



By Joe Byerly

Lesson #1: The finish line is never fixed

Several authors warned about the dangers of hitching our happiness to goal achievement. Too many of us spend years doing things we don't enjoy while sacrificing the things that bring us fulfillment, all in the name of achieving success in the future. Some of us even think we're managing success, but in actuality, success is managing us. That's because the finish line of ambition is never fixed. It moves on us each time we cross it.

In his book, [*From Strength to Strength*](#), Arthur Brooks points out that it's too easy to find ourselves running life on the Hedonic Treadmill. The dopamine high that achievement brings quickly dissipates after we get our hands around it. We're left wanting to feel it again, so we chase after more. We expect to feel contentment on the other side of our goals, only to find the desire to chase our next success. He writes, "No matter how fast we run, we never arrive." In [*The Earned Life*](#), Marshall Goldsmith also commented on the dangers of living solely for ambition, writing that it gives us a rinse and repeat rhythm to life which doesn't necessarily equate to happiness or fulfillment.

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