9 Things You Simply Must Do to Succeed in Love and Life:
A Psychologist Learns from His Patients What Really Works and What Doesn't

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Many years of counseling have enabled Dr. Henry Cloud to observe people trying to work out the most important issues of life: relationships, career, fulfillment, meaning, pain, hurt, loss, despair, and addictions. If we sincerely want to "get life right" and quit repeating the same mistakes over and over again, 9 Things You Simply Must Do provides the practical guidance we need to live life to its fullest . . . every moment.

My Synopsis:

This was a great read, one that had been sitting on my bookshelf unread far too long. The true challenge is understanding and application of the 9 Things in your everyday life, something that I’m still working through. Love the tie-in from a psychological standpoint, as it has already helped me in building relationships in the business world, and at home. I’m growing into a déjà vu person, but I’ve got a ways to get there. I’d recommend you join me on the journey!
9 Things You Simply Must Do to Succeed in Love and Life
A Psychologist Probes the Mystery of Why Some Lives Really Work and Others Don't

p.2 ...certain kinds of people, given certain circumstances, always face and resolve situations in the same way.
p.4 ...these people are getting from life what they had decided they wanted.
p.5 People who found what they were looking for in life seemed to do a certain set of things in common.
p.9 “Take care to get what you like, or you will be forced to like what you get.” – George Bernard Shaw
p.11 ...just because you do not have it all finished in terms of your personal growth does not mean that you cannot learn how to better handle life while you are getting there.
p.11 Growth is not only about getting healthy but about learning ways of living as well.
p.15 Success is...about the principles of life and wisdom that transcend any of our own abilities or lack thereof.
p.17 “Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.” – Proverbs 4:13
p.19 Principle #1: Dig It Up
p.19 Choice of attention – to pay attention to this and ignore that – is to the inner life what choice of action is to the outer. In both cases, a man is responsible for his choice and must accept the consequences, whatever they may be.” – W.H. Auden
p.22 The invisible world is always where the visible originates.
p.25 ...life comes from the inside.
p.25 To make a successful life, the déjà vu person:
• Becomes aware of his dreams, desires, talents, and other treasures of his soul.
• Listens to them and values them as life itself
• Takes steps to develop them, beginning in very small ways
• Seeks coaching and help to make them grow
• Does not care as much about his results as his essence, but just continues to express them wherever he can
p.26 ...the reality of the life we see and live on the outside is one that emerges from the inside, from our hearts, minds, and souls.
p.28 There is no shortage of things in life that can cause you to bury your heart and soul.
p.31 We are given a heart full of treasure and talent, feelings and desires...potential realities. God has granted to us a heart, mind, and soul full of potential realities for whatever our situation might be.
p.31 It is our job to dig up whatever potential we have...then to invest it and see it grow.
p.32 Those who allow fear to keep them from stepping out, not only fail to increase what they have, they actually lose it.
p.32 Those who succeed in life cannot ignore their hearts, minds, and souls.
“Above all else, guard your heart, for it’s the wellspring of life.” Proverbs 4:23

Success and failure alike arise from what is going on inside and the wise person is one who pays attention.

No matter what a person is trying to accomplish, if he is walking around with unresolved matters of the heart, his goals will be negatively affected.

...every time he faces one of those sicknesses in the heart, something better and larger emerges.

You are growing a garden in your heart; some things you wish to increase, and others you need to weed out.

There is very little growth and reward in life without taking risks.

Avoidance of risk is the greatest risk of all.

Chasing fantasies in your heart may be a way of avoiding the real treasures that are there.

Don't confuse envy with desire.

One of the worst things you can die with is potential. Die with failures before you die with potential.

**Principle #2: Pull the Tooth**

Successful people do not hang on to bad stuff for long.

You may be involved with things that are not bad in and of themselves but that distract you from those deepest desires in your heart or the most important things in life.

Even though it may not be a bad thing in itself, it may not be beneficial.

If you know that investing more time toward reaching a solution is never going to help, then it is time to pull the plug and move on.

You can find out if something is fixable only by getting busy and fixing it.

Why do we stop doing what is so natural?

Many people live lives that do not soar because they do not deal with negative drains.

