



The 3 Simple Truths



By Steve Dailey

Dedicated to Sam

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Chapter One - The First Simple Truth	7
Chapter Two - The Second Simple Truth	10
Chapter Three - The Third Simple Truth	14
Conclusion	21
Resources	23



Introduction

Success in life: it's an enticing ideal. There's little doubt that its pursuit is an ever-present aspiration for most of us. Certainly there are moments we are less focused on what we are actually doing about it, but the notion of living a successful life – however it's defined for you – lures us persistently with a faint, insistent call.

And as life spins along, the urgency to “get it done” heightens – doesn't it? Age and wisdom sharply reveal that time for mistakes, trials and errors, and do-overs is waning while the gap between what we want and where we are gets more real. Stakes are higher and time shorter.

At times we might have flashes of insight from lessons learned in life that confirms we really are on track for all that has eluded us so far. But not uncommon, we also abruptly realize those insights were really just head-fakes, false affirmations; and we are reminded how much we don't know about what we don't know about the “secrets” to success.

Meanwhile – as though we aren't thrown off balance enough in our search for certainty – life's priorities are shuffling faster than cards in a dealer's hand at a Las Vegas casino. There are the now-normal uncertainties of economic peaks and valleys. Divisive political agendas constantly changing the rules by which we live. Aging parents require unexpected time or relocation. Adult children lose their way on the trip out the door to their *own* lives. The little aches and pains that were once inconveniences are now health issues demanding attention. And more of the same comes at us each day as we try to manage with what seems to be less time in a day, shrinking bank accounts, and dwindling energy reserves.

We are not simply riding a roller coaster; we are navigating Class V rapids in a leaky raft with one oar and the ride doesn't seem to have an exit ramp. It takes courage, tenacity, endurance, hustle, drive, and commitment... just to get out of bed in the morning, let alone pursue success!

So in an attempt to answer our insatiable and sometimes desperate search for finding what it takes to be successful – and above all making sense of it – our marketplace has gladly responded. We are seduced by a saturation of self-help books, cleverly titled websites, weekend endurance seminars, coal-walking workshops, television gurus and exclusive social media communities. The common theme is that something has been held from us – that access to all that we could ever imagine is contained in...*wait for it*...a secret power formula just released that boosts hormones or an investment strategy that until now only a chosen few knew about. In fact, if we claim to be really serious about climbing that proverbial mountain to seek the true answer, and we order now for only \$99.95, we can get the whole solution on a DVD that comes with a handy tote bag.

Seriously. If the answer to success in life or business or relationships is really found in any one of these secret-sauce solutions, why are we still searching? Why do we keep buying, signing up and looking for more? Why does it seem like we still don't have the answer?

I'm Steve Dailey. I'm a dad, a husband, and a business owner – but mostly just a regular guy and probably as much of one of those insatiable achievement seekers as any of us. I've done the seminars, read the books and sat at the feet of gurus. I've also lived well past a half century and all that comes with participating in what we now know is one of the most transitional times in the history of the world.

We have grown up expecting – and enjoying – the excitement of it all, haven't we? Our instinctually competitive reflexes have lured us into the incessant pursuit of "*more*"...more than our neighbor, more than last year, more than we believed before, more of everything and

more than enough. Meanwhile many of us engaging in well-meaning entrepreneurialism have spawned the Internet, advanced the advent of fast food, and built new ways of getting things done faster and presumably better – all contributing to shaping an expectation that life is normal only at light speed. God forbid we simply go at a walking pace.

So we have more of everything, including speed and thinking that we are getting closer to nirvana – but we still don't feel we've arrived at a successful life...perhaps even spun out away from it's orbit. And why is that?

Well, it might be because we stepped over the obvious answer on our way to hurry up and get more.

To sort it all out, consider what I call "*The 3 Simple Truths*". These are each facts of life that you already know and I'm sure you'll readily recognize. These "Truths" represent a blinding flash of clarity about how we navigate life that will cause you to suddenly see everything you do, every effort toward success, even every moment of every day in a different light that builds on itself toward all your aspirations and intentions.

