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The ‘Virtuous Cycle’: How to Create Compounding Successes

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In their careers, people often believe they can achieve happiness (https://www.success.com/4-ways-to-plan-your-happiness/), once they’ve attained success. But would you believe research shows that’s actually backward? When we pursue happiness, we are more likely to become successful.

The impact you can have on others works in the same way. Some people think that once they're really successful, once they're superstars, they can start giving back to their communities or shining their light on others on their teams. The research shows this view, too, is directionally wrong.

Reaching your greatest potential (<https://www.success.com/continually-reach-your-potential/>) doesn't operate in a single direction at all. Instead, it works as a positive feedback loop whereby successes among those around us create a cascade of compounding successes, what I call a "virtuous cycle."

We've all heard the term vicious cycle used to describe what happens when negative events cascade and compound. An employee doesn't like her job, so she becomes disengaged, which makes her do poorly at work, which makes her dislike her job even more. A great home run hitter strikes out three times in a game, loses confidence and becomes timid with his swing, which leads to more strikeouts the next game and so forth.

Consider the virtuous alternative. A virtuous cycle is an upward spiral of potential. With each success you garner more resources which, in turn, allow you to achieve greater and greater successes. Just as a vicious cycle compounds the negative, a virtuous cycle compounds the positive (<https://www.success.com/15-positive-affirmations-for-an-awesome-day/>), making future progress easier and easier.

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For example: A sales leader shares the praise for her sales success with one of her support team members, which makes that member feel more invested—which leads to greater sales success for the leader and in turn to more success and praise. An overworked manager trusts

his assistant enough to delegate an important task; this makes the assistant feel trusted, which leads him to knock it out of the park on the project, thereby earning more trust from the manager.

Did you notice that the vicious cycles, the downward spirals, occurred when the individuals attempted to go it alone? If the employee who didn't like her job would work on connecting deeper with co-workers, she could be inspired to perform better. If the struggling home-run hitter asked out of the starting lineup for a day of rest or work in the batting cages (giving his rookie teammate a chance to shine), the entire team could benefit.

In the virtuous cycle, we often work together (<https://www.success.com/simon-sinek-on-how-we-are-better-together/>). We create opportunities for others and recognize them for their contributions.

When we commit to making others better, there is no limit to what we can accomplish both individually and collectively.

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