

what  
success  
takes



by  
GARRETT PIERSON



# What Success Takes

The Die-Hard Principles of True Victory in Life,  
Business, and Soul

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Garrett Pierson

**Interview with Monikah Ogando**

<http://www.whatsuccesstakes.com>

**Garrett:** Hello everyone, Garrett Pierson here with What Success Takes. I'm here today with Monikah Ogando, who is The Business Explosion Coach, and Founder of Ogando Associates. Monikah, welcome and I'm so happy to have you here.

**Monikah:** Thank you for having me, Garret.

**Garrett:** Tell me this; you were in the Inc. 500, is that correct, with your business?

**Monikah:** Yes, I was listed as one of the fastest growing companies in the US. It's very exciting for us this year; we've been giddy with excitement and pride. It was awesome – and it was a lot of hard work. It's like, "Wo-hoo, somebody noticed."

**Garrett:** Why don't you give us a little bit of background about you, your family, or your business adventures, and then we'll get into the questions.

**Monikah:** I was born and raised in the Dominican Republic. How about that for starting at the beginning? We came to this country when I was ten years old. I raced through school, so much so that I graduated with two undergraduate degrees by the age of twenty. As immigrants, my parents weren't really in the financial position to pay for my schooling. It was either go to college on your own dime, or don't go to college. I chose to go to college on my own dime.

I guess that was the first piece of me saying you have to do what it takes to get what you want, because otherwise; it's not going to be handed to you. That's always been the underlying assumption of success, for me.

When I left college and went into corporate America, I got into financial services. I learned that a lot of the financial planners, CPAs, and people like that, they're good at what they do but sometimes it's hard for them to understand where the other person is coming from, particularly with entrepreneurs. We have very different financial planning needs.

I created a course to teach financial planners how to attract and keep entrepreneurial clients because they're very profitable, the good ones are. I went around the country teaching that and training other financial planners. They started bringing their business-owning clients to the classes I was teaching.

I started working with them, coaching them one-one-one on their particular concerns, whether it be sales, how do I do this, how do I carry my business online, how do I develop an online presence, how do I motivate my team, how do I take my sales to the next level? They were really key, business building and business growth questions.

One of the things I discovered is that a lot of it had nothing to do with tricks or tips, tools, technologies, or strategies. I can give you the world, but if the mindset and belief system does not align with it and is not congruent with it, it's just kind of throwing pearls to the pigs, as someone once wisely said.

I started to really work with my clients on their mindsets. Once their mindset was clear, then you could mix in the marketing and the money. It's explosive! It's kind of like a fulcrum. Do you know what a fulcrum is?

**Garrett:** Teach me; I know what it is, I'm just not remembering right now.

**Monikah:** You know how you can put a spoon on a lever and if you move the spoon at the base, just a little bit, the tip of it moves exponentially. A lot of what I noticed in the business world is a lot of people are moving the spoon at the end of it. They are moving around making this big to-do and this overhaul, but the smallest change at the root, at the belief level, at the mindset level creates exponential results. It does not take a lot of effort, but you have to get to the root.

When you change things there, then you don't have to move much; everything just automatically happens, and we'll get into that. They started calling me the "Business Explosion Coach," because a lot of it was explosive success. They were like, "Oh my God, I wasn't even expecting this; I thought we were just going to coach once a week for three months, and that would be the end of it and I was going to see some gradual growth. I wasn't thinking my life was going to be altered forever." I'm very proud of the transformations I've witnessed and assisted in. I'm so passionate about entrepreneurship. I think it's the best thing since sliced bread, to be honest.

**Garrett:** That's wonderful. That's a great story and I'm sure you've helped many people, including yourself. The number one question I always start with is, and which is chapter one of my book is, "Failure is Key". Some people say, "Garrett, I don't like you saying that; it's negative. Why are you saying that?"

In my life, and a lot of people I've interviewed and people that I've witnessed their failures; I believe failure is a key point of becoming successful. You have to have a low to have a high. Do you agree with that?

