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# THE FORMULA FOR CAREER SUCCESS

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Hello, my friends. How are you? It is episode 50. I can't believe I've done 50 podcasts. When I look back and listen to the first ones, I'm like, yikes, what was I thinking? I don't know. You're always evolving and you're always thinking of new ways to explain things and you learn as you go. I think the lesson that I took from doing these podcasts so far is I may not have known exactly what I wanted to say, how I set it, and how I wanted to say it when I started; but I started and I did it.

When I listened to those first podcasts, I was like, Oh my gosh, I need to take those down. But it's okay, that's part of the journey. There are some really good nuggets in there. If I could redo them all, would I redo them? Yes. But why? What's the point? The whole point is to just start and try and be imperfect as you go and get better. As long as you're getting better and you're learning, that's really the ticket.

Of course, none of what I just said has anything to do with what I'm talking about today, which is totally fine. But I just want to take a moment and celebrate 50 podcasts, because, for me, that's a really, really big deal. It's almost been a year. It's actually just over a year since I started because I missed a few weeks here and there. But I think that's pretty amazing. I want to thank all of you who have been listening and supporting me along the journey of putting this podcast together, thanking me, and sending me notes.

I even got a phone call from a friend of mine who listened to the podcast from last week's podcast on success intolerance. I want to just recognize for a second how much effort it takes to actually pick up the phone and call somebody to tell them that you appreciate their work. Shout out to Christie and thank you so much. That really meant a lot to me.

The whole point of doing this podcast is to help people get insight to make their career lives better, to help them take control of it, and achieve what they want to achieve faster. As they always say, faster with less drama, which brings me to what I'm talking about today, this whole thing about success. Success is sometimes elusive and dramatic in and of itself. When we try to do things and it's hard to do them, we beat ourselves up. There is a lot of drama and emotion associated with striving to achieve something.

So today, I want to offer you a really simple formula for success. The whole idea here is to try to neutralize some of the emotion that comes around going after what you want and really bring it down to a numbers game. This whole podcast today is about giving you a perspective that's going to work for some people. It's all about how to


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find the thoughts and the focus that you need to be able to go after what you want. One of the ways you can do that is to figure out a way to change your thinking.

Today, I want to offer you a formula for success that might help you motivate yourself to stay focused on what you need to do versus focusing on all the things that could go wrong and how hard everything is. Because a lot of people find it tough to go after their success. You're your own worst enemy. What I want to offer is, to take the time. Just forget about all of the BS.

Forget about all the things that you don't know how to do. Forget about all the bad bosses and all the drama around broken promises that they were supposed to give you something and they didn't give it to you. Forget that you're in the wrong job and you're trying to find a job that makes you happy, and all of that stuff. If you could forget about that stuff for a second and just park it and instead, take all of that energy, get it, and focus on it.

If you get focused on learning how to manage your mind and get out of your own way, all the other stuff won't be a problem anymore. When I talk to people about coaching, a lot of the time, I hear, *I don't have time to do this yet*. We invest all this time on all of that other crap, like worrying about all this other crap. I want to tell you that if you could just learn to focus your own mind and not let that other stuff get in your way, it would all of a sudden not be a problem anymore.

Because you would just focus on yourself, what you're doing, and how you need to think to get what you want; not spend an ounce of energy on how your boss is treating you and what they said about the broken promises and how you don't know how to do things. You would just deal with the bad boss and figure out your strategy for getting past the broken promises, even if that means leaving your job and not worrying about what you don't know how to do. You'd focus on just going out and figuring out what you need to do. It's just about reframing things in your mind to keep you focused.

So today is really about trying to park some of that emotion and give you a perspective. Make it about the numbers. Make it a mathematical formula for what you need to do so that you can neutralize that emotion and move forward. Before we do that, I just want to remind everyone that 2021 is just around the corner. At the beginning of the year, it is a fantastic time to really get clear on what you want to achieve in your career. It's a time when a lot of us have to put together our career goals for the year for our organizations.

But what if you really made it about you and not your organization? What is it about your career that you've always wanted to go after? What do you really want to achieve but you just don't know? How is there something that's blocking you from getting the success that you want? Maybe it's a relationship with someone or maybe it's a leadership behavior that you've been struggling with for a long time. What is it that you want and what's getting in your way? Now is the time to figure it out, learn to manage your mind, and get all of the success that you deserve.

