

INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

YOU CAN WIN[®]

A step-by-step tool for Top Achievers

Shiv Khera

New
Edition

“Winners don’t do
different things.
They do things
differently.”



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A STEP BY STEP TOOL FOR TOP ACHIEVERS

SHIV KHERA

B L O O M S B U R Y
LONDON • NEW DELHI • NEW YORK • SYDNEY

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BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHING INDIA PVT. LTD.

www.bloomsbury.com

ISBN: 978-93-82951-53-7

*First published, 1998; Reprinted, 1998-2002 (twenty-two times);
Revised edition, 2002; Reprinted, 2003-2008 (twenty-six times);
2009 (twice); 2010; Special edition, 2011; Reprinted, 2011, 2012 (twice);
Special edition, 2013; Reprinted 2013 (twice)*

New edition published by Bloomsbury 2014

Published by Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt Ltd
Vishrut Building, DDA Complex, Building No. 3
Pocket C-6 &7, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110 070

Printed and bound by Replika Press Pvt Ltd, India

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*To my mother to whom I shall remain indebted for setting the foundation
on which this book is based*

MR SHIV KHERA is the founder of **Qualified Learning Systems Inc. USA**. An author, educator, business consultant and a successful entrepreneur, he is a much sought-after speaker.

He inspires and encourages people, making them realise their true potential. He has taken his dynamic personal messages to opposite sides of the globe, from the U.S. to Singapore. His thirty years of research, understanding and experience have helped people on the path of personal growth and fulfillment.

Mr Shiv Khera is the author of **sixteen books** including the international bestseller '**You Can Win**', which has sold over **2.76 million copies** in sixteen languages. His other books are creating new records. His clients include **Lufthansa, IBM, HP, Citigroup, HSBC, Canon, Nestle, Philips, Mercedes Benz, Johnson & Johnson** and many more.

Tens of thousands of people have benefitted from his **dynamic workshops internationally** in over seventeen countries and **millions** have heard him as a **Keynote Speaker**. He has appeared on numerous radio and television shows.

He has been recognised by the Round Table Foundation and honored by Rotary International and The Lions International.

His Trademark is
**“Winners don’t do different things,
They do things differently.”***

PREFACE

SUCCESS does not mean an absence of problems, it is overcoming problems. Success is not measured by how high we go up in life, but how many times we bounce back when we fall down.

Have you ever wondered why some people are more successful than others? It is no secret - they simply think and act more effectively. They have mastered the principles of success. Positive behavior comes effortlessly to them because they have internalized the success principles. Successful people accept responsibility and hold themselves accountable for their actions and decisions.

This book can empower you to achieve your goals and live a meaningful life.

You might have heard of the power of positive thinking, but have you ever heard of the power of negative thinking? Power of positive thinking, empowers you with a will power to succeed. Power of negative thinking empowers you with won't power to fail.

WHAT KIND OF BOOK IS THIS?

In one sense, this book is a construction manual. It describes the tools you will need for success, and offers blueprints to help you build a successful and rewarding life.

In a second, sense, it is a cookbook. It lists the ingredients—the principles—you will need to follow to become successful and gives you the recipe for mixing them in the correct proportions.

But, above all, this is a guidebook – a step by step, how to book that will take you from dreaming about success to unlocking your potential for success.

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

This book will empower you with time tested principles, which if applied properly, can help you to achieve lifetime success.

But the concepts in this book cannot be absorbed by casual browsing or by gulping the whole book down in one reading. It should be read slowly and carefully, one chapter at a time. Don't move on to the next chapter until you are sure you understand every concept in the previous chapter.

Use this as a workbook. Write marginal notes to yourself. Use a highlighter as you read and mark those words or sentences or paragraphs that seem vital, or especially applicable to you.

As you read, discuss the concepts in each chapter with your spouse or partner, or with a close friend. A second (and hopefully frank) opinion from someone who knows your strengths and weaknesses can be especially helpful.

START AN ACTION PLAN

One of the purposes of this book is to help you create an Action Plan for the rest of your life. If you have never created an Action Plan, it defines three things.

1. What you want to achieve
2. How you expect to achieve it
3. Target date to achieve it

As you read this book, keep a notebook handy, divided into three sections: your goals, the stages in which you plan to reach them, and your timetable for success.

By the time you finish reading this book, your notebook will be the

foundation on which you can build your new life.

The principles in this book are universal. They are applicable in any situation, organization, or country. As Plato said, "Truths are eternal."

Throughout the book I have used masculine gender, only for the purpose of ease in writing. The principles apply to both genders and are based on the premise that most people fail not because of lack of ability or intelligence but because of lack of desire, direction, dedication, and discipline.

This revised edition clarifies and elaborates many concepts. It contains a detailed, step by step action plan along with the auto suggestions for the chapter on Subconscious mind in order to implement the concepts explained in the book. The revised edition not only explains the principles of success but also how to implement them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ANY accomplishment requires the effort of many people and this work is no different. I thank my daughters and especially my wife, whose patience and support was instrumental in accomplishing this task. I thank my staff whose diligent effort made this publication possible.

Many examples, stories, anecdotes are the result of a collection from various sources, such as newspapers, magazines, other speakers and seminar participants over the last twenty-five years. Unfortunately, sources were not always noted or available; hence, it became impractical to provide an accurate acknowledgment. Regardless of the source, I wish to express my gratitude to those who may have contributed to this work, even though anonymously.

Every effort has been made to give credit where it is due for the material contained herein. If inadvertently we have omitted giving credit, future publications will give due credit to those that are brought to the author's attention.

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IMPORTANCE OF ATTITUDE

Winners' Edge

Ability teaches us how we do, motivation determines why we do,
and attitude decides how well we do.

There was a man who made his living selling balloons at a fair. He had balloons of many different colors, including red, yellow, blue and green. Whenever business was slow, he would release a helium-filled balloon into the air. When the children saw the balloon go up, they all wanted one. They would come up to him, buy a balloon and his sales would go up. All day, he continued to release a balloon whenever sales were slow. One day, the balloon man felt someone tugging at his jacket. He turned around and a little boy asked, "If you release a black balloon, will that also fly?" Moved by the boy's concern, the man replied gently, "Son, it is not the color of the balloon, it is what's inside that makes it go up."

THE same principle applies to our lives: It's what's inside that counts and what's inside of us that makes us go up is our attitude. William James of Harvard University said, "*The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.*"

Most of us have heard of the power of positive thinking but very few have heard of the power of negative thinking. They both are very powerful but take us in totally opposite directions. Just the way positive thinking empowers people to achieve new heights, negative thinking propels people towards self-destruction.

YOUR ATTITUDE CONTRIBUTES TO SUCCESS

A study attributed to Harvard University found that when a person gets a job or a promotion, eighty-five per cent of the time it is because of his *attitude*, and only fifteen per cent of the time because of intelligence and knowledge of specific facts and figures. Isn't it surprising then, that almost hundred per cent of education dollars go to teach facts and figures, which account for only fifteen per cent of success in life!

YOU CAN WIN is all about that eighty-five per cent of success. *Attitude* is the most important word in the English language. It applies to every sphere of life, including one's personal and professional life. Can an executive be a good executive without a good attitude? Can a student be a good student without a good attitude? Can parents, teachers, salespersons, employers or employees be good in their roles without a good attitude?

The foundation of success, regardless of your chosen field, is *attitude*.

If attitude is such a critical factor in success, shouldn't we examine our attitude towards life and ask how our attitude will affect our lives?

ACRES OF DIAMONDS

Hafiz was a farmer in Africa who was happy and content. He was happy because he was content. He was content because he was happy. One day a wise man came and told him about the glory of diamonds and the power that goes along with them. The wise man said, "If you had a diamond the size of your thumb, you could buy your own city. If you had a diamond the size of your fist, you could probably buy your own country." And then the wise man left. That night, Hafiz couldn't sleep. He was unhappy and he was discontented. He was unhappy because he was discontented and discontented because he was unhappy.

The next morning Hafiz made arrangements to sell his farm, took care of his family and went off in search of diamonds. He looked all over Africa and couldn't find any. He looked all through Europe and couldn't find any. By the time he got to Spain, he was emotionally, physically and financially broke. He was so disheartened that he threw himself into the Barcelona river and committed suicide.

Back home, the person who had bought his farm was watering the camels at the stream that ran through the farm. Across the stream, the rays of the morning sun hit a stone and made it sparkle like a rainbow. He thought the stone would look good in his living room. He picked up the stone and put it on his mantle piece. That afternoon, the wise man came and saw the stone sparkling. He asked, "Is Hafiz back?" The new owner said, "No, why do you ask?" The wise man said, "Because that is a diamond. I recognise one when I see one." The man said, "No, that's just a stone I picked up from the stream. Come I'll show you. There are many more." They went and picked some samples and sent them for analysis. Sure enough, the stones were diamonds. They found that the farm was indeed covered with acres and acres of diamonds.*

What is the moral of this story?

There are many morals:

1. When our attitude is right, we realise that we are all walking on acres of diamonds. Opportunities are always under our feet. We don't have to go

anywhere.

2. When we don't know how to recognize opportunity, it could slap us on our face and we would still not be able to recognize it. All we need to do is to learn to recognize opportunities.
3. People, who don't know how to recognise opportunities, complain of noise when they knock.
4. Lost opportunities are easier recognised when they are leaving rather than when they are coming.
5. An opportunity only knocks once. The next one may be better or worse, but never the same one. That is why it is so crucial to make the right decision at the right time. A right decision at the wrong time becomes a wrong decision.
6. The grass on the other side always looks greener. There are two dimensions to the greener grass: a. It may be possible that the other farmer is taking better care of his grass and it is actually greener. b. Most of the time, however, it is only an illusion. Many times in life, while chasing an illusion, we lose out the opportunity right under our own feet.
7. While we are eyeing the grass on the other side, there are others who are eyeing the grass on our side. They would be happy to trade places with us.

DAVID AND GOLIATH

We all know the Biblical story of David and Goliath. Goliath was a giant of a man. He struck fear in everyone's heart. One day, a seventeen years old shepherd boy came to visit his brothers and asked, "Why don't you fight the giant?" The brothers were terrified of Goliath and replied, "Don't you see he is too big to hit?" But David said, "No, he is not too big to hit, he is too big to miss." The rest is history. We all know what happened. David killed the giant with the slingshot. Same giant, different perceptions.

Our attitude determines how we look at a setback. To a positive thinker, a setback can be a stepping-stone to success. To a negative thinker, it can be a stumbling block. Great thinkers and philosophers feel and believe that every problem comes with an equal or greater opportunity for success.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTITUDE TO ORGANISATIONS

Have you ever wondered why some individuals, organisations- or countries are more successful than others? It is not a secret! They simply think and act more effectively. They do so by investing in their most valuable asset—*people*.

I have spoken to executives in major organisations internationally and

asked them a question: “If you had a magic wand and there was one thing you could change that would make you more productive, what would it be?” Their answers were unanimous. They said they would like to change their people’s attitudes. With better attitudes people would be better team players, cut down on waste, quality & bottomline would go up. In general, their company would be a great place to work in.

Experience has shown that human resources are the most valuable asset. People are more valuable than capital or equipment. Unfortunately, human resources are also the most wasted of resources. *People can be your biggest asset or your biggest liability.*

TQP—TOTAL QUALITY PEOPLE

Having attended a number of training programs such as customer service, selling skills, strategic planning etc., I have come to the conclusion that most of these are great programs with one major challenge: none of them will work unless they have the right foundation and the right foundation is *TQP*. What is *TQP*? **TQP** is *Total Quality People*. **They** are people with character, integrity, good values and positive attitudes.

Don’t get me wrong. You do need these programs, but they will only work when you have the right foundation—*Total Quality People*. For example, some customer service programs teach participants to say ‘please’ and ‘thank-you’, smile and shake hands. How long can a person smile if he does not have the desire to serve? Besides, people can always see through a fake smile. When the smile is not sincere, it is irritating. The point is, there has to be substance over form, not just form over substance. Without a doubt, people who serve customers should say, ‘please’ and ‘thank you’, smile and so forth—these things are important. But keep in mind that they come a lot easier when accompanied by a desire to serve.

Someone once approached Blaise Pascal, the famous French philosopher and said, “If I had your brains, I would be a better person.” Pascal replied, “Be a better person and you will have my brains.”

Great organisations are not measured by wages and working conditions, they are measured by feelings, attitudes and relationships. When employees say, “I can’t do this,” they’re really saying one of two things: Either they are saying “I don’t know *how to do it*” or “I *don’t want to do it*.” If they are saying *I don’t know how to do it*, that is a technical training issue. If they are saying that *I don’t want to do it*, they are again really saying one of two things: 1. Either I don’t care to do it or 2. I feel strongly enough not to do it. The first one is an attitude issue (they don’t care). The second one is a values issue (they don’t believe they should do it). We find a greater percentage of

challenges all over the world fall into these two categories. Attitude is the foundation to success. The greater the success, the stronger the foundation.

The Calgary Tower stands at 190.8 meters. The total weight of the tower is 10,884 tons, of which 6,349 tons are below ground (approximately sixty per cent). This shows that the tallest and the greatest buildings have the strongest foundations. Just like a great building stands on a strong foundation, so does success. And the foundation of success is *attitude*.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

I believe in a holistic approach. We are not just arms and legs, eyes and ears, a heart and a brain, but a complete human being. The whole person goes to work and the whole person comes home. Behaviours don't change. People who are honest at home are honest at work and people who are dishonest at home are dishonest at work. We take family problems to work and work problems to the family. What happens when we take family problems to work? Our stress level goes up and our productivity comes down. Similarly, work problems too have an impact not only on our families but on every aspect of our lives. Personal, professional and social problems are strongly interconnected and impact each other.

FACTORS THAT DETERMINE OUR ATTITUDE

Let me ask you: Are we born with attitudes or do we develop them as we mature? What are the factors that form our attitudes? Can attitudes be changed?

Most of our attitudes were shaped during our formative years.

While we were born with tendencies toward temperaments, there are three factors that largely determine our attitude formation. These are the triple E's of attitude:

1. Environment
2. Experience
3. Education.

Let's evaluate each of these factors individually.

Environment

Environment consists of the following:

- **Home environment:** positive or negative influences start rubbing off on all family members

- **School environment:** peer pressure
- **Work environment:** supportive or over-critical environment
 - **Social environment:** media, television, newspapers, magazines, radio, movies etc. What is socially acceptable or unacceptable, starts influencing our attitude
 - **Economic environment:** abject poverty—Can you teach values on an empty stomach?
 - **Religious** environment: Many times, either interpretation or misinterpretation of religion makes people fatalistic.
- **Political** environment

All these environments create a culture. Every place—be it a home, organisation or a country—has a culture or lack of it, even lack of it is a culture. For example, if you go to a shop you may find the sales person polite, the supervisor polite, manager polite, the owner polite. You go to another shop and you find the salesperson rude, supervisor rude, manager rude and the owner rude. There is a culture running. Similarly, if you go to a home and you find the kids are courteous, so are the parents, even the help is polite. You go to another home, you may find the kids are fighting like cats and dogs, so are the parents, even the help is rude. There is another culture running. Culture in any place always goes top down, never bottom up.

In countries where there is political uncertainty, people stop thinking long term, they start thinking short term. Their objective becomes to fleece everybody and fill their pockets today, because if their pockets are full today, they will be more prepared to face the uncertainties of tomorrow.

In countries where the government and political environment is honest, generally you will find that the people are honest, law abiding and helpful. And the reverse is true too. In a corrupt environment, an honest person has a hard time, whereas in an honest environment, a corrupt person has a tough time. *“In a positive environment, a marginal performer’s output goes up. In a negative environment, a good performer’s output goes down.”*

We need to step back and look at what kind of environment we have created for ourselves and those around us. It is tough to expect positive behavior in a negative environment. **In societies where lawlessness becomes the law, honest citizens become cheats, crooks and dacoits.**

Take some time to evaluate how the environment that you are in affects you and how the environment created by you affects others.

Experiences

Events and experiences in life determine our attitude. If we have a positive experience with a person, our attitude towards him is likely to be positive and conversely negative experiences tend to make us cautious. Experiences and events become reference points in our lives and we draw conclusions which serve as guidelines for the future.

I teach my grandson to tell the truth. If he sees me lying, he gets somewhat confused initially, because he hears one thing and experiences something else. He draws his own conclusions based on his experience which become his reference points going forward in life.

Education

Holistic education ought to teach us not only how to make a living but also how to live.

Education refers to both formal and informal education. We are drowning in information but starving for knowledge and wisdom. Strategically applied, knowledge translates into wisdom which in turn translates into success.

The role of the educator is vital. A teacher affects eternity. The ripple effect is immeasurable.

HOW DO YOU RECOGNISE PEOPLE WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE?

Just as the absence of ill health does not equal good health, similarly the absence of negativity does not make a person positive.

People with positive attitudes have certain personality traits that are easy to recognise. They are caring, confident, patient and humble. They have high expectations of themselves and others. They expect positive outcomes.

A person with a positive attitude is like a fruit of all seasons. He is always welcome.

THE BENEFITS OF A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

There are many benefits of having a positive attitude. The advantages are easy to see. But unfortunately, sometimes what is easy to see is also easy to miss!

A positive attitude:

- Makes for a pleasing personality
- Is energizing & invigorating
- Gives fulfillment and makes life meaningful
- Inspires oneself and others
- Helps people become contributing members and assets to society

- Increases productivity & profits
- Fosters teamwork & better relationships
- Solves problems & makes positive decisions
- Brings pride in performance and improves quality
- Makes for a congenial atmosphere
- Breeds loyalty & dependability
- Reduces stress & increases happiness
- In other words, a positive attitude leads to a happy, healthy & prosperous life.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE

Life is an obstacle course and we become our biggest obstacle by having a negative attitude. People with negative attitudes have a hard time keeping friendships, jobs, marriages and relationships. Negative attitudes lead to:

- Bitterness
- Discontentment
- A purposeless life
- High stress for self and others
- Resentment
- Frustration
- Ill health

Negative attitudes create an unpleasant environment at home, at work and in society. They pass on their negativity to others around them. People with negative attitudes become a liability to society.

Do attitudes go from one generation to the next?

Absolutely. No wonder we find some families and societies more positive than others.

WHEN WE BECOME AWARE OF OUR NEGATIVE ATTITUDE, WHY DON'T WE CHANGE?

Human nature generally resists change. Change is uncomfortable. Regardless of whether it is positive or negative, change can often be stressful. Sometimes we get so comfortable with our negativity that even when the change is for the better, we don't want to accept it. We prefer to stay with the comfort of the negative.

Charles Dickens wrote about a prisoner who was locked up for many years in a dungeon. After serving his sentence, he got his freedom. He was brought out from his cell into the bright daylight of the open world. This man looked all around and after a few moments was so uncomfortable with his newly acquired freedom that he asked to be taken back to the confines of his cell. To him, the dungeon, the chains and the darkness were more familiar, secure and comfortable than accepting the change of freedom and an open world.

Many modern-day prisoners do the same thing. The stresses of having to cope in an unfamiliar world are so great that they may purposely commit another crime in order to be sent back to prison, where, though their freedom is restricted, they have fewer decisions to make.

If your attitude is negative, your life is restricted. Your success at work will be limited. You will have fewer friends. You will not enjoy life to its fullest.

In the next chapter, I'll share with you my thoughts on how you can build a positive attitude. Building a positive attitude will take a lot of hard work and commitment but would be tremendously rewarding in every area of your life.