They ain't fancy, but watch: they make perfect sense. They can be applied to every area of life, and as you reflect on your journey in life up to now you will realize that anything of any significance that you have ever accomplished, attained or acclaimed can be tracked back to one or more of *The 3 Simple Truths*.



Chapter One

The First Simple Truth

The first Simple Truth is this: *Something is Better Than Nothing*.

As I warned – you already know this. But what I am about to reveal for you may give you new eyes. This simple paradigm is something we all claim to know; yet denial of this tiny truth is the root of almost all procrastination, stagnation and regret.

Now think about it; have you ever procrastinated, felt stalled or stagnated, experienced regret for not taking action or taking advantage of opportunity only to “wait for the next time”? Of course! Those dark feelings are all too familiar to all of us.

But why do we wait, hesitate, and delay only to wish we wouldn't have? We rationalize that we aren't quite ready to give a thing our “fullest attention”. Or when we have a little time, but not a lot of time, we think the thing should wait for a better time. We've bought the unproven notion that if we give it a go at another time we will be more able to make an impact or do it better or create a more heroic result. Somewhere we learn the false lesson that doing a little is not nearly as good as doing a lot. Yet we're trapped because doing a lot takes more time or energy than we have right now – doesn't it? “So certainly we need to take a bit more time to get more ready for the bigger thing”, we say. We believe that more is really better – because, remember, “*more*” is how we have learned to define success.

But more isn't more.

The real truth is that “something” – anything – is more than before; you know...when there was *nothing*. Waiting doesn’t open the door to “the more” we think we want – waiting only makes pursuit of what we want an even more daunting task. But something – anything – is more than “*the nothing*” that was there when you were standing at that threshold of taking the first, small, simple step...always. It turns out that *something* is a rocket ship to most everything of value.

Look at the basics of life that we hold most precious: love, health, money, time itself... certainly something of any of these essentials is better than nothing, especially at a moment when we are deficit of any one of them. Yet when we see the opportunity to enrich love and relationships, enhance our health and longevity, acquire greater wealth or spend time on things more fulfilling or gratifying we tend to squander or procrastinate those opportunities, only to wait to be more ready or have more information or get more equipped or wait for a “better time” so that we can finally justify taking action.

It’s easy to get seduced by the thinking that if you don’t go for the whole enchilada it somehow is a weak compromise. We believe the t-shirt that declares “*go big or go home*” is a strategy for success. But let’s face it: mustering “going big” all the time is an exhausting proposition. Nobody *really* does that. Certainly there are moments to bring all we’ve got – but in the everyday scheme of life it’s the little things that make the big things really happen. Life’s true richness happens in moments.

Something is truly better than nothing.

Take the last precious minutes of a loved one’s life? Five minutes can be an eternity. Longing for the feeling of being deeply appreciated or acknowledged? A small compliment can absolutely bring the sun out. How about money? When your pockets are empty and you are hungry – a few coins are certainly better than none.

So how this applies to success and achievement in life is very profound. Every single success in any venue, regardless of the person involved or the endeavor they pursued...every single time they achieved what they did it was because they started with *something*, immediately erasing the *nothing* that was there just a moment before.

It was one step or one dollar or one smile or one connection or one idea or one decision... and then one action. It was *some-thing* that was enough – and it was much, much better than *no-thing*. *Something is better than nothing* defeats procrastination, sparks the miracle, literally sources endurance and profoundly overwhelms inertia.

And what about you? Is there an intention, a relationship, an ambition, or a dream that rests idle because you won't **do** *some-thing*? What do you want, where are you going and what achievements are you pursuing...and can anyone tell what you're up to based on the *some-things* that are visible around you?

Is there a relationship in your life that is stalled, stagnant or sick? Heal it, fix it, recover it with one word, one card, one phone call, one hug.

Is there something about your health or level of fitness that haunts you daily as insufficient, ill-equipped, or broken? One day of healthier eating, one walk around the block, one trip to the doctor to find the truth, one invitation to a friend to join you in one new commitment to take really great care of yourself one day a week, or one week of a month, or one month of a year. "One" is always on the way to "the many" that turn into a lifetime. *Something is better than nothing* and everything counts.

