

INTRODUCTION

In every success story, you will find someone who has made a courageous decision.

PETER F. DRUCKER

What does it mean to be successful?

Everyone has a different version of this in their own mind. For some, it means having a great relationship, for others it may be having a nice house or plenty of money. Whatever the concept of success is in your own mind, this dream or vision of what you can strive towards motivates your actions, thoughts and behaviours in an effort to create the reality, from the fantasy.

For many couples, entering into a business journey together is driven by the vision that they can become successful. You never go into an experience deliberately for the pain, conflict, or for the stress it will create. Why would anyone knowingly purchase anything when they are only told the bad points or the faults?

Would you buy an airline ticket if you were told of all the possible things that could go wrong with the plane on your way to its destination? No, of course not. You buy an airline ticket so you can relax and enjoy the place you are bound for. You can sit on the beach in the sunshine, climb mountains, ski, explore, or visit loved ones at the other end.

The same is for business. If the only things you knew about starting a business were the potential failures, the risks and the arguments you would have with your partner, you would probably look at the opportunity and politely decline.

We all enter into business to fulfil a desire within ourselves – we enter with hopes, dreams and plans for being successful; however, often like the fairytales in life, we fall short of the fantasy that we thought was going to happen.

Whatever the reason for starting your business journey together, something has brought you to this point where you are reading this book in the hopes for some insight into how to keep your romance alive and grow a successful business together with your partner.

Clues that things are going wrong

There are tell-tale signs along the way that may be flashing some warning signs in your life, indicating that things are not as smooth as you would hope they would be. The relationship may be feeling a little

dull or stagnant. Maybe you can't remember the last time you both had a lovely romantic evening together. Holidays are a distant wish, if only there was free time, or the money for that matter, to even take a few days off.

There seems to be more bickering over silly aspects that are really irrelevant in the grand scheme of things. Then there are the more obvious signs, such as words of anger about whose fault it is regarding a particular situation that both of you are facing. There may be hurtful comments, bitterness, and resentful feelings about the lack of equal efforts placed into the business or your relationship.

Whatever has brought you to this point – where you have decided to find some answers – it primarily means that there is still hope for both of you to bring your business and relationship back on track.

The beginning

For most couples in business, life starts out well, and then after a few years their conversations start to change, and they realise that their whole lives are focused solely around the business. It's as if there is nothing else to talk about together, and business problems are bulldozing their way through every area of their home life as well. Every waking moment is consumed with business problems, chatter or robust discussions on how to get out of a problem or situation, or who hasn't paid their account, or how can they pay the staff or meet this month's mortgage on their home.

The turning point comes when two people look at each other and find that they're just 'existing'. If you are starting to feel as if you just live with 'a work buddy', then you know things have to change.

In fact, I contacted a client and long-time friend recently and found out that after 38 years together, their relationship no longer held a magic spark. Their business was extremely successful, and from the outside they looked like the perfect couple, and yet, after all those years together they had gone their separate ways.

It is very important to maintain the excitement, mystery, romance and love throughout any life journey together, especially one that is carrying the extra pressure of running a business.

So how do we manage to do this?

What are those key factors and secrets that would make you that 'Dynamic Duo' together?

Universal laws

If you are to build a successful relationship and business with your partner, you have to follow some universal laws that are critically necessary to strengthen your foundations, both as individuals and as a couple.

There are certain ‘laws’, ‘ingredients’, or ‘secrets’ – if you want to call them that – to living successfully as individuals. Once you are aware and understand these, you can apply them to every aspect of your private and business life. The application of these ‘laws’ is about understanding the foundations and reasons behind why we do the things we do as human beings.

It all starts with the **WHY**.

If you look at our ‘great’ role models in society – men like Sir Richard Branson, Anthony Robbins, or amazing women like Oprah – you will see that they have ‘deep purpose’ in what they do. It is from this core motivation that the rest of their efforts in their business and in their lives make an enormous effect on the rest of the world.