**Monikah:** Yes, I do. Failure is just feedback. Failure means it didn't work. That's all failure is. It doesn't mean you suck. It doesn't mean you are forever doomed to the pits of depressing hell. It just means it didn't work; try something else.

**Garrett:** I believe a lot of people are afraid of failure and that's why they don't succeed. How has failure helped you to become more successful in your life, or business?

**Monikah:** You said something very important. You can't have a low if you don't have a high. One of the things that failure has contributed to in my life is that contrast. It's allowed me a space to get clear. In the face of this, what do you want? You can stop now or you can just lie down and play dead, or you can change direction, you can tweak some things or you could just keep trucking. What do you want?

It has allowed me to get clear. It has allowed me to fluff my aura and get rid of the unnecessary stuff, change direction, get more tools, get skills, ask for help, figure out

what resources I have available to me, and it just sharpens me. Iron sharpens iron and I've become sharper because of failure.

If I was just cruising by, not only would I get dull and numb because I haven't really met up with any challenges, but I would also get arrogant. It wouldn't be nice to be around me because there is nothing to keep me humble.

Failure has two big gifts. Number one, it's clarity and number two is perspective. When you've gone through stuff and you've failed, you are also compassionate about other peoples' failures. You serve as an example for them to also keep trucking. I like failure. All around, it's a good thing.

**Garrett:** That's great. Chapter two is the "Successes of Life". We just talked about failure and we've learned from that. Now comes success. What would you consider to be the three greatest successes you could achieve in your lifetime and tell us why?

**Monikah:** It's funny; when I was thinking about this – we talked about the Inc. 500 and everything else. None of the things that came to mind that could possibly make the top ten list, never mind the top three list, none of it had to do with my business.

I see my business as an extension of who I am. How successful my business is allows me to be a better version of who I already am and who I want to become. For me, the greatest successes, so far, number one was graduating college by age twenty, completely self funded. I didn't think I could do that. It was hard. When we talked about failure and I say I like failure, I don't mean to downplay how awful it feels sometimes, and how hard it is, and how confronting it is, and how discouraging sometimes. I don't mean to downplay that.

I can only say I like failure with perspective. In the middle of it I'm like, "Oh are you serious, I have to go through this?" For me, graduating college by the age of twenty was a grueling, gruesome, heart wrenching experience. At the end of it, what happened was when I walked across that stage, I was like, "Wow, who I've become..." I'm getting teary just thinking about it. Who I've become because of what I've had to do to get clear, to get discipline, to keep trucking, to be resilient, to have that stick-to-itiveness. I wouldn't trade that for the world. It was an amazing experience.

The second one was beating cancer. Again, when I was twenty-two, I was a couple of years out of college and diagnosed with cervical cancer. They caught it late so they gave me six months to a year to live. My daughter at the time was about eighteen months, almost two years old. Again, it was one of those big questions, "Okay, what do you want? Are you going to stop now; are you going to lie down and play dead until you die? Are you going to change direction or keep trucking? What do you want?"

To face that and to be on the other side of it, completely healthy – not just I beat cancer but I get the flu every now and again. No, disease and illness free; I haven't even so much as gotten the sniffles for ten years because that was how clear I was in my

decision that I am going to be 100% healthy 100% of the time. There is no other option. That was big for me.

The third one was of course my daughter Sarah. She is the Sun in the sky. I love and am very proud of the fun and empowering relationship that I have with her. There are so many opportunities for me to check in with who I was as a daughter when I was her age, the lessons my Mom taught me, so it's a lot of mirroring, a lot of projecting back and forth with her. It's allowed me to grow and it's a fresh playground for me to say, "This is what I want to do. This is what I don't want to do. This is who I say I am in this situation and this is who I'm not."

All of my successes have been opportunities for me to just step forward and say, "Okay, this is what Monikah is made of."

**Garrett:** Wow, that was very inspiring and I can throw the book away and just play those three things you talk about 100 times over and that to me is ...

