

# AN OLD GUYS GUIDE TO SUCCESS IN LIFE, BUSINESS AND LOVE

BY: AN OLD GUY

As I reflect on my life it has come to me that many things have happened to create success in my life, business and in love, { with the Fabulous One as she is known to me}.

Some of what will follow has been shared with me by wiser people, some, to my amazement has come from learning and study and some from my own experiences, aka the hard way.

My hope is this information will enhance your life, relationships and success and will act as a stimulus for you to create your own guide to success.

## SUCCESS IN LIFE –STARTS WITH THE FAMILY

My Grandfather and Grandmother came to America in 1906. Recently the Fabulous One and I were in the harbor at Naples, Italy where they left from, As we wandered about I couldn't help but think of these two young people from a small town in Southern Italy, with an infant daughter in their arms, getting ready to sail to America. Mike and Lucia Menito had to know there was no turning back. What was going through their minds, fear, anxiety, excitement, anticipation, hope?, I get goose bumps just trying to visualize them and the excitement that lie ahead.

The Naples Harbor is huge and expansive, these kids were brave or a bit um-botz{ that's crazy in Italian}. Trying to put myself in their position gives me pause for thought, would I stay or would I go. Decisions today seem so monumental, buy or sell a house, change neighborhoods or jobs. What is the right thing to do? Can we afford it can we afford not to?

Sometimes we worry so much about being wrong we forget we could be right.

The invaluable lesson their story has taught me is to always believe in myself, set my sights high and go for it.

My Grandparents were not unlike yours' or millions of other immigrants. Make it your business to get to Ellis Island in New York, experience it for yourself. Do the audio tour with the head sets and follow the stories. If you don't have tears in your eyes and a sincere appreciation for the courage of your ancestors, I will be shocked.

Grandpa worked as a laborer Grandma took care of the family? They had 10 children, 9 daughters and my Dad. My dad followed in his footsteps working hard and rising to be a plant manager. He was a gifted artist, but could not pursue a scholarship to the Art Institute. Grandpa and Grandma were the pillars which held our entire family up. We all gained strength from the pillars. Some Saturday evenings a group of my 50 first cousins{ the younger ones} stayed with Gram and Gramp. We watched wrestling on TV. Grandpa sat in his high back green chair smoking a Dago Rope, an Italian cigar. Grandma was on the edge of the couch hollering at the wrestlers, she was an avid wrestling fan. Us kids on the floor staying quiet, being part of the flock, hanging with the pillars. SWEET !

My Dads side of the family had a special tradition. Every Sunday no matter what ,we ended up at Grandma and Grandpas house on Fillmore street. When you got there kids were running all over , the uncles sat on the porch with Grandpa in the middle. The woman and Grandma were in the house cooking and talking.

You knew without saying that upon arrival you found Grandpa and gave him a hug and kiss, with the same for Grandma, plus you got your cheeks pinched. Now you were free to play kick the can or running bases, games of my era, no apps or I pads, real outdoor stuff.

Looking up at the porch you could see Grandpa watching and smiling. I now understand, it was his dream, his life, his Famiglia.

This was special, family, unity, acceptance and the strength of character it gave us to face our lives going forward.

After I was born and for as long as I could remember my Mom and Dad had a dream that I would go to college and have a better life. Without their dream for me and their constant reminders I am not sure what would have happened. When I graduated from college, I was the first in our entire family to do so. Thirteen sets of aunts and uncles and 60 first cousins on both sides and I was the first to graduate from college. Thank you Grandpa , Grandma on both sides, Mom and Dad for setting everything in motion, you were the American Dream at it's best.

My Mom and Dad were workers, they were some of the first families that had the Mom and Dad working outside the home. I was a latchkey kid and didn't even know it.

After school it was off to Grandma and Grandpa's home a very short walk.

They were my maternal grandparents and along with my GodMother who lived with them or visa versa. Their love for me was unconditional. I loved going there; it was warm, safe and comforting.

To have your formative years surrounded by people who love you, care about you and had dreams for you set the tone for my personality and future interaction with people and events.

