



Bryan
DODGE
development inc.



BUILD A BETTER YOU

**Personal Development
To Enhance a Life
Worth Living!
(E-Book)**

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A MAJOR PART OF GAINING A COMPETITIVE EDGE BEGINS WITH EDUCATION

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Introduction

I am excited to share this e-book to you. The many testimonies I have received from presenting these inspirational thoughts on stage is the incentive for this book. The goal of this book is to open your eyes, mind, and heart to take the steps to win control of your life. By doing so, you will be completely happy with the present and you will begin to look forward to what the future will bring.

Each chapter is designed to have an inspiring message to help you develop a full and exciting life worth living. On these pages, I will share the truths of life to remind you of the importance of focusing on the things you can control. It's only logical to conclude that by focusing on the things outside of your control, you will allow yourself to be out of control ending up stressed and unhappy. In the end, the only conclusion that we can come to is that happiness is a choice. We have been so busy doing what doesn't matter that we haven't been able to find the time to do the things that really do matter or to even realize we are skipping over them.

My hope is that you will find something of value in each of these lessons and then share it with the people that you want to help—people who need to become inspired to make positive changes in their lives.

Above all, remember: The Good Life Rules!

Bryan Dodge

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bryan Dodge". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops and a prominent horizontal line across the middle.

The Truth of Diminishing Intent

The Truth of Diminishing Intent means that once an idea pops into your head or a feeling comes into your heart, you have about 48 hours to act on it or else you never will. Make the commitment to follow your heart – it will show you the way. You’ll be teaching yourself discipline and in the end the effort will be worth it. So, for the next 30 days, if a thought, idea, or request comes into your heart or mind, make it a 48-hour priority – not following through is not an option. After 30 days, it may just become a habit!

“Life is too short not to be happy, and too long not to do well.” In 2001, I made over 300 appearances for corporations and public events all over the United States and Canada, and my audiences all agreed – it is better to be happy than it is to be sad. This is common sense, right? Yet it is human nature to be negative – to look for the bad in everything. If people would just turn their point of view, they would find that it is just as easy to find the good in a person, company, or situation as it is to find the bad. Look at it this way: What you look for, you will find; what you find, you will attract; what you attract, you will become.

Life is something that one needs to experience, keeping in mind that what matters is not what you have but what you have learned and enjoyed along the way to achieving it. Life is time; unfortunately, most people focus on their past mistakes, which make it very difficult for them to open the gift of the present.

The E-A-T Philosophy

Why is it that we can't seem to appreciate the little things in life that really mean everything until our time is shortened? A friend of mine called me and said that she had sat up all night and just watched her son and daughter sleep; she was very excited that she got to watch her son have a dream. She watched the sun come up; for the first time in her life, she watched it every inch of the way without being distracted.

To most people, this kind of thing wouldn't seem like a big deal. But to her, it was everything. She was dying from cancer and only had a short time to live. I designed my "How to Build a Better You" program to help you shorten the time clock in your own mind so that you can truly see the gifts that are all around you.

The biggest problem I see in people at my seminars is that they are living in the past. This makes it very hard for them to open the gift of each day (the present), and it's difficult for them to see clearly what the future might hold. Ralph Waldo Emerson said "What lies behind us and what lies before us is small compared to what lies within us."

Another problem I see is that people are putting off dealing with their problems, and by the time they get around to them, it's too late. Three key words to remember are "On Its Time." When a problem or something negative enters your life, stop whatever you're doing and resolve the problem "on its time." Your other choice is to ignore it and hope it gets better on its own. But it won't go away, it gets worse, and in the end, it's controlling you. If you take care of it "on its time," you control the situation. The outcome is the difference between freedom and imprisonment.

The E-A-T Philosophy in my program covers three very important points in personal development. The E stands for being an eager learner. Your mind has to be truly open. If I asked the average person what they're studying, that person would more than likely respond, "Nothing." Then I would ask them, "How long have you been doing that?" If you're learning about the things you want to know, your brain is active; if not, it's inactive. If you do the same things every day – drive home the same way, for example – try going a different way. Look around you. Get out of autopilot and make a change.

Also, try questioning things. A child between the ages of three to five uses the word "why" more than any other word – they want to understand the world around them. That's one of the keys of the "How to Build a Better You" program; you must want to grow and understand. Once you begin to grow, everything around you will grow, too. The mind is like a computer – if it is open (on), it is working. And "why" is the "On" button.

The A stands for argue. If there's no debate between two people, one of them is giving in

too often. As you become more successful in life, the challenges and negativity you face increase. You don't want fewer problems unless you want to have less, do less, and earn less. You have to fight (argue) for the things you believe in or else you'll get nowhere.

The T stands for thankfulness. Why is the grass always greener on the other side? Most people say that it's because you're not over there but that's not true. It's because you're spending so much time looking on the other side that you're not seeing how great things really are on your side. If you look for the good in a person or situation, you will find it; the same is true with the bad.

My favorite movie is *Pollyanna*. It's all about how one little girl changes an entire town simply by turning her perspective to look for the positive instead of the negative. Maybe you won't change the entire town you live in, but you will make yourself a happier, better person. If you are not happy at this time in your life, for any reason, change it. Happiness is your choice, not anyone else's. The good news is that you can start a good habit today. So why not do it?

Why You Should Be Goal-Setting

“There are no short-cuts to the right place.” Just like happiness, success is a choice. It comes from making and meeting your goals. The biggest problem I see as I travel around the country doing programs is that the focus on the goal is not always there. Very few people write down their goals, and a regular question I ask during my seminars is, “Why should you write down your goals?” The most common answers that I receive are:

- 1) If a goal is not written down, it’s only a wish.
- 2) So you know where you are going.
- 3) To keep you on track.
- 4) So that you can visualize what you want.
- 5) So you can go into the future and borrow energy for today’s activities.
- 6) If you know where you are going, you can make the right choices to get you there.

With all the years that I have been helping people grow for the right reason, I have finally realized the real reason we should write our goals down. The real reason is that *goals are a responsibility, not an option*. If you choose not to write your goals down, you have given up your responsibility. This allows somebody or something else (more specifically, society) to take responsibility for you. Let’s not get too far away from the truth: the goals other people choose for you will never be as good as the ones you choose for yourself. The points listed above are secondary reasons for writing down your goals. The primary reason is to not let society choose the things you should do. I have realized how important it is to do this not only for yourself but also for your loved ones.

With my kids, I enacted a goal setting procedure that each one has gone through over the years. On their 11th birthday, we sat down for a talk. Their mother and I had them write down 18 goals on a 2” x 3” index card. Then they signed the bottom and we made copies for everybody in the family. We had it laminated and at that point, I made them a promise. If they met all of their goals by the time they turned 16, I would buy them the car of their choice. I’ll never forget when my daughter received her car. I had it on a flat bed trailer with balloons all around it saying, “Life is good!” and a banner saying, “From good choices you get good things! Congratulations on your good choices.”

I sell my kids every day on the books they read, and the people they are around. Why? Because I have learned that if you are not selling them, somebody else is. I’ll never forget when my daughter was driving away, and we were all standing there, my youngest son started to pull on my pants, and he asked me when he would get to write down his goals. Remember, kids do what they see. Also remember, we are all kids. Our toys have just gotten much more expensive as we’ve gotten older. Remember that goals are a responsibility, so take responsibility and decide what you want in life. It will make your decisions tomorrow easier because you will know where you are going.

Realize that goals do change, but you can't get to point B (your goals) unless you start with point A (yourself). So let's start with A, and then go out and teach others the same principle.

The Unusual Approach

You should not be surprised to hear that unconventional success calls for unconventional approaches. Leaping into a new phase in your life requires a little inconsistent behavior and some unusual moves; actions that, on the surface, seem to contradict common sense.

As human beings, we usually go with the obvious. We fall into a habit of relying on behaviors that may have worked best for us over the years or even methods that worked best for our parents. Once we realize that a specific action gets us where we want to be, we hold on to it for dear life. There's a tendency to follow our favorite approach more and more often, and we get to a point where that is the only way we do things.

We resist new maneuvers because they make us feel clumsy, awkward, and more at risk. But if you want to accelerate your rate of achievement, you must search out and vigorously employ new behaviors and new attitudes. You must be willing to break out of your routine to make the leap.

If you continue to rely on those old routines that were easier to do, maybe even leaning on them most when your performance flattens out or sags and you get away from the things that were harder but got higher results for your effort, you create a trap for yourself. There is a certain irony here. Your most dependable behaviors can become the major obstacles to future success. It's possible for them to cripple your progress. They may create personal boundary lines that limit what you can accomplish with your life and keep you from raising yourself to that new level.

Try Different Tactics

You cannot achieve personal and business leaps through “more of the same.” You have to shift gears. You have to follow your heart with new thought patterns and actions. The rules of what does and doesn’t work always change when you try to make a move from normal performance to a better you.

What is the key? Stop and think. Pause to listen to what is really going on. More of the same only produces more of the same. If that is what you are after, fine. Try a little harder and get a paycheck that is slightly larger. If you try harder, you can expect better results.

Sooner or later, though, you are going to reach the point where you cannot try any harder. Your spirit may be down, or you may have stretched your physical and mental resources to the limit. And often, you reach a point of diminishing returns – when trying harder and harder produces less and less. In fact, there may be times when intensifying your efforts produces nothing except bigger problems.

As a case in point, go to the story of the fly. The little insect could have turned away from the window and followed the path of least resistance to the open door and out to freedom. Ten seconds of effortless flight would have produced total success. Instead, it spent hours of frustration and panic beating its wings against the windowpane, its fruitless attempts ending in death on a dusty windowsill.

This is not an argument against self-discipline or persistence. These are true virtues in life and two keys to success. However, sometimes the best strategy is to change direction, implement new ideas, learn new skills, and try a new avenue that is more productive. Stay away from getting caught in the same old rut.

My advice to you is to quit thinking about trying harder when you see that it is not producing the results you want. More effort is not the answer in that situation. Remember, nothing changes until you change, and once you change, everything around you will change.

Thinking Beyond What Common Sense Allows

Most of us fly too close to the ground. Too often we do not give ourselves permission to soar. It is time to start focusing on possibilities, rather than on limits or obstacles.

Making a leap means moving outside your mental boundaries. If you rethink how you are thinking, you can multiply your performance potential. You must let your desire guide you, instead of allowing perceived constraints to box you in.

Seeking this leap means violating the boundaries of the probable. It means achieving well beyond the obvious. Do not limit your desires to what you think you “can have.” Start going after what you “want.” You must give yourself permission to dream, to risk. You must set yourself free.

A 10 percent improvement is not the idea at all. This would represent only incremental gains. Moreover, it might be an impressive performance in a situation with unusual obstacles or a very difficult set of circumstances. But while such a goal might be challenging, it would not represent a leap, which is what we are truly seeking today. Instead of “an additional 10 percent or so,” a leap produces a dramatic gain, an exponential increase. Leaps are, by definition, rather astounding and certainly unconventional.

Do not get the idea that anything you can think of is possible. It is not. But what lies within your reach in some areas of your life is enough to stagger the mind. You can double, even triple your level of success. Far beyond that, you can leverage up your performance to the second or third power or beyond.

True, there are limits, but you do not need to worry about them. Your real limit is far beyond your artificial mental boundaries. The real limits will not box you in, but the false ones you are carrying around in your mind are a self-imposed prison.

So how do you break out that jail? You do it by surrendering some of your old beliefs and sacrificing some of those “sensible” thinking patterns. So-called common sense can put a ceiling on how far you will reach or how high you will see yourself flying in the world.

Don't Doubt Yourself, Doubt Your Doubts

Your skepticism, which you presume to be based on rational thinking and an objective assessment of factual data about yourself, is rooted in mental junk. Your doubts are not the product of accurate thinking, but habitual thinking. Years ago, you accepted flawed conclusions as correct, began to live your life as if those warped ideas about your potential were true, and ceased the bold experiment in living that brought you many breakthrough behaviors as a child. Now it is time for you to find that faith you had in yourself before.

If you want to be skeptical of some ideas that truly deserve to be called into question, challenge the thoughts and beliefs that have argued against your taking a leap. Put those old inhibiting ideas to the test by going for it with everything you've got.

Doubt is what does the most damage. So don't give it any mental space. Proceed boldly, as if it is completely inconceivable that you will experience anything other than a successful leap.

If you must doubt something, doubt your limits.