**Monikah:** Thank you, we'll be here all day.

**Garrett:** That was awesome. Now, let's talk about business, the successes of business. You can talk about your business, other businesses you think are successful, but what do you think are the hallmarks of a successful business?

**Monikah:** The biggest one that comes to mind is adaptability. We are talking about the economy doing this and that; I'm not even going to speak into what people are saying. We've gotten into this survival mechanism. We have to eat or be eaten, or kill or be killed. People are talking about Darwin like he was right. This is what it comes to; only the strong survive.

That's not what he said. The man has been so grossly misquoted. He said that the species that survive are the ones that are most adaptable to change. So, the marketplace now is shifting. It has always shifted, but it's become much more flagrant now. What businesses have to do is say, "What are looking at? Do things the way we've been doing them and hope they turn around and come back to "normal". Or, we'll shift with it and create different results based on how we are with our customers, how we are with our vendors, how we are with our competitors, how we are with the marketplace in general, who do we say we are." That's ultimately the number one question.

For me, the hallmark of a successful business is adaptability, fluidity. That's why small businesses are in such an advantageous position. You are more nimble when you are smaller. You can move faster, adapt things more quickly in your operations, your marketing, your personnel, and your stand with the community. When it takes you forever to notice change, like in December people started saying, "We're in a recession," when the rest of the country was like, "Really? Welcome to the party." When it takes you forever to notice something and then to respond to it, by the time you are prepared to "do battle" the war has been won or lost somewhere else already. You'll get the memo later, but sorry; you're late to the party. I would say adaptability is number one.

**Garrett:** That's great, I love that. "The Top Ten Lies of Success" – throughout my life, I have thought success was something and later found out it was totally different from what I thought. What have you learned about success that is different from what you earlier believed about it?

**Monikah:** I always thought success was something to get to, a destination. When I was growing up in the Dominican Republic, it was getting to the United States. Once I was in the United States, and going to a school that was not challenging me academically, it was going to a more challenging school. Then, it was going to college, and then I got married and had a baby, fresh out of college. Then, it was now I have to do this. There was always a "what's next," thing to get to.

What I have come to know about success is that it sounds cheesy and trite, but it's not the destination; it's the journey. Ultimately, and I'll keep saying this again because it rings so true for me; ultimately, the only question that we have to ever answer, in business, health, finance or whatever, is who do you say you are? Success is an opportunity for you to answer that question. It's an inside job, much like failure. It's an inside job.

You're not born with a silver spoon in your mouth, like that guarantees a safe and smooth ride. There have been so many people who have a silver spoon in their mouth when they're born and they just puke it and do something else. There are people who are born in the throes of despair and create amazing, transformational results, not only with their lives but the way that they impact other people.

That doesn't come from external circumstances. It doesn't come from external resources. It comes from inside. What do I say I'm up to? Who do I say I am? What do I say I have to contribute? What impact do I want to make in my life and in my business?

Success isn't about this income goal to get to, or this revenue goal, or the number of clients, or the number of customers. Those are all great metrics to let you know you are on the right path, given the direction you've declared for yourself. Ultimately, success is who you become on the way to get there.

**Garrett:** I'm sitting back enjoying and eating up all your words, so thank you. "Mind, Body, and Soul" – do you believe that success can affect your personal wellbeing, and that your personal wellbeing can affect your success?

**Monikah:** Absolutely, we're not compartmentalized beings. We don't live compartmentalized lives. This is present from me because I just came back from the dentist this morning. They were tell me how the health of your teeth has a lot to do with your propensity to develop heart disease and your propensity to develop gallbladder, intestinal, or liver issues. I was like, "What, my teeth, really?" Okay, I'm going home and flossing.

The point I'm making by referencing that is that your body is a tool that's meant to support you. When I was going through that cancer experience, I almost saw my body

as the enemy, like I had to subdue it, control it, tell it what to do; “You’re not going to die, this is what we’re doing and you just better shape up, buddy! I’m in charge here.”