Come book a free career planning session with me. Let's just talk about it. Let's talk about where you are now, what you want, and what are some of the challenges that are blocking you from getting where you want. And let's talk about how we can get you there. Just go to our show notes for this episode, which is thecareerreset.com/50. I will have a link for you to book your session. Or you can just go directly to melsavage.com/chat.


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Book your free planning session with me and we'll talk about it. We'll get you started. This is the first step on a long line of steps that you'll take to get what you want. But that's not what it's all about. Just like I did with the pilot podcast, it's just about taking the first step. So make sure that you go and do that.

Let's get back to our topic today, the formula for your success. Like I said, I really want to help you try and neutralize the emotions around success because that's what you need to do. Anyone who says you need to take emotion out of the equation doesn't understand how emotions work. You can't take emotions out of the equation. But you really need to neutralize emotions. You need to figure out how to make them a non-issue if you will. You can't do anything without an emotion. Emotion is always going to be there.

It's the emotion that always drives you in everything you do. Everything you don't do is because you want to feel something or avoid feeling something. Our actions or our inactions come from our emotions and come from our feelings. We either want to feel something or we want to avoid feeling something so therefore, we do or we don't do something. So the thing that you want to do is go after your success story in this unstoppable way.

The question then becomes, if that's what I want to do, what emotion do I need to do to make that a reality? What emotion do I need to feel to be able to go after my success story in this amazing, unstoppable way? Most people would go to things like, *I need to feel motivated, I need to feel determined, I need to feel confident.* But honestly, I think the emotion is neutrality.

Think about the things that you do all the time at work. Some people might think are hard, but you just do them. You do them without even thinking about it. The fact is, you actually are thinking about it, and you are feeling something in the background, but it just feels like nothing. You just do it. You just go and do it. Like you're checking something off your list, and you don't even think about it. But there are thoughts and emotions in the background.

And it's not in that case. It's not determination and motivation that's making you do it. It's just that you needed to do this thing and you did it. It's like you're feeling neutral about it, you don't even think about it. You can go, *I needed to go to this meeting, I needed to get briefed on this project.* And so you did. You didn't feel sad about it, or happy about it; you didn't feel scared or intimidated, or determined or motivated. You just did it. It wasn't hard. It was just a matter of due course. That is neutrality. That's not indifference.

Indifference means you don't care. But you do care, you just aren't getting overly emotional about it one way or the other. You're just neutral. You're just doing it. It's like when you want to lose weight. Sometimes, I think about what the version of me at my goal weight thinks about food. What would she think about food? She actually doesn't think about food. She doesn't obsess about it, worry about it, or feel like she's depriving herself. She doesn't necessarily get excited about it. Maybe sometimes when something is going to be really special or extra delicious. But mostly, it's just okay.

It's lunchtime, and she eats. She eats whatever she's prepared for herself. It's not like, *Oh my God, it's lunchtime, and I feel so deprived. What am I going to eat? I'm so excited.* She just doesn't think about food. It's just a matter of due course. When I think about the version of me at my goal weight, food is a non-issue. It's just a thing that I do. I eat. That's how I imagine that version of me thinking.


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The goal of giving you the success formula, as I said, is to help you neutralize the emotion that you feel about your goals and do the things that you need to do to get the success that you deserve. I'm going to give you this formula, and then I'm going to talk to you about what it means and how to neutralize it like how to use it. Here's the formula: ***Success = worthy attempts – failures.***

What I'm saying is, that it's the number of times you put yourself out there minus the number of times you don't get the result that you want out of those worthy attempts. Just Math, pretty basic. You become successful when you try stuff more times, and then you fail at the stuff that you're trying. When I first had this eureka moment in my own life, I was like, of course, it doesn't have to be any more dramatic than that. Try stuff, fail at it. And then keep trying until you get at least one more time than you fail. You just have to get that one extra time.

The other thing that I think is really important to take away from this equation is that you can't have success without worthy attempts. If you're someone who just sits around saying, *I deserve this and that* or *Why isn't it coming to me? Why don't I have it yet? I should have this or I should have that.* Well, I have news for you. You need to make some worthy attempts to get what you want. You might be like, *Look, I try stuff all the time. It's not like I'm sitting here doing nothing.* I hear you. But I want to talk about what a worthy attempt is.

