of who you were meant to be that will effectuate (positive) change in the lives of every person you come into contact with.

Chapter 2

❧ *Quotes* ❧

My Thoughts On Quotes

In 2001, I began to write out motivational Quotes to inspire myself. I did this to motivate myself during a time in my life when things were very, very difficult for me. Some kind of way, I found it within myself to develop these Quotes so that I could keep moving forward in my life when things seemed to be the most tumultuous. I used to write them on the white board in one of the conference rooms where I used to work at the time and sometimes they would stay, other times they were erased whether due to a meeting or someone needing to use the board for demonstration purposes. But whatever the case was, I would continue to write them up there.

I didn't realize the affect the Quotes themselves were having on me and being a graphic artist I began to accompany them with graphics that I had designed and I felt were fitting. I then came up with the name *Success Thoughts* because these Quotes reminded me of the old *Successories* memorabilia that was popular back in the 90's. I felt like the Quotes were words of motivation toward a successful mind set, so *Success Thoughts* was born. I then began to write small blogs at a time when blogging was unheard of. Compiled together in the form of a newsletter, I began to e-mail them out. Then, after having an epiphany, I shut everything down until 2009 and began to write them again, introducing them back to the world through the form of Social Media. At that time, I made a vow to myself that every time I felt depression and despair trying to take a hold of me that I would write something positive that would encourage not only myself but someone else as well.

Throughout the years since then, I have continued to write Quotes (and Blogs) that have literally touched the lives of thousands of people. I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you some of those Quotes that have inspired, motivated, and encouraged many a reader, helping to catapult them into their destiny and purpose.



Success is a mountain that's well worth the climb.



The success that you will experience tomorrow will come from the hardships that you press through today.



We have yet again awakened to another day of opportunity for success and greatness. Let's make it the best we can, beyond every obstacle and adversity.



True success and greatness is forged in the heat of discouragement, when all else on the outside is telling you “No, stop!” but there is a still, small voice inside telling you, “Yes, keep going.”



Take today and embrace it for what it is. We have another opportunity to walk in the fullness of what success and greatness were destined to bring out of us.



Don't fight against the adverse circumstances that are working to develop the greatness that lies within you. Embrace them and let them temper and mold you into what you were destined to be.



All the negative things that were told to you in the past were said to distract you from who you really are. You are actually the opposite. Know who you are for yourself and that greatness lies within you.



When negative circumstances present themselves, they are presented to develop something in your character that already exists, not to change who you are.



Success starts in the mind. It's a mental attitude. It's a lifestyle. It doesn't just happen, you have to make it happen. I have found that success begins with an "I can" attitude.



You will find your strength in your struggle.



You will never know true successful victory until you experience the pain and agony of struggle and defeat.



Greatness is forged out of extreme difficulties.



Condition and train your mind to think in a forward progression. Soon you will find that it has become a habit that will help change your life forever.



It always seems to be more of a struggle to progress forward and upward as oppose to being complacent or going backward, but the rewards are so much sweeter and last much longer.



Some of our greatest triumphs and victories are forged in some of the darkest days we will ever see. Just know that the night is always darkest right before the dawn.



Your external circumstances won't change until YOU change your internal mindset.





There is a strength that lies within that you may not know is there. It is revealed when trials and adversity come to test what you're made of.



Never give up in where you are in your life. If you do, you're giving up on yourself, your future, and those who need what's inside of you that can help take them to the next level.



You have everything in you necessary for you to be successful and great. It starts first in your mind and how you view yourself. Change your mind and you will change your future, and fulfill your destiny to its fullest.



Always be mindful of how you deal with and manage your relationships.



If you don't manage your time, something or someone else will. Manage your time and life wisely.



A grand successful idea is something that you are not able to do on your own.



Don't wait for someone else to do something that you have the power within yourself to accomplish.



Successful relationships start with communication and trust.



Success is conceived when you make the decision to realize the potential that lies within you.



Success demands that you be as consistent as possible.



Success and greatness come into full maturity when what you have built far outlives you.



DO NOT allow fear to keep you from reaching your goals and pursuing your dreams.



The level of greatness you experience will be determined by the level of pressure and pain you are willing to endure.



Keep pressing forward, no matter how much adversity mounts itself against you.



In order to get more into your hands later, you have to be willing to give away what you hold now.



Success is not something that you look forward to, It's a lifestyle that you live that develops your life.



To truly walk in greatness, you must first be willing to humble yourself and wait until your time has come.



We must take time and be thankful always, not just one day out of the year.



Success is something that is developed over a period of time, not overnight.



Make sure that your success doesn't lead you to a place where you have it all and have nothing, all at the same time.



The greatness of a person is not defined by how much he has accumulated unto himself, but how much of himself he is able to give away for the benefit of others.



You must first realize that greatness is in you, even if no one else does.



Figure out a way to do something unique that will change and impact the lives of others, and success will be inevitable.



Don't stop believing in who you were made to be, even if everyone else does. Encourage yourself. You can do it.



Relax and weather your storm. It has only come to make the flowers of your life grow.



No matter what the situation is you face, don't let it change you, you change it.



Don't give up hope on your dreams and being successful. Hope has not, and will never, give up on you.



Do what you know to do, but never stop seeking knowledge to do better.



Don't make a life-long decision based on a temporary situation.



When life opposes you, stop, listen, think, then act. React according to what's in YOU, not by WHAT'S coming AT you.



Don't wait for something or someone else to make something of YOUR life. Do it yourself. You have the power within to do it.



Make the most of where you are. Your future may very well depend on it.



The purpose of power in the hands of a person is not to harm but to help, and more so to help those who cannot always help themselves.



“No” is not always an answer of opposition as we perceive it to be. We need to learn to accept no as an answer that helps, now and later.



Have the fortitude to be straight forward with others. Be direct and forthright. It will be worth much to you in the long run to do so.



Pursuing your dreams will be one of the most fulfilling things you will ever do in your life. Start now if you haven't already.



Make a conscious decision today to pursue your dreams, and let nothing and no one stop you or tell you otherwise.



You have to make up in your mind that you want to be successful. Once you do, success is inevitable (incapable of being avoided or evaded.)



Do your best to succeed today. Tomorrow will take care of itself.



Stare right into the face of adversity and tell it that YOU ARE a success and greatness lives in you.



It's time for us to realize a new way of thinking that will aid in a greater level of success.



A key to success: Begin to set small, attainable goals that will lead to larger, greater ones.



Purpose brings pain, but it's only to grow and develop what is in you.



Take time to focus on that one thing that you can build on that allows you to work less and produce more.



Don't allow frustration. It is the breeding ground for discouragement and can hinder your journey of success and greatness.



Be thankful for what you have. Appreciate where you are in life. Take life one day and one step at a time. Who or what you don't have either will come later or doesn't need to be there.



A Favorable Response: You have a responsibility to give a favorable response to every situation that comes your way for the sake of the future of your success.



On your way to success: Make up in your mind this day whether or not you will stick out the tough times.



On our way to success: Take time and enjoy life while you have it. Make out a "life list," not a bucket list.



If you're going to be successful in life or business, it's important for you to be able to read and judge people correctly.



Don't quit. Don't give in. the breakthrough to your next level of success is just a few steps, or the next step, away.



Your character is always the main thing that others will remember about you. Maintain it well.



On your way to success: If you need to hear the voice of direction in a quiet place, the answer will not bring more noise. It will come in a still, small voice.



Maintain control of your response to every situation. Don't let your situation control you and your response.



Learn to appreciate what you have and the time you have to appreciate it.



Begin to embrace those things that will push and propel you to greatness.



Break away mentally from the things that are not conducive to the future of your success.



Some doors you have to walk through; some you have to force and pry open; some you have to kick open and use C-4 to open; some you leave closed. Use wisdom to know the difference.



Life happens, things will happen. It's what you do with it and how you manage it that makes the difference.



Have the greatness of character to know when to bow out gracefully from a chapter in your life that's closing, looking forward with expectation to the next one being written.



Your life is a book daily being written. What will you contribute to the success of it?



Only a fool would rush into purpose without being prepared. Be fully prepared for the success that you're moving toward.



In preparation for success, write down your vision and make it plain. In fact, write down everything that comes to you and catalog your thoughts. Be prepared for when the opportunity manifests itself.



