



## **Cereal Theory: Why Achieving Success is as Simple as Eating Your Breakfast**

### **Part One**

**By Seamus Anthony**

I was sleepily sipping my tea one morning, watching my kids munching on their bowls of cereal, when suddenly it just popped into my head:

“Achieving Success is as Simple as Eating Your Breakfast”.

I am kind of a tripper and used to these colourful thoughts arriving unannounced so I stuck with the idea and thought it through. By the time the kids had finished their breakfast I had the following list of “proofs” about my shiny new Cereal Theory of Success.

#### **Proof #1 - You Eat Breakfast Every Day**

Unless you are deliberately trying to mess with your metabolism you eat breakfast every day, right? Apparently, it’s the most important meal.

Well, in order to succeed, you must succeed every day too. In other words, the trick to success is to be successful.

Success is not a future event – it happens now. That’s why I get to write this blog – because I am successful *now*. For years the voice of fear kept telling me that I wasn’t successful enough to write about success, that I needed to make my millions first, that I simply wasn’t qualified. However, one day my mind, scootling down the mental highway at about one zillion miles per hour, just overtook that crap and I realised that:

- I am successful every day...
- and so are you.

Every time we breathe we are being successful. And consider the odds we beat to even exist? We were all conceived because we won a mad, struggling, wriggling race against several billion competitors to make it to the egg first. Do you know the odds entailed?

So who says we aren’t still successful now? Your TV? Your best friend? Your boss? Yourself?

Success is a conception.

It’s just an idea.

A ghost.

When you realise how silly and trite and empty the concept of success is you realise that you are not bound to some law that says you are only successful “when”. Actually, *you* get to decide when you are successful and when you are not, and one thing’s for sure – success begets more success. The secret to success is to be successful. So once you decide you *are* a success, you will naturally continue to succeed as long as you keep your head screwed on and keep doing successful things.

This realisation changed me. It enabled me to hold my head high and realise that I am worthy. And self-worth is important. For all my cocksure posturing over the years, onstage and off, the thing that has always held me back is a lack of self-worth – but when you bypass that shit and leave it floundering on the side of the highway choking on your dust, that’s when you start to kick some serious butt.

I used to obsess about success but framed it as a future event that I was striving to achieve, but eventually I flipped the perspective and instead considered my life:

- my beautiful family,
- my well-paid freelance work-in-my-pyjamas business,
- my health,
- my wonderful friends,
- my music and all the awesome experiences that come with being a musician
- how I had lost weight lately,
- the things in life I have enjoyed,
- the experiences I have shared and rejoiced in,
- my talents and passions,
- that flower over there – look!
- the challenges I have overcome
- the peace that I am able to enjoy in this moment.

No debtors banging on the door. No stressful, unsupportable lifestyle. No hated job to rush off to. No fear of the unknown. Just a peaceful curiosity about what this day will bring, an expectation of positive experiences and interesting, challenging and ultimately fulfilling work and family life.

Thinking about my life from this perspective of gratitude, something in me shifted in a moment and suddenly I realised that *I AM successful* – that I know how to achieve success and that I do it every day, more and more, without really thinking about it too hard or getting too stressed that often.

It suddenly popped into my brain that achieving success is kind of like eating your breakfast – you just do it every day, it’s enjoyable and not something that you worry about or feel is too hard or out

of reach. You just decide what you're going to tackle, grab your spoon and eat it. And it tastes good, so you savour it along the way.

Success is yummy. Success is crunchy. And all you have to do is just pour it out of the box and into your bowl – then grab a spoon and start munching until you finish the bowl and you're full. So tuck in dude, tuck in...

My amazingly stupendous and dazzlingly unifying Cereal Theory of Success continues next week...

## **Cereal Theory: Part Two – In Which I Further Squeeze An Admittedly Pretty Weak Metaphor Until it Damn-Well Coughs Up Some Juicy Content**

**By Seamus Anthony**

A few weeks ago I published part one of Cereal Theory, asserting (with the kind of impenetrable self-confidence that only a safely obscure blogger sitting pretty in his comfy slippers can muster) that “success is like eating a bowl of cereal”.

Stupidly, I threatened a sequel to that post, and never one to back down from a threat (unless bribed or clearly in actual physical danger) I hoisted myself out of bed at 5am this morning to bloody well get that one off my infernal fucking to do list already – enjoy.

### **Proof #2 – Finishing the Bowl: Success Requires Focus on One Thing**

When you eat a bowl of cereal you are only focussed one thing – finishing it.

“But wait!” I hear you cry “I like to read the news on my ipad while I eat my brekkie!”

OK, yes, so you do. Fine.

