

Personal Excellence

The Magazine of Personal Leadership

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Erin Gruwell
Freedom Writers

November 2007

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Life**

**Reclaim
Your Life**

**Walk Your
Spiritual Path
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November 2007

The Magazine of Life Leadership

SPIRITUAL • HOPE

Exercise Your Hope

Achieve when no one else believes.

by Andrew Razeghi

IT ALL STARTED WHEN I GOT LOST. A FEW YEARS ago, the State of Alaska invited me to give a keynote speech on innovation at an annual gathering of state employees and professionals. Arriving early, I opted to take a drive into the bush—to get back to nature and experience the last frontier up close and personal. My destination was *Hope*, Alaska's first gold rush town.

I embarked upon my journey with a super-sized cup of black coffee, no map, and Mother Nature as my co-pilot. About one hour's drive into Alaska's majestic wilderness, on a weather-beaten road to a once-celebrated town called Hope, I encountered a road sign: *Avalanche Area. Next 1.5 miles. Do not stop.* Amused, I got out of my car and took a picture of it. "Stupid tourist," I later thought, "but what a great photo!" Fortunately, nothing happened to me physically. However, spiritually, that moment had a profound effect on me. On the road to Hope, Alaska, stands a poetically coincidental life lesson: *Drive beyond fear. Do not stop. Hope is just around the corner.*

Before that experience, I considered hope to be synonymous with optimism—the opposite of which was pessimism or hopelessness. However, I then realized that the opposite of hope is not hopelessness—the opposite of hope is fear. Hope and fear comprise a belief system—one that encourages us to hang on to (or give up on) our dreams. This belief system propels us forward (hope) and holds us back (fear). Your job is to live your life "net positive". This starts by re-thinking how you

define hope followed by a healthy dose of exercising your hope muscles.

First, think about hope differently. Consider the experience of Vaclav Havel, playwright and former president of the Czech Republic. While in seclusion as a political dissident, Havel wrote to a friend who inquired about his hope, by saying, "Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty



that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. This hope gives us strength to live and continually to try new things, even in conditions that seem as hopeless, as ours do here and now." Havel and his country were triumphant in their fight for freedom against communism—not simply because of *what* they believed, but also because of *why* they believed. They knew what they were doing was right. They

exercised their beliefs through writing, public demonstrations, and sometimes even silence—an unwillingness to go along with "the way things were."

Second, exercise your beliefs. To quote Geoffrey Canada, founder of the Harlem Children's Zone, dedicated to giving America's most disenfranchised youth a shot at the American dream: "I tell our kids that they have to exercise their hope muscles. It is in life's most challenging moments that you have the opportunity to believe more deeply."

Five Ways to Exercise Beliefs

Follow these five steps to exercising your beliefs and building your hope muscles:

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Play to your strengths. Paul Orfalea, a very successful entrepreneur, is also dyslexic. In high school, due to his "learning disability", Paul's counselor suggested to his mother that she enroll him in some vocational training classes. His mother pulled Paul from the counselor's office, looked Paul in the eyes and said, "Paul, the A students work for the B students. The C students run the businesses. And the D and F students dedicate the buildings." Mom was right. Over 1,200 stores now bear Paul's college nickname—Kinko (for his kinky red hair). Paul never lost hope in himself, not only because someone had hope in him but also because he never tried to be something he wasn't. Early in his career, Paul realized his greatest strengths resided in two areas: the numbers and the people. And so, he poured himself into both. He studied the financial side of the retail photocopy business and saw a way to make a profit. He also understood people and what they wanted. One executive who worked for Paul said, "People loved working for Paul when he owned the company. People wanted to follow him because he believed in them." We lose hope when we try to be something we are not. This is when we fail. Write down your strengths. Play to them. Outsource your weaknesses.



Never hope alone. Once you've identified your strengths, surround yourself with people who believe in you. There is no greater gift you can give someone that to let them help you. The greatest irony of hope is that while everyone loves a dreamer, no one wants to be called one. *You are such a dreamer Martin Luther King! You must be kidding, Mother Teresa! You are going to do what, Mahatma Gandhi?* You cannot lose hope if you are not alone. Maintain your hope by surrounding yourself with people who believe in you. Pull your fans into your game. Write down the six individuals who help you "figure things out". For each of these people, write down how this person makes you a better person. What exactly does he or she do? Then, make deliberate appointments with these folks. Go to them. Create your own coaching panel for what you hope to achieve.

Know the details of the situation. Financial services innovator Charles Schwab recalled, "When I started in this business, the first thing that I did was study the industry. I studied the products—how they were priced, what benefits they provided, what the margins were, and who benefited the most. It began my thinking that the old ways of doing things were wrought with conflicts. I then had the courage—the hope—to go into the discount brokerage business." Hopeful leaders do not act with

reckless abandon. They don't simply break the rules. They study the small stuff. Know the details. Write them down, but don't get lost in them. Once you fully understand the situation, step back from it and ask, *What does all this mean?* Then, make a decision to act.

Focus on the task, not on the objective. Between 1995 and 1997, tennis star Andre Agassi fell from the World's No. 1 player to No. 141. Not content with his fate, he decided to turn things around, ultimately winning the 2002 French Open and regaining his top spot. Agassi credits a specific tactic for his comeback, "Each day I got up I'd write down one thing that I could do that day. It didn't matter what I wanted over the longer-term, it was only about that day." People lose hope when what they hope to achieve seems so far away. Break it down. Focus on the task not the objective. What can you do in the next hour to work toward your goal? Make that call. Send that letter. Do something to make hope happen. And leave your regrets at the door. Heed Andre's advice: "Every time I think about things I could have done differently," Agassi said, "I take a lot of pleasure in the fact that I'm still here doing things the way I want."

When others fail to see what you believe, change the story (not your beliefs). Joseph Strauss had a dream: build the Golden Gate Bridge. However, to get the job done, he had to persuade citizens living on both sides of the bridge—San Francisco and Marin County—that the bridge was a worthy endeavor. His story for selling his dream to Marin County was simple: *transportation*. If we build it, you can get back and forth from the city efficiently. Marin didn't care. They could take the ferry system to cross the bay. So, Strauss simply changed his story. He went back to the people of Marin and told them that a bridge would have a positive effect on the value of their real estate. He won their support. We often lose hope when we try to convince others that what we believe is worthy of their attention. Sometimes that story doesn't make sense to people. Rather than give up on your dreams, create a new story to sell your dreams.

By practicing these steps, you'll build your hope muscles. You'll believe more deeply in those things that matter most to you. Along the way, heed the advice of Simon Peter, "Always be ready to give an explanation for your hope." As a hopeful person you will forever be an oddity to others. Make them wonder why you're still smiling. PE



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ACTION: Be a more hopeful person.



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Love Leadership

Make good things happen.



by Gregg Cochlan

COMBINING LOVE AND LEADERSHIP makes sense.

When Warren Buffet was asked how he would define *success*, he said, “For me, if the people who you hope love you, do, that’s success.” Since love is the single most important element in human life, it seems surprising that the words “love” and “leadership” are rarely linked. Love brings out the best in people, so why not use it to lead?

I am not talking here about “hearts and flowers” but about caring about people enough to hold them accountable and responsible for achieving higher performance, greater productivity, and wider functionality.

Here are seven principles:

1. Positive approaches draw people to you. Love-inspired leadership never forgets the dignity of the individual. This implies respect for human dignity in all circumstances, a belief in human potential, and a commitment to foster that potential. Attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage and abundance are part of a Love Leadership style. As you nurture and express these attributes, you come closer to your core as a love leader. Although the focus of Love Leadership is not on productivity, it naturally brings out more productivity from people. When people believe you value them as human beings, they respond by becoming more creative, loyal, willing, productive, innovative, and adaptable to change. Love Leadership still demands performance and accountability, but changes the paradigm of how it is achieved. Love Leadership takes courage and an authentic way of interacting as a human being.

2. Injecting love into your leadership reduces your fear of embarrassment, failure, or rejection. Some leaders are afraid of the word “love.” It implies commitment, emotional connection, and a relationship. If your leadership style makes people fearful and angry, they won’t take risks, move forward with a positive attitude, be adventurous or welcome change. And that severely limits accomplishment. Those who practice Love Leadership don’t do it because they want people to like them. They do it because they want to

unleash the talent, energy, innovation, productivity and creativity in their people. A top-down, command-and-control, or divide-and-conquer leadership style adds layers of protective armor, so you learn to bury your natural self. You learn to layer those styles over our own to protect yourself. Love Leadership requires peeling away those layers of other, less effective styles.

3. Love leadership is the “new normal.” Love Leadership, as a new way to lead people, creates a “new normal” of what we find acceptable, possible, and desirable. When you’re driven by compassion and love for others, the way you do things reflects that. At times, you have to make tough decisions. You may have to fire someone, but you certainly do not have to degrade them. Love Leadership



trumps the dehumanizing behavior we see in some cultures, allowing you to protect the dignity of the individual.

4. Authenticity is the key to Love Leadership. Authenticity is the key to effective leadership, but we often cover up our authentic selves, because it means allowing ourselves to be open and vulnerable. However, when you’re dealing with someone who isn’t authentic, you tend to be guarded. Think about it. Your instinctive response to another person’s “phoniness” is to be protective and pretentious. In an environment rich in pretense, no one knows who anybody really is or how anybody will react, because they may react in different ways at different times based on who’s in the room. This behavior costs you money. Love Leadership gives you permission to be who you are, which inspires others to trust you. And, because it is fearless, Love Leadership becomes a great adventure. It prepares you and your team to take risks and adapt to change. Change is constant, and resistance to change is equally constant. Love Leadership positively impacts your ability to accept, rather than resist, change. Through your leadership style, you create a more adven-

turesome group that adapts more easily to change.