Be free to be yourself. Be the unique person that you were designed to be, not a duplicate or copycat.



Change is inevitable and a part of life that must be embraced. In order to achieve success and greatness, accept the things that can't be changed, and be determined towards the things that can.



One of the truest landmarks of success is leaving behind a legacy whose roots are cemented in time and history for generations to come.



Prepare yourself by finding several things you do well and mastering them. Success will come when the opportunity presents itself.



Have such greatness of character that you leave an indelible impression on people, and you are truly missed when you're gone.



You dictate what (success) thoughts take up residence in your mind, not outside circumstances.



You have need of patience that, after you have done your due diligence in your endeavor for success, you will receive your promised reward.



Govern your time in such a respectful manner that demands and commands others to do the same.



The essence of greatness is knowing that what mistakes you've made does not dictate WHO you are in character, but instead they have helped to shape it.



Going through the process of being forged under pressure will only yield a higher level of success and greatness.



No matter what things look like, no matter how you feel today, no matter what people say, NEVER give up on your hopes and dreams. The future of your success depends on it.



We must be determined to succeed and let nothing stop us from reaching our landmarks of success and greatness.



Make sure to make the right decisions for your future. One decision could affect your destiny.



In order to become great and successful in every area and aspect of our lives, we must be willing to be susceptible to change in our minds first. When we change our minds, we align ourselves with our destiny.



One of the biggest rewards one can have is to have a good name that lasts long after they're gone.



Make room for change. Change has certainly made room for you.



Remembering those who have gone before us and paved the way so that we could be successful is part of the process of greatness.



When you begin to realize and appreciate your own value, you will be successful in fast-tracking yourself to greater things.



Let life's pressures shape you like a diamond. The greater the pressure, the greater your value.



Maintaining mental stability in the midst of a crisis is the first step towards overcoming it.



Surround yourself with individuals who are at a level to which you aspire. Success and greatness are sure to follow.



Help someone out of your own pain



Your character is defined not by your achievements or accomplishments, but the trials and tribulations you are able to press through, by not allowing those things to change you, and maintaining your sanity and a positive attitude.



Adversity is designed to develop your character, not destroy it.



Doubt will come when adverse circumstances arise, but it's what you do with those doubts in the process that makes all the difference.



Greatness is not developed and made without pain. The struggles that we go through were pre-designed to draw that greatness out. Don't resist the struggles, but rather embrace them, for you may be upon one of your finest hours.



When negative circumstances present themselves, they are presented to develop something in your character that already exists, not to change who you are.



All the negative things that were told to you in past were said to distract you from who you really are. You are actually the opposite. Know who you are for yourself and that greatness lies within you.



Dig your heels in even deeper. It's getting tougher and uglier and the fight is on. But the outcome is going to be great. Keep looking for it. Don't give up.



Feel the growing pains of greatness as you go through struggles, knowing that the outcome will make you so much better.



Make your life the success you want it to be.



Never discount yourself on what you are truly able to do. The success and greatness that you can achieve in your life may come from some of the things that you never thought you'd see yourself doing.



To measure one's success, you don't qualify them by the number of things they succeeded at, but the number of things they tried that they found didn't work and their unwillingness to quit until they found something that did.



The biggest fear I have is not of failing, but what would happen to me if I stop moving forward.



The longer I live, the more I find there is to learn.



Success is finding out what you're good at and doing that thing that gives you fulfillment.



There's something to be said about a positive transformation of the mind. When you sense it, it's like a spiritual metamorphosis.



Success is a mountain that's well worth the climb.



Success is making your dreams become reality.



Success demands a great price, but it's worth everything you could ever pay and more...



Great minds strive for more.



Greatness starts from the mind of a great person.



Success can be likened unto a fine wine... It gets better with time.



Partnerships are built on a foundation of commitment and trust.



Communication is a major key to keeping solid relationships



Success is a driving force that begins in the mind, then it becomes a plan,
then it becomes a pattern, then it becomes a lifestyle.



The true measure of one's success is not how much wealth he has gained at
the end, but the wealth of people he was able to help and share it with
along the way.



Success... a journey that doesn't have to end.



When success is achieved, there's nothing that smells sweeter.



Success is a light waiting to illuminate our thoughts.



The triumph of success... the rose we remember, the thorns we seldom
forget.



Consistency... a true measure of success.



Success is bridging the gap between vision and actuality.



Success is like trial and error... You keep trying until you get out all of the errors.



The road to success is not always the path of least resistance.



The color of success? You decide.



The sound of success... music to the ears.



There's a beauty in success sometimes words can't describe... it has to be seen.



Success and greatness will always stand strong and tall.



Success is very much a discipline.



In the mind is where success is first conceived and achieved.



There is power in your thoughts and it comes from the decisions you choose to make from those very thoughts.



So, where is your mind today? What are you thinking about? Where are your dreams? Have you forgotten them? Where are your inventions and ideas? What happened to your belief in that they could come to pass? If you feel like you've lost them, then you can find them. Don't let your feelings cause you to see things in your mind that are not real. Bring your thoughts in and think on what you can be. There's nothing you can't do as long as you think so.



This is a new year and time to take hold of new things while finishing up the old and setting them to the side. It's time to gain a new perspective on your life and where you're going. It's time for you to begin to see your life from a view you've never seen before. If you are reading this, you still a chance, a chance to change, a chance to make things better, a chance to change your verbal professions. You have many opportunities availed to you. Don't waste another moment over what has passed, but what great things lie ahead in your future.



Who you are as a person should continue to evolve in a positive direction, not digress into degradation. As you evolve, strive to get better and not allow yourself to get complacent and settle for less than who you were meant to be.



Never get so caught up in being successful that you forget about two important things: your family and friends.



Don't give up. Don't quit. Don't look back in despair or defeat. Don't allow your circumstances to dictate to you what will be. Don't give up on yourself.



You absolutely cannot allow fear to have any place in your life. It makes you feel as though you have no control, not even over yourself. Fear only has the power in your life that you give it.



If you see something in you that is bringing about negative consequences in your life, strive with everything in you to change it.

For Blog: You can only change what's in you.



Take down time as prep time. Get ready for the next phase of your life by being prepared.



Greatness hurts and you pay a price for it but it will all have been worth it when it's called upon.



What is common to one is NOT common to all. Common Sense is only common to you, relating to your environment, no one else's.



Success can be as simple as taking one step at a time.



Make a solid, concrete decision to move forward, no matter what.



One of the best things about hard times is that they show you just how much you really need. Take heed.



Many times when things present themselves as impossible to overcome only prove that there is a possibility for triumph.



Always be mindful of what you say. You never know who's life you may change in the process.



Many times in life, it's not always just about making the right decision, but learning to stand behind and backup the ones we've made, with no regrets.



You have to come to a place in your life where you become "unconscious" of the adversities and trials that screaming your face. They should only serve as a reminder that you are close to the achievement of a long-awaited goal.



Be mindful of what you allow to go into your mind and heart.



The decisions you make in your life should always be governed by what your life's purpose is. Do not make your decisions based on the opinions of anyone.



The moment you want to stop believing, having faith, pressing forward, striving for the best, reaching for the top, that's when you have to dig deeper for that extra bit of strength that lies within you and know that you have what it takes within in to make it to the next level.



Impossibility only exists in the realm of fear. Vanquish fear and you will discover possibilities that you only imagined.



There are two types of failure you need to be aware of: one is the type you experience when you've made a poor decision concerning your destiny; the other is what you experience when you've just come across the result of trying to find a solution to a problem.



Don't just strive to acquire knowledge, but strive to acquire knowledge that is conducive to your purpose.



Part of the success we experience is learning how to deal with the everyday decisions we make, whether good or bad.



Be sure to guard the favor that you have in every area of your life and know that it's not for everyone else to use.



Opportunities will always come along. The ones that matter are the ones that are right for you.



It doesn't matter how much the odds stack up against you, you have the ability within you to level the playing field and beat them.



Many times the biggest voice you can have is not with what you say, but what you write that leaves an indelible impression to generations long after you're gone.



The true test of right standing in heart is by what you do when there's no one else around looking.



Circumstances press hard, but they can't press harder than you. Keep pushing and maintain your footing. Your victory is yet at hand.