ACTION PLAN

Dreams are a dime a dozen... it's their execution that counts.

—Theodore Roosevelt

1. List three opportunities that you can recognize right now that you might have overlooked so far.
i..... ii..... iii.....
2. List three areas where, there is opportunity that you have not been able to identify so far.
1.....
2.....
3.....
3. Evaluate how your current environment is impacting your attitude.
4. Evaluate how the environment created by you is impacting others.
5. Three behaviors you can change to create a positive environment.
1.....
2.....
3.....
6. List three advantages each of having a positive attitude in the following

areas:

- a. Home: 1..... 2..... 3.....
- b. Work: 1..... 2..... 3.....
- c. Social: 1..... 2..... 3.....

[*](#)Adapted from Russell Cornwell, *Acres of Diamonds*. Cornwell founded Temple University based on this lecture.

BUILD A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Reaching your Destination

The winner has a solution for every problem; the loser has a problem for every solution.

Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success or failure.

– Norman Vincent Peale

DURING childhood, we form attitudes that last a lifetime. A positive attitude acquired during the formative years makes life meaningful and rewarding in every manner. If your early childhood experiences have produced a positive attitude, you are indeed fortunate and have a head start over others. But, if you have acquired a negative attitude, whether by design or by default—are you stuck with it? Of course not. Can you change your attitude? Yes. Is it easy? Absolutely not! Is it worth it? You bet!

Caution: If you have a positive attitude, is there any guarantee that you will always remain positive? The answer is ‘No’ unless you make an effort to maintain it.

How do you build and maintain a positive attitude?

- Become aware of the principles that build a positive attitude.
- Have a desire to be positive.
- Cultivate the discipline and dedication to practice those principles.

As adults, regardless of our environment, education and experience, who is responsible for our attitude? We are. We have to accept responsibility for our behavior and actions. Some people blame everyone and everything but themselves. It is up to us to choose our attitude every morning.

You hear many self-made success stories, but have you ever heard a self-made failure story? Probably not. Failures with negative attitudes blame the whole world for their failures—their parents, teachers, spouse, bosses, the stars, fate, luck, the economy and the government. They will never accept responsibility.

You have to get away from the past. Dust yourself off and get back into the mainstream. Put your dreams together and move forward. Thinking of the positive things that are true, honest and good, will put you in a positive state of mind.

8 STEPS TO ATTITUDE CHANGE

If you want to build and maintain a positive attitude, you need to consciously practice the following steps:

Step 1: Change Focus, Look for the Positive

You need to become a seeker of good. You need to focus on the positive in your life. Start looking for what is right in a person or situation instead of looking for what is wrong. Because of our conditioning, most of us are so attuned to finding fault and looking for what is wrong that we often forget to see what's positive.

LOOK FOR THE GOLD

Andrew Carnegie came to America from Scotland as a young boy. He started out by doing odd jobs and ended up as one of the largest steel manufacturers in the United States. At one time, he had 43 millionaires working for him. A million dollars is a lot of money today, but in the 1920s it was worth much more.

Someone once asked Mr. Carnegie how he dealt with people. Andrew Carnegie replied, "Dealing with people is a lot like digging for gold: When you go digging for an ounce of gold you have to move tons of dirt before you get to an ounce of gold, but when you go digging, you don't go looking for the dirt, you go looking for the gold."

Andrew Carnegie's reply has a very important message. Though sometimes it may not be apparent there is something positive in every person and every situation. We have to dig deep to look for the positive. Andrew Carnegie's message is very clear: Become a gold digger. Change focus. Look for the positive.

What is your focus? Search for the gold. If you are looking for what is wrong with people or with things, you will find many faults. What are we

looking for? Gold or dirt? Even in paradise, fault finders will find faults. Most people find what they are looking for.

SOME PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS LOOK FOR THE NEGATIVE

There was a hunter who bought an amazing bird dog. This one-of-a-kind dog could walk on water. The hunter was looking forward to showing off his new acquisition to his friends. He invited a friend to go duck hunting. After some time, they shot a few ducks and the man ordered his dog to fetch the birds. All day long, the dog ran on water to retrieve the birds. The owner was expecting his friend to comment or compliment him about this amazing dog, but never got one. As they were returning home, he asked his friend if he had noticed anything unusual about his dog. The friend replied, "Yes, in fact, I did notice something unusual. Your dog cannot swim."

What is the message from the above story? Some people fail to see the positive in spite of its being obvious.

Some people always look at the negative side. Who is a pessimist? Pessimists:

- are moaners, groaners and permanent complainers
- are unhappy when they have no troubles to speak of
- feel bad when they feel good, for fear they will feel worse when they feel better
- always turn out the lights to see how dark it is
 - cannot enjoy their health today because they think they may be sick tomorrow
- not only expect the worst but make the worst of whatever happens
- don't see the doughnut, they only see the hole
- forget their blessings and count their troubles
- know that hard work never hurts anyone but believe "why take a chance?"

Caution: Looking for the positive does not necessarily mean overlooking faults. **being a positive thinker does not mean one has to agree or accept everything.** It only means that a person is solution-focused.

Be an Optimist

How can one be an optimist? It is well described by the following:

"Be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind. Talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet. Make all your friends feel that you appreciate their good qualities and strengths. Look at the sunny side of everything. Think only of the best, work only for the best and expect only

the best. Be as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own. Forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future. Give everyone a smile. Spend so much time improving yourself that you have no time left to criticise others. Be too big for worry and too noble for anger.”*

Step 2: Make a Habit of Doing It Now

The unfortunate part of life is as Oliver Wendall Holmes said, “Most people go to their graves, with music still in them.” We don’t achieve excellence because of our own lack of vision.

*He slept beneath the moon
He basked beneath the sun
He lived a life of going to do
and died with nothing done.*

– James Albery

We have all procrastinated at some time or another in our lives. I know I have, only to have regretted it later. Procrastination leads to a negative attitude. The reverse is just as true. They feed on each other. The habit of procrastination fatigues you more than the effort it takes to do the task.

A completed task is fulfilling and energising; an incomplete task drains energy.

If you want to build and maintain a positive attitude, get into the habit of living in the present and doing it now.

When I Become a Big Boy

This is like the little boy who says that when he becomes a big boy, he will do this and that and will be happy. And when he becomes a big boy he says that when he finishes college he will be happy. And when he finishes college he says that when he gets his first job he will be happy. And when he gets his first job he says that when he gets married, then he will be happy. And when he gets married he says when the kids get out of school he will be happy. And when the kids get out of school, he says that when he retires, he will be happy. And when he retires, what does he see? He sees, life has just gone by, in front of his eyes. It is too late.

Some people practice procrastination by hiding behind high-sounding words, saying “I’m analysing” a month later and six months later they are still analysing. What they don’t realise is that they are suffering from a disease

called: *Paralysis by Analysis* and they will never succeed.

Then there is another breed of people who procrastinate by saying “I’m getting ready.” A month later they are still getting ready and six months later they are still getting ready. They’re getting ready to get ready, and they never get ready. They say “I’ll do it when I become an expert.” They don’t understand that unless you do it, you’ll never become an expert. They keep making excuses.

You cannot learn to swim by reading a book. You have to get into the water.

Live in the Present

Life is not a dress rehearsal. I don’t care what philosophy you believe in—we have got only one shot at this game called life. The stakes are too high to waste life. The stakes are our future generations.

Unlike the game of football where we can replace players, in the game of life, we have to play our own game. And the funny part about life is that the test comes before the text, and experience is the name we give to our mistakes. This life is a one-way street. There is no rewind button.

What time is it and where are we? The answer is, the time is now and we are here. Let’s make the best of now and utilise the present to the fullest. The message is not that we don’t need to plan for the future. The message is that we *do* need to plan for the future. If we utilise our present to its fullest, we are sowing the seeds for a better future.

If you want to build a positive attitude, learn the phrase, “do it now” and stop the habit of procrastination.

The saddest words in life are:

- “It might have been.”
- “I could have.”
- “If only I had given a little extra.”
- “I should have.”
- “I wish I had.”

Never leave till tomorrow, which you can do today.

– Benjamin Franklin

I am sure all winners wanted to be procrastinators but never got around to it.

When people say, “I will do it one of these days,” you can be sure it means none of these days.

Some people keep waiting for all the lights to turn green before they leave home. That will never happen. They fail even before they start. That is sad.

Why do people procrastinate?

One major reason is, procrastination is an escapist attitude. Most people keep postponing because they don't have the courage to face up to the consequences and hence they keep postponing. The more they postpone, the price tag becomes higher and higher.

Stop procrastinating: Isn't it time that we put off putting things off?

Step 3: Develop an Attitude of Gratitude

Gratitude reflects humility. It keeps a person grounded. It is a great philosophy to live by, 'never forget what others have done for you and never remember what you have done for others'. Count your blessings, not your troubles. Take time to smell the roses. It is not uncommon to hear that someone, because of an accident, became blind or paralysed, but got a million dollars in a settlement from the insurance company. How many of us would like to trade places with that person? Not many. We are so focused on complaining about things we do not have that we lose sight of the things we have. There is a lot to be thankful for.

When I say count your blessings, not your troubles, I don't mean that a person should become complacent. If complacency was the message you got, then I would be guilty of miscommunication and you of selective listening.

Many of our blessings are hidden treasures—count your blessings and not your troubles.

Step 4: Get into a Continuous Education Program

Let's get some myths out of the way. It is a general belief that we get educated in schools and colleges. During my seminars in many different countries there is a question I ask my audience all the time, "Do we really get educated in schools and colleges?" Generally, there is a consensus that some people do but most don't. Don't get me wrong. We get a lot of information in schools and colleges. We do need information to get educated, but everyone who has information may not necessarily be educated e.g a PhD may have a lot of information in his area, they may or may not be educated. We live in an information age. It is estimated that the amount of information is doubling every year. With information so readily available, it is easy to dispel ignorance. It is sad to see that we are taught everything but the most essential things. We are taught the three R's (**R**eading, **R**iting, **R**ithmetic), but what

good is intellectual education without understanding human dignity and values?

We need to know the true meaning of education

Intellectual education influences the head and values-based education influences the heart. In fact, education that does not train the heart can be dangerous. If we want to build character in our offices, homes and society, we must achieve a minimum level of moral and ethical literacy. Education that builds fundamental traits of character—such as honesty, compassion, courage, persistence and responsibility—is absolutely essential.

We don't need more academic education; we need more value-based education. A person who is morally educated will be a lot better equipped to move up in life or succeed than a morally bankrupt person, with excellent academic qualifications. **I would prefer to go to the second most qualified surgeon in town who has character**, than go the most qualified surgeon who lacks character. The same thing holds true in any profession.

Education without Values

Universities are turning out highly skilled barbarians because we don't provide a framework of values to young people, who more and more are searching for it.

– Steven Muller, President, Johns Hopkins University

True education is training of both the head and the heart. It is better to be uneducated than ill-educated. An uneducated thief may steal goods from the train but an educated one may steal the entire train. We need to compete for knowledge and wisdom, not for grades. **Knowledge is piling up facts, wisdom is simplifying them.** One could have good grades and a degree and still not learn much. The most important thing one can learn is to 'learn to learn'. People confuse education with the ability to memorise facts. Educating the mind without morals creates a menace in society.

Knowledge is Not Power

We are often told that knowledge is power. Not really. Knowledge is information. It is potential power and it becomes power only when it is acted upon.

What is the difference between a person who cannot read and a person who can, but does not read? As Ben Franklin said, "Not a whole lot."

Learning is a lot like eating. It is not how much we eat that matters, but

what really matters is how much we digest.

Knowledge is potential power; wisdom is real power.

Education takes many forms; it is not just grades or a degree. It is:

- Cultivating our strength
- Learning self-discipline
- Listening
- Eagerness to learn
- Developing characteristics leading to success

Our minds are like muscles that can stretch or shrink. It all depends on how much or how little we exercise them.

If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.

– Derek Bok

EDUCATION DOES NOT MEAN GOOD JUDGMENT

There is a story about a man who sold hotdogs by the roadside. He was illiterate, so he never read newspapers. He was hard of hearing, so he never listened to the radio. His eyes were weak, so he never watched television. But enthusiastically, he sold lots of hotdogs. His sales and profit went up. He ordered more meat and got himself a bigger and better stove. As his business was growing, his son, who had recently graduated from college, joined his father.

Then something strange happened. The son asked, “Dad, aren’t you aware of the great recession that is coming our way?” The father replied, “No, but tell me about it.” The son said, “The international situation is terrible. The domestic situation is even worse. We should be prepared for the coming bad times.” The man thought that since his son had been to college, read the papers and listened to the radio, he ought to know and his advice should not be taken lightly. So the next day, the father cut down his order for the meat and buns, took down the sign and was no longer as enthusiastic. Very soon, fewer and fewer people bothered to stop at his hotdog stand and his sales started coming down rapidly. The father said to his son, “Son, you were right. We are in the middle of a recession. I am glad you warned me ahead of time.”

What morals can we take away from the above story?

The above story forces us to distinguish between being intelligent vs being prudent. What is intelligence? Intelligence is the ability to be a quick learner. Somebody could be highly intelligent, but may have poor judgment. Optimism and pessimism are both expectations—either positive or negative. Many times, positive or negative expectations sub-consciously, turn out to be self fulfilling prophecies.

Choose your advisers carefully but use your own judgment. **The tragedy is that there are many walking encyclopedias who are living failures.**

A person can and will be, successful with or without formal education if

they have the 6 Cs:

- Character
- Conviction
- Courage
- Commitment
- Courtesy
- Competence

What is the difference between skill and competence?

Skill is an ability. Competence is the ability alongwith the willingness and desire to apply what is learned. Desire is the attitude that makes a skillful person competent. There are many skillful people who are totally incompetent. They lack the desire and fail to translate theoretical knowledge into practical applications. Ability without the right attitude is wasted.

The first duty of a university is to teach wisdom, not trade; character, not technicalities.

– Winston Churchill

What Does it Mean to Be Educated

Just like a passport is a pre-requisite to travel the world, similarly, a good education is a pre-requisite to lead a meaningful life confidently.

Whom, then, do I call educated?

The following is the definition of education given by Socrates approximately two thousand years ago.

First, those who manage well the circumstances which they encounter day by day; and those who can judge situations appropriately as they arise and rarely miss the suitable course of action.

Next, those who are honorable in their dealings with all men, bearing easily what is unpleasant or offensive in others and being as reasonable with their associates as is humanly possible.

Furthermore, those who hold their pleasures always under control and are not unduly overcome by their misfortunes, bearing up under them bravely and in a manner worthy of our common nature.

Most important of all, those who are not spoiled by their successes, who do not desert their true selves, but hold their ground steadfastly as wise and sober-minded men, rejoicing no more in the good things that have come to

them through chance than in those which through their own nature and intelligence are theirs since birth.

Those who have a character which is in accord, not with one of these things, but with all of them, these are educated— possessed of all the virtues.

– Socrates (470–399 B.C.)

The above definition is as valid today, as it was two thousand years ago.

In a nutshell, educated persons are those who choose wisely and courageously under any circumstances. If they choose between wisdom over foolishness, good over bad, virtue over vulgarities, regardless of the academic degrees they have, then they are uneducated. Educated people recognise their limitations but focus on their strengths.

WHAT IS A BROAD-BASED EDUCATION?

Some animals in a forest decided to start a school. The students included a bird, a squirrel, a fish, a dog, a rabbit and a mentally retarded eel. A board was formed to determine the curriculum and it was decided that flying, tree climbing, swimming, and burrowing would give a broad-based education. All animals were required to take all subjects.

The bird was excellent at flying and was getting A's but when it came to burrowing, it kept breaking its beak and wings and started failing. Pretty soon, it started making C's in flying and, of course, in tree climbing and swimming it was getting F's. The squirrel was great at tree climbing, but was failing in swimming. The fish was the best swimmer but couldn't get out of the water and thus got F's in everything else. The dog didn't join the school, stopped paying taxes and kept fighting with the administration to include barking as part of the curriculum. The rabbit got A's in burrowing but tree climbing was a real problem. It kept falling and landing on its head, suffered brain damage and soon couldn't even burrow properly and got C's in that too.

The mentally retarded eel, who did everything half as well, became the valedictorian of the class. The board was happy because everybody was getting a broad-based education.

A true broad-based education prepares students for life, without losing their areas of specialisation and competence.

We are All Gifted with Some Strengths

The small size of the hummingbird, weighing only a tenth of an ounce, gives it the flexibility to perform complicated maneuvers, such as beating its wings seventy-five times a second. This enables the hummingbird to drink nectar from flowers while hovering, but it cannot soar, glide or hop. The ostrich, at 300 pounds, is the largest bird, but it can't fly. However, its legs are so strong that it can run at up to fifty miles per hour, taking strides of twelve to fifteen feet.

Ignorance

Being ignorant is not so much a shame as being unwilling to learn to do things the right way.

– Benjamin Franklin

The illusion of knowledge is not education, but ignorance. Foolish people have a strange kind of confidence which comes only with ignorance.

There is nothing wrong with ignorance, but making a career out of it is stupidity. **Some people accumulate ignorance and then confuse it with education.** Ignorance is not bliss. It is misery, tragedy, poverty and sickness. If ignorance is bliss, why aren't more people happy? If a little knowledge is dangerous, so is a lot of ignorance, which leads to pettiness, fear, dogmatism, egotism and prejudice. Wisdom is nothing more than dispelling ignorance.

Schools are a fountain of knowledge: some students come to drink, some to sip and others just to gargle.

Commonsense

We are born with five senses—touch, taste, sight, smell and hearing. But successful people have a sixth sense— Commonsense. Commonsense is the ability to see things as they are and do them as they ought to be done. The application of education and knowledge without common-sense is meaningless.

Commonsense may not necessarily come as a result of education. The best education without commonsense is worthless. An abundance of commonsense is called wisdom.

WHAT IS CONTINUOUS EDUCATION? IT IS SHARPENING YOUR AXE

John, a woodcutter, worked for a company for five years but never got a raise. The company hired Bill and within two years he got a raise. This caused resentment. John went to his boss and asked "I've been here five years and never got a raise and Bill, within two years, got a raise. How come?" The boss said, "We are a result-oriented company and would be happy to give you a raise if your output went up." John went back, started hitting harder and putting in more time but he still wasn't able to cut more trees. John thought to himself, "Let me go find out from Bill how his output went up. Maybe he knows something more than I do." Upon asking, Bill answered, "After cutting every tree, I take a break for two minutes and sharpen my axe. When was the last time you sharpened your axe?" John said, "Oh oh, five years ago!"

When was the last time you sharpened your axe? Past glory and education don't count for much. We have to continuously sharpen the axe.

There is another dimension to the above story. John's boss said, "You really don't have five years' experience. What you think as five years' experience is really only one year's experience repeated five times over.

Feed Your Mind

Just as our bodies need good food every day, our minds need positive thoughts every day. The key words in the preceding sentence are *good* food and *positive* thoughts. If we feed our body with junk food and our mind with negative thoughts, we will have both a sick body and a sick mind. We need to feed our minds with pure and positive thoughts to stay on track.

Similarly, positive thinkers regularly build a reserve of positive attitude by constantly feeding their minds on pure, powerful and positive thoughts on a daily basis.

Positive thinkers are not fools and they are not going through life with blinders. They are winners who *recognise their limitations*, but *focus on their strengths*. Losers, on the other hand, recognise their strengths but focus on their weaknesses.