5. Share accountability and encourage people to own results. It is difficult to innovate in an organization where accountability has been given up to a leader or people feel that they have a gun to their heads. Leaders who stop viewing people as disposable are rewarded with elevated effort, enhanced performance, more creative thinking, and greater flexibility and adaptability. Knowing your boss cares about you as a person makes you care more about your employer. The same holds true for members of a project or team. Team members no longer give up accountability for the success of a project, they willingly accept a share in it, and by owning it, help accomplish it. When a team leader or boss has a problem, so does everyone.

6. Throw people safely out of order. Love Leadership stretches comfort zones and throws people out of their routines to create a sense of adventure and possibility. If you throw people out of order, but ignore their humanity and dignity, you create a defensive culture—and how can you expect a positive result? To successfully challenge people’s habits, attitudes, beliefs and expectations, you need to create a safe environment where they can willingly change. A safe environment means it is okay to make mistakes and even to fall short of goals. At the same time, when you let people know that it is okay to *fall* down, you also must let them know that it is not okay to *stay* down. They will live up to expectations because they begin to have those expectations of themselves.

7. Accept constructive criticism. Even though Love Leadership accepts mistakes, it does not let people off the hook. In fact, you never provide an escape hatch for people to be less than they could be. You also never use fear as a weapon. If you care enough about your team to throw them out of order and challenge their habits, you will ultimately have people challenging some of yours. As a love leader, you also have to be open to the fact that when someone cares about you, they will want to help you avoid or correct your mistakes. You’ll be living up to *your* potential as well.

Love Leadership is the best way to real success, as a business leader and as a human being. And truly, how separate are these two aspects of our lives? PE

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ACTION: Practice love leadership.

Healthy Self-Esteem

You can develop the six pillars.



by Nathaniel Branden

AS SOCIETY BECOMES MORE complex, competitive, and challenging, self-esteem is vital to improve performance.

Self-esteem has two basic components:

- **Self-efficacy:** You have confidence in your ability to cope with life challenges and a sense of control over your life.

- **Self-respect:** You experience yourself as deserving of happiness, achievement, love, and sense of community with others.

Self-esteem is self-reinforcing. When you have confidence in your ability to think and act effectively, you persevere when faced with difficult challenges, you form nourishing relationships, you expect more of life and of yourself, and you succeed more often than you fail. If you lack confidence, you give up easily, fail more often, aspire to less, and hence you get less of what you want.

Self-esteem is vital to well-being, but its presence doesn't make life problem-free. People with high self-esteem may experience anxiety, depression, or fear when overwhelmed by complex issues.

I think of self-esteem as an immune system. A healthy immune system can't guarantee you won't become ill, but it reduces your susceptibility to illness and improves your odds for a speedy recovery. Likewise, strong self-esteem makes you resilient in the face of difficulties.

People who are arrogant or boastful show a lack of self-esteem. Those who are comfortable with themselves and their achievements take pleasure in being who they are—without boasting.

Becoming successful, powerful, or well liked does not automatically confer high self-esteem. In fact, talented and powerful people who doubt their core value are usually unable to find joy in their achievements—no matter how great their success. Self-esteem has to do with what *you* think of *you*, not what anyone else thinks of you.

Affirmations are also of marginal value in raising self-esteem. Telling yourself you're capable and lovable accomplishes little if you are operating irresponsibly in key areas of your life.

Genetic inheritance and parental upbringing also play powerful roles. Parents with strong self-esteem may induce that quality in their children. They raise them with love and acceptance, believing in

their competence and setting reasonable rules and expectations. Yet some of these children become self-doubting adults, while others who survive tough childhoods grow up with strong self-worth.

Six Pillars of Self-Esteem

You can strengthen self-esteem by following six self-examination practices that I call the *Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*:

- **Conscious living:** Attend to feedback about needs and goals; face facts that are uncomfortable; refuse to wander through life in a self-induced mental fog.

- **Self-acceptance:** Experience whatever you truly think, feel or do; face and learn from your mistakes.

- **Self-responsibility.** Establish a sense of control over your life by realizing you are responsible for your choices, actions, goals, values, and happiness.

- **Self-assertiveness:** Express appropriately your thoughts, values and feelings; stand up for yourself; speak and act from your deepest convictions.

- **Purposeful living:** Set goals and work to achieve them, rather than living at the mercy of chance and outside forces.

- **Integrity:** Integrate your behavior with your ideals, convictions, standards, and what you believe is right.

You may ignore your needs and wants to concentrate on living up to others' expectations. Self-esteem requires you to listen to and respect your own sensations, insights, intuition, and perspective. Developing the six pillars of self-esteem is a life-long, worthy challenge. PE

Nathaniel Branden is the author of *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*. Visit www.NathanielBranden.com.

ACTION: Cultivate these six pillars of self-esteem.

Reclaim Your Life

Even during chaotic times.



by Joyce Weiss

WHEN YOU FACE ADVERSITY or see or hear a doom-and-doom picture of the future, you must be positive to persevere, regain your enthusiasm for life, and focus on the tasks at hand. You then create a mindset that prevents negativity and renders three benefits:

Benefit 1: You discover opportunities for growth. When a challenge comes, you naturally want to focus on the negative event. You're unable to let go of the hurt, pain, or sorrow. This is precisely when you must refocus your thinking and get back on track. Are you afraid to spend money? Did you lose a loved one? Is your job in jeopardy? Now, look at the scenarios from a different perspective. Play the "what if" game. What if you talked with your boss about moving to a new department or rearranged your schedule to spend more time with your family? The more you try to see the challenges in a new light, the more you'll uncover growth opportunities.

Benefit 2: Worries about the future disappear. Rather than waste precious time worrying about the future and let worrying cripple your sense of well-being, take time to see the good that's going on around you. Take some time for yourself. While making a living is a



vital part of life, enjoying your life and living a fulfilled life are equally important. So, momentarily slow down. Enjoy nature, talk with others, and enjoy their company. When you enjoy what's in front of you now, you release the worry and frustration.

Benefit 3: You open the path to new goals. The most effective way to take action during any challenge is to make changes. Sadly, change is the last thing you want to experience during a crisis however, change forces you to grow. Take some time to sit down and re-evaluate your personal goals. The direction you wanted to take six months ago may not seem important any longer. Talk with your family and ask what new

goals or dreams they have as well. Agree as a group on the objectives the family wants, and then write down your personal goals. Outline what you need to do to make those goals a reality, and then take action. Develop a "have to have it, can't live without it" proposition, such as "The only option is success." If you want something badly enough and work hard for it, you can succeed. When you focus on your revised plan, you'll regain enthusiasm and zeal for life.

How well you carry on during a crisis is an indicator of your emotional strength. Take steps to reclaim your life so no tragedy can hinder your growth. Facing and overcoming challenge sends a message that you will survive—and win—in the face of adversity. PE

Joyce Weiss is a speaker and facilitator on employee performance. Visit www.joyceweiss.com.

ACTION: Gain these three benefits.

Unlock Your Curiosity

You will achieve greater success.



by Alan Gregerman

IF YOU HOPE TO BE MORE energized, innovative and successful, you'll be excited to know that the most essential requirement is a talent you are born with—the gift of curiosity. So stop complaining that you're not creative and follow these three steps to make a difference:

1. Find the song in you. Think about what really matters to you. There is a wonderful, "song" in you that is waiting to be sung but is rarely expressed. And with the passage of time, it often seems harder for you to bring it out. Yet you are far more likely to be brilliant when you believe that something is worthy of your best efforts. That means finding the place that inspires you to make a compelling difference. Then acknowledge that you *can* make a compelling difference, and that all you need to succeed is a bit of inspiration and the right insight and circumstances. But you'll have to stretch a bit, and that means broadening your curiosity and knowledge of yourself, the "customers" you serve in your life, and the limits of your imagination.

2. Unlock your curiosity. Look at your challenges and opportunities with an open mind and seek a better or unique way to solve them. Challenge yourself to be more observant and to cast a wider net in search of ideas and insight. Look around you at things you might be taking for granted. Then think differently about the best sources of inspiration. Put yourself in places filled with new and different ideas and fresh ways of thinking.

Read everything you can that is interesting, different, and compelling. Attend seminars and conferences where they talk about ideas that matters to different people. Listening, observing, and exposing yourself to new ideas is the best way to get your creativity flowing. Make it part of your routine to discover compelling ideas from other industries and other walks of life. Set aside time each day or at least each week to look for new ideas that could, with the proper tinkering,

deliver compelling value for the customers you serve. The more ideas you unlock, the more likely you'll make a powerful connection between new and different thinking and the important needs of those you serve—although you might have to put ideas together that don't seem to belong together in order to unlock unique value.

Da Vinci didn't talk to humans about how to fly because they had no idea how to do it. He studied birds. Several more centuries passed before the first airplane, but it wasn't for a lack of thinking differently about the magic of flight. There are countless examples of breakthroughs, large and small, that come from looking at the world differently.

3. Turn your curiosity into action. By doing these things, you'll strengthen your ability to deliver greater genius to those you choose to serve in your life.

Six Ways to Genius

If you need help getting comfortable with your potential to explore, think and create, here are six things you can do today:

1. Expand your reading horizons. Subscribe to and read at least three magazines or journals that interest you and focus on new ideas that have nothing to do with your daily work or your personal or volunteer life.

Then start to broaden the array of books and sources of information and inspiration you expose yourself to. You might also want to make regular visits to your favorite bookstore or library.

2. Hit the road in search of new ideas. Take mini-excursions to unlock fresh ideas and new ways of doing things. Create a mix of "planned" activities where you go to a specific place that is likely to offer real insight for a particular problem or opportunity, and "unplanned" wanderings with your eyes wide open to possibilities. And pay attention to all of the *nothings* that really seem to matter and all of the promises that are being made and kept. Look at signs and billboards along the way, and pause to overhear other people's conversations.