Be careful in whom you sow and give of yourself. Your seed must be sown on good ground so that you reap the harvest intended for your purpose.



Giving up is hard to do when you have fully committed yourself not to.



Develop an "I won't quit" attitude and adversities won't be as easy to walk away from.



Take in today as another opportunity to do better at what you attempted to do yesterday.



It is quite possible that if so many people are saying the same thing what they're saying could be false.



When people show you (adversely) what's truly in their heart, don't be angry with them. They just haven't come to a level of maturity that merits them treating you differently.



Be perfect in who you are supposed to be. (Dictionary.com: conforming absolutely to the description or definition of an ideal type)



There's ALWAYS a way out of your situation. You just have to be willing to have the heart to stick with it and find the way.



Even when it feels like there's no one there supporting you, no one there with you while you're going through, remember that there is ALWAYS someone that sees all you're going through that's cheering you on, someone that's hoping for the best for you. Sometimes you have support and don't even know it.



Let's do our best to stay encouraged and encourage someone else in the process.



Never give up on where you are. There's always better ahead.



Success is not something that just happens because of information you receive. It's the implementation of a system of methodologies through the working of trial and error that bring about positive, duplicatable results.



Being honest with yourself can be difficult, but it's only that way if YOU make it that way. Once you learn to be honest with you ABOUT you, then life will become so much easier.



Look at what you give away for free as seeds being sown. You'll reap the harvest from them in the future.



Perseverance is truly one of the keys to a successful lifestyle. Stick out the rough times because it's easy to stick out the good.



As much as discouragement fights against you to make you think that a positive change isn't going to happen, that's proof that something positive is on the way.



You have to know when it's time to move on to the next thing versus continuing to labor with something that's not moving or is meant to move later.



Have you ever given much thought to how much more success and greatness you would have achieved in some situations had you not given up? Let me hear from you.



The decisions you make have the potential to affect the lives of others in ways you can't begin to imagine. Make decisions that will make a positive impact.



There's something good waiting for you on the other side of your struggle. Make sure you're correctly positioned and continuing to press forward to get what's on the other side.



There's nothing wrong with having a dream, an idea, a concept, because at some point, they have the potential to become a reality.



Be sure about where you want to go in the future. Don't let someone or something else dictate your future.



Do you make permanent decisions based on temporary situations, or do you think them through and execute a strategic advance that will set you up for success in the future?



There's something to be said about someone that won't quit, won't back down, won't give up easily, takes plenty of pot shots, constantly cleans off slung mud, continues to walk through adversity, tramples over negative words spoken about them, doesn't look for problems but looks to see an opportunity. I would say that's called persistence.



Many times in our lives we have to learn to wait on things that are conducive to our purpose. It's time and you can't rush the growth and development in the process.



Always prepare for where you want to go. Preparation makes for a good foundation of success.



It's better to fully think through a situation and make the right decision rather than react quickly and make a poor decision that can cost you so much more in the near and distant future.



It's difficult to keep your focus when the hardness of your circumstances are staring you right in the face. Stay focused as best you can.



You're never above being corrected. If you cannot be corrected, you cannot grow.



Sometimes you have to press through frustrating times to get to your place of purpose.



You can't get fruit from seeds you haven't sown. Continue to sow into the future of your success.



Never close your mind to the truth of another way to handle a situation. When one door closes it only opens up an opportunity proving that there is always another way.



When you make the decision to give up on something truly worthwhile and worth your time, it shows how much you really care about the success of your future. When you feel like giving up, don't take a break and go back to it. You have within you what you need to succeed in all you do.



You cannot embrace the beauty of your future purpose until you deal with and learn to manage the ugliness of your past.



The beginning of having a different state of mind that is more conducive to your purpose and success in life is to begin to change your thought process.



In order for you to reach your fullest potential, you have to begin to assess everything inside yourself that could hinder you from getting to your goals and destined place.



Sometimes waiting is a really good thing. Just make sure to make good use of your time while you're in the wait. Don't waste it. Be productive.

Chapter 3

❧ *Blogs* ❧

My Thoughts On Blogs

The following blogs were compiled mostly from the last four years (as of this writing.) They are designed to give a little bit more insight into some of the struggles I faced and how I held true to the vow that I made in desiring to encourage myself and others when adversity came knocking at my door.

Writing has truly become an outlet for me and through the Blogging portion of Success Thoughts it has become more of a tool for me to help others that may be struggling with some of the same issues that I've had to struggle with.

I've come to know and learn that much if not all of what you go through in life is not just for you but for someone else. I'm quite sure that much of what I have written has been a tremendous blessing to those who will never voice themselves. From Jacksonville to Jamaica, from Tennessee to Timbuktu, I have no idea how many lives have been impacted around the world by Success Thoughts, but I choose to believe that it has been many, and I expect for many more to be affected.

I pray that you find something in these Blogs that you can grab a hold of that will shed light and bring enlightenment to the present situation you're facing. Don't let your circumstances dictate to you what the end will be, but instead "*write*" your own ending and make it a positive finish according to your purpose and destiny.

❧ *Fools Rush In* ❧

Rushing hastily into your purpose to succeed or be a success without having been prepared can make for a sloppy and thrown together outcome. The result will end up being one that has no foundational stability, and in order to be a success and help others to do the same, it can't be done in a rush.

When you bake bread from scratch, you have to prepare all the ingredients properly, and then at some point you have to wait for the dough to rise. If you don't wait and you rush it or even bump the pan the wrong way, you cause the process the dough was going through to slow down or to be stopped all together, causing the dough to fall.

So it is with our lives. We have to make sure we prepare all the right and proper ingredients into our "bowl" and allow for the time it takes for us to "rise" to the occasion. We cannot be in a rush to succeed. It does not happen overnight except when much preparation has already been put in place.

❧ *Never Giving Up* ❧

Life has a way of throwing, hurling, and blasting things your way. Ask me how I know! But I'm sure you can attest as well. So many trials and tribulations came at you; so much from life. And trust me, "Life happens WITHOUT your permission." It's what you do with what life throws at you that makes all the difference.

Many times, I have wanted to give up and throw in the towel. But there is something that lies within me that keeps me moving forward, no matter what. I can't explain it, but all I know is when I want to give up the urge to press on even harder kicks in and doesn't let me.

Giving up is not an easy thing for me. Do I think about it? You bet I do. Do I want to give up at times? Absolutely. Do I believe that things will get better? You better know it. So, I dig my heels in a little deeper in the dirt and keep pulling things my way. Eventually, something's gotta give on the other end of this rope I'm pulling on, and I'll get to a better place. It'll happen. It has to. As long as I don't give up.

❧ The Meaning of Greatness ❧

Webster defines Greatness as the following:

Greatness - eminent (standing out so as to be readily perceived or noted), distinguished, having remarkable ability.

Greatness walks hand in hand with Success. It's a characteristic that comes from the hardships of life. It's a quality that comes from having undergone much pressure and having withstood that pressure. The pressure, in turn, thereby transforms you into something even greater.

A caterpillar goes through a process called metamorphosis. Webster defines metamorphosis as the following: (as you can tell, I love words and knowing the meaning of them.) *1a: change of physical form, structure, or substance especially by supernatural means b: a striking alteration in appearance, character, or circumstances.*

Believe it or not, Diamonds also undergo a type of metamorphosis. Their original form is not a pretty, shiny, jewel that we normally see mounted in a ring or pendant, but it is a huge, ugly, lumpy piece of coal that transforms under hundreds of thousands of pounds of pressure. It is the pressure that causes the metamorphosis.

In life, there are circumstances that arise that bring a lot of pressure. The circumstances themselves have no say in how you turn out, only you do. Your attitude, your state of mind, your willingness to survive the ordeal; it's a decision that you make that determines what your outcome will be. And these things determine and build your greatness as a person and individual. Don't let the circumstances beat you. You beat them. There is ALWAYS a way out and a better way.

❧ *From Your Mind Within* ❧

I always say, “Greatness starts from the mind of a great person.” And I think it’s so true. What you think about yourself has a lot to do with your own greatness. It first starts from within your mind. Do YOU think you’re a great person? If you do, then it will show in your attitude, in your walk, in your talk, in your style. It will show up in everything you do.

