

Live the Life You Have Always Dreamed Of!

10 Rock-Solid Principles That Will Absolutely,
Positively Turn Your Dreams Into Realities!

By Chris Widener

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Published and Distributed by
AsAManThinketh.net
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Foreword: It's True Because I've Lived It

I haven't always been what I am now. I haven't always done what I do now. I haven't always had what I have now. No, this story starts a long time ago and a great distance from the life I live now.

Imagine if this were your life:

Imagine being born to a couple where the man doesn't even want you. In fact, he pressured your mother into having an abortion, which she refused. Talk about mixed blessings! On one hand you get to live, but on the other you have a father who doesn't even want you. Not the preferred way to be brought into the world, is it?

Then imagine four years later when that father dies after a short battle with cancer. You are just four years old, and left without a father. As a young boy, you are rudderless, left to find your way to manhood alone. What is worse, what deepens the impact of the death is that the father who never wanted you goes to his grave without leaving so much as a note saying, "I'll miss you." Or "I'm sorry I won't be able to see you grow up."

You grow up bitter and angry. Soon you begin to act out in destructive ways. Your mother does the best she can to raise you but she is gone much of the time, working to provide for you. You are comfortably lower middle class.

When you are in just sixth grade you fall into the wrong crowd. You begin to break the law, take drugs and drink alcohol. Just 12 years old and already headed down the wrong path. In seventh grade you smoke marijuana almost every day. This explains your 1.4 grade point average. Your principal passes you on to the eighth grade, not because you deserve it but to get rid of you sooner.

Fortunately, you play sports, and you play them well. They are most likely what keeps you from going so far over the edge as to not return. Sports provide another positive impact: Your job during your teenage years is to work with a professional basketball team. It is the highlight of every day.

Junior high and high school are a pain because you are a pain to the teachers and they in turn discipline you. It seems as though it is one big war. You wonder where your life is going. The lack of control and direction only serves to make you angrier and more and more bitter.

When you are sixteen you pick up a book about a career you are interested in. You read it and are amazed. You love the idea. You wonder if it is possible. You dream. Your dream is to one day become a professional speaker. To stand before the masses and inspire, motivate, and challenge them. You want to make something of yourself so you can tell others that no matter how difficult it may be, they can make something of themselves as well.

When you are seventeen you have a monumental experience in your life where everything changes one hundred and eighty degrees. Your grades shoot up your senior year. You are able to go to college to study what you want and pursue the career you desire.

All along the way there are naysayers. There are people who do not believe you can do what you want. There are those who, while awake, are truly comatose to life. They do not actually live. They are dead but simply waiting for life to stop. They do not dream.

What would you think of this life? How would you live it? I ask, because this is my life. Yes, now I live in a beautiful home, I have a wonderful wife and four truly delightful and healthy children. I make great money doing what I love to

do. I am surrounded by friends and colleagues who are some of the finest and most talented people there are on this old planet of ours.

But it wasn't always so.

No, I *chose* this life. I made decisions all along the way that brought me here. I lived out the principles you are about to read. You see, there are many “posers” out there who would teach you “success” principles but who have never lived them out themselves. It is one thing to regurgitate someone else's writings – it is another to learn for yourself the principles of successfully achieving all that you want to achieve and then to share them with others.

I know the principles you are about to read work because I have lived them. They are not pie in the sky, motivational, human potential fluff! They are practical steps to reaching the dream you have for your life.

Now, before you lies a choice: You can continue to live among the walking dead, or you can come to life, no matter how old you may be, and run toward your dream. I am living mine, and I want to help you live yours.

Let's go!

Introduction: Live the Life You Have Always Dreamed Of!

Take a moment right now to do something. Close your eyes and dream for a moment. Shut your eyes and imagine life as it could be. Imagine life as it would look if you had the life you really, truly desire. Do you see it? Can you see the people? Can you hear the sounds? Can you *feel* it? Is there a rich vividness to it? Wouldn't life be grand if we could only live it in reality as we see it in our minds when we dream? Yet, more often than not, we let ourselves dream, then we open our eyes, shake our heads, and tell ourselves, "Now I need to get back to reality."

For some people, the life we dream of *is* a reality! Why? Because they are better than us? Because they deserve it more than we do? Because they are luckier than we are? Absolutely not! There is a reason though, why some people are living *our* dreams. Because they did what it takes to make their dreams a reality. They went beyond just wishing and they began to *create*! They created the life they wanted. They took action control to live the life they wanted. They took responsibility for their own destiny. And now you can too!

I am a firm believer in the theory that, with just a very few exceptions, we all live exactly the lives we choose.

This means that we can choose to have a different life the same way we have chosen to have the life we currently live. It makes sense doesn't it? We all made conscious decisions to do certain things that got us right where we are today. Most of us went to college and chose a major, and then chose a career, then chose a company. We chose!

Now, if you don't like your life, make a choice to change it!

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“But Chris, you just don’t understand! I can’t just quit my job!”

Let’s start there. Yes you can. The first mistake most people make is in the language they use that betrays a mindset that will keep them right where they are – in a place they don’t want to be. Here is the key:

Don’t mistake “I can’t” when you mean, “I won’t.”

Let’s take another look: “I won’t just quit my job because I am scared I will starve.”

“I won’t just quit my job because I don’t want to go back to college and spend two years of my life preparing for a new career.”

“I won’t just quit my job because I don’t want to try my new career while I deliver pizzas at night to support myself.”

“I won’t just quit my job because I am afraid I’ll look like a stupid failure.”

You get the point. The idea is that we CAN do anything we choose to. We really mean that we can’t because we won’t. Once we get beyond this, we can really move toward our dream and live the life we always wanted to!

With that in mind, let’s take a look at a few steps for pursuing your dream and living your new life:

Reconnect with your dream. Set aside some time to let yourself dream. What have you placed on the backburner in order to live the status quo? Settle on one or two dreams that you can and will pursue. Don't come up with too many. That will only deter you further.

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Decide that you will do it. This may seem elementary but many people never decide and commit fully to their dream. They simply keep "thinking" about it.

Tell others that you are going to do it. This puts you on the record as to what you are dreaming about. It makes you accountable. It will help you do it if for no other reason than to avoid embarrassment!

Develop a step-by-step plan. This is absolutely essential. You must sit down and write out a few things:

A timeline. How long will it take to the end?

Action steps. Point-by-point what you will do and when you will do them.

Resources you will need to draw from. What will it take? Who will need to be involved for help or advice?

An evaluation tool. You need to evaluate from time to time whether you are progressing or not.

A celebration. Yep, when you are done you should already have planned what you will do to celebrate. Make it big!

You CAN live any life that you choose. You CAN have the life you have always wanted. But you must decide that you will have it and then get on with pursuing it! There is still time. Go for it!

Preface: Take Ownership of Your Life

There are lots of things we desire to own in this life, aren't there? Many of them are fine and dandy, as the saying goes. But there is the most important thing we own that many people never think about owning, and that is their life! They spend a lot of time thinking about the next set of golf clubs, a vacation home, or a new piece of jewelry, but they never really understand that they own their life. Whenever it comes time to be responsible, they end up placing the blame somewhere else, rather than realizing that they are the owner and so they are responsible! With that in mind, here are some thoughts about the ownership you have of your life:

You only own one person – you. You don't own your spouse. You don't own your boss. You don't own your kids (with kids, you are in charge of them, given the tremendous responsibility of teaching them to own their own lives, but you don't own them). No, there is only one person you own, and that is you. That is great news! Now you don't have to worry about running anybody else's life! This is a temptation for us isn't it? We just know how everybody else should do it and with many of them we try to take ownership and run their life! Well, hands off! Take control of your own life since it is the only one you own. You wouldn't try to drive somebody else's car from the grocery store parking lot, so don't try to drive their life either! You own you – so stick to you!

You get to choose what to do with only one person – you. Once you have come to realize that you only own you, you get to get to the fun part – running your life and making it what you want it to be. Instead of choosing what other people should do, you get to focus in on choosing what you get to do. You get to begin to shape and mold your life. This is exciting! Aren't you glad you don't have to run everybody else's lives anymore? I am!

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Your ownership means that you can do what you want with yourself. Your life is a blank sheet of paper. You can choose whatever you want to do. You can have whatever profession you want. You can earn as much money as you desire. You can marry whoever suits your fancy (as long as you suit their fancy too, by the way). Stop wishing and start choosing. I like to use the example of a person who is thirty years old and doesn't like their income. I tell them that if they so chose, they could go back to school, get a degree, go to medical school and by age forty be in a high-income profession. Then they would have 25 years of high wages to support the lifestyle they desire. You can choose whatever you want and take whatever actions you choose to rectify any situation you are in!

Your ultimate destination in life is set by you, not somebody else. Where will you end up? Wherever you choose to end up. You will do well to get it in your mind that someday you will be seventy years old and you will be at a certain place and the only thing that got you there was the choices you made all along the way. Imagine that. If you are thirty, you have forty years – FORTY YEARS – of choices that can put you right where you want to be at the end of your life! So you're fifty-five? Who cares? You probably have at least twenty years left! You still have TWENTY YEARS to get yourself to whatever destination you choose. Do you know what a person can do in twenty years? ALMOST ANYTHING THEY SET THEIR HEART ON!

**Most people overestimate
what they can do in a
year, but underestimate
what they can do in ten
years.**

Anthony Robbins

The responsibility for your life, and what you accomplish, is found in one person – you. You will accomplish what you choose to accomplish. You will make and save as much money as you choose to. You will write as many books as you choose to. You will take as many vacations as you choose to. You will have the kind of relationships you choose to. What you accomplish is up to you! Take that seriously!

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Focus on your values and live them out, regardless of what other people do. This is key. We do not live our lives in a vacuum. We need to be very thoughtful about what we believe, about what our values are, and what our morality is. These things will all shape how we go about exerting ownership of our lives. But once we have come to understand these things for ourselves, the power to live our lives increases tremendously. Now it doesn't matter what anybody else does. It doesn't matter what the circumstances are. We live out of our morality, values and beliefs. These are the principles that transcend everything else and enable us to set our course!

I know this seems like a lot of responsibility, but I consider it a freedom and a privilege! We get one life to live and we get to shape it however we want. That is one job I want to take seriously and not mess up! With diligence, hard work, and a lot of right decisions, I'll get to the end of my life deeply fulfilled. I hope you will to!

All You Want is Within Your Reach

If there is one thing that I believe with all my heart, it is that you can have any life you choose to. You can live the life you have always dreamed of.

We live in a period of unparalleled opportunity in human history. Think about it: Just one hundred years ago, most people really only had five or six options when it came to deciding what they would do with their lives. For most, they didn't even have the knowledge that they could do anything other than take over their father's farm when they turned eighteen!

But today a person living in the western world (and many other areas of the world as well) can choose to do virtually anything they want to! The key is the word "choose."

You see, the world is within your reach. Any job you want can be yours if you decide. All of the opportunities are there for the taking. The question is whether or not you will take.

You say, "But Chris, you just don't understand. I'm thirty-eight years old with two kids and I have bills to pay. I make \$28,000 a year. I can't just go become a doctor and make big money!"

And I say, "Yes you can! If you decide to. If you will take action you can become a doctor or anything else you want to. We live in a day and age when virtually anything is possible."

For the sake of highlighting this principle, let's look at the above example. How would this person change careers? Simple. Here is the process in specific action steps:

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1. Find out from a medical school what classes you would need to take to get in. Chances are your college major would need some rounding out or if you didn't go to college, you would need to do so. Maximum time to do this: 3 days.
2. Now, go to school. Maximum time to do this: 4 years.
3. Now, medical school and residency. Maximum time to do this: 6 years.
4. Begin practicing medicine.

At this point you would be forty-eight years old. That leaves you seventeen years to practice. Now let's see the impact it has on your life:

1. You get to pursue your dream, making you and your family MUCH happier.
2. You will make, on average, \$100,000 more per year. The difference here is manifold! If you stayed where you were, you would have earned \$28,000 a year for twenty-seven years and would earn \$756,000. If you left and pursued your dream you would earn \$128,000 for seventeen years (That's if you took ten years to make the transition. Most would be less.) and your earnings would be \$2,176,000! This is a difference of \$1,420,000! And this doesn't even take into consideration the amounts you would earn on investments on the difference in incomes.

So is it possible? Yes. Does it take time? Yes. Is it hard? Yes. Is it scary? Yes, and that is why most people won't do it.

It isn't for lack of opportunity. It is usually because of one of the following:

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- Lack of vision.
- Lack of tenacity.
- Fear.

The truth is that you can do anything you want to. Stop telling yourself excuses! Go to battle against a lack of vision! Pick yourself up and get tenacious! Look fear in the face and stand up to it! Your whole life depends on it, my friend!

The choice is yours. Will you continue to limp along in life because you don't have the courage to run for your dream? Will you continue to allow the fear of poverty keep you from pursuing the riches, both materially and emotionally, that lay within the vision you have of what your life could be?

**Courage is the first of
human qualities because it
is the quality that
guarantees all others.**

Winston Churchill

You CAN live the life you have always dreamed of. All you want is within your reach. But to pick it up, you must first empty your hands of what they already hold. Then you must reach for it, take a hold of it, and possess it!

Seven “Have-to’s” to Achieve Personal Growth

Quite frankly, I wish personal growth would just happen! I wish I would just get better and money would fall out of the sky. I wish my waist would get smaller even as I sit on the couch in front of a warm fire eating Breyer’s Vanilla Bean ice cream. Oh, how I wish it was easy!

Okay, enough whining, enough dreaming, enough lack of reality. I have it out of my system! The reality is that it is work to grow personally. The sooner we realize that, even lovingly embrace that, the sooner we jump on the highway of success! The fact is that we “have to” do some things!

As my uncle the truck driver use to say to me when I was a kid, “Wish in one hand and spit in the other – then see which one fills first.” (Remember, he was a trucker, and somebody else may have been a bit more elegant, but I still remember it today, 25 years later. I recommend however, that you take it at face value. It isn’t a fun experiment to actually carry out.

Without any further ado, here are the seven “have-to’s” to achieve personal growth for yourself. Don’t wish anymore! Get on the ball and start reaping the rewards!

1. You have to know what it is that you want. Wanting personal growth isn’t enough. Do you want more money? How much? Do you want to lose weight? How much? Do you want a spouse? Who? Do you want to travel? Where? Do you want more freedom in your professional life? What would that look like? Clearly define in your mind what it is that you want! Once you do...

2. You have to decide that you really want it. Do you really want it? That is the place to start, really, because I have realized working with people that many of them really don’t want what they think they want, once I talk them through all

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of the issues. Is this what you really want or is it a dream you have to escape something else? For example, do you really want to quit your job and start your own company? Do you want the risk of reputation? The risk of capital loss? Do you want to work from six in the morning until nine at night, seven days a week for the next two to three years? Do you really want it? Yes? Proceed...

3. You have to be willing to sacrifice to get it. What will you give up to get personal growth? I know what I have to give up to be able to fit into size 32 pants – mud pie! Now, you may not think that is so bad, but you don't know how bad I love mud pie!

I know that it is a sacrifice for me to get to the gym every day of the week (okay, I usually take two Sunday afternoons a month off). I know how much I write the check out for each month to belong to the gym – it would feed a small army. This is sacrifice, all of it. What are you willing to sacrifice to get personal growth in your life? Are you willing? Then proceed...

To gain that which is worth having, it may be necessary to lose everything else.

Bernadette Devlin

4. You have to be willing to be criticized. Surprisingly, the average person doesn't like the average achiever. Why? Because they make the average person feel, well, average. They resent that the achiever makes choices they don't make, even though they could too. And they secretly resent that the achiever benefits from rewards that they don't. It seems odd, but working with thousands of people over the years I have seen enough jealousy and envy to fill every seat in the Rose Bowl. Can you handle that to various degrees? Then see number five...

5. You have to decide you want it more than other pleasures. What is more pleasurable: Ice cream every night or a proper weight? What is more pleasurable: Sitting on the couch or pounding away on a treadmill? What is more pleasurable: Spending your money on the things you want right now or saving for

later? What is more pleasurable: Getting off at five every night or working endlessly on the weekends? What is more pleasurable: Reading a favorite novel or a technical book? What is more pleasurable: Four weeks of vacation or one? You get the point. In order to grow personally or professionally, there will have to be a desire to work hard in spite of the pleasures that call your name. And if you work it right, in the end there will be plenty of time to reward yourself with the pleasures of accomplishment. Do you want it more than other pleasures? Really? Then let's move on...

6. You have to take a long-term approach. Why do most people fail to accomplish their personal growth goals? Because they take a short-term approach. They know what to do. They do it for a week or a month, then they quit. Every January the gym gets so busy. Then February rolls around and I have no problem getting on the machines! In order to accomplish your personal growth goals, you absolutely, positively must view it as a long-term goal. For example, when most people want to lose weight, what do they do? They change their diet until they lose it. Then what? They change it back and gain the weight back. Instead, they ought to say, I am changing the way I eat for the rest of my life and slowly but surely my weight will take care of itself. And it does! Are you capable of seeing your personal goals in the long-term? Well then you are ready for number seven...

7. You have to diligently, methodically, and relentlessly work at it. Every day, every week, every year. The more you put into it, the more you get out of it. I was on a conference call with Zig Ziglar last night and he made an incredible revelation. For 25 years he has read for three hours a day! No wonder he oozes information! That is diligence. That is methodical. That is relentless! Can you do the same for yourself in the area you want to grow in? Certainly! But will you? That is the question. If you do, you will achieve any dream you set forth for yourself!

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You can achieve personal growth! It is entirely possible for you to live your dreams! Put the above to work and you will see them unfold before your very eyes! Just remember, it won't just happen to you, you "have-to" do some things!

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The Live the Life Principles

Live the Life Principle Number One: DARE TO DREAM –

When you choose to let your heart dream, and you pursue that dream, you are taking the first step in taking that dream from being something that exists in your mind and heart and making it into the life that you lead, live, and enjoy, each day.

Live the Life Principle Number Two: VISION IS THE CORNERSTONE – Vision is the spectacular that motivates us to live out the mundane each day as we pursue our dreams. Vision gives us the big picture that causes us to live the little picture until the big picture becomes our reality.

Live the Life Principle Number Three: GOALS ARE FOR ACHIEVING – Goals are the powerful carrot that leads the horse onward. Goals become a powerful force for action and change, luring and enticing us forward until we live our dreams.

Live the Life Principle Number Four: THE TENACIOUS BIRD GETS THE WORM – It isn't the early bird. It isn't the strongest or smartest bird. It isn't the fastest bird. The bird that usually gets the worm is the one that sticks it out. Tenaciousness is a must for those who would achieve their dreams.

Live the Life Principle Number Five: STAY MOTIVATED FOR SUCCESS – Those who can keep themselves motivated are the people who will enable themselves to live their dreams because they will keep themselves in a state that drives them toward their desired life.

Live the Life Principle Number Six: IT REALLY IS BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE – Those who desire true success, not just financial success, are people who realize the positive force of good that is unleashed when they become people who give of their time, money, energy, and resources, to make the world around them a better place.

Live the Life Principle Number Seven: RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE CORE OF OUR EXISTENCE – Life is not lived alone. Every day of our lives depends on our ability to get along with, work with, and enjoy the people around us, whether it is our family, our friends, or our colleagues. Those who harness the power of relationships understand and enjoy the fruit of the core of human existence.

Live the Life Principle Number Eight: DON'T TIP – KEEPING YOUR BALANCE – While pursuing your dreams it is easy to tip out of balance, to let an important area of life get out of whack. People who end their lives well, those who live their dreams, are people who maintain a healthy balance in their lives, keeping a positive tension between body, soul and spirit.

Live the Life Principle Number Nine: ACHIEVE FINANCIAL FREEDOM – Financial freedom has nothing to do with how much money you have. While there are some basic understandings of how money works in terms of making and saving it, the key to living your dreams and enjoying life is to understand the truth of financial freedom. It lies in the difference between you having money, and money having you.

Live the Life Principle Number Ten: ATTITUDE IS KING – Whatever your attitude is about life, it will directly affect the kind of life you have and achieve. In fact, your attitude will rule and reign over it. Your attitude is king and determines whether or not you will live the life you dream of.

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**Live the Life Principle Number One:
DARE TO DREAM**

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Dare to Dream Again

"Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat." Teddy Roosevelt

Do you remember when you were a child and no dream seemed too big? Some of us thought we would walk on the moon; some dreamed of riding with Roy Rogers; others imagined stepping to the plate in a big-league game. Every one of us, when we were young, had a common trait - we were dreamers. The world hadn't gotten to us yet to show us that we couldn't possibly achieve what our hearts longed for. And we were yet still years from realizing that in some cases we weren't built for achieving our dream (I realized about my junior year of high school that I was too short and too slow to play professional basketball. The dreamer is always the last to know).

Eventually we started to let our dreams die. People began to tell us that we couldn't do the things we wanted. It was impossible. Responsible people don't pursue their dreams. Settle down, get a job, be dependable. Take care of business, live the mundane, be content. Do you know what I say to that? Hooey! It is time to dream again!

Why? Here are just a few reasons:

Avoiding regret. The facts are in, and someday we will all lie on our deathbed looking back through the history of our lives. We will undoubtedly think about what we wished we had done or accomplished. I for one don't want to regret what could have been, what should have been. So I am deciding today to pursue my dreams.

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Making the world a better place. All of the great accomplishments that have ever happened began with a person who had a dream. Somebody rebuffed the nay-sayers and said to himself or herself, "This can be done, and I am the one who will do it." And in many instances they changed the world for the better. It isn't just the Martin Luther Kings and the J.F.K's either. Think of all the people we have never heard of, who have started things large and small that help people world-wide every day.

The world needs people like you to dream of something great and then to pursue it with all of your heart. Maybe you belong to a business, school, or organization that started out with good intentions but has settled into the same old same old. Shake them up and remind them of how they could really help people if only they would dream!

Personal and family fulfillment. One of the things that happens when we stop pursuing our dreams is that a little piece of us dies and we become disheartened, if only in that area of our lives. Stepping up and pursuing your dream rekindles that passion and zeal that everyone has the capacity for and lets us experience fulfillment. Having a purpose puts the zip in our step and the zing in our emotions!

Leaving a legacy. How will your children remember you? As one who sought all that life had to offer, using your gifts and talents to their fullest extent, leading the family with a zest for life, or as an overweight couch potato who could have been? Our children need to see that we dream; that we search for something better. They in turn will do the same!

