

A DIVA'S CHRONICLES...



HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUCCESS?

by Jax Cassidy

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We are constantly surrounded by reminders that we can achieve success through the power of positive thinking. Whether we see these inspirational quotes in catalogues sent to our mail, in a magazine at the check-out aisle, or hanging in those oversized picture frames in those corporate offices, there is an underlying optimism that we can achieve all that is promised if we believe. Maybe I'm a sucker when it comes to these things but I must admit, over the years, I've held a love/hate relationship with these words of wisdoms. On days when I was skeptical that the sun would never shine again, I have held tight to those silly little quotes plastered along the border of my computer screen. Somehow, the corniest of sayings is just enough to help me get through that rough patch.

For me, the road to publication has been a challenging one, although most would believe beginner's luck played a heavy part in publishing less than six months after writing my first romance. Yet, in my own personal journey I have been at this trade for well over twenty years. In the beginning, I started out with a desire to be a hard-hitting journalist, along the way I discovered that my love of storytelling and entertainment could be applied to screenwriting, and then came the overwhelming desire to be a novelist. Through these twist and turns of life I've managed to apply what I've learned within the different areas, I've never looked back. Writing is like breathing. Without it I would be lost without knowing what my future would become.

Where do the quotes come in? Well, I've had more than enough time to dissect these nuggets of inspiration so I will happily share my thoughts with you. I'm no authority by any means, but I know at least someone out there will agree to my observations.

Over the years I've discovered that success is in the eye of the beholder. To succeed does not necessarily mean monetary gain or celebrity status, it means different things to different people. On the surface I may look like any healthy person, but inside I have been battling a physical and neurological illness since 1998. Some days I can't seem to get myself out of bed, and on others, I wonder if I would ever have the strength to continue on this course. Although I may be in the early stages of my writing career, I realize I have already succeeded far more than I would ever conceive. Today I am living a normal life again. When doctors once told me I may never recover, I have proven that the mind has the power to heal if one believes hard enough. Nothing beats a person down more than having to learn your motor skills again, or trying to remember simple phrases and words that have always been engrained in you since childhood, or recognizing that the essence of who you are is still locked deep inside and someday they may resurface again.

Without experiencing these personal hardships, I don't think I would have been able to see my own definition of success. Nor would I have the material to create convincing stories that will entertain readers. My success is defined by the power of overcoming personal obstacles on my own terms. The rest is just a bonus for me.

One of my favorite sayings is:

Every artist was first an amateur.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

I realize this is so simplistic but it's true, and it applies to any artist of any medium. We aren't all born prodigies, but we first start life a bit clueless. We must learn in order to shape our own vision of who we are as an artist. With education, interaction with those more experienced than us, and through hands-on training in the professional world, we are given opportunities to grow and improve if we open our eyes to the life lessons. Whether they are hidden or blatant learning opportunities, these situations provide a pivotal tool that we need to recognize. If you don't try you will never grow. If you don't grow you won't succeed. What does it hurt to try? It's a win-win because either way you are learning and growing from those mistakes or accidental achievements.

Looking back I see that my journalism helped me to be technical and precise. My screenwriting helped me to create beyond the limitations of 'just the facts'. My novel writing helped me to delve deep into my soul to provide a sense of realism to my stories that would grab the readers on an emotional level. We all start out as a blank canvas and with time and experience; we layer on those elements, one by one, that will eventually shape and form a fully cohesive painting filled with depth and emotion. We become an individual masterpiece that we should be proud of and can embrace.

*The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to
be what you desire to appear.*
—Socrates

Socrates was dead-on with this quote. I'm a big believer that a persona or an image can make or break a career. Most writers often forget that what we show to the public is what the public will perceive of us. I've seen on many occasions when an author reveals too much of themselves, are too vocal, or lash out before they have fully thought out a response which can essentially destroy their image in one fell swoop.

On the one hand, we want our friends and readers to get to know us better. On the other hand, we may cross boundaries by airing all our dirty laundry without realizing it. To have an effective persona, we must keep quiet when the situation calls and we must turn the other cheek so we don't dig our own graves. I'm too busy carving a future so I try not to read blogs or websites that focus on the negative or tearing others apart for pure enjoyment. Frankly, I find it a waste of energy spent stewing when I could be focusing on producing more work. When an author helps to prolong those flame wars via the eUniverse, years from now they will not escape or undo the proof of their one moment of lapse in judgment.

Writers need to remember that they are representing themselves and unprofessionalism can easily attract the publishing industry. All eyes are on you but it may not be for the reasons you'd like. Who knows when an agent, editor or publisher is watching and listening in so it's safe to say that staying out of those dangerous situations and fueling your professionalism in the writing industry may be the best recourse. Okay, I won't lie, I've seen my fair share of authors crashing and burning even before they made it out of the gate. As an author, I want a long-term career and if it means continuing to be consistent and professionally savvy, I'm going to make every second count.