3. Ask stimulating questions when you have the chance. Start asking more questions at every meeting, event, or gathering you lead or are invited to attend. Try to challenge yourself and your friends and colleagues, in a positive way, to question everything you are doing with the objective of determining whether there might be a better way. You might even ask people to think about what should be done to be perfect, faster, more responsive, or more remarkable. Or think about what it means to create a compelling performance.

4. Become your customer's best student. Hang out with those you choose to serve and learn as much as you can about their world and the challenges they face. Then invite them on some of your journeys of discovery to explore and unlock new ideas and possibilities together. Create a new and more compelling conversation together that challenges both of you to anticipate your evolving needs and imagine a more compelling picture of your future success.

5. Make friends with unusual people. Talk to people whose work and ideas fascinate you to learn how they use their curiosity and passion to deliver value for those they choose to serve. Befriend people whom you admire. Get to know artists who stretch your thinking and do something different that matters. Get involved in organizations that are making a difference in your community, especially ones that bring together people from many walks of life. Tutor a child who will also mentor you on how they see the world. Build the best, most diverse network possible with people who have varied interests, perspectives, and ways of thinking about things that matter to them. It's a great way to keep your thinking fresh and relevant.

6. Cast an even wider net. Look to nature, history, geography, and the genius of other people and other cultures as a source of great inspiration. Seek to understand what other people and other creatures know so clearly and how it might apply to your world and the world of those you choose to serve.

Discover the song that lives inside you. The greatest skill that you possess is a sense of curiosity and possibility. And that skill is heightened when you apply it to things that interest you and really matter. Stop saying that you are not curious and creative. You are born with these gifts. So put them to use! **PE**

Alan Gregerman is the author of Surrounded by Geniuses and Lessons from the Sandbox. Visit www.alangregerman.com or www.venture-works.com.

ACTION: Cultivate your curiosity and creativity.

12 Principles

Of personal leadership.



by Herbert Harris

PEOPLE WHO EXERCISE PERSONAL leadership achieve desired outcomes for themselves and their teams. To be an effective leader, master these 12 principles:

1. Be a thinker. You become what you think about most of the time. So, guard your thoughts in three areas: *1. Thoughts about yourself—your self-image:* How you see and feel about yourself determines what you get out of life. *2. Thoughts about other people—your attitude:* How you project yourself to others and what others perceive about you. *3. Thoughts about the world in general—your outlook on life or frame of reference.* You are most effective when your thoughts project a positive self-image, a caring attitude, and a *can do* approach.

2. Be willing to change. Making effective change requires faith, choice, and desire. You must have faith that the change will result in desired outcomes. Every opportunity, situation, or challenge requires you to make tough choices to manifest the desired outcomes. You also need a burning desire—the emotional fuel that sustains you when challenges or obstacles arise. Change the outcomes by changing your thinking.

3. Have vision and set goals. When you lack vision, you fail. So develop a vision—a detailed mental image, utilizing your senses, of the desired outcome. Write, share, and commit to the vision, and then translate it into written, specific, measurable, attainable goals to be achieved over a definite time period.

4. Say the right things and speak with authority. What you say is what you get. Articulate the vision and goals in a way that touches and motivates the team to believe in the desired outcomes.

5. Radiate confidence. Project an image and aura of strength, conviction, understanding, and compassion. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Be the person you want to be to attract the people you want to meet, the experiences you wish to have, and the outcomes you seek. Radiate courage and confidence through direct eye contact, a firm handshake, physical appearance, tone of voice, and body movement.

6. Be focused and disciplined. Keep

your eye on the desired outcome, vision, goal, or purpose. Distractions are counterproductive. Discipline your mind, body, instincts, and emotions. Be organized and energized and *walk your talk*.

7. Plan and take effective action. Develop, write, and execute detailed, definite, practical plans that lead to desired outcomes. A success plan is a blueprint for attaining the vision.

8. Manage time, resources, and people effectively. How you spend your time determines your success in achieving desired outcomes. Every hour ask, *What is the best use of my time right now, considering my vision, goals, and purpose?*

9. Build strong relationships. These are the heart and soul of leadership. Your ability to develop positive, empowering relationships largely determines your ability to achieve desired results.

10. See possibilities and seize opportunities. Believe that there is always a way to achieve the desired results. Be a possibility thinker.

11. Be persistent. Persist in efforts with unshakable faith in your ability. Leaders never quit, and quitters never lead. Be impervious to the fear of change, criticism, and failure, and do whatever it takes, for as long as it takes, to achieve the desired outcomes.

12. Seek truth in all situations. See through appearances to the truth of all situations. All things operate in accord with basic laws of success and accomplishment. So master the skills of discernment, intuition, and initiative. PE

Herbert Harris is author of the *Twelve Universal Laws of Success* (LifeSkill Institute). Visit www.lifeskillinstitute.org.

ACTION: Develop these 12 mental disciplines.

MENTAL • CHANGE

Catalyst for Change

What influence can you have?



by Erin Gruwell

BY PICKING UP A PEN AND following in the footsteps of Anne Frank and others, I hoped my students would see the relevance and power of writing. I've always believed that education is the great equalizer, so I wanted them to level the playing field.

My students, the "Freedom Writers," were teenagers surrounded by violence, racism, discrimination, and hate. Because they compared their circumstance to a war zone, they empathized with the violence Anne described.

One student was struck by a passage in Anne's diary when she compares herself to a "bird in a cage," wishing she could fly away. While Anne's cage was the attic where she hid from the Nazis, this Freedom Writer felt caged by her environment and by the decisions she'd made up to that point.

Through Anne, the students saw writing as a form of freedom, as well as a way to spread a message of tolerance and hope. They were inspired to do the same with the stories from their own experiences. Those experiences were often struggles against drugs and abuse.

Many of my students had the "fight or flight" mentality—since their community had experienced the race riots

and murders. In response, I decided to teach my students to put down their fist, spray can or gun, and pick up a pen instead. I realized that the students could be reached through their personal experiences, and based most of my teaching on themes like *tolerance*.

The books I shared encouraged the students to write. One student wrote that he felt like he "lived in an undeclared war," so I used books written by teens who had lived in wars. Reading their harrowing tales inspired my students to be more honest and forthright in their journals. They wrote about personal problems involving pain, alienation, and racism. We realized these issues were universal. Writing became very cathartic. My students had to see the relevance of writing in their lives. Once they learned the power of the pen, there was no stopping them. We signed honor codes so that the students would not sensationalize their stories.

My students finished high school as different people.

They entered my class afraid to sit next to one another or talk to a person of a different race. They left as a family. We broke down stereotypes and dismantled comfort zones to see past color and creed.

Allow your students to teach you. Make your curriculum relevant to their lives. I became their student as they taught me to question everything and to give a voice to the voiceless. PE

Erin Gruwell is an award-winning teacher at Cal State Long Beach and president of the Erin Gruwell Education Project. Visit www.gruwelproject.org.

ACTION: Be a catalyst for change.

Achieving Goals

Avoid 10 common traps.



by Douglas Vermeeren

MOST PEOPLE CLAIM TO SEE the importance of setting goals to attain a better life, but 80 percent of people never set goals, and of the 20 percent who do set goals, roughly 70 percent fail to achieve the goals they set. When you consider that many people set small, easily attainable goals, it's a wonder that anyone accomplishes anything remarkable.

There are "be" goals and "do" goals: who do you want to be or what do you want to achieve? Within each category, there are four areas: wealth, health, relationships, and self-fulfillment. Most goals are about either wealth or relationships. However, achievement involves all four areas, and success means finding balance. To live a successful life, you need both "being" and "doing" goals in each of the four areas.

Before you start setting goals, you need to know what traps to avoid. Here are the top 10 reasons why people fail to achieve their goals.

1. Fear of success or failure. You may be afraid that you will fail, or worse, that you may actually succeed. So, you don't even bother trying to attain a goal. You lack belief in yourself and in your potential. In your mind, if you fail, everyone will think negatively of you; and if you succeed, people will be envious and think negatively of you. So you see only a lose-lose situation. You can achieve anything you set your mind to. Believe in yourself and your abilities, and others will, too.

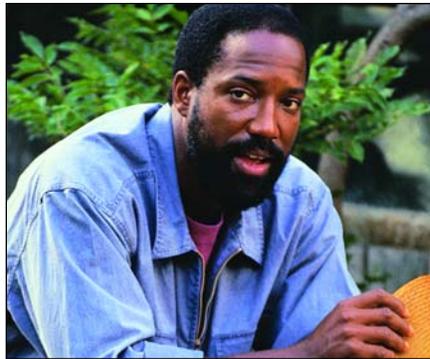
2. Lack of understanding about the goal-setting process. You may think that goal-setting simply means putting a goal on paper, setting a date for completion, marking off checkpoints, and then starting all over again. But goal-setting isn't a one-time thing that you scratch off a list. Setting a goal is about changing yourself over time. Goals aren't short-term, quick-fix things; they are fixed and immovable destinations that show the world who you want to become or what you want to achieve.

3. Lack of commitment to the goal. Even though you state you want to achieve a certain goal, in truth, you may not be committed to it. Hence, you don't give the act of goal attainment

your full effort. And if you don't give it your all, you receive mediocre results. Commitment is crucial for attaining any goal.

4. Inactivity. After setting a goal, writing down dates, and setting checkpoints, you need to actually take that first step to progress toward your goal. If you don't get started, you can't go anywhere. Without action, nothing happens. So if you create a goal list and wonder why your goals aren't transpiring, ask yourself what action steps you've taken to achieve your goals. If you haven't taken any action, now is the time to start.