Greatness is not just someone telling you that they think you’re great, but from your own life’s experiences. It comes from the ones that beat on you to never return, but some kind of way you manage to rise up out of the ashes. It comes from things that should have killed you. They may have killed others but they didn’t kill you. It’s one thing to believe the age-old cliché that “Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger.” I believe that there is more to that saying than that. I believe what doesn't kill you *that you learn from and use to make your life better* is what *truly* makes you stronger.

Developing a mental attitude on this note will make you think about and view your life much differently. It’s what we think first that truly makes us great individuals. Think on those things that are uplifting. I know sometimes it’s hard. I have those days, too; MANY times. But once you wrap your mind around the concept and begin to formulate a different way of thinking, making it a habit, you will watch your life transform before your very eyes.

❧ *It Matters What You Think About* ❧

I've found that it truly matters where your thoughts are. I notice that when I have thoughts that seem to be “gloom and doom” or just all around negative thoughts, my day tends to drag, I have bad experiences that seem to be worse just because, and everything else in between. But when I start my day off right (with prayer and scripture reading), and elevate my mind to better thoughts, my day goes so much better.

When troubles come and try to weigh me down, I try and think of something inspirational that I know will help me first and is applicable to my life and then I'll post it as my status message on facebook and a shorter version for Twitter. This has really been helping me.

So, thus, in the end, it does matter what you think about. I do my best to “think on those things that are lovely, true, honest, just, and of a good report”, because, “if there be any virtue, I think on these things.”

Remember, what you think you are, what you think you can and cannot do, either way, you're right. So, which way do you want to go?

❧ *Misconceptions* ❧

The general populous of people think that you are a success when you are seen with the results that come from a successful mindset. But what most fail to realize is that success begins as a mental attitude. It's having a "stick-to-it-iveness" attitude. Yes, success IS attitude!!!

Every manifest presence of the things we see (i.e. Cars, Buildings, Houses, Structures, etc.) were all first formulated in the mind. It started with an idea. And there were steps taken to make that idea come into fruition (reality). So it is with success.

Making a million dollars all starts in the mind. It's an attitude that, "I can do this and there's ABSOLUTELY no one that can stop me but me..." A million dollars doesn't just fall into your lap and say, "Here I am! Now you're successful!!!" I'm sorry, but it just does not happen that way.

"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he..." If you think you're a failure, then guess what? You are, and will be, a failure. But, if you think that you're a highly successful individual that's like an Amtrak train that can't be stopped, then guess what? The world better look out and get off your tracks because you're coming through!!!

~ *Renew Your Mind* ~

In order to be and become successful, you must begin to renew your mind. It is imperative that you begin to change the way you think. Everything you know about what success truly is may very well be wrong. The first thing you must ask yourself is: What does success mean to me?

You have to look at success and know that number one, success is a good thing, not a bad thing. Success is setting goals and accomplishing them. It's having every area and aspect of your life moving in a forward, progressive direction.

In order to answer the first question, you must go back a little more in your mind's retrospect and ask yourself: What is it about my life that makes me feel unsuccessful? Look at the little things in your life that lead up to the bigger things. It's not always the big things that determine success but the little things. And how you view those little things will determine whether or not you have a successful outcome.

❧ *The Fruits of Your Labor* ❧

Begin to feed yourself seeds of success and watch them grow to greatness. Give your mind the nutrition it needs in order to develop a conducive environment for success. The things you read; the things you say; these all play a HUGE part. A tree only multiplies after its own kind. Pretty soon, success will become a fruit of habit rather than the spoil of failure.

Plant enough of the good seeds for successful living and you will have a tree that will reproduce what you've planted. And, if planted well and maintained properly, you will enjoy those fruits for many years to come with roots that run far and deep. What are you reproducing?

❧ *Have A Vision* ❧

I believe heavily in having a dream. But there is something more concrete about having a vision. Dreams take place when you're asleep, but vision is something that's active while you're awake. You have to find the "happy medium" between the two and create a feasible "marriage."

Have a vision that you can see coming into fruition, something that can become tangible and workable by others. When you have a dream, you're the only one that can see it. When you have vision, everyone can see it. Make your dreams a reality by writing them down and allowing the right people to see it so that it can become reality.

❧ *Climbing The Mountain* ❧

Success is much like climbing a mountain. It happens in stages. As you ascend to the top of that mountain, the air in the atmosphere gets thinner, making breathing more difficult, requiring proper training, stamina, and endurance to be able to withstand the conditions.

We have to prepare ourselves for success and the ascension to the many levels that will be faced. Each level requires training and expertise that will prepare you for the next. You must immerse yourself in reading applicable books, attending training, developing a personal development regimen. What are you doing to train yourself for your mountain?

❧ *I & P* ❧

Inspiration and Perspiration. I know it seems like these two words don't generally have cohesion, but there is an ironic relativity that does exist. In songwriting, there is an understood constant: Songwriting is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration.

Success inspired will rarely take place, but success that's worked for will ALWAYS happen. It's something that you have to work hard at. And there comes the reward of knowing that by the sweat of your brow you have something that can last for generations to come.

❧ *The Perseverance of Success* ❧

Success does not mean that you never experience failure or that you don't ever want to quit, but instead is an attitude of never accepting failure or defeat and never quitting. It means facing your failures, regardless of how many times you've failed, and getting back up again, willing to try something different from what you did the last time. It's dealing with the heart-wrenching feelings you get when things aren't going the way you think they should be going. It's taking that feeling that grips your heart and using it as fuel to keep you moving forward.

❧ *What's Your Motivation?* ❧

What's the reason you want to be successful? This is a question that must put us in a constant state and frame of mind of checks and balances. We must always make sure that we have the right motives for being a success in life.

Is it because of how you were raised? Is it because someone said you couldn't do it, or that you would be nothing? Or is it to leave a legacy behind for your children? Or to build a foundation to help following generations? Check your motives and make sure they're pure.

❧ *When Life Beats You Like A Drum* ❧

When life beats on you, be a drum that's fine tuned to resound the sentiments of a true champion. Let the sound played by life trying to beat you down be harmonious in the ears of everyone that hear. Circumstances in life have a way of beating us, almost to the point where we want to give up. But who in the audience of your life is listening to the sound that resonates from you? Will you allow life to beat you out of tune, or will you let it fine tune you so that others can hear a song of resilience that will inspire them to do the same? Let life fine tune you so that you can create a beautiful symphony with others.

❧ *Get Ready For The Baby. It's Coming!* ❧

When a married couple knows that they are going to have a baby, they begin to prepare. They buy clothes, food, accessories and other miscellaneous things, prepare a room for it, and even name it once they know the sex of the child. So must we prepare as well for success. Just like we prepare for a baby before it's born, so must we prepare for our "baby" of success. Get things in order; buy what you need; make room because this "baby" is coming!!!

❧ *Success Is Like The Traffic of Life...* ❧

Sometimes you have to stop (red light) and assess the situation...

Sometimes you have to yield (yellow light) and allow some things to pass you by...

Sometimes you have to know when to go (green light) and keep moving forward...

But we must do things in order (traffic laws) and remember that our only limits are our thoughts on everything (speed limit) and that even if trouble comes (accidents), we can still get back up and into traffic again with confidence that we'll reach our destination.

~ *Live Life* ~

I am very determined to be great and successful. But something that I think I am finally learning is to live life and have fun doing it. I am setting goals for things that I'd like to do and experience, and who knows who I might meet along the way.

Being successful doesn't have to be boring. As a matter of fact, it should be fun! As we continue along our journey of success, let's take time to enjoy some of life's simple pleasures.

❧ *The Power of Painful Change* ❧

One of the keys to dealing with pain in your life, as with any emotional precursor, is how you manage it. And you can manage your life, your emotions, even the changes that happen and take place in your life. Management of these factors and circumstances simply means being in control and not letting those circumstances and situations control you.

Can you control the pain that comes into your life? Absolutely not. Can you control how that pain affects you? Yes you can! That's the management part.

Allow the changes that come into your life to help shape you into what you were predestined to be. Don't run away from the pain that life's changes take you through. Know that it is always for the betterment of your life and your character. Look deep within yourself and focus on what your purpose in life is. The changes that come into your life and bring pain are, ironically enough, designed to build you in every area of your life that pertains to your purpose.