If you look closely at this concept of ‘purpose’, there are important elements to it that you can apply to your own life and relationships. The reason I choose ‘great’ role models is to allow you to assimilate the principles I am to give and to align them with someone you acknowledge or recognise as successful or ‘great’.

I will discuss the universal ‘laws’, and much more, within this book, and I hope that you find wisdom, enlightenment and a few tricks to help your relationship and business prosper.

SECTION ONE

Most people have attained
their greatest success one step
beyond their greatest failure.

Napoleon Hill



ESSENTIAL BASELINE

So how do you start from where you are at the moment?

Firstly, you have to establish a baseline of understanding about how the world works. Without an understanding of these universal laws to build upon a strong and solid foundation, it would be difficult to ensure the best is given by each of you into the relationship and your business.

Sure, there are plenty of couples in business who plough through the ups and downs, and weather the storms together, or maybe end up so exhausted with the battles on all fronts that they give up.

What if you could have the ‘core elements’ of the universal laws to make the ‘Dynamic Duo’ journey not only seem calm and effortless, but fruitful, rewarding, enjoyable, and successful for both of you?

For you to begin the journey of a thousand steps, you have to start by seeing the map of the road ahead.

This book provides the ‘road map’ for all successful couples in business, by discussing some core elements. If you need help with navigating the journey to becoming a ‘Dynamic Duo’, the following sections cover all the core elements and will help guide you.

I call these core elements the **Five Cs**.

The Five Cs

The **Five Cs** are five core elements that need to be understood and put into play when building successful relationships with your partner, while at the same time growing a successful business together.

Firstly, you must have **clarity** around who you are and where you are going in your own individual lives.

From there, you need to make a **commitment** to your partner and the business.

To enjoy any form of harmony throughout the journey, you must both learn effective **communication**, which will bring about greater understanding of each person’s viewpoint and approach.

Once you have the foundations of a strong personal relationship with each other, only then can you combine your efforts to build a successful business through **cooperation**.

Finally, when each person within the relationship can work extremely well together as a team, you can begin to create your dreams and plans through **collaboration** towards the bigger goal.

Before launching into the Five Cs that create a 'Dynamic Duo' in business, I will give you a brief overview and explanation of how I see the world using five 'core living principles', which are essentially the 'foundations' of the Five Cs.

This will help you understand the reasons for setting the 'Dynamic Duo' pathway into the Five C components that will ensure you build a successful relationship and business partnership together.

The Five Core Living Principles

There are 'Five Core Living Principles' that form the foundations for life, which need to be established before setting out on the journey of building and renewing any relationship you have with your partner. These principles are more about seeing the 'bigger picture'.

You have to be able to know and learn about yourself and your partner in order to accept where things are currently sitting. Without accepting a starting point, like any journey, you cannot clearly define the pathway to your destination. These five core living principles are what will define your experiences in life, and these principles are the baseline for understanding the Five Cs.

1: What we focus on grows

You are probably aware of the fact that whatever you focus on grows. If you are focusing on buying a new car, you will suddenly see that type of car everywhere. It is not that they didn't exist before you started noticing them; it just means that now you are more aware of them because it has become a **focus** in your mind.

Therefore it stands to reason that if you focus on the negative things in your relationship, then that is what you will begin to see more of. Whereas, if you focus on the positive contributions that your partner offers to your relationship, then this will make for a much greater chance of survival in the years ahead.

I used to coach a client who approached her business as if everyone was out to rip her off. She would find and highlight all the customers who complained about her business, feeling they just wanted free stuff as compensation, and she'd justify her beliefs through the use of an exaggerated apportionment of blame.

I explained to her that customer feedback is great for a business, because it allows us to see where we can improve. If we leave holes inside our business and don't fix them up, exactly like a leaking bucket, eventually we won't have a business. My client shifted her perspective on things and now runs a thriving business. She takes care of every customer and appreciates them and their feedback, for without them, her family would have no income.

Whatever your situation is right now, I am positive there are areas that can be improved. Life and love is a journey – one that has ups and downs. There is no magic pill that will solve every problem overnight so that you never need to put in effort ever again.

