

4.3 Failure is not an option

READING

- 1 Read the article. Match the paragraphs (1-4) with the main point they contain (a-d).
- a the connection between achieving success and having money 2
 - b some things that are more important than becoming successful 4
 - c a comparison between the human race and the animal world 1
 - d how the effort of becoming successful can harm some people 3

Does success matter?

ANITA DONALD



1 Have we always been so obsessed with success? Is it simply a normal part of the evolution of the human race? Success in the animal world is often a matter of life and death where only the strongest survive. But succeeding and surviving are not the same for millions of human beings who already have comfortable homes and plenty to eat. So why do we seek additional measures of success? As long as our society thinks of failure as a negative thing, success appears to be the only alternative. A person who fails is typically viewed as being weak and their options become limited, so it seems that we are not very different from the animal world after all.

- 2 Many of us push ourselves to succeed in education because, generally, it allows us to have more options in life. We push ourselves to succeed in our careers because success in business usually indicates financial success. This is an important goal for many people because money is the greatest measure of modern success: the more success we have, the more money we have. We look up to successful people because we are impressed by what they have, and we want to have it too. We want success. We want money. We want to feel powerful.
- 3 But do we give too much importance to success? In other words, do we think it's better than it really is? Too many people put terrible pressure on themselves to succeed because they need to appear strong and powerful in the eyes of other people. They want

- 2 Complete the summary with the words in the box. Two words are not used.

dangers	fail	importance	professionally
right	succeed	success	wrong

The article is an opinion piece about the desire to 1 succeed. The writer describes the difficulty in society for those who 2 fail, and explores why people push themselves so hard professionally. She feels that too much importance is placed on success, and she thinks that people often want success for the 5 wrong reasons. She mentions some 6 dangers associated with the stress of chasing success, and concludes that there are more important things in life.

- 3 Read the article again. Are the statements true (T), false (F) or not given (NG), according to the article?

- 1 The writer sees a link between success and the behaviour of people and animals. T
- 2 There are more successful people today than ever before. NG
- 3 The reason why many people want success is in order to have more money. T
- 4 Generally, we tend to admire people who are successful and powerful. T
- 5 Putting pressure on ourselves to succeed is one of the best ways to guarantee success. F
- 6 The writer's own financial success has not brought her happiness. NG

→ Too much pressure can lead to anxiety and physical and mental health issues.

to be successful at all costs and, as their level of expectation rises, their level of anxiety also rises. This can create a dangerous situation for their physical and mental health. People believe that success and happiness are the same thing, but they are not. Just think about some of world's greatest movie stars and musicians who were enormously successful, yet desperately unhappy.

- 4 If we could reduce our obsession with success, we would probably be a lot happier. We are too concerned with how we appear to other people. Our priorities are wrong. We're wasting too much energy trying to present the perfect picture of our lives on social media, and we're losing track of what really matters. What about our friendships, our health and the importance of quiet time? We are too busy trying to be successful to pay attention to our deeper needs as human beings. Living a happy and healthy life is a much greater sign of success than any awards or big bank balances.