BUT (he hollers, scrambling around for a half-decent rebuttal)

... while you are reading the paper, you are *mainly* focussed on eating the cereal; this is your major purpose. And when you've finished it, unless it's Sunday or something, you put the ipad down and get on with something else.

AND MORE TO THE POINT (he insists, unwisely belabouring it)

... the fact that you are reading while you eat is actually making you less efficient at eating!

Nutritionists state (so say I) that in order to digest your food more completely you should concentrate on eating your food, not on the news of the world (not very appetizing at the best of times) as it will aid digestion and also will allow you to more fully appreciate the taste of your bowl.

Go ahead – eat something and do it without doing anything else but focussing on the taste of what you are eating – doesn't it taste much better than when you are eating while working or reading?

Well?

Anyway, the same goes for succeeding – you succeed by focussing on finishing the bowl. There's no better way to truly get things right than to focus fully on the task at hand.

Now ... \*cough\* ... moving right along...

### **Proof #3: You Enjoy Eating Cereal More Than “Having Eaten”**

As in, when you've just smashed down a giant bowl of sugary, crunchy goodness bathed in full cream cow juice, you probably feel less excited about that idea than when you were, so to speak, smashing it.

There's a funny quote I like:

*“I hate writing, I love having written.”* (Dorothy Parker, if the Internet is to be believed.)

I say “poo” to this.

I have often met so-called writers, but every time I ask them if they have been writing, they shrug and say “not really, something something, hard to find time, mumble”. Yet they have plenty of time for yoga or drinking red wine or whatever. Which is fine, but success only comes (if it does at all, which is totally not a certainty) if you do the work. And you are only likely to do the hard work (especially the type you have no guarantee of getting paid for) if you love the process.

I love the writing itself, that's why I keep smashing out blog posts and e-books, even if it means getting up at 5am to do it.

Cliché, yes, but it's true that success is more about the journey than the destination. Things that come too easily are soon taken for granted, but things we have to work hard for are appreciated very keenly. Also there is a lot of proof (so say I) that the true satisfaction lies in the desiring of something and the working to get it than in the actual acquisition of the prize. After all how many famous people do you know who seemed to be pretty energised and inspired while they were working their way up the ladder only to become perennially dissatisfied once their dreams had all come true.

I think the story of Australian '80s rock band INXS is a sorry example of this: They were so amped on the way up, having so much fun chasing their goal to become a huge rock band and their music was incredibly inspiring during their ascendant years. However, once they made it to the top of the heap, they sort of became bored and boring and kind of depressed looking (well before poor Michael's tragedy). The carrot had been their driving force but once they ate it, I guess it just tasted like a carrot...

*Anyway ... back to cereal ...*

### **Proof #4: You Have 100% Belief in Your Ability to Finish the Bowl**

It's unlikely that when you pour a bowl of cereal that you feel very overwhelmed by the task of munching that tasty stuff down. You probably don't even give your ability to accomplish an empty bowl much thought at all. You just size up how much you reckon you can handle and then get to work.

Same goes for success – *if you're going to do it then you need to believe that you can.*

It doesn't matter if, according to common logic, your belief is irrational or delusion. And it doesn't matter whether other people believe in you. The thing that matters is that you believe you can eat the bowl. *Otherwise you never will.*

This is easier than it seems when just about every person you know assumes the default position of utter scepticism in the face of your dreams and passions. This is at best annoying (raised eyebrows and ever-so-slightly-sardonic smiles that leave you seething at the big family dinner, wanting to slam your fist in your plate of roast beef and scream "WHY DO YOU PEOPLE HAVE NO VISION!?") and at worst, demoralizing. When those closest to you don't believe in your ability to shine, after a while their fear starts to rub off.

But here's the thing:

YOU MUST NOT LET YOUR OWN OR ANYBODY'S FEARS AND INSECURITIES STOP YOU FROM BELIEVING IN YOURSELF - OR YOUR DREAMS ARE DOOMED.

The fact that your stated dream to become a professional dancer (writer, singer, business owner, artist, whatever) fills you with self-doubt and pushes all of your loved one's hot buttons, bringing to the fore all their insecurities, which they then project on you, coupled with their own (much more honourable) concerns for your actual well-being, is irrelevant to your mission.

Nobody who ever did anything awesome ever let general cry for "common sense" stop them from doing it anyway. It can be really hard to deflect this energy, and I will go into this in detail in my forthcoming book "Taming The Monkey Mind" (working title) but for now I suggest that whenever you begin to feel that your self-belief is being undermined, from within or without, remember this quote by Steve Jobs:

*"Remembering you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart."*

This is the full version (i.e. without boring bits chopped out) of a post by me, Seamus Anthony, that can be found at my blog here:

<http://rebelzen.com/2013/01/cereal-theory-achieving-success/>

<http://rebelzen.com/2013/04/cereal-theory-part-two/>

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