For you, and those most important yearnings that keep you in pursuit of your own magic answer to success and fulfillment, it is very simple: its one step or one dollar or one smile or one connection or one idea or one decision...and then one action. *Something is better than nothing*. Always.



Chapter Two

The Second Simple Truth

The second Simple Truth is: *Averages Count.*

The “big events” in life grandstand front and center in our day-to-day experience. Hard to ignore, over-hyped and cleverly promoted they compel us to stay glued to stories of those that win big. We love to watch and commentate on the heroic acclaim of overnight rags to riches stories. We align with the championship team so we can vicariously celebrate winning by association. We lean in to the news of the latest lotto millionaire, hoping that we’ll be next. We buy the book and watch the movie of the underdog-turned-hero, looking for resemblances in our own under-expressed characteristics that are privately hiding in the image of who we want to be.

And as a result don’t we also always put more hope in the home run; you know, the big sale, the big stock hit, the amazing 2-week weight loss program, the love-at-first sight romance? And we do this instead of embracing the other mundane alternative: patiently picking our way through all of the tedious one hit, stepping-stone struggles to minor achievements and unheralded brick-upon-brick efforts that are also, not so coincidentally, woven in among valleys, lows, shortfalls and turning points.

Let’s face it; it’s much more enticing and more attractive to wish for and dream of the big wins than it is to endure all the tiny ones that nobody notices.

But here's the newsflash: The true magic of life is primarily revealed in the average of the seemingly insignificant. You could even say that the *average of all the averages* creates the world, as we know it.

Think about it. The big things, the little things, the amazing things, the subtle things – they all sum up to make an average. And an amazing average at that.

Have you ever studied a field of wild flowers? From steps away it is an exploding palette of brilliance and a grand statement of nature's amazing creativity. But look closer. Look at just one flower. It falls short of the overwhelming beauty that many more standing together in the field announces. Then there's the little green and brown and pale weeds that frame the bright sparks of color. One flower is beautiful, but the average of all the flowers – including the ugly weeds – is beyond wondrous. One flower is worth pondering, but a field full of them stops your heart and washes away anything you might have been burdened with prior to stumbling upon the magic... of their average.

A community's culture is an average of the attitudes and histories of all the people that make it up. Grades are the average of all the scores on tests and worksheets. How happy you are is an average of how much you invest in appreciation, versus complaining. And how much you are appreciated by the world around you is determined by an average of your contribution to what others need or want that lifts *their* average experience in life.

Life is miraculous, though, in giving us opportunities to seize glorious moments among the many that aren't nearly as celebration-worthy. Taking the opportunistic shortcut, leaping to the front of the line, riding the elevator, pedaling down the hill versus up it, even hitting the home run...these are all good things in life too; but they are indeed part of the average. And the *average* is what counts most.

But it's not just the average of the good things that defines us either, is it? We are each defined by the average of our failures as well. *Both* successes and failures, small or large, are swizzled into... the average.

And it's not so much *that* we fail, it's really how we respond *when* we fail: whether we get up or not, whether we move forward or not, how often we are able to muster the courage to go on...it's these things that define our character, our results, our self esteem...and our average.

Our average physical health turns out to be not only how much time we invest in doing the right things, but what we do when we are sick or hurt or distracted or what choices we make when it seems there are more people to take care of than there is time in a day to take care of ourselves.

Our average financial state – and stress – is directly related to not just how well we have saved or invested, but how we handle it when a life event drains our savings or the value of our investment portfolio is suddenly cut in half. And success in business is not only defined by the brilliant idea or a surge in customer demand but also the average of our reactions to the sucker punches that the marketplace blindly delivers.

Averages count when it comes to relationships with our kids, our relationship with God, our belief in our self, whether we have nice things or not, how clean our car is and how far it goes before we have to get a new one. Averages count everywhere.

Visualize the Grand Canyon: one mile deep and over 18 miles wide. Solid rock...gracefully sculpted by water and finely smoothed by wind and more water. And how did wind and water carve into stone such a majestic and magical feat of nature? It wasn't with an explosion or an earthquake. It was drips turning into flow and over time flow, relentlessly and patiently finding it's way from one end to the other. It was frequent, persistent breezes that picked up speed as they formed their own weather, kissing the ever-deepening sides of the massive canyon walls day-by-day and year-by-year. The wonder of the Grand Canyon is not average

- but it was formed by the average of the deliberate and patient power of water and wind over time.

