

Strategies for Success

Earl Nightingale was co-founder of the Nightingale Conant publishing empire in the 60's and one of the pioneers of personal development and what is generally known as 'self-help'. As well as his books he was also the first person to create a personal development audio programme which he called Lead the Field. The following 'strategies for success' as I have termed them are all about creating momentum and taking action that not only moves you towards your goals but also strangely brings your desires towards you!

This Earl called the Strangest Secret which was the title of one of his most successful audio programme recordings which can now be purchased as a short book of the same name printed by Merchant Books (2013).

As a snapshot of Earl's Strangest Secret and Lead the Field programmes his strategies for success they could be summarised as follows:

Attitude

Earl stated that attitude is your mixture of moods, thoughts and actions at any one time. Therefore, we could say that your attitude is made up of your thoughts, feelings and actions. What's more Earl was keen to point out that we have control of our attitude and therefore control over our thoughts, feelings and actions. If we want to change our attitude, we then need to change our thoughts, feelings and our actions.

He also went on to say that our attitude towards a task or indeed towards our lives will determine the level of success we will achieve and that we need to manage and control our attitudes so that we think, act and behave in a way that demonstrates our best possible attitude to the world and those in it we come into contact with.

A good life comes from a good attitude – and that is it!

Change your attitude – change your life! Most people know this of course but few do it. To change your attitude is to consciously take control of your thoughts, feelings and actions each day so that you can proactively decide the attitude you wish to have.

Another strategy Earl offers is to treat every person as if they are the most important person in the world, not least because that's how we all want to be treated but also that in treating others this way we show ourselves that we can treat ourselves this way and further develop a better attitude towards ourselves.

Explore your current work for opportunities

Much of Earl's work is about developing our capacity to think. This is not thinking in the sense of rerunning old thoughts or remembering the past. Here we are talking about the hard thinking of how to make our lives better.

What Earl call Greener Pastures he implores us to look at the work we currently do for the unseen opportunities for growth and success. He tells us that people waste time and energy getting distracted by other pastures when our own likely holds the treasures that we seek.

He talks of our working to become an expert in our field as experts are needed and become so valuable and this 'future proofs' our worth and work. He recommends we spend an hour a day developing our expertise and further coming up with ways that the current work we do might contain the unseen opportunities that others cannot see. This is about developing what Earl calls Intelligent Objectivity – the ability to see your work, industry or organisation as an outsider might and therefore develop the ability to see the opportunities others cannot.

He therefore suggests we:

- 1) Learn everything you can about your work, industry and company and become an expert
- 2) Build a library of books and information to support this development
- 3) Spend an hour a day doing this

Set clear goals

Earl tells us that the difference between those who succeed and those who do not comes down to a simple matter of goal setting. Those that succeed set clear specific goals – it is that simple. Further he tells us that although we might have a number of goals that we focus on the most important first and deal with one goal at a time – largely again down to how we think and process information mentally. It is easier to keep one goal clear and focused in our mind.

He also provides us with an amazing definition of success as follows:

'Success is the progressive realisation of a worthy goal'

Earl talks about how most people are like rudderless ships that are just floating around aimlessly. However, if the ship's captain knows exactly where he or she is

going, even though he or she cannot see the final destination, they know they will get there if they keep doing the right actions over and over.

This is fantastic as we can see that if we are to be successful, we must first set clear goals and start to work towards them! Simple indeed but again how many people really actually do this?

Another key part of this strategy is to think about your goal all of the time and expect to achieve it. To do this Earl suggests writing your goal out and reading out loud morning and night and as often through the day as you can. In fact, he suggests you get a piece of card (like an index card) and write your goal on it. Carry this card with you everywhere to remind you of your goal each time you take it out and read it.

This thinking about it is clearly important and Earl sums it up like this:

‘We become what we think about’

To set clear goals you can do the following:

- 1) Take the time to decide what your goals are and write them all down – include all the ‘things’ you want, the qualities and skills you would like to have, the income you want and the person you would like to become make sure you get them all down
- 2) Looking at your goals now choose the most important one that you need to achieve first and highlight it or circle it on the paper – keep the page and put it away for now
- 3) Next write your goal out positively but succinctly onto a piece of card so that you can read your goal out loud regularly – give it a timeline/date for achievement
- 4) You must decide what you want because we become what we think about
- 5) Act with the attitude of having achieved this goal already (see above)
- 6) As Earl says ‘what the mind can conceive and believe it can achieve’ – so develop a sense of expectancy that you will achieve your goal
- 7) Remember that you become what you think about

Use your mind

Earl was able to provide a logical process more broadly as well as within each of his ideas. Here we move onto taking action towards achieving our goal, remembering that taking action not only moves us towards our goal but moves the goal towards us!

To use your mind Earl is further imploring us to take the time to think properly and to engage our minds! He tells us that successful people are not those without problems but essentially that successful people are those who engage their minds fully to solve their problems. The problem being getting from where they are to where they want to be.

Earl provides us with the idea that 92% of the things we tend to worry about are not worth worrying about or won't happen. Further of the 8% left about half of these are beyond our control leaving about 4% that are in our control and that we can affect.

It is these problems that Earl is asking us to solve as these are the important ones that will improve massively the quality of our lives.

To do this he provides the following strategy:

- 1) Every morning, get up early and write out your primary goal (see above) at the top of a piece of paper
- 2) Next then think of, originate, uncover and write down twenty ways you can improve the work you are doing currently
- 3) Not all of these will be great but one of them may well be!
- 4) To imagine how your life will improve as you develop your ability to think and solve problems
- 5) To tap into the deep reserve in our minds and ourselves, the great abilities we have for our development and improvement of ourselves.