If we commute two hours a day and utilise that time for our education by reading good books or listening to positive recorded messages, it will give us close to 500 hours of education in one year, in the field that we want to excel in. That is equivalent to receiving a post-graduate education.

Step 5: Build High Self-Esteem

What is Self-Esteem?

Self-esteem is the way we feel about ourselves. When we feel good, the world looks nice, productivity goes up and our relationships are a lot better. The reverse is just as true. What could be the reason? It is that there is a direct correlation between our feelings and behavior.

How Do You Build High Self-Esteem?

If you want to build high self-esteem quickly, one of the fastest ways is to do something for those who cannot repay you in cash or kind.

A few years ago I started volunteering my time to teach attitude and self-esteem programs to jail inmates. In just a few weeks, I learnt more than I had learnt in years.

After attending my program for two weeks, one of the inmates stopped me and said, "Shiv, I'm going to be released from the prison in a couple of weeks." I asked him what he had learned through the attitude development program. He thought for a while and then said that he felt good about himself. I said, "Good doesn't tell me anything. Tell me specifically what behavior has changed?" (*I believe that learning has not taken place unless behavior changes*).

He told me that since the beginning of the program, he started reading the Bible everyday. I then asked him what did reading the Bible do to him. He replied that he now felt comfortable with himself and others, something he hadn't felt before. I said to him, "That is nice, but the bottom line is, what are you going to do when you leave jail?" He told me he was going to try to be a contributing member of society. I asked him the same question again and he gave me the

same answer. Then I asked him, “What are you going to do when you leave jail?” Obviously, I was looking for a different answer. At this point, in an angry tone, he said, “I am going to be a contributing member of society.” I pointed out to him that there was a world of difference in what he said earlier and what he said now. First he had said, “I am going to try to be” and now he said “I am going to be.” The difference is the word ‘try’. Either we do something or we don’t. The word ‘try’ kept the door open for him to come back to jail.

Another inmate, who was listening in on our conversation, asked, “Shiv, what do you get paid to do all this?” I told him, the feeling that I just experienced was worth more than what I could get paid in monetary terms. He then asked, “Why do you come here?” I said, “I come here for my own selfish reasons. The feeling that I got upon listening to this man, I come here to get that feeling. When I feel good, my self-esteem goes up. When my self-esteem goes up, I become more productive everywhere.” This kind of selfishness is healthy. In a nutshell, what you put into the system, you always get back and most times it is more than you can ever put in. (But you don’t put it in with the desire to get something back.)

Another inmate said, “What anybody does is their own business. When people take drugs, it is none of your business. Why don’t you leave them alone?” I replied, “My friend, even though I disapprove, I will compromise and accept what you are saying—that it is none of my business. If you can guarantee that when someone takes drugs and gets behind the wheel of a car and has an accident, the only thing they will ever hit is a tree, I will compromise. But if you cannot guarantee this, you or I, or our kids could be dead, then you better believe it is my business. I have to get this person off the roads.”

Whenever we do something positive in life, even if no one is watching, we rise a little bit in our own eyes. Whenever we do something negative like lying, cheating, stealing, even if no one is watching, we fall down a little bit in our own eyes—that’s the magic of self-esteem.

There are many individuals and organisations who do voluntary activities where there are no gains in cash or kind such as organising blood donation, eye donation camps. You ask them why they’re doing this and their answer is “I feel good.”

Many times you hear parents telling their kids, “Do what feels good” without understanding that **Feeling good is a natural outcome of doing good; and doing good is a natural outcome of being good.** How can a person feel good when they don’t do good?

This one phrase, “It is my life, I will do what I want,” has done more damage than good. People choose to ignore the spirit and derive the meaning that is convenient to them. Such people have tied this phrase to selfishness and this has had a negative effect on them and the world around them.

These people forget that we don’t live in isolation. What you do affects me and what I do affects you. We are connected. We have to realise that we are sharing this planet and we must learn to behave responsibly.

There are two kinds of people in this world—givers and takers. Takers eat well and givers sleep well. Givers have high self-esteem, a positive attitude and they serve society. By serving society, I do not mean a run-of-the-mill pseudo leader-turned-politician who serves himself by pretending to serve

others. Nor do I refer to the drug dealers, who, after making ill-gotten wealth, setup a drug rehab centre in order to become legitimate.

We all have the need to take. But the sign of a healthy personality is one that also has a need to give.

A man was washing his new car when his neighbor asked him, "When did you get the car?" He replied "My brother gave it to me." The neighbor said, "I wish I had a car like that." The man replied, "You should wish to have a brother like that." The neighbor's wife was listening to the conversation and she interrupted, "I wish I was a brother like that." What a positive way to think.

Step 6: Stay Away from Negative Influences

What are negative influences?

Negative influences are negative people, drugs, alcohol, pornography, profanity etc. All negative influences pull people down. It depletes energy that could have been used constructively, to achieve new heights.

Impressionable minds get influenced by adult behavior and the media. Peer pressure affects not only children and teenagers, it is also prevalent in adults. It shows a lack of self-esteem when people do not have the courage to say "No, thank you," and stay away from negative influences.

A person's character is judged not only by the company they keep but also by the company they avoid.

If you associate with achievers, you will become one. If you associate with thinkers, you will become one. If you associate with givers, you will become one. If you associate with negative people, you will become one.

Whenever people succeed in life, petty people will take cracks at them and try to pull them down. When you refuse to fight petty people, you win. In martial arts, they teach that when someone takes a crack at you, instead of blocking you should step away. Why? Blocking requires energy. Why not use it more productively? Similarly, in order to fight petty people, you have to come down to their level. That is what they want, because then you become one of them.

Don't let negative people drag you down.

Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol

According to the U.S. Surgeon General's report, ninety percent people become smokers by the age of eighteen. Guess, till the above study came, who was sponsoring all the major sporting events? Of course, cigarette companies, because they knew their exact target audience and the

impressionable age group.

One reason that I don't drink is that I want to know when I am having a good time.

– Lady Astor

Drinking makes a person lose his inhibitions and give exhibitions.

Alcohol

In my travels, I have noticed that in some countries drinking every night has become a national pastime. If you don't drink, they look at you as if there is something wrong. Their motto is: "It doesn't matter how bad your English is, as long as your Scotch is good." If a banker asked them what their liquid assets are, they would bring two bottles of Scotch. After a few drinks, inhibition goes down and exhibition goes up.

Drinking and smoking are glamorised today. It all starts with the first time. If you ask people why they consume alcohol or take drugs, they will give you a host of reasons, such as: to celebrate; to have fun; to forget problems; to relax; to experiment; to impress others (it is cool to drink); to be fashionable; to mingle; for business purposes. Research shows that one out of seven casual drinkers become alcoholics.*

People want to conform to peer pressure. I am amazed at the way peer pressure compels us with phrases such as "Aren't you my friend?"; "One for the road"; "One for your health."

The following poem from an unknown author explains the dilemma of a social drinker well.

*I've drunk to your Health in taverns,
I've drunk to your Health in my home,
I've drunk to your Health so damn many times,
That I've almost ruined my own!*

Drinking and driving costs lives. Jerry Johnson, in his book *It's Killing Our Kids* (p. xv), cites American Hospital Association reports that half of all hospital admissions are alcohol-related. According to the National Safety Council's 1989 Accident Facts Edition, a person is injured in an alcohol-related crash every sixty seconds.

Pornography

Pornography has only one message and that is, that a woman is only an object

of sex to be used and discarded. It is nothing short of dehumanising women and children.

As per a research by National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families, **ninety per cent rapists are addicts to pornography**. Input determines output. Garbage and obscenity in—garbage and obscenity out. Even as adults, we are vulnerable.

The consequences of pornography are that it

- Dehumanises women
- Destroys marriages
- Makes fun of ethical and moral values
- Destroys individuals, families and communities
- Victimises children
- Encourages sexual violence

A woman is raped in the United States every forty-six seconds. (National Victim Center/Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, 1992). Eighty-six per cent of rapists admit to regular use of pornography, with fifty-seven per cent admitting imitation of pornography scenes when committing sex crimes (Dr William Marshall, 1988).*

It is sad to see how low some people will stoop to make a buck by making pornography their business.

Negative Movies and Television Programs

Today's kids are learning their attitudes and values more from television and movies than from any other source. It is estimated that in the United States, by the time a youngster gets out of high school, he has watched more than 20,000 hours of television, witnessed 15,000 murders, and watched 100,000 alcohol-related commercials.** Television programming and advertisements convey the message that drinking is fun, smoking is glamorous, and drugs are the 'in' thing. No wonder the crime rate is so high!

Soap operas and other television shows as well as movies glamorise premarital and extramarital sex. No wonder commitments are lacking in relationships and divorce rates are high. Impressionable viewers set their standards and benchmarks based on what they see and hear in the media. And no matter who we are, we are all impressionable to varying degrees.

Profanity

Using profanities shows a lack of vocabulary, self-control and discipline.

Rock Music

The lyrics of some hit songs are obscene. The music we hear and the performances we watch influence us. **Input determines output.**

If you want to build a positive attitude, then associate with people of high moral character and read books that lead you to positive thinking. Where you will be five years from now will depend on the company you keep and the books you read. Where we are today, is also the result of the same.

Step 7: Learn to Like the Things That Need to be Done

Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible.

– St. Francis of Assisi

Does an athlete always like to go for practice? Probably not. But he does it anyway. Some things need to be done whether we like them or not; for example, mothers caring for their young. This may not always be fun and may even be painful, but if we learn to like the task, the impossible becomes possible.

Step 8: Start Your Day with Something Positive

Read or listen to something positive first thing in the morning. After a good night's sleep we are relaxed and our subconscious is receptive. It sets the tone for the day and puts us in the right frame of mind to make the day a positive day. In order to bring about change, we need to make a conscious effort and be committed to make positive thoughts and behavior part of our lives. Practice having positive thoughts and behavior daily until they become a habit.

William James of Harvard University said, "If you are going to change your life, you need to start immediately."

If you follow the eight steps above, you will be a winner:

WINNERS VERSUS LOSERS

- The Winner is always part of the solution;
The Loser is always part of the problem.
- The Winner always has a plan;
The Loser always has an excuse.
- The Winner says, "Let me do it for you.";
The Loser says, "That is not my job."

- The Winner sees a solution for every problem;
The Loser sees a problem for every answer.
- The Winner says, “It may be difficult but it is possible.”;
The Loser says, “It may be possible but it is too difficult.”
- When a Winner makes a mistake, he says, “I was wrong.”;
When a Loser makes a mistake, he says, “It wasn’t my fault.”
- A Winner makes commitments;
A Loser makes promises.
- Winners have dreams;
Losers have schemes.
- Winners say, “I must do something.”;
Losers say, “Something must be done.”
- Winners are a part of the team;
Losers are apart from the team.
- Winners trade short-term pain for long-term gain;
Losers trade short-term gain and get long-term pain.
- Winners see possibilities;
Losers see problems.
- Winners believe in win/win;
Losers believe for them to win someone has to lose.
- Winners see the potential;
Losers see the past.
- Winners choose what they say;
Losers say what they choose.
- Winners use hard arguments but soft words;
Losers use soft arguments but hard words.
- Winners stand firm on values but compromise on petty things;
Losers stand firm on petty things but compromise on values.
- Winners follow the philosophy of empathy: “Don’t do to others what you would not want them to do to you”;
Losers follow the philosophy, “Do it to others before they do it to you.”
- Winners *make* things happen;
Losers *wait* for things to happen.
Winners plan and prepare to win. The key word is *preparation*.

ACTION STEPS

You may be disappointed if you fail, but you will be doomed if you don’t

try.

– Beverley Sills

Let me close this chapter with the eight actions steps discussed earlier:

- Look for the positive.
- Make a habit of doing it now.
- Develop an attitude of gratitude.
- Create a continuous education program for yourself.
- Build positive self-esteem.
- Stay away from negative influences.
- Learn to like the things that need/ought to be done.
- Start your day with something positive.

ACTION PLAN

1. Based on the eight steps, what commitments are you making that you will practice immediately:

- at home
- at work
- socially

2. List three actions that you commit to take to get on a continuous education program. E.g. Books, listening/watching Positive messages/programs.

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

3. List three areas in which you will practice 'Do it now'

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

4. Identify three blessings that are priceless

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

5. List three things that you would do to build your self-esteem
 - 1.....
 - 2.....
 - 3.....
6. Identify three negative influences you want to stay away from that are pulling you down
 - 1.....
 - 2.....
 - 3.....
7. List three things that you will do even if you don't want to do that ought to be done.
 - 1.....
 - 2.....
 - 3.....
8. What would you do to start your day with something positive.
 - 1.....
 - 2.....
 - 3.....
9. List three benefits you will receive by doing all of the above.
 - 1.....
 - 2.....
 - 3.....
10. Establish a time table and commit yourself to do all of the above.

* "Creed for Optimists" by Christian D. Larsen, in *The Best of ... Bits & Pieces*, Economics Press, Fairfield, NJ, 1994, p. 3.

*Source: http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_percentage_of_drinkers_become_alcoholics

*From the National Coalition for The Protection of Children and Families, Annual Report, 1995.

**As mentioned in Jerry Johnson's book *It's Killing Our Kids*, p. xvi.

SUCCESS

Winning strategies

The greatest job security is ‘performance’.

Super achievers don't waste time in unproductive thoughts, esoteric thoughts or catastrophic thoughts. They think constructively and they know that their level of thinking determines their success.

– Dr Seymour Epstein

YOU need to keep your mind on what you want, not on what you don't want.

Success is not an accident. It is the result of your attitude and your attitude is a choice. Hence success is a matter of choice and not chance.

A priest was driving when he saw an exceptionally beautiful farm. He stopped at the edge of a field, got out and stood quietly, appreciating the bountiful crop. The farmer was riding on his tractor and saw the priest. He drove over to where the priest was standing. The priest said to him, “God has blessed you with a beautiful farm. You should be grateful for it.” The farmer replied, “Yes, God has blessed me with a beautiful farm and I am grateful for it, but you should have seen this farm when God had the whole farm to himself!” *What is the moral of the story?* 1. God only helps those who help themselves. 2. Fatalistic people only wait for things to happen, they never make things happen.

Most crackpots keep waiting for a jackpot! That strategy rarely brings success. In fact, that is not even a strategy. It is an invitation to disaster. The common man seeks security, whereas the uncommon man seeks opportunity.

Why does one person move forward with one success story after another, while others are still getting ready?

Why does one man go through life crossing one hurdle after another and accomplishing his goals while another struggles and gets nowhere?

If we're able to understand the answer to the above two questions, we could revolutionise our lives.

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

If you really want to succeed, form the habit of doing things that failures don't like to do.

– Anonymous

A lot of research has been done on the subject of success and failure. The secrets of success can be learnt from the life histories of successful people. Successful people have certain qualities in common no matter which period of history they lived in and no matter what their fields of endeavor.

Success leaves clues. If we identify and adopt the qualities of successful people, we too shall be successful. Similarly, there are characteristics common to people who aren't successful. If we avoid those characteristics, then we shall not be failures. Success is no mystery. It is simply the result of consistently applying some principles leading to success. The reverse is just as true: Failure is simply a result of making a few mistakes repeatedly. This might sound too simplistic but the fact is that most truths are very simple. I'm not saying they are easy, but they are simple.

HOW DO WE DEFINE SUCCESS?

What makes a person successful? How do we recognise success? What are the manifestations of success? How do we know we have arrived? To some people, success might mean wealth. To others, it may be recognition, good health, a good family, happiness, satisfaction or peace of mind. What this really tells us is that success is subjective. Success means different things to different people. The definition that I feel best summarises 'success' is:

Success is the progressive realisation of a worthy goal.

– Earl Nightingale

Let's look at the above definition of success carefully.

'**Progressive**' means that success is a journey, not a destination. It's an ongoing process. We never arrive. After we reach one goal, we go on to the next and the next and so on.

'Realisation' means it is an experience. Outside forces cannot make me feel successful. I have to feel it within myself. It is internal not external. That is why what often appears success externally may be total hollowness internally. No wonder we hear of some celebrities and billionaires taking drugs and committing suicide because they feel emptiness internally.

'Worthiness' determines the quality of our journey. Can people have unworthy goals in their lives? The answer is, Yes! What makes a goal worthy? It is our value system which determines the quality of our journey. Whenever we talk of values, whose values are we talking about and who are we to judge? We talk of universal values and eternal values. Universal values mean that they cut across countries, cultures and religions. Eternal means, they were here before we came and they will be here after we're gone.

When I do my programs internationally, I am asked "Don't you see cultural differences?" My answer is that I find more similarities in people than differences. To me, what I find cultural are really surface issues. They may not end up as surface issues, but to me, they appear totally surface issues. E.g. the thumbs up sign in the western world is a sign of encouragement or victory whereas in some parts of the middle east, it means you insulted me—you showed me your thumb. That's cultural. In India, we worship the snake and the rat. That's cultural. In Singapore and China, the number four is considered unlucky. That's cultural. Emotional appeals are totally identical. Integrity and cheating is given the same meaning in New Delhi, New York, New Zealand.

Worthiness is what gives meaning and fulfillment. Success without fulfillment is empty. That's like good looks without goodness. In life we need substance over form, not form over substance.

'Goals'—Goals are important because they give us a sense of direction. Our destination determines the direction we take.

Success and happiness go hand in hand. Success is getting what you want and happiness is wanting what you get.

Existence alone is not success! It is a lot more!

Do more than exist—Live.

Do more than touch—Feel.

Do more than look—Observe.

Do more than read—Absorb.

Do more than hear—Listen.

Do more than listen—Understand.

– John H. Rhoades

SOME OBSTACLES TO SUCCESS (REAL OR IMAGINED)

- Ego

- Low self-esteem
- Lack of formalised goals planning
- Not accepting
- Lack of focus
- Under ambitious
- Over commitment
- Lack of training
- Lack of priorities
- Procrastination or escapist behavior
- Fear of failure or success
- No planning or poor
- Ups and downs in responsibility life
- Financial insecurity
- Shortsightedness
- Over ambitious
- Lack of commitment
- Lack of persistence

I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody.

– Bill Cosby

Success does not mean being liked and accepted by everyone. There are some groups I would not want to be accepted by, out of choice. **I would rather be criticised by fools than appreciated by cheats and crooks.**

I see success as a manifestation of good luck that results from **aspiration, inspiration and perspiration**—generally in that sequence.

THE WINNING EDGE

In order to get the winning edge, we need to strive for excellence, not perfection. Striving for perfection is neurotic; striving for excellence is progress. Excellence is continuous improvement. There is nothing that cannot be done better or improved the next time.

All that we need is a little edge. At the race course, the winning horse that comes first may win with three to one, five to one or ten to one depending on the odds and betting. The question is whether the winning horse that wins ten to one, is ten times faster than the next one? The answer is, absolutely not. He

may only be faster by a fraction, by a nose, but the rewards are ten times greater.

Is it fair? Who cares? It does not matter. Those are the rules of the game. Whatever happens with the horses at the race course, is also true in our human lives. The question is, do we have to be ten times smarter than the competition? Absolutely not. All we need is the nose and the rewards are ten times bigger.

It's a lot easier to improve one per cent in hundred different areas than to improve hundred per cent in any one area. That is the winning edge!

STRUGGLE

History has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heart-breaking obstacles before they triumphed. They won because they refused to become discouraged by their defeats.

– B.C. Forbes

Trials in life can be tragedies or triumphs, depending on how we handle them. Triumphs don't come without effort.