And such it is for the total of life itself. When you are in your last days, you will reflect certainly on the wins and the celebrations and the mountain top experiences - but you will be most gratified by your endurance and persistence through your averages: the number of days you chose to invest unselfishly in the lives of others, how often you hung in there in spite of the tough spots that life dealt, the tenacity you expressed when you failed and how gracious you were when you succeeded knowing that it was not a single victory but the sum of it all that calculated your average in a brilliant life worth living.

Will you be able to proudly and confidently look back on a life filled with both good and bad experiences and be able to say you did your best with the most of every opportunity? If you do, it will be because you understand that averages counted most and it was the averages that defined you.

Life isn't average but it is *an* average. And averages truly count.



Chapter Three

The Third Simple Truth

And the final Simple Truth, the one that anchors the other two and is at the nucleus really of everything we experience in life, is: *Our Choices define both where we are... and what's next.*

In his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* best-selling author Stephen Covey described a powerful principle that governs outcomes in every area of life. Pointing out that though all creatures on the planet (including humans) have a stimulus/response wiring, Covey reminds us that just because we see food it doesn't mean we have to eat it or just because someone angers us it doesn't mean we must react in kind. There is a space between both internal and external stimulus - and our responses. And that space is called **choice**. When we learn how to find and use the pause button that resides between stimulus and response, a world of opportunity opens up.

You see when we look at all the circumstances in our life - whether they are things we are most proud of or those we aren't especially happy about - they are, without exception, a direct result of how we used our gift of choice.

Now, to truly understand the power of choice, we must also embrace both the light and dark side of choices we make.

If there is anything going on in your life that you wish was different, it's there because of choices you've made that put you in that uncomfortable place. As difficult as it might be, if you can own that, it sets you up for tremendous power and success in the future.

And likewise, if you have circumstances in your life that you're happy about - and you allow yourself to own those blessings as a direct result of good choices you've made in the past - you'll put yourself on the crest of a wave for future success.

Now if you are like most, this is a hard notion to agree with. In fact, you likely had several “exceptions to the rule” pop into your mind just now - rationalizing that there are many good or bad or uncomfortable things in life that just happened to you. You had no choice in the matter, right? As they say - “stuff happens!” You might defend that some - or even most - of what happens to a person in life has more to do with family or environment than it does with personal choice. You might even subscribe to the thinking that success in life is about luck or some sort of DNA imprint that pre-determines the outcome of life.

We'll take a deep breath, and allow a moment to consider a new way of thinking about all that stuff - and how much control you really do have over it. There is a very happy ending here, I promise.

Let's start with this. Everything in life has both a history and a present. That is, there are things that happened or didn't happen in the past that led up to where they are today - and then there is the present state of those circumstances and how you feel, think, and react to them. The choices you made in history got you to here; that's the past. Where you go from here will be defined by the choices you make now and forward about how you think about history; and that's the present.

You might relate to this example. Many of us might be unhappy with our current financial status or preparation for retirement. When you think back, there are choices you made. (And by the way, not making a choice *is* a choice.) And those choices had direct impact on how much money you have currently. Perhaps you said yes to a job that now you realize undervalues you. Maybe you passed on a business opportunity that later you found paid off for others that invested. Maybe you didn't lean in to a negotiation, favoring to stay in a

comfort zone, when one more round might have yielded a much more lucrative outcome. Or like many, you invested in what you thought was safe that turned out to be disappointingly fragile. So...what you did or didn't do - choices you made - set up your potential for income that might now fall short of your expectations or desire. Granted, you likely weren't able to predict the outcome you are uncomfortable with today. But in any case, the choices you made - in the past - still put you here.

Now here's where the present comes in to play. Will you decide to make different choices to advance your status of wealth - or will you conclude that financial abundance is not in your genes? Well, it's a choice. Will you bemoan and linger in the bad decisions you made or the self-serving actions of others that left you short - or will you use those events as insight and inspiration to pursue greater success? Again, it's a choice.