...if the problem is not going to be resolved, you have to let it go and put it behind you.

One of the toughest things to figure out is when to let go of something that is important to you.

...hope means investing time and energy toward results that you have a solid reason to believe can be achieved.

New things that actually have hope for the future cannot appear until you get rid of what was taking up the space that the new thing needs.

...I just don't do any deal or work with anyone when the cringe factor is involved.

What is the cringe factor? ...the big gulp you would have to take to go forward.
Learn to listen to that little voice inside that tells you things like:

- This doesn't quite feel right.
- I really don't feel comfortable doing this or agreeing to do this.
- This is not what I really want.
- I don't like what I am agreeing to.
- This violates an important value.
- I am going to resent this tomorrow.
- I am going to resent this for a long time.
- I wish this were not happening.
- This feels the same as the last time.

“A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.” Proverbs 22:3

When your senses tell you that something is wrong, there is a reason you feel that way.

Principle 3: Play the Movie

Déjà vu people rarely take any action without considering its future implications.

We've seen that we must dig up and invest our talents, and move past the negative.

Sowing and reaping is much bigger than the immediate connection between what I am doing now and what will occur immediately following.

What will happen in the end is the question the wise person seeks to answer.

Any one thing you do is only a scene in a larger movie. To understand that action, you have to play it out all the way to the end of the movie.

Play now, pay later. Pay now, play later.

The movie is not optional, but where its plotline goes is.

We act as if the present is all there is; we forget that the future is going to come either way.

By avoiding the immediate discomfort, you also sign up for the negative consequence residing within the future reality.

Don't borrow trouble from tomorrow by worrying.

Big wins are usually a collection of very small steps.

Principle #4: Do Something

...if you don't like the way things are, then it is up to you to do something.

...I believe that is what people who succeed do. They do something instead of nothing.

What can I do to make things better?

Are you driving your life, or just along for the ride?

If they (proactive people) want a situation to be better, they see themselves as part of the solution, or at least as a catalyst to get it going.

Winners take the cards they are dealt and play them well.

We have to do our part while others are doing their part to help us.
“No man is free who is not master of himself.” – Epictetus

...when you are burying yourself in the ground, not making your move, time will pass with absolutely nothing happening.

We must pray, he says, and we must also act.

“Ask God's blessing on your work, but don't ask him to do it for you.” – Dame Flora Robson

**Principle #5: Act Like an Ant**

“When you have a great and difficult task, something perhaps almost impossible, if you only work a little at a time, every day a little, suddenly the work will finish itself.” – Isak Dineson

“Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs.” – Henry Ford

We don't tend to see such things in our own lives.

They achieved their goals by taking tiny steps over time.

Weight comes from life, not the other way around.

Well, you might want it now, but that does not make you ready now.

...steps in a successful plan...each had three characteristics in common: small, simple, and good.

She does not judge how she is doing by the good. She judges by whether or not she is doing the small things...until you begin to value the little steps and focus on them, not the big goal, you will always get discouraged and give up.

All or nothing thinking keeps people stuck in destructive ruts.

Growth too small even to notice blossoms into one of the most beautiful creations in the world.

Wanting it all keeps you from having any.

The shortcut is always the longest path.

Wanting it now keeps you from having it.

Life is what happens to us while we are making other plans.

**Principle 6: Hate Well**

Certain things, if not seen as lovely or detestable, are not being correctly seen at all.

Hate gives us a window into people's makeup in the same way that love does.

Character is in part formed by what we hate, because we move to be different from whatever that is.

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.” – Romans 12:9

...hate in a way that solves problems as opposed to creating them.

Successful people move against the problem, and show love and respect to the person at the same time.

Go hard on the issue, go soft on the person.

“A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.” – Proverbs 15:18

Déjà vu people tend to address the real toxins of life in specific, effective ways that face the issues and respect the persons involved.

...to not elevate small things to the same level as the important things.
Negative emotions are of little value when it comes to solving problems.

Make your values intentional.

**Principle #7: Don't Play Fair**

“The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried.” – G.K. Chesterton

If I make a mistake, I want you to help me, not get back at me.

If you have more ability than he, then you have more responsibility to make it better.

Give back better than you are given.

