

Part 1. Think of something you're quietly proud of: a job, a skill, a move abroad, a relationship. Share out 100 points between the six factors below to show what really got you there. Then talk through your numbers.

<i>What got you there</i>	<i>Points</i>
Graft: putting in the hours	
Natural talent	
Being in the right place at the right time	
Who you know	
Family background and support	
Pure, dumb luck	
Total	100

Part 2. Which of these could you own up to? Choose two and tell the story behind them.

<i>I've said "touch wood" and then actually looked around for some wood.</i>	<i>I've kept quiet about good news in case I jinxed it.</i>
<i>I have a lucky number, item or ritual.</i>	<i>I've put a result down to beginner's luck when it was really skill.</i>
<i>I've pushed my luck and lived to regret it.</i>	<i>I've crossed my fingers for something I could have just prepared for.</i>

Part 3. Here are six things people say about success. Pick the one you'd stick on your fridge and the one you'd quietly bin, and explain why.

<i>"You make your own luck."</i>	<i>"It's not what you know, it's who you know."</i>
<i>"The harder I work, the luckier I get."</i>	<i>"Fortune favours the brave."</i>
<i>"Everything happens for a reason."</i>	<i>"Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity."</i>

Part 4. Each of these people is a success story. Tell each story twice: first as a tale of pure graft, then as a tale of pure luck. Then decide what the honest version sounds like.

Jenny, 34

Jenny's bakery struggled for two years. Then a food writer with a huge following posted about her cinnamon buns, and now there are queues round the block every Saturday.

Tom, 19

Tom grew up in a town with no professional football club. A scout came to watch another player at a match Tom almost didn't turn up for, and signed Tom instead.

Sally, 29

Sally started her design agency at 24. Her parents lent her the deposit for the first office, and an old university friend became her first big client.

Part 5. Which of these head starts make the biggest difference in life? Number your top five. Then talk about which ones are just the luck of the draw, and which ones people rarely notice they've had.

Parents who read to you as a child	A quiet place to study
Good health	A teacher who believed in you at the right moment
Growing up speaking English	A famous parent (the "nepo baby" head start)
Being naturally confident	Being tall or good-looking
Not having to work while you studied	Friends who expected big things of you
A passport that opens doors	Being born at the right time for your industry

Part 6. What would you do? Choose an option or come up with a better one.

You get an interview for a job you really want, partly because your uncle knows the CEO. A friend with a stronger CV applied for the same job and didn't get an interview.

1. *Take the interview and say nothing. That's how the world works.*
2. *Take it, but tell your friend the truth.*
3. *Take it, and put in a good word for your friend while you're there.*
4. *Turn it down. You'd always wonder whether you'd earned it.*

Your team's project wins an award. Your manager thanks you by name in front of everyone, but a quiet colleague did most of the work.

1. *Smile, say thank you, and buy the colleague a coffee later.*
2. *Correct the record there and then.*
3. *Have a quiet word with your manager afterwards.*
4. *Say nothing. You'll make it up to them some other way.*

A friend who's had a run of bad luck says, "Some people just have all the luck." You know they've also made some poor choices along the way.

1. *Agree and sympathise. Now isn't the time.*
2. *Gently point out that luck isn't the whole story.*
3. *Tell them about a time your own luck ran out.*
4. *Change the subject before it turns into an argument.*

Part 7. Read the two views and discuss which is closer to your own.

Viewpoint A

Nobody handed me anything. I worked two jobs, studied at night and took risks other people wouldn't. Calling that "luck" is an insult to everyone who's grafted for what they've got.

Viewpoint B

Hard work matters, but so does where you start. Plenty of people work just as hard and never get the break. Success stories tend to leave out the head start, the timing and the people who opened the door.

Part 8. Tell the story of a sliding doors moment in your life: a small, random event that changed what happened next.

Think about:

- What happened, and how close it came to not happening
- What your life might look like if it had gone the other way
- Whether it was luck, or whether you made the most of it
- Whether you'd change it if you could

Part 9. Discuss the questions.

- Who gave you a leg up when you needed one? Did they know how much it mattered?
- Is it ever fair to help someone just because you know them?
- Why do some people who've made it pull the ladder up behind them?
- Is "paying it forward" something people actually do, or just something they say?
- What's one door you could open for someone else, and what stops people from doing it?

Reflection

Complete the sentences in your own words.

1. If I'm honest, the luckiest thing that's ever happened to me is...
2. Something I've taken credit for that was partly luck is...
3. I make my own luck by...
4. A door I could open for someone else is...