You try stuff all the time, that's great. Keep trying stuff. First of all, just because you're not getting it, or just because you're failing doesn't mean you're not gonna get it. You have to keep trying stuff. But I want to make sure that the stuff that you're trying is a worthy attempt. A worthy attempt means trying stuff that pushes you outside of your comfort zone. That's what makes it worthy. You're trying stuff that pushes you outside of your comfort zone. Things are a little bit scary, you're not sure you want to do them, but you do them, anyway.

Because there are lots of stuff that you could do that are safe. The stuff that you've always done, the stuff that keeps you stuck, and things that are maybe more passive in nature, like doing your research on leadership, reading books, listening to podcasts about careers, researching jobs online, putting your resume together, and thinking about what you want. Maybe you've done a vision board or something. This is the kind of safe, more passive stuff.

Or there may be things that you're used to doing in your job right now that are in your realm of comfort, and you keep doing the same stuff over and over, like going to work extra hard at this project. You're used to working extra hard, and that's fine. But you're not really pushing yourself out of your comfort zone. You keep doing that stuff because it's safe, comfy, and not that scary. That's a choice that you're making.

But worthy attempts are things that really take you outside of your comfort zone. Maybe offering yourself up to lead a special project, for instance. Maybe that's uncomfortable for you. Or going after an internal job, or maybe even an external one, like sending the resume, getting prepped for it, doing the research to apply for the job, and actually applying for it, and then going for the interview.

Or something that can really take you out of your comfort zone is deciding to admit to yourself that you're getting in your own way and that maybe it is you and not them. They can be them, they can have bad behaviors, they can do all the things; all the *thems* out there, whether it's your bosses, or your peers, or whoever it is. But you are creating your own drama.


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Deciding to admit that you're the one creating your drama, and you're the one who has to fix it, is a really big one for people who think that they deserve something and they haven't got it yet, or that everyone is out to get them or they feel that at the end, life is happening to them, or all these bad things are happening to them. Just deciding to admit that maybe there is something that you need to do differently to get the traction that you need to get and bring down the drama in your life, is a worthy attempt. You just decide that and then take the next step forward tackling a leadership behavior head-on.

I know for years, for me, I struggled with communication. People thought I was too opinionated and I would say things too directly. Honestly, I was like, that's their problem. There is nothing wrong with me. But really, yes, it's true that you can't control how other people think. But if everyone is feeding you the same feedback over and over again, eventually, it's like, *Maybe I need to rethink my approach on this. It's not about not being authentic to who I am, it's really about how can I bring my authenticity to something so that people can hear my message so that I can work better with people so that I can get what I want. Because what I'm doing over here isn't working. So maybe I need a new strategy.*

There are so many people who get caught up in *That's not authentically me, I can't change who I am.* No one's asking you to change who you are. we all have different versions of who we are. We know we all put our game face on. Sometimes we all have the professional version, the fun version, and all these different versions. What kind of version of you can you bring forward that's going to help you bring more traction to a certain behavior?

Here's another one. Doing the things that you're procrastinating on, like just doing that, without leaving it to the last minute. That can also be a worthy attempt. We leave things to the last minute because we need the fear to be able to get past them. We need the fear of not getting the work done to get past the fear of the thing that we're trying to do. So maybe just push through the fear ahead of time. Don't wait for the last minute, do it ahead of time. That's a worthy attempt. It doesn't matter what it is. It can be all different kinds of things. It can be unique to you.

It's really about a worthy attempt to be something that's at least a six plus on the discomfort scale. On a scale of one to 10 of discomfort, with 10 being totally uncomfortable, or paralyzed uncomfortable. It should be like a six plus, really pushing yourself. Think about it right now in your career. If you want to think about one worthy attempt that is waiting for you to attempt it, that's between you and getting the success you want, what could that be? Think of something that's a worthy attempt that you haven't taken yet and ask yourself why you aren't taking the attempt or making the attempt.