❧ *The Blessing From Pain* ❧

Success and Greatness truly mean something to me. But I understand that they come with a price: the pain and agony of going through. I aspire to many a great thing, and there are times when I have truly been low in my life. But there is something that has been built in me that causes me to have a determination to not quit and never give up, even in the midst of, sometimes, severe pain.

Pain can truly be a motivator. It can motivate you to do good or bad. The results you experience are determined by the choice you make in what you do with that pain. Most people don't like pain and do everything they can to avoid it. But I've learned to not run from my pain but run to it.

I now realize that the pain I have felt, and sometimes still feel, is a blessing to someone else that may be experiencing what I have already gone through. There's an old saying I like: "Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger." And it is so very true. One of the ultimate blessings I am experiencing is others now being blessed because of the pain I was able to endure, in turn letting others know that they, too, can make it through painful situations and be a blessing to others.

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❧ *The Other Side of Pain* ❧

It's tough when you have to go through things that are for the purpose of shaping your destiny. And many times, you will go through things that no one else sees. It's really not for them to see. You are going through your own "go through."

This is how great you know you are: You will go through things that seem to want to break you. They hurt. You feel MUCH pain. But you have to get it engrained into your spirit that you are going through these things for yourself first, then for others.

When you are meant for greatness, it's a seed that's planted in you. No one can see the birth or germination of that seed, but you know it's there by what you experience in going through hardships. Then, it begins to spring forth and show signs of life, in which it eventually grows into a full grown plant (your purpose.)

But what no one saw initially was the other side of the pain that you went through in order to get to where you are, or even on your way. The pain will only be followed by the joy of the manifestation of success that was formed in you in all that you went through. Stick out the pain. It'll be worth it when it's all over.

❧ *Taking Control of You* ❧

One thing that you cannot control is how other people treat you. To say that if people don't respect you then you won't respect them is a sad and poor commentary of your character. Your respect of others should NEVER be predicated on whether or not someone respects you first because everyone does not grow up with the same morals and values that you do.

We live in a society that glorifies "an eye for an eye," which never brings about a (positive) resolve. My daughter text me while in class one day regarding the presumed mistreatment from a teacher. Now, my daughter can have a temper at times and she finds it difficult to hold her peace when being wronged. She wanted to verbally respond to the teacher and walk out of the class but I explained to her that she has to maintain control of herself and her character, that she simply cannot allow someone to take her out of character because of how they're treating her. Just as I explained to my daughter, you have to remember that you are in control of you, not the other way around. There's a saying in the world: Whatever angers you controls you." That holds so much truth. When people know what buttons to push in you to generate a response, they will do it and cause you to lose control of you and your life. When people treat you adversely, you cannot allow your response to be the same as theirs, but rather respond in a manner that commands differently. You must maintain a presence that commands the treatment you deserve: to be treated like royalty.

Whenever you allow other people and outside circumstances to control you and how you respond to a given situation, you lose power and control over yourself. Altogether, you lose, and, depending on the given situation, you could stand to lose greatly. You must learn to teach people how to treat you. It's all in how you carry yourself, not how they entreat you or talk to you. Think about this for a second: does it really make sense for your life to be controlled by how other people treat you or what they say about you? If that were the case, our lives would continuously be in shambles. When people see that they can't handle you just any kind of way, it will make them have a different perspective of who you are. They will notice that they can't treat you the way they treat everyone else in their life. YOU command and control the atmosphere around you.

❧ *Overcoming Fear* ❧

Fear in its simplest definition is to be afraid of something, or having a concern or regret for an unwanted situation. It is very closely associated to having a phobia which is also clearly defined as an exaggerated usually inexplicable and illogical fear of a particular object, class of objects, or situation. Confused yet? You shouldn't be. Fear many times derives from illogical thoughts. It can stem from "what if" questions that make absolutely no sense at all. It can birth from things we see, things we have been told, and many other related places. Although, what you should be able to identify with is what fears you have.

Think about things that make you fearful and why you run from them. Fear in its purest state is designed to cripple, paralyze, and disable you from being in control and moving forward in a positive direction. It is designed to make you think illogically. Fear does not have power that it is not given. When we give in to the circumstances that present themselves that are designed to keep us from moving in a positive forward progression in our lives and to not think logically and rationally about the situation or scenario, fear gains power over us.

Also understand and realize that fear does not even become real until that moment. It does not exist until we acknowledge its presence and assumed power. Fear's only power is what we give it. So what we must learn is how to take control of our lives where fear has no place. We must make sure that we avoid foolish and unlearned questions about all the "what ifs" in life that could happen. If we spend time dwelling on these simple nuisances, we lose time and life.

We must maintain the power and control we have in our lives that rightfully belongs to us. We cannot dwell on things that have the potential to happen and have not even manifested. In order to conquer these fears, you must begin to take yourself through an exercise that will help you identify and address the fear(s) that exist in your life and eradicate them.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. What am I afraid of?
2. Why am I afraid of it?
3. What are the circumstances that surround my fear of this thing and what parts do I have control over?

4. Am I going to allow this thing (or things) to have control of my life, causing me to live in fear for the rest of my life?

Once you have answered these relevant questions, you will begin to take control of your life and conquer your fears. You will also know how to deal with every other forthcoming situation that poses itself as a threat to make you fearful in your life.

~ *Nothing Else Matters* ~

There are times in your life where you come to a place where you have to discern what really matters and what doesn't. When it comes to the sanctity of your well-being and having a whole mental state, truly, nothing else matters except doing all that you must in order to maintain that state.

Of course, you have to put things in their proper perspective. You still have to live your life, handle your responsibilities, the "whole nine". This is where you learn how to better manage your life. As you learn how to better manage your life, you are able to better prioritize what matters most.

In your pursuit of gaining a more successful lifestyle, nothing is more important than you taking care of you. Sometimes you will come to a place where you have to be firm in your standing of your life's priorities and declare that nothing else matters. It will help you gain a more accurate mental focus and weed out all the things in your life that don't matter.

❧ *Life's Doors* ❧

Many times in life, it's easy for us to become satisfied with where we are. We get settled in the place where we have become comfortable. This is not always a good thing because "life happens and changes without your permission." Hence, knowing when one door closes and recognizing the new one that's opening.

Sometimes it hard to accept that a door is closing because we're afraid to move forward through the new one. It's because many times we're afraid of the unknown. We often fear what we don't understand. And trying to understand why one door closes and the purpose for going through the new door can be a little frightening.

We must learn to embrace change enough to the point that we are open to new doors, new things, new horizons. When one door closes, there is purpose behind it, and it's not always for us to understand, but to simply move forward and walk through it. The new door that opens is all for your purpose that's set before you. Embrace it and look forward to a new and brighter future.

❧ *Down Time* ❧

A friend of mine once told me that, "Down time is prep time." In other words, when things seem to be slow and there's not much going on, the time that you are allotted should be used to prepare for the next thing that's going to happen. Or, otherwise put, take time to plan and prepare.

Many times we think that because we have this down time that something is wrong, or that we need to be doing something else. Sometimes, we just need to take the time to plan and prepare. Sometimes, the down times happen unexpectedly, which can't be helped, but can be controlled.

On your way to success, learn to recognize the times when things are slower than normal and maximize that time to continue being productive. Take advantage of that time to plan your next move, get some direction, counsel, whatever you need to do, in order to continue moving forward towards success and greatness.

❧ *When Things Look Their Worst* ❧

One of the toughest things to deal with in life is when things go wrong and they most certainly look absolutely horrible. It's difficult to handle and deal with and having others involved or around the situation that view it for how it looks when you're trying to hold to optimism in the midst of crisis can only add to make matters worse.

Many times when things look their worst is an opportunity for something good to come about. Just because things look bad doesn't necessarily mean that they are bad. You cannot always go by how things appear to you in their natural form. There is still something good that can come out of a bad situation.

❧ *Your Thoughts Have Power* ❧

You ever wonder why when you think about certain things how those thoughts have the tendency and ability to affect your mood? You later sometimes wonder, "How did I get here, thinking about this?" It had much to do with your thoughts. The mood or feelings derived from watching a movie, or even seeing an event unfold, have the ability to bring about a certain mood, if the thoughts are not harnessed. This is because it is understood by many that your thoughts truly do have power.

