

12 success tips inspired by Grandpa Charlie



Many people, including those in leadership positions, tend to overthink things.

Haralambos “Charlie” Pistis, the archetypical self-made man and my grandfather, fortunately was not one of



them. He traveled as an immigrant from Cyprus to the U.S. at the age of 16 to make a new life for himself, and retired at 60 a millionaire. The secret to his success was not that complicated, as you'll see below.

I've codified the wisdom Grandpa Charlie passed down to me, and a glimpse of this knowledge is here. It's a set of strategies leaders should remind themselves of from time to time.

1. **Be awake and alive to the suffering of others.** “You must give in order to truly live. Live with compassion, honor, and humility—the key qualities that Charlie embraced and exemplified in his service to others. The more that you embrace these great tools for living and carry them always in your tool chest, the greater your success and life will be.
2. **Ignore realistic expectations.** All limits are, in the end, just artificial creations. It is you who hold them, you who design them, and you who give them their standing and their power. They most certainly do not hold you, as you are the author of this relationship. It is you who render unto them, the power to hold you down. If you are willing to do the work, you can damn well improve and most certainly change for the

better.

3. **Keep emotions in check.** Not easy when we are, at our core, emotional beings. Remember, though, the vision and the end game or culmination of any plan will, in the end, be the culmination of literally tens of thousands of actions, tens of thousands of choices, tens of thousands of steps forward, and tens of thousands of attitudinal responses to both those choices and steps. Planning and drawing the map that will lead to your successful life is no small thing.
4. **Respond to people as quickly as possible.** This is what I like to call my “rapid response formula,” and it is truly one of the primary secrets to my success. The faster you respond to people, the more highly they will think of you. The formula is simple, and it suggests that you both value and respect them. I love overly impressing anyone who emails or texts me. I try to respond within minutes, if not seconds, when they send me a message. Whenever someone asks me a question for which I don’t have an answer, I don’t ever guess. If I am not 100 percent sure of the answer, I just say that I will do the research and get back to them.
5. **On the way up, try to live below your means.** To live below your means is another secret to becoming a success in life, for when you do that, you will never be stressed about paying the bills and you’ll know that you have the extra money set aside for the emergencies and the unexpected. So, try, try, try, to live low, unless and until you are able to live high.
6. **Develop speaking skills.** Learning to speak, make professional presentations, and effectively market yourself matters a great deal because it sets you apart and automatically places you on a higher level. Stepping up to be a panelist at workshops, and stepping further still to confront full audiences, distinguishes you.
7. **Be the expert.** Learn, learn, learn, and never stop learning until you become your industry’s standard. Be the expert in your field, be the best, be the exception, be the one that people turn to for answers when they don’t have them. At the very least, never stop aspiring to be the best, and that means never stop planning your work, working your plan, and to never forget that anything worth doing is worth doing extremely well.
8. **Celebrate the achievement, not yourself.** Keep the ego and pride at bay in the workplace and in the company of your peers. Celebrate the work and the achievement, but not yourself.
9. **Pursue success; it rarely pursues you.** Do you want to “forge” success? Or do you want success to natural flow like a river, to your door? There are plenty of unsuccessful folks waiting for that river. And there are plenty of successful folks who “looked for what others didn’t see.” Keep your mind open. Look beyond, look harder and deeper. If you do not look for what is new in each day, so much will pass you by. Opportunities rise up with the dawn just as the sun does, and anything is possible.
10. **Write the story of your life.** It doesn’t matter if it’s a sentence, a paragraph, fifty pages, or a book. Writing the story of your life and addressing what you want to be remembered for is a telling and often game-changing exercise. It forces you to imagine and envision. It forces you to construct your best possible plan and, maybe, just maybe, to replace the one that you originally cobbled together.
11. **Nothing is final.** High achievers are never fully satisfied. The day may come when you switch gears, and, while you may redirect your energies, you will never stop achieving. there are no limits and no ends. There are only new beginnings. There are and never have been any final victories. The journey always goes on, just as your pursuit of your best life always goes on.
12. **Reflect.** Take 10 minutes to ask yourself questions like: Am I where I want to be? What more, if anything, can I do? What happened yesterday or today that I can do more with? Who can help me? Where do I turn next? This goes a long way in helping you become better, so I strongly suggest that you make it a habit to pointedly take out ten minutes each day for introspection, and when used wisely, I promise you that these 10 minutes will become the most important minutes of your days.

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