5. Analysis paralysis. If you feel that you can't start on a goal until you have all the answers to every "what if"



scenario, you'll let questions and doubts paralyze you. No matter how long and hard you prepare, you'll never have all the answers to the questions you ask. Also, don't make your decisions or address your questions based on where you are right now, but rather on where you want to go or who you want to become. Always base your decisions and answer your questions with a view to the future—not a view to current situations. Your situation will change because of the decisions you make today and will dictate the success of your journey. So move forward toward your goal, knowing that you'll never have all the answers.

6. Lack of a real destination. Don't start setting goals without a solid destination of who you want to become or what you ultimately want to achieve.

If you don't have a destination in mind, then you'll never know which road to take to get where you want to go. Your destination needs to be clear—something you can visualize

and describe to others. Without such a clear view of what you want in life, you'll be forever changing course and falling short of your potential.

7. Failing to plan. While you understand the formula of goal setting, you don't have a plan for goal attainment that's personalized to you and your experiences. You neglect the gifts you possess, which can help you attain the goal, as well as the people you know who might help you. You bring so many unique talents and attributes to the table, and you know many people who can help you in some way. Be mindful of these advantages during your planning, and use the resources you have available to you.

8. Having too many goals. You may set too many goals and lack focus. It's like throwing darts with three targets in mind. Focus on one goal and move forward with that goal only. You may well have more than one goal, but you need to realize that you have only so much time and energy. So, choose the one goal that will give you the highest return on effort, and focus on that one goal first. Once you complete it, you can then focus on secondary goals in sequence.

9. Feeling unworthy of the end result. You may believe that you are unworthy of attaining the goal. So you self-sabotage. Perhaps you suddenly walk away from the key contact who will help you with your goal, or you neglect to do a critical activity that will enable you to achieve your goal. People who feel unworthy usually lack self-confidence, and confidence is key to attaining goals.

10. Lack of motivation to change. If you are satisfied with what you have and where you are in life, you won't explore what else is available or what greater things you could achieve. Two motivating factors cause you to change: pain and pleasure. Even if you are feeling pain in a situation, that pain may not be great enough, or you are receiving ample pleasure, so you don't strive for more. Goal attainment happens when you're ready to break the status quo and want something better in life.

You can achieve your goals. You can be who you want and do what you want. By balancing your goals in the four categories and avoiding the mistakes that hinder results, you can achieve any goal you set for yourself and reach new levels of success. **PE**

*Douglas Vermeeren is a speaker, author of *Amazing Success and other books on goal setting*. He's touring with "The Secret," while producing "The Opus." Call 403-714-5191 or visit www.douglasvermeeren.com.*

ACTION: Set and achieve worthy goals.

Can You Quit Yet?

Gain financial independence.



by Robert Pagliarini

FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE IS a phrase that often gets tossed around without any understanding of what it means. One of my goals is to take the mystery out of financial independence and to show you exactly what it is and what it provides.

Financial independence should be your primary financial goal. Here's why.

At the root of financial independence is the freedom to choose between several options, putting you in control of your finances and your life. It allows you to shape your life rather than being at the mercy of someone else's vision of your future. It takes you out of the passenger seat and puts you behind the wheel. You can choose work that stimulates and inspires you, without worrying about how much money it will earn for you. It also allows you to pursue your hobbies without regard to their cost or time commitment. And it allows you to volunteer your time and money to worthy causes.

Financial independence also provides security. How would you feel if you could live the lifestyle of your dreams without worrying about being downsized, billing time, or meeting sales quotas? Your sense of security comes from having control over your life and your future. Without financial independence, your life is dictated by someone else—usually your employer. Your security is at the whim of an organization with their best interests at heart.

What is Financial Independence?

To some, financial independence means being able to pay the bills. For others, it means being able to eat out on a whim. For still others, it means having vacation homes and boats.

I define financial independence as *being able to support the lifestyle you desire without having to work*. There are two important pieces to this definition.

First, differentiate the lifestyle you desire from your current one. Too often, you reduce your lifestyle to fit within your means. Financial independence is not about limiting or reducing your lifestyle, but about living the life you want and having the means to support it.

Second, financial independence means you don't need to work to support your lifestyle. The income generated by your

assets fully supports your expenses. Income from labor is earned income—it requires your participation, effort, and energy. If you take time off, your earned income ceases. Earned income is how you may now receive money. You get up, go to work, and put in your day. Every two weeks, you get a paycheck. This is the earned-income cycle.

Earned income is an exchange of time for money. Through education and experience, you can increase the value of your time and be compensated accordingly. Even high-powered attorneys or surgeons who make hundreds of dollars an hour, still exchange their time for a paycheck. The minute they stop this exchange, they stop earning income.

Financial independence is not about being "rich." To be rich, you only need to make or have a lot of money. This

definition ignores a part of the equation—expenses. Financial independence involves earning enough *passive income* to support the lifestyle you desire. So, there is no "magic" amount of passive income required—it depends on your expenses. If you earn \$100,000 in annual passive income and have expenses of \$85,000 per year, you are financially independent. If you have \$500,000 in annual passive income but \$750,000 in expenses per year, you are not financially independent. Expenses are an equally important part of the equation.

I invite you to change the way you deal with money. PE

Robert Pagliarini is a Certified Financial Planner and author of The Six-Day Financial Makeover (St. Martin's). Visit www.sixdayfinancialmakeover.com, call 949-305-0500 or email robert@pacificawealth.com.

ACTION: Engage in a financial makeover.

Have Enough

How fat is your wallet?



by Edward Webb

TWO YEARS AGO I HEARD A guest speaker at church. As I settled into my seat I heard the speaker announce his topic: "The Economics of Spirituality".

I thought, "Just what I need at 9 a.m. on Sunday morning! I envisioned him mouthing platitudes. I was wrong. Instead, he launched into an practical talk about how your economic status impacts your ability to be spiritual.

His premise was simple: it's hard to be grateful and find a firm spiritual center if you're hungry. Few of us know what it is like to "go hungry." I find it difficult to imagine. I believe that one of the great gifts of being a U.S. citizen is to contribute to the care, feeding, and health of those less fortunate. But, I'm not writing about the means or methods of meeting the needs of the economically less fortunate but about the "economics of having enough".

This refers to more than an assessment of how well you're meeting your needs. *It is your attempt to quantify your sense of well being*. It's where your fears, needs, and assets all come together.

You likely wonder at times about whether you have enough money or stuff. If you're afraid you don't have enough security, you may build fences and buy toys and then security alarms.

How many toys are enough? If you're not sure, you can always buy more.

Who decides what is enough? Is there a baseline standard of living that qualifies as enough? How come some people seem to have enough with a modest lifestyle and other wealthy people seem driven to get more? The economics of enough is not just about reality; it's about the place where reality and self-perception blend.

You need to ask yourself: do I have enough? How do you know? There's no rule that applies to everyone—you have to decide for yourself.

I have two suggestions to help you:

First, look around you. How does

your lifestyle compare to the way you were raised? Are you living the life that you thought you would 10 years ago? If there is a gap between where you want to be and where you are, this can be a reflection on your personal economics of enough.

Second, how are your relationships? Do you have a committed relationship with a significant other? Do you have a healthy group of friends to provide you with validation, advice, and fun? Your relationships are often a window into how you are internalizing the economics of enough.

When you think about all that you have and about all those people who have less, ask yourself whether you have enough. Seek the sense of well-being that comes from knowing your worth and knowing it's enough. PE

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ACTION: Decide what is enough for you.

Seven Sleep Myths

Learn the facts and solutions.



by Narinder Duggal and Leslie Van Romer

SLEEP IS CRITICAL TO FEEL YOUR BEST, look your best, and perform at your best every day. A lack of sleep can result in decreased productivity, creativity, and focus, but a continued lack of sleep can cause more serious health issues. While the quality and quantity of sleep take front and center stage, there are other major health players such as: eating lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, making time for 60 minutes of exercise each day, taking in fresh air, drinking lots of water, and having an uplifting outlook on life.

Seek Solutions for Better Sleep

Sleep is important, but there is much confusion about how we can get this sacred time to rest, recuperate, and reenergize. Here are the top seven myths about sleep and the solutions:

Myth 1: Snoring may be annoying to a sleep partner, but it is never harmful.

Fact: Snoring may be harmless, but it can also be a symptom of a life-threatening sleep disorder called sleep apnea, especially if it is accompanied by severe daytime sleepiness. Sleep apnea, or pauses in breathing while sleeping, prevents air flow, reduces oxygen levels and strains the heart and cardiovascular system, increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease. People with sleep apnea awaken frequently during the night. Obesity can also contribute to sleep apnea. Solution: Lose weight and if you suspect sleep apnea, get it checked out. It is treatable.

Myth 2: You can “cheat” on the sleep you get. **Fact:** Most adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night for optimum performance, health and safety. When we don't get adequate sleep, we accumulate a sleep “debt” that can be difficult to “pay back.” The result: sleep deprivation, which is linked to obesity, high blood pressure, mood swings, decreased productivity, and safety issues in the home, on the job, and on the road. Solution: Put your body and health first and get to bed early enough for your full eight hours of rest.

Myth 3: Insomnia means difficulty falling asleep. **Fact:** Difficulty falling asleep is only one of four symptoms associated with insomnia. Others include waking up too early and not being able to fall back asleep; frequent awakenings during the night; and waking up feeling un-refreshed. Insomnia can be a symptom of a sleep disorder or other health problems. Most adults report at least one symptom of insomnia. Solution: Daily exercise, loading up on lots of whole, fresh fruits and vegetables, and avoiding or eliminating stimulants from the diet, such as caffeine, chocolate, and refined sugar in foods and drinks. When insomnia symptoms occur several times a week and impact your daily life, you should



discuss the symptoms with an appropriate health care provider.

