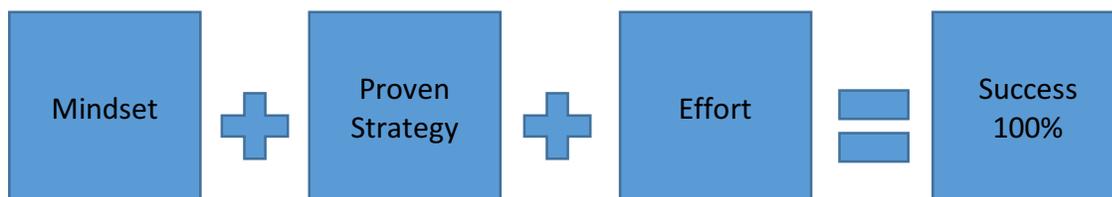


A TIME FOR  
CHANGE

What if I told you that you could achieve higher grades while spending less time and effort on your school work, most people think that sounds impossible, or think I'm crazy. There is no doubt that effort and strategy are important qualities to have in order to be successful within school and in your career. But what if I told you that the effort you put in and the strategy you have accounts for less than half of the energy you should be putting in. In fact, it accounts for less than a quarter of the energy your need to put in order to attain success. In this essay I will be talking about a concept called; the equation for success. I will be explaining it in detail due to the immense positive change I have experienced in my life when I started putting it into action. First I will begin by explaining what the equation is, and then I will explain in detail the following terms: mindset, proven strategy, effort and success. Afterwards the equation to success will be broken down, how to achieve results will be explained and strategies for change. Then I will describe the benefits I have experienced in my personal life. Lastly I will reiterate a summary for the purpose of conclusion. My goal for this essay is to answer one question: What if you could change your professional and academic life by making one small change, would you be willing to do it?

### **Equation for Success**

The image below was developed from the information I learned from an Undergraduate Studies class I took in University. The equation consists of 4 parts: mindset, proven strategy, effort and success (Nasser, 2016). If we arrange the formula appropriately we would add 3 values together and they equal success (Nasser, 2016). The 3 added values are; mindset, proven strategy and effort (Nasser, 2016).



## **Mindset**

Mindset can be described as a habit that we individually develop (Ames, 2013, para 10). It acts as a fixed mental attitude and guides majority of the actions in our day to day lives (Ames, 2013, para 10). Mindset can also predetermine a person's responses to situations, whether negative or positive (Ames, 2013, para 10). Within my Undergraduate Studies class, we explored mindset more closely, breaking it even further down into: belief, attitude and expectation (Nasser, 2016). Belief was described through my class notes as what we are convinced to be true (Nasser, 2016). For example, when completing an extensive final term paper I want my belief to be affirmed that I can complete the task; I believe in myself. Attitude is described as your emotional state (Nasser, 2016). Taking my final term paper as an example; going into my term paper assignment with a positive attitude will help shift my mindset into the right direction. The last part within our mindset is our expectation, and that can be described as what we predict will happen (Nasser, 2016). Predicting that I will complete my final paper in a timely manner and with room to spare will help direct my mindset into completing the appropriate task.

## **Proven Strategy**

Proven strategy can be described as using the appropriate approach that has been proven to work (Nasser, 2016). This is where it is important to learn about your individual learning style in order to optimize what strategy works best for you. Some strategies that have proven to be beneficial for me include: speed of implementation, which has been described in my class notes as starting the task right away (Nasser, 2016). By beginning a term paper the moment it is assigned you are more likely to complete it. Even if it is as simple as opening up a new Word document and dedicating less than a minute towards a term paper title page. Once you have started the paper, ideas seem to flow more fluently and your paper manages to get done within a shorter than expected period of time.

A second strategy that has proven to be successful for me this semester is being aware of the stress performance graph. I have taken the graph below from Forbes online, it explains how performance and stress are closely related and when you have reached an optimal level of stress,

your performance becomes optimal. The axis' in Figure 1 are performance versus stress, and it is represented through a bell curve.