Focus On the End Rather Than the Means

It is crucial to have a crystal clear picture of what you want to accomplish. Operate with a sharply defined mental image of the outcome you seek in life. You do not have to know how you are going to get there, but you need to know where you want to go. Rivet your attention on the spot where you are to land at the end of your leap. Visualize your arrival. When you do that, it is like you “magnetize” yourself to the ways and means involved in the methodology for getting there. Answers will then come to you, and when they do, you will probably find them to be simple, streamlined solutions.

If you start worrying about everything that will be involved in getting from here to there, you are bound to get bogged down in the questions about methodology. People always get hung up on the “how to” aspects regarding the leap. Life is too short not to leap. Follow your heart; it will lead you to the time and place.

A leap is a move you are already prepared to make, you just have not done it yet. Every human being has the potential, the resources are available, and the opportunity is there. What has been missing is your decision to go for it.

Maybe this will help you frame the situation better: the leap is something you have been keeping from happening; it is not something you have to struggle to make happen. You do not really force it into existence, you just let it occur. The key is to not get in the way!

A leap is the unexpected that comes to you with sudden grace. You can open yourself to such a breakthrough, you can even invite it, but you can not make it happen by struggling harder or insisting on the perfect plan. We achieve focus through an intuitive discovery process based on a sense of direction and action. If you have the answers and structure up front, it is not a leap.

The formula does not involve getting everything neatly organized and eliminating all the risks before you make your move. There is an element of shooting from the hip involved here. Do not count on having all the procedural issues for the journey buttoned down before you begin the trip.

You must be willing to tolerate ambiguity, confusion, possibly even chaos for a while, shaping your game plan as you go. Understand there will be disorder in your life. If you get too concerned with the step-by-step plan of action to follow you will find yourself brooding over the potential problems and roadblocks that you could encounter. For now, all you need is an aiming point and action.

Remember, a leap, by definition, means moving into uncharted territory with no guide to follow. You personally draw the map as you go.

Choose a Different Set of Risks

Going for the leap feels chancy. The risks seem rather apparent to you and may be quite threatening, but you must weigh them against the hidden risks you accept when you decide to live with the low risk status quo.

Ask yourself what you are risking if you do not go for the leap. The risk is that you will live with “what if” throughout your life. Understand the difference between calculated risk and blind leap. You have got to understand that you can never escape risk—that’s just life. It is not something you can decide to live without. Something is always at stake and only you can decide which risks to take.

Whether you choose to go for the leap or to follow your usual routines, you are putting something on the line. So choose carefully and don’t kid yourself with the idea that “playing it safe” by living with the status quo gives you the best odds. That may be the surest way of losing. Leaps also mean that to some degree you must move beyond the zone of familiarity, security, and comfort. But you can make the leap without being reckless or impulsive.

Frankly, making the leap is not mere gambling. It is not a crapshoot. You simply move on an opportunity you have been ignoring. You abandon your excuses. You reframe the problem. You take a completely different chance. A leap is risking in a way that unmasks the truth, revealing how the only significant thing that has been standing in the way is you.

Take that risk and believe in yourself. Risk is acting on the assumption that you can succeed in making a leap. Otherwise, the risk is that you will settle for only a fraction of what life has to offer.

This is not a case of taking a big chance. It is a matter of giving yourself a better understanding of your personal gifts. Remember that a leap does not have to be big to make the difference. On the contrary, sometimes the smallest leap can make the biggest difference in your understanding of life.

The major obstacle to overcoming the odds is never challenging them. Until you test the limits regarding what you can achieve, you won’t know what your chances really are. Remember, the odds change in your favor when you begin to challenge them.

True Talent

The good news is that everybody has true talent. True talent is a choice, not a gift. Some people are born with gifted talent, but all of us are born with true talent. In most of life's endeavors, characteristics like persistence and self-discipline are much more powerful in the long run than the kind of gifted talent measured by today's standardized tests.

That is why success in life correlates so weakly with success in school. It is why some of the kids at one school are going to outperform and score higher on tests than some of the kids at a more prestigious school. But if the kids with lower performance have the character traits that enable them to realize their potential, they will outperform the higher scoring kids who don't use their true talent.

Some of the greatest stars in life were relatively late bloomers. For instance, Larry Bird was not a great basketball player in junior high school. He was overlooked but this forced him to develop a strong work ethic if he wanted to play. Late in his high school years when his physical talent bloomed, he had already developed the true talent that makes people great. That is why it is important to understand that it is not what happens to you in life, but what you do about it. At that point in your life, you will either be forced to use your true talent and develop it into a habit for life, or choose the easier path that will take you farther from your true talent.

Great people understand that the key to developing your true talent is to **do the things that are easy not to do**. Is it easy to read? Yes. Is it easy not to read? Yes. Is it easy to eat? Yes. Is it easy not to eat? No! If you do not eat for a whole year, you will be dead. Everybody has to eat; not everybody has to read (although everybody should). That is how to start developing your true talent. Find your true talent and make it work for you. I fall back on a bit of wisdom I first heard from the late George Burns: "You can either do what you love or love what you do. I do not see where there is any other choice."

Remember, happiness comes not so much from doing well, but from doing well by others. If you seek and find the ways in which your work enhances the lives of others, you are going to enjoy it more.

The Importance of Goals

Every once in a while, we need to review the past, present, and future. With this personal review, it is my hope that you will be reminded to focus on the things that truly matter in life. Remember that what you focus on is your choice. Life is the sum of your choices so think about them and ask yourself, “Why?” These steps will allow time and knowledge to be on your side. This reminds me of a gift that I received from a very close friend years ago. I carry this poem with me every day.

IF (written by a 16 year old girl living on the street)

*If all lips spoke the truth,
All pride was cast aside,
Greed was packed and stored away
And jealousy subsides.
If love could rule the universe,
Kindness was shown to every race,
Then one could glance into a mirror
And view God in His face.*

I am very thankful for this gift because it reminds me of the goals that matter in life:

- Always be truthful with others, but more importantly with yourself. It all starts with you.
- Pride is both powerful and evil. The key is to remember to be humble.
- Greed will only slow down your progress in life.
- Jealousy tears down your success in life. The “awe” factor builds your positive legacy. Be in awe of others successes and they will be in awe of yours.
- The best use of life is love. No matter what I say, what I believe, or what I do, I am bankrupt without love.
- Kindness starts in your mind. Thinking like a servant requires a mental shift and a change in your attitudes.
- Knowing your purpose gives meaning to your life. We were made to have meaning in our lives.

What Drives Your Life

Everybody is driven by something. The question that you must answer is “What is the driving force in control of your decisions in life?” It may be a problem or deadlines that you have to tackle each day that drive you. I meet many people all the time who respond to that question with the word “guilt.” They spend their entire lives running from regrets and trying to hide from their own shame. It is those memories that distract the mind from focusing on the things that truly matter in life. It might be life pressures, such as bills, or promises that you have made that you can not fulfill. It could be anger or the need for approval or a hundred other reasons that cause us to develop a habit of not focusing on the important things in life.

I saw a movie once in which a young boy just focused on where he had been. A bushman walked up and told him not to focus on the past for too long unless he wanted it to be his future as well. It is very important to understand that, although we are products of our past, we do not have to be prisoners of it. In order to find the key factors that affect your choices and focus, write them down on a piece of paper. Then address them accordingly. You might ask why you should change this part of your life first. People that tend to make choices based on their surrounding circumstances, pressures, and feelings at the moment end up trying to do too much, which only results in more stress and more conflict. This causes the purpose to become unclear and difficult to find. The circle of conflict continues with no end. That is the main reason why some people never change.

Remember, once you know your purpose, you can create a very simple life resulting in a clearer vision of your hopes, dreams, and the wonderful things that you can do for others. Commit to building more purpose in your life, so that you can help thousands of others do the same. Leaders know the way, they go the way, and they show the way. Once you are on track, it is imperative that you help others find the same results in their life as well.

Don't Let Fear Keep You From Your Purpose

There is a “disease” that keeps you from seeing your purpose in life and it’s called fear. It would be heartbreaking to know the number of people in this world who let fear control them. It could be fear of the past, present, or future, but regardless of the cause, fear-focused people miss life’s greatest opportunity—seeing their purpose in life. Fear is a self-imposed prison that will keep you from building a purpose-guided life. How do you work with fear? First, define the three biggest fears you have in life and think about why you have them. Then take the following four-step success process:

1. Ask for help.
2. Have faith. Without faith, you lose hope. That is why you cannot find the energy to fight these important battles in life.
3. Understand the true power of love. If you use love for the right reasons, it is the most powerful tool against fear.
4. Adopt the “Fighting Attitude Commitment,” as described in George H. Allen’s quote below.

“One of the most difficult things everyone has to learn is that for your entire life you must keep fighting and adjusting if you hope to survive. No matter who you are or what your position, you must keep fighting for whatever it is you desire to achieve. If someone is not aware of this contest and expects otherwise, then constant disappointment accrues. People who fail sometimes do not realize that the simple answer to everyday fears is to keep fighting. Health, happiness, and success depend upon the fighting spirit of each person. The big thing is not what happens to us in life, but what we do about what happens to us.”

-George H Allen, Former Chairman of the President’s Council on Physical Fitness

Always remember that your purpose in life is looking for you. Thus, each choice in life is like a key to a door; if the doors that you opened yesterday and today are not taking you in the direction of your purpose, then you must change the key. By key, I mean the choices you make to open the right doors in your life. The most viable tool for finding the right key is your heart. It will give you direction if you will learn to listen to it.

Anger and resentment are two more major factors that keep your purpose from revealing itself. Each time anger or resentment enters your mind and becomes part of your thought process, the clearness of the day disappears. Whose choice was it to let them in? Yours! Why do we have anger and resentment as a part of our lives? The best answer that I have ever heard is that it is easier to be negative than it is to be positive. If finding your purpose was easy, everybody would do it. It is that extra effort of not taking the easy route that makes you different and allows you to see your purpose. Remember, anger and resentment always hurt you more than they hurt the other person.

What Are You Focusing On?

“True happiness...is not attained through self-gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose.” – Helen Keller

You know that you are living your purpose when you are full of energy and devoid of stress. Many of us today have a very hard time with the energy factor. Look at how big the energy pill market has become. You can hardly pay for your gas because the convenience store counter is covered with them. And stress! I have three children, so let's not talk about stress!

The first thing you have to understand is that you do not want less stress in your life unless you want to earn less, never get married, or have children. The stress factor is not what we are talking about. The real problem is what I call the uncontrolled stress factor. Controlled stress is life; uncontrolled stress is the problem, and it comes from your choices and your focus in life. Remember, your focus affects your choices.

The following are the five most important focus-killers in your life.

1. **Television.** The average American watches four hours of television each day. That adds up to 1,460 hours, or two months, of watching television per year.
2. **Newspapers.** Remember that what you choose to read goes into your mind. Each time I get on an airplane, I notice the types of books the people in first class are reading. Then I look at what the people in the rest of the airplane are reading. Over the years, I have found that there is a huge difference. The real “why” in life is to understand that the books you read and the things you watch and listen to really do matter. It is your choice!
3. **Radio.** The average American listens to the radio 2.5 to 3 hours per day. Each time you turn on the radio, you are listening to a message that someone else has chosen for you to hear, whether it is talk radio or music. That is why there are so many different radio stations; they allow you to decide what you want to listen to. I have a rule in my life that for every hour of radio that I listen to, I will listen to two hours of a CD program of my choice.
4. **Gossip.** The average American gossips one hour every day. My question to each person that chooses to gossip about a situation or another person is this: “Why are you doing it?” When finding your purpose in life, you must understand the importance of never breaking the “laws.” One of those laws is to never lower another person in life for your own benefit.

5. Negative thinking. The average American spends too much time in this area. Keep in mind that focusing on negative factors in life will not help you grow. Why do most people take the negative way? Because it is easier to think in this manner. People with purpose do not take the easy way, they take the right way. Your heart will help you in this area.

These are the key focus-killers that will make it almost impossible to find your purpose in life. These are the reasons we become lost to our clear purpose in life and develop into people guided by materialism. The drive to always want more is based on the misconceptions that having more will make you happier, more important, and more secure, but it does not. This type of focus only provides temporary happiness and the further need to get more. That is marketing at its best. The most common myth about money and possessions is that they will offer you a more secure lifestyle. It never has; we all know that you cannot buy true happiness. You can only find real security in that which can never be taken from you—your purpose in life. Once you find it, you will never want to go back. Remember, your purpose in life cannot show itself to you when your focus and lifestyle are wrong. Change your focus and your lifestyle, and your purpose will make itself known.

A purpose-guided focus motivates strong lives. Keep helping people around you find their purpose in life, because as you help others, your life will become clear.

