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Success and the “It” Factor



Success is not a destination but a journey toward the accomplishment of predetermined, worthwhile goals. The journey in sales isn't about learning basic skills. It's about being a change agent who strives for continuous improvement. It's about your education and growth as a whole person rather than just your sales techniques. And it's about your ability to go deep inside yourself to understand personalities, relationships with others, current circumstances, and your ability to create your destiny.

Think Sold! Creating Home Sales in Any Market will provide you with tools for ongoing success in the industry. You may be surprised to learn that these tools include not only presentation and demonstration skills but also visualization skills. Visualizing success is a precursor to achieving results in sales. It is a tool to aid you in controlling your thoughts and altering your beliefs to be success oriented and to put you in control of your work and your life. Regardless of the current housing market, interest rates, energy costs, or the overall economy, by controlling your thoughts and applying mental imagery along with the theories, techniques, and strategies outlined in this book, you can make the next decade in the industry your best ever.

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“The people who get on in this world are the ones who get up and look for the circumstances they want and, if they can’t find them, they make them.”

—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW
Playwright



Everything you accomplish is governed by the following three immutable principles:

- ◆ Your beliefs are consistent with who you are.
- ◆ Who you *are* is shaped by what you *think*.
- ◆ You achieve only if you believe you can.

Your mental attitude and focus determine your success or failure. Define your purpose and focus on your goal and you will begin to plant the seeds of your success. The most powerful tool at your disposal is your imagination. Use it to reach your desired destiny. If you can dream and imagine, you can create without limitation.

You must develop constructive beliefs consciously and continually. Eventually the habit of focusing on positive thoughts, feelings, and outcomes will become automatic and as natural as breathing. As a result, you will succeed in sales, enjoy the work more, and have the life you want.

As in any profession, success in sales demands planning. The first step in the planning process is to decide who you want to become and what you want to achieve. Do you want to be the best new home sales associate in your company? Do you want to be the best in your market? Once you have established your goal, visualizing your plan for getting there will help you eventually reach it. In your imagination, you have no limitations except for those you impose upon yourself. Your power to think is unlimited, and therefore, your power to create the vision of your perfect reality is also unlimited. You must throw out all preconceived notions of what can and cannot be, and picture yourself executing perfectly every time.

Imagine that if you think, believe, and expect a result, it will happen. If you expect to be successful, you act as if you are successful, and your actions create success. A destructive thought, on the other hand, is your personal devil. Like a germ, it attacks from the inside and can weaken your resolve and interfere with your success. Your thoughts and beliefs have shaped and will continue to govern your life. If you are not happy, then you have adopted beliefs that are destructive or are not aligned with your true

desires, perhaps without even realizing it. You have used your power, albeit unintentionally, to prevent you from attaining your true desires. Practice listening to your emotions. If you feel bad about a situation, that feeling is rooted in inconsistency between your thoughts and your true desires. The bad feeling is a siren warning you that danger is approaching.

You are the gatekeeper that protects your mind from negative, destructive thoughts. Replace them with positive, successful, empowering thoughts by practicing positive self-talk, visualization, and mental imagery.

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Overcoming Fear

One of the most destructive emotions you can have is fear because fear is the root of all other negative emotions. When you replace fear with a more positive emotion, such as love, your reality will change significantly. When you are fearful, think courageously. If you find yourself dwelling on what you don't have, retrain your mind to think of what you're grateful for or what you have in abundance.

Are you willing to release your negative feelings? *Will* is the predominant factor in your success or failure in any venture. Once you have decided that you are willing to give up your fear, you have freed yourself to change your life immediately or sometime in the future. Make no mistake; this transformation is a matter of personal choice. If you decide now to change your mind, you can.

To start changing now, try this exercise: When a destructive thought enters your mind, close your eyes and take a deep breath and hold it. Think about your fear and count slowly from one to three. When you get to three, release the breath and imagine that as you exhale, the fear is leaving your mind and body along with your breath. Open your eyes, take a deep breath, and imagine, as you draw in air, a pleasurable experience or situation. Let that sensation fill your body and mind as the fresh air fills your lungs. You can control your thoughts. By determining what

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“If you think you can do a thing
or if you think you can’t do a
thing, you are right.”