The past ten years, I’ve learned that my body is in partnership with me, dancing with me. It’s giving me feedback. When you’re dancing with someone and they’re stepping on your toes, it doesn’t mean they’re a bad dancer. It means you are out of sync. It might mean they’re a bad dancer, but you don’t know that right away.

The mind, body, soul connection is really about everything being integrated, in integrity, and aligned. When any one of those things is misaligned, it affects the rest of them. It’s not like one is more important than the other. They all dance together.

**Garrett:** I love that analogy. In chapter six, I talk about “The Climb”. For me, I visualize my success as climbing a mountain because I live right next to the mountains. I love the mountains. Other people visualize it as a marathon or there are a lot of different ways. To me, there is effort involved in any aspect of your life. What have you enjoyed the most in your efforts, your climb, or your marathon, to achieve success? What have you enjoyed most?

**Monikah:** I like that you say effort because sometimes people think that effort equals struggle. It’s not the same thing. I like that you said that. The thing I’ve enjoyed the most; when I’m confronting a difficulty or a challenge, it’s not pretty from this side. It’s like, “Oh man, I have to go through this. It’s a pain in my butt.” Yet, while I’m going through it, because I have the gift of perspective, and the point of reference of there having been similar situations to this; we all have the gift of perspective if we use it. You’ve been through other challenges. You’ll make it through this, too.

Because you’ve become a different person each time, the challenges that come thereafter are just going to be that much more challenging. It’s like when you’re playing a video game. You can’t expect the level of difficulty in level four to be the same as in level eight. It’s not going to happen. That’s not level eight. You’re just in another version of level four.

The thing I’ve enjoyed the most is who I’ve had to become in order to be available for my next opportunity. I’ve had to confront some of my own inner demons, my own belief system, the things that have worked for me and the things that have not worked for me, releasing that, forgiving people, forgiving myself for holding myself back in some respects, letting go of the need to be right about certain things or about certain people, letting go of the need for validation or approval from certain people in my life, whether it is my parents or a client I think stiffed me. I just want validation and my day in court.

The climb to success isn’t so much about what I’m doing as much as it is about what I’m letting go of. It’s not so much about what I’m taking on as much as it is about what I’m releasing. Sometimes the releasing is far more painful than the taking on of things.

**Garrett:** I love that. You don't get put on the Inc. 500 for not building relationships. Chapter seven is "Building Social Equity," which is a work I love to use. How does success or the lack thereof affect your relationship with others, or does it?

**Monikah:** Equity – I guess because I come from the financial world. To me, when I hear equity, I hear assets minus liabilities. It's not all pretty. It's not all assets. You also have to deal with the liabilities that are involved. In terms of how success affects my relationships with others, it's that dance or balance.

There are some people, situations, or circumstances that perhaps I perceive as liabilities in my life, in my business. My position as a steward of my own success is to make sure that my net worth or my equity so to speak is in the black. My assets outweigh my liabilities.

Success is a great sifter because what happens is the people who are misaligned with my direction just fall away. I don't have to kick anybody out of my life. In fact, I'm going to assert; nobody has to ever kick anybody out of their life. The way you know they belong there is because they're still there. The way you know they don't belong is they've gone. That's how you know. We're great big magnetizers. We are this big magnet. The stuff that doesn't belong to you won't stay, no matter how hard you try to keep it. The stuff that does belong to you, you won't be able to keep it away. Success is a big sifter because it prepares you for what's next and the lack thereof sharpens me.

What are you up to? What are you doing here? Are you sure you want to hang out with these people? Are you sure you want to be in this environment? If you're not, you are going to have to move. Sift away the things that do not align with who you say you are.

**Garrett:** I love it; that was awesome.

**Monikah:** I'm giving you the Mo Bible, here, Garrett.

**Garrett:** This is the meat. I love the meat. You were talking earlier about level four and level eight and being in a game. My chapter eight is "Success is Easy". A lot of people have a problem with this. That's fine. I think of a video game, and I think of when there is a video game, a lot of times you have an easy level, medium level, and a hard level.