Big Dreams - Big Rewards

I talk a lot about dreams, if you haven't noticed! That's because I believe every single person has a dream inside of them just waiting to be turned loose! Each man and woman has a desire to do something great, to achieve excellence or to go somewhere wonderful. Most of the time these dreams have been hidden or forced inside because of fear. Many times these dreams have been put on the back burner to simmer while a "normal" life goes on.

I am on a one-man mission to destroy the concept of keeping dreams inside and to yourself! I want to motivate as many people as possible to passionately pursue their dreams and watch them come to fulfillment!

But what would you get out of dreaming big, you ask? The rewards are almost endless! But to get you started, here are a few of the top rewards you reap when you dream big!

A renewed passion for life and work. Feeling tired? Got the doldrums for life or work? There is a good reason – you aren't dreaming big enough! Get a big dream going and you will see your entire life revitalized and filled to overflowing with exuberant passion for life! Start today. Dream a big dream. Put it on the wall and start aiming for it. Live for it and you will see your energy level skyrocket!

Order will come to your life. A big dream serves as a focusing point. A focusing point will serve to bring order into your life. You will plot out a plan, lay out a strategy for reaching your dream. Since you will be so energized to reach your dream, and since you will have a plan for doing so, you will focus and discipline yourself in ways you never imagined possible before. You will see a new level of order emerge.

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A life that ends the way you want it to. There will come a day when you will be reflecting back on a long life. What joy you will have to be able to be there that day with absolutely no regrets. Your life will end the way you want it to: Having pursued and achieved your big dreams!

A deep sense of personal fulfillment and satisfaction. As you live life there is one thing that hounds the dreamless: A lack of fulfillment. You see I believe we were specifically designed to have big dreams, to pursue visions of greatness. And if we aren't doing so, we will see a certain lack of fulfillment. But when we do pursue those dreams – watch out because you will see an incredible sense of self-fulfillment wash over you like a tidal wave!

An ability to see others' lives changed for the better. Big dreams will give you the opportunity to stand back and know that you have helped others grow, achieve more and experience the best. If you haven't helped others, then your dream was too small because a big dream is by definition one that helps others as well.

I want you to experience the above rewards and the good news is that you can! You can see your dreams become reality and you can see your rewards multiply!

Here is a checklist to get you going:

Do you have an identified dream?

Have you laid out a plan for reaching it?

Have you taken a first step to do so?

What is the next step you need to do to reach your dream?

What are the rewards you are experiencing right now?

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Seven Steps to Achieving Your Dream

**“Vision is the spectacular that inspires us to carry out the mundane.”
Chris Widener**

Can achievement be broken down into steps? Well, it isn't always that clean and easy, but I do know that those who achieve great things usually go through much of the same process, with many of the items listed below as part of that process. So if you have been struggling with achievement, look through the following and internalize the thoughts presented. Then begin to apply them. You will be on the road to achieving your dream!

1. Dream it - Everything begins in the heart and mind. Every great achievement began in the mind of one person. They dared to dream, to believe that it was possible. Take some time to allow yourself to ask "What if?" Think big. Don't let negative thinking discourage you. You want to be a "dreamer." Dream of the possibilities for yourself, your family, and for others. If you had a dream that you let grow cold, re-ignite the dream! Fan the flames. Life is too short to let it go. (Also, check out my article "Dare to Dream Again," Which has been read by close to a million people in the last 4 months alone. You can see it at the website.)

2. Believe it - Yes, your dream needs to be big. It needs to be something that is seemingly beyond your capabilities. But it also must be believable. You must be able to say that if certain things take place, if others help, if you work hard enough, though it is a big dream, it can still be done. Good example: A person with no college education can dream that he will build a 50 million-dollar a year company. That is big, but believable. Bad example: That a 90 year-old woman with arthritis will someday run a marathon in under 3 hours. It is big alright, but also impossible. She should instead focus on building a 50 million-dollar a year business! And she better get a move on!

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3. See it - The great achievers have a habit. They "see" things. They picture themselves walking around their CEO office in their new 25 million-dollar corporate headquarters, even while they are sitting on a folding chair in their garage "headquarters." Great free-throw shooters in the NBA picture the ball going through the basket. PGA golfers picture the ball going straight down the fairway. World-class speakers picture themselves speaking with energy and emotion. All of this grooms the mind to control the body to carry out the dream.

4. Tell it - One reason many dreams never go anywhere is because the dreamer keeps it all to himself. It is a quiet dream that only lives inside of his mind. The one who wants to achieve their dream must tell that dream to many people. One reason: As we continually say it, we begin to believe it more and more. If we are talking about it then it must be possible. Another reason: It holds us accountable. When we have told others, it spurs us on to actually do it so we don't look foolish.

5. Plan it - Every dream must take the form of a plan. The old saying that you "get what you plan for" is so true. Your dream won't just happen. You need to sit down, on a regular basis, and plan out your strategy for achieving the dream. Think through all of the details. Break the whole plan down into small, workable parts. Then set a time frame for accomplishing each task on your "dream plan."

6. Work it - Boy, wouldn't life be grand if we could quit before this one! Unfortunately, the successful are usually the hardest workers. While the rest of the world is sitting on their couch watching re-runs of Gilligan's Island, achievers are working on their

To bring one's self to a frame of mind and to the proper energy to accomplish things that require plain hard work continuously is the one big battle that everyone has. When this battle is won for all time, then everything is easy.

Thomas A. Buckner

goal - achieving their dream. I have an equation that I work with: Your short-term tasks, multiplied by time, equal your long-term accomplishments. If you work on it each day, eventually you will achieve your dream. War and Peace was written, in longhand, page by page.

7. Enjoy it - When you have reached your goal and you are living your dream, be sure to enjoy it. In fact, enjoy the trip too. Give yourself some rewards along the way. Give yourself a huge reward when you get there. Help others enjoy it. Be gracious and generous. Use your dream to better others. Then go back to number 1. And dream a little bigger this time!

Your Dream Can Be Your Future

Here is a basic truth you must accept and believe if you are to achieve your dream...

Your dream can be a reality! That's right, your future can actually see you living your dream. It doesn't just have to be a big wish!

When we are young we are dreamers. Nothing seems too big for us to accomplish. Nothing seems too outrageous. The world is ours on a string as the old song goes. Until...

"Reality" hits. Reality is what others want to box you in with. "You can't do that." "Nobody has ever done that before." "It will never work." "You've gone off the deep end now!"

All dreamers (who eventually become accomplishers) have heard these things. Yet they overcome them. They refuse to accept someone else's "reality" for their own life. They let the average people live their average lives, bound by fear, while they pursue their chosen future – their dream! So don't believe the people who tell you that you can't or won't. Believe your dream. Believe that it can be your future!

Once you have determined that you can actually live your dream, I want you to memorize this acronym. I shared it in an article a number of months ago but I found that it is tremendously helpful for reminding and motivating us toward our dreams.

D is for **Dare** (dare to dream while others don't)

R is for **Relentless** (relentlessly pursue your dream no matter what)

E is for **Excellence** (strive for excellence in all you do)

A is for **Abandon** (abandon any other alternative plans)

M is for **Measure** (constantly measure where you are in your dream journey)

Okay, that's great and motivating, but what about the practical stuff? Well, there is certainly practical stuff. No matter how lofty your dream, no matter how spectacular, you will live most of your life in the mundane. Richard Nixon said of the presidency that you "campaign with poetry, but govern with prose." The vision is beautiful, the actual is mundane (not bad, but "everyday" so to speak).

Courage That Changes Your Life

“Courage is a special kind of knowledge: the knowledge of how to fear what ought to be feared and how not to fear what ought no to be feared.”

David Ben-Gurion

Courage. It is a word that conjures up images of great and dramatic actions. And yet I realize that we all have the opportunity to be courageous every day, in small and large ways. And it is when we choose to be courageous that we change our lives and the lives of those around us.

Can you name anything of any significance that did not emanate from some sort of courageous decision? I can't. Think of the changes that we have experienced in the last few decades and trace them back to their initial decision. Chances are, someone exhibited courage.

**The scars you acquire
while exercising courage
will never make you feel
inferior.**

D.A. Battista

So what is courage? It is simply acting on what we want to do, regardless of any fear we may have. It is the choice to disregard worry. It is the choice to do right, to pursue our dreams, to be successful people, to lead the way for others.

Courage changes lives. Yes, it changes lives.

First, the day you begin to stare down your fears and worries, and instead act courageously, your life will change. You will be set free to fly like you never have before. You will accomplish things you once only dreamed of. You will experience things you thought were only for others – the courageous ones. You will realize that your fears were baseless and just paper tigers, a mirage. You will begin to live your dreams. You will become a person of character!

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**Courage is fear
that has said its
prayers.**

Dorothy Bernard

You will also change the lives of others. Simply put, courageous people pull others along with them. Everybody benefits from courageous people. I have a friend who I admire greatly. A little over a year ago he decided to leave a lucrative career and pursue a dream. All obstacles were thrown his way. The day he left his company, he found out that his wife had cancer. He went into a great deal of debt to finance his dream. He raised millions of dollars, putting his name and reputation on the line. He acted courageously. A year later, he has over fifty employees and growing monthly. Those employees are reaping the benefit of his courage! And his wife, who beat cancer, is acting courageously with him!

Here are some quick tips for acting courageously:

Know what you want. Courage is about choice. If you are to act courageously, you need to know what the right choice is. Be clear about your dream and vision.

Do not worry. I heard recently that worry is the wrong use of the imagination. That is perhaps the best definition I have ever heard. Worry is just thinking about all of the bad possibilities, isn't it? Well, courage is just thinking about all the great possibilities and then acting upon them!

Do your homework. It helps to get the facts. It helps because then you can make an informed decision that will put your heart and mind to rest. There will probably be a downside but we understand it, choose alternatives, and act decisively instead of those.

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Act. There is no substitute for the first step. Do you know what you want? Have you thought of the possibilities? Have you done your homework? Then what are you waiting for? The next step is to take the first step, and ACT!

**Live the Life Principle Number Two:
VISION IS THE CORNERSTONE**

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Stop Just Writing About Your Past and Start Writing Your Future!

“The history of free men is never written by chance, but by choice – their choice.”
Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Many people spend a lot of time on their history. Some do it purposefully with such hobbies as journaling, while others simply write and rewrite their history over and over in their minds. Depending upon the way you go about this, this can be good or bad. If you are doing it so you can reflect back on your life, that’s good. If you are doing it so you can learn from your past, that’s good too. Unfortunately, many people do it simply as a subconscious act of running themselves into the ground over and over.

What you “write” in your mind is an act of mental discipline, just as what you write on a sheet of paper is a discipline. Keep that in mind.

So if this is true, that we can make a choice as to what we want to write, both literally and figuratively, we have an extraordinary opportunity!

Instead of going over and over our past, we can choose to write our future! Have you ever thought about writing your future before it even happens to you? Well now you can – and you will!

Here is a process that will let you determine and write your own future!

Choose to choose your own future. If you don’t make the decision to accept responsibility for your own future, then you are choosing to not write your future. You must choose to choose. Do you?

Determine what you want your future to be. Be specific.

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What do you want to earn?

Where do you want to live?

What do you want to weigh?

What do you want to do for a living?

What do you want to do in your leisure time?

How much do you want to retire on?

If you don't know the answers to these questions then you may as well not even begin to write your future. Take some time to answer them fully.

Get a good understanding of your strengths and weaknesses. If you are going to write your future, you will have to have a sober understanding of what you are good at and what you are not particularly good at. Maybe ask a good friend or your spouse to give you an honest appraisal of your strengths and weaknesses.

**We acquire the strength
we have overcome.**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Focus on playing to your strengths while ever improving your weaknesses. Be sure that what you are doing is utilizing your strengths to their fullest. And you don't want to forget your weaknesses, even while you are trying to stay away from them. Instead, set smaller goals for improvement in your areas of weakness while you set grand goals for the areas you are strongest in!

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Get out a three pieces of paper. On the top of one, write, “One year from today I will...” On the next write, “Three years from today I will...” On the last write, “Ten years from today I will...” Then begin to fill them out. Make commitments to yourself. As you write them, end each sentence with a transition to how you are going to do it. For example, you may write, “One year from today I will... Have \$4800 in my saving account by saving \$400 per month.”

Start putting only information into your mind that will benefit the fulfillment of the kind of life you are writing about. For example, if you have a hard time spending money rather than saving it, you should probably cancel all of the catalogues that come each day that entice you to spend. Instead, spend the time you would have spent thumbing through catalogues going through financial growth material instead.

Discipline yourself to spend your time in a manner that will help you get to your goals. For example, cut out five hours of television a week and spend that time on your goals instead. That would be a difference of 260 hours in the next year! Wow! What could you do with another 260 hours? Almost anything!

You do not have to be a paper cup blowing to and fro in the wind! You do not have to live at the whims of other people or circumstances. You CAN choose your future! You can write it out just the way you want it to happen! Yes, ups and downs will come but you will outlast them and eventually arrive at your destiny. Then, when you get to the end of your life, you will know how it all turns out because you will have been the author!

Get going – write your future!

Your Date with Destiny

Destiny. What a powerful word. And the great thing about it? Everyone has one! You have a destiny! Another great thing about destiny? We have a significant role in shaping our own destiny! In essence, you can choose your date with destiny – powerful!

Your destiny is the dream that lies within you of your desired and preferred future. And the things that we choose each day are what lead us to that destiny: Our actions, our words, our attitudes, and our relationships. They all add up to develop and shape that date on which we will reach our destiny.

Here are some thoughts to think about as you work on shaping your Date with Destiny:

The Mental Question: Do you believe that you can achieve a life of abundance? The frank truth is that many people simply do not believe that they can achieve what lies in their heart. Success is for someone else, a better person, or a smarter person. This is not true and is perhaps the greatest obstacle we face on the journey to our destiny. If we are to achieve abundance in life, we must first believe we can, or face our own continual self-sabotage of what a college professor of mine called “stinkin’-thinkin’.”

Here is the truth:

It doesn't matter what your intelligence is.

It doesn't matter what your current resources are.

It doesn't matter what you currently earn.

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It doesn't matter what family you came from.

Nothing in your current circumstances matter in whether or not you can achieve your destiny! Nothing! Now, your current state may make it a longer or harder journey than someone else, but the possibility is always there no matter what your current circumstances are.

And that is the message we need to continually tell ourselves. "I can do it." Not "I can't do it."

Clear vision. Do you have one of your destiny? Here are some questions to determine whether or not your vision is clear.

Can you describe it in intricate detail?

Can you "see" it?

Can you "feel" it?

Can you "hear" it?

It's not what's happening to you now or what has happened in your past that determines who you become. Rather, it's your decisions about what to focus on, what things mean to you, and what you're going to do about them that will determine your ultimate destiny.

Anthony Robbins

Here are a couple of illustrations.

Perhaps you came from a dysfunctional family and your dream is to have great moments with your family. Let's start with a Thanksgiving meal. Can you see each person there? What are they wearing? Are they

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smiling? What is the conversation? Can you hear the laughter? Can you experience the joy? Can you smell the turkey? Can you see people hugging each other and saying “This was wonderful,” as they leave?

Another scenario: Your company. Can you see the large building you are in? Can you see the workers? Can you feel the positive attitude they have as they carry out their work? Can you experience the excitement as you get the quarterly results? Can you see yourself handing out healthy bonuses that bring pleasant surprises to your employees?

This is where it begins. A clear vision of your destiny.

Consider your resources. Are you aware of the resources you will need in order to set your date with destiny? Do you know how you will go about getting them?

What are the natural gifts and talents that you have? How can you best utilize them in achieving your destiny?

What are your current level of resources?

Money?

Time?

Emotional health?

Help from others such as friends, family, employees or volunteers?

What will be your needed future level of resources? And have you developed a plan to achieve this level?

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The last thing I want you to do is to fix a date in the future that you will be living your destiny by. A real date. This enables you to begin to work backwards in setting goals to move you along the way, providing you with future points to strive for and evaluation points to reflect upon.

Here are the points again:

Answer the mental question: Do I really believe?

Develop a clear vision.

Consider the resources needed.

Set a date with destiny.

Develop a plan to get there.

You Can Achieve Whatever You Choose To!

I have one firm belief that was drilled into my head by my mother: You can achieve whatever you choose to! It is true. Here are some facts:

Wherever you are right now, it is because you chose to be there. (Even if situations went sour on you and you feel like a victim of circumstances, go back far enough and you will see that choices brought you to where you were)

Whatever you choose to do, you can do. Even if you are far down a road you don't want to be on, you can make choices, though they may be hard, to change direction.

With that in mind, let's talk about the coming years of your life. Are you where you want to be? If so, great. If not, then understand this: Your choices got you to where you are and they can take you to where you want to be! That is powerful if we look at it in the positive!

Here are a couple of examples:

You earn what you choose to. Don't like your pay? Choose a different profession! I have long said that anybody can make \$150,000 a year guaranteed, if they want to. They can quit their job, finish college and go to medical school. "But that would take years," you say? I never said your choice would be easy – just possible! The point is, you CAN do it. You no longer have to be the victim!

You spend your time the way you choose to. "But I have no time," you say? No, you have as much time as any sports hero, business leader or president of a country – 24 hours a day! Imagine that, you have as much time as those people who shape the world. What is the difference? It is in how we

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choose to spend and prioritize our time. You can do whatever you choose to, and live whatever kind of life you desire, if you choose to reprioritize your time and how you spend it! That is so freeing!

There are many more examples I could give but I want to give you the key principle and then some questions to spur you on to make powerful choices that will shape your life. Take some time to go through these and begin to make the choices you need to make in order to live the kind of life you want to!

Key Principle: We must take responsibility for our life and understand that we can, and will, achieve whatever we ourselves choose to.

Q. What kind of income will you choose to have in the next 5 years? What will you do, what specific action will you take, to make that choice?

Q. What career will you have in the next 5 years? What will you do, what specific action will you take, to make that choice?

Q. What kind of family life will you have in the next 5 years? What will you do, what specific action will you take, to make that choice?

Q. What kind of emotional and intellectual state will you be in for the next 5 years? What will you do, what specific action will you take, to make that choice?

Q. What kind of spiritual state will you be in for the next 5 years? What will you do, what specific action will you take, to make that choice?

Q. What will be your physical state of being for the next 5 years? What will you do, what specific action will you take, to make that choice?

Remember, you can achieve whatever you choose to – and you do!

Re-Developing Your Vision

One of the most important things we can do for our businesses, schools, and organizations is to have vision. Vision is a clear picture of a desired end result that you are aiming for.

However, sometimes, no matter how big our vision was originally, we find ourselves focusing in on the daily events that require our attention but have nothing or little to do with our ultimate vision.

Occasionally, we think to ourselves, “Hey, I’m not really getting any closer to my vision. I’m spinning my wheels here.” This is when it is time to re-develop your vision!

Here are some helpful hints in doing just that.

Re-evaluate your original vision. Maybe what you used to think wasn’t realistic according to your strengths, your abilities, or your circumstances. Maybe it is time to change or modify the vision to make it attainable.

Assess your strengths. To achieve your vision, you and your staff will have to operate out of your strengths. If you are having a hard time moving toward your current vision, perhaps it is because the vision requires extended application of strengths that you and/or your organization don’t have. Either you need to hire into those strengths, develop those strengths, or re-develop the vision.

Ask yourself where your passions lie. If we are to attain great things, they must be aligned with those things that burn deep within us. Do you still have a passion for your vision? Does your staff have a passion for your vision? If not, you need to develop the passion, or find the vision that you can pour your

passion into. Never underestimate the power of passion and excitement in moving you toward (or keeping you from) your vision.

Ask yourself what it is that you value. What is important to you? How will fulfilling my current vision, fulfill my desire to do something important and worthwhile for myself, my family, my employees, and my community?

Break the vision down into easy to achieve steps. This helps us see that the vision is attainable. It lets us know the end result, but focus intently into achieving the next goal. This, step-by-step, moves us toward the vision.

**Live the Life Principle Number Three:
GOALS ARE FOR ACHIEVING**

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Get Your Goals – Guaranteed!

“Goals” is a topic that many people talk about, both in a positive as well as a negative sense. Some people are goal maniacs and others think they are a waste of time. Me? I am somewhat different. I just care about one thing – results. Goals: write ‘em down; don’t write ‘em down, I don’t care. Just get them! Achieve them! Live them! That is the only thing that should matter about goals, right?

If the only thing that matters is that we achieve our goals, then let’s talk about ways that will guarantee that we get our goals! There is such a way... and here it is:

First, be realistic. Too many people get hyped up by people promising them the world and they set goals that simply aren’t realistic. Then they are disappointed and then decide that “goals” are bad. But wait a minute. Don’t I teach that anybody can achieve anything? Sort of. We have to be realistic. The best example is that a seven-foot center who plays basketball will never be a world champion jockey. A person who is five feet, two inches could be, given time. This is the difference between a realistic goal and one that isn’t. Take some time and set a realistic goal or goals. This will make your goals guaranteed from the get go!

Second, memorize your goals. Set them in stone in your mind. Know what they are. Prioritize them in order of importance and memorize them so that if anyone asked you, “What are your top seven goals?” you could answer immediately. This will embed the goals and the desired outcomes into your mind, which is the seed of action.

**If you don't know
where you are going,
you might wind up
someplace else.**

Yogi Berra

Visualize your goals. Some people are really into this. Some people think it is total hokey. I am in the middle. I do not think that there is anything “magical” about the visualization process, but I do think that taking some time to regularly envision your dream and goals is a great thing. It deepens your desire to get your goals. It puts you into a frame of mind where you operate in a peak state. So, don’t overdo it, but don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater either. Put your goals deep into your mind by visualizing them periodically.

Set time frames. Don’t let your goal be, “I want to lose twenty pounds.” Instead, let it be, “I want to lose twenty pounds in four months.” Again, a reminder to be realistic. But you can do wonders for your goal setting if you break your goals and put time frames on them. This gives it a sense of urgency. It makes it some thing you are working “toward” rather than working “on.” In fact, I would suggest setting long-range time frames, mid-range time frames, and short-range time frames.

Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.

Stephen A. Brennan

big costs, but even little dreams have a cost associated with them so count the cost.