Smart Focus

What you focus on is your choice and the choices you consistently make regarding what you think about matter. It is when you think it does not matter that you will find yourself moving farther away from your purpose in life. Life is filled with choices. What you choose to focus on in life you will find, but remember that what you find you will attract, and what you attract you will become. I am not talking about motivation. I am talking about one of the most important skills in life—“smart focus.” This is when you constantly focus on the right things in life and make enough of the right decisions that your environment becomes a place where you can not only see your purpose, but understand WHY it is your purpose in life. I only wish that there were some way for me to guarantee that moment of clarity for everyone. Because at that moment, you understand what freedom is all about; the energy and feelings you have, the understanding is so clear, and many of the “whys” are answered. But you and I both understand there is no guarantee of this. The only true guarantee in life is that the choices you make really do make a difference.

Why do we try to create our own little worlds with the illusion of being completely in control of our entire existence when we know with certainty that we are not? If I’ve heard it once, I’ve heard it thousands of times—“My life is one big distraction” or “I’m a walking issue.” Issues are distractions, and distractions are the keys that lock the doors that must be open for you to see your purpose in life. One lady came up to me after a program in St. Louis and said that she could not find her purpose in life. I asked her, “How can you not find it? It is right in front of you. It has been following you around all your life. The problem is that you can’t see it because of all the distractions you’ve created in your life.” We know the truth, but sometimes the truth is too easy...or is it?

What is one key step that you can take right now to begin the life design that will allow you to see your purpose? Holding yourself accountable to your choices in life will help you understand and control the in-between factor in your life. I am a big believer that life is a journey so do not miss the journey. When I play golf, which is not too often, I like to walk and carry my clubs. I believe golf was meant to be played walking. Many people get an electric cart and race from shot to shot. Golf for them is just hitting the ball. For some, it is all about the score. The actual moment that the clubface makes contact with the ball during a round of golf amounts to a few seconds. Golf, like life, is not just about the moment of hitting the shot. It is not just the destination or the score; it is also everything in between. Like golf, most of life is “in between.” There is so much to enjoy about life while you are walking, driving, or flying if you will just look for it. I challenge you to follow your heart when making choices in life. Ask yourself “Am I in a hurry? If not, then why am I acting like I am?” Enjoy life’s “in-betweens.”

Your Focus Factor

We all have good and bad habits in our lives. What we want to do for our families and for generations to come is to educate them on the mistakes that we made regarding our lack of focus on the things that matter in life. How many of us sit down with our parents, children, or friends and share with them the negativities and hardships we endured through our own choices and our struggles to overcome distractions in our lives? We begin to realize that all people have this challenge in their lives, some more than others. The true beginning to real change in one's life is letting people around you know that focus has been a challenge for you. The key is that you are revealing it to a person you respect. By taking this action, you are embracing the responsibility for the change in your focus.

This transformation of weakness into strength makes a huge difference in attaining long-lasting change in your focus. Many people look for triggers to start the change process in their situation and they have a tendency to look very far for these triggers. Turning a lack of focus around is probably the easiest trigger to find. We all have weaknesses within ourselves; therefore, we all possess sources of motivation. When I was a child in school, I always understood that there was something different about my energy and focus levels. I had a lot of energy but very little focus. If I were a child today, my condition would be diagnosed as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) and I would be referred to a doctor. The irony of my condition is that people today go to pharmacies to buy energy boosting products and yet in a child, society sees this condition as a challenge. I had great respect for my teachers and elders. I realized that discipline was the key to my focus success. I feared when my teachers threatened to summon my parents to school. I respected my neighbor as much as I respected my parents. If my neighbors saw me performing below par outside my house, they had an equal right to reprimand me. This was not only true of me but all others. During my childhood, society was very active in molding good citizens. It was not only the role of the parent or teacher.

Sadly, this is not the case now, especially in the western world. This societal obligation does not exist anymore. I truly believe the greatest and most powerful tool in helping a person that lacks focus is discipline. Parents do not support one another and teachers are afraid to discipline students for fear of lawsuits. We do not realize that discipline is a tool that creates great focus in one's life. Discipline will allow individuals to have very creative minds, but have the focus so that they channel their creativity for results that they can be very proud of. We have forgotten that discipline is a tool for success; by instilling fear in our teachers, friends, and family, we are taking that vital tool away from them. In a nutshell, we have ceased to transform our assumed weaknesses into strengths. Until we improve as a society, the caliber of citizens we mold will continue to be dismal. We can only change this situation if we allow ourselves to see the truth; at that point, individuals

and their situations will start to change. It falls back on a common statement parents make: “My child will never have to go through what I had to go through.” Going through certain situations in life is what made you what you are in life. Too often, we take too much away from life and we never learn important lessons. People see what they want to see instead of the truth. It is the truth that allows all great things to happen in one’s life. I never said life was easy but I do say and believe that Life Is Good!

All relationships are your mirrors and all people are your teachers. Ask yourself the following questions:

How do others see you regarding your focus factor in life?

How do you see yourself?

I recommend “The Power of Focus” By Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and Les Hewitt. This book will give you some additional tools to take your focus to the next level. Remember, focus on the things that matter, and you will receive the things that count. It is your choice.

Living with Peace

In this chapter, I will address one of the most important disciplines in life—learning to have peace. One of my former professors once stated, “If you’re not in a challenging situation, you have one coming.” We are either going into or coming out of challenges in life. The true success in life is to have peace before, during, and after each situation.

A common statement I often hear is: “As soon as I get through this problem, I will have more peace in my life.” Unfortunately, that is not the way life is. As soon as you finish with one challenge, another one finds you. The key is to make a daily choice to be led by peace. We must allow the inner tranquility that comes from peace to rule our lives. The loss of peace lets us know when something is out of our personal will. This is why we need one another like never before for advice and guidance.

We will have more peace in our own lives if we focus on helping others have peace in their lives. Think about it—we work harder at our jobs than in the past. We take fewer and shorter vacations while investing longer hours working to build our businesses. Travel agencies I have worked with all say the week-long vacation is rare now; instead, most families take long weekends. The question I ask now is, “How much time did you invest today helping someone with their life?”

I once asked this question and the response I received was, “It doesn’t really make a difference.” But it does; it makes all the difference in the world. Think about it—what did you do yesterday, and what have you done today, to make a difference in someone’s life? Young people today are faced with a variety of moral questions and major life decisions. They need help answering such questions as: “What is right and wrong in this situation?” “Where should I go to college?” “Is this the right person for me?” “What career should I choose?” These are real questions that will not go away and they can be difficult to answer. Unfortunately, many people try to live life independent from peace and they end up with broken dreams and a broken life.

Can you imagine what life would be like if we all had peace in our lives? Peace is a very powerful tool, once we have the discipline to implement it and not be distracted by other things. Distractions, such as television and video games, have become a very large part of our lives. They can provide short-term relief, but they destroy the foundations of inner peace. Peace will help you with major decisions as well as the little everyday decisions in your life. I am becoming more sensitive to allowing inner peace to lead me as I experience life. We can live purposefully when we are led by peace.

Repeat after me: “I can be led by peace!” It is your choice, you know. Why would we choose any other way? Too many people have forgotten the internal power that comes from peace rather than anger or hatred. I believe that we have peace deposited in our

hearts as a gift, but if we want to experience it fully, the key is to make a concentrated effort to cultivate peace. We must accomplish this goal in spite of the mistakes we encounter. The vast majority of mistakes are merely problems we have the opportunity to solve; they are rarely personal. Try not to confuse the possible consequences of a mistake with the mistake itself. To retain perspective, simply ask yourself, “What is the worst that can happen?” The answer will often diminish your fear because the worst that can happen may not be that bad. In the rare case that the worst that can happen is something terrible, once you have accepted it, you can focus on the solution and not the mistake. Then you can let the peace in your life work for you.

Do not resist the force of peace. Instead, use the energy that peace provides to stay alert as you explore your true possibilities. Then you will realize that you have never been sharper. You know you are living your life when you realize that no matter how strong your will, there is one that is greater...peace!

Taking Control of Your Life

What we value and the things that motivate us the most vary from individual to individual but the following attributes, in various order, are on everyone's list: family, possessions, faith, reputation, financial security, career, friends, loved ones, and community. We construct our lives around all these attributes with the emphasis changing depending on the circumstances.

To build a balanced life that encompasses all the above attributes, it is imperative to develop your own value system to guide you through your everyday life. Determine which attribute you value most and work towards giving it the corresponding amount of attention. The nature of life is such that your job, partner, friends, schoolmates, career, and community might change but your value system remains unshakable.

Your value system will always remain your center of balance and should ideally be your foundation and your point of reference. Each of us has our own individual and unique value system. To determine your own value system, write down everything on which you focus. Next to it, write down whether or not you can do anything about it. You will realize that you are focused on issues that you have little or no control over and by doing this, you put yourself out of control. If you focus on the things you can control, you put yourself back in control.

It is your responsibility to stay focused on your goals. But always remember that life talks to you. Are you listening? It is always difficult to determine when a certain way of thinking or behaving has become an addiction instead of a choice or focus. One definition of addiction is "habitually giving up on one's self." By this definition, any behavior can be addictive if it controls the individual, rather than the individual controlling the behavior.

Addiction involves a special cycle or predictable pattern of thinking and behaving that captures a person a little more each time they repeat it. The first phase in gaining freedom from addiction is to understand what addiction is and how it works. Control is the key. The question "What is addiction?" can be answered "Addiction is like a thief in the night. Sometimes it takes a little, sometimes it takes a lot, but it never gets enough. It keeps coming back for more until it owns you completely."

The key question is how can we tell the difference between an act that is done often and an act that is addictive? The distinction is whether the act controls the person or the

person controls the act. The avid golfer may prefer to stay out on the course, but he or she will make rational choices and be sure to take care of business. The addicted golfer will play when lightning is striking all around him and his shoes are full of water; even when it means missing work or an important family event. He does not just want to play, he thinks he has to! An addict is a person who surrenders control of him or herself on a habitual basis, thereby giving up their dignity, power, and quality of life.

The addict loses the ability to make good choices. In the process he or she will ignore or explain away the negative results of the addictive behavior. Remember anything can be addictive. Focus is one thing; addiction is another. Know the difference and it could save your family, dreams, hopes, and even your life.

Defining Your Needs

If we do not understand the purpose or the “why” of what we are doing in our pursuit of a great life, we can misjudge the experience and even the outcome. Always remember that success in life is a personal thing. Be brave in your pursuit of success.

Your needs fuel the direction in your life. We constantly find ways to meet our needs. Whether it’s a necessity or just a desire, we have to make our lives satisfying and meaningful. Controlling your needs makes all the difference in your life. How do you control your needs and keep them moving in a united positive effort to achieve maximum life development? There are four questions that Steve Bell outlines in his book, “Life without a Crutch.” These questions will allow you to confirm who is in control of your life—you or your needs:

1. Define the need or desire. Give it a name or label it.
2. Identify the behavior that will satisfy the need, taking time to think it through. Ask yourself the question, “Why is this so important to me?”
3. Ask yourself “Is this a need that will allow me to grow as a person or will it pull me down?”
4. Carry out the behavior that will satisfy the need. The key is to act on it if it is a good need in your life. If it is a bad need, accept the truth that it is not good to satisfy that need.

Thinking plays a very important role in this process. Since our thoughts determine our actions, we have the power to take a natural need and distort it to suggest an unnatural solution. Our mind shapes our life, so we become what we think.

We must understand that needs and determination are important to the success in our lives. There are good and bad needs that we should identify so we can understand why they create determination in our lives. Determination is the refusal to give up or quit. Only strong needs can give you that type of determination. Winston Churchill, former Prime Minister of Great Britain, surprised and disappointed many people at his alma mater when he gave a keynote speech. He rose up, amidst all the expectations and proceeded to give his now-famous three word speech, “Never give up.” Even though many were disappointed, the weight of these three words exceeds many of the hour-long speeches we have all heard. These three words were what the students needed to hear and they are important words for you to bring your needs under control and to unify your motivation for success in life. Focus your energy to move towards the good needs in your life so you can begin to move away from the bad needs that tempt you.

Morality and the Good Life

People with purpose in their lives have chosen to have faith in their decisions concerning life, people, and the things that surround them. If you choose to look for the bad or good in a person, you will find it. Just remember that the quality of experiences, opportunities, and people that you have in your life are there because of your choices. And because of your choices, your life will attract more of the same.

There is nothing more beautiful than a life lived well and nothing more attractive than a good person living their life well. Good people should interest you. That interest will attract your focus, which will ultimately draw you in that direction. That is why we should want to be around good people and why they should interest us so much.

