

Success: a Matter of Definition

A message from Jim

So many of us are looking for success. We talk about it and hope for it, and often become discouraged when we don't achieve it. Yet many of us have not really understood how to get to success, and that it is not something we can find by worming, or forcing, or buying our way into it. Ultimately, we can only get to success by claiming it for ourselves, which begins with how we *define* it for ourselves. If we are not experiencing ourselves as successful, it is often because we are trying to live out *somebody else's* definition – maybe from our culture, our friends, our parents – or a definition we may have chosen in the past which just doesn't really fit with where we are in our lives *today*.

As we look at what success really means to us on a personal level, we may find that success isn't lots of money, or some high-level job, or a new car, or any of those things we might have thought "being successful" should look like. Instead, it might be a feeling of inner peace and joy, and a sense of purpose and of inner fulfillment. Truly the greatest indicator of success is in just this kind of a state of being, and *anything* we may be trying to achieve in the outer world is ultimately just a means toward this end – to the experience of an inner sense of fulfillment.

Many of us expect success to be radical, in great big steps, as if we either are or are not successful. Because we don't see success as a process and a journey, we often become discouraged because we fail to notice the little successes of everyday life, and it is they that ultimately lead to that greater fulfillment we are looking for. So it's important that we stay awake to our achievements, however small they may seem, and that we be aware of how we interpret the small accomplishments that we see. By paying attention to the successes we do have in our lives, we can intentionally keep "working that which works for us," and thereby move on to the yet greater fulfillment that can now begin to manifest.

We must also realize that we won't find success by just sitting back and waiting for it to come to us. Anyone who has ever become successful has learned that success comes through movement, through action. Yet so often we don't begin to move until we know that this or that is the "right" move to make. It's as though we need to know the results before we will even make an effort, and so we stay stuck in our fears and our limited thinking. But one of the keys to success is to do *something* – to move the energy of that which is in front of us towards whatever it is that we want.

They say that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Wherever we are now, there is always our next single step. So get up, get going, and see where that takes you. Once you are in motion and in the *consciousness* of success, you can always make course corrections; you can always decide by the way it feels within you whether this is a path to continue or to change. The journey to fulfillment is ever ongoing and moving. There is no stopping, stagnation, or completion. Always there is the next step and the next one after that, leading us on towards that ever greater fulfillment.

Now, sometimes we may feel as though we *are* where we need to be and doing what we need to be doing, and yet something is not quite right. That inner spark of enthusiasm and that inner sense of rightness is missing. If this is the case, then it is important to look and see if the environment, either around us or inside us, is really serving our definition of success and really helping us find our fulfillment. If not, it is time for a move, but not necessarily a physical one – we can move by changing our thoughts or feelings internally, or we can move by changing our environment externally. The key is in the heart, in what *the heart* is drawing us towards. We may never know what our right decision really is until we actually begin and *move*. But as we move and yet listen to our hearts, we will know by our own enthusiasm, that joyous sense of "oh, boy," and "let's go," and "I can't wait." If instead we feel a sense of burden and hardship, can it really be aligned with the heart? Enthusiasm is the golden clue that we are following our own definition of success which *will* lead to the fulfillment we seek. ■

ILM EVENTS IN THE MIDWEST

ILM minister, Steven McAfee, offers a variety of activities in Indiana and Michigan:

Spiritual Study Classes: Thursday evenings, 7:30-9 PM, in Fort Wayne, focusing on a wide range of teachings and their application in daily living – combines lecture, meditation, and group singing.

Sunday Morning Presentations in the Fort Wayne area: Steven is a frequent guest speaker at a variety of area churches and study groups. Please check with him for details.

Your Personal Spiritual Quest: 3rd Sunday of each month, 1:30-4:30 PM, in Fort Wayne. This is a new personal and spiritual self-development program, with group sharing and support to help us apply our understanding to the realization of our dreams.

Weekend Retreats, 2nd weekend of each month, alternating between Grand Rapids and Fort Wayne. Often in conjunction with Faithful Heart Learning Center of Sparta, Michigan, these special weekends are an opportunity for more in-depth sharing in a loving and supportive environment, with lecture, structured exercises, meditation, singing, fellowship, and vegetarian meals.

CREATIVITY: EXPRESSING YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL, our annual ILM workshop with Steven McAfee, Jim Gordon, and Nick Martin: October 8-10 at Camp Mack, Milford, Indiana (one hour northwest of Fort Wayne). This workshop will be experientially oriented and limited to the first 60 registrants. Mark your calendars, and watch for details in our next newsletter.

For details on any of the above events, please call Steven at (219) 485-2167.

