



Meaningful Minute



New Meaning



Info@newmeaning.co.uk

www.newmeaning.co.uk

Tel: +44 1525 242 063

The interplay between success and fulfilment

In the modern world it can seem like success is everything. We almost prescribe what success should mean; for example the ability to command great wealth or power. It can seem like a hedonistic pursuit as we climb the materialistic ladder towards success; feeding on the admiration of others, striving for more and yet sometimes being aware of a strange feeling of emptiness inside – that something might be missing.

What could this emptiness represent? Have you ever felt it?

Viktor Frankl believed that we find meanings in three ways: 1) through the deeds we perform (for example through work); 2) through the commitments we make to someone or something (for example relationships and hobbies) and 3) through the attitude we adopt to life, no matter the life event.

If we use this model to help us shape meaningful success goals then our focus shifts from materialistic outcomes to focusing on the means. For example finding success through my work not as a result of my work. Or finding success through what and how I commit to someone or something not from what I get from someone or something. Or finding success simply by remaining true to my ethics, morals or principles even when faced with a major life challenge that I did not choose and would rather avoid.

Some people we most admire in history have lived this way. Take Gandhi, he fully committed to shaping a free and independent India (his commitment to something), the deeds he performed were linked to this commitment (it became his life's work) and no matter the adversity, he refused to raise arms against another or alter what he valued most – a peaceful solution.

Fulfilment is the sense, feeling or conviction that you are making the best contribution you can through: 1) worthwhile work (deeds), 2) committed relationships and causes and 3) the attitude you choose to adopt throughout life. Success is a goal and fulfilment the feeling we have along the journey to that goal.



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Balancing success and fulfilment

How you balance success and fulfilment depends how you define what each means to you. The exercise below helps you to explore what meaning might suit you best. There is no right or wrong solution and what is important is what feels right in your life now. You have the right and the ability to define success and fulfilment for yourself.

Exercise (design to be a minimum of 15 minutes of reflective time).

- Indicate on the success – fulfilment matrix on the next page where you perceive yourself to be today. Have you considered yourself to be both successful and fulfilled? Less successful and fulfilled? Or successful but not really fulfilled? Or neither successful and fulfilled.
- Now think about what success could mean to you tomorrow by responding to the following questions:
 - What contribution would I like to make through the work that I do?
 - What contribution would I like to make through my relationships and interests
 - What contribution would I like to make simply through my attitude to life?
- Visualise yourself in 10 years time sitting with close friends describing the worthwhile contributions you have made through work, relationships, interests and your attitude. What story might you tell?
- Remaining 10 years in the future indicate on the success-fulfilment matrix where you would expect to be if: 1) it was totally down to your interpretation and 2) it was determined by society at the time. Is there a difference? Either way does it matter to you?
- What action do you need to take to be successful by your definition and feel fulfilled as you journey?



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