A biology teacher was teaching his students how a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. He told the students that in the next couple of hours, the butterfly would struggle to come out of the cocoon, but no one should help the butterfly. Then he left.

The students were waiting and it happened. The butterfly struggled to get out of the cocoon and against the advice of the teacher, one of the students took pity on it and decided to help the butterfly out of the cocoon. He broke the cocoon to help the butterfly so it didn't have to struggle any more. But, shortly afterwards, the butterfly died.

When the teacher returned, he was told what had happened. He explained to the student that it is a law of nature that the struggle to come out of the cocoon actually helps develop and strengthen the butterfly's wings. By helping the butterfly, the boy had deprived the butterfly of its struggle and the butterfly died.

We should apply this same principle to our lives. Nothing worthwhile in life comes without a struggle. As parents we tend to hurt the ones we love most because we don't allow them to struggle and gain strength.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

People who have overcome obstacles are more secure than those who have never faced them. We all have problems and sometimes feel discouraged. Everyone faces disappointments; but winners don't get disheartened. The answer is perseverance.

An English proverb says, "A smooth sea never made a skillful mariner."

Nothing comes easy in life. We cannot run away from our problems. Obstacles keep coming to test our grit, time and time again.

Most people give up just when they're about to achieve success. They quit on the one-yard line. They give up at the last minute of the game, one foot from a winning touchdown.

– H. Ross Perot

HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

True success is measured by the feeling of knowing we have done a job well and have achieved our objectives.

Success is not measured by our position in life but by the obstacles we overcame to get there.

Success in life is not determined by *how* we are doing compared with others, but by *how* we are doing compared with what we are capable of doing. Successful people compete against themselves. They better their own record and keep improving constantly.

Success is not measured by how high we go up in life, but rather by how many times we bounce back when we fall down. It is this bounce-back ability that determines success. Success is not an absence of problems, it is overcoming them.

EVERY SUCCESS STORY IS ALSO A STORY OF GREAT FAILURE

Failure is the highway to success. Tom Watson Sr, of IBM, said, “If you want to succeed, double your failure rate.”

If you study history, you will find that all stories of success are also stories of great failures. The world only sees success. They don't see the struggle behind the success, and say “He got lucky, he must have been at the right place at the right time.”

Let me share a famous life history with you. This was a man who failed in business at the age of twenty-one; was defeated in a legislative race at age twenty-two; failed again in business at age twenty-four; had his sweetheart die when he was age twenty-six; had a nervous breakdown at age twenty-seven; lost a congressional race at age thirty-four; lost a senatorial race at age forty-five; failed in an effort to become vice-president at age forty-seven; lost a senatorial race at age forty-nine; and was elected president of the United States at age fifty-two. This man was Abraham Lincoln.

With these many failures, if Lincoln had quit, probably nobody would have blamed him but nobody would remember him either.

Would you call Lincoln a failure? He could have quit, hung his head in shame and gone back to his law practice. But to Lincoln, defeat was a detour, not a dead end. The greatest people in the world turn a setback into a comeback.

In 1913, Lee De Forest, inventor of the triode tube, was charged by the district attorney for using fraudulent means to mislead the public into buying stocks in his company by claiming that he could transmit the human voice across the Atlantic. He was publicly humiliated. Can you imagine where we would be without his invention?

A *New York Times* editorial on 10 December, 1903 questioned the wisdom of the Wright Brothers who were trying to invent a machine, heavier than air, that would fly. One week later, at Kitty Hawk, the Wright Brothers took their famous flight.

Colonel Sanders, at age sixty-five, had assets of a beat-up car and a \$100 check from Social Security. He realised he had to do something to improve his position. He remembered his mother's fried chicken recipe and went out selling. How many doors did he have to knock on before he got his first order? It is estimated that he had knocked on more than a thousand doors before he got his first order. How many of us quit after three tries, ten tries, a hundred tries and then we say we tried as hard as we could?

As a young cartoonist, Walt Disney faced many rejections from newspaper editors who said he had no talent. One day a minister at a church hired him to draw some cartoons. Disney was working out of a small rodent-infested shed near the church. Seeing a small mouse inspired him to draw a new cartoon. That was the start of Mickey Mouse.

All the above examples confirm that success is not the absence of failure. It is overcoming failure. Successful people don't do great things, they only do small things in a great way.

One day a partially deaf four years old child came home with a note in his pocket from his teacher, "Your Tommy is too stupid to learn, get him out of school." His mother read the note and answered, "My Tommy is not too stupid to learn, I will teach him myself." And that Tommy grew up to be the great Thomas Edison. Thomas Edison had only three months of formal schooling.

Henry Ford forgot to put the reverse gear in the first car he made.

Do you consider these people failures? *They succeeded in spite of problems, not in the absence of them. But to negative thinkers, it appears as though they just "got lucky."*

All success stories are stories of great failures. The only difference is that every time they failed, they bounced back. This is called failing forward, rather than backward. You learn and move forward. Learn from your failure and keep going.

In 1914, Thomas Edison, at age sixty-seven, lost his factory to fire.

It had very little insurance. No longer a young man, Edison watched his lifetime effort go up in smoke and said, "There is great value in disaster. All our mistakes are burnt up. Thank God we can start anew." In spite of disaster, three weeks later, he invented the phonograph. What an attitude!

Below are more examples of the failures of successful people:

- Thomas Edison failed approximately 10,000 times while he was working on the light bulb.
- Henry Ford was broke at the age of forty.
- Lee Iacocca was fired by Henry Ford II at the age of fifty-four.
- Young Beethoven was told that he had no talent for music, but he gave some of the best music to the world.

Setbacks are inevitable. A setback can act as a driving force and also teach us humility. In grief, you will find courage and faith to overcome the setback. **Learn to become victors, not victims. Fear and doubt short-circuit the mind.**

After every setback, ask yourself: What did I learn from this experience? Only then will you be able to turn a stumbling block into a stepping stone.

In order to turn a setback into a comeback, we need to think positive and learn from our experience. Henry Ford said, "If you think you can, you can. If you think you cannot, you cannot. You are right either ways." In fact, you will prove yourself right.

IF YOU THINK

If you think you are beaten, you are.

If you think you dare not, you don't!

If you like to win, but think you can't,

It's almost a cinch you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you're lost;

For out in the world we find

Success begins with a fellow's will;

It's all in the state of mind.

If you think you are outclassed, you are,

You've got to think high to rise,

You've got to be sure of yourself before

You can ever win a prize.

*Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger and faster man,
But sooner or later the man who wins
Is the man who thinks he can.*

– Walter D. Wintle

Prosperity and success are the result of our thoughts and decisions. It is for us to decide what thoughts will dominate our lives. Success is not an accident. It is the result of our attitude.

THE GREATEST GIFT

The greatest gift that humans have is the ability to think. Of all the creatures in the world, humans are physically the most ill-equipped. A human cannot fly like a bird, outrun a leopard, swim like an alligator, nor climb trees like a monkey. A human doesn't have the eyes of an eagle, nor the claws and teeth of a wild cat. Physically, humans are helpless and defenseless; a tiny insect can kill them. But nature is reasonable and kind. Nature's greatest gift to humankind is the ability to think. Humans can create their own environment, whereas animals have to adapt to their environment.

Sadly, very few people use the greatest gift—the ability to think—to its full potential.

Failures are of two kinds: those who did and never thought and those who thought and never did. Going through life without using your ability to think is like shooting without aiming.

Life is like a cafeteria. You take your tray, select your food and pay at the other end. You can get anything you want as long as you are willing to pay the price. In a cafeteria, if you wait for people to serve you, you will wait forever. Life is like that too. You make choices and pay the price to succeed. In fact, the reverse is true. **We never pay the price for success. We reap the rewards of success. We actually pay the price for failure.**

LIFE IS FULL OF CHOICES AND COMPROMISES

Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.

– William Jennings Bryan

At first glance it might seem that there is a contradiction in the statement, that

life is full of choices and compromises. If life is full of choices, where is the question of compromise? But, even a compromise is a choice. Let's evaluate this.

How is Life Full of Choices?

When we eat too much, we make a choice to be overweight. When we drink too much, we make a choice to have a headache the next day. If we drink and drive, we choose to risk being killed or killing someone in an accident. When we ill-treat people, we choose to be ill-treated in return. When we don't care about other people, we choose not to be cared for by them. When we light up a cigarette, we choose to invite cancer.

Choices have consequences. The most important thing to understand is that **we are all free to the point of making choices. but, after we make a choice, the choice controls the chooser.** We have no more choices. What is success? Series of positive choices is called success and series of negative choices is called failure. We have an equal opportunity to be unequal. The choice is ours. Life can be compared to a pottery maker who shapes clay in any form he wants. Similarly we can mould our lives into any shape we want.

How is Life Full of Compromises?

Is everything within our control in our lives? Obviously not. Life is not just party and pleasure; it is also pain and despair. Unthinkable things happen. Sometimes everything turns upside down. Sometimes bad things happen to good people for no fault of theirs. What wrong did they do? Who knows? Some time, people are born deformed. What wrong did they do, who knows? We cannot choose our parents or decide where and when we are born. If the ball bounced the wrong way for you, I'm sorry. But what do you do from that point on—cry or take the ball and run? That is a choice you have to make. We cannot choose the cards which are dealt to us but we can choose how to play the game.

On a clear day, there are hundreds of boats sailing in all different directions in a lake. Even though the wind is blowing in one direction, the sailboats are going in different directions. Why? It depends on the way the sail is set and that is determined by the sailor. The same is true of our lives. We can't choose the direction of the wind, but we can choose how we set our sail.

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 Allen

We can choose our attitude even though we cannot always choose our circumstances. The choice is either to act like a victor or a victim. It is not our position but our disposition that determines success. And what is disposition? It is our attitude.

It takes both rain and sunshine to create a rainbow. Our lives are no different. There is happiness and sorrow. There is the good and the bad, dark spots and bright spots. When we can handle adversity well, it only strengthens us. We cannot control all the events that happen in our lives, but we can control how we deal with them.

Richard Blechnyden wanted to promote Indian tea at the St Louis World Fair. It was very hot and no one wanted to sample his tea. Blechnyden saw that iced drinks were doing a flourishing business. It dawned on him to make his tea into an iced drink, mix in some sugar and offer it for sale. People loved it. That was the introduction of iced tea to the world.*

An acorn cannot decide whether to become a giant tree or to become food for the squirrels. Human beings have choices. Human beings are not like an acorn which has no choice. If nature gives us a lemon, we have a choice: either to cry or make lemonade. When things go wrong, as they sometimes will, you can react responsibly or resentfully—the choice is yours.

ACTION PLAN

1. Define success—What does it mean to you?

.....
.....
.....

2. To achieve success, you must have worthy goals. Write down your three most important goals.

1.
2.
3.

*Adapted from *The Best of Bits & Pieces*, Economic Press, Fairfield, NJ, 1994, p. 98.

ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESS

Path to success

Ability without dependability is a liability.

QUALITIES THAT MAKE A PERSON SUCCESSFUL

1. Desire

The motivation to succeed comes from the burning desire to achieve a purpose. Napoleon Hill wrote, *“Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, the mind can achieve.”*

A young man asked Socrates the secret to success. Socrates told the young man to meet him near the river the next morning. They met and Socrates asked the young man to walk with him toward the river. When the water got up to their necks, Socrates took the young man by surprise and pushed him under the water. The boy struggled to get out but Socrates kept him there. When the boy started turning blue, Socrates raised the boy's head out of the water. The first thing the boy did was to take a deep breath of air. Socrates asked, “What did you want the most when you were under water?” The boy replied, “Air.” Socrates said, “That is the secret to success. When you want success as badly as you wanted air underwater, you will have it.” There is no other secret. This is called the burning desire. In the business community, we call it the fire in the belly. In the sports community, we call it the killer instinct.

A burning desire is the starting point of all accomplishment. Just like a small fire cannot give much heat, a weak desire cannot produce great results.

2. Commitment

Integrity and wisdom are the two pillars on which to build and keep commitments. This point is best illustrated by the manager who told one of his staff members, “Integrity is keeping your commitment even if you lose money and wisdom is not to make such foolish commitments.”

Playing to Win Requires Commitment

There is a big difference between playing to win and playing not to lose. When we play to win, we play with enthusiasm and commitment. However, when we play not to lose, we are playing from a position of weakness. When we play not to lose, we are playing to avoid failure. We all *want* to win, but very few are prepared to pay the price to *prepare* to win. Winners condition and commit themselves to winning.

Many years ago, the French who were the world champions in football, lost out in the first round. When they lost, one of the players said “There goes my contract.” During the same championship game, the South Koreans, who were not considered as a strong contender for the championship, came all the way to the semi finals. But the way they played, even though they lost the match, they won the heart of the world. What was the difference? The difference was, one was playing for the contract and the other was playing for their country. That’s the difference between playing to win versus playing not to lose. **When we play to win, we play out of inspiration vs. when we play not to lose, we play out of desperation.** There is a big difference between the two.

There are no ideal circumstances. There never will be. To reach any destination, you can neither drift nor lie at anchor. You need to sometimes sail with the wind and sometimes against it, but sail you must.

Ask any coach or athlete to define the difference between the best and the worst team. There would be very little difference in the players’ physique, talent and ability. The biggest difference is an emotional difference. The winning team has dedication and they make the extra effort.

They have a stronger desire to win. To a winner, the tougher the competition:

- The greater the incentive
- The stronger the motivation
- The better the performance
- The sweeter the victory

New challenges develop new potential. Most athletes’ best performances have come when the odds were slightly against them. That is when they dig deeper into their emotional reservoirs.

When I'd get tired and want to stop, I'd wonder what my next opponent was doing. When I could see him still working, I'd start pushing myself. When I could see him in the shower, I'd push myself harder.

– Dan Gable, Olympic gold medalist in wrestling

Success is not in the achievement, but in the achieving. Some people never try because they are afraid to lose. At the same time, they don't want to stay where they are because they are afraid to be left behind. There is a risk either way. Ships that go out into the open waters face risk from a storm. But if they sit in the harbor, they would rust anyway and that is not what they were built for. The difference between playing to win and playing not to lose is that you cannot be committed and not take risks. People who play to win thrive on pressure and those who play not to lose don't know how to succeed.

Commitment makes people who play to win prepare harder. For those who play not to lose, the pressure saps their energy. They want to win, but they are so afraid of losing that they can't reach their full potential. They lose energy worrying about losing instead of concentrating their efforts on winning.

Losers want security; winners seek opportunity. Losers are more afraid of life than death. Failing is not a crime, but lack of effort is.

The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.

– Vince Lombardi

3. Responsibility

A duty that turns into a desire eventually turns into a delight

People with character accept responsibilities. They make decisions and determine their own destiny in life. Accepting responsibilities involves taking risks and being accountable, which is sometimes uncomfortable. Most people would rather stay in their comfort zone and live passive lives without accepting responsibilities. They drift through life waiting for things to happen, rather than making them happen. Accepting responsibilities involves taking calculated, not foolish, risks. It means evaluating all the pros and cons, then taking the most appropriate decision or action. Responsible people don't think that the world owes them a living.

You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.

You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.

You cannot enrich the poor by impoverishing the rich.

You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money.

*You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer.
You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative
and independence.
You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred.
You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn.
You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and
should do for themselves.*

– Abraham Lincoln

Each of the above statements by Lincoln is profound and valid universally and eternally. It is worth repeating. **You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.** You must make them build their own strengths.

If you are climbing an icy mountain or fighting a war, a mistake may kill you. **When things go wrong, negative people play the blame game.**

The retiring president of a company, after a standard farewell, gave two envelopes marked No. 1 and No. 2 to the incoming president, and said, "Whenever you run into a management crisis you cannot handle by yourself, open envelope No. 1. At the next crisis, open the second one."

A few years later, a major crisis came. The president went into the safe and pulled out the first envelope. It said, "Blame it on your predecessor." A few years later a second crisis came. The president went for the second envelope, and it said, "Prepare two envelopes for your successor." What is the moral of the story? Losers look for scapegoats and excuses. They're not willing to take responsibility.

4. Hard Work

Mark Spitz created a new world record in swimming by winning seven gold medals at Munich. I am sure some people thought it must be his lucky day. Mark Spitz was at Mexico in 1968 and won three gold medals. He was happy but unhappy. From 1968 to 1972, from Mexico to Munich, he trained 10,000 hours and if you're good at maths, it translates to 2,500 hours per year and if you are good at calculus that translates into close to eight hours per day, no Sunday. You go sit in the water eight hours per day for the next four years, your body will shrivel. Did he get lucky? Luck is not designed to deliver you these things in life. Athletes train fifteen years for a fifteen second performance. Go ask them if they got lucky. There is no substitute to hard work.

Most people want to win in life but very few are willing to pay the price to prepare to win. If you and I are willing to train 10,000 hours, like Marks Spitz, probably, we could be at the Olympics too. The question is, are we willing to do it?

Luck? I don't know anything about luck. I've never banked on it, and I'm afraid of people who do. Luck to me is something else; hard work—and realising what is opportunity and what isn't.

– Lucille Ball

Success is not something that you run into by accident. It takes a lot of preparation and character. It takes sacrifice and self-discipline. There is no substitute for hard work. Henry Ford said, “The harder you work, the luckier you get.”

The world is full of willing workers, some willing to work and the others willing to let them. How true! Kammons Wilson CEO of Holiday Inn said, “I like to work half a day. I don't care if it is the first twelve hours or the second twelve hours.”

Just as a person cannot learn to spell by sitting on a dictionary, he cannot develop a capacity to do anything without hard work. Professionals make things look easy because they have mastered the fundamentals of whatever they do. Michelangelo said, “If people knew how hard I had to work to gain my mastery, it wouldn't seem wonderful at all.”

The average person puts only twenty-five per cent of his energy and ability into his work. The world takes off its hat to those who put in more than fifty per cent of their capacity, and stands on its head for those few and far between souls who devote hundred per cent.

– Andrew Carnegie

Successful people ask “How much work”, not “How little work”; they ask “How many hours”, not “How few?” They think in terms of seconds and minutes, not in terms of hours and days. To them, every second is precious. Wasting time amounts to wasting life. The best musicians practice every day, often for hours. Winners don't need to apologise for winning because they work long and hard.

Everything that we enjoy is a result of someone's hard work. Some people's work is visible while others' goes unseen, but ultimately both are equally important. So take pride in your work and whenever there is a chance, show appreciation for the hard work of others by treating their work with care and respect. Work hard and well and you will have the satisfaction of seeing your project completed. Sometimes others may show appreciation, but that's a bonus, for the major satisfaction comes from within.

Many people don't understand the difference between idle time and leisure time. **Idle time amounts to wasting or stealing time ; leisure time is earned.** Enjoying leisure time leaves us energised and refreshed. Idle time

saps our energy. Procrastinating is idle time.

Excellence is not luck; it is the result of a lot of hard work and practice which make a person better at whatever he is doing.

Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at something worth doing.

– Theodore Roosevelt

Hard work is both a beginning and an end in itself. The harder a person works, the better he feels; and the better he feels, the harder he works. The best ideas will not work unless you work the ideas. Great talent without willpower and hard work is a waste.

We need to learn from nature. The duck keeps paddling relentlessly underneath the water but appears smooth and calm on the top.

Once when the great violinist Fritz Kreisler finished a concert, someone came up to the stage and said, "I'd give my life to play the way you do." Kreisler replied, "I did!"

There is no magic wand for success. In the real world, success comes to doers, not observers. A horse that pulls cannot kick; a horse that kicks cannot pull. Let's pull and stop kicking.