Myth 4: Health problems such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and depression are unrelated to the quantity and quality of a person's sleep. **Fact:** Studies show a direct relationship between sleep and many health problems. Insufficient sleep affects growth hormone secretion that is linked to obesity. As the hormone secretion decreases, the chance for weight gain increases. Blood pressure usually falls during the sleep cycle. However, interrupted sleep can affect this normal decline, leading to hypertension and cardiovascular problems. Insufficient sleep impairs the body's ability to use insulin, leading to the onset of diabetes. Solution: Losing weight and building up your health with whole fruits and vegetables, while reducing fat-loaded foods, such as meat, cheese, and hydrogenated fats found in many processed foods can help. Also, get 60 minutes of daily exercise and avoid stimulants, such as caffeine, chocolate and white sugar

found in drinks and foods.

Myth 5: The older you get, the fewer hours of sleep you need. **Fact:** Just like most adults, people over the age of 65 need 7 to 9 hours of sleep. While sleep patterns change as you age, the amount of sleep you need generally does not. In fact, a poll by the National Sleep Foundation shows that older adults typically do not sleep less than younger counterparts (they sleep an average of seven hours). Poor health, not age, is a major reason why many older people report sleep problems. Solution: Building healthy, lifelong habits is a must to getting a good night's sleep and enjoying life. Daily walking, deep-breathing, stretching exercises, spending time with family and friends, and jumping into a hobby can contribute to a good night's sleep. Eat the right kind of foods and avoid caffeine, refined and processed foods, and fatty foods. Napping in the early afternoon, around noon, is less likely to interfere with sleeping at night. And, get down to your ideal body weight.

Myth 6: During sleep, your brain rests. **Fact:** The body rests during sleep. However, the brain remains active and gets “recharged.” During sleep, you drift between two sleep states, REM (rapid eye movement) and non-REM, in 90-minute cycles. Non-REM sleep, when our minds can still process information, has four stages with distinct features, ranging from stage one drowsiness, when you can be easily awakened to “deep sleep” stages three and four, when the most positive and restorative effects of sleep occur. REM sleep is an active sleep where dreams occur and eyes move back and forth under the eyelids.

Myth 7: If you wake up in the middle of the night, it is best to lie in bed, count sheep, or toss and turn until you eventually fall back asleep. **Fact:** If you wake up in the middle of the night, relaxing imagery or thoughts may help to induce sleep more than counting sheep, which may be more distracting than relaxing. Solution: If you do not fall back asleep within 15 to 20 minutes, get out of bed, go to another room, and engage in a relaxing activity—such as listening to music or reading. Return to bed when you feel sleepy. Avoid watching the clock. The bed should be associated with sleep and sex only. **PE**

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ACTION: Get more and better sleep.

Travel Smart Tips

Stay healthy on the go.



by Nancy D. O'Reilly

MORE PEOPLE ARE TRAVELING across the globe.

Whether for work or play, people are finding it easier to take that flight or road trip. This on-the-go lifestyle can leave much to be desired when it comes to health. Often, traveling means eating greasy food when you have time, picking up germs from fellow travelers, or staying at hotels where your body hasn't adjusted to a new location's temperature, altitude, or time zone.

There are easy ways you can stay fit and healthy, even while on the road. You can't always control the weather delays or flight cancellations, which add stress, but you can take these precautions:

- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing. You might bring a sweater or small blanket in case the plane gets too cold.
- Before your flight, try to burn off any nervous energy. Take a 30-minute walk around the airport.
- Quench your thirst with water or juice; avoid alcohol and caffeine. The air inside airplanes is dry, and you can easily become dehydrated. Your blood then thickens, putting you at risk for clots.
- During the flight, do some stretches and leg lifts in your seat. Try flexing, extending, and circling your ankles.
- If your flight is long, get out of your seat and move around once every hour.
- Wash your hands frequently. If you want to, carry some hand sanitizer in your bag or bring hand wipes with you.

When you arrive at your destination, use these tips to be more relaxed in a new setting and get a good night's sleep:

- Select (or bring) a comfortable pillow, but one that is firm enough to keep your head in alignment with your spine.
- Keep your room as dark as possible during bedtime. Use window blinds and shades to block out light.
- Counter distracting noises by bringing a CD with nature sounds, such as waves or falling rain.
- Try to maintain a nighttime bedroom temperature of 65 degrees.
- Keep a schedule to sleep at about the same time as you would normally, to avoid disturbing your body's natural sleep patterns.

Eating "right" when you're on the go can be a challenge, especially with enticing foods. Here are some tips:

- Try to eat at the times when you would normally eat to avoid throwing off your appetite and sleep patterns.
- Start your day with a healthy breakfast to keep your energy up.
- Worried about your weight? Monitor the calories you consume all day compared to the total you burn up.
- For many people, traveling means eating high-calorie "junk food," rather than fruit or other foods low in calories and high in nutrients. So, pack some nutritious snacks (such as peanut butter and crackers, fresh fruit, granola and water bottles).
- Curb the amount of alcohol and caffeine you consume when you travel.

Too much of either substance can affect your ability to sleep well.

- If you must eat out, make healthy choices. Even most fast-food restaurants now offer salads. Avoid things that sound healthy but aren't, such as veggies loaded with butter and salt or salads that come with high-fat dressings.

Keep your diet balanced and your body fit. Use these tips on your next trip to reduce stress, while keeping your body as healthy as possible. **PE**

Nancy D. O'Reilly is a clinical psychologist, researcher, founder of WomenSpeak.com and author of You Can't Scare Me. Visit www.womenspeak.com or call: 417-860-5834.

ACTION: Observe these tips when you travel.

PHYSICAL • WEIGHT

Your Best Life

Start living it now.



by Oprah Winfrey and Bob Green

YOU'VE GOT TO ASK YOURSELF, *What kind of life do I want—and how close am I to living it?* You can't ever live the life of your dreams without facing the truth. Every unwanted pound creates another layer of lies. It's only when you peel back those layers that you will be set free to work out, free to eat responsibly, free to live the life you want and deserve to live. Tell the truth, and you'll learn to eat to satisfy your physical hunger and stop burying your hopes and dreams beneath layers of fat.

On my show, one woman who had been struggling with her weight said she'd learned to *challenge the pain and not the peanut butter*. I thought that was brilliant. Once you work on what's eating you, you won't want to eat so much.

The *Best Life Diet* plan mirrors the way I eat and live now. There is no secret to losing weight. It's simple physics: what you put in vs. what you put out.

I lost weight in stages. First I became active, and I still work out because I know if I don't exercise, I'll end up weighing 200 pounds again. Then I started working on my eating. I stopped eating past 7:30 at night. When Bob told me it would make a big difference in my weight, I resisted. I thought it was going to be too hard. But I was surprised to find that it wasn't; and even more surprised when it turned out to be one of

the most effective changes I made.

I've now replaced most of the bad foods in my diet with good. I eat smaller portions, and eat healthy foods as a way of life, not a diet to go on and off. And I'm always working on getting better. My diet is a work in progress.

Are you ready to end the struggle with your weight once and for all? Do you want to find a simple, delicious, "I can do this, no problem!" approach to eating that you can stick with? The *Best Life* program offers a three-phased approach to losing weight and getting in better shape that's as much about helping you shape healthier habits as it is about "eat this, and not that." That's why it's easy to follow, and why the results are often dramatic. This program is a way of learning to eat better, get active, and create a healthy lifestyle.

The *Best Life* program is not about being "on" or "off" a diet. Instead it's a way of living—of eating, exercising, and viewing your life—that puts you at your healthiest. Sure, one goal of the program is to lose weight. But it also has a more far-reaching purpose: to keep the weight off, and develop habits that dramatically reduce your risk of diabetes, heart disease, and other ills. Is emotional eating a problem? The *Best Life* program also helps you tackle that demon. Each phase gradually leads you to an increasingly healthy diet and encourages you to increase physical activity (brisk walking counts—you don't have to go to the gym). Soon, you'll be amazed at how wonderful your life has become. **PE**

Oprah Winfrey is a talk show host, and Bob Greene is fitness trainer and author of Best Life Diet. Visit www.oprah.com.

ACTION: Start living your best life.



Communication

You can always improve.



by Dianna Booher

TYPICALLY, THE HIGHER YOU go in the organization, the more difficult it is to get honest feedback about your skills and your work and to communicate effectively. Here are nine tips to assist you:

1. Recognize that others want to win your goodwill; interpret their words and behavior accordingly. If you're the boss, you'll get more attention to your preferences, quicker responses to your requests, and overt approval of your ideas. Don't, however, conclude that all this happens because you're an excellent communicator, that your requests have more merit, that your ideas are better, or that all your customers and colleagues receive such responsiveness. If you want honest feedback about how your unit *really* functions or how well you *really* communicate, you'll have to play fly on the wall. When you're good, people tell you. When you're not so effective, they keep quiet because they don't want to hurt your feelings.

2. If you want to get honest communication, remove the status symbols and power barriers. Be aware of the power you have with different groups. You have *reward* power if you positively influence what will happen to them. You have *coercive* power if you can negatively influence their future. You have *positional* power if by your position you can force your will upon them. You have *expert* power over someone if you have knowledge they need. You have *referent* power over them if you can influence through your personality. If you want to minimize this power, relate to others on equal footing, and receive an honest opinion from them—you have to remove the status reminders. You may want to sit beside them or introduce yourself by name (no title). You may want to join them in the training center rather than invite them to your office. Rapport-building and honest communication hinge on such small steps.