Spend time and money on your goals. Realize that any goal worth achieving is worth spending your resources, specifically time and money, on. Buy books, go to seminars, join associations, hire a coach, etc. Whatever you need to do to get your goals! Spending time and money will seed your dreams and you will reap the end result far beyond what you put into it. Big dreams have

Surround yourself with people who can propel you to your goals. Never underestimate the power of the people around you to either drag you down or lift

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you up. Poisonous people can destroy your goal by systematically draining you of your passion and desire and replacing it with total pessimism! Passionate and positive people can invigorate you with renewed energy and a mind set on the dream. Be around people who will energize you!

Act on your goals each and every day. Even if it is just a small step, it will leave you closer to your goal each and every day. If you have a savings goal, set aside even one dollar a day. Take a jar and empty your change into it at the end of each day. If you want to write a book, write each day, if even just two paragraphs! Small, step-by-step actions will produce the goal – guaranteed!

Be persistent! I have long said that if the three most important words in real estate are “location,” “location,” “location,” then the three most important words in getting what you desire are “persistence,” “persistence,” “persistence.” In fact, be tenaciously persistent. Be ruthlessly persistent. Look, there will be all sorts of barriers and obstacles you will have to overcome if you want to achieve your dream. Dreams don’t just roll over and die. You have to attack them! Go for it and don’t give up! They can, and will, be yours!

Can you get your goals – guaranteed? You bet you can. And you will, if you put into practice the above principles.

If you...

Be realistic.

Memorize your goals.

Visualize your goals.

Set time frames.

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Spend time and money on your goals.

Surround yourself with positive people.

Act on your goals every day and...

Be persistent.

You can get your goals – guaranteed!

The Twin Actions of Accomplishment

When it comes to achieving accomplishments there are two foundational actions that must take place. When these two actions take place, and take place in the right order, you will become unstoppable. You will also enter into an elite group of people who actually do both.

You see, most people are given to only one or the other, and in doing so negate their opportunity to accomplish what it is that they want to accomplish.

What are these two actions?

Intake and Output.

Think about it. Do you want to have a healthy body? You must take in proper food and output vigorous exercise. Do you want to be financially fit? You must intake income and output investments.

The same is true in our personal and professional lives. But what specifically do we intake and output?

We intake information and we output effort through the exercise of our will.

The twin actions of accomplishment then are the intake of information and the exercising of our will.

As I said, most people do one or the other. They are simply information addicts or they are action addicts. You have some who go to every seminar in the world and then never exercise their will to put it into practice. Others are simply a flurry of action but going in no specific direction.

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When you only intake information you become fat! Not physically fat but personally fat. You become lethargic. You become frustrated because all of this information was supposed to change your life!

When you only exercise your will and become a tornado of activity you become spent. You become tired because you aren't achieving anything but a busy schedule!

But when you put these two together – WOW! Look out, because you will turn the world upside down! So let's look at these two a little closer.

How can you intake information?

- Choose as close friends, people who will challenge and stimulate you intellectually and personally.
- Go back to school.
- Buy success products and then read or listen to them.
- Go to a seminar.
- Get involved in an ongoing discussion group with people who want to grow.

How can you exercise the will? This is a bit simpler but not so easy.

- You simply must act on the information.
- Eat better foods – put down the ice cream.

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- Save more money – stop spending on superfluous items.
- Lose weight – start walking every day.
- Manage your time – shut off the TV.

All of these things we know do to do, but we must simply do them.

Are you a person who has all the info? Then act.

Are you a person who acts but doesn't get anywhere? Then learn.

Intake information, exercise the will. The twin actions of accomplishment.

Simple Ways to Super-Charge Your Goals and Make Them Work!

Goals. Most people have a love-hate relationship with goals. They love them because they are such a great idea and a wonderful way to motivate us to achieve, as well as evaluate our progress, but hate them because for many, they more often than not go unattained and simply frustrate them. This isn't what goals should do!

So I thought as we begin this New Year, I would give us some simple ways to set goals so that we achieve them! After all, what good is a goal if it isn't something you achieve? Here are some simple steps you can take to make sure that you see change in your life this year.

Narrow your focus. That's right, start small. Pick two or three areas tops, that you want to work on. Too many people say to themselves, "I want to do this, and this, and this, and this....." and they end up doing nothing! Most of what you do throughout your day can be done without a lot of mental or emotional exertion, but change isn't one of them. So focus down to a couple. This way you can get some victory in these areas. Here are some areas to think about: Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Spiritual, Financial, and Relational. What areas need some work? Now, what one thing should be the first item on the change list? The others will come later, but for now, you should focus on two or three.

Keep the long-term in mind, but set your sights on achieving your goals in the short-term. Do you want to lose 75 pounds? Good. Long-term you will. But for now, think short-term. Don't think about losing 75 pound in eighteen months. Think about losing 5 pounds by in one

You must have long term goals to keep you from being frustrated by short-term failures.

Charles C. Noble

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month. This does two things. First, It makes it urgent. Instead of blowing it and saying, "Oh well, I still have 17 months to lose the 75 pounds" (because eventually that becomes 2 months to lose 75 pounds) your goal is only a few weeks out. This is better in terms of reaching your goal. Secondly, as you reach these shorter goals, it gives you regular victories instead of regular progress. Progress feels good, but achieving a goal is awesome!

Reward yourself when you achieve the goal. When you lose the 5 pounds in a month, go get yourself a milkshake. But just one! Then get back to your goal for the next month. This puts a little fun back into the process of self-control and self-discipline. You will look forward to the reward and when the going gets tough, you will say, "two more weeks, two more pounds, then..."

That's it. I truly believe that it can be that simple for you.

This adds some ideas to the above article.

1. Don't bite off more than you can chew. Instead of saying, "I am going to quit my three pack a day habit cold turkey," say "I am going to drop to a pack and a half a day." You can always make new resolutions when you have achieved the first ones. Give yourself small victories a little at a time. Instead of saying "I am going to lose 75 pounds," say "I am going to lose 20 pounds."

2. Be specific in your timeline. Don't just say, "I am going to lose 20 pounds." Say, "I am going to lose 20 pounds by April 1st." This way, when you start to be tempted in the ice cream aisle in the middle of February, you can say, "Nope, only 10 more pounds to go in a month and a half and I am not going to blow it."

3. Post your resolutions where you will see them every day. This will keep the resolution in the front of your mind at all times. Instead of forgetting that you

are trying to lose weight and ordering a big, thick porterhouse, you will have been reminded earlier that day that you need to go with something a little more on the lighter side. It will help your will beat your desire.

4. Find an encouraging person, who you respect, to keep you accountable. This person should ask you, at an interval established by the both of you, how it is going. They must be the encouraging type, though. If you are blowing it, they can say, "Well, that's okay, get back to it tomorrow." If you are doing well, they can say, "Awesome job. I'll talk to you next week." You will look forward to their weekly encouragement.

5. Find a partner. That's right, someone who is trying to accomplish the same thing (or something different if need be). Just make sure that they really want to change, or they will end up just bellyaching about how hard it is and you will both fall into the abyss.

6. Write down a list of all of the benefits that will come if you accomplish this. If it is losing weight it might be something like this: Feel better, better self-esteem, longer life, clothes are more comfortable, no more time spent sewing on popped buttons, wife says you look 22 again, etc. If it is quitting smoking, it may look like this: Better breath, no more brown fingers, no more wrinkles on my face, no more red eyes, no more smelly clothes, longer life, wife don't make me spend two hours a day on the back porch, etc. This will help you see what you will get from accomplishing your resolution.

7. Plan a reward if you accomplish your resolution. It can be anything from small to large. If you drop the twenty pounds, go out for dinner and dessert. Then get back to lose the next 20. If it is quitting smoking, go on a mini-vacation. Whatever you do, reward yourself. Or let a spouse or a friend pick the reward. Then splurge and enjoy!

Using Failure to Further Your Future

"You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it."
Margaret Thatcher

Failure. Even the word sounds bad, doesn't it? That is because since the time we were just young children we were taught that failure was bad. But is that true? Is failure bad? Let's consider some things.

I like a baseball analogy. Do you know what the record is for a season batting average (That means how many times the batter successfully hit to get on base)? It is a gentleman by the name of Ted Williams and his season batting

**Failure is a detour,
not a dead-end
street.**

Zig Ziglar

average was .411 one year. That means that out of 1000 times at bat he would get a hit 411 times. That is considered by baseball fans as one of the greatest records ever. There are players making millions of dollars who hit .280!

But what does that stat also tell us if we flip it around? It tells us that the best season any batter ever had in the major leagues was a FAILURE RATE of .589! *Even the best fail on a regular basis!*

What about the richest people on Wall Street? Do they fail? Of course they do. They pick the bad stocks sometimes, but they cut their loses and learn from their failure.

Did Michael Jordan miss shots? Over 50% of them!

So what about all this? What does this mean for us? The fact is, I think we can learn a lot about failure that will actually make us a great success. So here are some thoughts to help you use failure to further your future!

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Failure is inevitable if you are trying for greatness. Failure is something we must accept as a part of the road we travel to success. This is a very important item and number one on the list because a lot of what stops people from pursuing success is their fear that they may fail and not reach their destination. When we embrace the fact that we will fail, and that is okay, then we have nothing to fear anymore. Instead, we keep our eyes open and pick ourselves up, adjust from the failure, and move on.

Failure is never failure unless you fail to learn something from it. That's right, we ought to stop calling these bumps in the road "failures" and start calling them "Learning Experiences!" When you fail, the first thing you should think is "What can I learn from this?" If you can pull just one idea out of that question, then the experience was worth it.

Sometimes failure is a blessing in disguise. Just ask the 3M Company. They were looking for an incredible adhesive and actually got a sticky paste that held, but not permanently. What a failure! No, instead, they spread some on the back of little sheets of yellow paper and called them "Post-It Notes." Have some? I'm sure you do. The 3M company thanks you for rewarding their "failure."

People won't think poorly of you if you fail. This is perhaps the biggest myth, and the one that causes us to never attempt our dreams. We don't try because of what Aunt Martha may say about us at the family reunion. The truth is, however, that people will actually respect you for trying. The only thing I have found that people think poorly about you is if you handle yourself badly when you fail. Sore losers get the bad press, not people who attempt great things!

Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker. Failure is delay, not defeat. It is a temporary detour, not a dead end.

Denis Waitley

Failure isn't the end but the beginning. One of our greatest fears is that our whole world will collapse if we fail. Or at least the project will. The truth is that that rarely happens! Most of the time we can pick back up again, make some adjustments and be on our way! This is a new beginning. Now there is no need to go down the road you have already taken, so there is one less option you have to try on your new journey.

Sometimes we miss out on success because we quit in the middle of a problem and it becomes a failure instead of an obstacle we could have persevered through. When people encounter trouble they have a tendency to quit. And then they see themselves as having failed. My question is this: What if they would have kept on going – persevered? Perhaps they would have struggled a bit and then broke free again. The failure happened only because they quit! So don't give up – keep pushing – and perhaps you will see yourself through to victory!

The greatest thing to overcome is the fear of failure. Most of the battle is right between our ears. It has been said that “we have nothing to fear but fear itself,” and that is true because in most of our “failures” the end result is usually much less than we feared it would be. Yet in giving into fear and not trying, we suffer the ultimate consequence – no success! So begin to tell yourself the good stuff! Change the direction of your thinking and begin to see the possibilities of success, not failure.

Remember, properly looked at, failure can help you further your future!

Bonus Questions to ask yourself when you “fail”:

What can I learn from this?

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What did I do right in this?

Where did this go wrong?

How can I start again?

What resources do I need to make sure this doesn't happen again?

Then use the answers to these questions to plot your new course.

Make Greatness Your Goal!

If greatness is your goal, whether in your business life, your personal relationships or your own personal growth, here are some guidelines to get you on your way. Greatness is possible! You can achieve the goals you set for yourself and you can make a difference in your own life and those who live and work around you! Set greatness as your goal! Here's how:

Identify greatness for yourself. While there are some basic generalities that most people would consider great, there are broader definitions of greatness, ones that each individual sets for him or herself. For example, most

**No great man lives in vain.
The history of the world is
but the biography of great
men.**

Thomas Carlyle

people would consider Mother

Theresa great while only some would consider Donald Trump great. Helping humanity is a broad generality while building a real estate fortune isn't. So what you need to first do is ask, "What does greatness look like for this

company, organization, family or for myself?" From there you can develop values and a mission statement etc. But if you don't first identify it, you'll never reach it.

Maximize targeted end results. As Covey says, "begin with the end in mind." What end results do you want? Be specific. Come up with all of them. Maximize them. Leave no stone unturned. Set out for yourself all of the goals or end results you must hit in order to reach greatness. Write them down, memorize them and distribute them broadly (if doing this for a group). Maximize your targeted end results!

Make distinction your endeavor. What is the endeavor of the great? Usually it is to distinguish themselves from the average. They seek to rise above

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the rest by the quality of their product or service. Everything goes toward the goal of making themselves distinct from the run of the mill. That is their mission. And in doing so, they make themselves great!

Map your effort thoroughly. The three most important words in real estate are “location, location, location.” In reaching a goal, the three most important words are “plan, plan, plan.” Okay, “execute” and “persevere” work too, but go with me here! Too many people wish they would achieve something but never write down a plan for getting there. When I want to go on a long trip I don’t just wish to get there. I plan on how to get there. I get a map, I figure out distances, times etc. Map out your goal thoroughly. This will help you achieve greatness.

Greatness does not approach him who is forever looking down.

Hitopadesa

Regularly take time for regeneration. Achieving greatness is hard! You will care more, work harder, and take more lumps and setbacks than the rest. So you will need to take time to regenerate so you can fight again another day. Your body needs rest. Your mind needs rest. Your emotions need rest. Your spirit needs rest. I firmly believe that a person who rests well can do more in less time than the one who works without setting aside time for regeneration. You may be able to reach goals without rest, but somewhere along the line, you will fall harder and longer if you aren’t regularly regenerating yourself. So take your vacation time this year!

Have a strict evaluation process. Every plan and goal needs an evaluation tool. And it should be a strict evaluation process. This is how you objectively decide whether or not you are proceeding toward your goal. If you have the right evaluation tool and you look six months into it and you aren’t hitting the goals, perhaps you need to change the goal or the way you are going after it. The evaluation process is not to be underestimated in its importance!

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Take somebody else with you. True greatness is not individual. The one who becomes great spreads the reward of greatness around. Incorporate many people into the plan and let them eat of the fruit of success. I live in an area that has literally thousands of millionaires created by a company that had a vision of greatness. And while yes, they experience the reward, the rewards then go out many levels through the whole community, from businesses that support our community to non-profit groups, churches, and schools. True greatness blesses those many levels away.

Learn to party! Party? Yes! What good is greatness if you can't enjoy it? And not just the final destination but also the entire journey. Be sure to stop along the way and relish in your movement. Celebrate small and large victories. This keeps the spirit high and the big momentum rolling! Spend the money, buy the food and blow up the balloons – it's time to celebrate!

**Live the Life Principle Number Four:
THE TENACIOUS BIRD GETS THE
WORM**

Take a Turn at Tenacious!

"Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan 'press on' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race."

Calvin Coolidge

I have worked with many successful people; people who have achieved the kinds of lives they have dreamed about. I have also worked with many people who are not anywhere near where they want to be in life. Many times those who are not successful resent those who are and believe that somehow success was handed to those who have achieved much.

What I have found however is that actually the reverse is true. Those who have achieved much have worked much HARDER than those who are not successful. You wouldn't believe the stories of struggle that I hear from those who now appear to be on "top of the heap."

Yes, they are successful; but no, it wasn't handed to them! And I find that most of the unsuccessful people who come to me actually haven't been tenacious at all. I find that with many of the people I speak to who complain about their lack of success simply haven't persevered and been tenacious. When I ask them questions I usually get excuses. Yes, there are exceptions on both sides, but I find this to be almost universally true.

If you are one who finds yourself dreaming of a better life, or looking at someone who "has it made," I would ask you to take a long, deep look inward and at your life to find whether or not you have actually been tenacious in pursuit

**You become a champion
by fighting one more
round. When things are
tough, you fight one more
round.**

James J. Corbett

of your dreams. How long have you gone for it? Many people who achieve much go for YEARS before they achieve what their hearts long for? How hard have you gone for it? Most people who achieve much have given up much. They have sacrificed much. They strive valiantly for what it is that resides deep in their dreams. They just plain ol' work hard!

So what are the principles of tenacity? What do you need to know in order to take your turn at the tenacious? Here are some thoughts to start your fire and get you going!

1. Sometimes you just have to outlast the others.

"Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go." William Feather

I have found that many people start on their dreams but most never finish. Then those who stop resent those who make it. The truth is that most people who become successful have simply mastered the art of keeping on keeping on! I myself can remember early on in my career when I would get discouraged and I literally said to myself, "One more week. Just give it one more week." Quite frankly, this is what got me through a couple of years of my work early on. I hung on as others let go.

Determine what specific goal you want to achieve. Then dedicate yourself to its attainment with unswerving singleness of purpose, the trenchant zeal of a crusader.

Paul J. Meyer

It is easy to get disheartened. Ask those who have achieved success if they ever got disheartened and you will find some of the most amazing stories you have ever heard. Give it a try: Go to the most successful person you know

and ask them if they ever thought about quitting. Ask them how they kept on going. You will be amazed at what you hear.

2. Sometimes you just have to hold on at the end.

"When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on." Franklin Roosevelt

We can do anything we want to do if we stick to it long enough.

Helen Keller

I wonder how many people have quit just as they would have begun their entrance into success? Sure there are many who quit at the first sign of hard work, but what about those who, after the tenth time of trial then give up, just as fate would have seen them go through one last hurdle and then into the promised land? How many people were on their last hurdle and decided not to jump? How many people had just one more mountain pass to go? Or just one more river to cross?

Of course we will never know, but certainly some of the people who quit are doing so on what would have been their last trial, right?

So what does this mean for you? For me it means I do not quit because I would hate to find out later that all I needed was just one last effort and I would have achieved my goal. What if it isn't my last trial? That's okay because as long as I keep going, eventually I will get to my last trial, I will overcome it, and I will enter the Winner's Circle.

3. Sometimes the most beautiful results come from dull things under pressure.

"Diamonds are nothing more than chunks of coal that stuck to their jobs." Malcolm Forbes

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If coal wasn't an inanimate object it would certainly scream, "Stop! I want out!" But that coal, when facing incredible pressure, is turned into one of earth's most precious possessions. Ugly, dirty old coal is transformed into beautiful diamonds.

Instead of looking at pressure and trials as the reason to quit, get tenacious and see them as the very thing that will make your life the beautiful thing that you desire it to be. See it as your opportunity to learn, to grow, and to be transformed. See these trials as the very things that will enable you to have the life that dream of!

Trials will surely come. Life will get hard. You will want to quit.

Then you will have a choice: Will you give up? Or will you take your turn at tenacious. The choice you make will determine much of the rest of your life.

My advice? Take your turn at tenacious. You will become stronger, and you will end up living the life you dream of!

My Top Four Pointers for Kicking Your Life Into High Gear

How would you like to kick your life into high gear? I can help you! Your life doesn't have to be stale and full of drudgery. Your life can be lived at the highest levels, experiencing joy in every area! I want to give you my top pointers for kicking your life into high gear so you can get moving on the fast track to success!

But first... A secret key to understanding success.

Secret Key: Success isn't just doing certain things, though we will certainly do certain things to become a certain kind of person. What kind of person you are is what determines your success in life. Yes, you can do right things and achieve a certain level of success, but not the kind of success I am talking about – true-life success.

So what are my four tips? Here they are:

1. Become a person of Vision.

**The only limits are,
as always, those of
vision.**

James Broughton

Vision is the spectacular that causes us to carry out the mundane. Vision is what sees us through the dark days so we do not give up and settle for second best. Vision is the grand scheme that we relentlessly pursue. Vision is the goal we aim for. The best way to kick your life into high gear and begin to succeed in what you want to succeed in, is to begin to become a person of vision.

The successful person has a fully developed vision of their destination. So let me ask you a simple question:

Do YOU know where you are going?

And not only do you have a vision of where you are going, but is your vision fully developed? Now certainly we cannot know everything that will happen to us in the future, but we can develop the plan fully, allowing in our plan for a variety of contingency plans. "But Chris, that is a lot of work." It is, but when you look across the board at people who have succeeded much, they are people who laid out most of their life and work before it happened. Life didn't just happen to them. They didn't just stumble into success. They planned for it and they created it.

The Tests of Vision

Is it Clear?

Is it Concise?

Is it Inspiring?

Is it Achievable?

Is it Easy to Memorize?

Ask your self the questions above and let the answers begin to shape the vision you have for your life. The tighter and clearer the vision you have for your life, the sooner you will kick your life into high gear!

2. Become a person of Passion.

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Nothing is so intolerable to man as being fully at rest, without a passion.

Blaise Pascal

Passion. Mmmmm.... Passion. Passion is the burning of the heart. It is the unbridled running amuck of the emotions. It is the overwhelming desire to accomplish your goal. It transcends the mental assent to a set of ideals. It drives and thrusts you toward your goal. You MUST have it!

Those who consider themselves intellectuals will underestimate the power of passion. The fact is that the victory isn't only in the mind. The truths of the mind are driven by the passion of the heart. So by all means, fuel the passion for life that resides deep within your soul.

Passion is like a fire. It can rage or it can smolder. Even if all you have is barely lit embers, you can fan into flame the fire of your passion for life, love, and the goals and vision you have for your life! Commit yourself to becoming a person who lives passionately!

3. Become a person of Priorities.

As I have worked through the years with people who achieve much and have lives that are constantly in high gear, I notice something amazing about them: They are people with an extraordinary ability to know what the right thing to do is and to actually do it in a timely fashion.

For example, a friend of mine was in charge of a three-day event a few weeks ago that was attended by close to 250,000 people and was featured on national and international television. Four days before the event he told me he had nothing to do and felt guilty. I encouraged him by reminding him that this was

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actually a sign of his incredible ability to have focused on and lived out his priorities throughout the whole year before the event took place.

When all was said and done, living and working out of his priorities enabled him to kick back and enjoy the fruit of his (and hundreds of his employees) labor. His life was in high gear and because he is a person of priorities, he is enjoying life. You can too.

It is the mark of great people to treat trifles as trifles and important matters as important.

Doris Lessing

Discern what the important things are that you must involve yourself in so as to have the life you want. Then relentlessly live out of those priorities. Say “no” to everything else!