Nature gives birds their food but does not put it in their nests. They have to work hard for it. Nothing comes easily. Milton rose every morning at 4 a.m. to write *Paradise Lost*. It took Noah Webster 36 years to compile *Webster's Dictionary*.

Even small accomplishments require hard work. A small good action is a lot better than a great intention. It is sad but true that there are more people in the world who are not working than there are people who are unemployed.

Some people stop working as soon as they find a **job**. Regardless of the unemployment statistics, it is hard to find good people to work.

Many times you hear, don't work hard, work smart. What does working smart mean? It means: 1) learning from other people's mistakes because our lives are not long enough to make all of our own mistakes. 2) We need to find a process or way to accelerate to achieve our goals or destination. Acceleration means speeding up the process rather than bypassing the process. Working smart does not mean compromising values. The key to succeed in life is to work both smart and hard. There is no substitute to hard work. Working hard includes working smart.

5. Character

Try not to become a success, but rather try to become a man of value.

– Albert Einstein

Character is the sum total of a person's values, beliefs and personality. It is reflected in our thoughts, behavior and actions. It needs to be preserved more than the richest jewel in the world. To be a winner takes character. George Washington said, "I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most valuable of all titles, the character of an honest man." It is not the polls or public opinion but the character of the leader that determines the course of history. There is no twilight zone in integrity. If character is the foundation upon which all else is built, it endures.

The road to success has many pitfalls. It takes a lot of character and effort not to fall into them. It also takes character not to be disheartened by critics. Nobody kicks a dead dog.

Character is a Combination

Character is having a combination of three core values: Integrity, Respect and Responsibility. All other values are supporting values. All positive behavior such as honesty, unselfishness, understanding, conviction, courage, loyalty, sincerity, hard work etc. emanate from our core values. Character is much deeper than personality. What is a positive personality with character?

- It is poise and composure.
- It is surefootedness and confidence without arrogance.
- It is being considerate and understanding.
- It is accepting responsibility and not making excuses.
- It is knowing that courtesy and good manners take many small sacrifices.
- It is learning from past mistakes.
- It has nothing to do with money or blue blood.
- It never builds itself by destroying others.
- It is substance, not just form.
- It is being able to walk with the elite and yet maintain the common touch.
- It is a gentle word, a kind look and a good-natured smile.
- It is the courage that stands against tyranny.
- It is being comfortable with oneself and others.
- It is having the classic touch that gives the winning edge.
- It is easy to recognise, hard to define.

- It is graciousness in victory and defeat.
- It is not fame and fortune.
- It is permanent.
- It is intangible. It is not a plaque.
- It is being humble, courteous and polite without being subservient.
- It is being classy without being cocky.
- It is self-discipline and knowledge.
- It is self-contained.
- It is trustworthiness and dependability

Human nature is such that sometimes, during the greatest moments of our accomplishments, we start slacking off and lose out. In order to sustain success one needs a lot of self-discipline, balance, humility and commitment.

Many people know how to become successful, but after they become successful they don't know how to handle it. That is why ability and character go hand in hand. Ability will get you success; character will keep you successful.

We don't unfold or discover ourselves—we create and build ourselves into the kind of person we want to be.

Character-building starts from infancy and goes on until death. Character does not need success. It is success. Just like a gardener has to keep weeding to prevent weeds from eating the life of the garden, we need to keep building and developing our character by weeding out our faults.

John F. Kennedy once said that it is a mark of character how well a person behaves when things are not going well. When things are going well for us, it is easy to be logical, kind and gracious. But when things aren't going well and we're under a lot of pressure, some people can't think clearly and snap at others around them, while others remain clear-headed and continue to treat others with respect.

6. Positive Thinking and Believing

What is positive thinking and positive believing?

Positive thinking means a person is solution or success focused, whereas positive believing means a person has a reason to believe that they will succeed.

What is the difference between positive thinking and positive believing?

There is a misconception that with positive thinking, everything is possible in

life. No matter how positive I am, I cannot do a kidney transplant on someone and expect them to live. The reality is that positive thinking does not guarantee success. But, positive thinking with positive efforts and actions increases our probability of success.

Example, Mohammad Ali. When he used to go into the ring, he used to think “I’m the greatest, I’m the champion... I’m the greatest, I’m the champion.” He never said, I hope I win. He used to psyche himself mentally. That was positive thinking or positive mental conditioning. He used to look at his opponent and say, “You have the belt but I am the champion.” Before he became a champion inside the ring, he became a champion outside. But he did not become the champion by only shouting “I’m the greatest I’m the champion.” While he was doing his positive thinking, he was not sitting in his living room, watching TV and eating pop corn all day long. He was in the ring punching the bag all the time. His positive thinking was backed with positive action which led him to believe that the results would be positive. **Positive thinking is a supplement, not a substitute to an action plan.** When a person has a reason to believe that they will be successful, that is positive believing.

To succeed in life, one needs both the **skill** and the **will**. One without the other will not work. But between the two, will is a little more important than the skill. Skill can be matched but when you are down and hurt, that’s the time when your will is going to pull you up one more time, to get up and give one more push and **that** is the winning edge. Even though it has become a cliché, it still makes great sense. The difference between the ordinary and extraordinary is only the ‘extra’.

Positive believing is more than positive thinking. It is, knowing that positive thinking will work. **Positive believing is an attitude of confidence that comes from preparation.**

What if you could actually listen to your thoughts? Are they positive or negative? Are you programming your mind for success or failure? The way in which you think has a profound effect on your performance.

Having a positive attitude and being motivated is a choice we make every day. Living a positive life is not easy; but then neither is negative living. Given a choice, I would rather go for a positive living. Positive thinking with positive actions help you use your abilities to the fullest.

Having a positive attitude without making the effort is nothing more than having a wishful dream. The following illustrates positive believing.

Several years ago Lockheed introduced the L-1011 Tristar plane. In order to ensure safety and test the strength of the jetliner, Lockheed exposed the plane to the roughest possible treatment for eighteen months, a program that cost \$1.5 billion. Hydraulic jacks, electronic sensors and a computer put the airplane through its paces for more than 36,000 simulated flights (equivalent to hundred years of airline service), without one single malfunction. Finally after thousands of tests,

the aircraft was given the seal of approval.*

Does the Lockheed organisation have reason to believe positively? You bet. There is every reason to believe that this plane is safe to fly, because of all the effort put into preparation.

7. Give More Than You Get

At one of my programs, there were a couple of hundred people. It was a very mixed group. There were doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians. As I walked in, I said, “Never in the history of mankind, has it been so easy to succeed in life, than the way it is today. Regardless of your profession, we have no competition.” After I repeated myself twice, one person stopped me and asked me to explain how it is that we have no competition. I asked him, “Tell me how many people do you know walking down the street who are willing to do a little more than what they get paid for? The answer was, “Hardly any.” I continued, “Most people don’t even want to do what they get paid for and a second category of people want only to do what they can get by with. There is a very small fraction of people who are willing to do a little bit more than what they get paid for.” I then asked him, “If you fall into that category, I don’t care what your profession is, tell me where is your competition? You can’t even find a good attorney today, or an accountant or an electrician or a plumber. The question is, are you willing to do a little bit more than what you get paid for? If you look at the life histories of most successful people or organisations, who have 1) Succeeded, 2) sustained success and 3) maintained goodwill, they have all lived by this one principle: “I shall always give more than I get, to my family, organisation and my society.” If we live by this principle, you tell me where’s the competition? In fact, we become the competition. We have no competition.

Why should you do more? The advantages of doing more than you get paid for are:

- You make yourself more valuable, regardless of what you do and where you work.
- It gives you more confidence.
- People start looking at you as a leader.
- Others start trusting you.
- Superiors start respecting you.
- It breeds loyalty from both your subordinates and your superiors.

- It generates cooperation.
- It produces pride and satisfaction.

If we go the extra mile, where is the competition?

If you work for a man, for heaven's sake work for him.

– Kim Hubbard

People who live by the above philosophy are in demand everywhere they go regardless of age, experience or academic qualifications. They:

- Can work without supervision.
- Are punctual and considerate.
- Listen carefully and carry out instructions accurately.
- Don't sulk when called upon to pitch in at the time of an emergency.
- Are result oriented rather than task oriented.
- Are cheerful and courteous.

Always think in terms of giving more than is expected by your customer, friends, spouse, parents and children. Whenever you do anything, ask yourself, "How can I add value to what I am doing?" or "How can I give added value to others?"

The key to success can be summed up in four words: "and then some more." Winners do what they are supposed to—and then some more. Winners do their duty—and then some more. Winners are courteous and generous—and then some more. Winners can be counted on—and then some more. Winners put in hundred per cent—and then some more. They always put in an extra effort even when it hurts.

Why are some highly intelligent people, often with impressive academic qualifications, living failures or at best, practicing mediocrity? It is because they become experts at why things won't work and build a reserve of negative energy. No wonder they are living failures. Only when they give or do more than what they get paid for, do they eliminate competition. This attitude is much more important than intelligence or a degree.

8. The Power of Persistence

Many times I am asked that if there was only one quality that could bring success, which one would that be? My answer is, "First of all, there is no one quality. It is a combination. But if there was only one, I would say it would be persistence." Persistence is the bounce-back ability. All successful people

gained success because they persisted. Calvin Coolidge said:

“Nothing will take the place of persistence. Talent will not: Nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not: Unrewarded genius is a proverb. Education will not: The world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.”

How well said by Calvin Coolidge. Talent will not compensate for persistence neither will genius nor education. The world is full of educated derelicts. How true! Persistence is omnipotent.

The journey to being your best is not easy. It is full of setbacks. Winners persist and have the ability to overcome and bounce back with even greater resolve. The following poem “Don’t Quit” literally changed my life.

DON’T QUIT

*When things go wrong,
As they sometimes will,
When the road you’re trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit—Rest if you must, but don’t you quit.
Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about When he might have won had he stuck it out.
Don’t give up though the pace seems slow—You may succeed with another
blow.
Success is failure turned inside out—The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you’re hardest hit It’s when things seem worst that
you must not quit.*

– Anonymous

Fritz Kreisler, the great violinist, was once asked, “How do you play so well? Are you lucky?” He replied, “It is practice.

If I don’t practice for a month, the audience can tell the difference. If I don’t practice for a week, my wife can tell the difference. If I don’t practice for a day, I can tell the difference.” What is the moral of the story? Persistence, hard work and pride in performance are inseparable.

Persistence results from commitment and leads to determination. There is pleasure in endurance. Performers put in years of practice for a few seconds or minutes of performance.

Persistence is a decision. It is a commitment to finish what you start. When we are exhausted, quitting looks good. But winners endure. Ask a winning athlete and he will tell you that he endures pain and finishes what he started. Lots of people who are failures began well but never finished anything. Persistence comes from purpose. Life without purpose is drifting. A person who has no purpose will never persevere and will never feel fulfilled.

9. Pride in Performance

In today's world, pride in performance has fallen by the wayside because it requires effort and hard work. However, nothing happens unless it is made to happen. When one is discouraged, it is easy to look for shortcuts. These, however, should be avoided no matter how great the temptation. Pride comes from within—it is what gives the winning edge.

Pride in performance does not reflect ego. It represents high standards of performance with humility. *The quality of the work and the quality of the worker are inseparable.* **Halfhearted effort does not produce half results; it produces no results.**

Three people were laying bricks. A passerby asked them what they were doing. The first one replied, "Don't you see I am making a living?" The second one said, "Don't you see I am laying bricks?" The third one said, "I am building a beautiful monument." Here were three people doing the same thing who had totally different perspectives on what they were doing. They had three very different attitudes about their work. And would their attitude affect their performance? The answer is clearly yes. **People who take pride in performance, hold themselves accountable to much higher standards of performance than others do.**

Excellence comes when the performer takes pride in doing his best. Every job is a self-portrait of the person who does it, regardless of what the job is, whether washing cars, sweeping the floor or painting a house.

Do it right the first time, every time. The best insurance for tomorrow is a job well done today.

Michelangelo had been working on a statue for many days. He was taking a long time to retouch every small detail. A bystander thought these improvements were insignificant and asked Michelangelo why he bothered with them. Michelangelo replied, "Trifles make perfection and perfection is no trifle."

Most people forget how fast you did a job, but they remember how well

it was done.

If a man is called to be street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.

– Martin Luther King, Jr

The feeling of a job well done is a reward in itself. It is better to do small things well than do many things poorly.

10. Be Willing to Be a Student—Get a Mentor

If God and the teacher (guru) are standing together, who does the student salute first? According to Indian culture, the answer is the teacher, because without his direction and help, the student could not have met God.

A mentor or a teacher is a person whose hindsight can become your foresight. Look for someone who can mentor you. Choose your mentor carefully. A good mentor will guide and give direction, whereas a bad mentor will misguide. Show respect. Be an interested student because an interested student gets the best out of a teacher.

The best teachers will not give you something to drink, they will make you thirsty. They will not give you answers but will put you on a path to seek answers.

Once a person asked a fresh science graduate, what are your qualifications? The graduate replied, I'm a master of science. Then the same question was asked to his professor and the professor replied, I'm a student of science. Isn't that amazing? One cannot be a good teacher unless he is a good student.

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

Do all of us have the qualities for success? Some people feel they don't. They stay mediocre and fail. But it doesn't have to be that way. All of us possess each of the qualities discussed in this chapter. The qualities may not be developed to the level that you want them to be, but they are there. You may not know that they are there, but once you discover them, life takes a new turn and changes for the better.

This is like having a million dollars buried in your backyard and not knowing about it. You wouldn't be able to use it. But the moment you find out, your thinking and behavior will change. We all have hidden treasures. All we need to do is bring them to the surface and use them.

A CRASH COURSE FOR SUCCESS

- Play to win and not to lose.
- Learn from other people's mistakes.
- Associate with people of high moral character.
- Give more than you get.
- Don't look for something for nothing.
- Always think long term.
- Evaluate your strengths and build on them.
- Always keep the larger picture in mind when making a decision.
- Never compromise your integrity.

ACTION PLAN

1. Write three things that you commit to do where you will give more than what you get from:

My family: 1..... 2..... 3.....

My customer: 1..... 2..... 3.....

My organisation: 1..... 2..... 3.....

My society: 1..... 2..... 3.....

2. Look back into the last three years of your life and write what you learnt from each setback.

A Setback.....

Learning.....

B Setback

Learning.....

C Setback

Learning.....

Ben Franklin identified thirteen virtues and worked on each of them for a week. At the end of thirteen weeks, he started the cycle over again.

Ben Franklin's thirteen virtues:

1. Temperance, 2. Silence, 3. Order, 4. Resolution,
5. Frugality, 6. Industry, 7. Sincerity, 8. Justice,
9. Moderation, 10. Cleanliness, 11. Tranquility,
12. Chastity, 13. Humility.

3. Decide how you can work on each of the ten keys to success in this chapter.

- Desire
- Responsibility
- Character
- Give more than you get
- Pride of performance
- Commitment
- Hard work
- Positive believing
- Persistence
- Be a student; get a mentor

*Adapted from *Daily Motivations for African-American Success* by Dennis Kimbro, June 29, 1993, Fawcett Press, New York.

WHAT IS HOLDING US BACK?

Fear and self-doubt

Ability will take you up there. Character will keep you up there.

The only limit to our realisation of tomorrow will be our doubts of today.

– Franklin D. Roosevelt

WHAT would happen if you drove your car with the brakes on? You'd never go full speed because the brakes would offer resistance. Your car would overheat and break down. If it didn't break down, the resistance would strain the engine. To get to your destination, you would have to make one of two choices: You could either press the accelerator harder and risk damage, or release the brakes to make the car go faster.

This analogy is a good parallel to life because many people go through life with our emotional brakes on. What are the brakes? They are the factors that prevent you from achieving success—fear, procrastination, lack of pride etc. The way to release your emotional brakes is by building a positive attitude, realizing your self-worth and accepting responsibility.

FAILURE—20 REASONS WHY WE DON'T ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE

Life is like a ten-speed bicycle. Most of us have gears we never use.

– Charles Schultz

There are 20 factors that can cause you to fail. By working to overcome these factors, you can release the brakes that are holding back your success.

1. Unwillingness to Take Risks

Success involves taking calculated risks. Risk-taking does not mean gambling foolishly and behaving irresponsibly. People sometimes mistake irresponsible and rash behavior as risk-taking. They end up with negative results and blame it on bad luck.

Risk-taking is relative. The concept of risk varies from person to person and can be a result of training. To both a trained mountain climber and a novice, mountain climbing is risky, but to the trained person it is not irresponsible risk-taking. Responsible risk-taking is based on knowledge, training, and competence—factors that give you the confidence and courage to act while facing fear. The person who never attempts anything risky makes no mistakes. However, not making the attempt is often a bigger mistake than making the attempt and failing.

Once someone asked a farmer if he had planted wheat for the season. The farmer replied, “No. I was afraid it wouldn’t rain.” The man asked, “Did you plant corn?” The farmer said, “No. I was afraid that insects would eat the corn.” Then the man asked, “What did you plant?” The farmer said, “Nothing. I played it safe.”

What is the moral of the story? Risk taking is part of life. Many times, not taking any risk could become the greatest risk. People who risk nothing, do nothing, have nothing and become nothing. Indecision is habit forming and contagious. Many opportunities are lost because of indecision. Take risks, but don’t gamble. Risk-takers move ahead with their eyes open. Gamblers shoot in the dark.

The following poem explains it well:

RISKS

*To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
To reach out for another is to risk involvement.
To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self.
To place your ideas, your dreams, before a crowd is to risk their loss.
To love is to risk not being loved in return.
To live is to risk dying.
To hope is to risk despair.
To try is to risk failure.
But risks must be taken, because the greatest
hazard in life is to risk nothing.*

*The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has
nothing, and is nothing.*

– Janet Rand

2. Lack of Persistence

When problems seem insurmountable, quitting may look like the easiest way out. It is true for every marriage, job and relationship. Winners are struck but not destroyed. We have all had our setbacks in life. But failing does not mean we are failures.

What is the difference between *persistence* and *obstinacy* ? The difference is that persistence represents a strong will and obstinacy represents a strong won't!

Most people fail not because they lack knowledge or talent but because they quit. The total secret of success lies in two traits: persistence and resistance. *Persist* in what must be done and *resist* from what ought not to be done.

*A man is a hero not because he is braver than anyone else, but because
he is brave for ten minutes longer.*

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

3. Instant Gratification

The desire to make a fortune overnight has made the lottery a flourishing business. We are living in an age of instant gratification. There is a pill for everything, from waking you up to putting you to sleep. People want to take a pill to get rid of their problems. In the same way when people want to be instant millionaires, they take shortcuts and compromise on their integrity.

Remember that when going for instant gratification, one never thinks of consequences, only of momentary pleasures.

Today's generation defines the ideal diet as one that will take off five pounds for good intentions. These are people who don't want to work but want all the rewards.

When you think short term, not long term, it is limited vision. With limited vision you will never see any worthwhile goals.

The problem with people today is that they want instant answers. They are looking for one-minute solutions to everything. Like instant coffee they want instant happiness, but there are no quick fixes. This attitude leads to disappointment.

4. Lack of Priorities

Setting priorities is crucial to success. What good is it to make millions if you lose your health? What good is it to make millions if you lose your family? What good is it to make millions and lose your conscience? Is it worth it?

Our priorities are based on our values. People make substitutions where they ought not to. For example, in relationships, they trade money and gifts for affection and time. Some people find it easier to buy things for their children and spouse to compensate for their absence than to spend time interacting with them.

