

Why You Need to Believe in Yourself

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

My first job out of law school was [working for a federal judge in Northern Michigan](#). The position did not pay very well, but that did not matter to me at all. I decided I was going to “live it up!”

I got the most expensive apartment I could find in the small town I was living in, told my girlfriend she did not need to work and leased a brand new BMW. I also purchased some nice suits, a Rolex watch for \$5,000 (on a credit card), got a nice television and entertainment center and made various other purchases.

I also bought about \$5,000 worth of exercise equipment for my own home gym.

In one of the strangest episodes of my life, I toured the YMCA, the only exercise facility in Bay City, Michigan (where I was working), and was told there were separate facilities for men and women. I was given a tour of the male area, and, to my complete and utter astonishment, several of the men were on exercise bikes and lifting weights completely nude. I have told this story to several people in my life, and I am of the opinion that most people do not believe it. In any event, it was due to my desire not to exercise with completely naked men that I made an expensive purchase of gym equipment to use at home.

“Are you insane?” my girlfriend asked me. “How are we going to pay for all this?”

“Don’t worry,” I told her. “I’ll do asphalt work on the weekends!”

I had a lot of experience doing [residential asphalt work](#), but it was difficult to make more than \$1,000 a day doing it. I started my job with the judge in September and knew it would start snowing in about 8 weeks. The snow would make doing asphalt work impossible in Northern Michigan. I wanted to have about \$25,000 to \$30,000 to get through the winter—far more than I could make doing residential work.

I needed to make thousands of dollars quickly. I decided to find a huge job doing work for someone with a big budget (like a city).

I purchased subscriptions to various services where I could learn about large jobs that were available from municipalities and large corporations. Within a few weeks of doing this, I put together several professional looking bids and had secured a giant job to do work on several streets and parking lots for a city about two hours outside of Detroit. In order to do this work:

- I needed to close down roads,
- coordinate with the police,
- get over \$10,000 in supplies,
- have about \$15,000 worth of equipment custom built, and
- get bonded by a large insurance company.

“Are you crazy?” my girlfriend asked me. “How can you possibly do that job? You do not have the equipment or anything you need.”

To make a long story short, I figured out how to get the job done. I got the city to advance me money, had the equipment built and found people to help me on the weekends. The city was pretty surprised when I showed up. I think they believed a large, industrial company would be doing the work. Nothing could have been further from the truth. But I finished the job, did a good job, made close to \$30,000 and completed the work in only two weekends.

Success means something different to everyone and can be about freedom, recognition, money, friends, having a happy family, being a leader or even being healthy. For me, at that point in my life, success was having the money to live the way I wanted to.

Every day, millions of people go to work in their jobs. Most people wish that they could reach the top of their organization, or industry and be as successful as possible. However, for a variety of reasons, people end up getting discouraged and believe that they need to settle for a certain lot in their lives. They believe they are destined for a certain type of mediocrity. As time goes by, their belief in themselves diminishes, and you can see it in the way they carry themselves. The way they dress, walk, and talk all begin to reflect their waning beliefs in themselves. Because others often see us the way we see ourselves, as time goes by, the way others see us diminishes as well.

In contrast, there are always a few people who really, truly believe they are going to achieve major success. They consistently improve and get better and better. They watch how others are succeeding and model their behavior after these people. They understand how the most successful people think about issues. They watch and listen carefully to what they need to do to accomplish more. And they do.

When you examine the people that become the most successful, it is always the people who believe they can. Having a strong belief in possibilities and success is the force that creates the most successful politicians, works of art and scientific achievements. If you believe you are going to be successful, you will be.

I knew a successful politician once. While he has been dead now for several years, when he was alive, he constantly talked about how he was going to be the President of the United States. I found this amazing because he was in the state senate. Nevertheless, he had a long and successful career and was very successful. His success was largely a product of his belief in his potential.

Most people are not that successful. When you speak with these people about why they are not successful, you find that they never believed they could be successful—or if they did—they lost this belief. You can never let go of your belief that you will be successful. The key to achieving success is believing you will be successful.

If you do not believe you are going to be successful, you will look at the world in a way that supports this. You will associate with others who do not believe in success. In contrast, the person who believes they will be successful tends to associate with others who are like themselves.

One of the most important things you can do in your career and life is constantly condition your mind to believe in your own potential. The more effectively you do this, the more successful you will be. In order to succeed at a very high level, you truly need to believe in yourself and your own capabilities.

Here is what you need to do:

Rules for Believing in Yourself

1. **Constantly Set Huge Goals**. It is not enough to set small goals. You need large ones—goals that seem impossible. The larger your goals, the more you will find ways to get to these goals. You should think great thoughts for yourself and your possibilities.
2. **Work on Thinking Thoughts that Support Your Success**. The most successful people never concentrate on thoughts like, “I cannot do this!” Instead, they tell themselves they will find a way to get something done and reach a goal. Your thoughts need to focus on how you will succeed and not how you might fail.
3. **Remind Yourself that You Can Achieve Anything**. Most people constantly doubt whether they will reach a goal. They decide their time is up, and they have gone as far as they can go. These thoughts do you no good. The most successful people out there are generally not smarter than you are. They are just people who figured out how to get their minds right and believe in themselves.

One of the most important things you can do to achieve the most in your life is to surround yourself with people who believe in themselves and who believe in you.

I have always been fascinated by how and why people from various environments seem to be so consistently successful while people from other environments are not. What are the odds that two people from the same family could become the President of the United States? Why do people from certain environments consistently fail? Why are people who graduate from certain schools generally more successful than those who come out of other schools?

It is my belief that it often comes down to the beliefs of the people we are associated with. If you are surrounded by people who believe in themselves, you will pick up these thought patterns and likely be more successful.

Conclusion

Every person wants to be successful. In order to achieve success, the number one thing you need to do is believe you can be successful. It is impossible to be successful without believing that you can be. When you believe you are going to be successful, you will find ways to succeed.