4. Become a person of Excellence.

People who live life in high gear, succeeding in every area of life, are people who place a high emphasis on, and strive for, excellence in every area of life. Good just won't do. The best is the target.

He who has put a good finish to his undertaking is said to have placed a golden crown to the whole.

Eustachius

Even when they fail or do poorly, they make an inner commitment to do an excellent job the next time. They are people who want, and live for, excellence in their work, their play, their finances, their relationships –

everything!

Do you long for a life lived in high gear? One that is filled with joy and achievement? It is possible! Give some time to contemplate how you can make

changes in the next few days and weeks in the following areas and see if your life doesn't kick into high gear!

Vision

Passion

Priorities

Excellence

They are yours for the taking! Go get 'em!

Live the Life Principle Number Five:
STAY MOTIVATED FOR SUCCESS

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The Top Six Ways to Stay Motivated

I receive many emails from people that basically ask the same question: How can I keep myself motivated long term? This seems to be quite a common dilemma for many people so I want to address it because it can be done! Here are my tips for staying motivated:

1. Get motivated every day. Zig Ziglar was once confronted about being a “motivational speaker.” The guy said to him, “You guys come and get people hyped up and then you leave and the motivation goes away. It doesn’t last, and then you have to get motivated again.” Zig reminded the gentleman that baths are the same way but we think it is a good idea to take a bath every day!

It is true that motivation doesn’t last. We have to renew it each and every day. That is okay. It doesn’t make motivation a bad thing. We simply have to realize that if we want to stay motivated over the long term, it is something we will have to apply to ourselves each and every day.

**If it doesn't come
from within, it
doesn't come.**

Herman Cain

2. Have a vision for your life. The root word of motivation is “motive.” The definition of motive is, “A reason to act.” This is the cognitive or rational side of motivation. It is your vision. You have to have a vision that is big enough to motivate you. If you are making \$50,000 a year, it isn’t going to motivate you to set your goal at \$52,000 a year. You just won’t get motivated for that because the reward isn’t enough. Maybe \$70,000 a year would work for you. Set out a vision and a strategy for getting there. Have a plan and work the plan.

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3. Fuel your passion. Much of motivation is emotional. I don't know quite how it works but I do know THAT it works. Emotion is a powerful force in getting us going. Passion is an emotion, so fuel your passion. "Well, I like to work on logic," you may say. Great, now work on your passion. Set yourself on a course to have a consuming desire for your goal, whatever it is. Do whatever you can to feel the emotion and use it to your advantage!

**Motivation is what
gets you started.
Habit is what keeps
you going.**

Jim Ryun

4. Work hard enough to get results. You can build on your motivation by getting results. The harder you work, the more results you will get and the more results you get, the more you will be motivated to get more. These things all build on one another. If you want to lose weight, then lose the first few pounds. When the belt moves to the next notch you will get fired up to get it to the notch beyond that!

5. Put good materials into your mind. I can't say this enough – listen to tapes. I still listen to tapes regularly. I buy tape clubs from other speakers and I learn and grow. Their successes motivate me to attain my own successes! Read good books. Read books that teach you new ideas and skills. Read books that tell the stories of successful people. Buy them, read them, and get motivated! Buy great music and listen to it. I just did a cycling class at the health club today. Whenever a good song came on I was actually able to get motivated to ride faster! It gets you going and motivates you!

6. Ride the momentum when it comes. Sometimes you will just be clicking and sometimes you won't. That is okay. It is the cycle of life. When you aren't clicking, plug away. When you are clicking, pour it on because momentum will help you get larger gains in a shorter period of time with less energy. That is the Momentum Equation! When you are feeling good about how your work is going, ride the momentum and get as much out of it as you can!

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These are the top six ways to stay motivated:

- Get motivated every day.
- Have a vision for your life.
- Fuel your passion.
- Work hard enough to get results.
- Put good materials into your mind.
- Ride the momentum when it comes.

These are simple principles, that when you put them to work regularly, will change your life by keeping you motivated all the time! Get going!

Live the Adventure!

Think of an adventure that you might like to take. Maybe it is a trip to a foreign country or a major destination in your own country. Maybe it is to climb a mountain or float down the Amazon. Whatever works for you, picture what that would take. Got it? Good, now let's see what are common characteristics of a good adventure and apply them to our lives. In doing so, you will shift your perspective and see how your own day-to-day life can be an adventure!

A desire to see something new: When we set out on an adventure, we are usually looking for something new. We are looking to break out of the doldrums and get to somewhere we have never been before. What about in life? Are you constantly looking for something new to experience? Take some time soon to experience something new. That will put some adventure in your life!

A desire to see something grand: People on adventures usually pick something larger than life, something grand. Do you think anybody would go to see the "Tiny Canyon?" No way. But hundreds of thousands of people adventure their way to the Grand Canyon. What about your life? Is there anything grand that you are pursuing? Is there anything bigger than life that you are striving for? Take some time soon to pursue something grand. That will put some adventure in your life!

A desire to learn: Lots of people take adventures to learn about something. This makes Washington, DC a popular adventure spot with all of its history. You can spend days there! Your eyes and mind are always being opened and it is enjoyable. What about your life? Are you involved in anything that causes

Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow.

Anthony J. D'Angelo

you to continually learn and grow intellectually? Take some time to stretch yourself to learn something. That will put some adventure in your life!

A willingness to be diverted: Part of a vacation adventure is that you can be diverted and it is okay! That is part of the fun. Yes, we want a clear destination but sometimes it is the diversions that bring us the spice of life. What about you? Are you diversion averse? Maybe you need to let yourself get out of the box sometime. Try this: The next time you have the possibility for a fun diversion, take it. Life is short and you can take some diversions. That will put some adventure in your life!

An expectation that there will be breakdowns: Have you ever gone on a family vacation that didn't have breakdowns? Not many. But when all is said and done, aren't those the things we laugh at years later and remember clearly? You know, "Remember Dad getting mad that the car had broken down and he slammed his finger in the door and started hopping around so much he fell in a ditch of water? And when he came up for air he had mud on his face? What a riot!" Even dad laughs at that – later! What about your life? Are you frustrated by the breakdowns? Try looking at them from the perspective you will look at them from 20 years from now. That will put some adventure in your life!

A focus on fun: Whatever the adventure is, we usually expect it to be fun, don't we? Well, life can be fun too. In fact, I require that life be fun! What about your life? Is it "all work and no play makes Jack or Suzie a dull boy or girl? Get out and have some fun my friend! That will put some adventure in your life!

A clear destination: Ultimately, our adventure usually has a clear destination. It may be the top of the mountain. It may be the goal of getting your whole family together at a resort. Whatever it is, it has a clear destination. It is the goal, and it is what gives us purpose. What about your life? Do you have a clear

destination you are working toward? Set your sights on a clear destination! That will put some adventure in your life!

Put Some Fire in Your Desire

One of the keys to success is staying motivated because it is being motivated that keeps us going out the door every day to change the world and reach our destiny! It is our desire for a better life, for change in ourselves and others, and for personal growth and fulfillment that moves our mountains! Desire!

Desire sure is a word with much more richness to it than the word “want” though they are essentially the same. “Want,” though, sounds like you could take it or leave it. “Desire” says, “I have to have it!” Desire, is “want” with a fire under it!

The first principle of success is desire -- knowing what you want. Desire is the planting of your seed.

Robert Collier

Unfortunately, we tend to ebb and flow from want to desire, even with the same goal! One day we may be passionate about building our business or growing our relationships and then, the next day, we find ourselves simply in the “want” camp again.

The key to keeping on is to re-light the fire under want so it roars into a raging fire of desire! Then, and only then, will we see the passion needed to be tenacious pursuers of our dreams! Keeping the fire lit is what will see you through the mountains and valleys of life and the journey you are on to your success!

So what do we do? We light the fire! Here are a few thoughts to help you build the fire of your desire!

The wood: Keep a clear mental picture of the goal. This is imperative. The picture of the goal is like the wood in a fire. It is the raw material. Know what your goal is and what it looks like.

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The fuel: Keep a list, if simply just a mental one, of all of the benefits of pursuing and reaching your goal. Make them as “sense” oriented as possible. “See” the benefits. “Hear” them. “Touch” them. This is like the fuel that we add to a fire to get it going. Now all we need is a match.

The match: Keep yourself active! This is the match: Action! Even when you don’t feel like it, get yourself to act and soon you will see the fire burning because you have again ignited the dream! The more desire you have the more the fire burns.

Eventually the fire will begin to die out. Here is where you throw the wood on again, pour on some fuel, and if need be, strike another match. I would encourage you to not let the fire go out though, because it is easier to continually throw wood and fuel on an already burning fire than it is to start one up again!

Finding Motivation: What To Do When You Don't Feel Like Doing Anything

“The measure of your success usually comes down to who wins the battle that rages between the two of you. The ‘you’ who wants to stop, give up, or take it easy, and the ‘you’ who chooses to beat back that which would stand in the way of your success - complacency.”

Chris Widener

In all of my interactions with people, I've never found anyone, regardless of their level of success, who doesn't sometimes find themselves simply not wanting to do the things that they need and want to do. It is a part of human nature that there will be times that, in spite of all that we need to do, and even desire to, we will find ourselves not wanting to do anything. And what separates those who will become successful from those who will maintain the status-quo, is the ability at those very crucial moments of time when we are making decisions about what we will do, to choose to find the inner motivation that will enable us to conquer our complacency and move on in action.

I find that I confront this issue in my life on a regular basis, so the following success strategies are not merely pie in the sky techniques, but proven ways to get yourself to go even when you don't feel like doing anything.

Honestly evaluate whether or not you need a break. This is the first thing that I usually do when I find that I don't want to get to a specific action. The fact is that oftentimes we will have been working very hard and the lethargy we are feeling is really our body and emotions telling us that we simply need a break. And this is where it takes real

What separates those who will become successful from those who will maintain the status quo is the ability to choose to find the inner motivation to conquer their complacency.

Chris Widener

intellectual honesty because when we don't need a break our mind is still telling us we need a break! But sometimes we do need a break. I'll give you a good example. I don't particularly like to exercise, but I do almost every day. Sometimes, I find myself before going to the club thinking about how I just didn't feel like going. Most of the time I am just being lazy. However, sometimes I realize that my body needs a break. So from time to time I will take a one or two day break from working out. The benefits of this are two-fold: One, my body gets a break to regenerate itself. Two, after a day or two, I begin to miss my workout, and eagerly anticipate returning to the gym.

Other examples: Perhaps you are a salesman who has been phoning clients for a week straight, day and night. You wake up one morning and just don't feel like doing it any more. Well, take a break for the morning. Go to a coffee shop and read the paper. Go to the driving range and hit some golf balls. Take a break and then get back to it!

Starts small. I'm at a point in my workout schedule now where a typical workout day for me consists of 30 to 45 minutes of aerobic exercise, and about 30 minutes of weight lifting. So when I find myself not wanting to get up and go to the gym, I will sometimes make a commitment to go and just do a smaller workout. Instead of deciding not to go, I'll commit to doing 15 to 20 minutes of aerobic exercise and 15 to 30 minutes of weight lifting. This is also good for two reasons. One, I actually get some exercise that day. And two, it keeps me from getting into a cycle of giving up when I don't feel like moving toward action.

Other examples: Maybe you are a writer who simply doesn't want to write today. Instead of the long day writing you had planned, decide that you will at least outline a couple of new articles. You will at least get these done, and you may have found that you put yourself into the writing mood after all.

Change your routine. I have found that what keeps me in the best shape and burns the most calories for me, is to do 30 to 45 minutes on the treadmill every day. Now let me be very blunt. I find running on the treadmill to be extremely boring. Usually I can get myself to do it, but sometimes I need to vary my routine. So instead of 30 to 45 minutes on a treadmill, I will break down my aerobic exercise routine into a number of different areas. I will do ten to 15 minutes on treadmills, 10 to 15 minutes on the reclining cycle, 5 to 10 minutes on the rowing machine, 5 to 10 minutes on the stair stepper, and then back on the treadmill for five to 10 minutes. I still get my exercise, but I'm bored a lot less.

Other examples: Maybe you are in construction and you have been working on the plumbing for a week, and it is getting monotonous. Don't do the plumbing today! Go frame-in the office.

Reward yourself. One way that I motivate myself to do something when I don't feel like doing it, is to tell myself that if I get through the work that I need to, I will give myself a little reward. For instance, I may tell myself if I to get up and go to the club I can take five to 10 minutes off my treadmill exercise, which will shorten my workout routine, and I'll allow myself to sit in the hot tub for a few extra minutes. Hey, it works!

Other examples: Maybe you are a mortgage broker who feels like sleeping in. Tell yourself that after the next three mortgages you close you will take your kids to the fair, or your spouse to the movies. Maybe you'll give yourself a night on the town with old friends.

Reconnect the action with pleasure rather than pain. Psychologists have long told us that we humans tend to connect every action with either pleasure or pain. Tony Robbins has popularized this even further in the last few years with something he calls Neural Associations. That is, we connect every action with either a pleasure, or pain. When we are finding ourselves lacking

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motivation, what we are probably finding about ourselves is that we are associating the action that we are thinking about with pain, rather than pleasure.

For instance, when I'm considering that not going to the health club on any given day, I am usually associating going and working out with having no time, the pain of exercising and weight lifting, or the boringness of running on a treadmill for an extended period of time. What I can do to re-associate is to remind myself that by going in and doing my exercise I will feel better about myself, I will lose weight, and I will live longer. This brings me pleasure. When we begin to run those kinds of tapes through our minds, we find our internal motivating force unleashed and changing our attitude about the action that we are considering.

Other examples: Maybe you are a counselor who really doesn't want to spend the day listening to people. Your association may be that it will be boring, or that you will be inside while it is sunny outside. Instead, re-associate yourself to the truth of the matter: Someone will be better off because of your care and concern. Think of your clients and the progress they have been making recently and how you have been a part of that.

Live the Life Principle Number Six:
IT REALLY IS BETTER TO GIVE
THAN TO RECIEVE

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True Success is Generous

“Write checks on a regular basis to those who you want to bless, not those who you owe. Be generous. If you are thinking of one amount, raise it a bit. They’ll be glad now. You’ll be glad now and later.” Chris Widener in the ABC’s of Success.

There are two kinds of people in this world. Those who allow their abundance to pile up and bring them a sense of (false) security, and those who use their abundance to increase not only the joy in their lives but also in the lives of others by being generous.

I believe that the truly successful, those who will change the lives of others and leave a legacy, are the ones who are generous with their abundance. So how do we become generous people? Here are some thoughts.

First, get over your idea that money will bring you security. It won’t. It might make you feel more secure, and it might enable you to purchase things right now, but all money can disappear quite easily. Markets go south, businesses go bankrupt, and fortunes are lost. History is filled with poor people who were once rich and lost it all. This idea that we can and have to keep it all is one of the greatest myths around. So when we give money away, it doesn’t effect us emotionally, bringing out a fear of lost security.

Second, focus on the joy you bring to others when you are generous. I love to be the one to buy something for someone who would enjoy it, to help someone who needs it, or to encourage someone who would be helped by my generosity. There are always people and

**To generous souls
every task is noble.**

Euripides

organizations who will benefit from our generosity and who will be overjoyed by it. And in turn, they will help others.

Third, make giving a planned and methodical task. I write out checks at the beginning of every month to people and organizations that I believe are helping others. I don't owe them this money, I choose to give it to them. It is something I believe in. Every month without fail I write those checks. It keeps me on track and keeps them encouraged, motivated, and moving in the right direction.

As for methodical, remember that over time, even small gifts add up. Maybe you can't afford to give or help with \$300 today, but you could with \$25 a month for a year. There is no way that my wife and I could afford to give a million dollars away at this stage of our lives, but our goal is to do that before we die. And I believe we will hit that because we are pursuing it methodically every month. And when we get to the end of our lives, we will be able to look back at our generosity and see that we made a difference. But you can't achieve those kinds of goals if you don't start somewhere and stick to a plan.

Fourth, make your generosity spontaneous. Now this takes a lot of self-awareness because I am not suggesting that you get yourself in financial trouble by being foolish, but here it is: Be the generous one of the group. Pick up the check for you friends and others. I have found that if you are wise with your money you won't get yourself into trouble by being the generous one. Picking up lunch won't break the bank. Offer to do nice things for your friends, relatives and co-workers. And then watch your relationships blossom!

Fifth, understand the principle that you reap what you sow. I truly believe that those who are generous, who help others, will always receive back what they need. I live by the

**You have to sow
before you can reap.
You have to give
before you can get.**

Robert Collier

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principle of John Wesley, “Earn all you can, give all you can, save all you can.” This principle brings our finances into perfect tension. Yes we earn, and all that we can, but we also go at our saving and giving with the same kind of gusto! And what happens, but that we are given more to turn around and be generous with again.

Lastly, and this is key for successful people. Never allow strings with your generosity. Do not expect anything in return. That is not generosity but manipulation. Pure generosity is its own reward.

How to start today?

If you aren't currently on a plan of giving, choose a charitable organization you believe in and write them a check – today. And then write that same check on the first of every month.

If you are currently being generous with your resources, seriously consider an increase! Even a percentage or two will help you and them. It will stretch you and encourage them!

Be a Success! Be Generous!

Seven Things You Must Give to Others if You Want to Achieve Success!

A major part of the process of achieving success and living the kind of life that you dream of is to give. Many people think that to get what you want you have to take it. There is a universal truth though that the true path to get what you want is to give. When you give, you get. What you sow, you shall reap. If this is true, then what is it we must give? I'll show you the way...

Give Others Your Honesty. The world we live in has a simple rule that most follow: Lie when you have to. Unfortunately, this may make some people wealthy but it make us humans poor. To achieve success is to become wealthy not only in money, but in character. To be successful, truly successful, is to be able to attain your goals and keep your character at the same time!

"Honesty is the most single most important factor having a direct bearing on the final success of an individual, corporation, or product." Ed McMahon

Mister McMahon is right, though others will tell you otherwise. Some people will say, "You have to bend the truth to get ahead." Not true. Some of the most successful people who have ever lived were honest people.

How about you? Are you honest in all things? The problem with little lies is they become big ones. Lies spin out of control. You get caught in one lie and you lie to get out of it etc.

In all things and at all times, give others your honesty.

Give Others Your Respect. Most of the time we give people respect based on what they have done or what they have accomplished. We gauge whether or

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not they are “worthy” of it based on what we know of what they have achieved or who they know or are related to.

But I believe we should have a higher standard: We respect people not for what they have done or for who they are related to or for what they can do for us. Instead, we respect people for simply being.

What would happen in our world, in our company, and yes, even in our families if we started with respect for everyone else rather than making them earn it? I think we would see that most people would live up to the respect that we give them!

Give Others Your Vulnerability. We are taught to “be strong.” And yes, we should be strong. But we have also embraced something that I think keeps us from having the kind of life that we long for. It is an idea that keeps us from experiencing the kind of relationships that would bring deep meaning to us. It is the idea of vulnerability.

“But Chris, make yourself vulnerable and people will step all over you!” It is true that this will happen. But I have also seen that most people will be drawn to you. They will help you. They will open up to you. You see, we are all broken people inside. We all have secrets. Yet everyone plays the poser. When one let’s down their veil, others soon follow – and we all win.

Give Others Your Care. Too many people are running around this old earth not caring about others. The days of “Look Out for Number One” and “Winning Through Intimidation” are over! Let’s bring about a new day when we can care about others AND succeed!

Take the time to show people you care. Listen to them. Empathize with them. Love them. Now, I don’t mean that you have to go around hugging

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everyone – that probably wouldn't fly in corporate America anyway – but we can take some time to step back from business and be human! And I have found that when we do so, our business succeeds as well!

Give Others Your Passion. There is nothing this world needs more than passionate people. And people need passionate people. Living in this day and age can be tiring. The hustle and bustle of it all can wear you down and tire you out. Give your passion to others and fire them up.

Don't just be humdrum – be excited. Give people all the energy you can muster up. And you will find that energy reciprocal. They will get energized and passionate. This in turn will fire you up more when you are already charged and get you going altogether when you don't feel like moving at all!

Give Others Your Experience. We all have areas that we excel in and they are usually areas that we have experience in. One of the things we can do to make our lives more meaningful and be of utmost help to others is to show them the way through the experiences we have.

Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him.

Aldus Huxley

Sometimes it will be what they should do: Shortcuts to take, people to meet etc. Sometimes it will be what they should not do: Shortcuts not to take and people to stay away from! Whatever it is, we can be of service to others by giving them our experience and ultimately it will make us all better!

Give Others Your Help. All in all, what we want to do is to help others. Zig Ziglar says that if we will "help others get what they want, we will in turn get what we want." If we want to be successful, we should consider ourselves servants of other people. What can we do to help them and make them better? This is the true path to greatness and success, not only in business but in life!

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If you want to live the life you have always dreamed of ask yourself if you:

Give Others Your Honesty

Give Others Your Respect.

Give Others Your Vulnerability.

Give Others Your Care.

Give Others Your Passion.

Give Others Your Experience.

Give Others Your Help.

The Art of Giving

In the pursuit of the life we dream of, this journey we are on for successful living, the focus is usually on figuring out what it is exactly that we want and then setting ourselves on course for going and getting it. This is very important: Know what you want to get for your life and then pursue it.

But there is another aspect of achieving the life you dream of that seems on the surface to actually be counter-productive to getting the life you want, yet is imperative to the successful life. It is giving.

Giving – of yourself, your time, your money, your energy – is something that takes us from simply being successful people in the traditional sense of the term, to being people who lead successful lives.

Giving is what makes us fully human. It is the essence of what we are, people who are here on earth together, not simply people who hope to clamber to the top of the pile in the survival of the fittest. Yes, pursue your life and your success with wild abandon; be responsible for yourself and take ownership of your life, realizing that you cannot be responsible for others, but also allow yourself to become a giving person.

Giving is also what allows us to accomplish things far beyond ourselves; and that is part of what living the life of our dreams is all about, right? Accomplishing great things through ourselves – and others!

How do we do that? Here are some ideas:

Make your giving purposeful. Give to people and organizations that fulfill purposes that you believe in. This way, they feel good, you feel good, and the

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work you believe in gets done. Giving purposefully will give you the ability to know that your giving is doing something great.

The more credit you give away, the more will come back to you. The more you help others, the more they will want to help you.