3. Assess others' knowledge and experiences exactly. If you assume your listeners know more than they do, they may misunderstand your message, stop trying to understand your explanations, or become frustrated or angry, thinking you're "putting on airs."

4. Set a level playing field. Before you speak, make sure what you're about to say doesn't contain words or phrases that imply your superiority to the other person. These comments reveal much about your management style and attitude: "I want you to meet Jane, who works *for* me" versus "I want you to meet Jane, who works *with* me." "Haven't I told you about not bothering me with such details?" versus "I'd prefer that you handle those details without involving me." Honest communication—whether soliciting new ideas, preferences, or genuinely helpful feedback about your performance or that of your team—flows or dribbles according to your attention to these small frames, gestures, and words.

5. Increase the likeability factor to make your message matter. To be heard, you have to make people like you. You need to create chemistry—with your staff as a manager, with your



team as a project leader, with your boss, with your customer, with your strategic partners. People believe people they like. Great communicators develop *The Likeability Factor*—your personality and "chemistry" you create between yourself and others. Certain traits seem universally to attract people and open their minds and hearts.

6. Be vulnerable; show your humanity. Audiences have more in common with those who struggle. If you worry about whether your teen will graduate from high school without getting involved with the wrong group, say so. If you lose a customer, regret it rather than excuse it. If you miss a deadline, repair the damage and catch up. If you miss a payment, make it, with interest. If you make a mistake, own it and correct it. If you misjudge someone, apologize and make amends. When you communicate with colleagues, never fear to let them see your humanity.

7. Be courteous. Daily, it's the small things that kill our spirit: The sales rep who leaves a dirty sink. The manager who uses the last drop of lotion and doesn't refill the container. The analyst

who leaves the printer with a paper jam. The boss who walks into the reserved conference room during a meeting and bumps everybody out. The person who cuts in line at the cafeteria cash register. The guy who answers his cell phone in the middle of a meeting. Even small courtesies kindle a fire that ignites chemistry and builds kinship. The courtesy of saying "hello" when you come into the office after being away. The courtesy of letting people know when you're going to be away. The courtesy of honoring policies about reserving rooms, spaces, and equipment for activities. The courtesy of a simple "please," "thank you," and "you're welcome" for small favors.

8. Share a sense of humor. No matter whether people agree or disagree with George W. Bush's political positions, they enjoy his self-deprecating humor. At a Washington correspondents dinner, Bush brought along his "double," comedian Steve Bridges, to make fun of his frequent mispronunciations: "Nu—cle—ar proliferation." Then Bush tried it, "Nu-cle—ar pro-boblieration." The crowd went wild. Self-deprecating humor can open hearts and minds to make people receptive to your ideas.

9. Show humility. Power can be seductive. And in an instant, an act of arrogance can destroy your credibility. Refusing to acknowledge people when they speak to you. Failure to respond to people's suggestions. Haughty body language. Time spent only with those of your "rank and ilk" at social gatherings. An amused smirk in response to an idea. A roll of the eyes to discredit a comment. A talk packed with jargon. Insisting that things be said one way.

Credible communicators show humility: They let others "showcase" by delivering key messages. They let others feel important by "interpreting," "passing on," and "applying" their goals and initiatives. They get input from others—and consider that input worthy of a response. They ask others for their help, cooperation, and buy-in. They tell stories about star performers and appreciate the efforts and results of other people.

Arrogance antagonizes people. Expertise tinged with humility goes down far better. Your look, language, and likeable personality often determine whether people accept what you say. If your message isn't sinking in or you're not getting the action you want, maybe you should take it, well, personally. **PE**

Dianna Booher is author of The Voice of Authority: 10 Communication Strategies Every Leader Needs to Know (McGraw Hill). She is CEO of Booher Consultants. Visit www.booher.com or call 800-342-6621.

ACTION: Boost your likeability factor.

Authentic Connection

Burn the ladder, connect the dots!



by Simon Bailey

RECENTLY, I HAD LUNCH WITH Rachel Landrum, president of Metavante Banking Solutions. Rachel and I met at a conference, and we quickly discovered that we both lived in Florida. I was eager to learn what made Rachel so successful.

After getting to know one another, I asked my burning question: *What are five things people can do to ascend the corporate ladder?* Without missing a beat, she said, “Simon, *there is no ladder.*”

Rachel explained that people confuse the career ladder with their goals. They set a goal to achieve a certain position or level and then start posturing, jumping through hoops, and jockeying for position. This fuels a political, internally competitive (vs. cooperative and collaborative) environment that erodes trust.

Instead of trying to climb the “ladder,” Rachel suggested that if you aspire to be successful you do the following:

- Stop looking for a position and exercise your passion to serve your clients and employees. Do the right thing *now*. The question is not if or when an opportunity will come. The question is, will you be ready to take it when it comes?
- Always be accountable to yourself. If you don’t, you will become lazy.
- Constantly evaluate your internal compass to stay grounded and to ensure that your motives are pure. Pay attention to your intuition—it’s your edge.
- Connect with people. See them as human beings instead of judging them based on societal beliefs. Celebrate others for who they are right now and for who they are becoming, instead of worrying about their past failures.
- Tap into your passion and pursue it with enthusiasm. Be willing to fail. Be present, yet chase the unknown for what you can become and do for others.

Rachel then said: “Some issues that women face are self-inflicted. For whatever reason, they bury their brilliance by creating artificial boundaries that confine them to a limited way of thinking and believing. Some women (and men, too) think that if they can’t make a big splash and see their name in lights, then they won’t do anything at all. But

people shouldn’t give up their power to artificial barriers. All people—regardless of gender or race—are powerful and can do whatever they decide to do if they will be accountable to themselves.”

Then she said, “Simon, when delegating a project or task, I want the best person for the job. So what if they have a different ethnicity or cultural beliefs! *Do they connect the dots* between our customer’s challenges and our solutions?”

I then asked, “Rachel, why do you think you’re so successful?” She said, “Because I realize it is not about arriving. There is no end goal, no final destination. I’m understanding how to be.”

Since our lunch, I’ve reflected on something Rachel said: *do they connect the dots?* The essence of success is to *connect the dots* between your customers’ problems and your product or service

solution. *You* are the solution to someone’s issue, problem, or challenge. *You* can drive value, make a difference, and take your team or company to the next level. You just have to *connect the dots!*

Don’t invest so much time climbing the proverbial ladder, only to discover that it’s leaning against the wrong wall. Instead think of ways you can build relationships with people, solve their problems, and make their lives better.

When you connect with others authentically—not for what you can *get* from them, but for what you can *give* to them—it makes for fulfilling, gratifying, and satisfying work. *So, spend less time on ascension and more time on connection!* PE

Simon T. Bailey is author of *Release Your Brilliance*. Call 972-899-3411, e-mail simon@simontbailey.com.

ACTION: Learn to make authentic connections.

PROFESSIONAL • CHOICES

Self-Responsibility

Make the most of your life.



by Jim Madrid

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR your actions requires that you become the cause of the results that you want. Refuse to behave like a victim. Take responsibility:

Consciousness. You can be fully present when you make decisions and work on projects, or you can be physically present but mentally absent.

Either way, you are responsible for the consciousness you bring to the occasion.

Decisions and actions. It’s tempting to disconnect from your choices—to insist that someone or something is driving you to behave the way you do. But you are responsible for how you speak and listen, how you treat others, and how you keep your promises or break them.

Fulfillment of desires. Stop imagining that someone will come along to rescue you—to solve your problems and fulfill your wishes. No one is coming to make life right or to fix things—nothing will get better unless you do something to make it happen.

Beliefs and values. Don’t just reflect passively what others believe and value. Become aware of your beliefs and values, scrutinize them, and make up your mind about them.

Setting priorities. The way you spend time and energy is either in

sync with your values or out of sync. The way you prioritize your time is your choice. Instead of neglecting people and activities that are important to you, reexamine your values or set priorities that make more sense.

Companions. You can blame and resent others when they hurt or disappoint you and feel sorry for yourself. Or you can choose with whom you spend time—and make different choices.

Actions in response to feelings and emotions. When you’re angry, you want to lash out. When you’re hurt, you feel like sulking. When you’re impatient, you may get angry. But you don’t have

to act on these urges. You can act more thoughtfully, with better results.

Happiness. If you believe your happiness is primarily in your hands, you give yourself great power. You don’t wait for events or people to make you happy. You ask, “What can I do?”

Your life and well-being.

Other people don’t exist as means to your ends, any more than you live in service to their goals. People may choose to help one another voluntarily. But no one is entitled to other people’s assets or energy.

Learning self-responsibility. Ask: What possibilities for action exist? What can I do? What will I do to get what I want? *To act more self-responsibly for relationships and results, choices and decisions, I might...* Write what comes to mind. It’s your life, so make the most of it! PE

Jim Madrid is an author and CEO of Entelechy. Visit www.entelechy.net.

ACTION: Practice self-responsibility.



Celebrate Success

Call upon positive moments.



by John W. Thompson

WE'VE OFTEN HEARD THE expression: *Don't dwell in the past. The past is past; the future is now; don't look back.* We've been trained to let go, move forward, and to forget.

Hence, many of us spend most of our time thinking about what's coming next—what do I have to do at work tomorrow, what am I going to make for dinner, how am I going to relax this weekend? We worry so much about what's next that we don't take the time to reflect on what has happened.

Late one night, I was lying in bed thinking about what I had to do the next day, when I realized that I was creating tension for myself at a time that should have been the most relaxing of the day. So I cleared my head and tried to genuinely relax. A fond memory jumped into my head, bringing a smile to my face. I started thinking about a particular experience that brought me great joy when it happened several years ago, and soon I was feeling relaxed and content. The transition was instantaneous. *By calling upon a positive moment in my life, I was immediately relaxed, rejuvenated, and ready for what comes next.*

The next day I started to reflect on this change in mindset, and only then realized the powerful and positive influence it had on me, both physically and emotionally. In an effort to take this positive experience even further, I started to record all the positive things that have happened to me in my life—things I'm proud of, experiences that bring a smile to my face, people who have made a positive impact on my life. After about 20 minutes, I had created an extensive list of life experiences, all of which made me feel great.