This is why it is important for you to have a handle on your thought life. It directly affects how you view yourself and your life and the direction you take. If you listen to things that invoke a certain mood or behavior, chances are, if you entertain them long enough, they induce thought patterns that begin to become a part of you. Your thoughts are more alive than what you give them credit for. They are the very essence of who you are.

The power you have in your thoughts can cause you to become great or be worthless. With your thoughts, you have the power to choose what you will think on, you have the power to create, the power to bring hope, the power to change situations and the course of history. What you must learn is how to harness those thoughts for the good and benefit of fulfilling your purpose and destiny. You must learn to bring your thoughts into subjection, and think on things that are worthwhile that bring life and joy to your own life. Then, and only then, can you bring the same to others.

~ *Time Vampires* ~

I have developed a philosophy about time that is truly helping me with every aspect of people in my life: Time is a commodity that you will pay for that you will never get back. And people will take advantage of every moment that you allow them.

I have found that many people do not have good time management skills. And this practice is NOT limited to a particular ethnicity. If you're not careful, people that do not possess good time management abilities will eat away your time intended to be productive.

If you're going to be successful, you have to be a good steward of, and over, your time. It is imperative that you exercise good time management skills. It has to be exercised in your personal and professional life. If you don't manage your time, it will manage you.

❧ *Be Free To Be You* ❧

We have many models by which we can follow and pattern ourselves after today. Many of which are really good examples. Those that find their way through life and become a more unique display stand out so much so that they seem to be ahead of their time.

You must find the freedom within yourself to be what you KNOW you are, not what people THINK you are. There is a great liberty and freedom that comes from allowing yourself to be free IN being yourself. Only you can find that freedom and allow it to come forth.

Be free to be you, not something or somebody else. There is a treasure in you that will bring you liberty and help to unlock doors to your success in being the unique individual that you were created to be. Your greatness will come from finding that uniqueness and allowing it to shine for all to see and be blessed by it.

❧ *The “Press” of Pressure* ❧

In order to produce olive oil, olives must first be collected and then gathered together in a press. Then, an extreme amount of pressure is applied in order to get the oil out. Thousands of pounds of pressure are applied during this process to get what we know as an important ingredient in cooking.

Remember this: You can't get the oil from the olive until it's crushed. Now, apply this to everyday life. In order for you to get to greater levels of success and greatness, you must fixate in your mind that there are circumstances in life that will bring pressure, lots of it. But the pressure is designed to draw out of you the “oil” that will not only benefit you, but others that you meet later in life.

Allowing pressure to “crush” you will teach you things and position you to be of even more benefit to many. How will you be able to help those coming up in the ranks behind you if you've not been through anything? You will be able to help others better who are going through a crushing process by having gone through your own first.

~ *Who Told You?* ~

Who told you that you could not do or be something that was in your heart to do? Growing up, did you see something that resonated in your heart and mind that made you say, "Hey, I can do that," and then someone came along and told you that you can't do that? Believe in this truth: they were wrong.

Growing up, we find out some of what was placed in us to do. Some we don't find out about until we get further along in life. What we have to be careful of and watchful over is those who would come along to discourage us from doing and being what we were created to do. These are people that have not found what it is they were supposed to do and work overtime in discouraging others from finding their way.

So, go back and evaluate where you stopped moving forward, stopped learning, stopped believing. Everything in your heart that you feel you can do, you CAN do it. There is nothing that is stopping you but YOU. Don't listen to someone telling you that you can't do something. Who told you that? Who said you could not be something or do something? So are you going to believe them or no?

❧ *A Successful Legacy* ❧

Any good parent worth their salt wants to leave something behind them that will outlast them throughout generations and take care of their children, grandchildren and beyond. One of the truest landmarks of success is leaving something behind for your children's children.

Many of us can attest to the fact that no one showed us how to truly be a success, much less how to build, develop, and maintain a legacy. It is important that we teach our children the truths about carrying on a successful legacy so that they don't squander the profits and benefits that we've worked so hard to set in place for them and future generations.

In our quest for success, let's make sure that we take care of the generations coming up behind us. Not just in showing them how to make and keep the money that we've made, but how to manage and multiply it, how to develop the business model we've left behind, and how to even take things to the next level. Leave a legacy that continues to speak long after you're gone.

❧ *Master of Many* ❧

Remember that old saying, “Jack of all trades, master of none”? That saying is a falsehood that has stifled many into believing that they can only do one thing well, if that. There are MANY noted individuals who found SEVERAL things they knew how to do well, and they mastered many, if not all, of the things they set their hands to.

I am more than sure that there are many things you know how to do. And who is stopping you from doing them? Was it something that you were told from when you were a child? Did a teacher or manager/boss tell you to learn that ONE thing and then you’ll be promoted? These are myths that set in motion a pattern of thinking that more than one thing cannot be learned and mastered. You must break that cycle TODAY.

Your success awaits you in the things that your hands know to do. Find those things and master them to the best of your ability. You have everything within you to be a success and make your life different from what it is now. When you find those things, you will find more time for yourself, fulfillment, satisfaction, enjoyment, pleasure, and most of all, peace of mind. Find them, find them, find them, and be a Master of Many.

❧ *The Pain in Purpose* ❧

Many people do not like pain and they will do everything they can to avoid it. But pain is a necessary part of growth and maturity, pushing us towards being great and successful. Like a child that experiences growing pains, we have growing pains through our life's experiences.

Tied to our purpose is pain that is actually designed to bring out of us the design of success and greatness for our lives. The things that bring the pain, ironically enough, actually dig out of us answers, truths, destiny, and purpose. But many times we don't see it that way.

We have to begin to learn to embrace the pain that comes into our lives and see it for what it really is. And it's the pain that comes from being a part of our intended purpose that we must focus on. Like feeling the burn in a good workout, know that the pain is an indicator that you are moving towards success and greatness.

❧ *The Shaping of Character* ❧

Mistakes are something that is a natural part of life. There are so many unknowns in our lives that making a mistake is to be expected. But oftentimes we are so criticized for the mistakes that we've committed. Knowingly or unknowingly, we will make mistakes and often those things are tagged to us as what and who we are.

Character is literally defined as the complex of mental and ethical traits marking and often individualizing a person, group, or nation. It's our make up; our "DNA." It's what truly makes us who we are. But in that character being constantly in a state of refinement, again, mistakes are inevitable. It makes you an individual.

Don't be afraid to make whatever mistakes during the process of greatness being formed and forged in you. Remember that making a mistake is much different than failure. You might find that in the mistake you made is an answer, or answers, to one or more questions to unsolved problems. This is part of the process of your character being shaped.

❧ *Being Forged Under Pressure* ❧

Pressure is literally defined as “the application of force to something by something else in direct contact with it.” Right now is a time when the pressures of life are mounting. And life brings its own set of circumstances that come in direct contact with us.

We face many different situations today that have a force behind them that sometimes seem overwhelming. And often times, we don't understand that our success and greatness are being forged in these tumultuous conditions. Unseen by many, we are actually being changed, one way or another, by the conditions that surround us.

Realize that the circumstances you face have you in a position that is uncomfortable, but it is necessary for your making. Just like that diamond that undergoes thousands of pounds of pressure to get the result of the luxurious gem we so highly value, so must we go through the process to be forged into something greater.

❧ *Expect The Unexpected* ❧

We have the ability in our lives to plan for the future. And it's good and we should have a plan for our lives. Plans for retirement, saving for the kids college fund, and buying that new house or car next year. But what do you do when your plans don't go as you expected?

Many times on the road to success, things don't always go as we planned. What we must do is learn to deal with the unexpected issues that life will bring to our doorstep. And, contingency plan or no, we must mentally be prepared to make decisions that are for the best, even without a plan.

Expect to deal with the variables of life that were not a part of the original plan and know that the experiences you have faced in life have already prepared you for what you are facing. Everything will not always go according to plan. Expect hidden variables (the unexpected) and know that there is always an answer to solve them.

❧ *Determination* ❧

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❧ *Change Is Inevitable* ❧

Something I've seen for a long time and now I have learned is that change is inevitable and something that happens all the time. It's something that, to a great degree, we cannot control. And it's something that happens many times without your permission.