Brian Tracy

Make your giving proactive. Take control of your giving. When we control our giving it becomes proactive rather than reactive. We know that we are doing what we want to do rather than what others may manipulate us to do. We can avoid a lot of the wondering about validity that comes when we give out of reaction. Giving proactively will give you a lot of peace of mind.

Make your giving generous. Don't be a tightwad! Loosen up the purse strings a bit. Think of your giving in regard to how you can be generous, not how you can cover your charitable bases. I have found that it isn't the extra money given to charity that breaks people. It is usually mismanagement. And at the end of your life you will most likely not know the difference financially, though you will in your heart. Making your giving generous allows you to give even greater amounts over time.

Make your giving increasing. Don't just give the same amount from year to year – increase your giving. I think there are two good times to readjust your giving: The first of the year and any time your income goes up. Bump your giving up then, if you can. This will keep you on pace with your giving goals and you will notice the increase less from your bottom line. Make your giving increase and your giving will keep pace with your income.

Make your giving from the heart. Don't just let your giving be a mind issue. Let it be a heart issue. This is what gives us our humanity. What causes make your eyes tear up? What causes really mean something to your heart when you

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are honest with yourself? Start giving to these causes! Let your checkbook be a reflection of your heart! Make your giving from the heart and you will allow your heart to grow.

(Sometimes) Make your giving spontaneous. Sometimes... Allow yourself to be spontaneous with your giving. Do allow yourself to react sometimes. Will you get taken advantage of? Yes, sometimes. But you will also be doing something within yourself that will keep you from becoming cynical. Sometimes, as life has been good to you and you find yourself blessed, let yourself be the blessing to someone else. Make your giving spontaneous (sometimes) and you will battle the disease of cynicism about charity that can creep in.

These are just a few ideas that you can implement right now to begin the art of giving in your life. The key is to decide that you will become a giver, and not merely a taker. You will choose to leave something behind in this world and not merely try to get something out of it.

And as we all commit to that, our world will be a better place and we can all live the lives that we dream of.

**Live the Life Principle Number Seven:
RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE CORE OF
OUR EXISTENCE**

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Put Some Z.I.P. Into Your Relationships

Relationships are really what makes the world go 'round, aren't they? I mean, good, positive, healthy and meaningful relationships provide us with the richest experiences we have here on this old earth of ours. Your loving spouse who shares everything with you; that best friend who connects with you like few others do; the people at work who appreciate you and help you to become the best that you can be; This is what brings joy to life!

But... relationships can also be the bane of our existence! What really brings more pain in this life than a broken relationship, especially when it isn't just broken but downright ugly!

So, it behooves us to do all that we can to keep our relationships zipping right along, doesn't it? If we put our very best into our relationships we can almost guarantee getting the very best out of our relationships!

The most important ingredient we put into any relationship is not what we say or what we do, but what we are.

Stephen R. Covey

Through the years I have spent hundreds of hours working with people in their relationships: Marriages, friendships, working relationships and social relationships. Through it all I have seen some wonderful things and some terrible

things. It truly is the good, the bad and the ugly!

But I have been able to find three core elements of successful relationships. These are things that, when done over time, begin to create for you the kinds of relationships that you truly desire. They are the kinds of relationships you have always dreamed of.

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The key to remembering these three items is the acronym Z.I.P. Z.I.P. stands for three things you can do – and begin to do immediately – to improve any and all of your relationships. They are:

- Put some ZEST into your relationships.
- Cultivate more INTIMACY in your relationships.
- Develop a PURPOSE in your relationships.

Let's take a closer look at each of these three:

Put some ZEST into your relationships.

By Zest, I primarily mean fun. Relationships were meant to be fun! We wouldn't have been made with the capacity to have fun if relationships weren't supposed to have a little zest in them!

Think about it: Don't you usually start out most healthy relationships with a lot of fun times. Whether it is going out to dinner or a ballgame, or spending time playing a game or even just a lively talk, you usually have fun as a major part of the relationship. Fun is some of the glue that bonds the relationship.

But as life goes on, specifically in a marriage, but in all relationships really, the fun starts to go by the wayside. More and more it is about getting the job done, whatever the job may be.

**People rarely succeed
unless they have fun in
what they are doing.**

Dale Carnegie

To restore the relationship, to put a little zip into it, we need to reintroduce the idea of “zest.”

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What about you? Have you lost the zest? What can you do to get it back? Think of a specific relationship you have: What were the fun things you did at the beginning of the relationship that acted as the glue that bonded you together? Now, commit to doing those again and see if your relationship doesn't begin to soar again! If you can, develop new fun things to do together so you can both start an adventure of fun together!

Cultivate more INTIMACY in your relationships.

First a couple of clarifications: One, I don't just mean intimacy in the currently common understanding, that is, sexual intimacy. I mean for all intents and purposes, taking your relationship to a deeper level. Second, I don't mean that you have to start doing group hugs with your workmates or having revelation sessions where the tissue flows freely.

What I do mean is that every relationship that is mutually satisfying has a level of depth to it that provides meaning. This is really what the search is for in our relationships: meaning.

Remember when you first started your relationship, whether with your spouse or friend. All of that time was spent opening up, telling who you are, where you were from, what your likes and dislikes are. There was a deep sense of satisfaction with the relationship – that is why it continued. You liked who they were and you enjoyed being known by them.

But then something happens. We get to a certain level and the pursuit of depth ends. We stop sharing feeling, likes, and dislikes. We stop sharing joys and dreams and fears. Instead, we settle into routine. The daily grind takes over and we stop knowing one another and we simply exist together. Now don't get

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me wrong, every time you get together doesn't have to be deep. Remember, I am the one who advocates in the previous paragraphs just having plain old fun sometimes. But there is a need for regular times of intimate connection where we go deeper with others.

This is particularly hard for many of the male species like myself but it is not only possible but also healthy and needed! If we want to have the kinds of relationship we were made to have, we have to open ourselves up to having others know us and for us to know others.

True, meaningful relationships come when we are loved and accepted for whom we are at our core, not simply for acting the right way in our relationships so as to keep the other person in it.

Think about the relationships you would like to see improvement in. Take some time in the coming weeks and months to spend time just talking and getting to a deeper level in your relationship. Specifically, let the other person deeper into your world. You can't force the other person to be more intimate and you certainly can't say, "Let's get together and have an intimate conversation," because that would be too contrived. But you can make a decision for yourself that you will let others into your world. Perhaps this will be the catalyst for them doing the same.

You can guard yourself from intimacy but then you won't go much deeper and you will feel a longing in your heart for more, or you can begin the deepening process and see your relationships change for the better.

Develop a PURPOSE in your relationships.

The most meaningful relationships we have are those that are held together by a common purpose and vision for what the relationship can accomplish, not only for those involved but also for a greater good.

**Be not simply good;
be good for
something.**

Henry David Thoreau

Let's face it, when people have a common purpose they feel like they are part of a team and they feel bound together in that relationship. Even when people may be disappointed in the people they are in relationship with, if they have a purpose, such as raising the children, they are much more likely to stick it out. Purpose creates bonds.

So what happens if we are proactively involved in seeking out a common purpose with those who we want to have a relationship with or those who we already have a relationship with but we would like to see it go deeper? Well, it gets better and stronger.

Think about your strongest relationships. Aren't they centered around at least one area of purpose or a common goal?

What about a relationship that has cooled? Think back and see if perhaps you used to have a common purpose but it has gone by the wayside.

And what of your desire to see a relationship grow? Take some time to begin to cultivate a common purpose. Sit down with that person and tell them that you would like to have some common goals, some purposes that you pursue together. As you develop these, you will see your relationship strengthen in ways you never imagined!

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Let's recap: You want your relationships to show a little "zip?" Then put a little Z.I.P. in them:

- Put some ZEST into your relationships.
- Cultivate more INTIMACY in your relationships.
- Develop a PURPOSE in your relationships.

Recharging Your Relationship

Now you may ask why we would write an article about developing better relationships. The reason is because I believe that those who are in a relationship will be significantly and directly affected in all areas of their life by how that relationship is going, and how healthy that relationship is.

Research has proven that those who are happy at home are more productive and less stressed at work. Developing a better relationship with your mate can help you develop a better life and a better business! Here are some thoughts to chew on for developing a strong and healthy relationship with your mate.

Listen. Communication is the key to a lasting relationship and listening is the key to communicating. Too often when we are quiet we are not listening, but waiting to speak. Instead of listening to what our mate is saying, and intently trying to understand them, very often we are making mental notes of what we would like to say in response. This is particularly true for us males. We often are trying to find the weakness in our mate's argument, rather than really listening to the words that they're saying and the manner in which they're saying it. Why not take some time this week trying to internalize and understand your mate's words and feelings?

Schedule a regular time to go out or spend time together. With today's busy lifestyles, it is too easy to put our relationships on the backburner and take them for granted. While we might have every intention of spending regular time with our mate, we often find ourselves driven by a schedule that has us running in every direction and leaving us little time for our most important relationships. Work gets in the way. The kids get in the way. Our hobbies get in the way. We need to realize the value in the importance of that relationship with our mate and

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its effect on our total life. Then we need to make spending time with our mate a major priority by scheduling a specific time at least each week to get alone together, talk, and simply renew our relationship. Be sure to set some time aside each week to rediscover each other and enjoy your time together. Pencil it into your schedule and don't give up that spot. In fact, it is probably best if you and your mate sit down and decide what night will work each and every week, then put it into your schedule book. If someone asks you if you're available at that time, you tell him or her you already have an appointment. In the long run, that time that you spend with your mate will help you to become more of a success than you could ever mention.

Consider your mate's interests more important than your own. When each person has decided to give of themselves to the other, you form a reciprocating relationship of love, concern, and devotion. When you come to a place where you disagree or where the two of you have differing opinions, try to get to the point where you can consider what your mate likes as more important than what you would like to do. The simple decision to do this goes a long way toward developing a healthy relationship!

Learn your mate's love language. There is a lot of talk recently of love languages. What this is, is that each individual has certain ways they receive love from other people. Some people like to have time spent with them. Others like gifts, small or large. Still others respond best to personal touch. And others appreciate verbal affirmation. Our tendency is to show love the way that we like to receive love, but what will recharge our relationship fastest is to find out what way our mate likes to receive affirmations of our love. The next time you get a chance to speak to your mate, ask them which of the above ways they like best to receive your demonstration of love. Then make a conscious effort to begin showing your love to them in that manner.

Do the small things you did when you first fell in love with your mate.

Do remember when you were first in love? Remember the small things you did show your love to your mate? But as time went along, you probably began to get weighed down with simply living life and forgot the small things that made the difference in the beginning. Things like a phone call in the middle of the day just to talk or say “I love you,” an appreciative note, flowers, gifts, and opening doors. Re-charge your relationship by consciously going back and doing the small things that you did when your love first began to grow.

Forgive. I've done a lot of work with couples were having troubles, and one of the most common elements I find that is working against the development of their relationship is that they are holding something against the other and they aren't willing to forgive. The fact is that your mate is going to fail you from time to time. We need to understand that. What we do when we get to that point

however, is what will make all the difference in the world. In a relationship that is going to last, the people involved are committed to forgiving one another. Those who's relationships last longest, and will be the healthiest, are those who are committed to forgiveness.

**The weak can
never forgive.
Forgiveness is
the attribute of
the strong.**

Mahatma Gandhi

I hope these thoughts are helpful to you in recharging your love relationship. I truly believe that if we will put these principles into practice we will see our relationships grow in ways they never have before, and that in turn will make our whole life better.

The Power in Praising People

**There are two things
people want more
than sex and money...
recognition and
praise.**

Mary Kay Ash

One of the keys to success is to have successful relationships. We are not islands and we don't get to the top by ourselves. And one of the key ways to grow successful in our relationships is to be "life-giving" people to others. Every person we meet, we either give life to or take life from. You know what I mean. There are people who encourage you and when you are done being with them you feel built up. Then there are others who you feel torn down by. Successful people are people who have mastered the art of building others up.

One of the ways we build people up is to praise them. There is power in praising people! Something begins to happen in them, in you, and in your relationship when you praise someone. Remember a time when someone told you something about yourself in a praising manner? It was great, wasn't it? You probably liked that person more after they praised you, didn't you?

Now I am not talking about praising people for the sake of praising people. I am talking about honestly looking for and praising positive character traits and action of others around you. Don't lie to people. If they have done something wrong, correct it, but when they do something right, Praise it!

With that said, here are benefits of and ways to start praising people.

Benefits

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Your relationship grows. Life is about relationships. Family relationships, friends, and co-workers. When we begin to praise people for their positive aspects, our relationships grow. It puts them, and us, on the fast track.

Your leadership and influence grows. Who is going to have greater leadership and influence capacity in the lives of their followers, the one who tears down or the one who builds up?

**I have yet to find the man,
however exalted his
station, who did not do
better work and put forth
greater effort under a
spirit of approval than
under a spirit of criticism.**

Stronger relationships and loyalty. When the person is appreciated and praised, they become fiercely loyal, because they know that you care for them, love them, and appreciate them. This will take you to success.

Charles M. Schwab

Happier, more fulfilled people. I truly believe it is our job to build others up and that they need it. It is a good thing, in and of itself to invest in the lives of others by praising and encouraging them. Even if we never get anything in return, it is the right thing to do to build up other people. Someone else will always come along to tear them down; the successful person will instill in them the power of praise!

Some ways to praise

Character traits. Is there someone you know who is joyful? Hard-working? Honest? Then let them know how much you appreciate that in them. You can do it with a word or a card, or a phone call. Say something like this, "You know Tom, I think it is great that you are such a hard-worker. It seems like you are always the first one here and the last one to leave. You really set a good example and I want you to know how much I appreciate that." Simple!

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Action. Same idea as above. “Sue, I don’t know if anybody else has told you this, but your work on the Johnson account was excellent. You have a wonderful ability to communicate the vision of the project and that helps all of the rest of us out in our roles and tasks. Thanks for that. It is greatly appreciated.”

Other ways you can show praise and appreciation is with a card, a gift, or time off from work.

Make it your goal to praise at least five people a day. If you can, praise ten people a day. Or perhaps you can try to praise everyone you come in contact with. It will take work but it is possible. It just takes discipline and a little work. Any way you cut it though, there is power in praising people. First for them, then for you!

Success Through a Supercharged Network

I have finally come to believe something about myself because so many people have said the same thing to me – I mean the EXACT same sentence – over the past year. It is about something about me that others notice, which quite frankly, just comes so naturally to me that I have never noticed before. It is a characteristic that, when applied to your life, will enable you to live the life you have always dreamed of because it will put you in the middle of relationships that will literally propel you to success! You see, no one lives their dreams without a lot of help from other people. I know a lot of successful people and all along the way, they all had others you went to bat for them and gave them a helping hand.

So, you are probably wondering what it is that I discovered about my self, aren't you?

Here is what I hear a lot:

“Chris, you know more people than anyone I know.”

Here are some other variations:

“Chris, you are the most connected person I know.”

“Chris, your network includes almost everyone!”

So I started thinking about it and I realized some things.

In the last year I have put people together, as in “Call this guy. He'll help you. Tell him I told you to call.” so many times that I am guessing there will be at

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least \$500,000 worth of business done and maybe that much again in salaries made.

Do you remember the “Six Degrees of Separation” principle? It says that most people on earth are connected by only six people connections – i.e. I know you know Joe who knows Sue etc until you get to the other person. Most people can do this with any other person in just six degrees. The more connected you are, the less degrees – and the easier it is to accomplish what you want to accomplish. So I started thinking and I came to the conclusion that most connections for me are two degrees and even the “toughies” are just three. Don’t ask me to pass word on to the President though – he’s busy!

Now, let me say this: I am not bragging at all (though I am sure it sounds like it, which is why I was a little reluctant to write about this topic). In reality, this is something I had never really thought about until just recently.

And, after thinking about it, I believe ANYONE – yes, even you - can have the same kinds of network! ANYONE! Why do I believe this? Because I started thinking about what has made my network so supercharged and it comes down to a few simple basics that anyone can do. I am no better than anyone else at all. My Supercharged Network has nothing to do whatsoever with me being anymore talented or intelligent than anyone else! It has to do with a basic understanding of human nature and the nature of relationships as well as how to apply some principles that will maximize your relationships so you can live the life you have always dreamed of!

You can have a Supercharged Network too! Here are ten “secrets” to success through a supercharged network.

1. Be successful. Successful people are sought out. If you succeed at what you put your mind and heart to, you will be sought out by other successful

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people. Yes, many unsuccessful people will seek you out as well, but that is the high price you pay to put yourself into the rank of those who succeed! Do your best, accomplish much and watch your network grow!

2. Be nice. If you are a jerk people will write you off and will quit taking your phone calls as well as avoid the people you recommend. I am amazed at how many people will sabotage their own success because they aren't nice to people.

3. Love to learn. Developing a network is about learning. You need to learn about each person you come in contact with. You need to learn human nature. You need to learn how people work together. And this is fascinating stuff! If you do this simply to network, people will realize you are a phony. And phonies get left outside of the network. I truly love to learn!

4. Like people. I genuinely like people. There is always a mystery with people, always something new and exciting. Okay, sometimes they burn you, but generally speaking I like people – and that gets noticed. People like to be liked. They like to take phone calls from people who like them. They like to do business with people who are referred by people who like them. Don't pretend to like people – like people!

5. Listen. Listen to people. Listen to what makes them tick. Listen to their likes and dislikes. Listen to their dreams and fears. Listen to their hobbies. Listen to what they do. I once got a job for a guy who I couldn't even explain what he did. But I knew enough to know that when a guy I was standing in an elevator next to (3000 miles from my home) was talking about something I didn't understand, the two things I didn't understand matched up! I turned to the guy in the elevator and told him I knew just the guy for the job he was talking about. He looked condescendingly at me as though I couldn't possibly understand what he was talking about (give him credit – I didn't), and assured me that I was probably

mistaken. This was a very niche job he assured me. I simply asked him for the website address and the position. He told me the website and that the position was for the CEO job. Within an hour my friend sent an email to my “friend” in the elevator. Two weeks later he was the CEO of the company! B-I-N-G-O!

6. Pursue “big-shots.” Face it; big-shots know more people than little-shots! So it helps to know big-shots. Now this takes some chutzpah! First, you have to deal with your own self-esteem. You have to understand that you are more worthy than you think you are. Secondly, you have to deal with your esteem of the big-shot. Big-shots are really just little-shots with a bigger title (And they are usually more interesting. Think about it: Even a pompous blowhard big-shot is more interesting than a pompous blowhard little-shot. One brags about how they sat around and watched reruns while the other sits around bragging how they took over another company, which is definitely more interesting).

Most of the big-shots I know are the nicest people you would want to know. Very few of them are jerks or think too highly of themselves. Once you figure this out, call them and introduce yourself. Go up to them at the meeting and say hello. Note: This doesn’t mean bother them at dinner or inappropriate times – I have seen famous people in public and my friends will say, “Let’s go talk to him.” I NEVER do. They are busy with their families for crying out loud! Bugging them is the best thing you can do to CLOSE your network. What I would do is walk past and nonchalantly nod hello to them. They will appreciate that you knew who they were and left them alone. Then, if you need to, drop them a line or call their office. They will remember you and return the favor for not bugging them like everyone else does!

7. Be helpful. Help those who you network with. Always be helpful. If someone needs something you can provide for him or her, or someone you know can provide for them, be sure to offer the help. Nothing bonds a friendship (and that is really what we are talking about here – I want as many friends as I can

get) like helping someone out. I can't tell you how many times someone has been saying that they needed this or that and I said, "Do you know so and so? He can help you." They got the phone number and usually a few weeks later they call and say thanks. Additionally, this only builds on itself as your network grows.

Help others via those who you network with. Here is what I mean. Give people the opportunity to help other people. For example, one time I knew someone who was going on a medical mission and needed to get some pharmaceutical supplies soon and at cost. I knew virtually no one in the industry but I did know an executive of a large company in a state that has more than it's share of drug companies. I figured he had to know somebody. It was a shot in the dark but it worked and the executive felt great being able to tap his network for the sake of needy kids in another country.

8. Keep records. Names, dates, phone numbers, addresses. Anything to help you remember people. Harvey Mackay has his "Mackay 66" which I think is too long, but it is the right idea. Take notes and use the information to build your network. Somebody needs tickets to a State U. football game? Call that lady in accounting that graduated there. She can help!

9. Give more than you ask for. Ultimately you have to be more of a giver than a taker. Otherwise you are more of a leech on the side of a network than you are a part of the network. Give to others any time you can help, have the resources, or know someone who does. This will make you a valuable asset in the network and people will want you around and active in the network.

10. Be social. The final idea is simply to be social. The more people you know, the wider your network will be. Not everyone will be a big part of your working network, but even those who aren't offer you one of the most cherished things on earth – friendship.

If you want to be successful in this life it will take the help of other people. We pursue relationships for relationships sake, not to use people. But we are wise enough to know that the people we develop friendships with are people who we can help and be helped by – so all of us can achieve our dreams! Take the above to heart and you will surely Supercharge Your Network – which in turn will put you on track to live the life of your dreams!

How to Talk to Anybody, Anytime

You know the situation: There you are at a business or social function and you end up with someone who you have never met before. Some people get amazingly uncomfortable with this situation because they simply don't know how to start or carry on a conversation. Yet successful people are always going to find themselves in these kinds of situations because they are always stretching themselves and putting themselves into situations to help them and their businesses grow and that means meeting new people. So if you are going to be successful, one thing you have to get down is how to talk to anybody, anytime. Good news: It is easier than you think!

First, a couple of things not to do. One, don't get flustered and excuse yourself. That is the easy way out, and you never know if you didn't just leave who would have become your best friend or closest business associate. Stick around! Secondly, don't start talking about yourself. Sure, introduce yourself, but don't launch into a half-hour monologue about your accomplishments. The other person will either roll their eyes back into their head or simply give you a new nickname: Joe "let me tell you a story about myself" Schmoe. This leads me to the key.

Talk about the person you have just met. Don't talk about yourself – talk about them! And the key is to ask questions. Now, there are obviously some people you just will not be able to talk to because they are absolute bores or they are angry or upset or something, but I have found that that is only about 1% of the people, if even that. For the most part, if you persist in asking questions, you will be able to talk to anybody, anytime.

**A prudent question is
one-half of wisdom.**

Francis Bacon

There are three segments to this process:

- Ask questions.
- Find connections.
- Go in those directions.

