

MEASURING SUCCESS

'Mukul, how do you measure success?' She asks.

The question is casually articulated, but I sense it is anything but.

Over the rim of her half-raised glass of Merlot, warmly intelligent eyes pierce through the semi-dark restaurant.

Dan + Shay fill the background with '*No Such Thing*'.

Thankfully, the volume has been turned down. I hate those places where the music is so loud that you cannot even hear yourself think, let alone make conversation. Though that can be a blessing if your date looks like Bae Suzy, but is philosophically reliant on Cosmo... :)

The question takes me by surprise on many levels.

Firstly. I have asked myself this question on more than one occasion over the years, and a lot more frequently when I was writing my 17th book, MAKE SUCCESS A HABIT.

Secondly. It is one of those *purpose-of-life* type questions; it is almost impossible to find an answer that makes sense to everyone. Or, stands the test of time, even for you.

Thirdly. This is NOT the kind of question one usually encounter on a Tinder date. Not that I am an expert on Tinder dates, but I would imagine so. At least, I had never encountered this before.

But then, when you stop to think about it, Life is a lot like Tinder:

1. We are always swiping left or right – choices, decisions and even people. (*Seeing how judge-y we all usually are.*)
2. There's usually a mismatch between appearances / perceptions and reality.
3. What you get rarely matches up to what you had hoped for.
4. One never knows what will come up next.
5. We get lucky sometimes. We wish we were lucky at others. *And*
6. No one is an expert at it.

'That's a very deep question.' I murmur.

The smile in her eyes tell me she knows I am stalling. 'You wrote a book on it.' A gentle flick of the wine glass as she points out. 'Surely you'd have given this thought.'

Damn social media; it allows people to research you up in advance. The beauty of surprise, unpeeling the onion and discovering the person is lost. *Ah well ...*

'I have. Often.' I admit. 'But so far I have been unable to come up with an answer that satisfies me ... at least not for long.' I do not resist the urge to expand on that. 'You see, **it is very easy to equate success with achievement**. This is true whether you are an individual or a company.'

'I agree.' She nods and completes my thought. 'And the problem with that is that what we wish to achieve changes pretty often.'

I am impressed. A nimble mind is *sooo* much more endearing than ... y'know.

(Oh I agree that off-shoulders and plunging necklines are good door-openers, but a nimble mind (and warm heart) create the right conditions for a much more engaging, endearing and enduring encounter. No?)

Anyway, back to the conversation.

'Precisely!' I respond. 'You will agree that man is a progressive animal... as one need is fulfilled, another always emerges. You buy a house and then you want a bigger one. Your company meets the sales target and then they create a new, higher one. *Right?* Nothing wrong with that approach, however equating success with achievements will usually create a shifting sand of endless possibilities.'

She gives a wordless smile. The silence spurs me on.

'And then ... your question acquires even more complexity, because what I may deem as an achievement, may not hold true for someone else. After all, if achievements were all about the rank or position I have managed to reach, or the size of the house or car I have managed to buy, then every rich man would be deemed successful and ...' I peter off with a shrug. The rest requires no elaboration. Also, I am not very fond of negative thoughts or speech.

'Go on.' She nudges with another flick of the wineglass.

'So **how about measuring success by the impact we create?**' I ask. However, she doesn't rise to the bait. Her right eyebrow rises in query instead. 'That is to say,' I resume, 'instead of achievements, or what we do with the position and power we may achieve, **what if we measure success by the relationships we foster and the memories we leave behind?**'

'What if indeed.' She murmurs.

There is a longish silence. Even the music fades momentarily. It returns with Selena Gomez's '*Back to You*'.

'So.' She asks again. 'How do *you* measure success?'

We both laugh. 'Perhaps you should get hold of a copy of my book and let me know what you think about success?' I suggest, just half in jest.

'No free copies for your date?' She smiles.

'Oh I would love to, but my publisher is not very romantic ... he would probably issue shoot at sight orders.' *This* question I am used to handling rather often.

We laugh again. The conversation drifts to more earthly and entertaining matters.

However, her question lingers in my mind. And despite the passage of time, it has not faded.

If we believe that people are important, and people differentiate one organisation from another, then ***how about measuring success by:***

1. The quality of the relationships we nurture? *And*
2. The social impact we create when we leverage our achievements?

I believe that identifying the way we measure success will not only get us closer to what we desire, but also make the journey much more pleasant and fulfilling, for ourselves and those around us.

What do you think?

I would love to know your answer. Perhaps it will help me (or whoever reads this article / thread) to find theirs.

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I am a Singapore-based keynote speaker, executive coach, mentor, facilitator and internationally bestselling author of 18 books.

My passion is empowering and inspiring people and organisations to achieve peak performance and transformational results by helping them **ACTIVATE THE RIGHT A.R.C.**[™] – *Attitude, Resilience and Confidence*. So that we can all be **F.I.R.S.T.**[™] – *Future-ready, Innovative, Relevant, Strategic and Trusted*.

To enable this I deliver keynotes, coach, mentor and facilitate sessions - so far, to over 250,000 people from 500+ of the biggest and best MNCs and government organisations across the world.

I would love to stay connected, to learn from you, and share your insights with others, so that they too may **LIVE LIMITLESS**[™].

If you have a story to share, or would like to benefit from the experiences and insights of others, please connect with me at:

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