

# WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU?

by Glenn Williams



Like skipping to the end of a good book to find out what happens, imagine you are able to fast-forward to the last chapter of your life. Looking back over the course of your existence – the choices you made, your patterns of behavior, the quality of your relationships - would you consider it a success? How would you measure or define it? It's similar to that rather **confronting question** posed by former Harvard professor, Clayton Christensen - *"how will you measure your life?"*

For many leaders, "being successful" often comes at a cost in other important areas of life – family and important relationships, health, peace. There is the challenge of managing competing priorities. *How do I meet the needs of the job as well as the needs of my family? How do I gain fulfillment from both achievements and relationships when both require time, effort, and presence?*

There isn't a simple answer when it comes to the question of what makes a leader - or a life - successful, as success is unique to each individual and means different things to different people. But for now, what if we broadly defined success as being able to achieve your goals in more than just one area of your life? That you don't have to resign yourself to the belief that success in one area must come at a cost in others.

Whatever your definition of success, the important question is, are you on a trajectory to achieving it? And what are you potentially losing in its pursuit?

## The 5 Leadership Anchors™

From research and our work with leaders over the last ten years, we identified some anchor points that, when aligned in a leader's life, provided great clarity, momentum and a renewed commitment to achieving their goals. We call these The 5 Leadership Anchors. They are foundational for creating sustainable success, not just over the course of your career, but also your life.

Adopting these leadership anchors will give you greater capacity to lead yourself, your team, and your organization toward success, without sacrificing what's important.

### 1. Relationships

*Leadership never occurs in isolation; it is always in the context of relationships*



The quality of the relationships in your world, both inside and outside of work, is the foundation on which good leadership is built. More than having good 'relationship building skills', leaders that *intentionally build and participate* in meaningful relationships have more relational currency to draw from when it's most needed. The word "currency" is used, because the reality is we transact in relationships every day, some better than others. Effectively managing up and down, increasing staff engagement, empowering collaboration, and building organizational trust is fostered through quality relationships. The better the quality of relationships outside of work, the better the capacity to build strong work relationships. Our ability to lead and influence others declines when this anchor is missing.

## 2. Motivational Drivers

Everybody is motivated by something – status, money, what they own, their reputation, or having a

significant impact on the world. **Success is highly personal** and is directly related to each individual's degree of motivation and performance.

To achieve their goals, personally, professionally and on an organizational level, leaders must understand what motivates them, while having an acute appreciation for the **motivational drivers** of those they lead.

While motivation is an individual metric, understanding the drivers of each member of your team and ensuring they are aligned to the organization's vision and objectives is key to achieving success.

### 3. Character

*"The quest for leadership excellence is based more on character than charisma."*

A leader's value code – their intrinsic values and principles – guides decision-making and informs their behavior.

By understanding who you are, what you stand for and what lines you are not willing to cross, you build a resilient character that holds firm under the pressure to perform. More than knowing *what* your values are, having a deep understanding of *how important* those values are to your definition of success will guide your personal and professional choices – especially when tempted by opportunities that require you to sacrifice your principles.

Ultimately, a leader's value code is about how you want to be recognized and **what you will be known for.**

### 4. Personal Scripts

Every person enters adulthood with thought processes and behaviors learned and adopted from childhood. Neither right nor wrong, these 'scripts' inform our decisions. The key question is, *do the scripts I've developed over the course of my life serve me, my team, or my organization effectively, or is my performance or leadership compromised by limiting beliefs and assumptions?* For example, because I've been hurt and disappointed by others in the past, does this create a script in my life that tells me not to trust others, and that if I need something done, then I'm the better person to do it?



By understanding the lenses through which leaders make decisions, they are empowered to write a different leadership narrative – one that produces far more effective results.

## 5. A Leader's Trajectory

*When goals compete against each other, nobody wins.*

Conflicting goals reduce the effectiveness of a leader's competence as they struggle to resolve the conflicts that occur between their business goals, professional goals, and personal goals. These conflicts often create stress and reduce a leader's energy and capacity to focus on what is needed most. When a leader aligns their efforts around the previous four anchors, they can set strategic and

meaningful goals that create sustainable success.

Gaining insight and clarity into your relationships, what drives you to succeed and the scripts through which you make decisions, empowers you to change the trajectory of your organization and your team. Importantly, it starts with you.

## **What's the bottom line?**

How would you know if you're successful? The 5 Leadership Anchors provide you with a framework to align your efforts around what's most important, empowering you to lead more effectively, and meaningfully, in both work and life.

---

### References

- <sup>1</sup> Sankar, Y. (2003). Character Not Charisma is the Critical Measure of Leadership Excellence. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*. (102)