I hope everyone would have someone special in their life like I had, it was my Godmother, Carmella. No one called her Carmella, it was Auntie Buzzy, her nickname had something to do with her fathers nickname, never did figure that out. She was the rebel in the family. Loved sports, Cubs and Bears, played second base on the neighborhood softball team, all boys in those days. No mitts allowed, it was 16 inch softball a special Chicago game, and she was good. She loved to dance and have a great time. Lucky me , she taught me all these things. After work we would dance, cha cha, jitter bug, two step, whatever, we laughed and had a hoot of a time. The Chicago Bears were her sports love, going to all the games with her we used her season tickets, the East stands at Wrigley Field . I could sing the Bear fight song by the time I was 5, my Granddaughter Lucie is almost 4 and she can sing it half way. It's a tradition. We went to the 1963 Championship game, Bears won, I was 16. Twenty two years later I took my son to the Bears Championship game, he was 16, we sat in Auntie Buzzy's season ticket seats, they were passed to me. There is symmetry in life.

I learned to dance like no one was watching, sing like I was in the shower and love like I had never been hurt before. We went all over together, she was a sun worshipper, 12<sup>th</sup> street beach one hot sunny day , got really burned, Mom gave her hell for burning up her

baby, it hurt , but I didn't care I was with Auntie Buzzy. I have to share another story about our family . When I think of them now my smile always gets big and I feel better. Sunday mornings it was off to 9am mass with my grade school class, then to Grandmas for some cash over to Dileo's bakery for fresh Italian bread. You know the kind it was warm with great crust. Back to Grams for fresh made meatballs. She would start the " Gravy " early and it would be ready for breakfast. Gravy was our Chicago word for sauce. Man they were good, sometimes I think I can still taste them. No Cheerios for me, those meatballs were good. Just a few more stories or these pages would be filled with stories of Me and Auntie B, those will have to wait for another time unless you want to buy me a beer , listen and laugh. My cousins and I learned to play poker after Holiday dinners. They called it depression poker. We all started with \$ 2 and if you lost your \$ 2 you were in a depression , but could still play, you learned fast how to play and be careful, didn't want to be depressed. Of course it was money from the grown ups, but you still wanted to win. My favorite card game was taught me by my maternal Grandpa, an Italian game called Briscola or Brisc as we called it. A game with 3 cards in your hand and a trump suit. Looking back I now realize it was a game designed by Italian men, as Jacks were stronger then Queens, we know that's not the real world. Grandpa would let me win or Gram would give him heck, I didn't care I was with him. My point is find someone special in your life or be someone special for someone else, it will change everything.

A friend read this over and commented, what if someone didn't have a family or a support system, are you saying they couldn't be successful. It gave me pause and obviously the answer is everyone can be successful, the key to it is relationships and special people. If you are not born with special people around you , lets hope you find some in a teacher, coach, clergy , friends or neighbors. I was lucky and had a family, but I was very lucky and had others who cared, read on.

My family was the foundation for building a wonderful life and my approach to life, love and business.

Like most young people I was smart and getting smarter every day. By age 30 the smartness was pouring out of me, then something happened. I awoke one morning and my brilliance had disappeared. To my chagrin that incredible brilliance has not returned and gradually a wiser view has taken over.

Something special did happen to me. As my career began I met 2 terrific men. William and Bill Vaselopoulos , I didn't know their Greek first names, these cousins came to America in the early 1900's. They worked diligently, creating great lives for themselves, their families and many around them. When we met they took a shine to me, easy to do as I am quite likable, and during that time they shared with me 2 things that have been the foundation for my wonderful life. As an aside, I am still associated with their families all of whom are terrific people.

1. Remember, if you have a problem you can solve with money you don't have problem.
2. Laugh at everything, because you will know when the serious stuff happens.

Each of us will interpret these thoughts in their own way. My approach was to live and love based upon what I had and not what I didn't. It hasn't been easy, but when something is easy it's usually not fulfilling.

You can decide for yourself how to use these iconic words to be part of the fundamentals of your life.