—HENRY FORD
Inventor

your mind and body hold onto and what they let go, you also control what to let enter or keep out of your life day to day. When you replace destructive thoughts of fear, lacking, and limitation with thoughts of courage, power, self-reliance, and confidence, your world will change.

I have been afraid, and I have overcome fear using these techniques. I know they work.

In December 1989 I married and by the following February I was pregnant. My son was due in November, but by October, I was already divorced. Naturally, I was anxious about the prospect of becoming a single mother. How would I take on this awesome responsibility on my own? In addition, as my brief marriage was dissolving, I was traveling frequently, selling bank card and check processing services to retailers. I knew my extensive travel would soon be out of the question and that I would need to make a career change. I had to make some difficult decisions.

Instead of fixating on the anxiety, however, I pictured my son and myself happy, healthy, and financially secure. I didn’t know how this perfect picture would become reality; I just convinced myself that everything would be all right. Whenever there was inkling that things might not be okay, I redirected my thoughts to envision great pleasure and success. Using my mental powers, I’d begin to feel as if I had already accomplished this success. I didn’t lose sight of my son and me stress-free and happy together in our home.

In fact, this American dream of homeownership was foremost in my mind as I was perusing the Help Wanted section of the newspaper one day. Amazingly, I came across an advertisement by U.S. Home for new home sales associates. I responded to the ad and soon joined U.S. Home as an on-site sales associate.

My first assignment with U.S. Home was in the community of Country Way in Plant City, Florida. In the previous six months, Country Way had two sales. But in my first 60 days, with no new home sales experience, I sold 6 homes. It was the beginning of the financially secure, happy life that I had envisioned.

Using Mental Imagery

The vivid mental imagery that I applied to reach my goals is really the first step to accomplishing anything in life, whether personally or professionally. Any new product, service, or invention is first imagined in the mind of its creator. Any great athlete or performer imagines their perfect time, execution, or performance prior to the event. Any great architect imagines a beautiful structure prior to sketching it on paper.

Jack Nicklaus, one of the all-time greatest golfers, said mental imagery was crucial to his success. “For some 40 years now, I’ve gone through the same visualization process before every competitive shot. No other discipline has helped me more . . . visualizing exactly what you want to achieve before setting up and swinging will greatly improve your play. The more deeply you ingrain what I like to call my ‘going-to-the-movies’ discipline, the more effective you will become at hitting the shots you want to hit.”¹

He explains this process in detail beginning with “seeing” in his mind where he wants the ball to finish. Then he “sees” the ball flying to the target he just visualized including the trajectory, curvature, and roll. Next, he “sees” himself setting up and swinging in such a way as to turn these visions into reality. And finally, he selects the club that will achieve his completed “movie” and steps up to the ball to execute the vision he just created.

Clearly, the subconscious mind does not differentiate between fiction and reality. Scientists agree that the human nervous system cannot tell the difference between an actual experience and an experience imagined vividly, emotionally, and in detail.² Therefore, you must have a clear, vivid picture of what you wish to achieve as a new home sales associate. Rather than focusing on how you will achieve your goal, focus first on the end result. Hold that image in your mind. You must savor the feeling of enjoying your results. You must imagine that you have already achieved your dream and are now living it. Then you can motivate yourself each day to consciously become the professional you want to be.

Conversely, if you constantly envision a bad end to what you perceive is a bad housing market, you will lose a sense of urgency with your prospects and the “bad market” will become a self-fulfilling prophesy. Your pessimism is the roadblock to achieving results. Even if a qualified prospect walks through the door, you won’t recognize them because you’ve convinced yourself that there are no qualified prospects.

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Instead, visualize perfect presentations and a wealth of qualified prospects, and your presentations will improve. Better presentations will lead to improved results. You will treat everyone as a qualified prospect; many of them will be, and many will buy your homes. Don't let your prospects' perceptions or prejudices cloud your belief that you are selling a wonderful product in a desirable community.

Imagine that you have unlimited resources and the power to attract anything and everything you desire. Imagine that you control every situation or circumstance in your life and there is nothing beyond your control. Now, stop imagining, and believe!