Each of us has done things that make us feel proud; things that make us laugh; things that put so much meaning into our lives. These memories and achievements are our most prized possessions. We need to celebrate those moments.

Record Best Moments

Give it a try. Grab a piece of paper and write five of the best moments in

your life. Don't think about it too hard; simply write the first five that come to mind. Go ahead and create your list.

Now pick one of the five items and think back to that time. Close your eyes and take yourself there. Chances are you'll end up with a smile on your face.

During your life, you experience thousands of truly happy moments. These memories are the foundation that gives you strength, contentment, and an inherent excitement to find out what comes next. Your past successes shouldn't be tucked away into the deep recesses of your mind; they should be celebrated and reflected upon to help you with the next adventure heading your way.

So when you're lying in bed



tonight, and many things are running through your head, pick one item on your list and clear everything else from your mind. Think back to this outstanding moment and smile. No sleeping pill can better relax you.

Great moments shouldn't be kept in the back of your mind. They should be celebrated as a source of inspiration, pride, and strength.

Every day of your life, you're creating memories. Most adults can remember moments as far back as age three. That means the typical 30-year-old adult has about 9,855 days worth of potential memories. If you consider how many memorable events happen each day, that number starts multiplying exponentially. However, the brain isn't programmed to keep that much information in its long-term banks. That's why out of a given week, only a handful of events will permanently be stored—only those moments that truly have an impact on us physically, emotionally and psychologically will be moved to long-term memory. The ones

that remain are there for a reason. These are the moments, good and bad, that have molded and transformed your life. But just because they've already happened doesn't mean you can't continue to use these moments to affect you in new ways.

By thinking back to a time in our lives when we experienced happiness, accomplishment and satisfaction, the brain allows us to relive those emotions, thereby creating an instantaneous effect. By recalling those fond memories and events, we can easily lift ourselves up in the present.

Think about that for a minute... you have the ability to stir up these positive emotions anytime you wish. That's a very powerful tool at your disposal.

Some people might interpret this as "living in the past," and will claim that dwelling on past experiences can be detrimental if done to such an extreme as to interfere with your continual development. But there's a difference between living in the past and using past successes to help you progress in your daily life. Reflecting on what has happened in your life can help you prepare for and celebrate what comes next.

There is another powerful benefit of recalling past accomplishments and experiences—you learn from yourself. *You are the most influential, effective and engaging teacher you'll ever meet.* Sure, you may not be the best at teaching others; but over the years, you've taught yourself more than anyone else could have. And you're not finished. You're teaching yourself new things daily.

One of the best ways to learn from yourself is to catalogue your great accomplishments. So, take another piece of paper and write down as many of your successes as you can. These are specific events that make you feel a genuine sense of pride. They don't have to be monumental; just because you haven't climbed Everest doesn't mean you don't have plenty of things to include on your list. One of your successes could be something as simple as helping your brother pass his seventh-grade algebra class. List all events that fill you with a sense of accomplishment.

These experiences and events provide the necessary context and knowledge to help you do great things going forward. So go ahead—do a little bit of dwelling. You just might discover that you're an amazing person. PE

John W. Thompson is the author of You Did It! Celebrating Personal Successes and is the founder of GOALearn—a professional coaching organization. Visit www.goalearn.com.

ACTION: Celebrate your success in service.

Turn Pain to Joy

Change your thinking and serve.



by Howard L. Millman

MOST PSYCHOLOGICAL PAIN is unnecessary, yet you likely experience negative feelings that interfere with your productivity, morale, and well-being. You experience some frustration, anxiety, anger, and worry, often leading to physical symptoms such as back pain, headaches, stomach problems, and tension. Mind and body are inseparable. A healthier mind and body leads to personal happiness, less sickness and down time, and more creativity in solving problems.

While overcoming problems is good, being resilient, creative, and joyful is better and prevents further problems. When you experience less pain and more joy, your life, work, and service become more satisfying and productive.

1. Change thinking. You can change your thinking through cognitive restructuring, reframing, and rational emotive therapy. *Rational* means the ability to reason logically. Amazingly, you may fail to apply rational thinking to your psychological pain. It's as if you are convinced that worry and anxiety are inevitable. "My pain will never go away. I won't be able to do my favorite things. How can I not be worried or depressed?" Does worry help any situation? The rational answer is "no." Yet, the worry may haunt you until the situation gets resolved. It is the *perception* that causes worry and depression, not the events. If you are consumed by "office politics," you worry about perceived negative comments and reactions from others. Rationally, you should be aware of others' reactions, interact in a friendly manner, gain competency, strengthen your job skills, and increase your value.

Perception can be changed! "Worry never helps. I'll focus on being a positive force for myself and others." Reality is what it is. Anxiety doesn't change reality. "If the worst happens, I'll do my best." The key is to recognize and then change negative thoughts and attitudes, such as jumping to conclusions, exaggerating, and catastrophizing. You are rewriting your internal script. Negative thinking usually leads to negative emotions, such as anger, guilt, frustration, fear, sadness, and anxiety. These emotions often cause fatigue, irritability, tension or pain, and lead to addictions.

2. Being here. Focus on being in the moment. Let go of destructive thoughts and worries. Substitute new perceptions that counteract pain and negativity. Stress reduction begins, and creativity is unleashed. No painful past, no worrisome future—just the immediate experience of being here. Accepting reality means that events happen, whether we like them or not. Fighting reality hurts; acceptance leads to tranquility.

3. Focus, flex and let go. *Focus, flex, and let go* is a way to counteract tension and physical pain and to feel better emotionally. So, *focus* on specific body pain, *flex* muscles, and *let go* of pain and tension. Know about your pain, focus on the cause, and let go of wor-

ries. Acceptance can be an antidote. When you accept reality, you weaken the intensity of negative sensations. Holding on increases pain, worry, and anger; letting go lightens burdens and is freeing.

4. Joy. A transforming experience occurs when your mind and body feel good, and you realize that there are no obstacles to diminishing pain and experiencing joy. Your competence leads to joy—the feeling of pleasure, happiness, and satisfaction. Accepting and enjoying each moment and being creative and productive become natural. **PE**

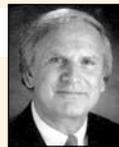
Howard L. Millman, Ph.D., is a clinical and consulting psychologist. Email hlmphd@paintojoy.com.

ACTION: Learn to turn pain into joy.

SERVICE • CHANGE

Student of Service

When wounded, rise again.



by Denis Waitley

YOUR LIFE TAKES PLACE IN a context of social, technological, political, economic, and cultural change. How can you avoid becoming a casualty of change? Take the offensive. Instead of "stewing," start thinking and doing. Your success depends on how well you *think*. Ask yourself: What can I offer that "they" aren't offering? How can I add value and enhance the quality of life of others? Breakthrough ideas occur when you calmly search for opportunities, not when you are anxious or frustrated. You can only do good if you feel good.

Wounded Warriors

Recently I read the book *Lefthanded Soldiers* by Gary Eby. It's dedicated to all of us who have been wounded in life—physically, emotionally, spiritually, or financially, and yet, against all odds, have overcome adversity and become champions! Yet there are men and women who, because of some event or series of events, have pretty much given up. Somewhere between brokenness and bitterness, they have laid down their proverbial swords and surrendered. They've been wounded.

When you are wounded—when your "right arm" has been hurt—you can still become a *Lefthanded Soldier* rather than allowing circumstances to condemn you to a life of "what-ifs."

How many great leaders are no

longer leading? What will our society suffer because the leadership we need is hurting? What great sickness is raging because the doctors and nurses are in need of healing themselves? How many great sermons won't be preached because an overworked and underpaid pastor is letting criticism keep him out of service? Great public servants, teachers, volunteers, entrepreneurs, and politicians are all waiting for someone to care enough to put their arms around them and say, "Let's get back into the battle of life again! We need you!"

Great leaders inspire "wounded warriors" to engage in life again and be winners! You can't wear a victor's crown without having fought a few battles! You can't sing before you talk. You can't run before you walk. You can't have a message until you've had a mess, and you can't have a testimony until you've had a test! Eagles can't stay in their nest if they want to soar. Sitting on the side lines you'll never be your best. God won't send thirsty

people to an empty well. Heaven's cup is sweeter once you've tasted hell. There's no wine until the grape has gone through the press.

Change is a door that can only be opened from the inside! The willingness to change can be inspired by others, but change is a personal choice. Choice, not chance, determines your destiny. So, get back into the battle of life. Decide to engage in life again and make a difference. All the victories you want to experience in life will flow from the change in your mindset. **PE**

Denis Waitley is a speaker, trainer, best-selling author. Call 877-929-0439, email speaker@deniswaitley.com, or visit www.deniswaitley.com.

ACTION: Rise from your wounds to serve others.





GOAL GETTERS



What do you really want?

Once you're clear on what you really want, you'll do more of the things that truly matter to you. Do you know your core values? When you know what matters most to you, your choices are much easier. The clarity positions you to gain more fulfillment and experience less frustration. Getting clear on what you don't want also helps you to figure out what you want. List the things you are tolerating—things that are broken, worn out, don't feel or look good or makes you feel bad. See what you need to eliminate or manage. Clear out any expectations that others have of you. Often you get confused because you think the things others want for you belong to you—they don't. Once you're certain about what you want, you can be more conscious about your intent. Use an organizer for identifying, prioritizing, planning and accomplishing your dreams and goals. Gain the clarity you need so you spend your life doing the things that truly matter to you.

