

# Introduction

This book is an interior travel guide into the hearts and minds of individuals who have succeeded on their own terms.

The individuals we are about to introduce to you have succeeded by knowing who they are, understanding the qualities that drive them, playing to their strengths, overcoming their limitations, taking advantage of their defining moments, and having their own definitions of success.

During the last two years we have traveled to over a dozen countries and explored with hundreds of successful individuals questions such as: What are the qualities that distinguish them? Do they simply have more energy, drive, focus, vision, and luck than the rest of us? Or do they also have something above and beyond that, something truly exceptional? Is there one particular quality shared by all successful individuals? And how can we recognize our own defining qualities and tap into our own inner strengths?

Along the way, we learned much about the qualities that distinguish and drive people who are succeeding on their own terms—and how we can recognize those qualities in ourselves.

Through in-depth interviews and insights gleaned from analyzing the comprehensive personality assessments they took, we will provide a one-of-a-kind look into people who are at the top of their game, succeeding beyond their wildest dreams.

From entrepreneurs to star athletes, from inventors of products to impassioned social workers, from mountain climbers to uncompromising politicians, we will take you behind the scenes and give you a real understanding of what motivates people who have a clear sense of purpose, meaning, and personal fulfillment in what they are doing.

We will share the inspiration and insights we've gained along the way about how winners see themselves, how we can identify and develop our own unique qualities, and how we can prepare for our own defining moments.

We wanted to find out: How does a star athlete get ready for a shot at breaking a world record? How does a parent defy the Ku Klux Klan when it is threatening her children? How does a student still in high school develop a company that Michael Ovitz wants to purchase?

Do such individuals even know what makes them tick and what keeps them going? Do they recognize winning qualities in others? Did they always know they were meant to take on their signature challenges? Do opportunities for success keep presenting themselves or come around only once? How do they overcome adversity? What keeps them awake at nights? And ultimately: How do people at the top of their game define their own success?

As we explore these questions, we'll introduce you to some of the incredible people we met, including Roger Staubach, the former quarterback who led the Dallas Cowboys to two Super Bowl victories and now heads his own international realty company; Nicole Miller, the renowned fashion designer; Rebecca Stephens, on how climbing Mount Everest became her all-consuming goal; Paul Schulte, an Paralympic wheelchair basketball player; Samuel Pizar, a Holocaust survivor who went on to become a prominent international lawyer; João Carlos Martins, who lost the use of one of his hands, but still went on to perform a Bach recital at Carnegie Hall; Ben Vereen, the actor, who tells us how he overcame the defining moment of losing his daughter; Senator Barbara Boxer, who talks about the importance of standing up for what you believe in, even when you know you can't win; Marc Koska, who invented the disposal syringe after he could not stop thinking about an article he read which focused on the need to prevent AIDS; Muggsy Bogues, the shortest NBA player of all time, who shares how he overcame the odds; Francis Samuel, who reinvented his currency exchange company when France converted to the euro; Michael Graves, the architect and designer who constantly keeps creative; Emilio Butragueño, the former World Cup soccer player who is now the sporting director for Real Madrid; and

Congressman John Lewis, the legendary civil rights advocate who spoke at the historic March on Washington just before Dr. Martin Luther King made his “I have a dream” speech.

While this is certainly an eclectic group of individuals from various countries and diverse walks of life, they do all share one common denominator, which was clear upon meeting them. What became immediately recognizable was the undeniable sense that these individuals are all doing exactly what they should be doing. They are in tune with themselves.

Now, allow us to step back for a moment and share some quick background on who we are and what motivated us to write this book. Caliper was founded by Herb over four decades ago to advise companies on hiring and developing employees, building teams, coaching executives, managing performance and virtually every aspect of ensuring that organizations have the people and systems in place to succeed. Our basic premise has always been that, when it comes to succeeding, an individual’s potential is far more important than his or her experience. Don’t look to the past. Look to what is inside of someone. The assessment instrument Herb developed and has refined through the past four decades is the Caliper Profile, which is one of the most accurate tools currently available for reading an individual’s motivations, strengths and potential. This assessment is the foundation for our consulting approach, which has helped over 25,000 companies around the world, including FedEx, Caterpillar, Johnson & Johnson, and some of the fastest growing smaller companies to assess and develop the talents of more than two million applicants and employees—from individuals being considered for their first jobs to presidents of companies, and everyone in between. It is our hope in writing this book to share what we’ve learned about people who find success on their own terms. These significant lessons have important meanings for individuals and corporations alike.

As a unique starting point, this book will begin with one of the authors, Herb, sharing what it was like to lose his sight at the age of 10. He’ll also tell you how he accepted certain things about his life—but not others.

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We will go on to pinpoint the defining moments of dozens of inspiring people who have succeeded on their own terms and share with you answers to some of the questions we posed to them, such as: How do you react when your back is against the wall? Did you recognize your defining moment when it was occurring? Did you have a hero? What quality distinguishes you? What was your biggest mistake, and what did you learn from it? What drives you in the face of defeat? Where do you get inspiration? Did you learn anything from your first job? What lessons would you like young people to learn from your life?

Among the key findings we discovered is that inside of all successful individuals are three things: a defining quality that sets them apart, a moment that they each called their own, and a clear definition of their own success.

As a bonus we are offering you the opportunity to take an online personality assessment which can serve as a starting point to help you discover your own defining qualities. The results may confirm and clarify what you already know about yourself *or* perhaps uncover a strength of which you were only vaguely aware. It is our hope that the insights you gain from this personality profile can provide a deeper understanding of how you can play to your own strengths.

By the end of the book we will also show you ways to clarify your own definition of success and identify your defining moments before they vanish in the rearview mirror.

By encouraging you to think about success in an entirely different way and showing you how winners see themselves and their world, we want to provide a road map to help you find your own success. We hope some of the stories and insights from this book will help you broaden your understanding of what success really means—whether you are an executive looking to hire employees who can grow with your company or an individual looking to change your life’s direction.