What you are trying to do is to find common ground. What makes people afraid to talk to others is that they are afraid they won't have anything in common. I have found that usually, if you ask questions for a minute or two, you can always find a connection with someone, and then you're set. The worst that could happen is that you ask the person questions for a few minutes and find nothing. But what will that person tell others? That you seem to have a genuine interest in others. That is a great reputation to have!

That is another key here. You can't be a selfish, arrogant person and be successful. I am talking true well-rounded success, not just collecting a pot full of money.

The best way to describe this process is to write out a mock conversation. You will notice the kinds of questions I would ask, when I find a connection, and how I would go in that direction.

"Hi, I'm Chris Widener. What is your name?"

"Joe Schmoe."

"Well, Joe, what do you do for a living?"

"I sell insurance." (Possible connection here. Everybody has insurance)

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“Oh yeah? What kind of insurance?”

“I insure Oil rigs in the Adriatic Sea.” (Whoops. Lost connection)

“Wow. That’s must be fascinating. Married or kids, Joe?” (I have a wife and kids, maybe we can show pictures)

“No, actually, I’m single.” (It isn’t looking good yet)

“So, who do you know here at the party?”

“Well, nobody. I am the brother of the host’s accountant. I’m in town for a week and my brother had to make an appearance.” (It is going in the wrong direction here)

“So where are you from?”

“Nebraska.” (Bingo, there it is. The connection! Now let’s go in that direction)

“Really? My dad was from Nebraska. Even though he died when I was four, my grandmother used to take me back to visit my relatives every summer growing up. It sure was a lot of fun. Were you city folk, or did you live on a farm?”

“I grew up on a pig farm.”

“That’s what my relatives did! As a kid I always wanted to ride one of those sows. Luckily my uncles never let me attempt it.”

There you are. Now just start asking questions about what they did growing up, how they liked it etc.

If you get adept enough at asking questions of others, you will inevitably find a connection to talk about. And having something in common with someone is the start to a long and mutually beneficial relationship – one of the foundations of success!

I am in a career where I meet new people all the time and this is exactly what I do. I am no better conversationalist than most of you. It is just a proven way of getting a relationship off the ground with someone you have just met.

Here it is again:

Ask questions, find connections, go in those directions.

Live the Life Principle Number Eight:
DON'T TIP – KEEPING YOUR
BALANCE

Bringing Balance to a Chaotic Life

If I had to make a composite question that gets at the heart of the question that I am asked most frequently, it would be this: How can I manage my time more effectively and bring balance to my life in regard to work, family, friends, and social obligations?

With this in mind, I want to give us some thoughts to focus us in on the answer to that question.

I am convinced that the most important thing we must do is to be acutely aware of the reasons I should manage my time and bring balance to my life. In fact, most of us really know “how” to do it, don’t we? Then why don’t we? I think it comes to the issue of having a powerful motivating factor or reason. Below are two of mine that keep me motivated:

A life of accomplishment. When I am old and unable to get out with the young folks anymore, I want to be able to look back on my life and say that I accomplished much and that my life benefited others. That is why I do what I do now. It is what drives me to pursue what I pursue with a passion and vigor. It is why I bring my life into balance in many areas so I can achieve much in many areas.

A legacy. Here is a powerful motivating image that I picture with regularity: Picture a family gathering five years after your death. What will it look like? What will the people be talking about? How will they remember you? What will be the quality of their lives and how will you have been instrumental in that? These are questions that we can for the most part, answer now by how we live our lives (for better or for worse). Our lives make a difference in the lives of others! This is a tremendous reason to bring my life into balance!

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Once we answer the “Why” question, and root it firmly in our minds and hearts, we come to the “hows.”

First, we sit down and prioritize. Have you ever taken a couple of hours and listed everything that you are involved in or could be involved in and then prioritized it by importance? You may come up with a hundred items but that is okay. You will want to separate them into some categories as well, such as Work, Family, Health, Friends, Hobbies, Spiritual, Financial, Intellectual, Emotional, etc.

Now you have something to look at and see what is important. This will help you in the process of eliminating areas from your life that you are spending time on that you shouldn't be. And that is an important part: Frustration comes when we get involved in something that isn't a priority and we kick ourselves the whole time we do it. If we stick to priorities, we eliminate much of that.

The next step is to learn the most powerful word in the human language: No. Just look in the mirror and practice saying that word with a smile on your face. This may be the most important part – learning to decline opportunity. It all depends on whether or not it fits in with our priorities.

Here is the principle that drives this:

Good is the enemy of the best.

There are lots of good things we can spend our time on. But because they replace those things that would be the best things we could spend our time on, they become our enemy. They become counter-productive to a successful and balanced life.

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So ask yourself: Is this good? Or is it the best? Do the best you can to stick to the best!

Schedule your time. The more we fly by the seat of our pants, the more apt we are to lose control of our time. If we schedule out our time, we can become a bit more objective and bring our lives into balance. For example, you may make it your goal to be home by six o'clock every night. In your schedule book, you write in that you have an appointment at six. You schedule to leave the office at five-thirty. Now when a co-worker comes in with an "opportunity" for you to work on, you say, "Sorry, I have an appointment at six that I can't break. Let's get together on it first thing in the morning." Scheduling your time, coupled with saying "no," will do wonders for bringing your life into balance!

Another aspect for us to look at is the area of external pressure that causes us to be out of balance. For example, financial obligations may be what keep us working too much. So we should look at those obligations and see if we can eliminate or reduce them.

The last thing I would challenge you with is to give some thought as to what the secret pleasures of being out of balance may be. For example, sometimes we let ourselves over commit because we don't like conflict. Peace is our secret pleasure.

Sometimes we allow ourselves to become out of balance because we like it when people say, "Boy, she sure is a dynamo. Look how busy she is." Admiration from others is our secret pleasure.

In review:

- Find the right reasons

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- Set priorities
- Learn to say “no”
- Understand that the good is the enemy of the best
- Schedule your time
- Manage External pressures
- Be aware of internal “secret pleasures”

Give Bad Habits the Boot!

Everybody has bad habits. Everybody. Now granted, some people have less than others and some people's bad habits are more grating than those of others, but we all have them. What is great is that we don't have to! Imagine a life where you couldn't change? What kind of life would that be? But we can, so let's!

There are two kinds of bad habits: Those you know you have that others may or may not know about, and those you don't know you have but everybody else knows you have!

The power of habit and the charm of novelty are the two adverse forces that explain the follies of mankind.

Maria De Beausacq

For the sake of everybody involved we ought to get rid of them all, right?

Well Chris, how can I get rid of a bad habit if I don't know I have it? Simple, but hard. Ask somebody to be brutally honest with you! You might think, "Yeah, but I'll be embarrassed." Would you rather everyone talk behind your back? Get up the courage and ask. Ask somebody who loves you and has your best interest in mind. Be gracious and don't defend your self. Just accept it and work on it.

What about the ones we know about - which are all of them once your good friend tells you the ones you were missing? Those are the tough ones. How do I know they are tough? They must be tough if you know about them and yet you still have them! If they weren't tough, they would be FORMER bad habits! Got me? Good!

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So how do you break a bad habit? How do you give it the boot out of your life? Here are a few things that must be a part of the plan in order to see that stuff gone forever!

1. You must want them to go. That's right, some people want them to stick around. I have seen dads choose alcohol over their grandchildren. I have seen smokers continue smoking while watching their parents die of emphysema. They don't want them to go. The first thing is to go deep into the recesses of your heart and ask, "Do I really want to give this up?"

2. You do? Good. Step two: Make up a list of all of the reasons you want to quit your bad habits. Make them positive. Make the list long! Start with the really powerful and dramatic if you need to. Now memorize them. Put them in your mind. You are making connections between stopping the bad behavior with what good things you will get from doing so. If you want to lose weight, then picture yourself slim and looking good in those skinny people clothes! If you want to stop smoking, picture your wife actually kissing you rather than sending you to the bathroom to brush your teeth!

3. Choose. That is right. Once you have the information, this comes down to one thing: It is an act of the will. Choose to do it. Say to yourself throughout the day, "I am choosing to..." Eisenhower rightly said, "The history of free men is written not by chance but by choice, their choice." It is your choice. You can write your history.

Your net worth to the world is usually determined by what remains after your bad habits are subtracted from your good ones.

Benjamin Franklin

4. Take action! Point four is tricky because there are two philosophies about this. One theory is that you must take massive action. You must go all or nothing. Using the weight loss example, this person would go spend \$500 to join a gym, rework

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their schedule and hit the treadmill everyday for a year. They will get rid of all fat in the house. They go all out! That works for some. Others would burn out on that, feel like failures and be worse off than before. They should start out slow, taking baby steps, but working diligently toward a planned goal. This person would decide to start walking three days a week. They would decide to limit dessert to two nights a week, down from seven. See how this works? Either way is okay as long as you get to the goal eventually.

5. Tell somebody. This is your accountability partner. Tell them your goal and tell them your plan. Write it down for them and have them ask you on regular intervals about your progress. This will prove invaluable!

6. Recover from failure. Inevitably most people will have setbacks. The key is to have them be setbacks and not turnbacks! Pick yourself up and get going again. Some people may want to lose 30 pounds and after losing fifteen they eat a gallon of ice cream. Then they feel bad and give up. Don't! Reset your goal for another two weeks and get going again. Chalk it off to experience! Say to yourself, "Sometimes you win and sometimes you learn."

7. Reward yourself. That's right. You should regularly congratulate yourself by rewarding yourself with some gift to yourself. Start small with small victories and plan a big one when you are finally and for sure over the habit.

Is it that simple? Most of the time, no. Habits are hard to break. There are so many intangibles that it would be hard to cover them all. But this is a simple and workable plan that will help you make great strides if you apply the principles.

Get going! Give those bad habits a boot! Good luck!

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Keeping Your Mind Tuned for Success

Absolutely no one can underestimate the power of the mind and its role in our success! It is imperative to keep our minds right and on the right track if we are to achieve balanced success in our career, finances, health, emotions, relationships and spiritual lives.

The analogy I would like to use here is one of a radio station. For example, there may be a “Success” station. But the only way you can hear a radio station is to be tuned into it. Even a little off and you can’t get the full effect. The same is true with our mind and success. If our minds and our thoughts get sidetracked, our success will get sidetracked. As our minds stay tuned to “success” our bodies will then carry out our success and we will begin to experience abundance!

So here are some ways to keep tuned into success!

Use your innate ability to decide and choose. One of the things that separates us from the animals is that we live not by instinct, but by choice. Constantly flexing that muscle of choice builds it up and keeps us on track for success. It is like working out. The more we do, the stronger we get. The more “fit” we get. Want to keep your mind tuned for success? Keep it healthy by making good choices and decisions on a regular basis. For example, do you have a bad habit? Then flex your mind muscle and choose to change - today. If you choose to stay the same way (and those are the only two alternatives) you will have just chosen to tune your mind to a different station than “success.”

**Life is a constant
oscillation between
the sharp horns of
dilemmas.**

H. L. Mencken

Put good stuff into your brain. There are lots of things that want to work their way into our minds (and eventually work themselves out again in our actions). There will be lots that we just get from walking around all day. But what about what we put in on purpose? We can choose to put good stuff in on a regular basis. Do you take time each day to put good things into your mind, to tune into success? Here are two things to consider when you are choosing what to put into your mind: First, is it positive? Will it build you up or tear you down? Will it make you a better person, or lesser? Will you grow from it or not? Will it tune you to success or not? Secondly, will it move you toward your goals in the areas of your life that you want to see success and abundance in?

Keep the junk out. Like I mentioned above, there will always be junk floating around, like a fellow employee who gripes all the time. But what surprises me is how many people who want success, actually willfully choose to put junk into their minds and then expect to be tuned into success. Here are some thoughts on this: First, evaluate everything that you put into your mind. Evaluate what you read, listen to and watch. We live in a fast-paced world and we have little time. Why then would we spend our precious time putting junk into our minds? Does what you read, listen to and watch move you toward your goals or away from them? It is a simple question, really. At least most of the time. And here is my soapbox. Eleven years ago, my wife suggested we give away our television. I was shocked to say the least, but decided to give it a try. Now I am the anti-TV fanatic in our house! I have more time than anyone I know and I don't have to spend a lot of energy filtering my mind to tune it to success. Just a thought.

Eat right and exercise. That's right. The way we eat and the amount of exercise we get goes a long way toward our mind's ability to tune into success. Put the right foods into your body and the brain responds. Exercise on a regular basis and the body releases chemicals that literally ignite your brain for success!

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Hope these thoughts help you to get going and keep your mind tuned into success. Put them into practice and soon you'll be dialed into success and abundance.

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A Little Equation that Creates Big Results

Often people will ask me how I get so much done in my life. They wonder at how I am able to accomplish so many things. The answer is found not in what a great person I am, but in an equation I came up with a few years ago and remind myself of on almost a daily basis. And when I live this equation out, it produces big results. What people don't seem to grasp is that this equation will work for anybody! Anyone can see results in their life if they will live it out!

This little equation, when it is understood, and acted upon, is perhaps the most powerful equation there is in regard to long-term achievement and accomplishment. Yet, this is not a complex equation. In fact, it is rather simple. So what is it?

Your short-term actions multiplied by time equals your long-term accomplishments.

If you want to see change in your life, see big results, the first thing you must do is change your current actions. Otherwise the old saying becomes a reality: "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you always got!" But if we change our actions, we will see different results!

Most people want to accomplish a lot in their lives. Yet very few actually do. Why is this? It is because what they believe will equal their long-term accomplishments are wrong. Here are some of the things that people believe will create great accomplishments for them:

- Beliefs

- Vision

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- Big dreams

- Ideas

- Ideals

- Values

- Desire

The truth is that while these things are very important, they are not enough in and of themselves. We need to have the above underlying all that we do, but we need to actually do something! And this is where most people stop. We need to take action on our dreams and beliefs every day.

Here are some examples of how this works.

Who loses weight? The one who knows all about the benefits of exercise or the one who walks 3 miles a day?

Who retires early? The one who dreams of a house on the beach, or the one who invests \$300 a month?

Who writes books? The one who desires to become a best-selling author, or the one who gets up early and writes for half an hour a day?

Who has the best marital relationship? The one who knows how much spending time with their spouse can improve their relationship, or the one who sits down and talks with their spouse every night?

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Who makes the most sales? The one who believes they can become a great salesperson, or the one who makes 10 sales calls a day?

I think you get the point. When it all comes down to it, we must act upon our vision, beliefs, and ideals or we won't see them come to fruition. I see too many people who know what is right, but don't ever do anything about it. Imagine what a difference we could make in our own lives and the lives of others if we would simply begin to act upon our beliefs!

The purpose of man is in action not thought.

Thomas Carlyle

When I get to the end of my life, I want to know that I have done all that I can to make this world a better place and to enhance the lives of those around me. I want to know that I gave it my best shot. And I am sure that you do too.

I remember reading an interview with an author who has written numerous books that have sold in the tens of millions. They asked him how he did it. His answer was that he got up every morning before anyone else in his family and wrote, long hand, with a pencil, for an hour. Then he quit and went about his day. But his short-term actions piled up. Seven hours a week. Thirty hours a month. Three hundred and sixty-five hours a year. After a while, he had lots of books!

Some questions as we leave:

What long-term accomplishments do you want to see come to pass?

What short-term actions will you need to do over time to see them come to pass?

What will you do today to begin seeing your dreams come true?

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What will you do this week to see them come true?

You can have an awesome future, filled with great achievements and results if you begin today to take action and make it a reality!

One more time, so you can plug it in, memorize it, and live it.

Your short-term actions multiplied by time equals your long-term accomplishments.

The Seven Deadly Roadblocks to Success

When traveling down the road it is always good to beware of roadblocks! You don't want to crash and burn do you? The same is true in our journey toward success. We need to beware of those things that will keep us from our destination!

What are the most common? Here they are:

1. Fear. Fear is one of the worst enemies of success. When fear wraps its tentacles around you and keeps you in bondage, you will never be able to reach for your dreams. We must confront our fears, see them for what they are, toss them to the side, and pursue our dreams with relentless passion. Conquering fear and stepping forward to reach new lands and new ideas is what makes success possible. What are you afraid of today? What fear must you conquer to be able to achieve your dream? When you realize what it is, take an action that is diametrically opposed to that which you fear. This will confront and conquer the fear by giving you the first step in the right direction.

Do the thing you fear to do and keep on doing it... that is the quickest and surest way ever yet discovered to conquer fear.

Dale Carnegie

2. Lethargy. Quite frankly, what keeps most people from success is that they simply don't have the energy, or make the energy, to do what it takes to move to the next level. They get to a point that is comfortable and then they settle in for a nice, life-long nap! Don't get lethargic; get going! Force yourself to wake up from the slumber and move!

3. Lack of perseverance. Often times the race is lost because the race is not finished. Success is often just around the sharpest corner or the steepest hill. Persevere. Keep going. One more hill. One more corner! Never underestimate

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the power of perseverance. Successful people know that they can often achieve what they want simply but outlasting circumstances obstacles and problems.

4. Pessimism. The saying is that you can achieve what you believe. Ask yourself what kinds of beliefs you hold. Are you an optimist or a pessimist? If you don't believe that you can achieve than you won't. Your pessimism will prove yourself right every time. You will find that you subconsciously undermine yourself. Develop your optimism. Look for ways to believe that you can achieve success.

5. Not taking responsibility. I am a volunteer chaplain for the local police department. The other day I went with an officer as he took two prisoners to court. Time after time the prisoners made excuses as to why they hadn't yet done what the judge had ordered (she didn't buy it, by the way). After dropping the prisoners off, I said to the officer that unsuccessful people and prisoners have the same bad habit – they won't accept responsibility for their lives. You are responsible. When you accept that, you are on the road to success.

6. Picking the wrong people to hang out with. We can easily become products of our environment. This is why it is essential to hang around people who will spur you on not hold you back! What about the people you have surrounded yourself with? Are they quality people who will encourage you and strengthen you in your quest for success? If not, move on!

7. No vision. Those who succeed always see their success months and years before they live it. They have the ability to look ahead, see the future, imagine the good that can and will come from their lives, families and work. To not have vision is a tremendous roadblock. Sit down and work on seeing the future – and make it good!

**Live the Life Principle Number Nine:
ACHIEVE FINANCIAL FREEDOM**

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Finding Financial Freedom

Have you ever gotten an email or letter that says something like this: “Find Financial Freedom! Make \$150,000 from home in the next 90 days!”

Every time I get one of these, I think to myself, “Hmmm, Financial Freedom. I already have financial freedom, even though it doesn’t look like what these emails promise me.”

Financial freedom is a buzzword for our generation. It is the pursuit of literally millions of people. So what is it? Is it that elusive? Can anyone get it?

Let me start by saying that this article will not be about how to earn money, or even more money. Rather, it will be about how to find financial freedom, which may or may not involve making more money.

Financial freedom – here we go!

The first step in finding financial freedom is to realize that financial freedom has absolutely nothing to do with how much money you have or make. What? Exactly. Financial freedom is something that goes on inside of you. This is why someone who makes very little can be happy and someone who makes a ton can be extremely stressed out over his or her financial situation. So the first step is to realize that financial freedom is more about our attitudes toward money than about the amount of money.

“Okay Chris, I’m with you. So what are the attitudes that provide financial freedom?” Here are a few that keep me in financial freedom.

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I do not have to worry about money. I used to catch myself saying, “If I had more money, then I wouldn’t have to worry about ...” But do you know what? I don’t have to worry anyway. I can control my income. I can control my outgo. I can make choices that can alleviate any of my worries. I also realized that things always work out. So why worry? I choose not to worry.

Each man makes his own prison.

Sir Edwin Arnold

I can be happy regardless of my financial state. I know people who are worth hundreds of millions of dollars and I know people who don’t have two nickels to rub together. Some are happy and some aren’t. And none of the people who have a lot of money say to me, “Chris, I’ve become so happy since I got money.” They were happy before they had money and they are happy now that they have money. Their happiness has nothing to do with the money. I think it was the Billionaire David Geffen who said, “Anyone who says that money will buy them happiness has never had any money.”

Money will be a means to an end, not the end itself. Another way to look at it is that money will be a tool to build the house, not the house itself. I would set some financial goals if I were you, but go beyond that to know what greater purpose there will be when you reach them. What will the house be that you will build with that tool?

I am free. I am free to earn – some people think it is bad to earn more money. It isn’t. I am free to save – some people believe it is bad to save. It isn’t. I am free to give money away – some people feel they will be better off hoarding it. They won’t. I am free to spend – some people believe that they can’t spend anything on themselves. They can. We are free to make choices. That is

No man is free who is not a master of himself.

Epictetus

financial freedom. One of my favorite quotes is from Charles Wesley, “Earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can.” That will keep you in financial freedom.

Some other principles for financial freedom...

Debt is the primary freedom killer. Want financial freedom? The first thing you should do is to get out of debt. That is priority number one. One of the reasons I have financial freedom is that I have no debt other than my house payment. And I work hard to manage myself and our home to keep us that way. For years I drove an old junker car, and while it looked bad, I had financial freedom that others who were in debt didn't have!

There is an old proverb – The borrower is the servant of the lender. Who has freedom? The lender. Who doesn't? The borrower. Develop a plan to get out of debt!

Embrace delayed gratification. Here is the principle: Buy it now and struggle later. Another principle: Delay it now, invest the money, and have all you want later on! And you won't even have to touch the principal! We tend to think that having it now will bring enjoyment, but unless you can do it and not cause yourself financial stress, you will actually get more from waiting to buy it later!

Have more by managing better. The fact is that most of us earn enough. What would be beneficial would be to set our priorities and live by a budget. As we get control, our budget will loosen up a bit and we will find ourselves enjoying it more. Money that is already there can be your answer if you put it to work for you.

Spend some time thinking through your attitudes about money. You may be surprised at how you can change a few, look at things a little bit differently and begin to enjoy true financial freedom!

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Principles to Ensure a Fantastic Financial Finish

Most people want to get to the end of their lives and be able to live comfortably, take care of themselves and leave something for their children. These are admirable goals and very achievable – especially if you have a good plan! While I am not giving specific financial advice, these are the principles I live by and believe can bring anyone to a fantastic financial finish! As always, check with a financial consultant before taking action.