Figure 1 How Successful People Stay Calm

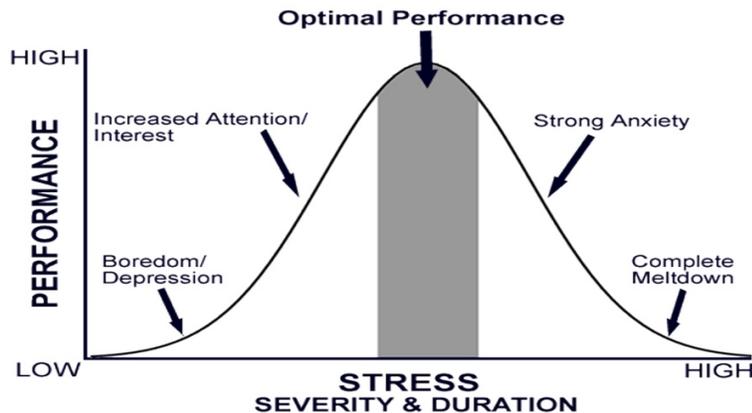


Figure 1 Performance vs. Stress low to high. Copyright 2014 by Forbes Leadership online

As Figure 1 shows, the optimal level of performance is a balance between stress and performance. In this graph low performance and success is a 1 or 2 on a scale out of 10 and high performance and stress is a 10 out of 10. When we are under stressed, we under perform; we reach a point of boredom and lack of motivation as times. From there we can begin to increase our stress level slightly and we start to feel an increase in attention and interest. When we reach a 7.5 on the stress performance graph, that is when we reach out optimal performance. When we reach a 7.5 we are well balanced and can maximize our achievements (Nasser, 2016). If we continue down the path of increased stress into an 8 or 9 out of 10, we begin to fall into a feeling of being overwhelmed and in many cases our anxiety increases dramatically.

One detail the graph does not show is what happens when we increase our stress pass the high level and into a 12 or 13, that is when we get into a danger zone (Nasser, 2016). Our performance decreases dramatically and we begin to shut down. But when we continue to maintain the optimal stress level of 7.5 we can increase our performance above a beyond a 10 (Nasser, 2016). We can achieve success we never thought was possible.

Therefore, how do we get to the optimal level; first it is important to determine the level you are at normally. Playing out a scenario in your mind such as sitting in a final exam, think about where your stress would be at normally. If you determine your stress would be low, at a 2 or 3, then it crucial to try and increase your feeling of workload. By writing down the tasks at hand it can provide you with a sense or urgency and can increase your stress levels more towards the optimal level. If you find yourself sitting in an exam scenario at a stress level of 10, then you should try deep breathing exercises to calm yourself down and allow your mind to relax. It is beneficial to try out different ways or coping to learn what works best for your particular self.

### **Effort**

The final contributor to the equation to success is effort. Effort can be described as taking some sort of action (Nasser, 2016). In our term paper example effort is the action taken in completing the actual assignment. Taking the time to schedule the task into your daily planner is also apart of effort. It is important to make note of always working in the direction from left to right, always working on your mindset first then the proven strategy followed by effort (Nasser, 2016).

### **Breakdown of Equation for Success**

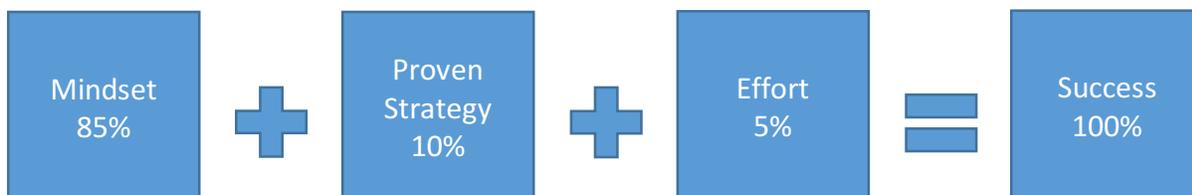
Mindset has been a topic for debate within various scholars. When researching the University library, I came across various opinions on what mindset really is. Now that we are aware of what each term in the equations means, the most important task comes in; learning the distribution of values amongst the 3 terms to equal 100% success. Understanding the importance of where to focus the majority of your energy is the determining factor for success (Schmidt, 2015, para 13).

I have found the change in my everyday success to be so powerful that I began to conduct a small personal survey amongst a diverse group of friends, asking for their opinion.

I conducted the email survey in order to receive feedback as per my friend's thoughts on percentage distribution. The chart below outlines the results I received from 9 of my friends.

