

Success and Failure

Task 1. Read the story of Richard's reaching success and answer the questions below in your own words.

1 Why do so many people reach success and then fail? One of the big reasons is: we think success is a one-way street. So we do everything that leads up to success, but then we get there. We figure we've made it, we sit back in our comfort zone, and we actually stop doing everything that made us successful. And it doesn't take long to go downhill. And I can tell you this happens, because it happened to me.

2 Reaching success, I worked hard, I pushed myself. But then I stopped, because I figured, "Oh, you know, I made it. I can just sit back and relax."

3 Reaching success, I always tried to improve and do good work. But then I stopped because I figured, "Hey, I'm good enough. I don't need to improve any more."

4 Reaching success, I was pretty good at coming up with good ideas. Because I did all these simple things that led to ideas. But then I stopped, because I figured I was this hot-shot guy and I shouldn't have to work at ideas, they should just come like magic. And the only thing that came was creative block. I couldn't come up with any ideas.

5 Reaching success, I always focused on clients and projects, and ignored the money. Then all this money started pouring in. And I got distracted by it. And suddenly I was on the phone to my stockbroker and my real estate agent, when I should have been talking to my clients.

6 And reaching success, I always did what I loved. But then I got into stuff that I didn't love, like management. I am the world's worst manager, but I figured I should be doing it, because I was, after all, the president of the company.

7 Well, soon a black cloud formed over my head and here I was, outwardly very successful, but inwardly very depressed. But I'm a guy; I knew how to fix it. I bought a fast car. It didn't help. I was faster but just as depressed.

8 So I went to my doctor. I said, "Doc, I can buy anything I want. But I'm not happy. I'm depressed. It's true what they say, and I didn't believe it until it happened to me. But money can't buy happiness." He said, "No. But it can buy Prozac." And he put me on anti-depressants. And yeah, the black cloud faded a little bit, but so did all the work, because I was just floating along. I couldn't care less if clients ever called.

9 And clients didn't call. Because they could see I was no longer serving them, I was only serving myself. So they took their money and their projects to others who would serve them better.

- 10 Well, it didn't take long for business to drop like a rock. My partner and I, Thom, we had to let all our employees go. It was down to just the two of us, and we were about to go under. And that was great. Because with no employees, there was nobody for me to manage.
- 11 So I went back to doing the projects I loved. I had fun again, I worked harder and, to cut a long story short, did all the things that took me back up to success. But it wasn't a quick trip. It took seven years.
- 12 But in the end, business grew bigger than ever. And when I went back to following these eight principles, the black cloud over my head disappeared altogether. And I woke up one day and I said, "I don't need Prozac anymore." And I threw it away and haven't needed it since.
- 13 I learned that success isn't a one-way street. It doesn't look like this; it really looks more like this. It's a continuous journey. And if we want to avoid "success-to-failure-syndrome," we just keep following these eight principles, because that is not only how we achieve success, it's how we sustain it. So here is to your continued success.

Answer the questions below

1. According to Richard, how do most people perceive the path to success?
2. Why couldn't Richard come up with any ideas after reaching success?
3. What did he do when the money started to pour in?
4. What does he think of his management skills?
5. What did he do at first to try and fix his problem?
6. Why did his clients stop calling him?
7. How did he manage to reach success again?
8. How long did it take?

Task 2. Find a word or phrase which means ...

1. activity that goes in one direction (**metaphor, P1**)
2. think (**informal verb, P1**)
3. a person who is talented and showy (**adjective + noun, P4**)
4. when you can't think of any ideas (**noun phrase, P4**)
5. lost my focus (**passive expression, P5**)
6. become involved in (**phrasal verb, P6**)
7. on the surface (**adverb, P7**)
8. became less strong or clear (**verb, P8**)