—Michael E. Angier, *SuccessNet*.



The idea of personal excellence

was invented by the Greeks over 3,000 years ago. Greek warriors lived and died by an unwritten code—to be the bravest in battle. Over time, they extended their heroic commitment to the Olympic Games. There were no “silver” or “bronze” medals for runners-up, only first prize—a simple wreath of wild olive leaves, treasured because it signified a true champion. The Greeks also celebrated intellectual and artistic achievements. In Athens, for example, playwrights competed at drama festivals to win prizes for the best comedy or tragedy. Both the Games and festivals were considered sacred occasions. Each honored the gods by offering up to them not ritual sacrifices but the best examples of what human beings could achieve. Greek philosophers expanded the definition of *excellence* to apply to each

individual. They taught that we should strive to be more today than we were yesterday, more tomorrow than we were today—to discover our special and unique strengths and to actualize our potential. So, discover those things you're capable of doing well, and do them with all your heart and soul.

—Stephen Bertman, *Eight Pillars of Greek Wisdom*



Make time for a Sabbath.

On my climb back up from the pit of burnout, I remembered the wisdom of my grandparents. “I have one prayer on this Shabbat,” my grandfather would say as he raised his glass of wine. “May the family always stay together.” Everyone waited for my grandmother's toast: “May we have health, love, money, and the time to enjoy them.” They would then clink glasses and shout, “*L'Chaim*” (to life). Even when we love our work, it is wise to take time to rest, rejuvenate, be with friends and family, and appreciate the blessings of our lives and our connection with God. The Sabbath is a weekly, 24-hour period in which you rest, reflect, and connect more closely with the spiritual dimensions of life. You replenish your resources, appreciate the miraculous gift of life, and engage in activities that nourish your soul.

—Sage Bennet is the author of *Wisdom Walk*



Stop multitasking, start chunking.

Multitasking wastes time, energy, and concentration. You can achieve greater focus and productivity by chunking—combining the benefits of focusing on one thing with the need to do various tasks during the day. Chunking means carving out segments of time that you use to focus on one thing. Turn off your cell phone, set your office phone to take messages, and shut down e-mail. For a time, you want to direct all your energies and thoughts to one task, plan, or project. Chunking allows you to focus on what's important.

—Lisa Haneberg, author of *Focus Like a Laser Beam*

PersonalCOACH



Get a Life and Lead

Enjoy guilt-free accountability.
by Linda Edgcombe

DOES YOUR JOB GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR LIFE? I sometimes look at people who create “odd” adventures and think to myself: “Those people have far too much time on their hands.” I harbor resentment for people who create a life for themselves.

Ask yourself: Do I often miss my children's special events because of my work schedule? Do I often volunteer for stuff and then pull out because I'm overloaded and then feel guilt? Do I feel guilty about many things in my life? When was the last time I slept-in? Do I have a sense of purpose for my life? Do I take time to exercise? Do I feel comfortable in my own skin? Do my responsibilities to work, children, community and partner compete for my attention? Do I rarely have fun? Have I lost touch with my friends? Am I missing deadlines?

Being accountable is not about checklists and bosses who hover over you to make sure you are on track. It is about writing down your goals and desires and setting some reasonable time lines, coupled with a weekly check-in to chat about progress with someone.

So, where do you want to go? And where do you start? Take an honest snapshot of your life. Record all that is good, and all that could use improvement or tweaking.

It's amazing how long you can see yourself as you want yourself to be: the capable, helpful, together, hip, cool, friendly, gracious, selfless soul who's always up for just one more favor, task, role, or duty. Meanwhile, you're frazzled to the breaking point.

Ask friends and family for an honest assessment. Then ask yourself: How would your friends describe you in each of your roles? How would you describe yourself? Which roles energize you? What roles would you like to drop? Can you re-define yourself in any of these roles? Are you more you in some roles than in others? Why? What values shine when you are more yourself?

You can't go forward unless you know who's taking the journey. You can only be successful when you know *who* and *what* you are and what you want to accomplish. Choose a couple of your to-do's to move you toward one of your bigger goals. Then email me (or a friend) once a week to discuss how it's going. The results are amazing. **PE**

Linda Edgcombe is the author of *Guilt-Free Accountability*. Call 1-888-868-9601, www.lindaedgcombe.com, info@lindaedgcombe.com or www.guiltfreeaccountability.com.

ACTION: Invite an honest assessment.

Spiritual Paths

Walk with practical feet.



by Ken Shelton

FOR CENTURIES, THE RAP against many well-meaning, good-hearted, artistically-inclined, relationship-centered, or spiritually-minded individuals is that they are missing “practical feet,” meaning they are not oriented toward business, law, banking and finance, and hence become family and community welfare cases (poor marriage partners).

While this argument has merit, so does the rap against money, wealth, power, greed, position, and status mongers: that they lack emotional and spiritual intelligence and relationship skills; hence, they become caustic, callous, abusive, and self-centered bosses and power-brokers (poor marriage partners).

The balanced solution is to walk the spiritual path with practical feet—aiming for something higher and better; having a noble vision, mission, or ambition; yes, having your dream or castle in the air—but then building a foundation under it, lest it topple and subject you to public ridicule and financial ruin.

Having had three siblings commit suicide (one with a gun and two with bad habits that left one debilitated and another amputated), I sense the pain and loss that comes with imbalance: with not walking the spiritual path with practical feet. I see the desperation and destruction that comes from distorted views—such as the scarcity mindsets of competition and comparison.

I realize that fulfillment and meaning come from living in the moment, and yet projecting forward with a sense of destiny and backward with a sense of history—tethered between a future of promise and past of preparation. I see the complete continuum of human behavior, condition, and habit: failure and success, the best of the spiritual and the worst of the temporal, corporal, and mortal.

Indeed, we need not wait beyond death for judgment, for heaven and hell; they exist here and now. We see people moving inexorably toward their destiny, for better or for worse, primarily as a result of their choices and mindsets, skill-sets and character.

Practical feet—proactive feet that walk and run, skip and dance, amble and aim toward something higher and better in humble service and sustained

stewardship with a daily discipline of appetites and passions—take the body where it most wants to go: health and happiness, peace and prosperity, abundance and fulfillment.

If there be a God and higher purpose to life than mere survival and monetary success (as I attest there is), then walking a spiritual path with practical feet is a wise way to go about life and love. Consider Brittney Spears, Nicole Richey, Paris Hilton, and others who think their self-made paths constitute a better way. Ask: Where will this path ultimately lead me? Is that a place I really want to go?

The voice of conscience reminds us of right and wrong, duty and honor, responsibility and accountability. Yet at times, we want to imagine that nothing matters: choices have no consequences.

SPIRITUAL • GLOW

Get Glowing

Cultivate inner beauty.



by Ann Mincey

ALTHOUGH I WORK IN AN industry that caters to exterior beauty and pampering, I advise you to work first on your inner beauty. My principles are based on a simple truth: what you want is within your grasp and it's up to you to develop your life—to glow like a star. Do you now glow like a star? You will when you attain balance and inner beauty. *You can be a star.* You can shine by taking care of your five glow points:

Body: take good care of the inner and outer body.

Mind: shepherd good thoughts and release bad thoughts that enter the mind.

Relationships: These are most important to me, since everything I have comes through others to me. Care for your relationships with divine kindness.

Resources: earn, invest, give, and spend your resources wisely.

Service: live in alignment with your values, and be forgiving and grateful for the love that energizes you to serve others. How you care for others is a measure of how you care for yourself.

Begin to believe that you are who you seem—live as if it already is so. Learn to forgive, to be thankful, and to serve others. Heed the 9/11 calling: Do it now. Pursue your dreams, before it's too late, yet realizing that sometimes



We are “free” to choose, and in our moral casualness we might suppose that “freedom” lies in the absence of restraint. Why deny what pleases and pleasures me? Who are *you* to tell *me* to stop what I'm doing or start down a new path?

The converse of walking a spiritual path with practical feet is to crawl a corporal or temporal or financial path with impractical, dysfunctional feet. Extrapolated to eternity, the difference in the two paths is infinite: literally worlds apart.

We see judgments rendered here and now—as people self-select where and with whom they feel most comfortable. PE

Ken Shelton is editor and publisher of Personal Excellence and Leadership Excellence magazines. Visit www.LeaderExcel.com.

ACTION: Walk a spiritual path with practical feet.

the best action to take is none. Get your rest. Don't compare yourself with others. Love others as you do yourself. Give others what they want most—love. Know when to let go of others and when to receive the gifts of others.

No matter what, know that God's in charge. Choose to let him lead you. My message is rooted in my faith. I grew up a pastor's daughter. Standards and expectations were high. My parents always modeled “never settle for anything lower than the best and highest,” and the example was our faith in God's abiding Love. God clearly gave me this call through the scriptures. I believe in daily “checking in.” This ritual keeps the “still small voice” clear to my heart, and I try to follow it—and this is the most secure guidance I've had in my

life. I draw my inner strength from God, and believe that no matter your beliefs or affiliations you can find guidance, peace, and strength from a higher power. You can become more than you've been and discover within qualities of beauty and peace.

My life is a journey toward inner beauty—finding the unique beauty each person is and the best image that will carry that beauty. Beauty isn't skin deep—there should also be substance in your lifestyle. As you *Get Glowing*, you will contribute fully, feel fulfilled, and earn more so that in turn you can give more. You take in the nourishment you need in order to enable others to shine as the stars they are, too. PE

Ann Mincey is VP of Communications for Redken, beauty supply manufacturer, division of L'Oréal USA, and author of Get Glowing! Visit www.Redken.com.

ACTION: Take care of your five glow points.

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