What is their secret? What good people know is that to be truly successful, we have to be moral. When we study morality, we learn about the beliefs, values, rules, and principles we need to know and practice. Knowing is one thing, doing is another. It is our actions that will show our true character. Morality looks at the meaning of a good life and the character of a good person. It helps us understand what it really means to love and how we must live each day to find true purpose in life. The key question one has to answer is, “What interests you in life and why?” The “why” will open your mind to see the possible problems and/or benefits that can come from any relationship. The key is to see the truth; only the truth will help you in life.

There are many ways to think about a moral life. One way is to see it as a search for the kind of happiness that will last. The key here is a lasting effect. Does everyone want to be happy? Of course we do. Does everyone agree on the best way to find happiness? Obviously not. Sometimes, that which we think will bring us happiness falls short. Sometimes, that which we think will make us happy actually leaves us sad, disappointed, or confused. Morality gives us direction. It helps us understand what true happiness is. What’s more, it helps us find such happiness for ourselves. A good person knows that life is a gift, sees its beauty, and is determined not to waste it. As we begin this journey closer to the things that really matter in life, we must always remember these three key factors.

- 1) Goodness is beautiful and has great power.
- 2) Where there is goodness, there is life and real happiness.
- 3) There is something beautiful and good, graceful and promising, in each of us.

Our challenge, and the whole point of morality, is to discover our purpose and the promise in our lives.

Some people may think that morality takes away our freedom. It is true that learning how to love, learning how to be a fair and just person, and learning how to keep our promises

can be difficult. Sometimes, it is easier to forget about others and put ourselves first. Keep in mind that it is easier to be negative than it is to be positive. Please do not take the easy way. You can play the games, but time will always tell the truth. The problem today is that we are not patient enough to let time tell us the truth. Time needs time to talk. Eventually such behavioral tricks catch up with you and the people you are around will see the truth. This type of behavior does us more harm than good in life. Life itself is good. Why is it that so many people have such a hard time finding the good in it?

Choose the Right Way, Not the Easy Way

As you choose to make a positive difference for others' benefit, it's very important that you understand how to be disciplined enough in your own life to enjoy the ride. Sometimes you can control where you are going and other times you can not. If you focus on things that you can not control, you put yourself out of control. You must have enough discipline in your life to focus more often on what you can control, so you will stay in control. Never forget that you can control how you think, feel, and respond. You can always control what you carry with you as you move ahead in life.

Resist the urge to fight against events or to become completely absorbed by them. Instead, find a way to use them positively and productively. There is much to gain in life when you focus on moving forward than when you become consumed by looking backward. Rather than getting hung up on how you got into a certain mess, become enthusiastic about where you can go from here. Then take some quality time in the next 48 hours to pose these questions to yourself:

1) Why am I so worried about the past and so negative about the future?

My Answer: It is easier to go that way. Do not take the easy way.

What is your answer?

2) Why am I not more disciplined in my life?

My Answer: It is easier to turn on the TV than it is to pick up a good book. Do not take the easy way.

What is your answer?

3) Why have I not taken time to right down my goals?

My Answer: It is easier not to. Do not take the easy way.

What is your answer?

4) Why do I come home without energy?

My Answer: It is easier, but remember you need to bring energy home. Your home will give you the energy you need to do the things that really matter in life. Do not take the easy way.

What is your answer?

5) Why do I choose to be jealous instead of being happy for others?

My Answer: It is easier. Do not take the easy way.

What is your answer?

Life is a choice. So think about your choices. All life asks of you is that you do the right thing for yourself and others.

Consider the Possibilities

In today's world, we seem to want the company and our position in it to define us. It is time for us to take charge of our lives and to make a difference. You are a valuable asset. I believe that one of the biggest reasons people fail is they do not think they are valuable or appreciated. Others may not treat you with respect, but that does not negate the fact that you are a truly valuable human being. Nothing anyone else can do or say will ever take away how you feel about yourself. The value of your life is yours! You can hide from it or ignore it if you choose, or you can make the commitment to make a difference by focusing on the possibilities that your life can bring not only to you but everyone close to you. People that choose to succeed always look for what is possible, not what is impossible. Rather than consider what is convenient, consider the possibilities. Do not argue about who is to blame for your mistakes, search for what is possible. The more stressful and uncertain a situation, the more possibilities there are. Like magic, possibilities can turn failure into success. If you will open your eyes to the real possibilities, not to the day in and day out process of your life, you will discover countless opportunities.

What is possible for you today? What is possible in your life? What is possible for your family? Every moment is a choice. Always remain fully aware of the true possibilities and choose to follow the most positive ones.

Keep in mind that you are more than your past and you are more than your limitations. You are more than the troubles of the moment and you are full of great possibilities. Open your eyes and your mind to the possibilities. Look into your possible futures and select the very best one to focus on. You will get back on track to making a difference in your life.

The biggest battle that you have in front of you is that you must truly convince yourself that you are a valuable and worthwhile person. The primary obstacle that stands between you and your desires is the challenge of convincing yourself of this fact. And yet, you have everything you need to overcome life's challenges. After all, you are skilled at convincing others. You have done it all your life. From your first cries that convinced your parents to feed you to the present where you can convince someone else to act in their best interests? Surely you can convince yourself.

Tap Into Your Potential

Potential—The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines potential as “existing in possibility: capable of development into actuality.” You already have the potential for developing the qualities of a leader once you learn how to tap into the potential. If you spend your life clinging to what is comfortable and secure, one day you may regret not testing your talents against the world. When you take shelter from life, you risk numbing yourself to it or even deadening your heart and mind. You cannot allow hard times or misfortune to permanently disable you or stop you from attaining your true potential. It is never too late to tap into your potential as this letter I received from Patrice Pruitt shows:

“I wanted to take a minute to share with you a good seed that you planted that took root and has sprouted into a full grown tree. The first time I heard you speak, you talked about how the average American reads less than one book a year. The comment got me to thinking and I realized that I was one of those Americans. I vowed to do something about it.

“I gradually started reading and the more I read, the more I realized how much I missed reading. I now read about 20 books a year—some for pleasure and some for business. In addition to that change, I also went back to college and graduated Summa Cum Laude from Northwood University with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Management and International Business. I enrolled at Dallas Baptist University and am currently working on my MBA.

“I realize that if someone says that they don’t have the time, it really means that they don’t have the motivation. I’m the Executive Director of the North Texas Chapter of the Air Conditioning Contractors of America and work sixty hours a week consistently. I also have my own business selling clothing for Weekenders USA, am chairperson for the Parish Life Committee at my church and still find time to work on my MBA.

“Thank you for planting a good seed in my life. I look forward to seeing you again soon.”

Your current level of development is not normally an indication of your total potential. Although you may be able to perform only the most elementary skills in your chosen field now, you retain the potential to continually develop. You can improve substantially with increased knowledge of practice. Repetition and practice is the mother of all skills. Every great teacher in history stressed the importance of acknowledging and working on the fundamentals in all aspects of personal and professional life. Mahatma Gandhi, one of

the great leaders of the 20th century, walked a distance of six miles at the dawn of each day. He developed a habit of weaving two hundred yards of yarn into cloth and he had a simple healthy diet that kept him mentally and physically alert throughout his turbulent life. Great athletes start out awkwardly but develop into phenomenal individuals because they consistently apply themselves to the fundamentals of their sport.

Nobody was born a superhuman being; leaders separate themselves from ordinary individuals by using their potential for greatness. It takes months and years of hard work, but leaders tap into their winning ability within and rise above the comfortable but less satisfying levels of mediocrity. The fact that everyone has potential offers a great deal of significance for you. Even though you might not currently look, perform, and act like a winner, you have champion capabilities. It does not matter how old you are. All high achievers were once at the same stage of development that you find yourself in now. They succeeded by tapping their unused hidden potential. They also had a belief in their ability to learn, practice, and dedicate themselves to achieve greatness. So can you if you choose to do so. Those who become emotionally involved in pursuing their goals will strive with more excitement and intensity than those who feel no emotion at all. Pursue your goals with emotion!

Courage

Preparation is a specific process that allows you to adequately rehearse for a task until you believe you are prepared. Working to achieve meaningful goals is the most significant and rewarding way you can spend your time and energy. Instead of defining your success by what you have achieved or acquired, why not begin defining your success by how much you are growing and developing each day?

Enrich your life and become more successful and happy by fulfilling these three requirements:

- 1) Fill your time with activity that is interesting to you.
- 2) Be a coach: find an opportunity to share something of yourself with another person.
- 3) Do something that brings you to the rewards that you desire.

To become a leader, you must spend countless hours preparing for success. If you learn even one new thing about yourself today, it will be a successful day.

No one will hand success to you on a silver platter. You do not arrive at your goals by accident. You arrive because you had a plan of action and you paid the price. Achievements do not happen spontaneously; you must rehearse them. You must practice being a leader before you can reap the benefits that high performance living will provide. The road is not easy but any worthwhile accomplishment is challenging. If you understand that you must prepare for success, you will do what great leaders do.

Success takes courage. Courage is dealing with a challenge head-on. Courage is also a measure of your heart, desire, and inner strength. It is the firmness of spirit that allows you to face danger or difficulty without flinching or retreating. There is no such thing as “no confidence.” We all have confidence in one ability or another. We need to take this confidence in the abilities we are good at and turn it into the provider of our courage with activities that need improvement. Avoid the temptation of retreating from issues with which you are not comfortable or familiar. When a situation occurs in which your competitor is superior and more experienced, your inner strength and courage may provide you with a winning edge.

Courage keeps you from being intimidated. What intimidates you? What has prevented you from moving in the right direction? The only way that someone can intimidate you is they have convinced you to look at failure and not success. Failure is more painful than the benefits you receive from success. Courage keeps you from being intimidated and gives you the confidence to look squarely into the face of defeat. Courage is the mark of a great leader.

Making a Choice to Make a Difference

People expect you to make decisions every day of your life. You cannot escape choosing. It is a fact of life for everyone. Even when you choose not to choose, you make a choice. Accountability and responsibility start with each of us. Once we start holding ourselves accountable for our own choices, we become more responsible in our own lives. And once you take full responsibility for your actions, you become a better spouse, parent, friend, and leader. As a result, the people around us reflect our accountability.

Your choices in life matter, so at least give them some thought before making a decision. Let me give you a personal example. I did a program in South Padre Island and decided to take my daughter, Nicole, with me since I had some free time before and after the event. As we were running on the beach one morning, it became obvious that she was in much better physical shape than I was. So on the way back, I purposefully fell behind. As I slowed to a walk, I began picking up trash on the beach. Nicole finished her run, then came back and asked me why I was picking up trash when I was not the one who put it there. My reply to her was, "I walked on this beach today, and because of a choice I made, it is a cleaner place." Children model their behavior based on what we do. Later that night, I found my daughter picking up trash on the beach on her own accord. I was very glad that the choice I made earlier in the day made a positive difference in my daughter's life.

When someone crosses your path, what choices do you make to make a positive difference in their life? Sometimes we find ourselves moving so fast that we miss golden opportunities to make a difference. Motivational author Og Mandino once stated, "When you are where you are, be there." I try to live by that philosophy each and every day of my life, and I hope you will, too.

What Do Your Habits Say About You?

Habits are a way to program you for success or failure. Either way, it's your choice. First, you form your habits, then your habits form you. Good habits are difficult to establish. They take significant, focused effort over a period of time. If you choose to put forth effort to build good habits, it will pay off significantly when those habits become firmly implanted in your daily life. However, one of the questions people ask me most often is "Why are people negative?" The best answer I can give is that it is easier to be negative than it is to be positive. Habits fall into the same framework; good habits are harder to start but they are easier on you in the long run. Bad habits are easier to start but over time, they become harder on you.

When it comes to habits, our problems don't stem from ignorance as much as they do from not doing what we know is right. For instance, few people read daily but most of us know that regular reading is good for us. Therefore, the problem does not lie in our ignorance but in our habits. There is a direct relationship between a habit and the focus that it receives from us. Breaking deeply imbedded bad habits, such as procrastination, impatience, and selfishness involves more than a little will power and minor changes in our lives. Change your focus and you change what you attract in life. Furthermore, we usually can't fully overcome these habits by ourselves. Our own resolve, our own will, and most important, our own effort—all of these are necessary but oftentimes they are not sufficient to break out of a bad habit. We need to ask for help.

