

# Personal Development

No human has reached his full potential. There is always room for improvement—self-improvement. We are living in an age when information and technology are increasing by the minute. Efficiency gurus, motivational speakers, counselors, plastic surgeons, and image consultants are in style now. People are spending all their money and free time searching for a way to make themselves better. I believe those things are fine, but the true measure of change is what takes place on the **inside** of a person. Unless you change the way you think and feel about yourself and your purpose, your attitudes, actions, and performance cannot improve.

## Presenting a Positive Image

- **Dress** – Clothing should look neat and pressed, in good condition and not torn or faded. Shoes should be polished to a nice shine. Refuse to look like a slob.
- **Grooming** – Hair, fingernails, breath, and facial hair must be kept in check. A neat, clean appearance is of paramount importance.
- **Physiology** – You tell others a lot about you by your body language. Unless controlled, the way you carry yourself gives your true feelings away. Your head should be up, shoulders back, mind cleared, eyes bright, and breathing easy.
- **Handshake** – When you shake hands with either a man or a woman, your handshake should be firm and brief, not weak and limp. You should portray confidence, not timidity.
- **Emotional** – Leave your ego at home. You should be humble, sincere, honest, and open.
- **Fitness** – Your physical condition also says volumes about you. You should exercise 30-90 minutes every day to keep your body looking healthy.

## Improving Your Decision-Making Skills

- You must first know what the end result should be.
- Prepare in advance. Success happens when opportunity meets preparedness.
- No decision is usually a bad decision. Make the best possible decision at that moment rather than no decision at all.
- There are times when it's appropriate to "decide not to decide."
- If you can't make a decision, you may need to make room for someone who can make a decision at the moment.
- Make a list of daily decisions and choose 25% that can be delegated to someone else to make.
- Know when there is someone more knowledgeable than you that should make the decision and let them make it.

## Improving Your Influence

- Power that is perceived is power achieved.
- Share why something is the way it is instead of expecting everyone to accept your word at face value.
- Use the word *because*. People usually stop listening to what you have to say when you use the word *because* and just believe whatever you say.
- Listen more than you speak. You learn more by listening than speaking.
- Whenever possible, use testimonials from happy customers to support your point.
- Get an endorsement from someone the group respects and admires.

## **Improving Your Listening Skills**

- First, decide that they need to be improved and work toward that end.
- A big ego impairs listening skills. Leave your ego at home.
- People know that you care about them if you care enough to listen.
- Practice NOT talking.
- Ask lots of questions.
- Look for commonality with other people.

## **Ways to End Procrastination**

- Once you get in motion, you're more likely to stay in motion.
- Use To-Do lists. Write down your five most important things to do and start doing them.
- Identify what is causing you to procrastinate and eliminate it.
- Find your groove. Everyone has a time of great focus resulting in great action. Find that place and recreate it as much as possible.
- Write down your goals and phrases that motivate you. Place these in prominent places where you will see them often.
- Decide that procrastination is not an option.
- Force yourself to do what is uncomfortable. No great accomplishment has ever been made without effort and pain.

## **Improving Your Concentration**

- Decide what you want most to concentrate on. Eliminate all thoughts, concepts, and ideas that do not relate to your topic.
- Make sure your environment is conducive to concentration. Is the light too bright? Is it too warm or too cool? You must be comfortable in your workspace.
- Relax, take a deep breath, and visualize yourself reaching the desired goal.
- State your goals and objectives in a positive way. Look at them in relation to your outcome. Don't think negatively about lazy workers who are chronically late, but rather think about attracting committed, hard-working people.
- Create a schedule and a plan to complete that schedule. Implement rules and policies that reduce interruptions and distractions and create an environment that is conducive to concentration.
- Never make excuses why you can't concentrate. If there is a reason why concentration is difficult, do something about it.