Adding my own words of wisdom, success in life should not be at the expense of someone else. Look for the good in others, stay away from anger and envy while concentrating on your own passion. Being successful and happy are great to share and will leave clues for others to follow. Being miserable and envious will also leave clues to follow, choose your legacy carefully. Each of us is a leader, others are watching, so be aware. Also be aware of naysayers and negative people, you know them instinctively everything is bad or going wrong, poor me , always get the bad luck etc. They will try to drag you into their world, instead keep your distance, this journey is challenging enough.

Learning is a continuous process, you cannot stop. Keep learning, reading studying and trying to get better. Be a mentor to those who will listen, find a mentor to constantly improve yourself and your life. Someone knows something you don't, keep improving. Sharing many lunches with the two Mr. V's as I referred to them, I just listened, it was very cool to hear their stories and absorb the information. I wasn't smart enough to realize I was actually learning life lessons until later. Keep your ears trained to listen and your lips together and you be amazed at how much you can learn. Mentors are not always older, we can learn from anyone if we listen and observe. Recently on a visit to Philadelphia I spent some time with a friend who has been very successful and is several years younger than myself. As we drove about he began to share some interesting ideas with me. He explained that many professionals begin to offer solutions to problems before people ever accept they have a problem. His theory being people need to understand they have a problem , and believe they have one before they will be open to options. I remarked, what do you mean options shouldn't it be solutions? How can you propose a solution to someone else's problems? Think in terms of offering a number of options and let them decide which works best for them. So simple, and amazingly correct. Thinking about myself, I only seek options when I accept that I have a problem. It's brilliant. Life is so simple, you are either learning or teaching, so get your head out of the clouds, every experience in our life teaches us something. pay attention and learn from it.

One thing I have learned that is really important is this, Some events in life build character and some events reveal it, what will the events in your life do ? Will they build strong character traits or will they reveal deep rooted flaws, it's your choice.

## SUCCESS IN BUSINESS

Like you, I have heard many times the phrase "if you do what you love you will never work a day in your life" and it's true. My vocation as an accountant would not lead you to believe one could be passionate about numbers and financial statements. The truth is I don't believe you can. I like numbers and am comfortable with them; they have been the fuel to my passion for helping people be successful in business and in life.

My passion and enthusiasm have been a constant driving force in my life, but several things have been equally as important.

Perseverance: don't ever quit trying. Perseverance beats unused talent every time, if you quit you never have a chance for success. You have heard it's the journey and the truth is, it really is the journey. We never fail, we just learn at each attempt. Continuously trying is the greatest character builder. It makes us stronger, wiser and more resilient. Getting knocked down never feels good, getting back up is empowering. Let me share a personal experience with you. After high school I attended the University of Illinois at the Circle campus, after two quarters I was asked to leave as being a good card player was not a course in their curriculum, go figure. I picked myself up, went to Junior college then two years at Roosevelt University with my degree, I didn't quit. It seems anything that has come easily was never as satisfying as something I had to work at, it doesn't make sense to me either, that's life for you. Thirty years later I am an overnight success, I knew it all the time. Believe in yourself or no one else will.

Now, if you add talent and skill to perseverance you will be amazing. There are countless examples of this: Thomas Edison took over 10,000 attempts to invent the light bulb, Col Sanders took over 1,000 tries to sell his chicken recipe and he didn't start until he was over 70 years of age. Because of their skill, talent and perseverance we can now eat great tasting chicken with the lights on.

Remember to laugh at everything; you will know when the serious stuff happens. Look back on your own life, if you see success it's because you kept trying, if you have not been successful, ask yourself, did you give all the effort you could have ?

It has come to me there are two times in your life you worry about money. When you don't have any and when you do, so get over it. When you don't have any, think and work your way to get some. This is America and it is possible. I don't have any clients or friends who were born into money, they thought and worked their way to success. It won't happen overnight, but it will happen. When you do have money, think and work your way to use it in creating a wonderful life for yourself, your family and your community.

Remember if you have a problem you can solve with money you don't have a problem. Working at a large firm after college, The Fabulous One and I had two children and no cash, gee what a surprise. I set a goal for myself to some day carry \$500 in cash in my pocket, I hated that feeling of not having anything and it drove me to work my butt off and never stop trying. It's funny when there was \$520 in my pocket, in my mind I knew only \$20 could be spent. The security blanket was the \$500. Creating financial goals will be a driving force to your financial and overall success. Unfortunately here is what I have seen. People say, as soon as I get \$5,000 I can start to enjoy life. When they get to \$5,000 they say if I had \$10,000 it would be a lot easier, and it continues on and on with a life not lived and money not used for enjoyment.