You are, after all, human. The variety, mystery, challenges and joys bring about your definition of success, purely by the ability to survive and navigate your way through. To make your dreams and hopes a reality, or at least as closely reflected as possible in your everyday lives together, is what makes your journey purposeful.

2: Every human needs two things in life

After interviewing hundreds of people – and myriads of couples that are happy together, as well as those that are separating or divorcing – I found that every person wants (or needs) the same two things.

When asked what they most desire, beyond all the superficial, material or circumstantial desires, everyone arrives at the same conclusive two answers. Now, you may feel that this is a little simplistic, but if you ask that question often enough, you will find this to be a very common answer.

Firstly, we all seek to be ‘happy’.

Now, ‘happiness’ will represent different things to different people at different times in their lives. For some it may be when they get a new

car, or a new job. For others it may be when they finish their course, or when they get to enjoy Christmas holidays.

If you want to look more deeply at the concept of happiness, it could be described as inner peace, or love, self-worth or some embodiment of wholeness within ourselves.

Whatever the representation, if you can finally get to that point in the future where whatever you wanted has arrived, then this represents the ultimate prize, that great or 'heavenly' feeling of being 'happy'.

Secondly, we all want to 'learn and grow'.

At a core and fundamental level, we need to feel that we are progressing in our lives, and that we are better than we were the day before. This is why the human race strives for greater things, reaching into space, and testing all boundaries in order to evolve.

We can often feel that in times of stress, we are not moving forward. This can become frustrating for people, and therefore they may feel stuck or trapped in a situation or circumstance that is out of their control. The overwhelming feeling of not moving forward indicates that we are not learning or growing beyond this point. This can trigger unhappiness, so both components are required.

There are many different viewpoints as to what each person feels they need in life to be happy and successful. Regardless of what

‘success’ looks and feels like for you, there needs to be a great deal of happiness at the end of it all. You need to feel that you have achieved something worthwhile, conquered the fear, overcome the hurdles and put your best foot forward.

Take a few moments to ask yourself what you really, truly and deeply want, beyond anything else in this world. Make a list of the three things that would make you truly ‘happy’.

And then write down three things that you feel you need to ‘learn’, in order to become the best version of yourself.

3: Everyone has a box of springs

The next important principle to understand is that everyone has ‘baggage’. Some have more than others, but essentially, everyone carries the scars of life around with them.

So what is ‘baggage’ all about? Why do we have it, and how do we get rid of it?

Allow me to explain it like this . . .

Every experience, thought, object, emotion, person and belief is like a coiled spring. Each spring represents something in our lives that we have come across, and whether we like it or not, it becomes a part of us. Now imagine that every spring we collect goes into a box, and

after 30 or so years, all those springs are now intricately entwined and building up pressure inside the box.

We can't simply open the box and pull out one spring because it is entangled with so many other things. That is why when we have an argument with our partner, all sorts of other, mostly irrelevant, topics come out in the middle of the discussion. One minute you may be discussing the priorities for next month's operations targets, and suddenly you are having a heated discussion about how the other person eats their porridge, or squeezes the toothpaste from the middle of the tube.

The only full and complete solution is to let your hand off the box. If you do this, you know that all of the springs will jump out of the box and land on the floor. For many people, especially those who are self-confessed 'control freaks' (myself included), this is a very scary process.

However, two great things happen when you let your hand off the lid of your box. Firstly, and most importantly, you have an 'empty' box. Secondly, you can choose what springs you want to put back into the box, if at all.

One spring may represent your mother-in-law, and another may be your pet. One spring may represent that horrible lamp that was given to you last Christmas, another may be a comment made in passing by a neighbour that irks you.

The great thing about shedding your excess 'baggage', or letting go of your box of springs, is that you allow yourselves the freedom to choose what you like and what you don't like. You can choose the things that you keep – the ones that are good for your soul and positive for your wellbeing. And you should carry no guilt about not keeping those springs that you simply do not want in your life any more.

It is a very liberating experience!

It also brings greater perspective about the things that truly matter in life.

