

A person is silhouetted against a bright, hazy sunset sky, standing on the edge of a dark, rocky cliff. The background shows a vast, misty valley with rolling hills under a golden light. The overall mood is contemplative and inspiring.

THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

By Yaron Barzilay
National Director
New Acropolis Cultural Organisation (India)

It is natural to wish to live a successful and meaningful life; to feel we managed to contribute, and make some difference, some impact on the world around us; to feel we fulfilled our life. To do so, it can be logical that one would seek to influence others, to be considered successful in their eyes, and someone worth learning from. It is certainly a means to impact others, to get positive attention. It could become a problem however, if we tend to mix means with aims, forgetting that one cannot replace the other. To be considered successful on the outer doesn't stand for the quality of the inner and the actual.

If we take the case of social media for example, to appear successful seems most important to present. The more we are considered as such, the more we gain popularity and attention, the greater the networking, and the greater our influence shall be, at least, so it seems. By the nature of such platforms, appearance becomes the main thing. No one wants to be considered a 'failure', whatever it may mean. Such platforms often look like a billboard for marketing the self, creating a big obsession with self-appearance. One may wonder what tremendous energy, intelligence and ability are invested in such a direction; how immensely our world could benefit if all of that was channelled towards a more beneficial pursuit, to serve a real Ideal, for example.

Sure, it would be naive to ignore the things that influence others; to ignore the so-called 'ways of the world' and social

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networks are very much a part of our lives today. We should be aware of how 'society' and the 'world' defines good and evil, success and failure, even if it's only to know where we are. But understanding its ways doesn't mean we have to adopt them ourselves.

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We must ask ourselves what is more important to us- to be successful as defined by society or to follow our path in life successfully, with the meaning that we choose to give it? What is our actual priority in this matter? Are we more afraid to be seen as a failure by others than to judge it for ourselves? And what exactly does failure mean to us? That too must be as per our own parameter, and not that of the others.



It may again sound naive to mention, but it could just be a simple truth to state, that we tend to care quite a lot about how others perceive us, to gain their approval, often much more than forming our independent judgment on our own life. Sometimes it concerns us so profoundly that it drives our choices, our behaviour, our self-esteem, feeling of happiness, and even our self-identity. This way, we lose our most precious authenticity.

We therefore, must take this matter into our hands and ask ourselves what our definition of a successful and meaningful life is. And how shall we measure it, knowing that each person has their own path to take? Each one is unique and special, and we are called, poetically or not, to dream by ourselves and pursue our dreams, even if we fail a hundred times... And maybe that's what life is all about? An art of living, dreaming and fulfilling in the best way we can.

If others are the judges of how successful my life is, then everything is about what they can see, confirm and appreciate. Appearance becomes much more important than the internal reality. If this becomes my driving force, it can only lead to living superficially. But if it is about pursuing and fulfilling my meaning in life, then I must evaluate how well I'm doing according to my criteria and with utmost sincerity. I'll need to constantly dare and be honest with myself and not be moulded and defined by what is conventional, as uncomfortable as it might be sometimes.

And how shall we measure our success? By which parameters? Is it about reaching a particular finish line, a well-defined achievement? Or is it about a process of bettering ourselves, of a genuine search, measuring the quality and authenticity of our life while moving on the path toward an ever-evolving dream and its actualisation?

Being authentic and bringing the best of myself, comparing myself to no one else, isn't about separateness from the whole. On the contrary, and remarkably, as indicated by the ancient philosophies, only a free individual can form a connection with the whole and be in harmony with the unity of Life.





Genuine authenticity is essential for the drop to return to the ocean, from which it never actually separated, it is said. On the other hand, mirroring the many voices heard from the outer keeps one attached to the most superficial, the periphery of appearance, separated in consciousness from the universal life. The first can offer real generosity, becoming a force of 'Life' and 'Light' to share with others; the second always depends on the recognition of the others and eventually tends to act as a beggar whose primary concern is to receive from others.

We must refuse to see our life as a product to be evaluated by others. We must be the one to choose how to respond to the fundamental questions human beings always ask themselves: 'Who are we?' 'What purpose does life – our own life – have?' and more.

There have always been those who dared to search, find and even offer us some answers if we truly knew how to listen. These aren't questions limited to an article or a book we read; they offer us a real philosophy for living. If we ever stop asking ourselves such basic questions, classifying them as irrelevant nowadays, by which measures shall we define our success in life? What shall be our reference point? We must dare to offer our life the meaning we see in it, while constantly pursuing a greater understanding and offering it greater loyalty and fidelity. We are living beings after all, and so it must mean something to be considered deeply, far beyond mere survival, production and reproduction. This may be an excellent way to start setting our life to be truly successful. $\triangle\triangle\triangle$

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