Description	Proven			
	Mindset	Strategy	Effort	Success
Female High School graduate, 19yrs old	50%	10%	40%	100%
Environmental Science Student (2nd year)	20%	20%	60%	100%
Marketing Student (3rd year), 22yrs old	40%	20%	40%	100%
Civil Engineer Student (3rd year), 23yrs old	50%	40%	10%	100%
Female no post-secondary, 24yrs old	10%	30%	60%	100%
Biological Sciences Masters Student	30%	30%	40%	100%
Graduated Sociology Major, 25yrs old	30%	40%	30%	100%
Graduated Civil Engineer, 26yrs old	50%	15%	35%	100%
Graduated Registered Nurse, 26yrs old	40%	20%	40%	100%
Results decimal	0.355556	0.25	0.394444	1.00
Results percentage	36%	25%	39%	100%

From the above data sample we can conclude that the average results for distribution for mindset are 36%. For proven strategy the average distribution percentage is 25%, and for effort 39%, making it a total of 100% for all 3 values. What if I told you the results I received were completely off, what if you decreased your effort and proven strategy significantly, and increased your mindset, do you believe your success would sky rocket? The diagram below is representation of the equation for success that changed my outlook on my academics. It is important to focus on the content and to separate the content from the delivery in order to optimize your understanding of the success equation (Nasser, 2016).



When your mindset is focused you will believe you can do it, if your attitude is in a positive state and if you expect to see results then how much effort do you really need to put in? What is your strategy? If your mindset is sharp then the rest will fall into place naturally.

## **Achieving Results**

In order to achieve success it is important to always define what success looks like first. Being able to write the challenge you have in words on paper is the first step. Asking yourself; how is this affecting my success? Sometime it is difficult to even begin to think of a challenge. There are times in life that things seem so chaotic that defining one challenge seems like an impossible challenge. By reversing your thought process and coming up with something you are already successful helps trigger positive thinking. Once you have come up with a success challenge put it into the equation.

For example, one of the biggest challenges students face in University is procrastination in their assignments. By writing out the success formula, I would define my success in this challenge as having my assignments completed before the actual due date. Success should be answered in a yes or no type format. My mindset in order to achieve success would be; believing that I can begin and complete my assignment, having an attitude that I can get the job done, and expecting that my assignments will be completed in a timely manner. I need to focus 85% of my energy into this mindset. I will focus 10 % of my proven strategy into speed of implementation, and scheduling exact times in the day to sit down and complete the given assignment. I then will focus 5% of my energy into physically sitting down in a desk actually doing this assignment. It is important to make note that the majority 85%, of my energy is going into my mindset, and when I devote enough energy into building that mindset success will come naturally.

## **Strategies for Change**

According to Rahayu (2000) mindset can give developing students a sense of confidence in their preparedness to navigate the real world after graduation. When an individual is more

confident it can transform their beliefs guiding their confidence and making the impossible tasks seem possible (Rahayu, 2000, para. 1). A successful mindset views failure as education, it believes anything is possible (Nasser, 2016). Successful mindsets know that true success comes after a significant amount of failure; they believe that if there is one person out there that can do it, so can they (Nasser, 2016).

Another effective strategy for change would be learning to shift your mindset from a fixed mindset to a growth. In a study conducted by Dweck growth mindsets have been found to increase student achievement in school than with fixed mindsets (Schmit, 2015, p.17).

### **My personal life**

In order to understand my success, it may be important to explain a bit about my background. As a third year Bachelor of Arts University student I am majoring in English and minoring in Business. I am currently a full time student, taking 4 courses and I maintain a full-time job working for a consulting company. Within my work I help assist projects from an administrative perspective and deal hands on with clients.

There was a hesitation towards going back to school, due to the fact I was unsure if I was going to be successful and have enough energy to balance everything. The equation for success has changed my perspective in both my academics and in my professional career. It has allowed me to spend less time studying while achieving higher grades, my anxiety has decreased, I have more self-confidence in school and at the office, and I'm able to stay motivation for a longer period of time. I enjoy attending class, and have not missed a single lecture the semester I started using the success equation as my guideline. But most importantly I am enjoying attending University and going to work, I never thought it would be able to feel excited about school and work.

My hope for this paper is to inspire one individual to make the change on their view of success. Having the ability to be open minded helped me to attain the most benefits from this

simple formula. Determining areas of weakness helps individuals engage in undertaking a transformation for change outside of one's comfort zone (Rahayu, 2000, p. 20).

## **Conclusion**

Imagine what you could do in your life if you developed a healthier mindset; imagine the impact it would have in your academics and in your future professional career. Therefore the effort you put in and the strategy you have are not nearly as relevant as the important as developing a healthy mindset. Within this essay you have learned the breakdown for the equation for success, you have learned strategies for change along with learned about my personal story and how it has changed my outlook on school and on work. Steve Jobs (2005) did a Stanford Commencement Speech and said, "Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma, which is living the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly already want to become. Everything else is secondary."

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