

SELF APPROVAL Outward proving and inward approving

Being happy, healthy and successful is often measured by outward proving, rather than inward approving or improving. How about changing the face of your success?

Superwoman/man measures her value with KPI's - Key Performance Indicators - based on external measures. She goes about proving herself and frequently experiences symptoms of the "have, do and be-good-enough" syndrome. Her internal condition is often "self impoverishment" and "insignificance" – even though she may feel on the outside that she has what others don't and she has achieved or exceeded someone's standards or expectations. The destination, result or reaching the goal is key.

A super woman/man acknowledges her value with KSAI's - Key Self Approval Indicators. She goes about approving of herself, and calmly knows her greatness. Her internal condition is "self empowerment" and "magnificence." Her external condition glows, and she inspires others by valuing her own contribution and being who she really is without having to prove anything. She values the process and journey as well as the destination or goal.

Key Performance Indicators – The face of Superwoman/man

Superwoman scales walls claiming her space on the career ladder, in the ranks of an organisation, or perhaps she is disguised as supermum. She dons her costume and flies into numerous and varied situations rescuing others and running up a tally of goals and tasks that she has accomplished - generally in a short space of time. At one end of the spectrum she may tirelessly run after others and attend to their needs and at the other end, she may be completely engrossed in her own "make me good enough" endeavours that she becomes unapproachable or simply awful to be around.

Figuratively the cake she bakes is not an ordinary one. It is a gastronomic delight. Her house or work is either immaculate with the keen, never-ceasing eye of a perfectionist, or it could be chaos because of the lengthy lists of things that need doing, which may have crept up her priority list. She can't let her guard down. One of her key words is "yes". She aims to please and to appease. Other self talk, whether conscious or not, may sound like this: "I haven't got enough time." "I'm just a ..." "I couldn't possibly..." "I'm exhausted." "I have to get it done...."

Superwoman measures her value on Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) - an external measure of approval or success, based on "doingness" and performance and sometimes dependent on the circumstances and people around her that allow her to "achieve" the goal or expected outcomes - her potential happiness and sense of success being generated only if and when she reaches or proves herself against those assigned standards. Her rewards may include money, status, possessions, networks and associations which she believes will prove her value as a person. External validation and social approval is an intrinsic need so criticism or disfavour almost kill her, and resentment and self doubt are common emotions. Her value and identity lie in doing and having, completing and accomplishing with competition taking priority over cooperation – so she often feels alone and unsupported. Her superwoman cape masks her real appearance, so she seldom feels like herself, and she may never feel truly happy or fulfilled.

Changing face of success, health and happiness

The downfall is that “external rewards” can easily be stripped away from you if you measure success in an external, KPI sort of way – perhaps leaving your self esteem in ruins, your social face looking different and your health possibly threatened. What happens...?

- when your partner leaves, your children leave home or when your health prevents you from doing what you would normally do to sustain your superwoman role and identity?
- when times get tough in the business world and outcomes are not as expected? Does that make you a failure? What if you lose your job that has supported you maintaining your identity up the ladder? What if you have never set foot in the career world yet?
- when, in your quest for social approval or fitting in, you don't have the money to get what you consider is the “right stuff” or “right lifestyle”?
- if you are not in the workplace, but running business from home in the form of motherhood? How do you value yourself and your success?
- if you only put on the “success crown” once your goal weight is achieved and you deem any “slip up” or weight “yo-yoing” as a failure?
- If you are experiencing fertility difficulties and don't have the baby you so desire?
- what else?

Key Self Approval Indicators (KSAI's) – a facelift

Try on being a super woman rather than being Superwoman – a subtle linguistic difference but it makes a huge personal difference.

A super woman admires how she is constantly changing and evolving. She intrinsically knows her value by actively aligning with her Key Self Approval Indicators – inward markers of success that acknowledge her value based on her own internal sense of self and based on who she is, not what she does or what she has. Happiness and success is intrinsically in her and does not need to be generated from outside of herself, nor does she compare herself against someone else's benchmark. A super woman recognises that each and every challenge and opportunity in life is there to grow her and invite her to believe in herself, be herself and be her best self and to be an expression of her values, passion and purpose.

KSAI's might include speaking and communicating with compassion, leaving a legacy, honouring self and others, being courageous when fear is still there, teaching and nurturing, communicating honestly, sharing feelings, learning to trust more, persevering, staying calm under pressure, learning to “chill” more, spending quality time with someone, loving oneself more...

KPI's and KSAI's - Cure versus healing – your face from both angles

Superwoman qualities and KPI's relate to a cure mentality versus a super woman's qualities and KSAI's– which relate more to healing.

A cure is an external fix, often given or administered by someone else. Cure is all or nothing – success or failure. Success in the sense of health would equate to absence of disease. You hand over your health entirely to the “professional” or authority figure, drug or treatment, rather than being a proactive partner in that. You blame others for your unhappiness, rather than find the source of your own happiness in yourself. You hand over your sense of success to the world to recognise and acknowledge you in a way that “fills you up”. With a “cure” mentality, the outward signs of health, happiness and success may be visible, but inwardly what is occurring? Are the key factors leading to, or even causing that illness, unhappiness or feeling of failure still present?

Health, wellness and success with a cure-based mentality often negates or disregards the healing that can occur in the process of “unwellness to recovery” or “failure to success” which in many ways has more value than the end result or cure. The healing journey (like KSAI's) is a “way of being” with whatever is occurring, rather than focussing on an outcome. A disease, moment of unhappiness, sadness or grief, and certainly any challenge is seen in the light of lessons and growth inviting you to come back to who you are – great, gorgeous, gifted and powerful.

Remember to look at your public and private face from both angles – not just proving, but approving as well, not just focussed on the cure or outcome, but also on the healing and the day to day journey – what we call living!

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