Ordinary to Extraordinary

We all start out in life as being quite ordinary and many remain that way. The few who have become extraordinary have these qualities (no specific order):

**1. Definite Aim, Vision and Purpose** - Successful people constantly seek clarity in their lives. They know what they want and they follow their own dream. Vague desires and beliefs lead to vague outcomes. It is this sense of direction that gives them the staying power to [stick to their goals](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/how-to-stick-to-your-goals-even-if-you-never-could/) and achieve their dreams.

**2.** **Expertise and Excellence** - No matter what they pursue, they become the best in their field. There is no job too small and successful people strive for excellence. They pursue mastery and understand that money is a by-product of the value they offer.

**3.** **Focused** - People who experience success know how to concentrate. They realize that they cannot do everything and they focus on the activities that will give them the highest return on the goals they want to achieve. They don't believe in the hype of multi-tasking and they know that the fastest way to finish your to-do's is doing them [one at a time](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/how-to-effectively-manage-your-time/).

**4.** **Positive Attitude and Perseverance**- Extraordinary people have realistic optimism. Realistic because they take action and optimistic because no matter what the result may be, they believe their success is inevitable. They believe that [like a child learning to walk](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/how-to-always-achieve-your-goals-lessons-learned-from-childhood/), they need to take action first and then modify the action according to the feedback that they get. This positive attitude allows them to persevere and be resilient when things don't go their way.

**5. Flexible** - One misconception that ordinary people have about persevering is staying the course no matter what. This is true only if the reason for pursuing your goal is still valid. Most successful people achieved success doing something different from what they initially intended to do (Example: Steve Jobs started with computers, went into the animation, and really made his comeback with the iPod). This makes sense because the world is always changing and they know a lot more now than when they started. Successful people know that if their reasons for doing what they are doing changes, there is no point to continue.

**6. Masters of Time** - Successful people are successful because they get a lot done. The only way to do that is by making the most out of the allotted 24 hours we all get. Extraordinary people value their time and see the direct connection between how they spend their time and their [energy](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/practical-ways-to-manage-your-energy/). They are usually [always on time](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/how-to-always-be-on-time/) and "train" those that deal with them to respect their schedule by implementing strict start and end times for meetings.

**7. Strong Communicators** - People who can communicate effectively excel in life. [Strong communicators](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/reasons-why-people-are-bad-communicators/) understand that just because people speak English (or the dominant language in your country), it does not mean they understand each other. What makes them effective is that they are clear about and sensitive to the outcome they want to get from their communication and are flexible in their method of communication to achieve their outcome. They are experts at [building rapport](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/how-to-build-rapport-with-anyone/) and separate what is being said from the meaning they put into what is being said.

**8. Brave** - We've all heard the phrase "No risk. No reward." but how many of us really [take the risk](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/3-ways-to-be-a-smarter-risk-taker/) necessary to get the reward we want? Not many but for those who do, they are the ones who make it and become successful. Successful people have the courage to begin AND the courage to continue. They are willing to not only bet but go "all in" on themselves. They are not afraid to burn bridges if it means moving forward.

**9. Givers** - Successful people are generous givers. They know and are convinced of the "secret" that the more you give, the more you receive as long as you are genuine about your gifts. They operate on the principle embodied by Zig Ziglar's quote, "You will get all you want in life if you help enough other people get what they want." If you haven't tapped into this secret, you should get started right away. Money isn't the only thing you can give. You can give time, expertise, space, etc. Look for ways [to open doors for people](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/frances-hesselbein-modeling-success-series/).

**10. High Self-Esteem** - Extraordinary people believe they deserve their success and know that [they can do anything](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/empower-yourself-now/) they set their mind to. They understand that a mistake is something that they do and not who they are. They also monitor the [warning signs of low self-esteem](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/warning-signs-of-low-self-esteem/) to ensure they always keep a positive self-image of themselves. They realize that self-esteem is a state of mind and choosing to have high self-esteem is much more useful than choosing to have low self-esteem.