## **Definitions of Failure**

- Accepting complacency
- Not picking yourself up after a mistake
- Failing to continually raise your standards each day
- Failing to act on the dreams and visions you have for yourself
- Hurting others for personal gain
- Failing to understand that you are here to serve others and from that, your needs will be met
- Failing to understand why you are here on this planet in the first place

## How to Really Enjoy Life

- Release the need for your present circumstances to be different. This is the cause for 90% of all mental stress.
- Release your need to be right. If you don't feel like you have to always be right, you can accept the fact that, on the big scheme of things, you really don't know very much. It's hard to be humble if you think you know it all.
- Accept yourself, even with all of your imperfections. God loves and accepts us just as we are. Who are you to do differently?
- Learn to be tolerant of the opinions and ideas of others.
- Don't be affected by others' opinions of you. If you do, you give them power over your emotions. You have the right not to be controlled by any other human being.
- Do not harbor hate and anger in your heart. Whatever you are in favor of strengthens you; whatever you are against weakens you.
- Love everyone, even if you don't like them. They are still created in God's image and are a valid person in their own right. Love is a choice and not a feeling. Make the choice to be a loving person.
- Choose your own destiny. You have the ability to choose which path to take.
- Realize that all things come to an end and prepare yourself for it. Good and bad, everything has its season. Be thankful and rejoice for the opportunity you had when a good season ends; be thankful and rejoice for the strength to endure when a bad season ends. Don't let the fact that it ends get you down.
- Be thankful. In all things give thanks to God. (*1 Thessalonians 5:18 - give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*) A thankful heart has no room for bitterness, strife, and envy.

# Make Greatness Your Goal

Greatness is not an event or something that happens to you. Greatness is a choice and a process. Greatness is possible to achieve, but it has to be your goal.

- **Identify greatness for yourself** – The definition of greatness can be subjective. It's different things to different people. You first need to look at greatness and discover what it looks like for you, your family, and your organization. Once you've discovered what greatness is to you, you then develop values, a mission statement, and a plan to achieve your goal. You can't achieve what you can't identify.
- **Magnify your end results** – Just as the Israelites erected monuments in the desert and just as we erect statues of great people and events, you need to define the goals and the end results that you want to achieve. Once you've done that, you need to write them down, memorize them, distribute them among your team, and post them where everyone can see them. Before you begin, you must have the end in mind. Keep that end in clear view and focus.
- **Strive for distinction** – What is a common quality of the great? They stand out in a crowd; they are distinct. They rise above everyone else because of what they've done and who they've become. Don't be run-of-the-mill; be distinct.
- **Make a plan** – Everyone has a goal they wish to achieve, yet few actually know how they will make it happen. You must make a plan and write it down. If you want to achieve greatness, you must know where you're going and have a road map to show you the way.
- **Take time to regenerate** – Achieving greatness is hard work. When ducks migrate, they fly in formation. The lead duck is working hardest and is making the way for the others. This applies to you as well. You will experience more hard knocks and setbacks than the others, but that's the price to pay for greatness. You need to take time to regenerate, to rest. Your body, mind, spirit, and emotions all need rest. It is a proven fact that the person who makes time to regenerate gets more done in less time than the one who doesn't. You may be able to reach your goal without resting, but you won't be in good enough shape to enjoy it.
- **Evaluate your progress** – Every plan needs to be evaluated from time to time. Are you still on course or have you gotten off track? Your plan must have a strict

evaluation process to let you know your progress. It would be a shame to work long and hard on your goal to learn that you have deviated from the course and missed the mark. The evaluation process is vital to the success of your plan.

- **Celebrate** – What good is greatness if you can't enjoy it? You need to celebrate not just the end result, but also the entire journey. Stop along the way and relish your progress. Celebrate victories, both large and small. This will keep you motivated and your spirits high.

## How to Accomplish More Every Day

We all complain that we don't have enough time to do all that we need to do. But we all have 24 hours every day. It's not that you need more time, it's that you need to discipline the use of your time.

