

How to avoid achievement overload

Achievement vs Over-achievement

Achievement is being motivated by high performance and getting to a desired outcome. **Overachievement** is being consumed by the relentless pursuit of more.

Ambition and wanting to do well can create a positive focus for your career. But when we become blinkered by achievement we can lose perspective on what makes us happy and helps us grow.

Are you an overachiever?

You can assess yourself using the below yes/no questions. If you answer 'yes' 4 or more times, this is a signal that you may have a high achievement bias.

1. Do you have a goal that you're going after?
2. Do you worry what failing will say about you?
3. Do you feel defined by your successes?
4. Do you want to be the best?
5. Do you prioritise excellence over experimentation?
6. Are you highly self-critical?
7. Do you regularly let work creep into your non-work life?
8. Do you prefer to focus on the future rather than the present?

Risks of being an overachiever:

- Competition and comparison
- Anxiety and overwhelm
- Pressure and perfectionism



Ideas for action

Prioritise performance

Overachievers are more focused on reaching the finish line than they are on the quality of the outcome.

High performers are focused on reaching their goals, but they care much more about how well they perform and how they can improve.

Think about a work goal you want to go after and 1 way you'll grow personally by getting there.

Don't put all your achievements in one basket

When a need to achieve focuses in only one area in your life it can lead to you becoming blinkered.

Achieving in more than one area of your life and in more than one way can balance your need to achieve.

Ask yourself: How am I helping others achieve? / How am I achieving better work/life fit?

Carry out a Rearview Review

Looking back at the achievements you're proudest of, helps you collect clues about what matters to you.

Part 1: Create a mind-map of your proudest moments and note what it was about the experience that gave you the sense of achievement.

Part 2: What do your achievements have in common? Take this awareness and compare to your current goals.

Coach yourself questions

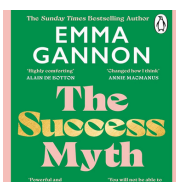
When has a bias for achievement held you back?



What impact do the people you spend time with have on your need to achieve?



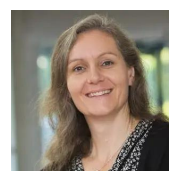
Recommended resources



The Success Myth
by Emma Gannon



High Performance Podcast
Highlights on YouTube



The Long Win with Cath Bishop
Squiggly Careers podcast special