Many times we don't understand change and why it takes place, but I have learned and accepted this: change can, and will, make me better. The changes that happen in life are not always what we want to see or hear, but we have to learn that all things work together for our good, even when it doesn't feel like they should.

I have learned to embrace change and all that it brings because I know that there is SOMETHING in that situation or circumstance designed to make me better. Success, in and of itself, is a state of change. You have to be willing to be "liquid" and many times go with the flow and allow change to make you what you were designed to be.

❧ *Admission of Fault* ❧

On my journey to a more successful life, one of the most important lessons I have learned is being able to admit when I'm wrong. The admission of fault, blame, wrong, is NOT a flaw of weakness but a sign of strength. For one to admit that they're wrong about an issue proves that person has a great level of humility.

When you admit you're wrong about something, it shows the level of character that you have and that you're not above anyone else. If you're not able to admit and "fess up," as we say, to yourself (which is what you're doing when you admit you're wrong), there's much work that needs to be done in your character.

You will not always be right about every situation. We're human and we WILL make mistakes. On your way to a more successful life, don't let pride, arrogance, or conceit cause you to demean your own character by not accepting the fact that there are answers that existed in this world before you. Admission of fault is a character builder, not an avenue of defeat.

❧ *The Pain of Loss* ❧

Many times in life we will lose things. And with every loss there is a level or degree of pain that comes with it. It may not have necessarily been our fault as to why the loss occurred, but the aftermath that remains is always the hard thing to deal with; sometimes even harder.

Loss is something that brings no feelings of joy with it. It is almost ALWAYS associated with negative connotations. But what we must learn is how to deal with the loss when it occurs. Whether in our personal, professional, or spiritual lives, loss has lessons that come with the ill feelings.

Success Thought: From this day forward, let's learn to embrace the losses in our lives that happen to us, whether they were merited or not. And know that the quicker we learn the lessons that loss brings, the better we will be on account of it. Plus, we will be able to better deal with the future losses that will take place and help others to deal with their losses better.

❧ *Dealing With and Managing Pressure* ❧

The process that diamonds go through are among some of the toughest and longest ever known to man. They go through a process where they're buried deep beneath the earth's surface where no one can actually see what's going on. They endure hundreds of thousands of pounds of pressure to become what we know as the gems that carry so great a value. And the more pressure that's applied, the greater the value.

Many times you will go through situations that no one else sees but you. It's in those times that you are being formed, shaped, fashioned, wrought, into what you were created to be. It's in those defining moments of your life that you must make a conscious decision to be made to have a greater value than what you currently have.

How you deal with those pressures that come into your life will make all the difference between your survival and your demise. You can make it through the pressures of every trial that befalls you. Make the decision today to stick out that circumstance that faces you, and heighten the value of your self worth. Remember, the greater the pressure you endure, the better you'll be on account of it.

❧ *The Power of Painful Change* ❧

One of the keys to dealing with pain in your life, as with any emotional precursor, is how you manage it. And you can manage your life, your emotions, even the changes that happen and take place in your life. Management of these factors and circumstances simply means being in control and not letting those circumstances and situations control you.

Can you control the pain that comes into your life? Absolutely not! Can you control how that pain affects you? Yes you can. That's the management part.

Allow the changes that come into your life to help shape you into what you were predestined to be. Don't run away from the pain that life's changes take you through. Know that it is always for the betterment of your life and your character. Look deep within yourself and focus on what your purpose in life is. The changes that come into your life and bring pain are, ironically enough, designed to build you in every area of your life that pertains to your purpose.

❧ *The Development of Character* ❧

I heard a man say once that personality is what people think you are, but character is truly who and what you are. I totally agree. I believe there is much that goes into the development of one's character. Especially when going through adversity.

Going through hardships has a way of bringing out the best, and worst, in people. One of the key factors is recognizing adversities and trials for what they really are. They are tools of life designed to sharpen and hone the gifts, skills, talents, and abilities you possess. Most of all, they're designed to develop your character. But, if you take them the wrong way, they will break your spirit and mar (to detract from the perfection or wholeness of; spoil; to inflict serious bodily harm on; destroy) you.

We have to be determined to not let circumstances change who we are, but rather embrace them and allow them to shape us like a potter shaping clay on a pottery wheel. Your circumstances are meant to be exactly what they are... circumstances. It's what you do with them and how you manage them that make all the difference in the world, and in your world.

~ *Hard Times* ~

Today, this very day, we face some very hard times. And it seems as though things are getting harder. I know that I've seen better days, and I may have even seen some worse. But there is something inside me that gives me great determination to keep pressing forward. I can't explain it, but it was forged in the heat of going through much adversity.

It's something that I can't release and it won't let me go. These hard times won't last. I refuse to believe that they will. I refuse to give up. I refuse to give in. No matter who's with me or not, no matter who stays with me and who leaves. These hard times are only making me dig deeper within myself and solidify my standing.

For I know that I am not what hard times have befallen me, but that hard times have come to make me better and draw out of me even more determination. I keep pressing forward until I see the manifestation of what is already alive within me. I press towards a higher mark that has a great reward.

❧ *Don't Give Up* ❧

Life has a way of dealing us hands that we are not ready or prepared for. The trials that come up against you have a way of truly bringing out the best or worst. And they can really test your patience. They will make you want to give up and give in.

But ask yourself something: how many other things have come against me and left me still the one standing in the end, no matter what the outcome was? To give up is say that you can't overcome when in fact you have everything you need within to make it far beyond where you are.

Don't give up. Don't entertain the thought of giving in to the negative circumstances that are before you. The mere fact that you still have breath and life in your body are living proof that you can make it. Now you have to focus your energy on looking up, thinking up, and search for the solution that will make you the victor and more than a conqueror.

~ *Know Who You Are* ~

Growing up we had people tell us what they thought they saw who we were. A doctor, singer, technician, whatever profession they thought. And as life began to weave its web and do what it does best, other circumstances tried to dictate to us who we were.

You have to know for yourself who you are. You cannot let others define you or put you in their “box of life.” You have to gain control over the person that you are. Look at yourself from the inside out and examine it very closely.

Know that you may be much more than what you have become. If you really know who you are, do what you must, “By any means necessary”, to cause that part of you to surface and take precedence in your life. Define who you are by BEING who you were meant to be, not what others said you were or are.

❧ *Greatness Comes From Pain* ❧

Greatness is not developed and made without pain. The struggles that we go through were pre-designed to draw that greatness out.

But, truth be told, how can you truly know victory unless you've experienced a degree of defeat? How can you truly know pure joy without having experienced the depth of pain? Hence, how will you know true greatness without having been through trials and tribulations?

The true greatness of a person is not from their achievements, but from the struggles they were able to overcome. Don't resist the struggles, but rather embrace them, for you may be upon one of your finest hours.

❧ *The Other Side of Pain* ❧

It's tough when you have to go through things that are for the purpose of shaping your destiny. And many times, you will go through things that no one else sees. It's really not for them to see. You are going through your own "go through."

This is how great you know you are: You will go through things that seem to want to break you. They hurt. You feel MUCH pain. But you have to get it engrained into your spirit that you are going through these things for yourself first, then for others.

When you are meant for greatness, it's a seed that's planted in you. No one can see the birth or germination of that seed, but you know it's there by what you experience in going through hardships. Then, it begins to spring forth and show signs of life, in which it eventually grows into a full grown plant (your purpose.)

But what no one saw initially was the other side of the pain that went through in order to get to where you are, or even on your way. The pain will only be followed by the joy of the manifestation of success that was formed in you in all that you went through. Stick out the pain. It'll be worth it when it's over.

❧ *Beyond Closed Doors* ❧

Many situations will happen where it seems as though doors are being closed in your face. You spend time and exert energy into seeking a door to walk through that will better your life. But there is life beyond that of a closed door.

Closed doors don't mean the end of what you seek, or your life, for that matter. It may mean that's a place where you did not need to be. It may mean to try another door. And don't get your heart so set on a particular door that you lose sight and focus of another open one that awaits you.

❧ *Change Your Mind* ❧

In your mind is where the actions you portray begin. Every habit you have begins with the thoughts that reside in your mind. And your life revolves around those thoughts that manifest into actions that shape your world.