**11. Action-Oriented** - We all know of people who have potential or talk a big game but accomplishes nothing. Those who spend all their time thinking about doing something will never succeed. Successful people are doers and not talkers. They don't wait for conditions to be perfect before they take action. They just go for it, observe the feedback and then modify their next action accordingly. Those who don't achieve much with their lives tend to use "would", "[should](http://www.robertchen.com/dont-should-on-yourself/)" and "could" a lot. Those who do get what they want are too busy achieving their next goal to explain themselves. If you suffer from procrastination, I encourage you to check out some[practical ways to stop procrastinating](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/practical-ways-stop-procrastinating/).

**12. Confident** - This is what helps successful people take action. Like the chicken and the egg, confidence helps you achieve your goals which in turn makes you more confident. A great way to be confident is remembering your past successes and overcoming your [fear of failure](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/how-fear-of-failure-stops-you-from-being-your-best/). Signs of confidence include empowering others, [not taking criticism personally](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/how-to-stay-calm-in-the-face-of-criticism/), and understanding that the first time you do something is always the hardest and all subsequent times WILL get easier. Success is the combination of confidence with competence.

**13. Readers** - Most if not all successful people like to read. If you believe that success leaves clues and that you can be successful by thinking and acting like a successful person, then reading should be a part of your daily life. I've come to realize that with access to more books than I can read in several lifetimes, it is important to read the books that will make the most difference to you. Usually these are the books that will help you become a true expert in your field of your passion or challenge the limiting beliefs you have about yourself.

So what should you read? Check out [book recommendations](http://www.robertchen.com/recommendations/) from people who are doing what you want to do. Extraordinary people are life long learners who view mastery as an [asymptote](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asymptote) that they keep getting closer to but can never reach.

**14. Trusts Intuition** - People who succeed in life trust their "gut". They may not be able to explain rationally why or how they made their decision but they knew it was the right thing to do. Successful people learn to harness the power of their subconscious by sending it "orders" from the conscious mind. This involves mentally visualizing the outcome beforehand and then being present to take in the data and information that will become the ingredients for your subconscious to deliver the "orders" that were sent. Learning [how to meditate](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/how-to-meditate-for-people-who-dont-meditate/) is also a great way to develop and get in touch with your intuition.

**15. Curious and Embraces Possibility** - Two people are running a race and they come up to an immense wall blocking their path. One person sees the wall and starts getting down on himself for wasting his time and decides to quit the race before he wastes even more time. The other person immediately thinks about what the possibilities are for getting over the wall. Will he/she climb it, break through it, dig under it, etc? No matter which option he/she chooses, he/she immediately acts on their decision and collects feedback. Successful people adopt an attitude of curiosity and they truly feel that they can always learn something from someone else. They incorporate the great qualities of others while making a point to avoid the bad qualities.

**16. Self Acceptance** - Polonius had it exactly right when he said: "To thine own self be true". People who are successful don't pretend to be something they are not. This allows them to express their creativity freely and not worry about hiding who they really are. The best way to accept yourself is to genuinely appreciate and accept others. If you tend to judge other people, you're probably not very accepting of yourself either. The worse type of rejection is self-rejection.

**17. Big Dreams** - I have yet to read a biography of a successful person who didn't have grand dreams for what they would accomplish. Sir Richard Branson, Walt Disney, and Sam Walton all had big dreams and for the most part, achieved more than they originally imagined. This is one of the reasons they became successful. They are not afraid to dream big and then go for it. If you want to know whether someone will be successful, ask them about their dreams. If they sound plausible, then they are not dreaming big enough.

**18. Well Rounded and Balanced** - Truly successful people strive to be successful in all aspects of their lives. They live healthy lives, become financially independent, nurture meaningful relationships, develop [personal mastery](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/scientific-method-personal-mastery/), and accomplish their professional goals. They know that sacrificing one key area to achieve another will not help them maximize their true potential. It is hard to be your best and to contribute when you have to worry about how you are going to pay the rent.

**19. Excellent Network** - Successful people understand the importance of relationships and how it is one of the most important factors in achieving your goals. They also realize that the [best way to build a great network](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/ways-to-build-trust/) is to give help to others first with no expectation of reward. Those who constantly take without giving usually do very poorly on building a solid network.