Creating Success

In 1992, I got an opportunity to sell homes in a new community, but it had two challenges. When you entered the neighborhood, among the first things you encountered were high-voltage power lines and an electrical substation. Also, a special school for children who needed emotional counseling abutted the community. Our competitors were using both of these location factors against us. Many sales associates didn't want to sell homes there.

With my vision of becoming a top seller firmly planted in my mind, though, I invited the local power company to visit and conduct tests that would provide me with the data to show to prospects fearful of electromagnetic fields (EMFs), the readings associated with the power lines and substation. We compared the readings to everyday living in a home that was not located near the power lines. We found that most people were exposed to higher readings of EMFs while in their family rooms watching television than what they would experience in the yards of the homes that backed up to the power lines.

I also visited the specialty school, which seemed more like an upscale boarding school than what our competitors were leading our prospects to believe. I obtained information about the school, the students attending, the adult-to-student ratio, and much more knowledge to overcome what our competition was saying about the school.

After I spoke with our prospects about these issues, many lost respect for my competitors' sales associates, who were spinning the data about our community rather than trying to inform and educate prospects. Ultimately,

I had great success in the community and achieved sales way beyond what the company had expected. If I had decided that external factors such as the community location features were roadblocks, I would have undermined my own success. Positive mental imagery helped me—and it will help you—develop self-confidence and allow you to pursue proactive strategies that will augment your selling before a prospect confronts you in the sales office.

Practicing Visualization

You may say you are still having trouble with visualization. When you close your eyes, all you see is darkness. In fact, many people find visualization difficult, but that’s only because they are not familiar with it. Like playing a musical instrument, taking up tennis, or learning any other skill, visualization becomes easier with practice.

Try the following exercise: Picture someone special in your life right now. What does this person look like? What color is his or her hair and eyes? What is he or she wearing? Can you describe this person? If you can, then you already have the ability to visualize; you just need to practice and apply this skill daily.

Visualizing is much easier when you are completely relaxed. So, if you have difficulty visualizing, schedule time when you can relax and focus. I have found that immediately before I go to sleep is a good time to practice visualization. I actually schedule 20 to 30 minutes at night before I go to sleep to practice visualizing the immediate and long-term future. I picture the next day as well as the satisfaction of living my perfect life.

Try this exercise. Select a blank space on the wall (if you are sitting) or on the ceiling (if you are lying down). Mentally draw a black horizontal line about six inches long. See the line as plainly as if it were painted on the wall. Next, mentally draw two perpendicular lines to intersect this horizontal line. Then “draw” another horizontal line to make a square. Draw a circle within the square. Place a point in the center of the circle and draw the point toward you. You will see a cone on a square base.

Change the color of your lines from black to white, then red, then yellow. Now change the color to orange and rotate the cone so that you can now picture it standing on its base. If you can do this, you are making excellent progress and will soon be able to concentrate on any situation

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you desire. Eventually, with practice, you will begin to see more vivid pictures, and you can substitute this simple picture for ones with more detail.

Let's move on to something more advanced. Get a photograph of someone in your life who you love immensely. Study the photograph carefully. Make note of each feature, including the color and shape of this person's eyes. Close your eyes and completely relax. Now, see your loved one in your mind but with the same level of detail. Can you picture this person? If so, that's awesome! You are well on your way to being able to use the power of visualization. If you're not there yet, keep practicing.

Zig Ziglar, the grandfather of motivation, once said, "People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing—that's why we recommend it daily." Similarly, proper mental imagery and self-talk are daily requirements. They will keep you focused and moving toward your goals. Self-talk—or your inner thinking about yourself—is the most powerful dialogue you will ever hear. What you say to yourself is the truth to your subconscious mind, and what you consider the truth shapes your beliefs and, ultimately, your actions. This is why positive affirmations are so powerful.

Recognize that your current reality is merely a product of the past and that success is a process rather than an event. This process begins with you envisioning having all of the prospects you desire, experiencing customers enjoying your presentations, and enjoying an abundance of sales as a result. As you imagine everything going your way, you will develop into the person in your perfect dream. Your life will correspond to this vision not because of providence but because you will be working hard to turn your vision into reality. By envisioning your perfect reality and practicing strategies to achieve success every day, you will improve not only your sales performance but your quality of life.