- **Plan your day** – To help set your priorities and keep you focused, you need to create an action plan, a task list for your day. Either last thing in the day or first thing in the morning, sit down and plan your day.
- **Organize your life** – One of the greatest time wasters is a cluttered office or messy living space. You've probably wasted a lot of time in your life searching for something you needed. Create a place for everything and keep everything in its place. If you can't find a place for everything, then you need to start throwing some things away. *If it's not important enough to have its own place, then it's probably junk and just taking up space.*
- **Don't bale your mail** – Every piece of paper that comes into your home or office needs to be dealt with immediately. This is a difficult thing for most people and it takes discipline to maintain it, but it is a valuable step in organizing and “de-stressing” your life.
  1. Open your mail right away.
  2. Sort your mail into categories.
    - *Mail that requires action* – You must either take care of the action yourself or delegate it to someone else (do it today).
    - *Mail to file and read later* – Be honest with yourself when determining if you will actually read it later or if you're just avoiding taking action on it.
    - *Mail to throw away*
  3. Do these steps while standing up. If you won't allow yourself to get comfortable or move on to something else, you'll be more likely to be successful handling this source of clutter.
- **Make every moment count** – Don't waste time. Make every moment count toward accomplishing your goal. If you have down time while being forced to wait for a



flight, a repair, etc., increase your knowledge by reading a book. While driving in your car, listen to a sermon, educational, or motivational cassette or CD.

- **Develop healthy habits** – Make sure your body gets adequate rest and exercise as well as a balanced diet. This will extend your life and allow you to accomplish more.
- **Avoid energy thieves** – Avoid people, activities, and thoughts that are negative and that drain your enthusiasm. They will literally suck the life out of you.
- **Give up television** – Television is one of the biggest time wasters out there. There are very few shows that will help you accomplish your goals. If you're not watching one of these, turn it off. Better to spend time with your spouse and children.

# Characteristics of Committed People

Are you committed to fulfilling your dreams or are you still just talking about them? This is the difference between living out your dreams and making excuses. What keeps people from making a commitment to fulfill their dreams?

## FEAR

Are you afraid of:

being overwhelmed?  
failing again?  
success?  
discomfort?

overloading yourself?  
what others may think?  
hard work?  
uncertainty?

You are using fear as justification to be stuck in one place and permission not to try again. You have no idea how competent and powerful you really are. You are forgetting who is on your side (*Philippians 4:13 - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*). You and Christ are unstoppable.

Here are characteristics of committed people.

- **Committed people make commitments** – They commit themselves to succeed at fulfilling their goal. Even if they fail at first, they never stop trying.
- **Committed people are confident in their success** – They have a strong belief that they can accomplish their goal. Not accomplishing their goal is not an option.
- **Committed people state their commitments** – They speak their dreams into reality (Proverbs 18:21 - Death and *life* are in the power of the tongue...)(emphasis added). Are you speaking life or death into your future?
- **Committed people invest in their commitments** – They invest their time, energy, and money into their commitments—they rework their lives around them.
- **Committed people are realistic about their commitments** – It's okay to explore different options. If you make mistakes, that's okay. Just don't stop trying. View mistakes and setbacks as opportunities instead of something to avoid.

- **Committed people form a bond with their commitments** – Their commitments become a part of who they are. This makes the journey fun and not laborious.
- **Committed people are passionate about their commitments** – Passion is a driving force that will carry you through to the end. It will even touch and inspire others to join you.

## Stay Focused On Your Objective

There are many keys to achieving success. One that most people overlook is consistency. Fulfilling a challenging goal requires sustained effort. It's not hard to try for a short while and give up when you don't see immediate results. It's all about sustaining that effort until the goal is achieved. Here are ways to maintain your focus.

- **Make sure it's YOUR goal** – You must make sure that this goal is your goal and not one that someone else has forced on you. It must excite you and create enthusiasm or you will not have the discipline and energy required to accomplish it.
- **Write your objectives down** – This process is critical. It not only has symbolic implications, but tangible ones as well. When you put something down on paper, it leaves an indelible impression on your consciousness.
- **Visualize** – If you have a clear vision, you can visualize your objective already in existence. The more detailed your vision is, the more real it becomes. The more real it is to you, the more powerful the effect on your motivation.
- **Make a plan of action** – An action plan helps you stay focused on your objective and give you a road map to go by. Be flexible with your action plan; your strategies will likely change and so will the path you take.
- **Measure your progress** – You will need some kind of system to track your progress. Seeing how far you've come will push you forward toward where you're going. Using logs and charts will help you measure your progress.
- **Maintain a support system** – Be accountable to someone. Surround yourself with people who will encourage and challenge you. Read and listen to positive messages.
- **Take action every day** – Your objective is important and it warrants daily attention. Do something in a positive direction every day. Don't rest on your laurels.

