

## How to Be the Next Taylor Swift in 12 Easy Steps By John Florance

I watched Taylor Swift's Eras Tour movie on Prime this past weekend. Not because I'm a Swiftie (I'm not), but because my wife wanted to watch it. I was caught up on all my streaming shows with nothing else to do, my wallet was taking a breather from its holiday binge, and we have only one "entertainment center" in the house, so Taylor it was. Whether you're a Swiftie or not, it's hard to not be impressed with the juggernaut that T.Swizzle has become. So, because I think we're all wondering how we can get a little some of that in our lives, I've compiled a sure-fire 12-step process to enable you to build your own personal economic tsunami:

1. Be born drop dead gorgeous with a charming personal charisma.
2. Also be born with at least a modicum of artistic talent.
3. Make sure your parents are driven and savvy enough to nurture your career from your toddler years through adulthood with the precision (and impact) of a laser-guided missile.
4. Write at least 100 songs on your own, or co-write a minimum of 200 songs with hard-hitting, soul-searching, times-relevant lyrics. It's helpful if you can give the world a glimpse into your innermost personal challenges, insecurities, failures, and triumphs.
5. Take up the guitar and the piano and hone your technical chops to a level where you can record and be taken seriously by the international community of musicians.
6. Record, release, and publicize 14 LP albums. Carry enough clout to be able to override producers and record labels to re-release your own personal versions of your favorite albums.
7. Perform 10,000 concerts starting as a child with back yard bar mitzvahs, VFW pot-luck dinners, and county fairs, gradually gaining exposure through small town honky-tonks, eventually graduating to concert venues and major sports stadiums. Perform through 6 world tours, dozens of international music festivals, and internationally broadcast awards ceremonies.
8. Avoid getting sucked into the drugs, sex, and rock-n-roll drama and scandals that derail so many other precocious creatives.
9. Curate your personal brand and develop a global fan base of at least 250 million across all social channels.
10. Stay true to your fan base and yourself.
11. Surround yourself with a cadre of world-class managers, agents, and lawyers.
12. Wash, rinse and repeat for 20 years or until you make it.

I guarantee that if you follow my recipe – pardon the pun – to a T, you too will be the next Big Thing. So easy, right?

The media are filled with an endless stream of "success recipe" articles. This kind of content has been a staple for decades. I've read and re-read the original success recipes, Dale Carnegie's *How to Make Friends and Influence People*, and Frank Bettger's *How I Raised Myself to Success*, and those examples were originally published in the 1930's and 1940's! And, in truth, I do benefit from those sage tidbits of advice.

These days, everyone seems to have the recipe that will catapult you to the upper echelons of personal performance, be it in sports, music, business, health, love, sex, or any other aspect of your life. But the truth is that for most of us, superstardom will never be in our field of view, much less within our reach. Tay Tay, Queen B, and others are true unicorns: combinations of once-in-a-lifetime talent, looks, personality, skill, constant effort, dedicated persistence, business savvy, and yes, luck. That may be a depressing thought. But I take heart that I do not need to experience that kind of success to feel purposeful and fulfilled. And what I do know is that when I keep my focus on fundamentals, things go right for me as well. When I look at the superstar checklist, there are some items that are beyond my control: looks, talent, and luck top among them. I am who I am and I've got what I've got. But there are other components that I can control: effort, dedication, focus, skillsets. And perhaps not remarkably, if I'm diligent in cultivating those things, I experience success on multiple levels: financially, professionally, spiritually. More importantly I experience the contentment and satisfaction of knowing I did my best.

What Taylor, Beyoncé, and others really know is that the true secret to their success was and forever will be one thing: you must do the work. Innate talent and good genes played a significant role in their respective journeys, but the road to mega stardom is littered with gifted and talented people who amounted to a whole lot of nothing because they had neither the guts nor the discipline to do their gifts justice.

So, my hat's off to Dr. Swift (and yes, she has an honorary PhD!) for setting a shining example of how to make the most of what you're given in life. Now, go out there and DO THE WORK!