

Principles of Success:

Renewing your Purpose with Love, Joy and inspiration - a recipe for an Empowered and Fulfilling Life

A conversation with Jack Canfield

It's always a thrill to meet an author whose work you've admired for years, and I was anticipating a great interview with Jack Canfield about his new book, "The Success Principles – How to Get From Where You Are to Where You Want to Be", co-authored with Janet Switzer and released in the UK this January by Harper Collins.

I'd never met Jack in person before, and the first thing that struck me about his presence was that he has a kind of glow. It's not only the Californian suntan and the big smile, it's the energy and enthusiasm that greet you – no signs of any jaded *"here we go again - another journalist"* response, simply an unassuming warmth that suggested the time was going to fly and we'd have a rich and rewarding conversation. And which equally suggested that he has taken his own advice, and is most definitely somewhere in his life that he really wants to be.

Jack Canfield is an undeniable success, with over 90 books to his name, and co-creator with Mark Victor Hansen of the unstoppable *"Chicken Soup for the Soul®"* series. He's also a Guinness World Record holder for having 7 books in the New York Times best-seller list at the same time, and a sought after speaker and trainer both in the US and on the international circuit.

The Success Principles is the product of hard work and application from Jack and his team, and it came from Jack's waking up one morning and deciding that he wanted to distil the 3,000 or so books about success he's read over the past 35 years into what he describes as **"as close to a blueprint for success as I've seen anyone put together"**.

I asked Jack what prompted him to write this book, and if it was possible that by taking the Success Principles and applying them to their life, a person could expect to be successful:



"I've spent 35 years studying success, in every aspect: successful relationships, success in terms of physical health, success in terms of happiness and success in finance. And what I've really done is what you've described – I've studied all those things and applied them to my own life. I've taken just about every seminar there is – I've studied NLP, Psychosynthesis, Gestalt Therapy, the Sedona Method - and virtually everything else there is available, and applied it to my own life.

When I decided one morning to do this book, I was literally lying in bed and I had my laptop, and I said to my wife *'I'm going to outline everything I know about success'* – because people were constantly asking me to share with them, *'Well, what's the secret of your success, you've been*

so successful.' And I just started writing down all the things I knew – I had about 114 actually, many more than the 67, but some of them combined easily and some of them I had to drop out due to space. I had a vision of giving a book to my son and saying: “Well, here’s what I’ve learned, if you want to make the best of your life and yourself, this is what you can do, this is what really works.”

There are those who might groan and say ‘Oh, no, not another personal development book about success...’, because there is such a large amount of information out there offering ideas on being successful, attracting the right partner, living the life of your dreams – it’s hard to choose, and having chosen, people are often disappointed when they don’t get results they are promised. That plethora of information is one of the reasons why Jack wrote this book, because he himself has sifted through, tested and applied what’s out there for thirty years, he has used these principles and manifested great success in his own life, and he has a real passion to share what he’s discovered. And you can be sure that these are not simply untested ideas - as Jack says:

“This is not a book of good ideas. This is a book of timeless principles used by successful men and women throughout history.”

I asked Jack about the passion that inspires his life.

“My mission statement in life is **‘to inspire and empower people to live their highest vision in a context of love and joy’**, and this is what gives me juice. Last night when I gave a talk at Alternatives (a centre for Holistic Learning, based at St James’s Church in London: www.alternatives.org.uk) watching people’s lights go on, having people come up and say “*you know, your books have made a difference to my life*”, the letters I get from people saying things like: “*I’m a prisoner in jail and before I used to blame everyone else for me being in trouble, and I realise now that no-one else is to blame but me, and I’m starting to take responsibility for myself and my responses, and to be nice to people. So now people are starting to be nice to me, and all the other members of the cell block are asking me to counsel them because I’m so happy and I’m in prison*”. These kinds of letters reinforce that I’m achieving what I want to achieve.”

Then our conversation moved towards purpose:

“I believe I came into this life with an intention to make a difference and to help the world. For me it feels like this is who I am, and what I’m about. I’ve been a natural teacher since I was in my twenties, and when I get to teach, I feel fulfilled in the same way that a tennis player feels fulfilled when they play tennis. It’s never been about the money – I love the money, the money’s wonderful, and means I get to do many marvellous things – but even if the money wasn’t there I would do it for free, because it’s what feeds me.”

So contribution and service are very important to you?