Real Life keys to Success

There are keys to success we all can use. Add in skill and talent and you give yourself a great chance at success. I call them the FAB FOUR, the Little FAB FOUR and THE LAME ONE.

Let's start with the Fab Four

1. Show up when you say you will.
2. Do what you promise and only promise what you can do
3. Finish what you start
4. Be polite and be nice

When ever you think the formula is too simple and should be more complicated, take a breath and revisit the FAB FOUR.

Let's get into the FAB FOUR

1. Show up when you say you will sounds so simple, so we take it for granted. It's to the point when we show up as promised people are surprised, why is that. Complacency. I believe we have become so accustomed to success we take it for granted. The customers and opportunities will be there, no problem, or will they. When businesses and people don't prosper we blame it on a host of things, but if we paid closer attention to the little things like showing up when we say we will, we take a giant leap toward success.
2. Do what you promise and only promise what you can do, quite a concept. I promise, keep my fingers crossed, cross my heart, on my Mothers honor, there are lot's of ways to say it and guarantee it, Nike says it best " Just Do It". When you make a promise keep it. How can you trust someone who doesn't do what they say they will? It's not always easy, but it is a must for your success. Put another way , if you don't do what you promise you will be considered unreliable, not worthy of trust and not someone who will be called upon for promotions, advancement, special opportunities, customers loyalty or referral.

If you under promise and over deliver you will be considered excellent. If you over promise and under deliver even if you were terrific you will be considered as someone not keeping their promise and your reputation will be tarnished.

3. Finish what you start is more then a nice saying. If you start something, finish it. Keep reminding yourself that the most important task is the one you are working on right now, PERIOD. Finish the job. Establish a reputation as a finisher and you will get more and more chances and opportunities to be successful. Fight the temptation and the allure of the new opportunity. Finish what you start, don't leave a trail of broken promises.
4. Be polite and nice. Now, you have shown up when you said you will, did what you promised, finished what you started. It's time to tie it all together by being polite, being nice and having good manners. Put bluntly, who would you rather do business with, someone who is nice, pleasant and polite or a jerk? A trick question and easy to answer.

Using the FAB FOUR will help you build strong relationships. These will be the cornerstone to your success in every facet of your life, it will always, always be about

the relationships you have created and nurtured through your life which will be the foundation of your success.

Hey how about the Little Fab Four, well they are really not that little when you put them in context with the Fab Four. Here they are-

Urgency

Pressure

Action

Results

Here's how this works. Urgency creates pressure, pressure creates action and action creates results.

Once you have established your goals you have taken the first step in creating a sense of urgency. When things are urgent don't we feel the pressure to do something? Why yes we do oh wise one is the correct answer. Look at it another way, when there is no sense of urgency [ nothing seems important] do you feel any pressure to act, no is the answer so your results will be whatever life or others throw at you.

I have found that it is very important to create a sense of urgency, not panic, please get a grip, a sense of urgency. This fosters self imposed pressure to do something aka take action which in turn provides a result. The result is merely feedback, sometimes it's what you want sometimes not, if not adjust and do it again.

I have used this formula in life , business and love, it will give you a positive direction, quit telling yourself I don't know, I wish I had a sign as to what to do . Give yourself a mental slap, get over it and get over yourself, start by creating a sense of urgency.

Last but not least is THE LAME ONE, aka, the destroyer of dreams. THE LAME ONE is the lame excuse..Lame excuses will singlehandedly destroy your dreams and goals as easily as the Fab Four and Little Fab four will help you achieve them. It starts early and can become a very bad habit. Its human nature to find reasons why things go wrong and goals are not achieved, PLEASE do not fall into this trap.

Accept responsibility for the things in your life, or you begin to feel that someone else on earth is in control, really is that how you want to live and prosper. The poor me syndrome will get you sympathy from your family, for a while, then they will see you for what you have become, a lovable loser. Get over it and eliminate The Lame Excuse from your life.