No matter what level or way of playing the game, no matter which one you choose; let's say you choose the hard. You go through that and it will be easy. If you choose easy, you're going to go through that and it's going to be the easy level. If you choose the hard level, it's going to become easy to you, as well.

To me, success is easy, no matter which part of the game you choose. It's the experience that can sometimes be hard. A lot of people don't like me to say that either, success is easy. They tell me I'm crazy.

**Monikah:** You're annoying a lot of people around.

**Garrett:** The reason this chapter is titled that is I believe that people have certain strengths, and to them; that's easy. What comes relatively easy to you?

**Monikah:** What comes relatively easy to me is my affinity for language and communication, the ability to listen to someone. I'm going to make a distinction here; there is a difference between listening to your talking and listening to your speaking. Your talking is the words you are using, that are coming out of your mouth. Your speaking is your "come from", what is fueling the words that you are saying.

You and I could have a conversation and I could say, "Fine Garrett, have a great fricking day!" Or, I could say, "Fine Garrett, have a great fricking day," and completely different energy because it has a completely different speaking underneath the words. I'm very good at picking that up.

**Garrett:** How did you discover that talent?

**Monikah:** I'll tell you; I grew up in a household where my father was in military police intelligence for over thirty years. He was the master of subtlety and mind games. I learned to pick up subtleties very early in my life. I don't have a horrendous story, I wasn't abused, or anything like that. It was just a very heady, intellectual household that I grew up in.

We always had to be quick on our feet and figure things out quickly, and put things together. I'm very good at looking at the big picture and breaking it down, or taking the broken down pieces and making a big picture out of it. As a coach, that's a great gift to have. A lot of times, people come with broken pieces and say, "What do I make of this?" Or they come with a big vision and ask, "How do I execute this?" That's my greatest strength, I think, to pick up on the subtleties and shift my focus with my vision glasses. I can see near and I can see far and I can make sense of it all.

**Garrett:** That's great. I love that exercise. People that come back to me and say, "Garrett, you can't say success is easy." I ask them that question, "What comes relatively easy to you." They tell me, and the light bulb goes on. I'll say, "See, success is easy if you focus on those strengths that you have."

**Monikah:** Brian Tracy says that a weakness is just a strength misapplied. I really believe that. Think about it; if you're someone who is very good at details but you are in a position, career, or business that requires you to be creative and kind of right brained, you're going to feel inadequate. That's not because you have a particular weakness, it's because your strength doesn't live there. You have to go to where your strength lives.

**Garrett:** Chapter nine is "Back to Reality". Although success is easy, it doesn't mean there aren't challenges and discomfort and efforts that we have to go through. What are the greatest challenges that impair your success and how do you overcome those challenges?

**Monikah:** Garrett, I wish I had a big litany or list of stuff that I could classify as challenges, but the more I think about the challenges I have in my life, the more they all boil down to that one question I gave you earlier. Who do I say I am? If I say to myself that one of my greatest challenges is I don't believe in myself, okay who do I say I am? My greatest challenge is I don't have resources. Who do I say I am? My greatest challenge is that I grew up in an abusive household. Okay, who do I say I am? It always boils down to that.

The way to overcome that is like the \$84 thousand question. Answer it in the way that moves you forward. You can always answer it like I am an abused person, or a survivor of cancer, or I'm a black woman in an apartheid country. Whatever it is that you identify with is what you are going to manifest. Who you say you are is the biggest, deepest, singularly most important question anybody can ask of the other person, ever. All the other challenges fall away. Then they become irrelevant.

They are just like circumstances, chairs in the Titanic, if you will. The question is, are you going to be on the Titanic or are you going to be on a boat that actually gets you somewhere? If that's the case, it doesn't matter how many chairs you move around on the Titanic; you're going down.

