

In Pursuit of Success: Overcoming Underachievement: A Book Especially for Teachers, Parents and Students

Len Restall

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In Pursuit of Success is an insightful work that's filled with helpful learning strategies for teachers, parents, and students.

Len Restall's accessible *In Pursuit of Success* suggests practical means of overcoming tendencies toward underachievement.

Written especially for teachers, parents, and students, the book includes information and observations about individual learning types; it centers personal motivation as a starting point for success and suggests five steps toward achievement. It opens this work with thought-provoking questions about why some people are more successful than others, and about what can be done to improve overall rates of success. Its approach both realistic and conversational, the book expresses empathy when it comes to the complications involved in underachievement, recognizing that success does not happen overnight.

The book's sound advice and helpful tips cover thinking about personal achievements without drawing comparisons to others and conceiving of success as a possible outcome. Its points are reinforced with quotes from well-known figures, including Henry Ford, who believed that attitudes about potential successes determine whether achieving goals is possible. Albert Einstein is also brought up as a model for persisting, despite others' assessments of his "fanciful and irrelevant" dissertation; Helen Keller is present for having learned to read Braille, and for attending college despite her challenges.

The book is also backed by statistics, including international studies that identify the number of students with learning challenges; such findings support expressed concerns about the problem of underachievement. A detailed discussion of learning behavior issues, and the ways these further hamper success, is also included, while an inquiry into what the average person remembers from what they read, hear, see, and do is of particular interest.

The book is illuminating as it introduces three learning styles—kinesthetic, auditory, and visual. These are returned to, and expanded upon, throughout the text, which emphasizes matching students' learning styles with teaching methods as a key to unlocking greater achievement. Notes at the end cover the characteristics of individual learning types in greater detail, including who works better in the morning, and who relates better to people versus the ideas.

The book articulates solutions in logical ways. It suggests motivational strategies and includes the specific steps that are necessary; it includes questionnaires and goal-setting sheets as action-oriented management tools.

Supplementary notes emphasize the importance of goals being specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic.

Key points are highlighted for emphasis throughout, including in boxes at the beginning of each chapter that introduce core principles. Bulleted lists help to consolidate and reinforce central points, while diagrams distill information well and prove useful in understanding concepts like the factors that impact underachievement.

Most useful for teachers, *In Pursuit of Success* is an insightful work that's filled with helpful learning strategies for parents and underachieving students.

ANDREA HAMMER (April 22, 2020)

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