In order to change your environment around you, you must first change the way you think. Changing the way you think involves you changing the knowledge that you intake. Go back and reevaluate where you really want your life to be in order to change. Change your mind and you will change your life.

~ *Understanding Money* ~

Many people think that being successful is having a lot of money, or that you have reached a certain level of success because you have a lot of money. This is a terrible untruth and a gross misconception.

You must first understand that money is CURRENCY and it has to FLOW through you. It is not necessarily designed to stay in your hand, but it is designed to flow through it, but with a level of discernment and discretion. The greater your level of understanding of this principle, the more money you are able to manage that can flow through you.

Understand that you are a conduit and not a depository when it comes to money. It may not make sense initially but begin to open your mind to this reality and you will see more money come to you than you could have ever imagined. Also know it's not money itself that is the root of all evil, it's the love of it.

❧ *Remember Who You Are* ❧

We've all done things in our past that we're not proud of. And there will always be those in your life who want to remind you of things you did, not being privy to the changes that have taken place in your life. So as life goes on, people judge you by what you did and not who you really are.

We've all made mistakes. It's a part of life. But no one has the right to hold you to those things or hold them over your head. And we have the responsibility to live up to what we know is right for our lives, not what other people think about what we did, even in the midst of bad decisions.

Determine in your heart and mind this day that you **WILL NOT** allow anything or anyone, for that matter, to dictate to you who you **KNOW** really and truly you are. You may have done what they say you've done, but you have to remember who you are and know that what's said about you doesn't matter. What matters is what **YOU** think about you and what you're doing to make your life better.

❧ *Forget The Past* ❧

Our past has an uncanny way of creeping up at some of the most unpredictable and inopportune times. People fail to realize that, true enough, you have the right to be wrong. But you also have the right to change; your life, your mind, your attitude.

Don't allow the things of the past to hold you bound to the degree that it impedes and hinders you from moving forward and possessing your destiny. Your past cannot hold you bound nor does it have the right to (and neither does anyone else.)

❧ *Make It Happen* ❧

There are some things in this world that we don't have power over. But there are some things that we do. Circumstances in our lives that need to be changed for the better require that we exercise our ability to respond, and do so quickly.

The things that you have control over in your life require that you respond to them with action, and sometimes force. You have the power within you to make things happen for you that no one else does. Be proactive and move now.

~ *Say & Think Future* ~

There's a great saying that fits perfectly with the title of this blog: "Small minds talk about people, big minds talk about ideas." It is absolutely paramount that your time from this day and time forward that you concern yourself with the bigger picture.

We don't have time to talk about what others are doing, especially if it's in the negative sense. We need to be about the business of talking about the vastness of our (positive) future and the big things we're going to accomplish.

❧ *Calming From Frustration* ❧

Frustration can place you in a state where you feel totally debilitated (in other words, where you can feel like you're paralyzed.) It can make you feel as though you have no control. And given the opportunity, it will immobilize you and can be detrimental to your life's forward progress.

Calming yourself in the midst of situations such as this can be almost as frustrating because you want to vent, scream, release the frustration that is being caused. You just want the thing that's causing the frustration to be put to rest. And it can be.

You have to remember, just as I have, many times, that you have control over YOU. That is first, foremost and paramount. Take control over yourself, your thoughts, emotions, and actions, thereby causing frustration to dissipate and eventually cease. It may take some time but it's worth the effort.

❧ *Life's Ways* ❧

Life has many ways of dealing with us. The situations and circumstances we encountered when we were children, growing up with our parents, shaped much of who we are today. But, if you really think about it, you see where some things were off, misconstrued, distorted, and obtuse.

These things are not to say that our parents were horrible people, or that they meant us harm. They only did what they knew to do. And the old saying proves true: when you know better, you do better. So, therefore, we have to reflect back on our lives and think forward positively.

We must take the experiences we have gone through, and still go through, and weigh them against the righteous responsibility that resides in our heart. We know right from wrong, for the most part, so now we must make our lives and the lives of our children better by doing better.

❧ *The Pain of Love* ❧

There will almost always be pain associated with that of loving someone; whether it's a friend, a loved one, a sibling, a child, it makes no difference. Probably the hardest thing to deal with is when you're hurt by that person you love so dearly. Question is, what will you do when that person hurts you?

Will you render the same thing to them that they've done to you to spite them just because you're hurt, or will you walk in forgiveness to them? Is it right to place more hurt back on them simply because they rendered forth something that they may not have even been aware of?

Loving someone, a person, means that you are willing to look past the fault of the person and love the heart of the being. Loving past pain is by no means easy. Like Fred said, sometimes it can be downright difficult. But it is something that you can do and you'll be a better person as a result.

❧ *Understanding The Pain* ❧

I think I've gotten to a place of finally being able to understand just an inkling of why God allows us to go through so much pain in life. Even though His intent for us was to never have eaten from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, He still had a contingency plan for us. When Paul got the revelation to pen that all things work together for good, he had to have had some experience that brought about the same epiphany that I know I've recently experienced.

One of the things that I've come to understand from dealing with pain is this: How else would we truly know how much God loves us and how far He is willing to extend it to us if we had not gone through such painful and horrific experiences in life that would make us shy away from Him at the very thought of what we've done. When He said that nothing could separate us from His love, He really and truly meant that. I see that now because feeling the weight of the pain of the things that you've done in your life even though you realize, have a revelation of, and know that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, you still have the memories to deal with. True enough, you must learn how to catalog those memories of the things either that you've done or that have been done to you, God still chooses to love us with an unconditional love that yet blows our minds to date.

I'm so thankful for God's love that He looks beyond our faults and sees our needs. It's so comforting to know that in a world where people can be so unforgiving even after God has forgiven you and you've forgiven yourself. The fact that people will sometimes never let you live down what you did or who you used to be can bring back the pain and hurt of those things past, making life difficult, but still yet doable. The "comfort food" in all of that is knowing that we serve a God Who created us and knew that we would go through everything we went through before we even went through it. He knew all the things that would happen to us. He knew about those who would turn their backs on us and those who would walk away but yet He chose to stick by us because He knows the good He put inside of us and the purpose that He created us for doesn't change or go away just because we went through a bad patch or a hard time. I've come to find that those things only build us in character and confidence in who we are in Christ and Whose we are.

Even as I pen this, I write this with tears in my eyes knowing all of what

I've done, many of which I can hold my head up high about, other things that I could hang it over in shame. But knowing that God's love covers me and keeps me in sanity is so comforting and the only thing that I can hold to with an assurance is that He won't reject me because of the things from the past that brought His Name reproach. He doesn't hold anything against me and He doesn't hold anything over my head. And when the times come when the pain seems almost unbearable, I can go to Him, I can run to Him with all my hurt and pain and give it to Him because He knows what to do with it all and He won't cast me away from Him. Instead, He uses all those hurtful and painful things to, ironically enough, make them all work together for my good in fulfillment of my purpose in Him. And what this does for me is make me have that same love for everyone I meet. Who am I to hold anything against them when the same loving and caring God that chose to forgive me did the very same for them? No matter how cruel people in this world can be, it can never be a match for God and His eternal love He showers us with and nothing can ever separate us from it or Him.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Howard Rose, Jr. is a profound Pastor, a prolific Motivational Speaker, an experienced Entrepreneur, a dynamic Life Coach, and a published Author. Having been an entrepreneur for almost two decades, Howard has become well-rounded and experienced in several areas of business including the field of IT, Professional Design, Development, Hosting and Maintenance of Websites, Graphic Design, and Business Technology. In the midst of developing his main business entity, The GLE Group, through good and bad times in the economy, Howard was able to maintain business through great client relations. In the beginning of developing The GLE Group, Success Thoughts was born, a prodigy in and of itself started in 2001. Success Thoughts is a Ministry and Motivational Speaking entity that centers greatly around self-inspired quotes that helped him through very tumultuous times in his life.

Howard has a passion for helping others realize that success and greatness begins in themselves first, starting in the mind. His heartfelt regard for people motivates him to help every person he comes in contact with, pushing and propelling them towards their destiny. His unique approach to dealing with life issues, coupled with his great love for people, is helping many an individual realize success and greatness from within and change their lives one thought at a time.