When we don't have our priorities right, we waste time, not realising that time wasted is life wasted. Prioritising requires discipline to do what needs to be done rather than taking actions based on our moods and fancies. These days too much emphasis is placed on success and failure rather than doing one's best.

How do you cope with defeat and problems?

Your response to this question says a lot about your character. One of the keys to solving this mystery of success is understanding your priorities. Some people set their sights on money, power, fame or possessions. We have to understand our priorities.

Success does not come by reading or memorising the principles that lead to success, but by understanding and applying them. Prioritising is one of the principles of success.

5. Looking for Shortcuts

If you become a neurosurgeon by taking a weekend course, guess what would be the result? The result would be a disaster.

The Easier Way May Actually Be The Tougher Way

Once there was a lark singing in the forest. A farmer came by with a box full of worms. The lark stopped him and asked, "What do you have in the box and where are you going?" The farmer replied that he had worms and that he was going to the market to trade them for some feathers. The lark said, "I have many feathers. I will pluck one and give it to you and that will save me looking for worms." The farmer gave the worms to the lark and the lark plucked a feather and gave it in return. The next day the same thing happened and the day after and on and on until a day came that the lark had no more feathers. Now it could no longer fly to go hunting for worms. It started looking ugly and stopped singing and very soon it died.

The above story exemplifies the behavior of losers who, for their **short term gain, eventually suffer long term pain**.

The moral of this story is quite clear—what the lark thought was an easy way to get food turned out to be the tougher way. There are no short cuts in

life.

Isn't the same thing true in our lives? Many times we look for the easier way, which really ends up being the tougher way.

The key is to get to the root of the problem and not just go with shortcuts. The same is true of our attitudes in life. Some people spread their attitudes of bitterness and resentment and these attitudes keep cropping up in different parts of their lives.

6. Selfishness and Greed

Individuals and organisations that have a selfish attitude have no right to expect growth. Their attitude is to keep putting themselves first without regard for the welfare of others. Greed always wants more. Needs can be satisfied, but greed cannot. Greed is like salt water. The more you drink, the thirstier you get. It is a cancer of the soul that destroys relationships.

Greed comes out of low self-esteem, which manifests itself as false pride, pretence, or 'keeping up with the Joneses.' The way out of greed is to learn to live within your means and be satisfied. Being content however, does not mean a lack of ambition.

WHERE DOES IT END?

A wealthy farmer was once offered all the land he could walk on in a day provided he returned by sundown to the point at which he started. To get a head start, early the next morning, the farmer started covering ground quickly because he wanted to get as much land as he could. Even though he was tired, he kept going all afternoon because he didn't want to lose this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to gain more wealth.

Late in the afternoon, he remembered that the condition he had to fulfill to get the land was to get back to the starting point by sundown. His greed had gotten him far from the starting point. He started his return journey, keeping an eye on how close he was to sundown. The closer it got to sundown, the faster he ran. He was exhausted and out of breath and he pushed himself beyond the point of endurance. He collapsed upon reaching the starting point and died. He did make it before sundown. He was buried and all the land he needed was a small plot.

There is a lot of truth in this story and a lesson to be learned. Whether the farmer was wealthy or not, any greedy person would have ended the same way.

7. Lack of Conviction

People who lack conviction take the middle of the road. And, guess what happens to those in the middle of the road. They get run over!

People without conviction do not take a stand. They go along to get along because they lack confidence and courage. They conform in order to get

accepted even when they know that what the group is doing is wrong. They still go along to get along.

Some people consider themselves a shade better because they do not support the wrong; however, they lack the conviction to oppose. They remain silent and they think they have integrity. Silence and integrity are two different things. **Just because a person is silent does not mean he has integrity.** In fact more lies in history have been told by remaining silent when we should have spoken. By not opposing something we know is wrong, we are actually supporting it.

One of the important secrets to success is, instead of being against something, be *for* something. That way, you don't become part of the problem, but part of the solution. It takes conviction to take a stand.

Conviction Takes Faith

Faith without action is delusion. Faith does not wait for miracles but produces them.

We all have low moments; we all fall down and get hurt. We all have moments when we doubt ourselves and indulge in self-pity. The point is to overcome these feelings and restore your faith.

There are three kinds of people in this world:

1. People who make things happen
2. People who watch things happen
3. People who wonder what happened

Which category do you fall into?

8. Unwillingness to plan

It is unfortunate but true that most people spend more time planning a party or vacation than planning their lives.

Experience shows that one properly planned minute saves four in execution. Achievers who want to ensure success, plan carefully. They even plan for the unplanned. If you have not planned for the unplanned, that means you have not planned properly. A good general or executive will always have Plan A, Plan B, Plan C, Plan D. Why? Are they planning to fail? Absolutely not. They are planning to succeed regardless of the obstacles. If Plan A fails, Plan B picks up and so on.

9. Unwillingness to Prepare

Preparation

Confidence comes from preparation, which is nothing but planning and practicing. Winners put pressure on themselves. That is the pressure of preparing and not worrying about winning.

If we practice poorly, we play poorly; because we play as we practice. **The difference between success and failure is the difference between doing exactly right and almost right.**

A complete mental and physical preparation is the result of sacrifice and self-discipline. It is easy to be average but tough to be the best. No wonder the average person chooses the easy way, lives the life of mediocrity.

Preparation is the necessary edge to succeed in any field.

Preparation = Purpose + Principle + Planning + Practice + Perseverance + Patience + Pride

Preparation Leads to Confidence

Preparation means tolerating failure but never accepting it. It means having the courage to face defeat without feeling defeated, being disappointed without being discouraged.

Preparation means learning from our mistakes. There is nothing wrong with making mistakes. We all do. A fool is one who makes the same mistake twice. A person who makes a mistake and doesn't correct it, commits a bigger one.

The best way to handle a mistake is to:

- Admit to it quickly
- Learn from it
- Not make excuses.
- Not dwell on it
- Never repeat it

Pressure comes from being unprepared. There is no substitute for preparation, practice and hard work. Desire and wishful thinking won't do it. Only preparation will give you the competitive edge.

Pressure can paralyse you if you are not prepared, or propel you to new heights if you are well prepared. Just as water gravitates to its own path, success gravitates to those who are prepared. Weak efforts get weak results.

Persistence is a name we give to:

- Purpose

- Pride
- Principles
- Plan
- Patience
- Price
- Preparation
- Practice
- Positive Attitude

Ask yourself:

- Do you have a clearly defined purpose?
- Do you have a plan of action?
- What effort are you putting into preparation?
- Do you have pride in your performance?
- Do you have the patience to withstand the gestation period?
- Are you willing to practice toward excellence?
- Do you have any firm principles to stand on?
- What price are you willing to pay? How far are you willing to go?
- Do you have the 'Positive' attitude?

10. Rationalising

Winners may analyse, theorise, sympathise but they never rationalise. Rationalisation is a loser's game. Losers always have a book full of excuses to tell you why they could not. We hear excuses like:

- I'm unlucky.
- I'm too young.
- I'm handicapped.
- I'm not educated.
- I don't have contacts.
- I don't have enough time.
- If only I didn't have a family.
- I'm born under the wrong stars.
- I'm too old.
- I'm not smart enough.

- I'm not good looking.
- I don't have enough money.
- The economy is bad.
- If only I had the opportunity.
- If only I had married right.

The list can go on and on. There are two things that determine whether a person is a success: reasons and results. Reasons don't count but results do.

How They Catch Monkeys in India

Monkey-hunters use a box with an opening at the top, big enough for the monkey to slide his hand inside. Inside the box are nuts. The monkey grabs the nuts and now his hand becomes a fist. The monkey tries to get his hand out but the opening is only big enough for the hand to slide, but not big enough for the fist. Now the monkey has a choice, either to let go off the nuts and be free forever or hang on to the nuts and get caught. Guess what it picks every time? You guessed it. He hangs on to the nuts and gets caught.

We are no different from monkeys. We all hang on to nuts that keep us from going forward in life. We keep rationalising by saying, "I cannot do this because ..." and whatever comes after 'because' are the nuts that we are hanging onto that are holding us back. Successful people don't rationalise.

Good advice for sure shot failure is: Don't think, don't ask, and don't listen. Just rationalise.

11. Not Learning from Past Mistakes

People who do not learn lessons from history are doomed. We learn from failure if we have the right attitude. Failure is a detour, not a dead end. It is a delay, not a defeat. Experience is the name we give to our mistakes.

Some people live and learn and some only live. Wise people learn from their mistakes but wiser people learn from other people's mistakes, because our lives are not long enough to learn only from our own mistakes!

12. Inability to Recognise Opportunity

Opportunities can come disguised as obstacles. That is why most people don't recognise them. Remember, the bigger the obstacle, the greater the opportunity.

13. Fear

Fear can be real or imaginary. Fear makes people do strange things. It primarily comes from a lack of understanding. To live in fear is to live in an emotional prison. Fear paralyses and immobilises people.

Fear results in insecurity, lack of confidence and procrastination. Fear destroys our potential and ability. We cannot think straight. Fear ruins relationships and health.

Some common fears are:

- Fear of failing
- Fear of the unknown
- Fear of being unprepared
- Fear of making the wrong decision
- Fear of rejection

Some fears can be described, others can only be felt. Fear leads to anxiety which in turn leads to irrational thinking and this actually sabotages our ability to solve the problem. The normal response to fear is escape. Escape puts us in a comfort zone and reduces the impact of fear temporarily while the cause remains. Imaginary fears magnify the problem. Fear can get out of hand and destroy happiness and relationships. Think of fear as meaning:

F A I L S E
E V I D E N C E
A P P E A R I N G
R E A L

Fear of failure is often worse than failure itself. Failure is not the worst thing that can happen to someone. People who don't try have failed even before attempting. When infants learn to walk, they keep falling; but to them it is not failing, it is learning. If they became disheartened, they would never walk.

14. Inability to Use Talent

Albert Einstein said, "I think I used about twenty-five per cent of my intellectual capacity during my life."

According to William James, human beings use only ten to twelve per cent of their potential.*

The saddest part of most people's lives is that they die with the music still in them.

They haven't lived life while alive. They rust out rather than wear out. I would rather wear out than rust out. The saddest words in life are: "I should

have.”

Rusting out is not to be confused with patience. Patience is a conscious decision. It is active and involves perseverance and persistence. Rusting out is idleness and passivity.

Someone asked an elderly person, “What is life’s heaviest burden?” The elderly person replied sadly, “To have nothing to carry.”

15. Lack of Discipline

You have a choice in life: You can either pay the price of discipline or regret.

– Tim Connor

Have you ever wondered why some people never reach their goals? Why are they always frustrated with reversals and crises? Why do some people have continued success, while others have endless failures? Anyone who has accomplished anything worthwhile has never done so without discipline, whether in sports, athletics, academia or business. What we are referring to is self-discipline, not external discipline.

People without discipline try to do everything, but commit themselves to nothing. Some so-called liberal thinkers have interpreted lack of discipline as freedom. When I am in an aircraft I want a pilot who is disciplined and does what he is supposed to do and not what he feels like doing. I don’t want him to have the philosophy, “I’m free. I don’t want anyone from the control tower telling me what to do.”

Lack of consistency demonstrates poor discipline. Discipline takes self-control, sacrifice and avoiding distractions and temptations. It means staying focused. Steam does not move the engine unless it is confined. Niagara Falls would not generate power unless it were harnessed.

We all know the story of the tortoise and the hare. The hare bragged about his speed and challenged the tortoise to a race. The tortoise accepted the challenge. They appointed a fox as the judge. The race started and the tortoise kept going slowly, but the hare sprinted off. He quickly left the tortoise behind. As he was confident of winning the race he decided to take a nap. By the time he woke up, remembered the race and resumed running, the tortoise had already reached the finish line and won.

The old moral used to be, slow and steady wins the race. But, if we go a little deeper, the meaning changes to the fact that even though the tortoise was not fast, the hare was over-confident and lacked self-discipline.

Consistency takes discipline and is more important than erratic effort.

Discipline and regret are both painful. Most people have a choice between

the two. Guess which is more painful. Obviously, regret!

Generally children brought up with excessive freedom and a lack of discipline grow up not respecting themselves, their parents or society and have a hard time accepting responsibility.

16. Low Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem is a lack of self-respect and self-worth. Low self-esteem leads to self-doubt. It leads to abuse of one's self and others. Ego takes the driver's seat. Decisions are taken more to satisfy the ego than to accomplish anything worthwhile. People with low self-esteem are constantly looking for identity. They are trying to find themselves, not realising that one's self is not to be found, but to be created.

Idleness and laziness are consequences of low self-esteem and so is making excuses. Idleness is like rust that eats into the most brilliant metal.

17. Lack of Knowledge

Sixty years ago I knew everything; now I know nothing; education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance.

– Will Durant

The first step towards knowledge is awareness of areas of ignorance. The more knowledge a person gets, the more he realises what areas he is ignorant in. A person who thinks he knows everything has the most to learn.

Ignorant people don't know they are ignorant. They don't know that 'they don't know'. In fact, more than ignorance, the bigger problem is the illusion of knowledge, because when you think you know something—but don't—your decision-making will be flawed.

18. Fatalistic Attitude

A fatalistic attitude prevents people from accepting responsibility. People with fatalistic attitudes attribute success and failure to luck. They resign themselves to their fate. They accept the predestined future written in their horoscope or stars. They believe that regardless of their effort, whatever has to happen will happen. Hence they never put in any effort and complacency becomes a way of life. People with a fatalistic attitude wait for things to happen rather than making them happen. Success is a matter of luck, ask any failure.

Weak-minded people fall easy prey to fortune-tellers, horoscopes and self-proclaimed God men who are sometimes conmen. They become superstitious

and ritualistic. (Some people consider a rabbit's foot lucky; but it wasn't lucky for the rabbit, was it?)

If you want to fail, believe in luck. If you want to succeed, believe in the principle of cause and effect, and you will create your own 'luck'. As Samuel Goldwyn said, "The harder I work, the luckier I get."

Some People Think they are Just Unlucky

They count on luck to deliver rather than their own efforts not realising luck favors the prepared. Hence, whatever they do, they go unprepared, attempt half-heartedly and say things like:

- I will give it a try
- I will give it a shot
- I haven't put much into it anyway
- I will see if it works
- I have nothing to lose

If you think about it, it is this kind of non-committed behavior that results in failure. **Attempting half-heartedly is like expecting failure and achieving it.**

EFFORT DOES IT

A man bought a racehorse and put him in a barn with a big sign, "The fastest horse in the world." The owner didn't exercise the horse nor train it to keep it in good shape. He entered the horse in a race and it came last. The owner quickly changed the sign to "The fastest world for the horse." By inaction or not doing what should be done, people fail and they blame luck.

Life without vision, courage and depth is simply a blind experience. Small, lazy and weak minds always take the easiest way, the path of least resistance.

Ask an athlete how he feels after a good workout. He will tell you that he feels spent. If he doesn't feel that way, it means he hasn't worked out to his maximum ability.

Losers think life is unfair

They think only of their bad breaks. They don't consider that the person who is prepared and playing well still got the same bad breaks but overcame them. That is the difference. *The winner's threshold for tolerating pain becomes higher because in the end he is not training just for the game but for his*

character.

LUCK FAVORS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES

A flood was threatening a small town and everyone was leaving for safe ground except for one man who said, "God will save me. I have faith." As the water level rose a jeep came to rescue him, the man refused, saying "God will save me. I have faith." As the water level rose further, he went up to the second storey of his house, and a boat came to help him. Again he refused to go, saying, "God will save me. I have faith." The water kept rising and the man climbed on to the roof. A helicopter came to rescue him, but he said, "God will save me. I have faith." Well, finally he drowned. When he reached his Maker he angrily questioned, "I had complete faith in you. Why did you ignore my prayers and let me drown?" The Lord replied, "Who do you think sent you the jeep, the boat and the helicopter?"

What is the moral of the story? He not only did not act to help himself but even rejected the help that came his way. The above story is a clear example of fatalistic behavior which is prevalent in most failures.

The only way to overcome a fatalistic attitude is to accept responsibility and believe in the law of cause and effect rather than luck. It takes action, preparation and planning rather than waiting, wondering and wishing, to accomplish any goal in life.

Luck Shines on the Deserving

Alexander Graham Bell was desperately trying to invent a hearing aid for his partially deaf wife. He failed at inventing a hearing aid but in the process discovered the principles of the telephone. You wouldn't call someone like that lucky, would you?

Good luck is when preparation meets opportunity. Without effort and preparation, lucky coincidences don't happen.

LUCK

He worked by day And toiled by night.

He gave up play And some delight.

Dry books he read,

New things to learn.

And forged ahead,

Success to earn.

He plodded on with Faith and pluck;

And when he won,

Men called it luck.

– Anonymous

19. Lack of Purpose

A lifetime goal is called a purpose. It gives meaning to life.

Great minds have purposes, others have wishes.

– Washington Irving

If we read stories of people who have overcome serious disabilities, it is evident that their burning desire to succeed was their driving force. They had a purpose in life. They wanted to prove to themselves that they could succeed in spite of all odds—and they did.

Desire is what made a paralytic Wilma Rudolph the fastest woman on the track at the 1960 Olympics, winning three gold medals.

When people lack purpose and direction, they are unable to see opportunity. If a person has the desire to accomplish something, knows the destination, moves in that direction, focused with dedication and the discipline required, then success will follow. But if you don't have purpose and direction, it doesn't matter what else you have, you won't succeed.

20. Lack of Courage

Courage is not an absence of fear but the overcoming of fear. Character (justice and integrity) without courage is ineffective, whereas courage without character is oppression. When our minds are filled with courage we forget our fears and overcome obstacles.

People who lack courage can never be trusted. They will always let you down at the last moment. **Weak people can never be sincere and cowards can never practice morality.** How can they? They don't have the courage to do it.

Successful people do not look for miracles or easy tasks. They seek courage and strength to overcome obstacles. They look at what is left rather than what is lost. Wishes don't come true; beliefs and expectations supported by conviction do. Prayers are only answered when they are supported with courageous action. Courage and character are the critical combination for success.

A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Success is like baking a cake. Unless you have just the right recipe, it is not going to work. The ingredients must be of the finest quality and in the right proportions. You can't over bake it or undercook it. Once you have the correct recipe, with practice and learning from the occasional mishap, it becomes a

lot easier.

You have the recipe: Whether or not to use it is your choice.

ACTION PLAN

1. QUIZ

	Never	Sometimes	Mostly	Always
1. Do you take calculated risks?				
2. Do you practice persistence regularly?				
3. Do you accept short term pain for long term gain?				
4. Do you live by your priorities?				
5. Do you have conviction in whatever you do?				
6. Do you plan and prepare whatever you do?				
7. Do you accept responsibility for your actions?				
8. Do you learn from your mistakes?				
9. Do you manage to overcome fear?				
10. Do you use your talent optimally?				
11. Do you practice self-discipline?				
12. Are you a fatalistic person?				
13. Do you feel a strong sense of self-worth?				
14. Do you have a specific purpose in life?				
15. Do you consistently practice being courageous				

2. Identify three most critical areas you commit to improve.

1.....

2.....

3.....

3. List the areas in your life where lack of discipline is hurting you and estimate its cost/consequence to yourself.

Area

Consequence

i. i.

ii. ii.

iii. iii.

4. The next time you face adversity, ask yourself these two questions:

What can I learn from this challenge?

.....

How can I turn this to my advantage?

.....

