

SCENE

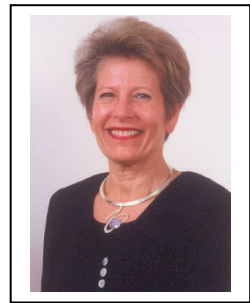
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Lonne Sterling and Christine Michaels, Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC) and Certified Employee Assistance Professionals (CEAP) and the co-founders of the Center for Change of Florida, have worked in the mental health, employee assistance and substance abuse fields for over 25 years. Their Center provides clients with outpatient counseling and area businesses with Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services. Together they have established a reputation as dynamic professionals, each bringing unique and varied experiences to their practice.

The Center services a diverse client population dealing with a broad range of mental health issues, such as mood disorders, relationship and family problems, anger and stress management, grief and loss, addictions, eating disorders and relapse prevention. The Center's staff is highly skilled, utilizing a brief, solution-focused, therapeutic approach and techniques such as EMDR and Hypnotherapy.



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Some People Have Money and Some People are Rich

Have you ever stopped to ask yourself what being rich means to you? Do you equate it with having money? Owning expensive things? Living a luxurious life style? Traveling in exclusive circles? Or is it more a matter of having Influence, Power and Prestige, running a Fortune 500 company? Could it be a sense of pride in your accomplishments? Recognition of your achievements? Making a difference in the lives of others? Maybe you define it through your relationships with your family, your friends or your faith.

We queried ourselves on the topic and perhaps because we are both psychotherapists, we had very similar responses. This peaked our curiosity so we thought it might be intriguing to gather opinions from a variety of people, from all walks of life and encompassing different generations. Here is a sampling of their thoughts on the subject.

“Waking up in the morning” (a Centenarian). “**Being Happy**” (7 year old girl). Knowing **what** makes you happy” (an 81-one year old Emmy-winning television producer). “Doing what you love, loving what you do” (an artist). “Taking steps to overcome fears, no matter how small” (a female agoraphobic client). “A harem” (a 75 year young, retired engineer). “Being content with never finishing my to-do list” (a housewife). “Picking yourself up after each failure and looking forward not backward” (an ex-pro quarterback). “Knowing that my family loves and supports me in spite of the myriad stupid and insensitive things I’ve done.” (a loving father). “Paying off the mortgage and early retirement” (a Baby Boomer). “Having done what I set out to do and hurting no one in the process” (an award-winning mystery writer). “Fulfillment and self-actualization” (a frustrated businessman). “A job paying me big bucks” (a college graduate). “A rich husband” (a graduating high school senior)

Although many people we canvassed did define success externally, by an accumulation of wealth, material acquisitions and status, a majority felt that having money and being rich were not necessarily synonymous. People who defined success more in terms of self- fulfillment, personal pride and having had a positive impact on others, felt richer.

One could thus conclude that true success means going beyond the static goal of money to a more spiritual goal of self-actualization. Only the individual with a true sense of authenticity will feel inwardly rich even if outwardly broke. Rather than

allowing cultural dictates to define them, these people define themselves. They are not influenced by a society that values monetary worth more than self-worth.

Nonetheless, in our experience there appears to be a number of characteristics common to successful people.

They have a:

- Positive attitude -- no matter the adversity, they are hopeful and expectant.
- Sense of Purpose – they know what they want, where they are going and are determined to get there.
- Sense of humor – they can laugh at themselves, find humor in the worst of situations and know how to have fun.
- Vision—they have foresight and think imaginatively

They are:

- Disciplined – they can postpone immediate gratification for the long-term goal.
- Risk takers – they are not afraid to fail and reframe obstacles into challenges.
- Intuitive – they trust their instincts, need little external validation and are not discouraged by what other people think.
- Doers—they don't wait for things to happen, they make them happen.
- Passionate—they are intensely committed to their convictions.
- Persistent—they can live comfortably with ambiguity, achieving balance in the midst of contradiction.
- Authentic – they operate with integrity and humility, honoring their gifts and accepting their limitations.
- Realistic – they have few past regrets, refuse to worry about the future and realize their point of power is in the present.
- Responsible – they respect themselves and others, setting appropriate boundaries and knowing when to say ‘no’.
- Healthy – they attend to their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

In short, being truly rich, whether you have money or not, is an **inside job**.

Oh, by the way, you might still be wondering how we defined success. We came up with several ideas such as, peace of mind, self-acceptance, personal integrity, living courageously, and making a difference. What it really all boils down to is: **being rich is not about wanting, needing or having, it is simply about being.**