## Characteristics of the “Best”

- The Best have a life-long habit of personal growth.
- The Best have vision.
- The Best make no excuses.
- The Best are optimists.
- The Best relentlessly pursue excellence.
- The Best welcome the challenge of the competition.
- The Best leave a legacy.
- The Best have a desire for leadership.
- The Best are strong in prioritization and execution.
- The Best focus on building relationships.
- The Best understand that good is the enemy of best.
- The Best dare to dream.

## Ways to Quickly End Relationships

- Boast
- Whine
- Gossip
- Sarcasm
- Jealousy
- Profanity
- Insincerity

# Get Back to the Basics in Life

All success begins with the basics. Perhaps the struggles we have are because we have gotten away from the basics.

## 1. Business

- Always produce a good product.
- Be honest.
- Under-promise and over-deliver.
- Help people and money will come.
- Pay your people well.

## 2. Family

- Put them first as they will be with you last.
- Treat your spouse like he/she is the most important person in the world — they are!
- Give your kids more time than even you think that you should.
- Be sure to discipline your kids — they need boundaries.
- Take the time to create family memories.
- Travel as far and spend as much money as you need to make it home for special occasions — in the long run, you'll be glad you did.

## 3. Relationships

- Treat people the way you want to be treated.
- Don't speak ill of others.
- Always help if you can when others are in need.
- Find ways to make others feel special.
- Always tell others what you like or appreciate about them.

#### 4. Health

- Significantly lower your intake of “junk.”
- Exercise more, even if it is just a short daily walk.
- Drop the bad habits, like alcohol and cigarettes.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables.

#### 5. Finances

- Eliminate debt - be ruthless about this.
- Take a look at what you are currently spending money on.
- Tighten up on (or cut out) the loose stuff in your budget.
- Save some money each month.
- Besides your tithes and offerings, give some money away to charity each month.

#### 6. Spirituality

- Pray regularly and fervently.
- Study the Bible consistently.
- Trust God, especially when it seems hard.
- Live what you say you believe.
- Get involved in a full-gospel, Bible-believing church.

#### 7. Emotions

- Take an inventory of your emotional health.
- Work to control extremes in any emotion (emotions are good when they help to feel what we are supposed to feel, but destructive when they go to extremes).
- Allow yourself to feel emotions you have suppressed.

# How to Balance Work and Life

Here's how to balance the demands of work and personal life.

- Determine your purpose here on earth independent from the demands of your daily activities. Just for a moment, don't consider that you're a parent, or a boss, or an employee, but think about your purpose as a human being and what God placed you here to do.
- Once your purpose is established, determine your vision, make decisions and an action plan to accomplish it, and then commit to putting it into motion day by day.
- Empower yourself to create an environment that will push you toward success. Use your God-given abilities and potential to drive your vision forward.
- View changes and setbacks as part of the natural process that perpetuates personal growth. Embrace change and look for the opportunities it brings to develop your skills, knowledge, and attitude.
- Hold on tightly to your faith. God has put you here for a purpose and you must allow Him to direct you in that direction. Look at where He's brought you from and begin to imagine where He would like to take you. We cannot comprehend all that He has in store for us, but we have to be willing to go.
- Examine your perceptions, mindsets, and actions to find the ones that are not beneficial to accomplishing your vision, and to your employer. You must be willing to give up those things that hinder you from moving forward to your goal.
- Get involved with other people and organizations. Church, community groups, and charitable organizations provide you with opportunities to learn, socialize, and strengthen a sense of belonging and contribution.