Usually, it's because we're focused on the fear of failure. Failure is the other part of the equation. It's part of the equation. You have to make a lot of worthy attempts minus the failures. You're not going to get anywhere without failing. You're going to fail, probably over and over and over again. Failure is necessary. It's a necessary part of the success equation: worthy attempts minus failures. Nobody did anything in their life without failing their way forward.

Think of a skill that you have right now that you're really awesome at, or it's so easy for you that you don't even think about it. How did you get good at it? Practice. You practiced and what is practice? Trying stuff over and over again, learning from your mistakes, and getting better all the time. Just like I was talking about the podcast, I didn't actually think that that had a relationship to what I'm talking about today. But it does. I just kept trying to do


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better and better podcasts. Sometimes I'm doing it, sometimes I'm not. But that's okay. That's what practice is. Trying stuff over and over and then learning from your mistakes, and getting better at it all the time.

Like walking. How did you learn to walk? You probably don't remember. But guess what, you did it by trying and then risking falling down. And you fell down a lot. If you were afraid of falling down the entire time, then you wouldn't be walking right now. Because you'd still be falling down, or you'd still be afraid of falling down so you'd still be sitting there. But the odds of you falling down now are pretty small so you get up every day and you walk around.

It's the same thing with the skill that you have right now, the skill that you're really, really good at. You risk something along the way to build that skill. Now, you don't even think about it anymore. Failure doesn't have to be this super big deal or something that you have to overindulge in. I mean, really, what does failure mean? What does it mean, literally? If we, want to think about failure in a neutral way, what is it really? Failure is simply not achieving a predetermined outcome.

For instance, I meant to walk all the way to money, but I fell on my butt halfway through. But what does the baby do? The baby gets back up and tries to walk the rest of the way. That's neutral. They're not afraid or determined or whatever; they're just trying to get to mommy. They're not making the fact that they fell mean anything. It wasn't what I wanted. I didn't want to fall. That wasn't my goal. But I did fall. I didn't make it all the way without falling.

So what do I need to do? I need to get back up and get the rest of the way. So what would it be like to feel neutral about failure? We get caught up in what it means and how we're going to feel if it doesn't happen, or if something bad happens, like if I don't make it. What if I'm embarrassed or someone judges me or I get rejected or I fall down? Bla bla, bla, bla, bla… All that stuff comes up. We make failure mean all this stuff. I know because I feel that way, too. My brain automatically is wired that way.

But then I think, because I have a lot more practice, I think, what if failure was just part of this worthy attempt? What if failure was just part of my checklist of things I have to do? Step one, write the proposal. Check. Step two, present it to the leadership team. Check. Step three, they hate the idea and everything in the meeting goes sideways. Check. That's your failure. Step four, rewrite the proposal. Step five, I set up another meeting.

It's just like one of the things along the way, on a checklist, it doesn't have to be anything more than that. It doesn't have to mean anything. It's just part of the gig. It's like ingredients in a recipe. I've got flour, salt, sugar, coconut, whatever. I've got meetings, proposals, failures, successes. It's just the ingredients of your success. And really, what's the worst that can happen when it comes to cooking? The worst that can happen is, it doesn't taste good, and that you wasted some time and money.

When it comes to your career success, though, the stakes feel a bit bigger. We're talking about risking your livelihood, your sense of belonging, and your reputation. But really, what kind of risks are you taking that risk you losing your job or your reputation? How often are those the risks that you're taking? Even if that was the situation where you are risking your reputation, or risking losing your job or something like that, there are always ways to manage expectations with key stakeholders or key partners, so that you're mitigating the impact or the fallout from the risk that you're taking. There are always ways to do that.


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Once you identify the obstacle, you can always find a strategy to manage it. Even if you were taking risks that could make you lose your job, you could mitigate that by pre-managing people along the way. There are always ways to figure things out. The truth is, most of the time, we're not really afraid of getting fired. We're afraid of judgment and humiliation. We're afraid of a feeling and we're afraid of what people will do behind our backs if we fail. But all of that can be managed.

Suffice to say, you can manage all of that stuff. If you're afraid of just feeling a feeling or what people are going to say about you behind your back, or that you can lose your job or your reputation, all of that can be managed. It's not a reason to not try. What I want to make sure that you understand today is not doing something because you're worried about what someone might say if you fail. A worthy attempt is not a reason to do something like, *Oh, I'm not going to do it because someone might think something if I try this.* I mean, come on. Really?