Instead of lowering yourself to their level, you elevate them to yours.

Unmet needs create frustration, and you cannot be helpful to someone else when you need something from him or her.

The high road that leads to payoff is always the one that begins with sacrifice.

You cannot help another if you are deprived of the thing you need.

His empathy had taken her to a higher level.

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” – Proverbs 15:1

Not giving others what they deserve is a big part of not playing fair.

Barking is answered with kindness.

...the higher road is more effective in accomplishing their goal.

...we cannot require maturity from the other person until we are being mature from our side first.

...it is not a good thing to water a plant that you do not want.

Revenge is for immature people.

**Principle #8: Be Humble**

“Pride is concerned with who is right. Humility is concerned with what is right.” – Ezra Taft Benson

Humility is not having a need to be more than you are.

Humility always wins. It is the winner's advantage.

...even very successful people go through loss, failure, and crisis.

Successful people show kindness, understanding, and help to others who fail.

Successful people are not derailed by their own failures; they accept them as a normal part of the process.

Truly successful people are givers, period.

...you will always need the support of other people to accomplish whatever you do in life.

People who win in life do not condemn themselves from failure; they accept it.

Self-confidence and belief in yourself comes from accepting flaws and mistakes and realizing that you can go forward and grow past them, and that you can learn from them.

...he doesn't know how to deal with failure. He things he is above it.

People who think they have it all together are infected with a terrible sickness...
They (déjà vu people) admit it quickly when they are wrong.
They (déjà vu people) receive correction and confrontation from others well.
We cannot grow and learn if we cannot admit our mistakes.
...learn the way of humility. When you do, not only will you succeed more, but you will also keep your success as well.
The moment you think some task or position in life is beneath you, take a time out.
Use failure as a teach and a friend.
Principle #9: Upset the Right People
“I cannot give you the formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure, which is try to please everybody.” – Herbert Bayard Swope
Déjà vu people do not make decisions based on the fear of other people's reactions.
They (déjà vu people) decide to do what is right first and deal with the fall out second.
They (people) have kept someone happy, but they have lost their own way.
What you should do, and what someone's response is going to be, are two very different issues.
There is a direct correlation with people who are out of control in their lives and their hatred of the word no.
If you let their (other people's) anger decide your course of action for you – whether to give or not to give – then you have just trained them in how to get what they want out of you.
If you are resetting your course based on the fact that someone might get angry with you, you have chosen a flimsy foundation upon which to make a decision.
(Successful people) are not held hostage by anger.
Just because the patient screams does not keep the doctor from administering the shot.
(Déjà vu people) go against the odds if the odds are against what is right. They are willing to be the odd one, risking loss of approval in order to do the right thing.
Do not try to avoid upsetting people; just make sure that you are upsetting the right ones.
“So do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”
– Matthew 6: 31-34
God puts people in our lives who show us the way.
God is there to help us if we ask him.
He not only helps us directly, he gives us others to help as well.
There are truths and principles, ways as we have called them, that are the ways he designed life to work.
As we practice those ways, good things are given.
p. 238-245 Twelve Steps to Applying the Nine Things

1. Do not go it alone
2. Receive wisdom
3. Receive feedback and correction
4. Find models
5. Review your patterns
6. Deal with impediments
7. Add structure
8. Practice, practice, practice, and fail
9. Change your beliefs
10. Quarantine your weakness
11. Put your vision – goals on paper
12. Pray, pray, pray

p.239 ...none of us has anything that was not given to us in some form or fashion\n
p.240 “Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.” –Proverbs 4:7

p.240 ...if you had it all together, you would already be there.

p.240 We cannot easily do what we have never seen done.

p.241 Do not allow past patterns of failing to repeat themselves.

p.243 Growth is a process. Give up your demand to have it all together right now.

p.244 You must learn your triggers and make sure you are protected from them.

p.244 If you have no plan or goals to get you somewhere, you will end up nowhere.

p.245 Structured goals tend to turn themselves into reality when they are written down and accounted for.

p.245 Jesus said that the one who asks, seeks, and knocks will receive.

p.246 Do not see success in love or life as a goal that you cannot attain or a prize only for special or lucky people.