

Chris Jones



Chris Jones is the president of Plant Therapy, the fastest-growing essential oils company in the nation. He founded the company in 2011 after identifying a need for high-quality, direct-to-

consumer essential oils and aromatherapy products. The results have been astoundingly successful, and in 2015, Plant Therapy earned a spot on *Inc. Magazine's* "Inc. 500" list as the 31st fastest-growing private company in America.

Yet, the essential oils industry is a far cry from where Chris once saw his life heading. As a young man, he was en route to pursuing a career as an airline pilot when his father became terminally ill. His college education cut short, Chris went home to care for his family and led his father's fertilizer business.

Since that time, Chris has been a self-employed entrepreneur. He ran several businesses before buying a small beauty products company from



his mother-in-law, an aromatherapist. Chris found it challenging to find quality, essential oils for use in the products. Many were overpriced or of low-quality, and most companies sold the oils through multi-level marketing.

Chris was certain there was an increasingly strong market for high-quality essential oils at affordable prices, and in 2011, he launched Plant Therapy. Under Chris's stewardship, the company has experienced a three-year growth of nearly 8,000% and now has around 35 employees. Plant Therapy has outgrown four commercial spaces and is now planning to have a 40,000-square-foot facility by the end of 2015.

1. How do you define success?

There are lots of different kinds of successes, so such a broad question is hard. I think my ultimate goal is the same as most other people: To find joy. I don't think success is a destination, but rather a journey. If I am finding true joy (or peace of mind) in my current situation, I would say I am being successful. For financial success, I would say when my passive (investment) income exceeds my living expenses, I am successful.

2. What is the key to success?

I think for both personal and professional success, most of the answers are the same: Treat others how you would like to be treated. Don't cheat. If you screw up, fess up to it and learn from it. Play fair. Don't quit just because it's hard. Be honest. Don't cut. Try your hardest. Be respectful. It's okay to fail.

3. Did you always know you would be successful?

I actually never really thought about it. I never really had a "plan." I have always just lived my life based on instinct and what was currently going on. When I went to college, I was never a very good student but planned to become an airline pilot (now I am so glad that didn't pan out). While in school, my self-employed father got sick. We didn't know what was wrong, but I was the only one that knew anything about his business. I moved home to help him run it while we figured it out. He died of cancer within a couple of months, and I did my best to keep his business afloat. I learned way more about business and life in the next year than I had in my previous 20+ years combined.

4. When faced with adversity, what pushes you to keep moving forward?

I have 3 daughters (soon to be 4) and an incredible wife. They are really my motivation. I have a fear of failure, but it is more of a fear of letting them down, rather than a fear of judgment from others.

5. What is the greatest lesson you've ever learned?

That it is okay to be me, flaws and all. I don't have to try to impress others or live within their confines. As individuals, we have unlimited potential, and once we stop trying to please others all the time or try to keep up with others, life becomes much more enjoyable and fulfilling.

6. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

What spare time? Just kidding. My daughters are still young, so they get most of my off work time. We spend the nights and weekends as a family. We enjoy camping and swimming. We spend many winter evenings in the hot tub. I also enjoy golfing and boating, but don't make as much time for it as I would like.

7. What makes a great leader?

Being able to inspire others. I think it is the leader's responsibility to make his people feel good about themselves and also help them to find joy in their lives. The vast majority of lessons taught and learned are done strictly through example. People need to talk less and do more.

8. What advice would you give to college students about entering the workforce?

Be open-minded and teachable. I have owned multiple successful businesses, and every single one came as a result of different circumstances in life, not a conscious decision to get into that business. When I got into the essential oil business, it was because I was presented with the opportunity to purchase a very small beauty products company with a minimal investment. I saw an opportunity for growth and jumped on it. You can learn important life lessons from everyone. Don't discount someone just because you don't see them as successful.