

# Mind Sets - Developing A Success Mind Set

## Creating Meaningful Work

Does your work make you happy? Or are you simply trading hours for dollars doing something you couldn't care less about?

Meaningful work means different things to different people.

Some of us believe that in order for our work to be meaningful it must have a huge impact on the world. Discovering a cure for cancer, feeding millions of starving children around the world, or protecting endangered species are good examples of what most people would consider meaningful work. But is that all? What if our passions lie elsewhere? Can any type of work be meaningful?

Yes – to those who benefit from it!

Consider an alternate definition of meaningful work: something that you feel passionate about, which also provides value to the world.

Any type of job or career can be valuable, if you think about it. Doctors, lawyers, accountants, caterers, musicians, artists, housekeepers, dog walkers, party planners, product manufacturers, hair stylists – they are ALL providing something of value.

In that sense, any job at all can be meaningful. But is it meaningful to YOU?

**The very first step  
towards success in any  
occupation is to  
become interested in it.**

- Sir William Osler

This is where a lot of people go wrong, by choosing work that “has meaning” but is not exactly meaningful to them.

Perhaps your high school guidance counselor convinced you to go into medicine, but your true passion is music. Or your father was a lawyer, so you felt obligated to follow in his footsteps. Or you weren't sure what to study in college, so you picked a field that seemed simple and paid well but now you feel bored.

You may not think it matters what you do, as long as you're able to pay the bills. Or you may be a “weekend warrior,” devoting weekdays to a mundane job and following your passions on the weekends.

There is nothing wrong with this if it makes you feel happy and fulfilled. But if you walk around with a constant feeling of frustration and emptiness, you might want to re-evaluate your career path and choose something that truly fulfills you.

## Doing What You Love For a Living

What were your dreams when you were a child?

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Did you dream of being a heroic firefighter? A famous singer? President of the United States?

What happened to those dreams? If you're like most people, you were told how unrealistic your dreams were and you were encouraged to be more practical. "Get a real job" is the phrase many of us heard from parents, teachers and other authority figures in our lives.

If you have buried those long-ago dreams so deeply in your subconscious mind that you can no longer even remember them, don't despair! A little introspection can help bring them to the surface, but even if they remain hidden, there is one important thing to remember:

**You are not the same person now that you were back then!**

While it is possible to rekindle a dream you've held since childhood, you do not have to. Instead, let new dreams make themselves known to you. Ask yourself what type of work would make you feel most fulfilled. Ask yourself how you can best make a contribution to the world by doing something you truly love.

It sounds simple in theory, but how do you start? Many of us have fallen completely out of touch with our passions. We're so focused on the things we HAVE to do that we have no time for play or exploration.

I'm going to be blunt with you: there is no other alternative but to MAKE time. Set aside some time to really get to know yourself. Figure out what you like to do, or explore new activities so you can decide whether they might be one of your true passions. You don't have to devote dozens of hours to this, perhaps start with 30-60 minutes a day.

## Identifying and Nurturing Your Talents

A good place to start is by gaining a clear idea of your skills and talents. Make a list of the things you are naturally good at, as well as the things you've become good at through repetitive effort. Write down the skills you use in your job, the things you learned in school, and the things you enjoy doing in your spare time.

When you've listed everything you can, look over your list and consider whether any of these skills and talents might be marketable. How can you use your talents to provide something of value to others?

**Take your time with this exercise!**

Seriously, don't rush through it. You're trying to get an idea of the work that would make you feel passionate and fulfilled – therefore it deserves your undivided attention.

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This exercise is also important for another reason. Your dream is NOT just about you. It's about all the lives you will touch when you do what you were meant to do on this planet. It took me a long time to understand that by holding myself back I was denying others something special I had to share with them. And I don't mean that as a boast.

**We are each special and unique, and we each have something to offer this world that no one else does. By denying our own talents, we deny others the gift of what we have to share.**

So please, don't skimp on this exercise. You owe it to yourself and others to be ruthlessly honest about your passion(s).

Once you have a clear list of your existing skills and talents, make a check mark next to the ones you use on a regular basis, whether in your work or personal time. Can any of those skills be enhanced or strengthened? Can you enroll in a continuing education course to expand on any of your skills? Make notes about possible opportunities to grow and develop what you already have.

(Note: if any of the skills on your list are not things you truly ENJOY doing, cross them off the list and do not consider them as career candidates. That doesn't mean you'll never use those skills, just that they won't be your main focus. A good example might be bookkeeping or accounting skills that you use in your day job. You may be good with numbers but if working with them doesn't thrill you and move you, you should simply consider it an additional tool that can help with your work.)

What's left on your list? Look at the talents that were not checked as something you use frequently. Would you like to spend more time developing those talents? Again, if they don't thrill you, cross them off the list. If they do interest you, consider ways to expand and develop them further.

Finally, make one more list: of things you've always wanted to do but haven't yet. These will be things you can explore gradually and see if they have potential to be your passion.

Then, be sure to MAKE TIME to explore them! Check out courses and classes in your local area, or do a few internet searches for groups of likeminded people. Give your interests a chance, and one (or more) of them might blossom into a life-changing passion.

### **Learning How to Work Smart – Not Just Hard!**

Many of us fall into the trap of believing that becoming successful will require a lot of hard work. While hard work can be good for us, too much of it can create the opposite effect we're going for. Think about it: we crave fulfilling work because we want to enjoy our daily lives, not feel exhausted or bored. Taking hard work to the extreme only holds us back, personally and professionally.

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Contrary to what you may have been taught, hard work alone has little (if nothing) to do with success. Think about people who are working long hours at low-paying jobs every day. Are they becoming successful because of their hard work? Or are they simply scraping by, paycheck to paycheck – as so many of us do?

Simply working hard is not the answer to becoming successful. Working steadily in a FOCUSED direction is. That's why I led you through all that "identifying your talents" stuff at the beginning of this chapter. If you don't know what you're working toward, you will be spinning your wheels no matter how hard you work.

Once you know your objective (passionate, fulfilling work that contributes value to the world), it is easy to come up with focused action steps that will make it a reality.

Working hard in THAT context can be extremely effective. You know where you're going, you know exactly what to do to get there, and all you need is the discipline and determination to see it through.

We'll explore taking action more completely in a later chapter.

**Wishing you a smooth transition to the success you deserve,**

**Mind Sets Team**