**Garrett:** I love that. That is great. *What Success Takes* is the title of my book, and chapter ten. It kind of wraps it all together. You probably just answered that, but just going into a little more detail, what does it take to be successful?

**Monikah:** First, decide to be successful. I told you before that I'm a big lover of language so to me, etymology is very important, the study of words and how they break down. Decide has the same root word as homicide, suicide, and all the other "cides". That root suffix means to cut off. When you are "de-ciding" what you are doing is cutting off all possibilities and moving away from them. The "de" means away.

First, decide that you're going to be successful and that no other options are available to you. Then, the second part of that is to do it, take action. You can make up your mind all you want but if your butt is still in the chair, then nothing is happening. The third thing is deliberate.

What I mean by that is okay, take in some feedback, some stuff has worked, and some things are not working. You put too much pepper in there, too much aggression, maybe too much love or too much permission in a relationship or whatever. You have to take some things away. There may also be some things that are missing. Maybe you didn't put enough love. Maybe you didn't put enough heart so when you're deliberating you're figuring out the right ingredients, right formula for you to create the results you want. You tweak it, take that feedback in, go redesign some things.

Decide again. Okay, this is what I want. Do I want to stop now, play dead, or change direction? What am I doing here? Then, go take action based on that decision.

**Garrett:** Wow, taking notes here because that is powerful. What is your favorite quote related to success?

**Monikah:** I have been looking so forward to this question. My favorite quote in the whole wide world has completely shifted the way I see people and the way I see the world and the way I see my place in it. It's a very quick sentence from *A Course in Miracles*. It says, "The truth about you is so lofty that nothing unworthy of God is worthy of you." The truth about you is so lofty that nothing unworthy of God is worthy of you.

For me, that just takes my breath away. For me to say if it's not something that I would think of in the same vicinity as worthy of God, then what am I doing with it? Why is this here? Let me shift some things. Let me deliberate, tweak, feedback, redirect, and then go decide to do something else. It just makes it simple.

Sometimes we complicate our lives too much. We have to do this and psychotherapy that and coaching this. I have to prepare. I have to go to a mountain for a year and be with... no, you just have to decide, do, and deliberate. Period.

**Garrett:** Do you know who said that or is it unknown?

**Monikah:** There are two people who wrote the book, *A Course in Miracles*. I forget their names, Helen something. You can Google that. They have free versions of that book.

**Garrett:** Monikah, I'm sure you've inspired many people who will be listening to this, or reading the transcript. Where do they go to find out more about you?

**Monikah:** You can go to [www.businessexplosioncoach.com](http://www.businessexplosioncoach.com). Or, you can go to [www.organdoassociates.com](http://www.organdoassociates.com).

**Garrett:** Awesome, thank you so much for your time and insight. It was a wonderful interview and I had a wonderful time speaking with you. I hope to meet you face-to-face, someday.

**Monikah:** Indeed, I'm looking forward to it. Thank you for having me, Garrett. This has been great.

## About the Author



### Garrett Pierson

**Garrett Pierson** has been helping individuals and businesses find “*what it takes to be successful*” in creating the life they deserve and business they desire by giving them the tools and techniques to make it happen.

He is **founder and president of New Generation Consulting LLC**, a **consulting firm** specializing in search engine optimization, social media, website conversion, and success.

**Clients** include Alex Mandossian, Global Marketing Strategies, Trust Guard, Webstarget, and many more satisfied clients worldwide.

Garrett has created software, training, and product services that give business owners the ability to drive targeted traffic to their websites and therefore obtain more sales and profits.

Garrett is a family centered entrepreneur that lives his passion each and every day, and it is his goal to help others do the same. To find out more about Garrett and his services, visit <http://www.garrettpierson.com>.

## What's Next?

**Now** that you have found what it takes to be successful I suggest you learn even more from the “Success Mentors” that you were able to learn from above. Each interview that I had the opportunity of doing with these great people was packed full of great insights on what success takes.

To get access to these full interviews and more, visit today:

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