Aggressive in the Beginning, Conservative in the End. The way finances work long-term is that you want to maximize your returns when you are young, while tolerating more risk because over the long-term you will recoup any losses you may incur because of the risk. This is why when you are young you can get more aggressive. You have more time to let your returns accumulate. However, the older you get, the more you want to be transitioning into more conservative, capital-protecting investments. This way short-term market fluctuations won't affect your day to day living situation. I personally, at the young age I am, have my investments in very aggressive stocks and mutual funds. I may be down 10 percent one year but up 80 percent the next. Over time the investment make more gains than losses. I have 30 years before I need to be more conservative. As I get older I will shift into stocks and mutual funds that may only give me 7-20 percent a year but will assure me of less risk. This idea lets me get as much as I can while I am young and can afford risk, so that when I am old I can draw a lower percentage off of a bigger net dollar amount.

Use Insurance. I am not an insurance salesman, but I could be! When my dad died when I was 4 years old, he was making \$89,000 a year (In 1970). That's pretty good! He had \$30,000 of life insurance. That's pretty bad! For a very nominal fee, he could have protected his family and left them with a couple of million dollars to maintain their current lifestyle. For many, you will want

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insurance to protect your assets you will be passing on to your loved ones. Don't let the government get too much! Find a good insurance agent and they will help you out. Also, make sure you have all the right kinds of insurance: Life, health, disability etc. All of these tragedies can drain your long-term financial health.

Use a broker. The brokerage business is going through a radical transition with the onset of the Internet and that is good. It will make them sharpen up a bit, drop their fees and offer more in return. For a while I was anti broker but now I have come full circle and realize that it is good to have somebody watching your investments for you. Just be sure to tell them that you want them to be proactive with your account and communicate with you regularly. This way you get the benefit of their expertise. If you want to keep an online brokerage and trade stocks, that's okay. Give your self a little to play with and leave the rest to the professionals.

Start Early. Even if you can only put \$10 a month away, do it. The law of compounding interest is simply amazing. If you put it away early on, at least you give yourself something that is growing. And if you have kids, consider giving them a head start by putting some away for them. The 20 years it grows before they take it over will mean a lot to them.

Be disciplined. There are primarily two ways to be disciplined if you want to have a fantastic financial finish:

Disciplined in controlling your spending and disciplined in saving or investing. This means that you commit to spending less than you earn. Add it all up. Are you

spending less than you earn? Or are you going deeper into debt? Also, are you putting something away each month? You may think that you don't have enough to put away. Even if you can only put away \$10 a month, you should be saving and investing.

**What it lies in our
power to do, it lies in
our power not to do.**

Aristotle

Stay Out of Debt. Debt is an absolute killer. It will kill your future, it will kill your balance sheet, and it will kill your emotional health. If you can live absolutely debt free, I would advise it. Most people should only have a house debt. “But I wouldn’t have the car I want!” you say. The question I would ask is “Do you want one of the cars you want now, with a debt coming due every month and causing pressure, or would you like to buy any car (or two or three) you want later on out of the interest your investments are throwing off – and pay cash, with no debt?”

Delay Gratification. This is the key to staying out of debt and to accumulating what you will need later on to maintain the lifestyle you desire. You have heard the old saying, “A penny saved is a penny earned.” Well the truth is that a penny saved, and invested for a number of years is more like ten pennies earned! Don’t get me wrong, I don’t mean to live life as a pauper. In fact, when I get a big check or extra income, I give ten percent away to charity, spend ten percent on things my family would like (in other words we splurge), and the rest we save and invest. This allows us some “extras” but causes us to delay gratification that we could otherwise have if we spent the other 80%. In the end, I will be glad that I invested that money.

Read up. I would encourage you to learn about money and how it works. Even if it doesn’t particularly interest you, you need to know how it works in order to manage your affairs. Know the basics of saving, investing, interest rates, stocks, mutual funds, and the power of compound interest. If I had to pick a beginner magazine that is well written and very good information, I would suggest to you Smart Money, published by The Wall Street Journal. Pick one up at the newsstand and then you can subscribe from there.

In closing this chapter, let me say that anyone can have a fantastic financial finish! It is simply a matter of applying these principles over the long-term and watching your money grow. Every now and then you read an article

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about someone who never made more than \$15,000 a year and yet left an estate of millions. Get behind the scenes and you find that they saved, invested, and watched their spending.

Here's to your Fantastic Financial Finish!

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Why Get Rich When You Can Be Wealthy?

Getting rich is the main goal for a lot of people. That is unfortunate however, because there is something so much greater than simply the accumulation of money. Now don't get me wrong – I am not saying people shouldn't have large sums of money. In fact, I believe greatly in the power of money for good when in the hands of the right people. I think money is simply a tool that people can use to do great things – or bad things.

**Any fool can rich, the
wise get wealthy.**

Chris Widener

What is unfortunate is that so many people give up so much else in life in order to get those large sums of money.

First of all, let me explain my quote about rich fools. Just turn on the TV or read a popular magazine and you will find lots of rich fools. You will see people with tons of money but who have no happiness, have drug problems and who leave behind them a string of broken relationships. These people are rich, not wealthy.

Rich people are people with lots of money. Wealthy people are people who are rich in life. This would include financial stability and freedom, but goes deeper into spiritual health, emotional and relational health, and of course physical health.

I think getting rich is easy. It is simply a discipline that anyone can do if they so choose. There are many examples of people who have made very little money who have left vast fortunes. Spend less than you earn, save more than you spend. Put what you spend into an interest bearing investment. Do this over a long period of time and you will get rich.

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Wealthy? That is something altogether different. I have found that in most cases you must give up some wealth to get the riches. I know many rich people

The true measure of a man's wealth is found in the things he can afford not to buy.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

and very few of them are people who I would call wealthy. Most of them sacrificed their families, their health or their relationships as they pursued the accumulation of riches. The fact is that it takes time to make money. And every moment of time you spend in the pursuit of money is a moment of time taken from something else that would make you wealthy in life.

So let me ask you: Are you on the fast track toward riches? Or are you on the long track toward true wealth?

Are you being wise with your finances so as to secure long-term financial stability and independence? I hope so, because that is certainly a part of being wealthy.

Are you investing in those closest to you? I hope so! The fact is that when you lay on your deathbed, it won't matter how much money you have. The grim reaper doesn't need any more money and so he can't be bought with yours! The only thing that will matter are those faces that surround you, the looks of love they give you, and the memories you have of good times spent with them.

Are you taking good care of yourself physically? I hope so because if you don't, you won't get the mileage out of it that you were intended to! Physical health is part of being wealthy!

Are you taking good care of your spiritual life? I hope so because I don't think there are any more important questions we can answer than those who's

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answers will play themselves out for eternity. In my mind, spiritual questions make all the others seem like child's play.

Are you taking good care of yourself emotionally? I hope so because it is your internal state that will give you the energy you are looking for to live long and the peace to enjoy that life of yours.

All in all, I have decided that I don't want to stoop to being rich. That is too low of a goal for me. I want to be wealthy – financially yes, but not to the exclusion of my body, soul and spirit. Not to the exclusion of deep and meaningful relationships with my friends and family.

How about you? Will you be rich or wealthy?

The Financial Equation that Will Set You Free!

I have a good friend who works in an area of the US that has more than its share of poverty. He called me the other day with a very broken heart. He was feeling badly for the people around him who simply do not allow themselves to get set free financially. I could feel the pain he was feeling because I too, very often wonder why it is that some people experience financial independence and others do not. It really is a mystery.

But how to get financial independence is not a mystery!

Rather, financial independence is a very simple thing. Truly! It is hard work and takes time, but the process is very simple! In fact, financial independence can come from following a very simple plan. All of the books on financial independence can ultimately be boiled down to this basic equation. It is an equation that is as simple as it gets. In fact, it isn't even a multiplication problem, it is an addition equation! And we all learned addition in the first grade! Just as $1 + 1 = 2$, so does this POWERFUL yet SIMPLE equation add up to your financial independence!

What is this equation? Get ready, your life is about to change forever if you will allow yourself to understand and live by the simplicity of this equation. Here it is:

Smart Decisions + Good Math = Financial Independence

Let's break it down and take a closer look. First the Smart Decisions, then the Good Math.

Smart Decisions:

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Go to college. Get educated. I know that somebody will say, “Yeah but most of the people on the Forbes 400 never went past high school.” Well so did most of the people on the welfare line! Most people aren’t Bill Gates or Sam Walton. Most people who earn between \$100,000-\$150,000 a year are college graduates. “But I’m forty! I can’t go to college.” Yes you can. You will be 44 when you get out and have 21 years of a much better income. The fact is that most good jobs and careers go to those who have educated themselves. It is still the surest way to a long-term large income.

Still don’t want to go to college? See the last item under smart decisions.

Get better training. At the very least go get some training in your specific area of expertise. The promotions will go to those who are the best trained, so become the best trained! Take a course, even if your employer won’t pay for it, because eventually they WILL pay you for it!

Work hard. I have found that the many hundreds of high achievers who I know personally who have become and are becoming financially independent are hard workers. Every one of them works long hours. They sacrifice for the security they are shooting for and have attained. I know, we all get advertisements that say, “Financial Independence in 10 hours a week.” Let me ask you, do you know anybody like that? I don’t. Not one. Even the success stories you hear in the get rich quick industries show you that they worked HARD!

Develop yourself. Become a better person. Better people get better jobs and get paid better dollars! Make sure that every day you are becoming a person who is on the growth track, raising yourself to a higher and higher level with each and every passing day! Eventually your development will catch up with you and your income will soar!

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Stay out of debt. This is the smartest decision you will ever make. NO Debt! You know what? I have ONE bill I have to pay every month. That is my mortgage. But that's a debt, right? Well, without getting into an argument, I consider it a forced investment with the added benefit of providing shelter for my family and me! I do not consider a mortgage a debt. I mean car debt, stereo debt, and consumer debt of all kinds. It is possible. It can be done. And it will provide you with financial freedom!

**Debt is the worst
poverty.**

Thomas Fuller

Own your own business if you can. So you don't want to go to college? Okay. Or maybe you did go to college and you just want to make sure that you earn as much as you can. Well, the smart decision is to own your own business. Most millionaires in America are the people who own their own businesses. It will take a lot of risk, a lot of hard work, and many ups and downs, but owning your business gives you the opportunity to accumulate great wealth, because the profit is all yours. There are plenty of opportunities to own your own business and I would encourage you to strongly consider the alternative for many reasons, one of the best of which is the opportunity to achieve financial independence.

Good Math:

Spend less than you earn. One plus one equals two. We learn that very early on. Eventually, we learn negatives and we learn that one minus two equals negative one. Simple right? Yet many people live their lives in such a way that they spend more than their income and destroy their opportunity for long-term financial independence.

There are two things you can do to make this "good math" work for you. You can increase your income so that it outpaces your spending, or you can decrease your spending. You increase your income by making the smart decisions listed above. You decrease your spending by making hard choices. You may have to

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give up spending on things that you really like. One of these must be done if you are going to achieve the kind of long-term financial independence you desire.

Put money away into investment vehicles on a regular basis. If you are going to achieve financial independence, you will have to put away money regularly. This is the math principle of addition. Don't laugh: most people don't get this. Or if they do, they don't practice it! Whether it is every paycheck, or the first of the month, or quarterly, or however you can do it – DO IT! When you hit 65 years of age, you will be glad you did. And if you put away enough and into the right investments, you may just be thankful a lot sooner than that!

Let your interest accrue. This is the law of compounding interest and it is powerful! If you earn twelve percent on your money every year, do you know how soon it will be until you have twice as much as you started with? At first thought you may assume that it is one hundred divided by twelve, or eight and a third years. Not true. There is an investment rule that is called the rule of 72. That is, divide 72 by what average interest you make and that is how many years it takes to double your money. In this case, at twelve percent, your money doubles every six years! This works because you earn twelve percent on not only the original amount but the interest you earned as well.

Start with \$100 and the next year you have \$112. If you take the \$12 out then you will only make twelve percent on \$100 again. If you let it accrue, you will make twelve percent on \$112. This will cut over two years off of the time it takes to double your money!

Where the real power comes in is over longer periods of time. Let's say grandma dies and leaves you \$25,000 when you are eighteen. You can do any number of things with that money.

Buy a snazzy car. Not a good idea, though most eighteen year-olds would do just this.

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Invest the money and take out the interest every year. This is nice. It throws you \$3000 every year and over forty-two years you make \$126,000 for doing nothing and you still have \$25,000! Not bad, not bad at all.

Here is the real deal! You leave the money alone for forty-two years at twelve percent (about the long-term average for the stock market). At the end of that time you decide to retire and go to the investment summary to see how much you have. What do you find? You find that your money doubled seven times and that leaves you with 3.2 million dollars! Can you retire on that? You bet you can.

You can achieve financial independence. You can live the financial life you have always dreamed of. You can have a life where you have enough at all times, especially in the end. It is possible. You just have to make smart decisions and use good math!

As a refresher, here they are again:

Smart decisions:

- Go to college.
- Get better training.
- Work hard.
- Develop yourself.
- Stay out of debt.

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- Own your own business if you can.

Good math:

- Spend less than you earn.
- Put money away into investment vehicles on a regular basis.
- Let your interest accrue.

**Live the Life Principle Number Ten:
ATTITUDE IS KING**

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Five Attitudes that Will Make You Soar!

Understand this: Much of your world, and your experience in it, will be a direct result of the attitude you choose to have. Let me break that statement down a bit:

One, it is MUCH of your world. Yes, there are some things that just happen and there is nothing we can do about it, but much of our world is not by happenstance, but determined by the attitudes we take.

Two, your attitude is one that you choose. You do not have to have a chip on your shoulder. You do not have to be sad or angry. You do not have to believe that you are incapable of achieving success. We can choose at any moment how we will believe and how we will interact with the world.

Third, our experience is a direct result of our attitude. For example, if we have a bad attitude toward someone, what kind of attitude do you think we are going to get back? That's just the people side, but that makes up most of our world right there!

**Life is the movie you see
through your own eyes. It
makes little difference
what's happening out
there. It's how you take it
that counts.**

Denis Waitley

So, if our attitudes determine to a great degree what kind of life we will have, shouldn't we focus in on the best attitudes to have and then make them ours? Absolutely! If we want to soar with the eagles in this life, and if there are attitudes that will make us soar, shouldn't we pursue them with all our hearts? By all means! So here we go!

Five attitudes that will make you soar!

"I can." This is the most basic of all attitudes. We simply must choose to believe that we can. In our house we are not allowed to say, "I can't." We can say, "I'll try," or "I tried and failed," but not "I can't." Telling yourself that you can't, will in effect make it so you can't. But telling yourself that you can, will in effect enable you to achieve much more. Even if you actually only achieve 50% of what you tell yourself you can achieve, you will achieve at least that much more than if you told yourself you couldn't.

I actually have a standard way of going about getting myself off of the starting block: I simply say if somebody else has, then I can too. And if many others have, then surely I can too! I have to be smarter than at least one of those who has already done it. I have to be able to work harder than at least one other. There has to be at least one other person who has come from more difficult circumstances than me. And if they can do it then certainly, "I can!"

"I will be generous." Another attitude that will make you soar is to be a generous person. The attitude (and discipline) of generosity increases your likelihood of success for two main reasons: One, you are happier about yourself and that puts you in a state of mind that is prepared for successful living. Two, people pay back people who are generous. Generous people receive in kind and that will raise you to levels yet unseen.

"I will make a difference in the lives of those around me." People who soar are generally people who have the attitude of helping other people. Yes, they may do it for monetary gain, but they are others-focused. They want to change the way people live and experience life for the better. They are difference makers all around. I live in a town that is very affluent. Most of the people I know, work with, and have as friends are very successful in this world. One thing I can say, as almost a universal truth, is that to a person, they are people who are not self-

consumed but genuinely care about others and will do what they can to help others. This is what I know to be true about the attitudes of the genuinely successful.

"Not much will make me angry." Whether or not we get angry is a choice of attitude. We determine whether or not we will be angry. I have found that often I will meet with someone who is struggling with achieving something and in many cases I find that they are angry people. They have held onto an attitude that is angry at its root. When we take on an attitude that raises the bar on what will make us angry, we are positioning ourselves to be in a state of mind that is better able to live and work in this world in such a way as to achieve success.

**To different minds,
the same world is a
hell, and a heaven.**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"I will look for the good in every situation." This is basic optimism. Successful people who soar through life are those who are optimistic about life. They see the good, think the best and strive for greatness,

believing all the while that they will achieve it because it is possible!

I suppose there are a few other attitudes that would make you achieve all that you dream of, but these are the basics and ones that we would do well to master first.

Where do you see yourself? Do you need an attitude adjustment? Take a look again:

- I can.
- I will be generous.
- I will make a difference in the lives of those around me.

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- Not much will make me angry.
- I will look for the good in every situation.

Make these attitudes your goal and as you get them you will watch yourself soar!

Have a nice flight!

Keeping Your Attitude Up When Circumstances Are Down

“Instead of spending your time thinking about how bad things are, think about how good they will be!”
Chris Widener

Everyone knows that a positive attitude is key to the successful life. But what happens when things go wrong? What happens when circumstances deal us a blow? We have a tendency to let our attitudes take the dive along with our state of affairs. Life deals us setbacks, both minor and major, on a regular basis, but if we are going to be successful, we need to know how to deal with them and keep our attitudes intact! We need practical tools to help us understand how we can go about keeping our attitude up, when the circumstances are down. Here are some thoughts to help us do so:

Take some time-out. I'm sure you are aware of what happens. You are going about your day and everything seems to be going well, when out of nowhere disaster strikes. All of your best-laid plans begin to tumble. Sometimes circumstances surprise us and we react. Unfortunately, this often compounds the problem because by reacting we tend to operate out of our weaknesses instead of our strengths. We make decisions that are not well thought out. We function with a bad attitude that says, “I can't believe this is happening!”

How beautiful is it to do nothing, and then rest afterward.

Unknown

The next time circumstances turn against you, take some time to just step back from the problem and think. This will enable you to deal with the issue at hand rationally, instead of emotionally. It will allow you to put your state of mind back into its proper place. It gives you the opportunity to choose your attitude as you face the circumstances at hand. Remember that we don't have to do

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something right now. Go grab a cup of coffee and relax little bit. By doing this you function with you being in control and not the circumstances.

Keep your eye on the goal. A second step in keeping our attitude in the proper place is to make sure we keep the important things important. One of the biggest problems with trouble is that it gets your focus off of where it should be. When I experience difficult circumstances and people ask me how it is going, I tell them, “I am just keeping my eye on the goal.” It has always been fascinating to me that when race car drivers get into trouble, they keep their eyes straight ahead and do not move them away. There is just too much chance of wrecking that way. Instead, their eyes are on the goal, and this keeps them out of trouble. If you find yourself getting down about circumstances, sit down and write out what the goal is. Give some thought to how you can achieve that goal, or others you may have.

A man was asked how he was doing and he responded, “Pretty well, under the circumstances.” The other man asked, “What are you doing under the circumstances?” Good question. We shouldn’t be under the circumstances; we should be focused on the goal and moving forward.

Focus on solutions, not problems. The squeaky wheel gets the oil, the old saying goes. Negative circumstances don’t sit idly by. They scream for our attention. When we face difficult circumstances, we tend to dwell on them. We talk about them, fret about them, and give them way too much attention. Instead of talking about problems, talk about solutions. Instead of spending your time thinking about how bad things are, think about how good they will be! Don’t have family or staff meetings about the

**Goals are a means to an end, not
the ultimate purpose of our lives.
They are simply a tool to
concentrate our focus and move us
in a direction.**

Anthony Robbins

problems and how big they are. Have meetings on the solutions and how you will implement them. Don't let yourself or other team members complain. Encourage them to solve, with an emphasis on the positive results that will come from doing so. Then take some time to put these solutions down on paper, so you can monitor your progress.

Get some positive input. The mind tends to build on itself, so when we begin to go in one direction, i.e. worry, it can be a slippery slope. One thing we must do is get our thoughts back on track with positive ideas. When circumstances have got you against the emotional wall, get with a good friend who can encourage you. Listen to tapes by motivational speakers. Pick up a good book and give it a read. Whatever external influence you can get to put your attitude back on the positive side of the tracks – do it! It must be one of our first goals to start plugging good things into our minds to fuel our attitudes.

Tell yourself the good. One of the greatest internal powers we have is the power to control our thoughts. Spend time dwelling on the good things about your life or job instead of the problems. Think about positive things, things you enjoy and give you a sense of happiness and peace. There is an old childhood song that says, "Count your blessings, name them one by one." That is great advice! Let your positive attitude develop from within as well as from without. This makes all the difference!

Remember that circumstances are not forever. Sometimes it seems like we are going to be up to our eyeballs in the situation forever, when in reality, this too shall pass. There will be a time in the future when circumstances will change and you will be on the mountain instead of the valley. This will give you a sense of hope as you live and work that will change your attitude, make you feel better and put you on the fast track for growth!

Some questions:

Q. Do you have a habit of reflection before responding?

Q. Do you have a habit of keeping your eye on the goal?

Q. Do you focus on solutions or problems?

Q. Do you give yourself positive outside influence?

Q. Do you have a habit of telling yourself the good?

Q. Do you remind yourself that nothing is forever?

Are You and Optimist or a Pessimist?

“I became an optimist when I discovered that I wasn't going to win any more games by being anything else.”
Earl Weaver

I have been giving some thought lately to optimism and pessimism. Basically, these are attitudes. Attitudes that shape and formulate our entire existence. I mean, have you ever met a happy pessimist? Of course not.

In short, our optimism or pessimism is this:

- The way we interpret the past
- The way we experience and view the present
- The way we imagine the future

Have you given much thought about how your attitude, whether you are an optimist or a pessimist, affects your business, organization or school? Have you thought about how it affects you personally? And what about the team you are a part of?

What is optimism? It is a belief that things in our past were good for us, even if that means they were hard and taught us lessons. It is also the belief that things will be better in the future.

Here are some contrasts between optimism and pessimism and how they affect us:

Optimism breathes life into you each day

Pessimism drains you

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Optimism helps you to take needed risks
Pessimism plays it safe and never accomplishes much

Optimism improves those around you
Pessimism drags them down

Optimism inspires people to great heights
Pessimism deflates people to new lows

There is only one way that optimism and pessimism are the same and that is that they are both self-fulfilling. If you are an optimist, you will generally find that good things happen to you. And if you are a pessimist, you will find yourself in the not-so-good situations more often than not.