What habit(s) do you want to change in your life? Who you are going to ask to help you break out of a bad habit? I have found that the person you ask for help also has habits that need changing. This openness and willingness to ask for help will allow both of you to help one another. A friend of mine had a real drinking issue and he asked me for help. I told him that he was putting a lot of energy towards that drinking habit and that he shouldn't lose the energy, just redirect it. He is now running marathons and training to compete in an Iron Man competition. He says he has never felt better. He redirected that energy—you can do the same!

The Right Kind of IQ

The letters “IQ,” when written together are usually indicative of a person’s Intelligence Quotient. To the layperson, one’s IQ is a measure of his or her success potential. It is widely believed that the higher the IQ, the more successful the person will become in life. A review of your high school yearbook will tell you this isn’t so. In your yearbook, you’ll find that not all classmates with higher IQ’s were successes in life and not all classmates with lower IQ’s were failures.

Success came to both groups not because of an Intelligence Quotient but because of another type of IQ, one more representative of one’s success potential. The IQ I’m talking about is one’s ability to Identify and Question destructive thoughts. I have taught many seminars on knowing the difference between a good seed and a bad seed. Bad seeds seem to be widespread in our society. Many people reach a point where they identify destructiveness in their lives but don’t know how to maximize their mental skills for changing destructive thought-processes to strong constructive thought-processes. Being able to do this will result in a better future for you and all those who depend on you. True IQ is the ability to know the truth and act on it in time.

Successful people find that the IQ Step System usually produces the long-term success that one is looking for in the life. You just have to understand, and live by, the following steps:

Step 1: Identify the destructive thought

Identifying destructive thinking is essential; without it, successful change is impossible. This is not as difficult as it seems. The following is the rule for identifying destructive thinking: It’s always a safe BET you are thinking destructively when your Behaviors (what you do), Emotions (what you feel), and Talk (what you say) are inconsistent with the reality of the situation. Often times, these are things you notice after the fact. That’s okay as long as you use these identifiers to prevent destructive thinking in the future.

Step 2: Question its relevancy

With identification comes the second step of the IQ system. The questioning component is asking the true “Why?” I have found that many people tend to accept the relevancy of their thoughts unconditionally rather than question it. They act on those thoughts with religious zeal. In their zeal, it never occurs to them that there could be alternative reactions. Because of this, they never develop the mental skills needed to protect, cleanse, renew, and refresh their thinking. As a result, they set themselves up for failure.

Success is your choice. Choosing the right thoughts leads to success.

Decision vs. Choice

Choice is the exploration of desire followed by the selection of action. In every moment, you choose to either align yourself with your true path or to veer away from it. There are no neutral actions. Even the smallest gesture has a direction to it, leading you closer to your path or farther away from it. Pure actions, like spending time with family, will bring you into alignment; false actions, such as spending time with someone you really don't like but to whom you feel obligated, will bring you out of alignment. Every choice in your life carries weight.

Though used synonymously, decision and choice are not the same. You make decisions in your mind, whereas you make choices with your gut. You make a decision by rationally and reasonably weighing the circumstances; you make a choice from deep within, from your essence and the alignment of your heart, your experiences, and your education.

Think back to an authentic choice you made at some point in your life. Perhaps it was a strong desire to visit a foreign country, or a feeling that a relationship needed to end, or the sense that you needed to leave your job and start a new opportunity. How did it feel to act on your choices? Remember that feeling. It is the essence of living in alignment with your path. Life matters, so make a difference!

Honesty

Falsehood is nothing new; it is as old as humanity. In modern times, dishonesty does not always revolve around grievous offenses, nor are the dishonest put to death for their misdeeds. But something within us dies; conscience chokes, character withers, self-respect vanishes, and most importantly, integrity dies in our own eyes.

Without honesty, our lives disintegrate into ugliness, chaos, and a lack of security and confidence. Imagine a society in which it would be unwise or unsafe to trust anyone—from elected officials to financial advisers to the babysitter to teachers to your spouse. Imagine someone who cheated in medical school or found a shortcut through the requirements for medical residency performing surgery on your child.

Without honesty and integrity, leadership erodes and falls apart, whether it is of the family, an organization, our society, or even the nation. Honesty is the keystone that holds any organization together. When is a lie too small to matter? The answer, of course, is never. Those of us with children must be careful not to have them tell the person on the phone that we're not home. Tom Peters, in his book "In Search Of Excellence," reported that the most successful businesses were those that focused internally on integrity. He summarized by saying, "Without doubt, honesty has always been the best policy."

Athens was once called the greatest city in the known world. It was the seat of Greece's government as well as a center of learning and commerce, art and science. Each young man of Athens, when he reached the age of eighteen took this oath:

We will never bring disgrace on this our city by any act of dishonesty or cowardice.

We will fight for the ideals and sacred things of the city, both alone and with many.

We will revere and obey the city's laws, and will do our best to incite a like reverence and respect in those above us who are prone to annul them or set them at naught.

We will strive increasingly to quicken the public sense of civic duty.

Thus, in all these ways we will transmit this city, not lessened, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.

That solemn commitment, and its subsequent expression in the lives of the young men of Athens, became the foundation of the principles and behavior that made Athens the cultural capital of the world. Codes of behavior are neither new, nor are they out-of-date. It is surely neither coincidence nor happenstance that five of the Ten Commandments deal essentially with honesty in its broadest sense.

The question that I leave you with is how would you rate your honesty on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the best rating? Ask a person that is close to you how they would rate your honesty. Let's look at our habits and ourselves for a moment. We will not be judged so much from the past as from the lessons we learn today and the progress we make tomorrow. Honesty is something we all have to work at every second in our lives. It is when we stop working on it that it becomes the barrier that slows down our progress and steals the energy that we need to be able to stand up for the things that matter most in our lives.

Be Willing to Change

Most people who aren't content with their life don't know the reason why. Often they suspect that circumstances or other people are to blame. Even honest, self-aware individuals who know the problems are internal may still have trouble getting to the root of the issue. They ask themselves, "Why am I this way?" They want to change but don't. They simply hope things will turn out all right and become frustrated when they don't. Only when they make the right changes to their beliefs will their thinking be disciplined enough to make a change for life.

One person cannot change another. For many years, I have worked as an inspirational teacher and not as a motivational speaker. When I started out, I wanted to change people for the better but it didn't always work. My intentions were good but I finally realized something: I couldn't change people; they had to do that for themselves. My responsibility in life was to show up for them. As a leader (we are all leaders in one form or another), it is very important to understand the power of showing up for someone else. You might ask yourself what that means. It is when you take the opportunity to show someone else how a specific good change could make a positive difference in his or her life and in the lives of everyone around them. It is that clear understanding of the value of changing your beliefs in yourself, so they can have the energy to make good changes in their life.

In our pressurized society, people who are mentally out of shape usually fall victim to ideas and systems that are destructive to human beliefs and relationships. They become victims because no one has taught them how to think effectively; they haven't dedicated themselves to the lifetime pursuit of mental growth. If they don't have a strong mind, they grow dependent upon the thoughts and opinions of others. Rather than deal with ideas and issues, they reduce themselves to lives full of rules, regulations, and programs.

As you strive to make good changes in your life, focus on these key points:

1. Take it personally – Look at yourself in the mirror and get a clear understanding of why you must change in whatever areas you need to change. The choice must be yours.
2. Make it possible – You are able to make this change. If you don't believe it is possible, it will never happen. Don't forget that some changes in our lives are not possible; make sure that the changes you want to make are possible and then believe in them. That which holds our attention determines our actions. This includes both good and bad habits.
3. Understand that it is painful – It is the discipline that comes from doing what others are not willing to do. It is the difference between just being good and really standing out in life.

4. Believe it is profitable – Understand the reward that will follow this change and clearly understand the consequences that you will live with if you choose not to change. It is the clear picture of the reward that will give you the energy to break through when you are ready to quit.

No matter how old you are or what your circumstances may be, you can change your thinking. When you change your thinking, you will change your beliefs. Belief is not just an idea that you possess; it is an idea that possesses you. A belief holds great power because it changes your expectations. It doesn't matter if you were born rich or poor. It doesn't matter if you have a third grade education or possess a Ph.D. It doesn't matter if you suffer from multiple disabilities or you're the picture of health. No matter what your circumstances, you can learn to make good changes in your life. All you have to do is be willing to engage in the process of good change every day of your life. Once you get started, you will never be able to quit.

Change Your Thoughts First

Do you want to become the person you always hoped to be? If you do, don't start by trying to change your actions. Start by changing your thoughts that will in turn result in the change of actions. In today's high-tech, fast paced world, it can be difficult to find even one place that allows you the quiet time to work on your thoughts each day and to contemplate how they impact your overall results. Where is the best place to think? Everybody is different. Some people think best in the shower. My brother thinks best when he is running; my sister thinks best when she is mountain climbing with her husband. I do my best thinking in the following places:

My truck: I get lots of uninterrupted time to contemplate my thoughts and ask myself why I'm choosing to have these thoughts. Are they thoughts that help me and the people around me? I usually listen to tapes or give concentrated focus to my thought process of the day while in my truck.

On airplanes: Because of my speaking schedule, I spend a lot of time on airplanes. I either read to generate ideas or spend the time taking down notes about my thoughts and ideas that can help people get closer to the truth in life.

My barn: During my live seminars, I always mention "the barn" as the place I find balance in my life. It is where my family, my dogs, and my horse love to be. I have some of my most important thoughts during my "barn time."

My spa: This is one of my favorite places to go and just relax for I remind myself of the most important thoughts that I will never lose. Each time I'm in the spa, my thoughts seem to find a better place in me. I really think it is the relaxed mood in which I find myself during the spa time. This is the one place that I don't find the thoughts—they seem to find me.

In general, thoughts rarely come to mind fully formed and completely worked out. Most of the time, individuals need to contemplate on their thoughts to fully understand them. With time and effort towards your daily thought processes, you can and will produce that person in the mirror that you have always hoped you would be. Your thoughts matter, because you are a product of your thoughts.

As you shape your thoughts, you find out whether an idea has potential to make a difference in your life. Too many people want others to change their thoughts when it is you that must change your thoughts first. Once you do, you will truly obtain a clear picture of why certain thoughts are so important at this time in your life.

Team Building

Choose Team Members Wisely

The first component to consider when developing a team lies in the wise selection of team members. Select members whose mental blueprint shouts to the world “Life’s Good!” Studies have shown that it takes three optimistic people to change the thinking of one pessimistic person. Any number less than that and the gloom and doom of the negative person can overtake the entire group. If only one pessimistic person can make that much of a difference, what do you think two or more pessimistic group members can do to a group?

Of course, experience has probably already answered that question for you. Most optimistic people can relate an experience in which they served on a committee where there were one or more pessimistic members. It wasn’t a pleasant experience, was it? One bad seed can spoil the whole bunch. You can avoid all of these headaches and frustrations if you choose your team members wisely at the outset. Always remember one of the most important laws in leadership. “If you can’t change the people, then you must change the people.” The only thing failure hates worse than failure is loneliness. When a person chooses to be pessimistic, his or her only goal is to get somebody else to think the same way.

Learn to Resolve Conflict “On Its Time”

Okay, you’ve chosen your team members wisely. They are all optimistic, bright, and positive. No pessimism equals no conflicts—goal completion, here we come. Right? Wrong. Regardless of the optimistic mental thinking process of the team members, the potential for conflict is there. This is because each member views the solution based on their own personal experience. Since this is the case, they don’t always see the solution the same way as fellow members. When this occurs, conflict can develop.

However, unlike the group with pessimistic members, optimistic members are skilled at resolving a conflict when it arises. Together, they develop a mutual solution to the conflict by creating a “when to focus” relationship. A “when to focus” situation happens when members view conflict not as an obstacle but as an opportunity to utilize each other’s experience to complete a common goal.

The People Matter!

One of the most fundamental psychological needs of every human is the need to feel important. Everything you do, everything I do, and everything everyone else does is motivated by feelings of importance, the feeling that you make a difference. Generally,

being appreciated fills this need. Think for a minute about the last time someone expressed appreciation to you for a job well done. How did you respond? You felt important and probably worked even harder to sustain their appreciation.

In all walks of life, it is essential to fulfill another individual's need to feel important by expressing appreciation toward them. In no other situation is this truer than within your own team. Team members who are skilled at fulfilling another individual's need to feel important are generally the most persuasive and popular of all team members.

Love What You Do

Do what you love in the service of people who love what they do. There are four “keys.”