If you have not yet tried this process, feel free to let go of everything that is weighing you down – emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually – in life. Take a few hours for yourself and find a quiet space, free of distraction or disruption. Let your hand off your box of springs. And remind yourself that you cannot control anything! The only thing that was ever in your control was yourself. Be free of guilt, be free of fear, be gentle on yourself and know that everything will be okay.

4: Everyone has a different view

One of the greatest causes of an argument with another person, is your differing points of view. We see it all the time in business and in relationships, where one person believes that they are right and the other person is wrong. This causes untold pain and stress between

two people. Not only is the argument generally due to their difference of opinion, it is also due to the fact that each person is trying to get the other person to agree with them.

Sometimes we can become angry with our partner when they do not adopt or agree with what we believe. After all, our purpose is to get our point across and have an agreement that what we are saying is correct, and it's the truth.

Perspectives and opinions are similar to watching an accident in the middle of an intersection. Each person stands on a different corner, which means each person has a different viewpoint, and yet they all see the same accident. If a police officer interviewed each person, there would be slightly different versions of the same event. One person may blame the cat that ran across the road, while the person on the opposite corner will swear that there was no cat.

The question is, who is telling the truth?

And the answer is that they **all** are.

People will tell their version of events as they see it. The key to fully understanding any given situation is to make sure we speak with every person at the scene and not take any one person's statement or perspective as the complete picture.

What does this have to do with our relationships and our business?

You and your partner will each have different views on how your business should run, what your relationship should have or reflect, who you should or should not employ, and a million other options for every decision that you could possibly come up with during the course of your journey together. You can't foresee everything; however, you can ensure that you are aware of the different corners of the intersection.

Let go of the emotion, let go of judgement and stick to the facts. Remain emotionally neutral when reviewing the viewpoints around the intersection.

In your lives and business together, a 'Dynamic Duo' couple must remove themselves from their own corner and review the situation from all angles. And they must take logic, reasoning and different viewpoints into consideration.

If both people in a partnership understand that no **one** person is totally correct by standing firm on their own statement, consideration of all angles will bring about better perspectives for all.

5: The law of balance

The fifth core living principle for a successful life is the understanding of the 'law of balance'¹. We all know about Sir Isaac Newton, who sat underneath the apple tree and the apple fell and hit him on the head.

¹ Millman, D 1995, *The Laws of the Spirit: A Tale of Transformation*, HJ Kramer and New World Library, California, USA.

From that he devised the 'law of gravity'. Even though we cannot see gravity, we know and can feel its effect. The same thing happens with 'balance'.

If you have ever seen a big, old grandfather clock, you will notice a pendulum swinging from side to side that keeps time ticking away. Tick . . . Tock . . . Tick . . . Tock . . . Watching the clock ticking away, you will notice that whatever distance the pendulum is pulled in one direction, the motion of the arc will swing to the exact distance on the opposite side. Why, because of the law of balance. It states that to remain in equilibrium, the forces must be *equal* and *opposite* distance from the centre.

So how does this relate to a couple in business together, trying to balance their romantic life, children, work schedules and private life? The more one person tries to pull in one direction, the partner has to pull in the opposite direction in order to maintain balance.

Now, you may be thinking about those men that work extremely long hours, and their wives who demand that they spend more time at home with the family. This is a perfect example of a couple trying to maintain balance. The longer he works, the more demanding she becomes. Remember, the pressure applied to the pendulum has to be equal and opposite to maintain balance.

There may be times when things get completely out of balance, for example, if both people are working too much, and neither of them have enough rest or family time. In these cases, there may be another cause that will force itself into the mix to ensure balance is restored. This could be a serious health issue, relationship breakdown, or a mechanical failure that forces work to halt. Something has to give somewhere along the line – it is just the way things go. Just like we cannot stop gravity, balance will take its fee when the time comes.

Now that I have covered off the basic ‘foundations’ to living, you can begin to enrich your relationships and your business with the Five Cs – the five components that will build stronger connections between you and your partner, and ultimately set your business up for success.