

What does it mean to win?

Win

verb

1.

be successful or victorious in (a contest or conflict).

2.

acquire or secure as a result of a contest, conflict, bet, or other endeavor.

While becoming motivated to write this, I started to conceptualize life as a game. Life is a game that is played by everyone on Earth. As you exit the womb, you are simply born into the game of life, and so your journey begins. There are no obtainable cheat codes, no glitches, no redos, no shortcuts; the only way to play is to continue forward until you die. I say these words not to cast a morbid outlook on life, but instead to bring light to the fact that as humans, we as a species have been given by our Creator the ability to make choices and decisions of our own. To choose to do nothing, you will become nothing. To choose to do more, you will become more.

“Strength and greatness are choices. Do not be tempted by pleasure and the distractions of weak men and women.”

-Stefan Aarnio, Hard Times Create Strong Men

In order to play the game and emerge a winner, we first must address what it means to win. This is subjective, as winning in life is and will always remain in the eye of the beholder. Some would say that winning in life means becoming a millionaire. Some would say it means finding God. Some would say it means being good to your community and having a kind heart. While I agree with all three of these things, I googled what it means to win in life and this is the top result I got:

“Winning at life means that you are succeeding, based off of your own terms and parameters for success. Someone who's **winning at life** is genuinely happy with themselves and their results. ... Whether you work smart or you work hard, you're going to have to WORK for what you want in **this life.**” - Quora, *What is your idea of a winning life?*

If I were to personally define winning at life, I would say that as a young man I have a responsibility to all who come and go in my life to impact them, or leave them impacted in a positive way; to use my energy to inspire people to want more for themselves and not let their circumstances define them, but also not to make the same mistakes that I have made. I also staunchly believe it is my responsibility especially as a man in the modern world to be the most powerful version of myself. More specifically, walking closer with God as I am a Christian, grappling my demons and destroying them mentally and spiritually, and discovering financial freedom. My opinion may certainly vary from others, but that's okay. I am still young as I am telling you this, and I have many years to ride out on Earth before I can transpose sagely wisdom. However I only proclaim what is in my heart, and I speak these words free of ego, as I have my own crosses to bear. If you started out with nothing except a few good rhymes and a truckload of ambition, managed to claw your way to the top of the rap game and produce several multi platinum records in a 25-plus year music career, you are leading a winning life. This outlines the success story of the legendary hip hop artist Eminem. If you are a disabled combat veteran who has served multiple tours of duty on foreign soil with no guarantee of ever seeing your family again, you are leading a winning life. This is the story of my father's experience serving our country in the military. He had the courage to willingly stare into the face of adversity and persevere. If you come from a broken family and dysfunctional home, nail down your first property with only \$1,200 cash only to build a multimillion-dollar real estate company doing joint-ventures, you are leading a winning life. This is the story of now deceased, self-made millionaire, award-winning Canadian real estate investor Stefan Aarnio. He wrote several books in his life, including Hard Times Create Strong Men. This is probably his most well-known book right now, and after reading it I was severely influenced to step up and achieve mastery over my life. At the time of writing this, *Gladiator* starring Russell Crowe was blaring in the background while I was trying to concentrate, but it reminded me of how General Maximus had everything taken from him; his family, his reputation, his pride. He grinds his way back to the top through many battles in the Roman colosseum and has his revenge on Commodus, the emperor who ordered his family to be killed. Maximus dies in the end, but he was able to avenge his family and return to them in the afterlife. He ended the game of life as a true champion. I am 19 years old, and I have only begun my journey on the road to self-mastery, spiritual growth and financial freedom. By analyzing the success stories of people who have turned rags to riches and have taken risks and advanced hugely in their respective industries, I am inspired and wish to emulate their strategies and lifestyle changes so I can reap the benefits of entrepreneurship as well.

Having established a general definition of winning the game and portraying a few different scenarios where people are winning, we now have a general idea of what it means to emerge victorious. There are two questions that remain. What tools do I need to win? How do I

play to win? Well, the answer is simple. The only one who will ensure your success is you, by going against the grain and taking the leaps and bounds that 99 percent of people will not take.. Most of the general population will do the bare minimum to survive and that is only if they are mercilessly kicked by a higher entity such as an employer or a bank. They do this because it is easy and they stay comfortable. The ones who double down, pass up the booze and cigarettes, don't waste their money on consumer crap and kick themselves day after day are the ones who go the furthest and come on top no matter the scale. This is significantly harder to do, but if many of those in the top one-percent did it to be successful, why can't you?

Mindset and motivation to take risks are your tools.

Countless hours of hard work, drastic lifestyle change and emergence from the comfort zone are how you play.

Do you have what it takes to win?

-Abraham Munch

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