Cultivating the "It" Factor

By the time I became a division president for a production home builder, I could easily distinguish between sales associates who were controlling their lives with constructive beliefs and positive thoughts and those who were not. My vice presidents and I said the former group had the "it" factor. As a matter of fact, I would conduct all second interviews of sales associate applicants to determine whether they had "it" because

whenever we hired an associate with “it,” they would have superior results compared with other associates. These people believe that failure is not an option and that they control whether they will be successful or not. They have a burning desire to achieve their goals, and they don’t allow their current circumstances to interfere with their ultimate success. They know they can create better circumstances. Do you have the “it” factor?

Like me, you are empowered to create your reality. But in order to be successful, you must first define what success means to you. What do you want from life? What do

you want to accomplish in your career? Do you want to outpace the market? Do you want to always outperform your competitors? You can do these things and more, regardless of housing economics. Your own thoughts, beliefs, and actions contribute more to your success or failure than the housing market or your competitors do. Therefore, train your mind to create success-oriented thoughts and those thoughts will birth beliefs that will help you achieve your heart’s desires. Some scientists believe that humans use only about 10% of our brain’s capacity. Think of what you could achieve if you had the ability to use 100% of your brain’s capacity! Most of your brain’s capacity is in the subconscious mind, which has power way beyond what most of us realize. Recognize this power and learn how to use it.

Have you ever felt as if you were on a roll and everything was going your way? Does it ever occur to you that those who have (money, power, success, happiness, health, love) only seem to get more? On the other hand, have you known people who never seem to get a break—who always seem like they have a cloud over their head? Ultimately, we tend to get more of whatever is going on in our lives, whether it is positive or negative. When you understand why this is true, you will be able to change your circumstances from being negative to mostly positive.

Your life reflects your beliefs. You shape those beliefs by interpreting what you observe every day. In other words, if you observe everything going your way, you tend to believe that everything goes your way, and

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you draw positive people, situations, and things toward you. If, on the other hand, you never seem to have enough (money, power, success, happiness, health, love), then you may begin to believe that you will

“To sit back and let fate play its hand out and never influence it is not the way man was meant to operate.”

—JOHN GLENN
Astronaut

never have enough, and you probably won't because your negative attitude will attract more negativity into your life.

The awesome reality is that you already have this power of influence. You are using this power now. It is determining the outcomes of your life. So, if your present reality or circumstances are not what you desire, then you are not using it effectively. Perhaps you are not even conscious that you have this power and are using it right now.

Your thoughts create your beliefs which continually shape the person that you are. In due course, your expectations create actions and circumstances that bring about a result consistent with your thoughts every time. In other words, your outer world and your inner thoughts are one. Therefore, everything will not go your way if you are always in a bad mood. Similarly, there is no way for everything to result in failure when you're in a great mood. Your outer world will harmonize with the way you feel (or your inner world). Have you ever had a day where everything went your way? Did you feel great because everything went your way? Or, did everything go your way because you felt great? While we may tend to believe the former, the latter is the more likely explanation. The circumstances or situations that happen *to* you are really occurring *because* of you.

Take body weight. Your weight today is a result of your actions of the recent past or, perhaps, recurring behavior over a long period of time. However, if you decide today that you are going to lose weight, and you decide that failure is not an option, you already have changed your thoughts in a way to help you reach your goal of losing weight. You can act on these thoughts to change your food intake, exercise

regimen, and other practices that ultimately will result in weight loss. However, if you continue to believe that you won't lose weight then you will probably not behave any differently and your weight will remain the same.

Understand that hoping for a result is different from being certain that something will happen. If you say, “I'll try to lose weight” or “I'll give it a shot,” you probably won't reach your goal because you don't believe that you can. Instead, you must have certain faith in the desired result. When you decide that you will accomplish your goal to lose weight and know that nothing will prevent you from achieving it, when you expect a result as sure as the Sun rising in the morning, then you will attain it. This same principle can be applied in every aspect of your life.

You ensure success by your beliefs, which govern your behavior day to day. Tom Hopkins, a bestselling author and sales trainer urges people to, “fake it, 'til you make it.”³ In other words, every day you are creating your own reality. You are an actor in a play that you write, direct, and will review. By understanding this basic principle, you design your own reality and, therefore, determine whether you succeed or fail.