Worrying is a massive waste of time. I call it borrowing drama. Nothing's even happened and you're already having all of this drama about it. You're borrowing drama from the future. Here's a side rule that you can live by– You're not allowed to have drama until you actually do something. Unless you'd make a worthy attempt, then maybe you could have some drama. But until you have the drama, don't pre-have the drama. That makes no sense.

Your job is to keep making worthy attempts and fail as you go. Treat the whole thing as the Math of success. *Success = worthy attempts – failures.* I have this philosophy that I get further in my life by focusing on what's working versus what's missing. That means, I still might get ahead by focusing on what's missing. But it's going to be slower, and it's going to be more painful. So instead, I would get further ahead faster if I was focusing on what's working versus what's missing.

There are always both what's working and what's missing in every situation that is out there. So why not focus on what's working? Even with your boss situation, if you're having a hard time with your boss, there are things that are working in that situation for you. You're just focusing on what's missing. If you have a job that you don't love, there are probably things that are really working for you in that job. You're just focusing on what's missing versus what's working.

Let's say you go to a meeting and you do something. You have this meeting, and you fail because it doesn't go the way that you wanted it to go. It doesn't mean that you can't be aware of what you could do better next time. But your focus is on how you're getting better in that situation. So it's like, *Yeah, it didn't go the way that I wanted but here's all the things that worked. Here are all the things that I can do better next time* versus *I suck. That sucked. That went totally wrong. I feel humiliated.* That's not you focusing on what's working, that's you focusing on what's missing.

I feel like we have this finite amount of energy every day and it depends on how much sleep we get, what we're eating, or what's going on in our lives. We have this amount of energy every day. Making worthy attempts takes energy. You have to focus on managing your mind to take action on things, even when you feel uncomfortable. You need to use your mind to get to that place of neutrality. You work on getting to a place to make these worthy attempts. I'd rather spend my energy there, wouldn't you? I'd rather spend my energy there, figuring out how to make it work than being paralyzed by worry and all the things that might go wrong, i.e. what's missing if I ever worked up the courage.


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What I'm saying in terms of what's working and what's missing is, how that applies with this is that you don't focus on the chance of failure. Don't focus on the chance of failure. That's you focusing on what's missing. Focus on the worthy attempt, which is what's working. Really think about how you want to invest your finite amount of energy every day. Do you want to invest it in focusing on what's missing, failure, all the crap that's going on? Or do you want to focus on figuring out how to manage your mind so that you can take action towards your success? I'd rather spend my energy on the latter.

One of the ways that you can really stay focused is just treating success as math. You can break down success into a basic formula. Success is the number of worthy attempts you make, minus the times that you don't meet your expectations. That's all failure is when you don't meet your expectations. The more you try and fail, the closer you get to your goal. Failing is just part of the checklist. It can be as neutral as that.

If you're someone who is really interested in going after your 2021 goals, making a lot of worthy attempts, facing what you need to face, and managing your mind to get it, I want to work with you to set up the clearest, most effective career plan that you've ever set up in your life. The most important part, stay committed to that plan and knock it out of the park week after week because that really is the hardest part of this whole thing. It's not writing the plan, it's staying on the plan.

If that sounds like something that you think is a worthy attempt and a worthy investment of your time, then it all starts with booking a free career planning session with me. We talk about where you are now, where you want to go, and what you think is getting in your way, and then I'll give you my observations and insights based on what you said. We'll see if we're a good fit to work together. Go to melsavage.com/chat, and make an investment in making the most of your career because it's going to be the best return on your effort that you will ever make. So book that free session with me at melsavage.com/chat.

That is all I have for you to take today, my friends. I feel like this was a long one. I don't know if it was or not, I'll have to check on that later. But I really want you to have a great week. I really want to challenge you to focus on making at least one worthy attempt this week. Something that's like a six plus on the discomfort scale. And then after you make it, I want you just to write down what worked on that worthy attempt, and what you would do differently next time. It doesn't matter if your worthy attempt fails or doesn't fail. Just write down what worked and what you would do differently next time. That's it. It doesn't have to be more complicated than that. It's gonna make a big difference.

I'll talk to you soon. Bye for now.

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