



Sweet success

Therése Neaimé tells us how perseverance made her music dream come through

What measures success? I've come so far that I could now say that I am successful in doing what I always wanted to do, living my dream every day. I'm proud that I dared to take the necessary steps on my way to happiness and fulfilment. It's been a long road full of doubts, ifs and buts, but in the end it's the only way to get the answer - was it possible? I believe from the bottom of my heart that everything is possible if you just work hard and try hard enough and I think that my story is a living proof to that.

I was the dancer who couldn't sing. I always wanted to, but at an early stage I was told that I couldn't. I could hear it myself to, but a dream is a dream and being sort of naive in that sense I just couldn't let it go. I was lucky and even if I wasn't a great dancer I still had the right connections, the passion and maybe the looks to become quite successful. I toured the world with different, more or less famous artists as a background singer and dancer and I loved it. It was an amazing feeling to work with what you love and see the world at the same time. But something else was born inside of me to - as great as it was I wanted to express more of myself and suddenly the dancing wasn't enough. What I always known in the back of my mind was now clearer than ever and I knew that I had to give it my very best!

Just for the fun of it I had joined a Gospel Choir a couple of years earlier and throughout the years I met many great personalities and friends. Suzanna Hultén, a very well known Swedish vocal teacher was one of them and she saw something in me. I took the money

that I earned from dancing and spent a great portion of it taking singing lessons for a whole year. I would be lying if I said that it was an easy process and I'm really grateful for Suzanna's patience with me - I guess that dedication feeds dedication.

At the time I was in a steady relationship, I had three different jobs, a beautiful 4 bedroom apartment and everything that would make anyone with common sense very happy! But I still had my dream, and no matter how far away or difficult it seemed, I just couldn't let it go.

Dedicated to get closer to my dream so I decided to attend a full time music school in Sweden. My main focus was to get comfortable with singing in front of people and see if I dared to take the necessary step. Looking back I know that at the time I had already decided to try to attend the school of my dreams in Hollywood. I didn't tell anyone of my plans - not even confessing them to myself which would have been far too scary!

I applied and I remember recording my first demo "Baby, come to me" a pop standard which was an amazing feeling. The recording wasn't great but for me it was a big step in the right direction.

When I got accepted I couldn't believe it at first. Suddenly everything changed and I had to make some big decisions. But I don't think I really had any choice... if I didn't leave I would probably regret it for the rest of my life. On the other hand, if I did go, maybe I would regret that to! Trying to decide almost drove me crazy, but of course I already had the answer - I had to go!



"The teacher asked who wanted to sing first and I raised my hand right away..."

Some people thought I was mad. "How could I give up everything safe at home", "it's just a dream", "it's too difficult" and so on. It was scary but very exiting at the same time.

Eventually I held a farewell party, packed my bags and moved to Los Angeles. I found a beautiful apartment in the middle of Hollywood just a couple of blocks from the school and my adventure began.

It's amazing how much you can do and learn if you just throw yourself into it and believe that you can succeed. I remember my first vocal lesson at a vocal performance class the first week at school. The teacher asked who wanted to sing first and I raised my hand right away. I was probably the least experienced singer at the whole school and most of the students probably thought that I was crazy, but the key was that I wasn't afraid and probably to naive!



Therese doing what she loves best - singing live

in some sense to think twice about it... Looking back on my whole experience, that was probably the answer to my success.

After that I dedicated 24/7 to the school and the people in it. I also know that part of my success had to do with the fact that I came to and stayed in L.A on my own. If you travel with your partner you keep the same pattern as you had back home and then you don't get to meet people in the same sense. I also think that the fact that I was a little bit older, knowing what I wanted, helped me focus better.

My plan was to stay in L.A for a year, but that year soon became two and after I graduated I decided to stay three more years, still doing music, writing my own material, which became better and more mature. I also played with my own eight piece band, NEAIMÉ, which through the years had over 30 different members. Thought the band mostly consisted of students, they sometimes either had to go home or got another gig... this

was of course a big issue but still we just kept going. In fact the NEAIMÉ band just became better and better and eventually we were the leading band playing on most student parties, open houses at school and different night clubs around L.A and San Diego. Not to forget that I was still not the best singer with the best material but I had probably the strongest drive to just keep going and most important of all, I had a message, a past and something to say in my lyrics. People listening to me could probably see the real passion, the desire and the truth in my performances.

At an early stage I also got a chance to sing and record in a studio in L.A with one of Barry Whites producers and of course I thought that my happiness was done. It turned out to be a horrible experience, were the producer for example wanted me to sing the same sentence for five or six hours just to make me sound like him or a black R&B singer, which I'm not or never will have the skills to be.

*"...I guess
dedication
feeds
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So again I was told that I was a bad singer, and I can't even remember how many times I nearly gave up. Or that time when a big record company told me they wanted to sign me and give me half a million dollar, which of course never happened! I still must say that I've always been lucky to know where to draw the lines and probably because of that never fallen into any serious trouble.

After five years in L.A, it was time to take the next step and when I by coincidence landed one of my songs on a soundtrack to the Swedish movie "Language of Love", I decided it was time to go home before I lost all my connections there. At the same time, luckily one of my close friends, the top international songwriter and producer Jorgen Elofsson heard my new material. After proving myself to him for a whole year, he finally decided that I was ready. He signed me as one of five songwriters to his top team which was, for me, a big step in the right direction.

Therése Neaimé studied at Musicians Institute in Hollywood, and you can hear her music at www.neaime.net



Along the way I've also met some amazing and talented songwriters and producers and today we talk the same language. We have the same experience and skills from doing everything the long and hard way which consists of a lot of work, many failures and sometimes success. We make a great team and I've finally found what's truly me. I've turned, what was before my weak spot to something unique and true.

It's taken me quite some time and several doubts along the way wondering if I did the right thing, but again, I actually don't think that I ever had any choice... this has always been my dream and I think that this is what I was destined to do.

At the time of writing one of my songs are #20 on the Swedish pop charts and climbing. People like my unique voice, the positive message and the fact that it's real music as they call it. I can only thank God, my family and all the people along the way that has supported me on my journey.

If someone would ask me today if it was worth it I would answer: Yes, every second, every tear and all the doubts along the way. I tried and did my very best to fulfil my dream... and I am living it now! So to anyone who reads my story I would say; Just go for it, you have nothing to loose and life it to short not to. Or as one of my lyrics describes it: *"The future lies in front of those who sacrifice; the future holds a life for those who fight"* 

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