1. Do what you love and make sure that your heart is in your work. Bring yourself fully and gratefully into everything you do. Be connected to your own work in order to inspire others. The vast majority of people grossly underestimate the power of the heart. They have no idea (or have forgotten) how much energy can be unleashed in themselves and those around them if they occasionally bypass the bureaucratic choices and just tell others why they love their business, communicating their authentic hopes and aspirations for the future of their company. We don't always remain in love with what we do, like it was in the beginning. But unless you love what you do, you are not making that true difference you are here to make. Accept that as truth and associate with people who will help you fall back in love again—with your job, your life, with all the opportunities that are around you. Don't do what the average person does, fall out of love with what they do, yet hang on as long as they can until they lose what they used to love, and only then appreciate what they had. Successful people have learned how to find ways to fall back in love with what they do before it's too late; they find the energy to encourage growth in the environment for which they are responsible.
2. Understanding the importance of serving people will keep you true, honest, and ethical. If you're doing what you love, you'll make yourself happy. But leadership is not only about you; it's about your impact on others. After years of raising Labrador Retrievers, I always remind the people that buy the pups from me that money buys the dog, but love makes it wag its tail. I believe that in most cases, it is a simple case of mistaken cause and effect. A mission statement in a company doesn't generate the energy that produces the chemistry in the team; love does, great ideas do, principles and values do, and most importantly, learning how to show up for people consistently so they are reminded why they truly love where they are does. During one of my programs in Colorado, a V.P. asked me, “How do you make sure you show up for each employee on a consistent basis?” I asked him how many people are on his team and he replied, “116.” So I told him to take the next 116 workdays and assign each day to one person. Each day would be the “show up day” for that person and during the day, he was to make a point to go out of his way to let that person know that he believes in them and that they are important to the team. When he gets up each day, the first thing he should do to prepare for the day is look for the name of the person whose “show up day” it is. Over the next 116 days, each person will have his or her own day, consistently with no one left out. He asked what I recommended after the 116 days were

completed and I told him to start over at the beginning, this is an on-going process that should never end.

3. Really loving what you do doesn't mean that you find people who love you and then serve them. It means that it is your responsibility to give everyone you serve something to love about you and what you are doing for them. It is important, whether you are talking one-on-one or standing in front of a crowd, that you say "This is who I am, this is what I believe, this is what we can achieve together if we put our hearts into it. I believe in you. Please join me and let's help each other make this happen."
4. Inspire love; don't try to "motivate" it. Never forget that love is the true inspirational motivator of all great people. Love of something or someone; love of a cause; love of a principle; love of people you work with and the customers you have the opportunity to serve; love for the future; and love for your business. These are the things that truly matter in the world. Without the inspiration of your heart, there is no good reason for you to take a stand, to take a risk, to do what it takes to make a difference in life. Remember, if you don't stand for something, then you lose the energy necessary to keep you from falling for anything.

Developing Ideas

I really love to discover and develop ideas. Personal and business breakthroughs often come as the result of developing a good idea and then putting the idea to work for you. I have discovered that a good idea can become a great idea when you give it time, energy and attention. We often think of ideas when we do not have time to deal with them. The first thing you have to do is ‘capture’ the idea in some way such as writing it down or do something physical to make sure you are reminded of the idea again. You can improve most ideas or execute them even if you have to overcome some challenges. Many ideas arise because you have a need to solve a problem.

There are several methods for developing ideas and most require that you do some brainstorming. Here are five brainstorming methods to help you expand your ideas. The first method is powerful yet it is surprisingly easy to implement. It uses the power of your subconscious mind. The origin of the expression “let me sleep on it” comes from this method. You can literally turn your ideas over to your subconscious mind to see them foster. You need to feed your subconscious mind with positive reinforcement declarations such as “I can improve on this idea” or “I will find a solution to this challenge.” When you take this approach, most often your mind will come up with a solution as you go about your other tasks.

The second brainstorming method is mind-storming. This method allows you to just focus on an idea by letting your mind go wild and by thinking out of the box to let the creative juices flow. To implement this method, you need to take your “mind’s eye” to the area where you will execute your idea. In turn, this method will allow you to create the new thinking patterns to help resolve that which challenges you.

The third method is group brainstorming. This method can be formal or informal depending on the idea or nature of the challenge the idea will solve. Group brainstorming has the advantage of drawing on the talents, skills, and experiences of others. You can create electrifying synergy by playing off of each others ideas.

The fourth brainstorming method comes by just doing research on the subject of the idea. The best and fastest way to implement this method is to use the internet. You can type key words in your favorite search engine and apply the results to your idea. Sometimes it may mean a trip to a hardware store, drug store, hobby store, or other physical location to gather information that will physically make your idea come together.

The last brainstorming method comes in the execution stage of your idea. Many times when you start to implement your idea, other initiatives and inspirations come to mind as you work with the idea. The satisfaction of developing and executing an idea builds your

confidence to take on even bigger ideas and projects. Perseverance in idea thinking pays off. Not only does the idea grow, but so do you. It brings great joy!

The Power of the Inner Voice

There is power in the voice in all of us. Your inner voice comes from your spirit. Refresh and strengthen that inner voice by renewing your direction on principles and values. A quiet time of reflection is important because, in today's world, it's challenging to find the solitude and stillness necessary to fortify your spirit.

Daily distractions are like a sword that will cut the energy of the voice to pieces. We hear the treasures of our inner voice only in silence and stillness. If we refresh our inner voice, we can more clearly hear it and can more easily guide and direct others. Once we listen to our inner voice, we have knowledge that not only makes a difference in our lives but allows us to make a difference in others. All of this leads to the confidence that is not found in silence but found in you.

Let the voice in you be like the tree laden with abundance of fruit, so you may produce in life the things that matter not only in your life but in others. Remember, who you are never changes; what you are never stops changing.

The Power of 48 Hours

What comes to your heart must be done within 48 hours, or society or your schedule will distract you or steal it from you. Procrastination is a thief that steals from your present and future. One of the common qualities of unhappy people is their tendency to constantly put things off. They somehow feel they will have forever to accomplish their life's goals. Happy people have developed the habit of "doing it now." They know that the present moment will never come again so they work as if they will live forever, but they live as if today is their last.

We spend our lives moving very quickly through the activities of the day. It is our discipline that allows us to stay focused on the things that matter most. And how do you really know what matters most? By following your heart. It plays a very important part in the outcome of your life. It is when we get too far away from that truth that we find our lives aren't what they used to be or what we want them to be. The happiest people in the world constantly take action to achieve their goals. They do what they can with what they have now. They believe it is better to do something now than waiting to do nothing later. People wait for the right timing to have kids, get married, retire, or start their own business. Why? The time will never be "right." There will always be something that distracts you from realizing your goals, so get to it and do it now.

A great place to start is with your own communication with others. People don't really know how you feel unless you tell them. Most of us aren't mind-readers. We do not know that you love us unless you tell us. We do not know why you are upset unless you tell us. We do not know what your needs, hopes, and dreams are unless you tell us.

You would be amazed at how many people speak to me after my programs and tell me that this is the biggest problem in their lives. They hold back what is on their mind. Parents don't always tell their kids how special they are. Spouses don't always take the time to tell their partner how important they are. Employers don't take the time to share positive feedback with their employees. Friends rarely tell each other that they really care for one another. I guarantee there is someone in your life that wants, needs, and even aches for a kind and loving word from you. Happy people do not assume that the people in their life know how they feel. They tell them regularly how special and important they are in their lives. Make the call, write the letter, or walk into another person's world and tell that special person that you care. I promise you will feel better about yourself and more important, they will feel better as well.

Why Do We Hold On To Emotional Baggage?

Old baggage is emotional stuff we carry around with us for days, months, or even years. It is usually negative, like old hurts, resentment, anger, or some kind of pain inflicted by another person that we care about. It can also be carrying around some guilt, failure, or fear that impacts our current relationships and life in general.

Why do people hold on to these old feelings? Everyone moves through life with their own personal agendas, needs, and life issues. Old baggage starts to feel very comfortable after a while, so comfortable in fact that many people die never letting go of these hurts, slights, and pains.

There is one very good reason to let go of all of this stuff. One of the major causes of stress today is suppressed emotions that fester in the body taking their eventual toll on some aspect of our health. One of the biggest causes of stress today is all of this old baggage. So why let it go? It may kill you if you don't. What do you need to let go of today? What is preventing you from letting it go? What harm is being caused in a current relationship, your career, or business by not letting it go? If your focus is the past then the future will be your past. It is very important that you learn the true discipline to live in the present, with the goal of making the future a better place because you were a part of today. Our futures and memories are created in all of our now moments. Living in the present is the true key to success in life today.

People who focus on the past: mistakes, errors in judgment, words said in innocence, omissions, and disappointments tend to bring a great deal of negative energy from the past into the present. People who focus on the future: expectations, desires, hopes, and dreams tend to miss the value, joy, and wonder of their present moments.

Everyone has "stuff;" no one ever gets rid of it all. The key is to understand that you can't fix what happened yesterday, and you can't fix today what will occur tomorrow. You need to focus on today, the now factor. The ego wants to look good, to control and protect itself. It does not like vulnerability. This will set us up for the hurt, pain, and rejection that we have found to be true in the past. But your soul wants for you the highest reward.

Focus on where you are, and bring energy to the places that matter most in your life. If you live by three of my favorite words, **BRING ENERGY HOME**, you will find the energy that you have been looking for. It is that energy that allows us to stay focused on the things that matter in life, so we can attract the things that count.

Take Time to Live Because Life's Good!

Most people rush through their life. Faster computers, shorter delivery times, and a general desire to “have it now” are prodding us into the future. I see people at work thinking about the beach, and when they go to the beach, they think about work. Not good! They fail to develop the disciplines that will allow them, at the proper times, to nurture their relationships, feed their mind, relax their body, or get in touch with their soul's desire for freedom and peace. Life moves relentlessly forward one day at a time, and there is nothing any of us can do to stop it or even slow it down. Sometimes I'm amazed at how fast my days and nights go by. We are getting older every day, but we don't have to grow older every day. Take time to daydream, visit a friend, or interact with your kids in positive ways, not from the sidelines. Make time to play and rest in your “barn.” (*see page 42*)

Taking time for yourself is important. We all need to take time to breathe, to live life to the fullest, to experience all of its colorful splendor, smells, tastes, and sounds, things that are both internal and external. We must take the time to really appreciate the things that matter the most, or we will lose them. Be proactive, because tomorrow will be here before you know it. Today will be a distant memory before you realize it. We create our future and memories in the present, so go through life today, conscious of your surroundings. Take a long walk, spend time with your family and always remember that today is a gift of life, and life's good! Live life with gratitude and don't ever let the sun set without seeing it, hearing it, and most importantly enjoying it.

Manage What You Expect

One of the biggest causes of frustration and disappointment in life is the unrealized expectations of other people's behavior. Why won't my kid, spouse, employees, friends, neighbors, etc. act the way I think they should? They never will, so relax and let it go. You can never be happy attached to the expectation of outcome you have for other people, no matter who they are.

The behavior by others is in their hands, not yours. I am not saying you should never have expectations. I am only saying that if you always expect others to do as you want them to, you will waste a lot of time and energy being disappointed. Sooner or later everyone—yes, everyone in life—will let you down. That includes friends, parents, spouses, kids, bosses, customers, and even the faithful.

To manage your expectations means you understand that other people are all doing the best they can, at any given moment, with what they have learned thus far on the highway of life. We are all learning every day, either by accident or on purpose. But we are all learning what life wants us to learn now. Keep in mind these people are not setting out to deliberately disappoint you, upset you, or make you miserable. It goes with the territory of being human.

Managing expectations also requires that we learn to love others as they grow through the individual lessons that life has thrown in their path. They may not always act as we would, or think they should, but guess what—we didn't either.

Live Life without Regrets

Regret weighs a ton. Living with words spoken or unspoken, deeds done or left undone, and actions taken or not taken is one of the biggest burdens people can carry. Some carry it to the grave. Living each moment with a happy disposition requires that we live in such a way that there is no need to carry regret into the next minute. If what you regret today was unknown by any other person but you, would you still be carrying that regret? I would be willing to bet in almost every case, it wouldn't have stayed with you this long.

So your regret is not the real issue but the fact that you weren't on an island by yourself when it happened. It's really a matter of being worried about what other people think. Are you ready to hear some really good news? People don't think about you as much as you think they do! So why do some people choose to live with regret? An even better question is why do people act or speak in such a way that they experience the constant negative pull of regret in their life? I believe the answer lies in the fact that it is easier to be negative than positive in life.

Choosing not to grow is easier for people than choosing to grow. I, too, know the pain of regret. I can only share with you what I have discovered: living with regret will not allow happiness, joy, energy, and peace back into your life. Regret is like a long shadow darkening the path behind you as well as the way ahead. If you focus on yesterday's regrets, then by your own choice, you allow them to be part of your today and your tomorrow.

