

# Are You Afraid of Success?

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The idea that someone can be afraid of success sounds odd to many people. Fear of failure is easier for most people to comprehend, but a fear of success? It sounds preposterous.

After all, who wouldn't want to be more successful? Perhaps you!

**Fear of success is a common obstacle to consistent and lasting success.** People are often masters of achieving 90% of a goal, only to throw it all away at the last moment.

Fear of success has multiple components and symptoms. Read on to see if a fear of success is an obstacle for you.

**The fear of success has more than one cause:**

1. **Fear of change.** Humans are programmed to avoid change. This is true even if your life is in the pits. Why would this be? Because, even if you're highly displeased with your life, you're still surviving.
  - **Your brain is concerned about what might happen if your situation changes.** As far as your brain is concerned, alive and miserable is better than possibly happy and dead.
2. **Fear of greater responsibility.** Success brings more responsibility. In many cases, you have to become more responsible to experience more success. When you've become successful, people expect more from you.

- Starting a business and experiencing success is great, but now you might have employees that rely on you.
- Building a real estate empire sounds great, but now you have tenants, debt, and complex taxes to deal with.

**3. Fear of standing out.** Some people love attention, but many do not. People notice when you're successful, and many will dislike you for it. Jealousy and feelings of mediocrity can bring out the worst in others.

- There are people that would prefer to just blend into the background than stand in the spotlight. Perhaps you feel this way, too.

**Those that fear success show several of the same symptoms:**

- 1. Self-sabotage.** Everyone has experienced that before. You're doing well and making great progress. Then, it seems like the wheels just fall off. You make silly mistakes. You make poor choices. **This is easy to see in others but can be challenging to identify in yourself.**
- 2. Changing goals.** You get close to achieving success and then suddenly decide to change your mind and do something else instead. If you keep changing direction, you'll never make any real progress. Choose an appealing goal and stick with it.
- 3. Procrastination.** A sudden lack of motivation is a common sign that you're afraid of success. Procrastination is a primary killer of progress.

**A fear of success can be managed. Try these techniques:**

- 1. Determine the cause.** What are you actually afraid of? Determine the cause of your fear, and you'll have a chance to work around it. You can't defeat the enemy you can't see.
- 2. Notice how that fear changes your thoughts and behavior.** What does that fear do to you? What are the symptoms of your fear of success? How are your thinking and behavior altered by this fear?
- 3. Face, rather than avoid, your fears.** Avoiding your fear leads to failure. **Develop a strategy for working around your fear.** Become more resistant to fear. Give yourself a pep talk or enlist the help of a friend. Do whatever you need to do to continue making progress.

If you're not sure why success seems to elude you, consider the possibility that you're afraid of success. Do you have any of the symptoms? How successful do you think you've been to this point in your life? Are you underachieving?

A fear of success makes sense when you consider the source of that fear. **However, what makes sense isn't necessarily the most desired option.** Overcome your fear of success and achieve the greatness you deserve.