OTHER UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

August 28-September 5, “The 1993 Parliament of the World’s Religions” – a week-long gathering in Chicago to promote sharing of ideas on world peace and cooperation. There will be a number of workshops and seminars by renowned leaders and authorities in the areas of religion, science, education, global ecology, and personal wellness, with keynote addresses by Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama. Steven will be organizing a group from the Fort Wayne area to travel together to a part of this very special and important event (September 3-5). Please let him know if you are interested in attending.

June 16-21, Insight I personal effectiveness training in Kalamazoo – \$150 per person. Contact Pat Holleman at (616) 349-7707. Many ILM members have attended and strongly recommend this very worthwhile and even life-changing event.

JIM GORDON HAS A NEW ADDRESS

10001 Brandywine Circle

Austin, Texas 78750

(512) 918-0203 as of June 14th

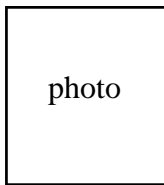
Jim will return to Honolulu July 11-19 for counseling appointments and a weekend workshop on the subject of meditation (July 17-18). For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact:

Tom Beaver at (808) 732-8934

OUR FIRST TWO BOOKS HAVE BEEN RELEASED!

Love and Loving and
The Knowing of God

These first two in our new series of study books are now in print. They may be ordered from ILM at \$6 each plus \$3 shipping.



Secrets of Success

by Steven McAfee

For years and years, people have been looking for the secrets to success. Of course, most of us realize by now that these “secrets” may not be so much in a particular set of *things* as they are in understanding a process – a process of how we apply ourselves to the realization of our dreams. And perhaps success is not so much a static state of being as a successful *approach to being*, an approach that is ultimately a matter of finding and doing what really works for us (in whatever area of living); and having the clarity, the honesty, and the courage to let go of what *doesn't* work for us and therefore stands in the way of our dreams.

I recently tried a technique using a simple 3 x 5 card. On it, I simply wrote the question, “Is what I am doing right now bringing me closer to my dreams?” Then I stuck it on the wall at my office where I would see it all day long. It helped me to realize that some of what I was doing (and not necessarily enjoying) really *was* going in the direction of my dreams, and this made it much easier for me to accept and to bear it. But it also helped me realize how much of what I was doing was *not* supporting my dreams, and with this awareness, I could begin to let that go.

As I began to consider what made this little technique so effective for me, I began to see a process that moved through six interrelated stages: attention, ambition, devotion, dedication, consecration, and liberation.

Contrary to what many of us believe, we don't gather creative energy from outside ourselves. Instead, the “doing” energy that we have comes to and into us from our own souls. We then direct it outwards, along the lines of our attention. That is, wherever we direct our attention is where our soul energy will go, whether or not it is in accordance with our inmost dreams. The

dictionary defines *attention* as: “applying the mind to an object or thought; it is a condition of readiness by the focusing of consciousness.” Indeed, if I want to be ready to receive the realization of my dreams, then the way I prepare is by focusing my attention in that direction, and then taking the action that will lead me there.

The next step is ambition, which the dictionary defines as: “an ardent desire for a particular end.” This ardent desire stimulates and sustains the attention and the creativity we need to imagine, discover, and then pursue the pathways that take us to our goals. It also gives us the “stick-to-it-iveness” we need when challenges arise.

Step three is devotion: “ardent love and intense affection.” With devotion, we begin to actually *love* the dream of our hearts, and to feel a heartfelt connection that serves to intensify our readiness to take action and also holds us to our focused attention.

This loving devotion leads to a fourth stage: dedication, which is defined as “to set apart and make special, to become completely committed.” As we mentally dedicate our efforts to the realization of our dreams, we make an inner commitment that we, ourselves, freely choose to do, as if to say, “This is who I am. This is what I stand for. *This* is what I'm after.”

The fifth stage is consecration, which means “to make sacred; to devote irrevocably.” With this *irrevocable* devotion, we move naturally into the sixth stage, of liberation, in which we freely and joyfully chart our own courses in the world. No matter what others may think, say, or do, and no matter what the path we must walk, we know who we are, we know what we seek, and we are truly in this world but not of it. And the inner fulfillment we find on this journey is reward far beyond any cost of our pursuit.

This six-step process is one of deepening our attentiveness while at the same time fully being who we truly are. It is this total immersion in who and where *we* want to be that is the great secret of success. I'm exploring it and invite you to explore it as well. ■

ABOUT ILM

Inner Light Ministries (ILM) is a nonprofit outreach organization founded in the fundamental principles of ancient and esoteric Christianity. It is dedicated to the development and balancing of the fourfold nature of the individual. Towards this end, it provides education and services concerned with the integration of the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical aspects of the self, and with the development of publications and materials that aid in this process.