* William James, *MDRT Timeless Treasure*, The Whole Person, p. 162.

MOTIVATION

Motivating yourself and others everyday

Thoughts move logic. Emotions move feelings. Motivation moves us into action.

“Good things come to those who wait, but only those things left by those who hustle.”

– Abraham Lincoln

Some consultants adopt the approach of telling others what to do. I take a different approach. My approach is, “Why don’t you?” I believe most people already know what to do. If you ask people on the street what should be done, they will give you all the right answers. But ask them if they are doing it? Probably not. What is missing is the motivation. The question is, can we motivate people? The answer is, Absolutely not! What we can do is, inspire people to motivate themselves but we cannot motivate them. Why? Because motivation is action. I cannot act for you. You will have to act for yourself. Inspiration is thinking and when thinking changes, it starts reflecting in behavior.

It raises two major questions: 1) Why do people get demotivated? 2) Who or what motivates the motivator?

The most powerful motivation comes from within our belief system. To move into action, we need to believe in what we do and accept responsibility for our lives. When we accept responsibility for our behavior and actions, our attitude towards life becomes positive. We become more productive, both personally and professionally. Our relationships improve both at home and at

work. Life becomes more meaningful and fulfilling.

Till the basis physical needs are met, money is the greatest motivator. Thereafter, emotional needs become a bigger motivator.

LET'S DEFINE MOTIVATION

The next logical question is: what is motivation? Motivation is a drive that encourages an action or a feeling. To motivate means to encourage and inspire. Motivation can also mean igniting the spark for action.

Motivation is powerful. It can persuade, convince and propel you into action. In other words, motivation can be defined as motive for action. It is a force that can literally change your life.

Why do we need to get motivated?

Motivation is the driving force in our lives. It comes from a desire to succeed. Without success there is little pride in life; no enjoyment or excitement at work or at home. Life becomes like a lopsided wheel giving a bumpy ride.

The greatest enemy of motivation is complacency. Complacency leads to lack of effort and when people are complacent they don't grow because they cannot identify what is needed in their lives.

MOTIVATION—HOW DOES IT WORK?

Once you understand what causes motivation, you can motivate yourself and achieve your goals—and you can inspire others too.

Your internal motivation is your drive and attitude. It is contagious. Your attitudes are the key to getting the response you want from others.

How does a person stay motivated and focused? One important tool that has been used by athletes for a long time is auto-suggestion. Auto-suggestions are positive statements made in the present tense and repeated regularly. In other words, it is positive self-talk. For example, let's say you're just starting a new job.

Several times each day you might say to yourself, "I feel more and more confident every day." Or let's say your child's behaviour irritates you. You might repeat to yourself, "I am calm and patient."

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INSPIRATION AND MOTIVATION?

Inspiration is thinking and motivation is action. People can be inspired to motivate themselves. An environment can be created that is motivating.

In order to inspire people to motivate themselves we need to understand their needs and wants.

What is the greatest motivator? Is it money? Recognition? Improvement in our quality of life? Acceptance by those we love? All of these can be motivating forces. Every behavior comes out of the 'pain or gain' principle. If the pain is greater than the gain, that is a deterrent to action. If the gain is greater than the pain, that is a motivator. Gains can be tangible, such as monetary rewards, vacations and gifts. They can also be intangible/emotional such as recognition, appreciation, sense of achievement, growth, responsibility, sense of fulfillment, self-worth, accomplishment and belief.

Motivation is like fire—unless you keep adding fuel to it, it dies. Your fuel is your belief in your inner values.

When this belief in inner values feeds your motivation, your motivation becomes long lasting.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL MOTIVATION

Motivation is classified into two types: External and Internal.

External Motivation

External motivation comes from outside. Examples of external motivators are money, societal approval, fame or fear. (For example, fear of getting spanked by parents or fear of getting fired at work).

Fear Motivation

A company wanted to set up a pension plan. In order for the plan to be implemented, it needed hundred per cent participation. Everyone signed up except John. The plan made sense and was in the best interest of everyone. John's refusal to sign was the only obstacle. John's supervisor and other co-workers had tried, without success, to persuade him to sign.

The owner of the company called John into his office and said, "John, here is a pen and these are the papers for you to sign to enroll into the pension plan. If you don't enroll, you are fired this minute." John signed. The owner asked John why he hadn't signed earlier. John replied, "No one explained the plan quite as clearly as you did."

It is not uncommon to see the prey outsmarting the predator, because one is running for its food and the other for its life. Some **advantages** of fear motivation are:

- It gets the job done quickly.
- It prevents losses by meeting deadlines.
- In the short run, the person's performance may improve.

If a ferocious dog is chasing you, you might just break the world record in

sprint. Who knows?

We learn from history that the pyramids were built by slaves. They had to be constantly watched and reprimanded for nonperformance. Some **disadvantages** of fear motivation are:

- It is external and it is temporary. Motivation stays while the motivator stays. When the motivator goes, motivation also goes.
- In the long haul, it causes stress and impacts performance.
- People do enough only to comply with and no more.
- It destroys creativity.
- People get used to 'the stick' and then they need a bigger stick.

People who do just enough to get by with, will never be valuable to any organisation.

A customer asked an employee, "When did you start working here?" He replied, "Ever since they threatened to fire me."

Incentive Motivation

External motivation can also take the form of incentives, bonuses, commission, recognition and so forth.

The major **advantage** of incentive motivation is that it works very well as long as the incentive is strong enough. Think of a donkey with a carrot dangling in front and pulling a cart behind. Incentive motivation will only work if the donkey is hungry enough, the carrot is sweet enough and the load is light enough. If the combination is missing, incentive motivation will not work.

From time to time, you have to let the donkey take a bite of the carrot; otherwise it is going to get discouraged. Also after the donkey takes a bite or its stomach is full, you may need to wait for the donkey to get hungry again before it will pull the cart. This same cycle is typically seen in our business environment. The moment sales people meet their quotas, they stop working. This is because their motivation is limited to meeting their quotas. That is external. motivation, not internal.

A few **advantages** of incentive motivation are:

- Rewards are tied to results.
- It may help a marginal performer become a good performer.

A few **disadvantages** of incentive motivation are:

- You take away the incentive and motivation goes down.
- After some time, they become used to the incentive and want bigger ones. Many times, it becomes self-destructive.

Internal Motivation

What's the greatest motivator?

The greatest motivator is belief. **People will do a lot for money, more for a good leader, but most for a belief.** In the United States, Middle-East, Far-East, anywhere people are willing to die for a belief, for no money.

In Thailand there are groups of people who pierce their cheeks with bamboos without anesthesia. Human rights would call it torture but they do it voluntarily. In India, there are groups of people who put tor steel rods on their tongues, hooks on their bodies and they walk on fire. Human rights would call it torture but they do it voluntarily. What is it? Belief. The most important thing is that **Belief is the greatest motivator, but remember, a false belief is also a belief.**

When we believe that we are responsible for our lives and our behavior, our outlook towards life changes for the better.

There was a young boy who came regularly to football practice but never made it to the 'A Team'. While he was practicing, his father would sit at the far end of the field, waiting for him. For four days, the boy didn't show up for practice. The matches had begun and his team was playing the finals. He showed up for the finals and went up to the coach and said, "Coach, you have always kept me in the reserves and never let me play in the matches. But today, please let me play." The coach said "Son, I'm sorry, I can't let you play. There are better players than you and besides, it is the finals; the reputation of the school is at stake and I cannot take a chance." The boy pleaded, "Coach, I promise I will not let you down. Please let me play." The coach had never seen the boy plead like this before. He said, "OK son, go play. But remember, I am going against my better judgment and the reputation of the school is at stake. Don't let me down." The game started and the boy played like a ball on fire. Every time he got the ball, he shot a goal. Needless to say, he was the star of the game and his team won.

When the game finished, the coach went up to him and said, "Son, how could I have been so wrong in my life? I have never seen you play like this before and I don't think you've played like this before either. What happened? How did you play this way today?" The boy replied, "Coach, my father is watching me today." The coach turned around and looked at the place where the boy's father used to sit. There was only an empty bench. He said, "Son, your father used to sit there when you came for practice, but I don't see anyone there today." The boy replied, "Coach, there is something I never told you. My father was blind. Just four days ago, he died. Today is the first day he is watching me from above." What motivated the boy? It was his belief.

Internal motivation is the inner gratification, not for success or winning, but for the fulfillment that comes from having done something. It is a feeling of accomplishment, rather than just achieving a goal. Reaching an unworthy

goal does not produce a gratifying feeling. Internal motivation is lasting, because it comes from within and translates into self-motivation.

Motivation needs to be identified and constantly strengthened to succeed. Write down your goals. Keep them in front of you and read them morning and evening.

Internal motivation comes from within. Some of the important internal motivators are a sense of responsibility, accountability, ownership, pride in performance etc.

Appreciation has been considered to be a great motivator. Why is that? Because it makes a person feel good. When they feel good, their self-esteem goes up. When their self-esteem goes up, they feel motivated. It is external because it originates from outside, though its manifestations (feelings) are internal to the receiver. Pride in performance is an internal motivator. At the end of the day the person feels good because he has done a great job. Even if no one appreciates, he still feels good. In contrast, if a person does not do a good job, even if you appreciate them they still don't feel good. Our objective really is to inculcate internal motivators.

Responsibility is internal as it originates from within.

Responsibility comes from a sense of belonging and ownership.

Take the case of Jill, a customer service representative who had been on the job for six years, a relatively long time in a job that had a high turnover rate. Jill liked her job—she liked talking with customers and being a problem solver. What she didn't like was the fact that most of the other customer service reps, who had been there less than two years, were on equal footing with her. Jill was frustrated and discouraged that many of the other reps were not willing to listen to her suggestions. When they did have a problem, they'd go to the manager for help even though the manager didn't have the front-line experience that Jill did.

The manager began to notice that while Jill's performance wasn't bad, it wasn't as good as it had been, and Jill no longer seemed to be happy with her job. Not wanting to lose such a valuable employee, the manager gave Jill a raise. But Jill's attitude about the job did not change. While more money is always nice, what Jill was looking for was respect. When the manager finally spent some time talking with Jill and discovered the source of her dissatisfaction, the manager gave Jill the title of supervisor and told the other reps that all problems were to go through Jill. Jill's increased responsibility fueled her need for respect and her performance immediately improved.

Monetary rewards are temporary and short-lived; they are not gratifying in the long run. In contrast, seeing an idea being implemented can be emotionally gratifying by itself. People feel that they are not being treated like objects. They feel part of a worthwhile team. The reward of doing the right thing is motivating by itself.

WE ARE ALL MOTIVATED—EITHER POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY

Everyone is motivated including the person who wants to do nothing. He is motivated to do nothing.

When I was in Toronto, I heard a story of two brothers. One was a drug addict and a drunkard who frequently beat up his family. The other was a very successful businessman who was respected in society and had a wonderful family. How could two brothers raised by the same parents, brought up in the same environment, be so different?

The first brother was asked, “What makes you do what you do? You are a drug addict, a drunk and you beat your family. Where do you get your motivation from?” He said, “My father.” He was asked, “What about your father?” He said, “My father was a drug addict, a drunk and he beat his family. What do you expect me to be? That is what I am.”

The second brother was asked, “How come you are doing everything right? Where do you get your motivation from?” And guess what he said? “My father. When I was a little boy, I used to see my dad drunk and doing all the wrong things.

I made up my mind that that is not what I wanted to be.”

Both brothers derived their motivation from the same source, but one was using it positively and the other negatively. Negative motivation brings the desire to take the easier way which ends up being the tougher way.

ON THE JOB: THE FOUR STAGES FROM MOTIVATION TO DEMOTIVATION

When people start a job, they often move through stages of motivation and competence.

1. Motivated Ineffective

When is an employee most motivated in the cycle of employment? When he joins an organisation. Why?

Because he wants to prove that by hiring him, the employer made the right decision. He is motivated but ineffective. Why? Because he does not know what to do.

This is the stage when the employee is most open-minded, receptive and easy to mould to the culture of the organisation. Training and orientation become imperative.

Unprofessional organisations either have none or very poor orientation programs. The first day at the job, the supervisor shows the new employee his place of work and tells him what to do and leaves. He teaches all the bad along with the good that he is doing. The new employee quickly learns all the mistakes the supervisor is making because that is what he has been taught. By not having a good induction/orientation program, the organisation loses the one time opportunity to mould the individual to be effective in a positive manner.

Professional organisations on the other hand, take special care to induct

people into their organisations. They explain to them, among other things, the following:

- Their values and vision
- Expectations of each other
- Parameters and guidelines
- The resources
- The hierarchy
- Do's and don'ts
- What is acceptable and what is not

How can one expect performance unless expectations are made clear up front? If induction and orientation are done well, many potential problems would not surface at all.

2. Motivated Effective

This is the stage when the employee has learned what to do and does it with drive and energy. He has learned the trade and it reflects in his performance. Then he moves on to the next stage.

3. Demotivated Effective

After some time the motivation level starts going down and the employee learns the tricks of the trade. This is the stage when the employee is not really motivated but continues doing just enough so that the employer has no reason to fire him.

This stage is detrimental to growth—most people in organisations fall into this third stage. His performance is marginal. He makes fun of the good performers. He is not receptive to new ideas and resists change.

Our objective is to bring him back to the second stage of being motivated effective through some good training and/or incentive programs. An employee ought not to stay in the third stage too long. Why? Because they're insiders. They start sabotaging the company. It is not uncommon that many organisations get destroyed because of sabotage from inside rather than competition from outside. They start spreading the negativity all around and demoralising others. From here, either they are brought back to the second stage, which is being motivated and effective or they automatically move into the fourth stage, which is demotivated and ineffective.

4. Demotivated Ineffective

At this stage, the employer does not have much choice but to fire the employee, which may be the most appropriate thing to do anyway.

Remember employers want the same thing as employees do. They want to succeed and improve business and if employees help in this objective, then they make themselves valuable and grow.

DEMOTIVATING FACTORS

Why do people get demotivated?

Two major reasons: Negative thinking or negative environment. Negative thinking could relate to the individual whereas a negative environment can be further divided into two: either physical or emotional. Example: physical could be, phone does not work, computers don't work, nothing works, how do I work? Emotional could be people related matters. Some of the other demotivating factors are:

- Lack of training
- Unfair / Negative / Public criticism
 - Rewarding the non-performers (which can be demotivating for the performers)
- Failure or fear of failure
- Playing favorites /nepotism
- Success (which leads to complacency)
- Lack of measurable objectives
- Lack of appreciation or feeling of belonging
- Too much or too little work
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of priorities
- Negative self-talk
- Hostile environment
- Office politics / Unfair treatment
- Poor standards / lack of quality consciousness
- Too much change too fast
- Responsibility without authority
- Too much job security / insecurity
- Hypocritical or incompetent supervisor
- Lack of clarity of roles and goals
- Lack of challenge or a feeling of being underutilised

The above is only a partial list. There are some factors which are such that, not having them, could be demotivating but having them may not necessarily be motivating. Example, one of my clients did not have a cafeteria at his facility. Everybody kept complaining and felt demotivated because of that reason. My client organised to put one in place to overcome the reason for demotivation. Interestingly, the motivation or demotivation level didn't change. What does it show? Not having was demotivating, but having, didn't motivate the people either.

The repetitive nature of work is demotivating.

It is a common belief that the repetitive nature of work is demotivating. Is it really so? I don't think so. What brings demotivation is, not the repetitive nature of work but 1) feeling of being underutilized; and 2) lack of challenge. Example, a mother cooks meals for her family for 50-60 years and is still motivated to cook and feed the family with the same enthusiasm. Why? Because she never feels underutilized, and 2) she always wants to outperform herself and make a more delicious meal for her family. In fact every time she cooks, she is motivated.

A person who has no aspiration and is contented with status quo may not really be a motivated person.

Such satisfaction may lead to complacency. Motivation brings excitement and excitement does not come unless there is commitment.

Whenever we think of motivation, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Give them money. They will get motivated. At least for some time they will get motivated. But, so long as you have demotivating factors present in your organisation, you can give all the money you want, and they will take it too. They'll never refuse your money but even after taking your money, they will still be demotivated. Hence, many a times, the greatest motivator is to remove the demotivating factors.

Motivators

What we really want to accomplish is self-motivation. When people do things for their own reasons and not yours, that becomes lasting motivation.

Remember the greatest motivator is belief. We have to inculcate in ourselves the belief that we are responsible for our actions and behavior. When people accept responsibility, everything improves: quality, productivity, relationships and teamwork.

A few steps to inspire others to motivate themselves are:

- Give recognition
- Make work interesting
- Encourage goal setting
- Provide training growth
- Throw a challenge
- Help, but don't do for others what they should do for themselves
- Give respect
- Be a good listener
- Provide opportunities for

Conclusion

People do things for their own reasons, not yours. This is illustrated by a story about Ralph Waldo Emerson. He and his son were once struggling to get a calf into the barn. Both father and son were exhausted, pulling and pushing. A little girl was passing by. She put her little finger into the calf's mouth, allowing it to suck, and the calf lovingly followed her to the barn.

ACTION PLAN

1. List three areas of training that will help develop a sense of pride
 - 1.....
 - 2.....
 - 3.....
2. List three non-financial ways to reward performance that you will put into practice
 - 1.....
 - 2.....
 - 3.....
3. List three areas to improve your induction orientation
 - 1.....
 - 2.....
 - 3.....
4. Identify and list three things you would do to become a positive role model.
 - 1.....

2.....

3.....

5. Identify and list three demotivating factors present in your organisation/department and how you plan to overcome them.

Demotivating factors	Plan to overcome
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1.....	
--------	--

2.....	
--------	--

3.....	
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SELF-ESTEEM

Identify positive and negative behaviours

Every time we do something good, we rise a little bit in our own eyes and the reverse is just as true.

A beggar was sitting at a train station with a bowl full of pencils. A young executive passed by and dropped a dollar into the bowl, but didn't take any pencils. He then boarded the train, but just before the doors closed, the executive suddenly exited the train and went back to the beggar. He grabbed a bunch of pencils, and said, "I will take some pencils. They are priced right. After all, you are a business person and so am I," and he dashed back on to the train. Six months later, the executive attended a party. The beggar was also there, dressed in a suit and tie. The beggar recognised the executive, went up to him, and said, "You probably don't recognise me, but I remember you." He then narrated the incident that had happened six months before. The executive said, "Now that you remind me, I do recall that you were begging. What are you doing here in a suit and tie?" The beggar replied, "You probably don't know what you did for me that day. You are the first person in my life, who, instead of giving me charity, gave me back my dignity when you grabbed a bunch of pencils and said, 'They are priced right. After all, you are a business person and so am I.' After you left, I started thinking to myself—what am I doing here? Why am I begging? I decided to do something constructive with my life. I packed my bag, started working and here I am. I just want to thank you for giving me my dignity back. That incident changed my life."

WHAT changed in the beggar's life? What changed was that his self-esteem went up and so did his performance. That is the magic of self-esteem.

Self-esteem is the way we feel about ourselves. When we feel good the world looks nice, productivity goes up and relationships are a lot better. The reverse is just as true. Self-image is the way we see ourselves. Our opinion of ourselves critically influences everything, in every walk of life.

High self-esteem is driven by self-acceptance and self worth whereas low self-esteem is driven by fear and self-doubt.

Self-esteem comes from recognising and accepting your self-worth. Acceptance of self-worth makes a person feel secure internally. They feel anchored, they are at peace with themselves and are poised. They are internally driven because they get their validations from inside. They don't have to prove anything to anyone.