What we choose to focus on, based on the past, will dictate what the future will be for us. Regret has the ability to stretch well into the future and cloud your focus with pain, anger, resentment, grief, blame, or fear. From my heart to yours, it is not worth it. Actions or words, or the lack of them, are not the real culprits here. We all make mistakes that may cause regret. It is what we choose to do about these issues once we become aware of them. We don't have the luxury of taking back what we have said or done in the past, but we can forgive ourselves and others.

What regrets are you living with today that need your forgiveness? These are the thoughts that create the action of wonderful change in your life.

Your Thoughts Matter (so think about what you're thinking about)

The most important thing you can do to guarantee your happiness is learn to control your thoughts. At first glance, this might seem a very easy task each day, but it is just the opposite. It is the most difficult of all tasks in life. Just think of how often today someone else pulled you out of your own thought patterns by their actions or words. Thought control is the one trait all happy people share, whether they are professional athletes or business leaders, husbands or wives, moms or dads.

Most people live their lives in reverse. Most of their thinking is nothing more than recycling old information, over and over again, in their mind. They replay hurts, joys, memories, dreams, and desires that have no essential value to that person's future. Real thought control lets you decide what thoughts have access to your unconscious mind. Most people think about what they don't want, can't have, won't become, or would like to change. It is easier for mankind to excuse success than it is to take responsibility for embracing the disciplines necessary to achieve success in their lives. Successful people accept the mind as a very powerful tool that can create happiness or unhappiness, success or failure, joy or pain, productive "now moments" or wasted time in the present.

To control your thoughts means that nothing gets in that you don't want. If a thought does get in, and it will, dispose of it quickly—don't let it stay too long. Understanding this concept really matters. My question to you is, "What thoughts are filling your mind today? Happy ones? Sad ones? Positive ones? Negative ones? Grateful ones? And why are those the thoughts you're thinking?"

Life Teaches—Are You Learning?

Before the day is over, life will give you the opportunity to learn something about yourself. Life is an interesting and fascinating series of events, processes, and growth opportunities. It is what happens to us as we plan the outcome of our existence. Life is truly a classroom.

There is no final exam, there is no pass or fail (or is there?). You can repeat a lesson again and again, until you learn the necessary skills or attitudes that the teachers in this classroom are trying to help you learn. Each of us travels through our very unique lives toward a variety of circumstances, events, people, and outcomes. We bring them into our lives both consciously and unconsciously.

Some people are good students, learning the necessary lessons the first time they appear in their life. Others can become stuck in the same old patterns, life dramas, and situations, because they fail to bring the learning back to themselves. You can't quit the school of life and you must complete each assignment before you can move on to the next level. Some people refuse to see the learning as theirs, saying "This couldn't be me, could it?" It always seems to be about another person.

We find the opportunity for learning in each of life's experiences or teachers. The key is to bring all the learning back to you and not point fingers at others. We don't always get to choose the curriculum in our lives, but we can sincerely put forth the effort to understand the "Why" that is in our lives. It is the "why" that will allow you to find the "how" in your life.

Limitations are Growth Opportunities

Let's face it—we all have personal limitations. But from those limitations, the “Good Life” can grow. Each of us is called to find liberation from enslaving sins and habits that rob us of joy and the “Good Life.” If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that our weaknesses and failures call us to deal with personal growth issues. We all have issues—I'm a walking issue. We can deny them, or we can see them as invitations to grow into the “Good Life.”

I believe that a good life is a special gift; you have the choice to make a difference, not only for you but for the people depending on you. If you had any idea how many people are on your sideline in life, depending on and learning from you, you would probably think a little more carefully about your choices. You would also have a much better understanding of why you must grow. You have a special set of circumstances, the strengths and weaknesses that are unique to you. Let the “Good Life” be that life situation that you commit yourself to becoming the best person you can be. Not only will your own life become more satisfying, but you will also pass on a genuine hunger and thirst for the “Good Life” to the people that are watching from your sideline.

A Builder's First Tool is Attitude

Attitudes! We all have them. Some contribute to your ability to build successfully, while others sabotage your calling to be a builder of happiness, peace, harmony, and joy.

When was the last time you conducted an attitude audit? When was the last time you asked yourself, “How are my attitudes shaping my present ability and my future opportunities to be a builder?”

When was the last time you asked a spouse, friend, employee, supervisor, or sibling about their interpretations of your attitudes? People that create a builder's lifestyle always stand back and see how they are doing. The best way to do that is to ask another person to help you see you better.

We create our destiny one attitude at a time, because our future is nothing more than the daily accumulation of attitudes about ourselves and others, as well as our past, present, and future. Stand back and look at yourself through the eyes of another regarding your attitudes.

Guard your attitudes, and remember—that which we allow into our lives on a regular basis is what we tend to become like. Be careful of what you let into your inner world, as well as who and what, you let in your outer environment. Why not stop right now and evaluate where you need to make the changes in thoughts, perceptions, interpretations, and beliefs.

Your attitude matters as a good builder and my goal is to encourage you to have a good attitude in life. I have no power at all to make anybody have a good attitude except myself. All I can do is try to inspire you through these articles that you should choose to have a good attitude. I try to point out what I believe to be the correct paths to obtain it. Then it's up to you to choose and follow the proven paths that great builders have used in their lives. Let's all be builders today and for years to come.

The Truth About Joy

Joy is one of the greatest focus points for people that have the Good Life. We have seen books such as “The Joy of Cooking.” These books promise joy as a by-product of doing something. There are also products using the “Joy” trademark, such as the liquid dishwashing detergent by this name. The selling point is that if you use the product, you will have joy. In all these examples, joy is the result of some activity.

Real joy is something different. Most people equate joy with happiness. The two are similar notions but different. Happiness shares the same root as the word “happening.” Both come from the Middle English word “hap” which means chance or luck. If you have a lot of money, you will be happy. If you go on a cruise, you are happy. If you marry the right person, you are happy. There is happiness in joy, but joy is much deeper.

Joy is not dependent on your health, your relationships, or your circumstances. Joy accompanies the presence of a Good Life. Once you understand this, you can accept that joy is a choice you must protect at all times. It is transcendent and eternal, but sin, wrong choices, and distractions can diminish our experience of it. However, it never truly goes away. That is the good news; it has a transcendent nature. I have learned to find the image of joy that helps me understand that joy is ever-present. We all have that place where we find balance in our life.

During my live programs, I discuss the place where we can find balance and remind ourselves of the true joy that we have in our lives. I find balance in my barn. It is not a big barn; it is the place I go to enjoy my horse and my Labrador Retrievers, and to watch my children fish in the tank that I built years ago. I can just relax and experience the things that matter; I can focus on the things that count. We all have “barns” in our life. Yours might be the backyard, a pool, your motorcycle, or just a place you go to hang out.

Life itself will keep you busy enough so that you overlook internal joy. Do not think of joy as extreme hilarity and laughing all the time. I have a sense of humor and like to tell jokes and funny stories as many of you know if you’ve attended my live programs. But I am not the type of person who is always walking around laughing out loud. Just because you are not always laughing does not mean that you don’t have joy. I like the way my wife defines joy. She calls it a calm delight. It is an inner gladness. It is a close relative of peace, yet it is much different. Peace is the tranquility, while joy is the inner delight of knowing your purpose. Turning joy inside out is our choice.

Many people live in constant turmoil. They’re always upset, frustrated, and have some kind of major challenge that’s keeping them from having joy in their life. They can’t sleep at night; they’re too worried. They don’t like the people they work with. They get

aggravated over the smallest things. When they have to sit in traffic or something doesn't go their way, they lose their cool.

It's extremely important that we know how to live a life of joy. We need to be flexible and willing to make some adjustments. When things happen that would normally bother us, we have to put our foot down and just say "No, I'm not going to let that take my joy in life away. I'm going to rule over my own emotions. I'm not going to allow myself to get upset and aggravated. I'm going to choose to keep my joy in life, and not give it up for something that doesn't even matter in the long run."

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one of the most important “whys” in your life. Hatred always fails and bitterness always destroys. We live in a time marked by litigious proceedings and heated exchanges, rather than one of forgiving, forgetting, and extending mercy to those who may have wronged us or let us down.

We have much to be grateful for such as the comforts that a modern society affords us and the privilege of living in a free and prosperous land. It would be fitting for us, as grateful people, to cultivate the ability to forgive and to accept forgiveness. Without that ability, you will always see that Life’s Good, but you will not truly feel it inside. We need to forgive others so that tiny molehills of misunderstanding don’t grow into mountains of destruction. In the home, parents and children hang on to old grievances for years, sometimes even a lifetime. In the workplace, business associates quarrel and refuse to compromise or forgive. So often, many people spend their days blaming others, nurturing grudges, and planning retribution. If you focus on not forgiving, you will pay a high price in your relationships with others.

In “A Piece of String,” French author Guy de Maupassant, tells the story of a peasant named Hauchecome who came to the village on market day. While walking through the public square, he caught sight of a piece of string lying on the cobblestones. He picked it up and put it in his pocket. The village harness maker, with whom he had previously had a dispute, observed his actions.

Later in the day, the loss of a purse was reported. Hauchecome was arrested on the accusation of the harness maker. He was taken before the mayor, to whom he protested his innocence, showing the piece of string that he had picked up. But no one believed him and he was laughed at.

The next day, the purse was found and Hauchecome was absolved of any wrongdoing. But, resentful of the indignity he had suffered because of a false accusation; he became embittered and would not let the matter die. He thought and talked of little else. He neglected his job. Everywhere he went, everyone he met had to be told of the injustice. By day and by night he brooded over it. Obsessed with his grievance, he became desperately ill and died. In the delirium of his death struggles, he repeatedly murmured, “A piece of string, a piece of string.” Because he was unable to forgive and forget, Hauchecome gave up the Good Life for a life of misery.

And yet, there are those who feel that forgiveness is a sign of weakness. But it takes neither strength nor intelligence to brood in anger over wrongs suffered, to go through life with a spirit of vindictiveness, or to squander one’s abilities in planning retribution. There is no Good Life in nursing grudges. You’ve probably heard the phrase, “I don’t get

mad; I get _____.” Although the statement is usually spoken in jest and invites a chuckle, there is nothing humorous about it. This type of thought only promotes a spirit of retaliation and one-upmanship rather than true forgiveness and the ability to forget.

Frankly, most of us have not reached the stage of true forgiveness. It is not easy to reach, but I never said the Good Life was easy. It requires self-discipline and the ability to let go of our pride. The application of forgiveness can be difficult to achieve, but it is even more difficult to live without.

Selfishness is the cause of most of our misery. It is a disease which can spread to the point of being uncontrollable if we allow it. Haven't we all lived beneath ourselves from time to time? You may be able to control your behavior for a while or keep a good attitude for a short period of time, but have you ever wondered why you can't really get free of it, why you are so angry, why you can't get along with certain people, why you are sometimes negative when you don't really want to be, why you are allowing the bad seeds of the past to destroy the good things that your life can bring to those around you? Remember, you can't live with those bad seeds inside you without it doing harm to you and to those around you. If you don't forgive the people who wrong you, they don't really care, but you need to remember that you are forgiving for your sake. You are forgiving so that those bad seeds will not continue to grow inside of you and destroy the Good Life focus.

And haven't we also been in a position to extend a hand of forgiveness that both sides needed? But we don't, because pride or selfishness gets in the way. So many of us are prone to say we forgive, when in fact we are unwilling to forget. Why do we bring up the past again and again? One of the greatest lessons that one can learn when reaching for the Good Life is that there is no true forgiveness without the ability to truly forget that which needs to be forgotten. As one of college football's successful coaches, Lou Holtz, once said that the happiest person in the world is a person with a short memory. If you are truly unable to forget, which is normal, then you need to pass the final test of true forgiveness. When the memory comes to you, does it make you mad, or does it make you appreciate where you are at this moment in life. If anger is still part of the memory, then true forgiveness has not taken place, and you must learn to let it go.

Your willingness to forgive is a sign of maturity that allows you to develop the Good Life focus that you need to rest your mind, body, and spirit and to remain energized. We all need to make a commitment to ourselves to not only forgive what needs to be forgiven, but to forget what truly needs to be forgotten, so your life and your energy can move to the next level. If you want people to forgive you, you must forgive first.

Accepting Differences

We are all unique in our outlook, perceptions, attitudes, feelings, experiences, and history. There is no one just like us in the world. There never has been, nor will there ever be, an exact duplicate of us.