“Yes and also very important Success Principles. Tithing is one of the best guarantees of prosperity ever known. There are two types of tithing – *financial tithing* is best explained

10 STEPS TO SELF WORTH

1. **Acknowledge your Positive Past**
2. **Use Only Positive Self Talk**
3. **Identify and Focus on Strengths**
4. **Clarify Your Purpose and Vision**
5. **Set Measurable Goals**
6. **Visualise your goals as complete**
7. **Take Action**
8. **Respond to Feedback**
9. **Persevere**
10. **Celebrate & Appreciate**

as contributing 10% of your income to an organisation from which you derive spiritual guidance, or whose philanthropic works you support. *Time tithing* is volunteering your time to serve an organisation such as a charity that needs volunteers. Tithing is powerful, and the benefits cross all religious boundaries and serve those of every faith – the simple act of giving both creates a spiritual alliance with the God of abundance, and fosters the mindset of love for others.

Tithing has certainly played a huge part in my success and the success of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul®* series. Ever since the first book of the series, we have tithed a portion of the profits to non-profit organisations dedicated to helping others. We’ve given away millions of dollars to more than 100 organisations including the Red Cross, the YWCA and the Make a Wish Foundation, amongst many other projects. We feel so blessed by all that we have been given that we want to give back. We also believe that everything we give comes back strongly multiplied many times over.

How did you start on this path?

“I started out as a schoolteacher in Chicago, in an all black, inner city school. I went there to teach history, which is what I thought I was going to do as a career – and what emerged was that many of my kids were not motivated to learn, and that was new to me. I became more interested in how to motivate them to learn than in teaching them history, which is what led into the work I do now.”

What happened to lead you further into the world of personal growth and development?

“What’s always been intriguing to me is how do you wake people up, how do you get them out of the malaise. If in your own environment you never see anyone succeeding, then you think that’s your legacy - that’s the way it is, and that’s the way I’m going to be.

Early in my teaching career, a friend of mine told me he was going to a series of ‘Living Philosopher’ lectures at a local college, and asked if I’d like to go with him. The

first one I went to was given by Herbert Otto, who said that we're only using 5% of our brain, and that really caught my attention. I went up to him afterwards and said to him *'that was the most fascinating thing I have ever experienced in my life, how do I learn about this and incorporate this in my teaching?'* I started using what he taught, and my kids were doing well, and other teachers were asking me *"What are you doing? Your kids are learning and paying attention"* So I started giving workshops for teachers, and that was a real world application of what happened at the beginning."

What are some of the other main influences in your life?

"W. Clement Stone was a major influence, and when I first met him he asked me *"Do you take 100% responsibility for your life?"* He told me that if you don't take 100% responsibility, you're waiting for something outside of you to make your life work better, and obviously that isn't effective. Then a few years later, I learned a formula from Dr Robert Resnick, a psychotherapist in Los Angeles, which is:

$$E + R = O$$

Event + Response = Outcome

And when I started to apply this E + R = O formula I realised that I had ultimately millions of potential responses that I could do – I'm in charge of thoughts, and my images that I hold, and was realising that certain thoughts were more productive and that people have specific thoughts which produce certain behaviours.

One of the things that Stone taught me was to study the people who are already doing what you want to do – so if you want to achieve something - whatever it is - somebody's already figured it out, and maybe if you hang out with them, and spend time with them, you'll start picking it up as if by osmosis.

He also advised making a list of people you regularly associate with, and classifying them as + (Positive) or – Toxic, and avoiding the people who don't reinforce your sense of wellbeing. In fact, his advice was "Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do it".

The first principle in the book is "Taking Responsibility" – does that underpin everything else?

"Taking 100% responsibility – I love the word **"100%"** - that's what I believe to be the core fundamental. I spend a lot of time on that in my workshops, because now the only game in town is called *"What responses are more effective to produce the results you want?"* If you don't like the results you are getting, then you have to change something, you've got to change yourself. The day you change your responses is the day your life will start to get better. As Jim Rohn has said,

'You can't hire someone else to do your push-ups for you'.

What is the response, the action you'd most want from your readers as a result of reading your work?

Principle 17: ASK, ASK, ASK Will you give me some money?

In 1997, 21-year old Chad Pregracke set out on a one-man mission to clean up the Mississippi River. He started with a 20-foot boat and his own two hands. Since that time, he's cleared more than 1,000 miles of the Mississippi and another 435 miles of the Illinois River, pulling more than 1 million tons of debris from the riverbanks. Using the power of asking, he's raised more than \$2,500,000 in donations and enlisted more than 4,000 people to help him in his crusade.

When Chad realised he would need more barges, trucks and equipment, he asked state and local officials for help, only to be turned down. Not to be dissuaded, Chad grabbed a phone book, turned to the business listings, and called Alcoa – "because" he said "it began with an A".