A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds.
—Francis Bacon

It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed.
—Theodore Roosevelt

Writers have so many resources available to them these days. The World Wide Web has made it possible to reach a wider audience and whether you're published or unpublished, you can jumpstart your career by getting your name out there. The more active and visible you are, the more opportunities you will find available to you. The writing community is immense and you don't want to be one out of thousands fighting your way to get recognized. Why not build your image now so that when opportunity knocks, you'll be prepared. Go to conferences, join your national and local chapters, volunteer when you can and when you gather enough contacts and friends, you'll see those doors slowly opening for you with a chance to reach your goals faster. Initiating some kind of progress instead of laying low will get you farther in this industry.

*Happiness depends more on the inward disposition of mind
than on outward circumstances.*
—Benjamin Franklin

Life has a way with throwing a monkey wrench into your plans, but positive thinking does sooth more than hurt. I'm not saying that you're not entitled to be depressed, sulk, or feel sorry for

yourself but none of those things are going to help you overcome the situation at hand. When I feel like giving up, I think about all the progress I've made, all the words I've written, all the time I've invested into this dream—then I try to figure out a way to keep my spirits up in order to get back into that writing frame of mind. Whether it's finding another outlet to be creative or spending one day alone to regroup, you'll discover that the problems will still remain, yet you are making an effort to cope. By accepting those situations you can't control, you are rising above the issues. You taking charge of your own mental state may help you move on with a renewed outlook. Issues will work itself out one way or another, so don't allow those outside forces to trap you in a perpetual bubble. You'll find those solutions and baby steps will get you back on track in no time at all.

*The thing always happens that you really believe in;
and the belief in a thing makes it happen.
—Frank Loyd Wright*

*Go confidently in the direction of your dreams.
Live the life you have imagined.
—Henry David Thoreau*

A dear friend of mine once told me that YOU have the power to make things HAPPEN. If you believe you'll reach publication, superstardom, or the New York Times, it will happen. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow but if you keep at it long enough, you will see the fruits of your labor. Look around you, there are so many creative people out there. Heck, some may even be better than you but the longer you're at it, you'll see that many of these same talented people will have dropped off and gone in different directions. When you look even closer, the last one standing is the one that has overcome all those hurdles that may appear too difficult to conquer. Look even closer and you will find that you may be the last one standing. When you've endured the most difficult of tasks, you will see spread out before you the endless miles of your own success.

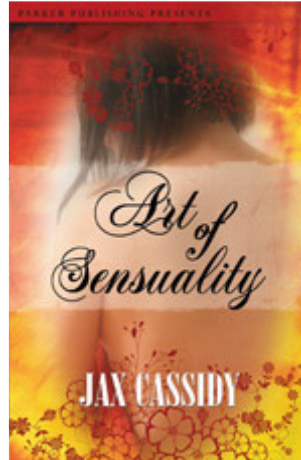
Let's face it; the power of positive thinking is energy. This truth has been around for about as long as the world has been created. When you send out those positive signals to the Universe, you are receiving those energies back in ways you might not have ever noticed. Don't shut yourself off from glimpsing the smallest of energies because it might be enough for you to hang onto. I used to be one of those people who complained about all the negative things in my life. Then one day I woke up and discovered that negativity draws more negativity. Staying positive makes the world a brighter place and staying positive gives you more clarity to make wiser choices. We tend to make poor choices when we are suffering mentally with the heaviness of all the chaos around us. Take a deep breath, get yourself into the right frame of mind and you can turn the situation around. All it takes is a few minutes and you can save yourself from a lifetime of regret.

So, the next time you scoff at one of those silly sayings in a fortune cookie or in a catalogue, ask yourself: How do YOU define SUCCESS?

Be sure to ask yourself that question again and again on a regular basis and you may discover that those tiny things that may often seem obsolete are actually small measures of success.

Don't over think the question. Just recognize that if you have tried anything at least once in your life, you have already succeeded!

CURRENT RELEASE



ART OF SENSUALITY

Release date: November 17th

ISBN: 978-1-6004-3044-2

Publisher: Parker Publishing

Art was not only a passion of Machiko Barrett, but also a destiny- a way of life she has known since her talent was discovered at 3-years-old. Caught in a turbulent storm of celebrity, scandal, and corruption, she disappeared from the art world only to re-emerge 15 years later. Her sheltered existence is disrupted when she is lured back to her one true passion: *painting*.

While she struggles to discover her own identity through her art, she encounters a man who opens her eyes to the art of sensuality, and awakens the woman buried deep inside the broken girl.

About JAX CASSIDY

Jax Cassidy is a multi-published author and has written under the pen name Cassidy Kent. She is Co-Founder of Romance Divas, an award winning romance writer's website and discussion forum. In between skydiving for charity and campaigning against human trafficking, she enjoys the company of close friends and indulges her caffeine fix at the nearest cafe. An avid traveler and an adventurous spirit, Jax has drawn inspiration from her experiences and often blends the exotic mix of Eastern and Western lifestyles into her writing. When she isn't locked up in her office penning her latest manuscript, Jax can be found creating abstract paintings for future art shows, or dividing her time between California, Texas, and Florida.

For more on Jax, visit her <http://www.jaxcassidy.com> and <http://www.jaxadora.blogspot.com>