Differences make life interesting, even challenging. Dealing with other people who see life differently makes for interesting relationships. Differences give us opportunities for growth, insight, and awareness. The unfortunate thing is that these differences can often lead to unmanaged or unresolved conflict, stress, and disappointment.

People who live the Good Life accept the uniqueness of individuals. They are not on a mission to change them, correct them, or invalidate them. Good people understand that everyone is on their own path throughout life doing what they need to do for them to fulfill their own Good Life.

Good people also accept themselves for who they are and what they become in life. They are not in a rush to get to the end of the game. They are patient with themselves and others, knowing that differences in human behavior are normal in life.

Who are you trying to change? Who in your life needs behavior or attitude modification? If you have a long list, you have a lot of work to do on yourself before you will truly find the Good Life.

Just Show Up

For many of us, growing older produces an increased tendency to rely on known patterns. It becomes harder to take risks. We rely on conservative choices and hold on to what we perceive to be security. It becomes more natural to say no. It becomes easier to criticize and complain, and the vibrancy of our life dims. We all have a special purpose, what I refer to as the “Why” in life, not the “How.” One of the biggest challenges that we have in front of us today is the ability to show up for the people who are depending on us. When we show up for others, it’s easier to be in harmony with one another and to have fun. We show up not only for the benefit of our own needs, but to connect with others in a more immediate way.

The Good Life asks us to lighten up and look around. It offers an alternative to the way many of us lead our lives. It requires that we say okay and be helpful, rather than be argumentative and difficult. It offers us a chance to do things differently. An ordinary day is filled with the rituals of getting out of bed, filling the coffeemaker, taking in the paper, going to work, and sitting down at our desk or workstations. We have the choice of going through the motions and plodding along half asleep, or we can wake up to the Good Life. I choose to do things differently right now and I really hope you do, too, because you have people depending on your ability to find the Good Life.

Why have you been asked to do so much with your choices, thoughts, behavior, and disciplines in life? Because you are a leader. Otherwise, you wouldn’t take the time to read this. You have the option to make your choices, or let others make them for you. It is up to you. This choice brings a benefit and a consequence. When you choose to show up for those around you, this will help them go up as well. I didn’t say grow up, I said go up. Remember if you do, they will. If you don’t, they won’t.

Why Good Life Principles Are Important

Now is the time to seek out the information you need to get to the next level. Then choose to outlast the negatives that will try to stop you. Proven principles, also called “secrets of success,” are at the heart of all successful actions. Since ancient times, people have sought to reveal and articulate these principles. Few have discovered them; fewer still have developed the disciplines to consistently use them. But those who succeed have been able to create a consistently high level of results.

Each principle on its own will yield some positive results; but when used in conjunction with each other they create a continuous journey of success. These principles marshal a truly unfathomable power to bring your life to the next level.

The circumstances in which you apply these principles may change constantly, but the principles themselves always remain the same. They are truly time-tested to produce results in your life. Once you understand why these principles are so important, you will apply them with your full attention and desire. Afterwards, your unwavering belief in yourself will reach its highest level, moving you directly toward realizing your dreams and finding the energy needed during your personal success journey.

These principles are as follows:

- Take charge of what you seek in life, and find the information needed to move yourself forward with your dreams.
- Apply the information within 48 hours of learning it.
- Be persistent when moving toward your focus; know why you are seeking it.
- Understand the power of the heart and how it leads to success.
- Be willing to teach what you have learned. The best way to learn something, to internalize it and truly make it part of you, is to teach it to others.

These proven principles can help you succeed beyond your wildest expectations. I want you to begin sharing these concepts right away with everyone in your life that is depending on you. True joy and fulfillment come from giving and making a difference in the lives of those you love. It is the only real legacy we leave when our time on earth is over.

Understanding Criticism

It is amazing how much power criticism has to stop progress, so we must turn criticism from a hurtful comment into a valuable tool. Over the years, I have found that there is only one right way to respond to criticism. The key is in your response, not only outwardly to the person giving the criticism, but also internally, giving yourself the power to use it in a constructive way.

The first internal step is to carefully consider the source. Does the person that criticized me know me? Do they know any of the intimate details of my life or my job? If the answer is no, then I can't take their criticism to heart. This determination is important in step two; determining the accuracy of the criticism. If the source is a credible one and it is accurate, then it's time to decide what to do with it. Step three is to take it into consideration.

Since most people don't enjoy criticism, it's important not to react. The difference between responding and reacting is that responding has much more thought behind it. Act on the truths you find in the criticism, but don't react defensively or in anger simply because you don't like to be told you're wrong.

Criticism is important to us because it gives us the opportunity to see and improve the faults in the current processes of our lives. Remember to quickly consider and act on the criticism someone gives you, but proceed slowly when criticizing others. Think about your own experiences. Some of the constructive and destructive criticisms that people have told you still influence your life today. I don't have to tell you about the power of words when you already know the effect they've had on your own life. The most hurtful criticism usually comes from family members. Remember to proceed with caution when directing criticism at a person you love. They have chosen to lower their guard because they love, respect, and trust you; they have not put up defenses to protect themselves from your words.

However, constructive criticism is still a very important and necessary part of life. Offer it sparingly and give it only when necessary. The correct reason for criticizing a person is to ultimately bring a positive change in their life. Do not criticize when you're angry or vengeful. Count slowly to ten, and remember the old adage, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all." The ability to stay silent is one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself. Moreover, learn to develop the true understanding of your choices, because the choices you make in the area of constructive criticism matter a lot to your future relationships with the people you work with and your loved ones.

The Single Biggest Cause for Losing the Good Life

When we think of greed, we usually think about it in relation to other people rather than ourselves. The truth is that the seeds of greed are present in every human heart; it is natural. In some people, these seeds subtly take root and gradually influence more and more of our decisions by holding our focus in that area too long, preventing us from achieving what we value most. They begin to take over our daily focus, which results in a big change in our ability to stay within the Good Life principles.

Although greed can certainly drive one's pursuit of riches and material possessions, greed is not about money. It is an attitude—a person can be greedy in just about any imaginable area. But in our society, the most visible form of greed is the pursuit of wealth. The question that I like to ask people at my programs is, “Do you give in to greed?” If I was to ask you if you have a problem with greed, most people would say no, and I really believe them. Yet greed may be quietly taking root in their heart. The fact that it hasn't yet produced an alarming symptom or a devastating consequence does not mean that it is absent or benign. If you don't take preventive or corrective measures, sooner or later it may ultimately rob you of your ability to have and keep the Good Life.

The results of greed can and will:

- Steal your Good Life away.
- Destroy your financial security.
- Affect your loved ones.
- Steal the energy inside you.
- Take happiness from those that need it.
- Steal your integrity.
- Create a false sense of security.

How to see the signs of greed in your life:

- Coveting
- Needing “more, more, more”
- Always in a hurry
- Closing your eyes to the truth
- More conflict, adversity, and problems in general in your life.

The key is to think, slow down, and ask yourself, “What is my focus?” When our focus continually shifts to what we don't have, we create turbulence in our lives and the lives of those around us.

The question people often ask me is “Can I achieve success and the Good life without being greedy?” My answer to that is, “If you are fishing and your goal is to enjoy the day and catch fish, then you have the Good Life focus. If your goal is to catch the biggest fish and to beat another when you are not in a competitive event, then your focus is on greed.” How easy it is to lose focus on why we went fishing. The key is keeping your efforts to succeed in the right perspective. Be on the alert for warning symptoms of greed; seek the counsel of others who care about you and your family. Doing so will enable you to keep greed from gaining a foothold in your heart and in your life.

How to keep greed out of your focus:

- Set your focus on giving to others.
- Don't ask for fewer problems, ask for more skills.
- Use labor to achieve financial success, as opposed to chasing wealth.
- Don't try to get rich; ask for more so that you can bring more value to the people that depend on you.
- Learn how to be happy with what you have while you pursue all that you want.
- Greed only appreciates what it has after it is lost. The Good Life learns to appreciate what it has before it is lost.
- Don't just let your business make something for you; let it make something of you.

We think that we can control a little greed in our lives, but we can't. We can't take the greed out of greed. Let it gain a little foothold in your life and it will ultimately steal the Good Life from you.

Anger Destroys the Good Life

Anger is an emotion caused by unresolved hurt, frustration, and fear. If we deal with the underlying source of our anger, it will soon dissipate, but if we react to the situation by expressing our anger, it will perpetuate itself. Remember, whatever you focus on, good or bad, will affect tomorrow's opportunities. Expressing anger creates negative consequences, and hurts others and ourselves in the process. Storing it up or burying it isn't any better. Unresolved anger produces resentment and bitterness, poisons your thoughts, and creates "bad seeds" in your life.

People that have the Good Life understand how important it is to eliminate unresolved anger. Here are some steps you can take to accomplish that goal.

- Put the problem in writing and then burn it.
- Try to understand the "why" of the circumstance, not the "how."
- Go hunting. Look for the positive side and focus on it.
- Let go of the anger. Forgiveness allows you see better.
- Ask for help. We all loved to be asked.
- Remember, if you hold on to anger, it will hold you back. Life is too short to be held back.

How can you undo the damage caused by your anger? It's impossible to change what has happened in the past, but if you humbly take responsibility for your actions, you might be able to undo the damage you have caused. Take the next four steps to begin repairing your relationships.

- Tell the person you're sorry within 24 hours and mean it.
- Ask for forgiveness. Don't demand it, or expect it. Just ask.
- Relationships take work, so work to restore the relationship.
- Never seek revenge.

Anger isn't a one-time thing. It is an emotional force we must deal with throughout our lives. The good news is that we don't have to be victimized by anger. It's your choice.

Heroes

We all need heroes—courageous, self-sacrificing people, giving examples for living to all of us. Everybody loves a hero. People line up for them and cheer them on. They stand in the rain for hours just to get a glance of the one that taught them to hold on a second longer. I believe there is a hero in all of us. A hero who keeps us honest, gives us strength, and makes us noble; who produces the ability to understand and see the “why” in our life.

Heroes understand that even though we have dreams, sometimes we must choose to be steady, and delay the things we want most at that time. We must heed this advice. Hearing and listening to the right advice will produce the direction that we need to take in the next year. It provides guidance to handle the challenges that we can all expect. I call this “leaning forward in life.”

The Definition of Success

While I was thinking about the definition of success recently, one of my sons mentioned how cool it would be if he won the lottery. He jokingly said he would share with me, as long as a couple of million were left for him. Then he asked me what I would change about my life if I had all that money, and that's when it hit me: there's nothing I would really change. The only difference would be that I wouldn't have to be concerned about paying the monthly bills anymore, and maybe I would purchase a really nice house on a lake. But the actual contents of my life and the way I have furnished it so far would not undergo any significant transformation.

This discovery intrigued me. In fact, I was mulling it over long after the conversation with my son was over. I started wondering if success should be defined as the degree of satisfaction a person achieves with regard to the general contents of their life and contentment with the choices they have made. Just think about it for a moment: there are many wealthy people I meet who would give away much of their assets if only they could obtain contentment. Then there are the people balancing on the edge of poverty that have peace in their hearts, smiles on their faces, and activities that they would not want to change for the world. Now, which category of these people is really successful?

My conclusion is that success has just as many faces as any other possible theme, depending on the society in which it is measured, and the character of the person who measures it. Many people confuse success with wealth: they assume that a person's triumph can be determined by the cost of a watch, a car, or a house. They envy those in their circle of acquaintances who can financially afford more than they can. They keep comparing themselves with the Joneses and allow their happiness to depend on the level to which they can equal these people's lifestyles. They forget to do the simplest thing in the world: turn inside and analyze what it is that they really want. I always ask people in my seminars: If what you want has not become a reality at this time in your life, is it because of lack of discipline, effort, strategy, and timing, or is it someone else's goal and not truly your heart's desire?

I think success should be synonymous with happiness rather than affluence. It's only when you find satisfaction with what you're doing and don't dread facing each new day that you are truly successful. When you can move in an environment that pleases you, and where you feel at ease with the ones you deal with on a daily basis; when you feel loved, cared for, understood, and valued in what you do, and you don't have to switch personalities from one location to another, that's when you've really attained success. When you see that you make a difference, even if it is only in one person's life, when you are presented with gratitude, not only from others, but from your outer-self to your inner-self, that's when you are a real winner.

We cannot measure success by a person's cash or material cover, but by what exudes from his or her personality. You can feel it in a touch; you can hear it in a voice and in the way someone speaks, and you can see it in the eyes. Successful people are self-assured, know what they want, and go for it. And what they want, they determine internally and not by what others dictate to them.

So, my question to you is “Have you found the true success that matters most in life?”