

the best *you can be*

Lesson

1

A SUCCESSFUL *woman*

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Philippians 4:13, NKJV

BEING THE BEST YOU CAN BE

Throughout history there are stories of Christian women who have been successful in many ways. They are women from all parts of the world. Many of them initially were afraid, nervous, sick or enfeebled, yet they claimed the promises of the Word. They believed in God who made them as they were and went on to do great things, becoming truly successful in their sphere of influence.

In England, Catherine Booth, co-founder of the Salvation Army, was often sick and afraid to speak, yet she became a successful woman, leading a church with her husband. In America, Amanda Smith, born a slave and one of 13 children, became an internationally acclaimed missionary evangelist, preaching in England, India, Africa and other parts of the world. As a young girl, Ellen White was significantly injured and received little further education, but she became a proficient preacher and writer who influenced millions with her encouragement and books. Wangari Matthai, born to a poor family in Kenya, became famous as a campaigner for women and prisoners and for helping her nation to become environmentally aware and for helping save trees.

All these women's stories are of spiritual triumph and success. They claimed the promise "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL LIVING

1. There is a difference between worldly success and Godly success. Worldly success and self-esteem involves: possessions, performance, position, appearance, and

people. True Godly success begins with that sense of worth and uniqueness which comes from our position in Christ. We are already special, created in His image, and loved with an everlasting love. Success, then, becomes striving to be all that God has already gifted me to become. Success means reaching my full potential in Christ Jesus.

- 2. I am somebody, a child of God, created in His image.** "Before I was born the Lord called me; from my birth he has made made mention of my name" (Isaiah 49:1). While I was still a microscopic cell, God arranged my DNA and lined up my genes and chromosomes to make me the special person that I am. There is none other like me among 7 billion people living on Planet Earth (see Psalm 139:13-16).
- 3. Jesus died to assure my success.** Because of Jesus' death, the wealth of the universe is mine. I am now a child of the King, a daughter of God. "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13; see Joshua 1:8, 9).
- 4. God has a special plan for my life.** "Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God" (E. G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 327). "You will go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands" (Isaiah 55:12; see 60:1-3).
- 5. I don't feel like a star.** "High and low, rich and poor, all have a work to do for the Master. Everyone is called to action"



(E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, Bk 1, p. 266). If we, in faith, talk and act success, the feelings will come. That is one of the psychological rules of life. Positive feelings follow positive thoughts and positive actions. Remember Joshua and the children of Israel as they faced Jericho. God told them to go forth, face the enemy, and blow the trumpets. Success follows action.

All of us, as Christian Adventist women, can be winners, no matter where we were born or how much education we have. We can be women of excellence regardless of the mistakes we have made in the past or the problems we may face in the future. Despite suffering, abuse, setbacks, and handicaps, we too can achieve. It doesn't matter what committees vote or what others think. We can receive a gold medal in living.

Each of us can have success beyond our greatest dreams, for God created us to be women of excellence. He made us to be winners! He is on our cheering team!

RATE YOURSELF

On a score of 1 to 5, rate yourself on the following characteristics of a woman of excellence. Five is the best.

1. Walks with her head up, giving a smile to each person she meets.
1 2 3 4 5
2. Looks people in the eye when she speaks.
1 2 3 4 5
3. Volunteers her name first in a new association.
1 2 3 4 5
4. Receives a compliment graciously, always saying "Thank you," but never playing down or playing up the value bestowed.
1 2 3 4 5
5. Does not make excuses. Doesn't put herself down, but talks affirmatively about the progress she is making.
1 2 3 4 5
6. Dresses and looks her best at all times.
1 2 3 4 5
7. Walks erectly and briskly but with relaxed yet rapid pace in public.
1 2 3 4 5

8. Sits up front in meetings so she can exchange questions and comments with the speaker.

1 2 3 4 5

9. Gives her own name first when initiating or accepting a telephone call.

1 2 3 4 5

10. Seeks out women of faith and excellence as friends and role models.

1 2 3 4 5

PERSONAL GROWTH EXERCISES

1. Begin to appreciate the way God has made you. Fill in the following inventory:

Three leisure-time activities I enjoy.

Three things I do well.

Three achievements in my life.

Three positive adjectives that describe me.

Three things I like about my body and the way I look.

2. Go back over your inventory and use it as an outline for a prayer. Thank God for each item on your list and for the unique person He made you to be.

3. Divide a sheet of paper into two columns. In the first column write the names of women in the Bible who project an image of success and high self-worth. Think of women who showed self-confidence and courage to become all that God had gifted them to become. In a second column, describe her actions.

As you read again through this lesson, think of women who were successful: in the Bible, from history, from the history of your church. Consider their secret for success. You will find that most had difficulty of some sort to begin with, but they pressed on, with Christ, to succeed. They spent time in the Word and in prayer, because they knew it was their source of power.

SUCCESS PRINCIPLE

Success is stretching toward my full potential through Christ, who enables me.

MY PRAYER FOR TODAY

Dear God, Thank You for difficulties and for the bad times because they turn me to You. I know that I cannot do anything without Your help. I claim the promises of the Word, and I ask You to help me to press on and never give up. I move forward in confidence because You created me for success.



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