**20. Enthusiastic** - A sure sign of someone extraordinary is the enthusiasm they have about [their passion](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/real-meaning-passion/) and their life. They wake up in the morning excited about their day because they know it is going to bring them one step closer to achieving their dream. Successful people tend to be leaders because others are attracted to their enthusiasm and become followers hoping to experience the same excitement and energy.

**21. Admits Mistakes** - There are two things you can do to guarantee that you will NOT be successful in the future: Blaming Others and [Making Excuses](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/extreme-ownership-jocko-willink/). When you do these two things, you give up both your responsibility and power. When something goes wrong and you blame other people or make excuses, you are clearly stating that you have no power in this situation and things are happening to you and not because of you. Great people admit when they are wrong so they can focus on the solution and not waste energy finding a scapegoat. Check out [what Albert Einstein can teach us about setbacks](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/what-albert-einstein-can-teach-us-about-setbacks/).

**22. Mindset of Abundance** - Successful people don't view [happiness](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/10-ways-to-be-happier/) or success as a finite resource where achieving happiness and success for yourself means denying someone else happiness and success. They believe that there is enough to go around and it is more about creating value and not competition. This is the quality that allows them to be happy for other people's successes. This mindset also encourages the empowerment of others. If you think $10,000 is a lot to spend on a hotel room, check out [this article by Steve Pavlina](http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2007/07/the-abundance-mindset/).

**23. Good Character** - Heroes are people who triumph. Think of all the heroes you know (in movies, books, and real-life). Don't they all act with honesty and integrity? Aren't they usually generous with others and frugal with themselves? Doesn't everyone look up to them? Being a hero that triumphs in life is no different.

**24. Great Company** - As I get older, I've come to recognize that you can learn a lot about someone by the company that they keep. Test this idea by watching people you know and noting who they spend the most time with. Some say a person's salary is usually the average of the five people they hang out with the most.

This happens because people with similar beliefs tend to get along and stick together. If a group averages $65,000/year and someone in the group believes that they can make $65,000/hour, the other people in the group will think that is ridiculous. Yet in the group where everyone makes $65,000/hour, the person making $65,000/year will probably second guess his or her own beliefs concerning earning ability.

What does that mean for you?

Surround yourself with people living the life you want to live and adopt their beliefs and habits. This might mean [spending less time with the people you've outgrown](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/outgrowing-things/).

**25. Listener** - Everyone wants to be a great speaker but how many people strive to be excellent listeners. People who listen succeed in life because they are able to hear and understand the needs of other people and to focus their energy on meeting those needs. The fastest way to be a good conversationalist is to listen well and ask questions.

**26. Self Control** - Successful people rarely lose control. They don't go into panics or blind rages. They have learned to control their emotions and consciously (or subconsciously) put themselves in a resourceful state. They understand that they can't change other people or what's happening to them but they can change how they react to it and [how they feel about it](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/how-to-feel-better/). Another sign of self-control is [doing what you're supposed to do despite how you feel about it](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/how-to-be-more-disciplined/).

**27. Prepared** - Extraordinary people are always prepared. They not only have a plan B but also a Plan C, D, E, and F. They mentally rehearse and visualize the possibilities vividly so that when the actual situation occurs, their brains will "remember" what to do.

**28. Choice** - People who are successful are in control. They know they ALWAYS have a choice. They don't feel victimized by their genetics, history and/or circumstances and they truly believe that the past does not determine the future. They write the script to their lives.

**29. Self Reliant** - Successful people rely on themselves. They don't need permission to do what they want and they don't give other people permission to slow them down by relying on them. They believe in themselves and their ability to achieve their dreams whether anyone helps them or not. What's interesting is that it is exactly this type of attitude that attracts others to want to help you. Samuel Smiles writes about this exact topic in his book, [Self-Help (pdf)](http://files.libertyfund.org/files/297/Smiles_0379.pdf).

**30. Energy Conscious** - Those who become great understand that successfully [managing their energy](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/practical-ways-to-manage-your-energy/) is just as important if not more so than managing their time (Quality #6). One of the most important principles in energy management is knowing that rest is as important as action. Successful people are aware that low energy produces poor results and this violates their need for excellence (Quality #2). One of the best ways to manage your energy is to [sleep your way to success](https://www.embracepossibility.com/blog/how-to-sleep-your-way-to-success/).