## How to Become Successful

- **Be strong and very courageous** – You must seize every opportunity and then be steadfast in the belief that you will be successful as you remain focused on the goal. It takes more than just a casual, come what may, attitude. It takes a tenacious determination and courage to be successful.
- **Observe** – To stay on the pathway to success, you must keep an eye on where you're going, but also know how far you've come.
- **Stay on track** – This pathway to success is very narrow. Be careful not to be distracted by other things that would force you leave your path. Don't chase things that have nothing to do with the original plan.
- **Attitude for success** – An attitude for success is one that encourages you to be all you can be and then help others do the same. Strive for knowledge and expertise and then teach and guide others along the same path. Share your knowledge and your possessions with others. To be successful, you must invest in your future and then invest in others'.
- **Meditation and contemplation** – Do you take time to reflect and meditate on your progress? You can't know that you're going in the right direction unless you stop long enough to meditate on it. Decisions that you make every day should be made with careful consideration. Are you chasing the vision or are you chasing the reward? Reward without completion of the vision is short-lived and very costly in the long run. Chase the vision, not the reward.

## Exercise in the Morning

One of the best things you can do for yourself, your family, and your teammates is to exercise. Your body needs physical exercise to stay healthy, but it also benefits your mind and your emotions. You should get into the habit of a daily exercise routine, but on those days when you only have a few minutes, don't skip the exercise, do something to get your heart rate up. Experts say that mornings are the best time to exercise. Here's why.

- To remain consistent in exercising daily, odds are better that you will remain consistent if you exercise in the morning.
- Morning exercise “jump starts” your metabolism and keeps it going for hours. That means you're burning more calories throughout the day.
- Exercising in the morning energizes you for a rough day.
- Morning exercise tends to regulate your appetite for the day. It puts you in a healthy mindset, you won't be as hungry, and you can make better food choices.
- Exercising at the same time every morning regulates your body's endocrine system and circadian rhythms. Because you do the same thing every morning, a couple hours before you awake your body begins preparing itself for exercise. This physiological process benefits you in several ways.
  - It's much easier to wake up.
  - Your metabolism begins to elevate while you're sleeping, which makes you feel more alert and energized.
  - Hormones prepare your body for exercise by regulating blood pressure, heart rate, etc.
- Your appointed exercise time becomes something you look forward to. It's your time to do something for yourself.
- Exercise increases mental acuity—usually 4-10 hours after exercise.
- Exercising in the morning helps you to ensure something else won't get in the way of this valuable time.

# Achieving Your Dream

- **Dream it** – Every dream begins with a conception in an individual’s heart and mind. Don’t be afraid to dream, to think “what if.” Get away from the safety and discouragement of negative thinking. Think big; dream big.
- **Believe it** – As big as your dream is, make sure it’s still believable. You must be able to say, “If certain things take place, if others help, if I work hard enough, it can be done.”
- **See it** – Great achievers have a common practice. They “see” their dreams fulfilled. You need to visualize yourself meeting your goal and accomplishing your vision. This practice grooms the mind to control the body to carry out the dream.
- **Tell it** – A main reason why many dreams never become reality is because people keep their dream a secret. If you really want your dream to become a reality, you must tell others about it. Why?
  - The more you speak it, the more you believe it.
  - It holds you accountable to others. If you talk about it, it motivates you to actually do something about it so you won’t look foolish.
- **Plan it** – To accomplish a dream, you must have a plan. Your dream won’t come to pass all by itself. You must sit down and plan a strategy, think through all the details, break it down into workable parts, and set a time frame for accomplishing each part.
- **Work it** – This is where the rubber meets the road. Successful people are the hardest working people. They are working while others are playing or resting. This stage takes the most discipline and courage. If you aren’t determined to work your plan, you’ll be like most others in that you’ll always wonder “what if” and complain about not being fulfilled.
- **Enjoy it** – Needless to say, once you’ve reached your goal you should enjoy it. But you should enjoy the entire journey. That’s usually easier said than done, but it’s possible. It’s all in your outlook. Make the process fun by rewarding yourself along the way. Be gracious and generous to others and surround yourself by those who believe in you. Once you reach your goal, it’s time to begin the cycle again, except dream even bigger.