So can a person just become an optimist? Yes! We can choose to look at the world any way we want to. We can choose to look at the world and think the worst, or we can tell ourselves the good things about each situation. As you find yourself looking at your enterprise, begin to view it through the eyes of an optimist, and you will reap the rewards listed above, and so will the people around you.

There are tremendous benefits to being an optimist, as stated above. But there are some pessimists out there who will say, "But that isn't realistic." I say, "Who cares?" If things go awry, at least I have spent my time beforehand enjoying life and not worrying about it. And, being an optimist, I would view the "negative" situation as an opportunity to grow and learn. So I can even look forward to my failures because they will be stepping-stones, and learning tools to be applied to my future success.

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Have you ever met a successful pessimist? Become an optimist and see your world change before your eyes!

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Are You In It – To Win It?

Have you ever heard this? “It isn’t whether you win or lose. It is how you play the game.” I am sure you have. But do you know who said it? Some guy who came in second place!

You see, I have a problem with that statement. It presupposes, or at least strongly suggests that winning and playing the game “right” are mutually exclusive propositions.

Perhaps we ought to have this as our goal as we pursue success: We want to win, while playing the game right! I totally disagree with the statement that we should win at all costs. Instead, we should do everything good that we can to win at this game we call life. And we ought also do all that we can to help others win.

With all of that... here are some thoughts on being in the game – to win!

Any “game” worth playing is a game worth pursuing a win in. If I get into a game, I play to win. What nobility is there in playing like a slacker? What virtue is purposeful mediocrity? None! I live my life to be a winner – Spiritually, financially, physically, emotionally, and relationally – every area of my life! If it is worth doing, it is worth playing for the win!

The first man gets the oyster; the second man gets the shell.

Andrew Carnegie

Let me tell you what winning means... you're willing to go longer, work harder, give more than anyone else.

Vince Lombardi

It is good to win. We live in an age now where people have reacted to sore winners by saying that we shouldn’t strive for winning. Many of our schools

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have abandoned the idea of competition, and our educational scores show that. Kudos to all of the teachers out there who still tell their kids that they can be winners! It is good and noble to win! It is something to strive for. It is good to push ourselves, to stretch and reach for victory. It is a grand thing to want to win!

There doesn't have to be a loser in life. Yes, in teamed competition, there are always losers (but more on that in a bit), but in life, you can all win! We can all strive for the best and give it our all to win.

Winners are the ones who move families, businesses, organizations, cities and countries ahead. Winners are the ones who push progress. You don't think that couch potato is the one who will cure cancer or open up the next great technology do you? No – it will be a person who has chosen to be a winner!

Losing can mean winning. Just because your score in a game or contest is the least at the end of the game doesn't mean all is lost. You can still be a winner in that you gave it your all, you competed at your highest level, you learned new skills and strategies, and you became a better player and person. That is winning in my book!

Winners help others win. That is right, good people, people who pursue winning by excellence, are also people who stop to help others so that they, too, can enjoy the spoils of victory. Pursue the win, but help others achieve all that they can as well!

Winners make everyone better. When I get into athletic matches I want to play against the best. Yes, I may come up short in the score, but I will be better because that winner will make me grow in every area of my game! Winners stretch the losers so they can become winners too!

Questions for reflection:

Are you afraid of winning?

Do you think it is wrong to win?

Are you living each area of your life as though you are a winner?

Are you enjoying your wins?

Are you helping others win with you?

Friends, we need to be in the game of life full force! We need to be in it, and we need to be in it to win it!

Your Attitude – You Choose

There are lots of things in this life that we don't get to choose. On the other hand, there are lots of thing in this life that we do get to choose. Our attitude is one of the things that we get to choose. Nobody else lives inside our brain. Nobody else controls what or how we think. It is up to us, moment by moment, to choose what our attitude is. It is up to us to determine how we will look at and perceive the world around us. It is up to us to decide how we will react to our world around us.

My advice? Choose a positive, optimistic attitude! Here are some thought on choosing your attitude.

We cannot choose our circumstances. For the most part, this is true. We cannot control if someone around us gets ill. We cannot control how another person will treat us. We cannot control the global economy. We cannot control the direction our society as a whole will go. For some, this may seem scary. For me, it is freeing. I don't have to control my circumstances. Running the whole world would be a big responsibility. It is good to know that I am not in charge of, or in control of all of my circumstances. This dose of reality frees you to focus in on what you can control – your attitude.

We can choose our attitudes.
That's right. We get to choose what our attitudes are. Here is the definition of attitude: "The feeling or opinion about something or someone, or a way of behaving that follows from this." We choose how we feel about others and

**Ability is what you're
capable of doing.
Motivation determines
what you do. Attitude
determines how well you
do it.**

Lou Holtz

situations. We choose our opinion about people and situations. We choose the way we will behave in relation to other people and circumstances. We choose it. It doesn't have to be bad. It doesn't have to be anything but what we want it to be. We have the option.

The choice of a right attitude will significantly determine new circumstances. Choosing to have the right attitude will change the world around you. This isn't any sort of magic; it is just how the world works. Now, don't get me wrong. It won't cure everything and turn your world into a virtual Shangri-La, but it will significantly improve the world you live in. For example, let's say that every day you go into work and you gripe about life and work from the moment you get there until the moment you leave. Will others want to be around you? Will others ask your opinion? Will others like you? Will others ask you to join them for lunch? Probably not! But what if you come to work every day and you are the positive optimist of the crowd? Will everybody love you? No, but significantly more people will than if you are the office pessimist! Your choice of attitude will determine what kind of circumstances you get!

Ultimately, it is our choice on what we have as an attitude. Nobody else can force you to have a bad attitude. Nobody else can force you to have a good attitude. It is simply a choice you make.

Where are you with your attitude? Do you have a good one? Why not sit down and give it some serious thought? Then, no matter where you find yourself, decide to take your attitude to the next level! If you have a really bad attitude, decide to take it up a couple of levels!

Your attitude. Your choice. Choose wisely.

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Getting Over Fear and On with Your Life

I have worked with thousands of people through the years and written for millions of others, many who have written to me for advice and the like. One of the things that I have found to be common in so many people is fear. Fear is something that cripples people and keeps them from pursuing and reaching their dreams. This does not have to be so! I truly believe that a person does not have to have fear in their life. I can honestly say that I do not have any fear in my life. Now, I am not perfect by any means but fear is not something I have because I have dealt with it.

The main reason I do not have fear is because I have come to grips with the concepts surrounding fear. I have understood fear, primarily from two angles. The first angle is psychologically and the second angle is theologically. You see, I think that if we address the issues of life and the fears we experience from both a good understanding of psychology and theology, then I believe we can be free from fear.

**Fear is met and
destroyed with
courage.**

James Bell

Psychology is the study of the mind and that is where most of our fears take place. Theology is the understanding of God and the world we live in as it relates to God and what takes place in this world. I know from personal experience, that as we settle just a few basic issues, we can be free from fear. A few weeks ago I spoke to a group on fear and here are a few of the insights I gave them on how they can get over their fears and get on with their lives. Look and see how each one of these principles fits either psychology or theology.

Disciplining your thoughts. Fear is an action of the mind. Fear is a use, or better said, misuse, of the imagination. In reality, when you fear something, you

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are simply choosing to imagine a future happening. You are fearful that your spouse will divorce you (future), or that the snake will bite you (future – it hasn't yet), or that you will lose your job (future – you still have it). So when we fear, we are simply letting our minds imagine a bad future. That is what fear is! Imagining a bad future.

So what is the answer?

Well, there are two things you can do. One would be to imagine a good future. The other would be to stop thinking about the future and just take one day at a time. If you are a fearful person, either one of these would be preferable to living in the prison you currently live in. The principle remains true in that we have to discipline our minds and choose not to think about a bad future. We can do that. We can choose our thoughts. It just takes discipline.

Accepting the realities of life. Much of what people fear are the realities of life. Some may think this cold, but people die, people lose jobs, people choose to do crazy things in relationships etc. There is nothing you can do about that. Period. For example, I know many fearful mothers who won't let their children play in the front yard because they are afraid the kids will get kidnapped. Now, what should they do? Do everything they can to make it safe and then let their kids play in the front yard! Some people are afraid they will go bankrupt or broke and worry endlessly about it. What should they do? Work hard, save, invest and live life. Could someone get kidnapped? Yes. Could you go bankrupt? Yes. These things happen and all you can do is work to make your life what it can be and accept that sometimes things happen, even tragic things. If they happen, you experience the pain and emotion then – there is no sense forcing yourself to experience it before it happens – IF it happens! This is a mental adjustment that we make that enables us to get over fear.

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Give yourself good information. Much of what we fear is irrational and not based on good information. For example, someone afraid of snakes will scream when they see a garden snake, even though the reality is that there is absolutely nothing that snake can do to them! Take the time to educate yourself about whatever it is you fear and see if that doesn't help you gain the mental edge you need.

Taking control only of those things you can control. There are things you can control and things you can't. Much of what we fear is out of our hands and we can't control it. You can't control if your spouse leaves you. You can control how you treat your spouse. You can't control a downturn in the economy. You can control whether you save for a rainy day or not. You can't control whether or not you will get a fatal disease. You can control whether you eat right and exercise. You can't control how your kids will turn out. You can control how you raise them, what kind of example you set, and what you teach them. You can't control how others will treat you. You can control how you will treat others. Control what you can control, and let go of the rest.

You cannot always control what goes on outside. But you can always control what goes on inside.

Wayne Dyer

Trusting that God is in control, even when it doesn't seem like it. Here is where theology comes in. There is an old theological term called "sovereignty," that basically means, "God is in control of the universe." I believe that. Basic to my understanding of God is that God is in control of the universe (God better be, because I'm certainly not – and wouldn't want to be!). Now there is a fundamental difference between believing that God is in control and trusting that God is at the helm. There is a difference between believing that ultimately God is calling the shots and actually liking the shots that God calls. I think one of the overriding principles of life that we can embrace that will help us overcome fear is that we can relinquish control and trust that someone greater than us is fully

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aware of what is happening on this earth and in our lives. I for one leave a lot of my fears on this theological hook.

These are some basic points that I use to shape my heart and mind so that I don't have to spend my life in fear. There are a few others as well, I am sure, and many you probably use yourself, but for now, this should be enough to chew on. Getting over fear is an issue of the mind and the spirit and, believe me, the battle over fear can be won!

Final Words:
Lock in Your Legacy

Lock In Your Legacy

You, my friend, are going to die.

What? What kind of motivational tool is that? Real inspiring!

In fact, it is. Our mortality may perhaps be the ultimate inspiration and motivation! If we lived on this earth eternally, we could be procrastinators extraordinaire! We would never have to get anything done because there would always be tomorrow. But alas, we pass on and all we leave are the memories and the lives of others we affected while we were here. Sounds gloomy? In actuality, it is exciting! You see, this gives us purpose and a deadline. (Pun intended).

We can choose how we will live on in the hearts and memories of others. We do this by purposing to live lives NOW that make change happen in ourselves, and those around us.

What kind of legacy will you leave? How will your family and friends remember you? How will you leave your descendants in the following areas? Give some thought to them and make some changes. In doing so, you will begin to lock in your legacy.

Emotionally: Have you ever stepped back and asked yourself how you treat other people and how that affects them emotionally. I have four children, and I am acutely aware that they are being shaped emotionally by how I treat them and teach them how to deal with the world. I am especially aware of this from my own background. I can directly trace the few emotional shortcomings I have to the emotional coolness I felt from my own family. Are you raising emotionally healthy kids who are both independent as well as interdependent?

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Are you helping your spouse to grow emotionally? Give this some serious thought.

Spiritually: In my mind, the “God” question is the most important. You know, I often hear people say that they are just going to let their kids “figure it out on their own.” These same people will show them how to shoot a basketball, trade stocks, and build a tree house, all simply temporal issues, but leave the answers to the biggest question up in the air! Now I am not advocating cramming anything down their throats, just taking the time to helping them find their way. Are you helping and encouraging those around you to find their spiritual life? Are you living an authentic spiritual life that will be your legacy? Give some serious thought to this.

Physically: Now I know what you are thinking: I can’t change my genes. They got what they got and they’ll have to live with it. To a certain extent this is true. I am 5’11 for the rest of my life. I will never be 6 foot, and neither will my kids. What I am talking about though, is to be examples of taking our physical health seriously. The statistics prove that whatever bad habits you have, your kids are likely to have as well. Why? Because you are their example. This is why I work to stay physically fit. I work out. I lift weights. I eat right (most of the time – I am a sucker for Breyer’s Vanilla Bean Ice Cream). I don’t smoke. I want to leave a legacy of health behind for my kids. True, they can still go astray, but I will do my best to give them a good example to follow. Give this some serious thought.

Financially: There are two primary ways you can leave a financial legacy. First, teach your loved ones about how to handle money (some of you may need to learn yourself first). There are just so many good books on the subject, there is no excuse for not knowing how to handle money. Rich Dad, Poor Dad is a good book to start with, or perhaps The Millionaire Next Door. These will teach you the basics. Secondly, you can leave an inheritance. Now let me be clear on this. This

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does not have to be after you die. In fact, the more you have, the more I believe you ought to give away while you are alive. Let's face it, the older you get, the less need you have for money once the basics are taken care of. It always cracks me up that by the time you can afford a big house, your kids are gone and you don't need one! Turn the money over early so you can watch the joy of your loved ones spending, investing and giving it! This is of course predicated upon the assumption that you have first taught them how to handle it. If you have, then you should give it away while you're alive so you can enjoy seeing your legacy in action! Give your financial inheritance some serious thought.

Relationally: What kind of legacy will you leave in regard to how people you know interact relationally with others. When people look at how you interact with others, will they be better off if they develop the same relational habits? Will your legacy be one of love, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and forgiveness? As you live this life, you will see that your legacy grows after you in those you influence day by day. Give the idea of influencing others relationally some serious thought.

Intellectually: I don't know about you, but I want to challenge people to deeper intellectual thought. In a day and age of People Magazine mentalities, we need people who will challenge us to think deeper. Are you doing anything that will challenge your sphere of influence to intellectual gains? Will those left after you are gone, say that you made them think thoughts they hadn't before? That you challenged them to be smarter? Give this issue some serious thought.

Functionally: Functionally? Yep. It's a catch-all word. It is how they function. It is all of the above, rolled into one. How will those you influence actually function? This is to a great degree how you function. Are you well rounded? Are you balanced? Do you keep the main things the main things? Is your life functioning well? Make it your goal to live a balanced, functional life so you can leave a legacy of such. Give your life function some serious thought.

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I ended each paragraph with a challenge to think seriously about each. These aren't issues we will solve immediately. They take a lifetime to build and they will ebb and flow. But as you diligently pursue staying on top of them all, you will be locking in that legacy you desire to leave behind!

The fact is, you CAN live the life you have always dreamed of. It IS within your grasp if you follow the principles contained in this book.

I have worked with thousands of people from all around this world and have seen people do tremendous things when they set their hearts, minds, and hard work on their goals and dreams.

Remember, you CAN do it – and you will!

They Lived Their Dreams

Here are true stories from some of the Made for Success subscribers on how they applied the principles spoken of above and began to live the lives of their dreams! I share these stories with you to show you that ordinary people can achieve extraordinary things if they pursue their dreams! Special thanks to these incredible people for sharing their stories with us!

Story One:

I recently spent some time with a friend who needed some special care and attention after the holiday season. As we were saying good-bye she apologized for "taking up so much of my valuable time." Without thinking I replied: "That's OK! You didn't take anything I didn't come to give willingly anyway!" Only later did I realize what I had said. Because I went there prepared to give, I did not feel forced or robbed, but fulfilled for having been a blessing to someone else. When I left she clearly felt encouraged and uplifted.

I've often related giving to something tangible like money, not realizing that it can also be giving of my time, attention love or just listening when someone needs it. Often times in the past I've felt obligated to give because someone was telling me to. I felt guilty about refusing, not realizing that giving with the wrong attitude won't produce the same harvest as giving willingly and cheerfully.

In the past year I've begun to learn to be a river in my giving, instead of a swamp. It has made me realize just how much I have been given to give away and for the first time I started experiencing how it could be more blessed to give than to receive. Giving more cheerfully and more willingly of every resource I have has made my life more meaningful and complete with clearly defined

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purpose to make a difference for someone else by sharing of the treasures in my treasure box. By Liane de Witt

Story Two:

When I was 19 years old I did one year of a university degree, but failed so went back home, started work, got married, went overseas and worked and lived in the UK. Finally, in 1984 with two small babies my husband and I immigrated to South Africa. I had never forgotten the university failure but it seemed a too long project at the time to restart, so I embarked on a correspondence secretarial diploma. With this, I got a full time job as a secretary in the Human Resources Department in a large company. I then discovered that it would be possible to study a Business Communications degree, specializing in Industrial Psychology by correspondence. This November, I will complete the degree after 5 years of part-time study. The department has been downsizing continually and every job that has become vacant has been done away with. Doggedly I believed that I only had to complete my studies, and promotion would come. Now out of the blue at the beginning of this year comes a new HR Manager who has done the same degree which I am doing, and he wants to put me on the continuation of studies program which will pay this year's fees and books. He is also shuffling the department so that I can leave the job as secretary behind me and start to move up the ladder. I was amazed that having been tenacious about being determined to complete my degree, and then being positive about being prepared when an opportunity knocks that suddenly things are coming my way. My "luck" is the result of blood, sweat and tears of frustration. By Leigh Voltaire

Story Three

Like most folks, I have heard about and read about goal setting and its values. So instead of just reading about it and hoping something might happen, I decided to make some good stuff happen in my life. I decided to pursue everything that I had always wanted to do or have.

Some 23 years ago I spent about six months and wrote down everything that I had ever dreamed about or thought about doing with my life. Nothing was sacred and I made no judgments about what, where, when, could I or couldn't I, what it would cost or was I physically or mentally capable of accomplishing the goal. I wrote everything down.

Then in May of 1979, I focused all my free time on reducing the list down to a workable document. It took about 2 more months to put stuff in about 14 different categories. I then prioritized them in the order that was most important to me at the time. I ended up with 186 things I wanted to do with the rest of my life. What a challenge. In July I was ready to start.

Here we are now. The list is still important; I still work on it on a regular basis. Some years I check off two or three items. Some years, I don't get any of them done. I take pictures along the way; add certificates, notes, and letters, whatever applies to the goal. Talk about fun. Best of all, someday when I am with the Big Guy, my children, grandchildren, etc. can look at that book and see what Papa did with his life. Hopefully they will see what can be accomplished in life with a little planning and effort. By Michael Stone

Story Four:

How do you find your way back into an old dream? I'd been a writer all of my life. But I grew up, got married, and had three children. I didn't have time to chase my dream.

I wrote at night and in the morning before work. I sent a proposal to an editor who liked it and asked me to send the book. My first book was accepted and scheduled for publication. I was on my way, higher than any kite!

Then my mother found out she had breast cancer. I had emergency gall bladder surgery. My writing came to a halt. I told my mother that I was dedicating the book to her so she would have to survive to see it. Her head was bald from chemotherapy. She had always told me that I could do it.

My first book was released in February of 1999. In March of 1998, my mother died. My pregnant daughter's husband left her. I kept writing. It was the only thing that kept me going. I had another book accepted and another.

If you have a dream, do it. Don't wait another minute. Don't give up because it doesn't work the first time or the tenth. When you don't know if you can hold on a minute longer, that's when something is likely to change. You're as capable of being the person you dream as anyone. Believe in yourself and your dream. Everything you need is inside of you. Fight for it.

This year, I had my 40th book contracted for publication. You CAN make your dreams come true! By Joyce Lavene

Story Five:

I don't know whether the things in life that I've overcome are more than my fair share, but I do know that without each and every one of these character builders, I wouldn't be the person that I am today. I was given up for adoption at age 3, put in a home for emotionally disturbed youngsters when 12, and living on my own at 15 while attending high-school. I am lucky to have lived through the freewheeling days of the late 1960's and early 1970's. I am lucky to have lived life on both sides of the tracks. I know what it's like to be well off financially, and what it's like to wonder where your next meal is coming from, let alone the roof over your head.

When I was 37, I went back to school to become an Electronics Engineering Technologist - a three-year program. Now you may say, "So what." What you do not know is that I was in an extremely verbally and emotionally abusive marriage, diagnosed with a severe liver illness and on very toxic drugs. I was also pregnant. I was almost the oldest in my class. Nothing deterred me from my focus. I did 4 semesters in a row. I had a baby in the one summer off & went right back to finish. I graduated with honors. Today, 10 years later, I am illness free and toxic marriage free. I live a life of peace and harmony while helping my son overcome his developmental delays. What have I learned? Never, never, never give up your dreams. They may take time, but they are achievable. Keep your focus, keep your eye on the ball when all around you is falling down and you will eventually get there. By Laurie Grant

Story Six:

The days following the World Trade Center tragedy on September 11th, 2001 were difficult ones. I didn't know any of the victims, yet living in Washington, D.C. kept me close to the action. Like many, for days I felt depressed and couldn't get back into the groove of my "normal" everyday life. The paperwork on my desk and chores around the house seemed so insignificant in perspective. My life was on hold.

Soon though, I decided it was time to take action. This was an event that made me realize I wanted to change my life and if anyone was going to change my life, it would have to be me. I sat down and wrote out three goals to achieve and I set a deadline to do it over the following six months. They were:

1. Volunteer for a worthwhile organization.
2. Buy my first investment property.
3. Seek out speaking opportunities to become an effective public speaker.

While the goals differed quite a bit, there was a reason behind each of them. I believe it is important to "give back" and I have found volunteering to be an effective channel for me to accomplish this. Buying investment real estate was my first step in creating the financial success I needed to achieve my life's mission, which was to build a Foundation for Giving. Lastly, I have a strong fear of public speaking.

I'm proud to say that I accomplished all of my goals within just five months. After just one month I became involved in a national organization that supports a cause I believe deeply in, and I spearheaded a project to promote their ideals throughout the D.C. school system. I worked with others on a fundraiser and invited local politicians and residents. As co-host, I was required to give a speech. It was a wonderful event and also an empowering

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personal success. As for the investment real estate, I closed on a property it was the beginning of a valuable experience.

Setting these goals and being tenacious about what I believe in helped turn the tragic event of September 11th into a personal victory and also an opportunity to better this world. By Paul Fontaine

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