## Success in Love

Taking all the information we have discussed so far and you can use it to be the foundation for your success in love. Here is the problem, anytime you add emotion[love] into any scenario it has a tendency to over power common sense. Knowing this, let's accept the fact that love makes us do crazy things.

Relationships create interesting dynamics. Once we have established mutual feelings how do we make that work to our mutual benefit.

Sometime ago we went to a performance and the name says it all, " I Love You, Your Perfect, Now Change" Mutual attraction draws us together, its right, but it would be better if ? so it begins.

The answer might be acceptance, who we are is who we are, or is it?.

Once we get past the “ Oh My Gosh “ phase the real business of creating a life together begins.

What does that mean Old Guy, well let me explain. In order to create an amazing relationship you have to communicate with each other, here is where the trouble begins. During the courtship we listen, we speak, we feel, we respond to everything. As we move along we all revert to our own tendencies of communicating, seeing and understanding the world.

Each person understands the world based upon three ingredients, information, emotion and time. The four basic personality types are as follows: the analytical type needs more time and more information to interpret things. The pragmatic person needs information and less time to interpret things. The extrovert needs less time and more emotion to interpret things and the amiable person needs more emotion and more time to interpret things.

Putting these four personality types in a rectangle we would all like to be in the middle and we are during courtship. After courtship we revert to our basic personality type and that's where communication issues arise.

Let's look at some examples of communication problems that might arise in relationships. I need less time and more emotion to understand things while the Fabulous One needs more time and more information, see a possible problem anywhere?

Fortunately we are soul mates and have been together for 5 or 6 lifetimes, but that's a story for another day. How about someone who needs a lot of information and little time to communicate matching up with someone who needs a lot of time and a lot of emotion, do you see trouble? An example might be Mother Theresa and Donald Trump. Now put all these factors in a relationship and you can see the disconnect, relationship discord, or the Big D.

Each of us must determine their own basic communication type and that of their significant other and strive to communicate with them in the way they understand. If you went to a foreign country you would want to understand the language so best to get along, same thing in personal relationships. This ability to understand those around us includes our children, friends, business associates and anyone you want to deal with on a positive level.

Ask yourself this question, is there someone you have known for a long time, but they feel like a stranger? And is there someone you recently met, but it feels like you have known them a long time? Well look at the personality types and the evidence is right there. If they are the same as you it's easy , if they are different it's a challenge.

Twenty five years ago I went on a self improvement binge. Seminars, books, recordings and anything available. My quest for knowledge and personal improvement were insatiable and frankly it still on going. Anthony Robbins wrote a book, Unlimited Power, my original copy is still with me . The pages are dog eared and brown from age and constantly rereading them, get this book and study, you owe it to yourself and the ones you care about. This book has been an invaluable tool in helping me build relationships, develop rapport , communicating and creating a wonderful life.

We have discussed Success in Life, Business and Love, so how do we put it all together? Let me give you some ideas and things I have used.

It begins with Alice in Wonderland. She is standing at a crossroad looking each way, completely unsure of which way to go when the Mad Hatter asks her, Alice where do you want to go? She answers, I don't know, his wise response is classic, then any road will take you there.

Think of it, we are all going to get somewhere! Will it be where we want to go or where someone else wants us to go? We can live being reactive or proactive, reactive means we react to what others choose, proactive is what we choose, so what's it going to be? I choose Proactive and here's how I have done it and still do.

Using a 3 x 5 card I have written down how I want to live and my financial and personal goals. I read them on a regular basis and get out of my own way. Planting these directions in your mind is a powerful thing. Your sub conscious mind takes over and directs you to do the things that will get you closer to your written goals. Give yourself a chance, don't change directions at the first sign of adversity keep moving forward.

As your life changes your goals will change, so you adjust. The process is simple, not easy. Trust me, it has been working for me for a long time and I still do it and it will work for you too.

My personal mission statement is" To live my life with truth and honesty, love and passion without fear or regret", choose how you want to live or someone else will.

Seize each moment while you can and create your own formula for Success in Life, Business and Love.

Warmest Regards,  
Your Friend-An Old Guy