In sales, your beliefs can construct a positive outcome or destroy any possibility of success. For example, if you're selling in a community that you believe is in a less desirable part of town, you may focus on the drawbacks of the surrounding neighborhoods and then begin to believe the negative script that you have created. A prospect who visits your sales office has not ruled out the location, obviously, but you will communicate your doubts to them even if you don't realize you are doing it.

Instead, by focusing on the community's assets—its proximity to downtown offices, cultural amenities, and shopping—benefits that none of your competitors offer, you can build rapport with prospects who want the convenience that only your neighborhood has. Focusing on the benefits of your community will result in more sales.

“ . . . The brain and nervous system constitute a marvelous built-in automatic guidance system which works for you as a ‘success mechanism,’ or against you as a ‘failure mechanism,’ depending on how ‘YOU,’ the operator operate it and the goals you set for it.”⁴

—DR. MAXWELL MALTZ
Author, Psycho-Cybernetics

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Let's relate inconsistency between thoughts and desires to new homes sales. Attaining your sales goal will be impossible if you keep focusing on the bad market, or if you keep thinking that your sales goal is unachievable. Your negative thoughts sap your motivation to prospect for buyers or brainstorm creative solutions to low conversion rates. However, when your belief says "Yes, I can!" you will attract customers with the positive attitude and creative ideas that emanate from that belief.

Six Daily Steps

Repeat the following steps daily to create an attitude of success and ensure that you have the "it" factor:

Set goals. Define your goals, write them down, and review them daily. How much money do you desire? How many sales and closings do you need to have to achieve your financial goal? What is your timeline to achieve this goal?

Be proactive. Recognize that all circumstances start with you. You can no longer blame or credit anyone other than yourself for your current circumstances. Eliminate the "glass half empty" philosophy and always find the best in everything and everyone.

Control your thoughts. Do not allow disempowering thoughts to linger. Immediately supplant a disempowering thought with one that is empowering. If you begin to think that because the market is slow and this is not home-buying season and you probably won't sell anything this weekend, immediately change that thought. Although these negative circumstances exist, some people are still buying homes. You will meet some of these buyers, and they will purchase a home from you. Isn't that a much more empowering thought? You must believe that success is guaranteed.

Visualize success. See yourself enjoying the success you've attained by achieving the goals you've set. Visualize the home you live in, the car you drive, the clothes you wear, the awards you receive, and the loving relationships that surround you. See yourself at a company event being honored for the top sales award. See yourself at a charity auction making a significant donation to your favorite cause. See yourself at a dinner party in your new home with your new car in the driveway.

Follow a plan. Set systems in place to ensure that you do the most important things first, then be disciplined and follow them. Spend your

time and money only on things that give you the desired return. For example, obtain the education you need and get the Certified New Home Sales Professional or Member of the Institute for Residential Marketing designation that you know will help you to attain your goals. Don't procrastinate. There is no better time to do it than now.

Repeat affirming words. Make daily affirmations a part of your routine and your vocabulary. Add at least 5 of your own affirmations to the following list and repeat them aloud each morning and night:

1. I love my work.
2. I am extremely efficient and get more done in less time than most people.
3. I follow through with tasks and take responsibility.
4. I own my failures and my accomplishments.
5. I make a difference.
6. It feels great when I do my job well.
7. I am passionate in my work and the money naturally follows.
8. I am grateful for my success.
9. I always work with and for wonderful people.
10. There are no limitations to what I can accomplish.
11. My thoughts control my beliefs and my beliefs create my destiny.
12. I can be what I decide to be.

Worksheet 1.1 is a tool to help you control your thoughts and beliefs (*see* Appendix). On the blank lines, write your thoughts, visions, and affirmations. Complete this form and read it daily, at least once in the morning and once in the evening. Read it just before you go to sleep so your subconscious mind can continue to focus upon these thoughts and visions all night long.

By understanding the power of positive thinking, you can supplant any negative situation with a positive one. You can have abundance instead of poverty, wisdom instead of ignorance, pleasure instead of pain, and freedom instead of oppression. You can attract anything that you desire and which you have the discipline to pursue. Be open to possibilities. Inspired thought, gut feeling, and intuition can help you discern opportunity. Then, when opportunity knocks, you must open the door.