Among its fundamental tenets is that we really are "temples of the Holy Spirit." As we seek and express this presence within, we find the peace, love, power, and wisdom we all so earnestly desire.

The many services of ILM are geared towards this path of individual unfoldment – through meditation, study, and prayer on an individual and group basis.

Service to humanity and the planet is its second major emphasis, and ILM encourages individual service, in any of a wide variety of possible forms, as a vital aspect of our daily experience

Please write or phone for
more information.

SUCCESS: A QUOTE

from Ralph Waldo Emerson

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES

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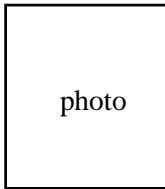
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Silent Sounds

A silent sound upon a page
says nothing to its reader
Until his heart be opened
to what truth's concealed therein,
For life is not contained in words
nor does one hold a word of print
As more than merely printer's ink
until a seer perceives.

Come not, my child, to read these words
but come to feel your heart beat
In rhythm with a silent page
that speaks but through your vision.
Come neither in kind company
but by the beat of wings
That melt within a meeting place
where words and wings are seen
In dreams of fusion with the silent sound
resounding on the printed page,
The silent stage where voices meet
and lift each other to the beat
Of hearts and wings and words and space
that seal within the silent place
The treasures meant to be revealed
to ears that hear and eyes that see
And hearts that feel the still entreating
from within that rhythmic beating wings may soar.



Our Children, Our Teachers

by

Laura Kesten-Beaver

When I was a young girl, pre-kindergarten, I remember being very happy. I remember swinging on a swing as high as I could, trying to touch the tip of a cloud with my little feet. I remember running free and wild with the wind, and making angels in the snow to represent the perfect me. And then I went to school, kindergarten, and I loved the activities and the story time, and, most of all, my teacher. Then my mother attended one of those scheduled conferences, and my life began to change.

My mother heard stories about me and was given strong and descriptive words to “define” me. I call this the time in my life when my mother stopped looking at the real me. Instead, she only saw me through the eyes of others, and only felt me through the words of others. I had become, in a sense, a reflection of her own self, and instead of working on her own issues, she spent the next ten years trying to change me.

As time went on, I worked ever harder at trying to be seen. I began to speak louder and faster. I began to lie and steal. I was embarrassed by whom I had become. And yet, somewhere deep inside me, I knew there was goodness and truth and wisdom. But my mother didn’t see any of that.

It wasn’t until my own daughter began school and I went to one of those same scheduled conferences, and heard stories and words about her, that I began to realize what my mother had done. But not before I began to replay the same patterns – by frantically trying to teach her more about sharing, about being less possessive, about being more focused. I was trying to change her. I became angry, obsessed, even enraged. This went on for some time until finally one day I was just exhausted, and I sat down on the floor in her room and looked at her.

I just looked at her. I was in awe of the beauty within her. She asked me what I was doing. I said, “I’m just looking at you.” Then she smiled and sat in my lap, and she put her arms around my neck. I told

her she was beautiful and that I thanked God that He had given her to me. She said, “Me, too.”

I’ve been teaching kindergarten at the Waldorf School for the past six weeks now, and whenever I am having difficulty with one of the children and begin to get flustered and controlling, I tell myself to just stop and look at the child. And very quickly I begin to see their light and beauty. I can then begin to find the special ingredient that will work with that particular child. Teaching is such an interesting job; the teacher has to be in control and yet not be controlling. They are not at all the same thing.

Children are like mirrors. Whatever a six-year old thinks and feels, he immediately expresses. He has not yet learned discretion or reserve. And so, very often, whatever is going on inside me is quickly absorbed within the child, who immediately mirrors it back to me.

For example, at nap time, if I am wanting to control the children, having them all do exactly what I say, the energy in the room becomes tense and the children become fidgety and testy. But if I just remember to breathe and remain relaxed, the children begin to melt into that energy and to rest quietly. So, whether it’s my own daughter or the children I work with at the kindergarten, I need look no further than my mirrors to find answers – she or the other children reflect to me my own issues and qualities.

A few years ago, someone said to me that what we heal for ourselves, we heal for our children, and that what we don’t, we pass on. Our children chose us as parents because they have certain issues to work out in this lifetime, and yet those issues are usually the ones that we need to work on as well.

When my daughter was about two, I was watching other children in my home as a way of making some extra income. One of the parents home-schooled her child, and one day she was talking to me about her experience. One of the things she said was, “God gave us children to teach.”

I thought about this for a moment, and then I said, “I believe God gave us children to teach *us*.” ■

Laura is an ILM staff member who resides with her husband, Tom, and daughter, Cally, in Honolulu. A licensed teacher, Laura has a special interest in women’s and children’s issues. She is also the coordinator of “Insight Hawaii.”