

The idea of success in American society is truly a multifaceted concept.

Booker T. Washington once said, "I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed."

Ralph Waldo Emerson maintained: "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

The great English leader Winston Churchill said, "Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm."

Indeed success clearly means many things to many people.

The first level of success is the one that we tend to think of most – the rich aristocrat, movie star and sports player. For example, Michael Jordan's goal was to be a great basketball player. Did he not go out and achieve this through hard work and determination? Bill Gates wanted to create a worldwide computer industry. He accomplished this the same way as Mr. Jordan did: hard work and grit. For me, whether it has been shooting a trophy buck or doing well on a difficulty essay, I have always adhered to what Anna Pavlova said: "To tend, unflinchingly, unflinchingly, towards a goal is the secret of success." Famous people who have accomplished great things through hard work and determination make wonderful role models, for children and adults alike. In life we would all like to have lots of money and appear on television weekly, and certainly that can be an indicator of true success.

However, Americans tend to be narrow-minded when it comes to realizing that there are other forms of success. We have a tendency to believe that only people who appear regularly on the news and make billions of dollars are worthwhile individuals. This is an inaccurate way of looking at the world.

When a prekindergarten student leaves the lunchroom with a smile on his face because I have helped him in a way that made his day better, I consider myself successful. If a teacher, for example, made it his life goal to educate students and give them each a chance to be successful in their own spheres, that teacher, although not incredibly wealthy or instantly recognizable to millions, transformed those students into incredible people. That, too, is success.

There is no textbook classification of success; instead, it is all in how one views it, as can be seen from the quotations I began with. Another quotation by Ralph Waldo Emerson comes the closest to a definition. "To find the best in others; to leave the world a little better; whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success." A person does not have to be a Bill Gates or even a President Bush to leave a positive mark on the world. For example, I am only fourteen years old, but every time I achieve anything I have strived for, I consider myself to be successful. Not everyone will agree that what he or she has accomplished fits this category. Some believe that only the Michael Jordan's of the world qualify, but what really matters is how one sees oneself. What is known as success assumes nearly as many aliases as there are those who seek it. There is no one person who judges if an individual is successful, except perhaps the individual himself or herself.

Success to me is accomplishing my own goals.

In closing, there are many different ways to be successful. First, as I said earlier, a person can be a celebrity or extremely wealthy. This level of accomplishment is what much of our modern day society tends to consider success. The type of success thought about less often is when a man or woman without being a celebrity accomplishes his or her goal. This is the true success. Teachers, ministers, Peace Corps workers and firemen realize

that not everyone can be a president, so they set out to gain what they desire and to help others. I, for one, cannot pursue the career of my choice at the moment, so I take advantage of every opportunity given to me to help me excel in my coming life. This way, when I am older and hopefully wiser, I will have a better chance of being successful. I know that it does not matter what form of success I achieve later on, because as long as I accomplish what I set out to do, my life will have accounted for something.