No matter what has happened in your life - regardless of the circumstance and how much control you feel you had or didn't have in the process that got you here - you still have the opportunity to choose your response, what you do next, how you talk about it, and how you feel about it...and it's all a choice and all in your control! You can either hold your experience and the string of events (and choices) that led you to here as though you were victimized, treated unfairly, disadvantaged or disabled in some way. Or you can use your past experience as learning to make better choices in the future - and begin doing that today. You can choose to feel sorry for yourself or you can choose to celebrate every experience in life as a foothold for greater things to come.

You see our thoughts are completely in our control and therefore govern choices. Our choices of course lead to our actions. Actions over time? Well, they define our habits. And our habits eventually define our character, while our character defines our legacy.

Ponder that powerful continuum for a moment. Thoughts...actions...habits...character...legacy.

So now would be a good time to ask: what are you thinking?

What do you think about your time? Is there enough time or do you think there's not enough time? It's a choice - and your choice about what you think about time will determine your actions: whether you squander time or carefully use it to advance your life in positive ways.

What do you think about your health? Are you making the no-choice choice to get to it later, or are you choosing to make everyday an opportunity to invest in longevity.

How about your money? Are you thinking you don't have enough? That choice will define your actions that will assure that you will fall short of what you say you want. Are you thinking you'll win in a risky venture of some sort? That choice will relax your pursuit of investment in other efforts that are more predictable and financially certain.

And what do you think about the people in your life - those you work with, live with, spend time with? Are you choosing to view them as fun, engaging, challenging, and loving? Or are they inconvenient, distracting, disempowering, or boring? Whether you spend time with them, how much time, and what you think about them is all a choice.

You can see where this is going. You choose to either believe that the things that happen in your life are accidental and you a casualty, or you can choose to conclude that whatever comes your way is a unique and special opportunity to learn, grow or advance toward your definition of success. You're happy or sad, discouraged or motivated, regretful or appreciative of all that happens - as a matter of choice. And those choices open or close gates of opportunity. Your choices lead to energy or depression, and choices lead to action or inaction. Your choice of attitude combined with your choice to do, or not to do, will produce a positive result or surrender all outcomes to happenstance.

Now I'm not suggesting that bad things never happen or that somehow you have a omnipotent power to control other people's actions. What is true though is that you have a

choice in deciding how life's events effect you and for how long - which in turn determines future outcomes that shape a life of success or not.

For example, let's say that your math teacher in junior high was frustrated with how you and your class were assimilating his instruction. When he called for hands to answer a question you had a moment of courage, but your response incited further frustration in your teacher and as he peered over the top of his glasses he said, "Well it sounds like you are leading your class today - in stupidity. I'm beginning to think none of you will ever be good at math." So as an impressionable teenager you concluded "I'm not good at math."

The math teacher did a bad thing. You had no choice in that. But what you do with what the math teacher said - and for how long - is completely within your control. Are you bad at math forever...really? And how long will you hold as conclusive that teacher's opinion of you? Will you persist in believing you are inept at math for life because of that one event and that one teacher's careless comment? Some people do that - and it's a choice.

Or let's say a loved one dies. Certainly there is time for sadness, and we can't say that you had any control over their life or death. But will you carry that sadness with you the rest of your life - or will you turn the corner on grief at some point and spend the rest of your life celebrating your loved one's life, sharing the gifts they shared with you, and assuring their legacy lives on through your example? It's all a choice.

So to truly leverage the power of choice we must also look at the choices we have in deciding how to respond to every experience in life.

Learning to be conscious about choice also has a massive impact on how we nurture and build up how we feel about ourselves or whether we destroy our own confidence and perception of self from the inside out. That's called self-talk. How we talk to ourselves - out loud or quietly in our own head - may be the most powerful opportunity for choice of all.

Do you see, and talk about yourself, as a winner? Are you smart, effective, a good listener, on time, neat and clean, loving and supportive, successful and growing, attractive? What comes out of your mouth and what echoes in your mind is perhaps, more than any other single factor, the most important determinant of all these characteristics.