## Dress Your Best

All the clichés about looking on the inside of a person instead of the outside are fine, but you and I both know that the outside is what we see first. It's great if you are wise, intelligent, witty, and an all-around great person, but if your appearance pushes people away from you, you won't have the opportunity to show all the great stuff on the inside. It's not about being beautiful and perfect; it's about doing the best you can with what you have. The key to being among the best dressed is highlighting our good features and downplaying our lesser ones. Here's how to make it to the "best dressed" list.

- Know which style and image suits you, and don't deviate very far from it.
- Just because something is the latest fashion doesn't mean you need it. If it's not your style, don't buy it.
- Concentrate on quality instead of quantity when shopping. Quality is not necessarily the most expensive.
- Take care of your shoes. Shoes can make or break your appearance. If they're poorly made or not maintained, they will hurt your overall look.
- Do not buy on impulse. Check your wardrobe to see what you NEED before you go shopping.
- Take care of your skin. The condition of your skin is a part of the whole package. It's just as important for men to take care of their skin as it is for women. Stay away from products containing mineral oil and petroleum derivatives.
- Don't rely on salespeople. The opinions of salespeople are based on what they're being paid to endorse; they are not impartial. Go shopping with someone who will tell you the truth, and also be sure to trust your instincts.

## How to Stay Motivated After Rejection

We will all face rejection at some point. The rejection itself will not hurt you, but reacting to it in the wrong way can. A positive attitude can deflect rejection and keep it from hurting you.

- Stop and ask yourself if it is worth getting upset over.
- Look at it on the big scheme of things. If it's not a major problem, shake it off and move on.
- Don't focus on the rejection. Focus on what's ahead.
- Ask yourself how your mentor would handle the situation.
- Find something positive that you can say about the situation.

## Stay in the Race

Life is like a marathon. How we compete will determine our success.

- Don't drop out. Your dream is alive only as long as you're in the race. Each step brings you closer to achieving your goals.
- There will be little wins and losses along the way. Learn from losing and you'll always win.
- Visualize what you want and allow it to happen.
- For every uphill, there's a downhill. Enjoy the rest when it comes, but don't be lulled into complacency.
- You're not defeated unless you quit.

## Secrets to a Stress-Free Life

- Take 5-minute breaks throughout your day. Allow your mind to relax and rejuvenate.
- Arrive 10 minutes early for every appointment (personal and professional). This will give you time to feel relaxed and shows respect for others' time.
- Take responsibility for your actions. Realize that your actions are a result of choices you have made. Use unpleasant consequences as motivation to make better choices in the future.
- Clean up your workspace. A cluttered workspace causes your mind to feel cluttered and increases stress. Find ways to eliminate excess paperwork and work in a more organized manner.
- Set priorities. Prioritize everything in order of importance. First on a large, life-size scale (i.e. God, family, self, work, etc.) and then within subcategories. If it's not a high priority, don't sweat it.
- Learn to say NO. Be honest with people. A simple straightforward no will save everyone time and stress ("No, I already have a commitment at that time.") It takes practice to do it effectively and pleasantly, but it is possible. You may upset some people until they can accept the new you, but you must realize that you can't please everyone.
- Reward yourself and others. Choose a reward at the onset of a new goal and use it as motivation to keep moving toward the finish line. Praise and reward others for their achievements, too. Appreciation is contagious, whether it's for you or someone else.

# My Priorities

Below is a list of my priorities in life. This is a reflection of who I am and the choices I've made.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

# Empower Yourself

It's not the events in your life that make you feel the way you do; it's how you interpret and evaluate those experiences. The meaning you attach to an event will determine the decisions you make, the actions you take, and the direction of your life. Instead of wading in grief and self-pity, empower yourself for action by asking the right questions.

- What specific actions should I take to be more productive?
- What is the best use of my time right now?
- What important project have I been putting off? What am I going to do to get jump-started?
- What have I been irresponsible about in my life? What action am I going to take to make a change?
- What habits do I have that hold me back?
- What did I learn from that situation or mistake?
- What are other solutions to the problem?

By learning to ask yourself and others the right questions, you can drastically change your productivity, your emotional state, and the quality of your life.