Armed only with his passionate commitment to his dreams, Chad asked to speak to the "top guy". Eventually, Alcoa gave him \$8,400. Later, working through the "A"s, he called Anheuser-Busch. As reported in *Smithsonian** magazine, Mary Alice Ramirez remembers her first conversation with Chad this way:

"Will you give me some money?" Chad asked.

"Who are you?" replied Ramirez.

"I want to get rid of the garbage in the Mississippi River," Chad said.

"Can you show me a proposal?" Ramirez inquired.

"What's a proposal?" Chad replied.

Ramirez eventually invited Chad to a meeting and gave him a cheque for \$25,000 to expand his Mississippi River project.

More important than Chad's knowledge of fund-raising was his clear desire to make a difference, his unflagging enthusiasm, his complete dedication to the project – and his willingness to ASK. Eventually, everything Chad needed was secure through – *ASKING*.

START ASKING TODAY – make a list of the things you want that you don't ask for:

At home

At school

At work

Next to each one, write down how you stop yourself from asking. What is your fear?

Next write down what it's costing you not to ask. Then write down what benefit you would get if you were to ask.

*"Trash Talker" *Smithsonian*, April 2003, pages 116-117.

“If you could succeed by having just one principle, I’d have done that, and I’d have written a much thinner book - and had a lot more free time last year! But I couldn’t, you really need all of these things.

If I had one hope for the book it’s that people would actually read it cover to cover, and then go back and take each principle, and start living each principle and integrating it into their lives, doing what it says....if it says you need to have a mastermind group, that they would form a master mind group, if it says read and attend seminars, that they would do that.”

What’s the main message, the key point you’d like to offer your readers?

“There are underlying messages: ultimately I would love to see people honour their own inner self, as their internal barometer for what’s important, because I think too many people use the barometer for the wrong purpose. We need to use it to know what’s in our hearts, that we are on purpose, and if we’re on course.

And if at some time you don’t yet believe that you can, there are techniques in the book to help build your self esteem and get yourself unstuck, and there are resources to assist you on the way.

Another message would be - not to do it all at once. You can just take simple steps and build up to achieving what you want. Ask others who have done what you want to achieve how they got started, and do that, read a manual, and then break down what you need to do into achievable action steps and put it into practice. Asking for what you want is a key piece in success.

Everyone has qualities, and the key thing is to identify those qualities that are essentially us, our essence, and then find a way to accept who we are, and then express who we are. For me, our purpose is the form in which we express those qualities. In my case, this comes out in my speaking, in that I’m funny and I enjoy myself. I have a good time and I’m light. What comes out more in my in-depth workshops is the empowerment where I’m really working with people to help them express the qualities of their inner selves.

Then the next question is: *‘What are two ways you really love expressing those qualities?’*, and for me that expression comes through the *Chicken Soup for the Soul®* stories and my own life story.

Building the vision is part of the next stage. We can ask, *‘If the world was working perfectly for you from your point of view, what would it look like?’*

And if the world was working as if everyone were living their highest vision, I take the position that if every person fulfilled their sense of what made them joyful then we’d have authors and artists and street cleaners and hotel workers being fulfilled.

Once people know their purpose, we can ask *‘Now that you know what you’re here for, what projects are to be formed*

so that we can get these messages out to other people?’ And for me, that really turns into the statement that my life purpose is inspiring and empowering people to live their highest vision, in a context of love and joy.

And the real message is that we all have the capacity within us to have anything we want. Anything people want, they can achieve. That’s the reason we have put so many true stories in the book about these Success Principles and how people are using them, because I truly want people to have that vision and to be empowered to great success.”

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Bio:

Janet Switzer, co-author of *The Success Principles*. From her first job as campaign coordinator for a Member of Congress at age 19 to building an international publishing company with over \$10 million in assets by age 29, Janet Switzer epitomizes the personal achievement and professional accomplishment that comes from applying these proven principles of success.



Today, she’s the marketing genius and business growth expert of choice for some of the world’s top success gurus: peak performance expert Jack Canfield, master motivator Mark Victor Hansen, marketing icon Jay Abraham, Internet income expert Yanik Silver and Jesus CEO author Laurie Beth Jones, among others. Janet is an internationally-recognized keynote speaker and Founder and Editor of *Leading Experts* magazine - as well as a columnist with *Training Magazine Asia* and numerous newswires and press syndicates.

Janet makes her home in Thousand Oaks, California where she belongs to Calvary Community Church and works with young people as a local 4-H Club project leader - a role she’s enjoyed for nearly 20 years.

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