Think about it. Have you ever said to yourself, "oh, you stupid", "I can't do it", "that's impossible", "why can't I ever get it right", "I'm just a bad person" or "I'm fat"? It's a simple choice to replace those disabling assertions to "that's not like me", "I'll get it with a little more practice", "it's not a matter of whether, only when", or "I'm a good person now and getting better all the time".

And what do you think about other people, or say when they aren't listening? This is self-talk in action. "I hate her", "why doesn't he stop that", "he drives me crazy", "she makes me mad". Ok then, if that's what you want, so be it. But it's all a choice, you see. None of it is accidental or out of your control. You can see and talk about people around you as difficult and disabling people in your life all you want - or you can choose to talk about and spend time with people in a way that supports how you visualize a successful life. But in either case - yep, it's a choice.

And this final word about choice: the choices we make reveal what is truly important to us - like it or not. If a person elects to take care of their body - whether it's in a simple moment or an established habit - they are declaring what's important. If a person has an affair, drinks irresponsibly, gambles away hard earned money, disrespects the people around them - all of these behaviors not only reflect choice but they also give naked insight into what's important or not in that person's life.

And likewise: pay it forward, random acts of kindness, saying you're sorry, forgiving someone, giving without expectation of a return, whistling when you're afraid, doing the hard thing anyway, making someone laugh when they need something else to bring perspective...these choices all reveal priorities and what's important to you.

Choices are defined by our thinking - as we have established - and what we think about ourselves, the people around us, how we use time and resources... it all reveals what is important to us. We will always *and only* do what is important to us.

Choices define life - what is, and what's next...and if you practice making choices consistent with how you want to experience life... that is very good news.



Conclusion

The analogies, examples and applications of these three powerful Simple Truths are endless and I could go on but I won't. What is more important is that you take a pause from believing what you've been taught as the elusiveness of success in life, and recognize you've already found the answer...or at least the core of the answer. You've known it all along – you only now need to remember it.

When you patiently remember and apply these Simple Truths, a refreshing sense of ease will come over you. Results will start showing up in extraordinary ways. And what's really amazing is that visible changes will begin to happen immediately.

Something is better than nothing. Every minute of every day has value and it is always the small things that make the big things that shape the outcomes and destinations in your life and the lives of those you have the privilege to touch.

Averages count. When you keep score, tally the average of all the ups plus all the downs plus how you respond to the wonderful gift of it all. What we experience in life after 30, 50, or 100 years will most certainly be described, valued, and expressed as an average... and when life is said and done, the average is the thing that matters most.

And finally, *your choices define both where you are – and what's next.* What you say, what you do, who you spend time with, the time you spend or invest or waste...it's all a choice. Your reaction to life's events is a choice and your actions that follow are a choice. And your choices will always express what's most important and what you value most in life.

So keep it simple... and honor Truth.

I wish tremendous success for you and everyone you touch in life.

Author Bio

Steve Dailey is a mentor, author, and adventurer. He is Founder of *AchievementBridge, Inc.* – a global coaching and consulting firm specializing in programs and trail maps that support success in health, wealth, and personal legacy.

Where to Go From Here...

Please go to www.KumuSteve.com to discover several exciting gateways to achieving your lifetime best in any area of life you choose.

You'll be especially interested in Base Camp Hawaii – www.BaseCampHawaii.com. Explore how a visit to our life-changing retreat in Paradise on the Big Island, Hawaii can reboot, refresh, and reignite your power to achieve your greatest potential.

Men: If you have entered the second half of your life... congratulations! And you'll definitely be interested in The Legacy Man Project (www.TheLegacyManProject.com), a community of men in the second half of life defining a new paradigm for leadership and purpose. The Legacy Man Tribe inspires a new battle cry for men achieving vibrant health, enduring wealth, and meaningful legacy for life ahead.

Interested in Inspiring your Team or Group to Action?

Steve Dailey is available for speaking to groups, teams and organizations – large or small – that have in common a quest for transition to their lifetime best achievements. If your group is seeking an engaging catalyst that is more than “entertainment”, and instead truly values “inspired action”, contact Steve at Steve@AchievementBridge.com.



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