Internal validation does not mean being egoistic. It means I accept myself the way I am with my pluses and minuses. I am at peace with myself. It does not mean that I am proud of my mistakes or I am complacent or I don't want to change. It only means I am not perfect. I make mistakes. I learn from them. I am not proud of them. I won't repeat them, but I am not a mistake. This brings self-acceptance, establishes self-worth and gets rid of self-doubt.

Self-esteem is a major component in determining success or failure. High self-esteem leads to a happy, gratifying and purposeful life. Unless you perceive yourself as worthy, you cannot have high self-esteem. All great world leaders and teachers throughout history have concluded that one must be internally driven in order to be a success.

We transfer our unconscious self-appraisal to others and they respond to us accordingly. People with high self-esteem grow in conviction, competence and willingness to accept responsibility. They face life with optimism, have better relationships and more fulfilling lives. They are motivated and ambitious. They are more sensitive. Their performance and risk-taking ability go up. They are open to new opportunities and challenges. They give and receive constructive criticism and sincere compliments with ease.

Self-Esteem is Our Self-Concept

There is a story about a farmer who planted pumpkins on his land. For no reason, he put a small pumpkin, hanging by the vine, into a glass jar.

At harvest time, he saw that the pumpkin he had put into the jar, had grown, equivalent only to the shape and size of the jar, while the other pumpkins grew to their full potential. Just as the pumpkin could not grow beyond the boundaries restricting it, you cannot perform beyond the boundaries of your self-concept, whatever those boundaries may be.

SOME ADVANTAGES OF HIGH SELF-ESTEEM

There is a direct relationship between people's feelings and their behavior.

Some of the advantages of high self-esteem are:

- Gives confidence without arrogance.

- Creates willingness to accept responsibility.
- Builds optimistic attitudes.
- Leads to better relationships and fulfilling lives.
- Makes a person self-motivated and ambitious.
- Makes a person open to new opportunities and challenges.
- Improves performance and increases risk-taking ability.
- Makes a person trustworthy.
- Makes a person more dependable and reliable.
- Makes a person more productive everywhere.
- Makes a person feel secure.

Low Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem is driven by 'fear and self-doubt'. How do we recognise low self-esteem? What are the behavior patterns of a person with low self-esteem? The answers to all these questions are overlapping and similar. The following is a brief list of behavior patterns of a person with low self-esteem. It is not all inclusive but is indicative.

- They're neither good leaders nor good followers. Reason: because they're willing to compromise values for ulterior motives any time. You can't trust them.
- They are gossipmongers.
 - They constantly criticise and are critical in nature. They get sadistic pleasure out of criticising others.
- They are unwilling to accept constructive criticism. When you give them constructive criticism, they become either defensive or offensive. It is very difficult for them to say "I am sorry" or apologise for their mistakes. Why? Because it hurts their ego.
- They are very conceited. Conceited people are highly egoistic and arrogant. They think they know it all. Such people talk down to others. They put down others and every decision they make, is more to satisfy ego than make sense. It raises a question that why does a human being put down another human being? It is sadistic but true, there are some people in the world who feel good when the other person feels bad. They feel superior when the other person feels inferior. Egoistic people are very self-centered, and often can be rude, discourteous, ill-mannered, inconsiderate and selfish.
- They are very hypocritical in nature. They put on a false mask. They

pretend to be what they are not. They have a dual personality. They become sycophants to the world and many times, oppressive to their own families. Why? Because they are the only ones who will take it. They massage other people's ego and they like others to massage their ego. They show timid behavior when they go to their bosses and oppressive behavior to their juniors.

- They are very touchy in nature. They have a very fragile ego. Anything you say, they take it personally and get hurt. Everything becomes a prestige issue to them. Many times, people confuse being **sensitive** to being **touchy**. Being sensitive is positive whereas being touchy is negative. Being sensitive shows a person is caring.
- They are arrogant, closed minded and self-centered.
- They constantly make excuses—always justifying their non-performance and failures.
- They never accept responsibility. They are always blaming others.
- They become fatalistic in nature—they take no initiative and always wait for things to happen.
- They are bored and uncomfortable when alone.
 - They have a breakdown in decency. People with low self-esteem don't know where to draw the line—where decency stops and vulgarity starts. It is not unusual for people to tell jokes at social get-togethers, but with every drink that goes down the belt, the jokes get dirtier and dirtier and they don't know where decency stops and vulgarity begins.
- They don't have genuine friends because they are not genuine themselves.
- They compromise values for ulterior motives. They manipulate people by making false promises for selfish reasons. It is not unusual to see the employer-employees, husband-wife, boyfriend-girlfriend, buyers-sellers lying to each other. When a person makes a sale by telling lies and does not keep his commitment, what happens to his credibility? It is lost!
- Their behavior is inconsistent and erratic. They swing from one end of the pendulum to another. They may be all sugar and honey today but the same people may be out to cut your throat tomorrow. They are imbalanced.
- People with low self-esteem are generally difficult to work with and work for. They tear down others to get a feeling of superiority.
- They become introverts, hence, isolated and withdrawn.
- They are indecisive, vacillating, and non-committal in nature. They lack stick-ability. They 'decide-change, decide-change, decide-change.' They

are fence sitters, never knowing which side they will have to run. Hence, they are non-committal.

- They have negative expectations of themselves and others and are seldom disappointed.
- They exhibit over-submissive or timid behavior. They constantly keep apologising even for their existence. Example, you notice, there are some people who start their sentences with an apology, “Please forgive me...” For what? For any mistake coming in the future in advance! There is a difference between **timidity** and **humility**. Humility comes out of confidence without arrogance whereas timidity is self put-down which reflects lack of confidence.
- They constantly keep looking for validation and approval from others. While working with others, they constantly keep seeking approval for every little thing. Constant approval seeking shows lack of confidence whereas consultation is positive.
- They brag about themselves. It gives them a false sense of achievement and fulfillment.
- They lack assertiveness. What is assertiveness? Assertiveness means that when a person feels strongly enough for something then he takes a stand firmly but politely. Assertiveness means firmness with politeness. The moment we take politeness out of firmness, it becomes aggressiveness.
- They become bullies. Low self-esteem is reflected in aggressive and oppressive behavior. They indulge in oppressive or intimidating behavior. Why do they do it? They get a false sense of security. This is called pseudo self-esteem.
- They manipulate others for ulterior motives
- They are suspicious in nature
- They have pessimistic behavior
- They have conforming behavior. What does that mean? Many times we notice people doing something wrong, knowing fully well that it is wrong. You ask them, “Why are you doing this?” Their answer is, “I don’t know. Everybody else is doing it, that’s why I am doing it.” Knowing well what they’re doing is wrong, **they still go along to get along**. Why? Because their group gives them identity. They have no identity of their own. They are looking for acceptance or validation from outside because they lack self-confidence.
- They try to ‘keep up with the Joneses’. When people buy houses, cars and other possessions and participate in activities to impress others, they

often spend money they haven't earned and buy things they don't need or like. All of this is an attempt to impress others whom they don't even necessarily like or admire.

- They exhibit attention-seeking or nonconforming behavior. In order to gain attention, people with poor self-esteem might do senseless things just to stand out and be noticed. They get a 'kick' and a sense of importance from perversion. Some people choose to do wrong and be wrong just to be different and gain attention. Examples are people who brag excessively, the bullies/clowns, people who dress outrageously and so forth.
- Attention seeking behavior is visible more so today than earlier because of a new breed of people called 'nouveau riche'. What is nouveau riche? Nouveau riche are a breed of people who have made new money. What is wrong with new money? Nothing wrong. But nouveau riche is never taken as a compliment. They have made money all right, but, values don't exist. And somehow, the nouveau riche persons' behavior is telling the world "Look at me, I've arrived, you can't afford to avoid me any more." They're looking for validation.
- They are indecisive and do not accept responsibility. Lack of courage and fear of criticism lead to indecisive behavior.
- They become rebellious against authority. I make a distinction between rebelling out of the courage of one's convictions and rebelling because of poor self-esteem. All the great world leaders, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Abraham Lincoln were rebels. They rebelled against authority out of the courage of their convictions; a person with low self-esteem rebels against authority just because it is authority, even when the authority is right.
- They lack a sense of direction and have a non-caring attitude.
- They have a hard time giving or receiving compliments. In giving they feel they might be misconstrued and in receiving they feel they are undeserving. Feeling unworthy is not humility. It shows lack of self-worth.
- They place too much emphasis on material things. People with low self-esteem judge your worth by your possessions, not by who you are. They look at what kind of car you drive, what kind of home you live in and what kind of clothes and jewelry you wear. **They judge your self-worth by your net-worth. They forget that people make things, things don't make people.** People with low self-esteem place more emphasis on net worth than self-worth. Their lives revolve around ads and fads.

Many times you hear people saying “I don’t wear anything unless it is designer.” Designer labels are their status symbols. Why? Because the labels give them identity. Take away their possessions and they will die of shame. They get into a rat race of one upmanship. As Lily Tomlin said, “The problem with the rat race is that even if you win, you are still a rat.”

- They don’t take any pride in their performance. Their work is always either incomplete or faulty or shabby.
- They don’t take any pride in their appearance. They are uncouth, shabby, untidy. There is a flipside. There are some people who are so conscious of their appearance that they are always over decked in a three-piece suit, permanently ready to get married any time. Their thinking is, you never know who you are going to meet on the way.
- There are some physical manifestations of appearance such as, droopy shoulders, avoiding eye contact, shifty eyes, flimsy handshakes etc.
- People with low self-esteem are very unforgiving in nature. They permanently hold grudges against others. There are times when a person makes an honest mistake and they realise it and then, apologise for it. People with high self-esteem would accept the apology and go forward with a clean slate, whereas, for a person with low self-esteem, it is very difficult to accept the apology. They continue holding a grudge.
- They are very argumentative in nature. It doesn’t matter which side you are on, they are permanently on the other side. In order to feel good, they always have to score a point over you.
- They lack empathy and compassion.
- They are sympathy seekers and they indulge in self-pity. What is self-pity? Self-pity is a victim complex. What is a victim complex? Why did God have to do this to me and not to somebody else?
- They are suspicious and jealous in nature. To the jealous, their own problems don’t bother them as much as other people’s successes do. Which means, **they don’t want to lift themselves up, but they want to pull others down.**
- They have an escapist attitude. Escapist behavior comes in two ways:
 1. They procrastinate. They keep postponing things because they don’t have the courage to face up to the consequences, hence they keep postponing. The more they postpone, the higher the price tag becomes.
 2. Escapist behavior comes in other forms and they become self abusive.

They become alcoholics, chain smokers, drug addicts etc. If you ask “Why are you doing all this?”, they will say, “I am drowning my sorrow in the bottle.” Question is, are alcoholism, smoking and drug addiction not self abuse? If you respected yourself, would you abuse yourself?

The above is a partial list of low self-esteem behavior, which results from insecurity. Do they impact our relationship and productivity? The objective of this list is to provide a basis for self-evaluation, not to produce guilt. Does a person have to have all of the above behaviours? Probably most of us have a little bit of all of the above negative behaviours in varying degrees. Our objective is to identify and get rid of them.

Could people with low and high self-esteem have similar behaviors? The answer is, yes. Example, a person with low self-esteem can be an introvert and so can the person with high self-esteem, but they are both driven with different motivations. A person with low self-esteem becomes an introvert because they are uncomfortable with people, whereas a person with high self-esteem becomes an introvert out of choice. This is the difference between loneliness and solitude. A person with low self-esteem is suffering from loneliness even when he is amongst large groups of people, whereas a person with high self-esteem is enjoying solitude out of choice. **Loneliness is the pain of being alone, solitude is the pleasure of being alone.** A person with high self-esteem is really saying I enjoy my company. I may be physically alone, but I am with myself.

Here are some comparison characteristics of people with high and low self-esteem:

<i>High Self-Esteem</i>	<i>Low Self-Esteem</i>
Talk about ideas	Talk about people
Caring attitude	Critical attitude
Humility	Arrogance
Respects authority	Rebels against authority
Courage of conviction	Goes along to get along
Confidence	Confusion
Concerned about character	Concerned about reputation
Assertive	Aggressive
Accepts responsibility	Blames the whole world
Self-interest	Selfish
Optimistic	Fatalistic

Understanding	Greedy
Willing to learn	Know it all
Sensitive	Touchy
Solitude	Lonely
Discuss	Argue
Believes in self-worth	Believes in net worth only
Guided	Misguided
Discipline	Distorted sense of freedom
Internally driven	Externally driven
Respects others	Looks down on others
Enjoys decency	Enjoys vulgarity
Knows limit	Everything goes
Giver	Taker

WHY PUT ON A MASK?

A young executive with poor self-esteem was promoted but he couldn't reconcile himself to his new office and position. There was a knock at his door. To show how important and busy he was, he picked up the phone and then asked the visitor to come in. As the man waited for the executive, the executive kept talking on the phone, nodding and saying, "No problem, I can handle that." After a few minutes he hung up and asked the visitor what he could do for him. The man replied, "Sir, I'm here to connect your phone."

What is the Message?

Why pretend? What are we trying to prove? What do we want to accomplish? Why do we need to lie? Why look for feelings of false importance? All of these types of behavior come from insecurity and low self-esteem.

Why Pretend?

Our character can be judged by everything we do or like. Our character is revealed by:

- The company we keep or avoid.
 - How we treat others—especially our subordinates, the elderly and the disabled.
- The books we read
- The music we listen

- The movies we watch
- The kind of jokes we tell or laugh at.

Every action of ours gives us away anyway, so why pretend?

Self-esteem, positive or negative, can be revealed by the following:

Positive Self-Esteem Negative Self-Esteem

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Self-respect | Self-put-down |
| 2. Self-confidence | Self-doubt |
| 3. Self-worth | Self-abuse |
| 4. Self-acceptance | Self-denial |
| 5. Self-love | Self-centeredness |
| 6. Self-knowledge | Self-deceit |
| 7. Self-discipline | Self-indulgence |

High self-esteem does not mean having a big ego. In fact, the reverse is true. Unless a person is at peace with himself, he cannot be at peace with others, just as we cannot give to others what we don't have. Unless we possess the components of high self-esteem, we cannot share it with others. We need to first evaluate honestly and put ourselves in order. Even in an aircraft, the safety instructions tell you to put on your oxygen mask first before helping your child. This is not selfishness. In order to support others physically and emotionally, one needs to be strong both physically and emotionally.

ACTION PLAN

I commit to:

1. Having read this chapter, please identify three areas where you need improvement and shall make a commitment to improve consciously for 30 days.
 - 1.....
 - 2.....
 - 3.....
2. List three weaknesses I will get rid of.
 - 1.....
 - 2.....

3.....

STEPS ON BUILDING HIGH SELF-ESTEEM

Foundation to success

Just like a passport is a pre-requisite to travel the world, similarly, a high self-esteem is a pre-requisite to lead a meaningful life confidently.

In order to build a high self-esteem, we need to first identify what are the causes of low self-esteem.

CAUSES OF LOW SELF-ESTEEM

We start forming our self-esteem, positive or negative, from the day we are born. We develop feelings about ourselves that are reinforced by others.

Negative Self-Talk or Negative Auto-suggestions

Negative self-talk is when we say to ourselves, consciously or unconsciously, statements such as:

- I have a poor memory.
- I'm not an athlete.
- I'm not good at math.
- I'm tired.

Such statements only reinforce the negative by conditioning the sub-conscious mind adversely and pull us down. Very soon our minds start believing these statements and our behavior changes accordingly. They

become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Environment

Home

The greatest gift a parent can give his children are roots. The best part of a family tree is the roots. Noticing a little girl's courteous and polite behavior, the teacher asked, "Who taught you to be so courteous and polite?" The girl replied, "No one. It just runs in our family."

Expensive jewels are not real gifts; they may be only apologies for gifts that we never gave them. Many times we buy gifts for people to compensate for not spending enough time with them. Real gifts are when you give a part of yourself.

Upbringing

"Fellow citizens, why do you turn and scrape every stone to gather wealth and take so little care of your children to whom one day, you must relinquish it all?"

– Socrates

In order for our children to turn out well, we need to spend twice the time and half the money. It is less painful to learn in youth than to be ignorant as adults.

Parents with high self-esteem inculcate confidence and high self-esteem in their children by giving them positive beliefs and values. The reverse is also true.

It is a great heritage to have honest parents. Parents who participate in crooked deals unfortunately set bad examples for their future generations.

A strong role model or mentor could be a parent, relative or teacher who is held in high regard. During their formative years, children look up to their parents and teachers as authority figures. Even as adults, we look to our supervisors and managers as role models.

*LITTLE EYES UPON YOU**

There are little eyes upon you and they're watching night and day.

There are little ears that quickly take in every word you say.

There are little hands all eager to do anything you do;

And a little boy who's dreaming of the day he'll be like you.

You're the little fellow's idol, you're the wisest of the wise.

In his little mind about you no suspicions ever rise.

*He believes in you devoutly, holds all that you say and do;
He will say and do, in your way, when he's grown up like you.
There's a wide-eyed little fellow who believes you're always right;
And his eyes are always opened, and he watches day and night.
You are setting an example every day in all you do,
For the little boy who's waiting to grow up to be like you.*

What Makes a Child Delinquent?*

- Teach him to put a price tag on everything and he will put his integrity for sale.
- Teach him never to take a stand and then he will fall for anything.
- Make him believe that winning is not everything, that it is the only thing and he will make every effort to win by hook or by crook.
- Give a child everything he wants right from infancy and he will grow up believing that the world owes him a living and everything will be handed to him on a platter.
- When he picks up bad language, laugh at him. This will make him think he is cute.
- Don't ever give him any moral or ethical values. Wait until he is twenty-one and let him 'determine his own'.
- Give him choices without direction. Never teach him that every choice has a consequence.
 - Never tell him he is wrong, he might develop a complex. This will condition him to believe that society is against him when he gets arrested for doing something wrong.
- Always pick up things that he leaves lying around books, shoes, clothes and so on. Do everything for him so that he will learn to push all responsibilities onto others.
- Let him read, watch and hear anything he wants. Be careful what he feeds his body, but let his mind feed on garbage.
- In order to be popular with his peers, he must go along to get along even when he knows what they are doing is wrong.
- Quarrel frequently when he is present. This way he won't be surprised when things fall apart at home.
- Give him as much money as he wants. Never teach him respect for the value of money. Make sure he does not have things as tough as you did.
- Provide instant gratification for all sensual desires such as food, drink and

comfort. Deprivation can cause frustration.

- Side with him against neighbors and teachers, as they are prejudiced against him.
- When he gets into real trouble, excuse yourself by saying, “I tried my best but could never do anything with him.”
- Don’t put your foot down because you believe discipline takes away freedom.
- Prefer remote control to parental control in order to teach independence.

BUILDING SELF-CONFIDENCE

A young couple used to leave their daughter at a daycare center every day before going to work. As they parted company, the parents and child kissed each other’s hands and then put the kisses in their pockets. All during the day when the little girl got lonely she would take out a kiss and put it on her cheek. This little routine made them feel together even though they were physically apart. What a wonderful thought!

Education

Being ignorant is not shameful, but being unwilling to learn is. Role models can teach through example. Children who are taught the importance of integrity during their formative years generally don’t lose it. It becomes a part of life, which is what we are looking for in any professional, whether a contractor, attorney, accountant, politician, police officer or judge. Integrity is a lot stronger than honesty. In fact it is the foundation of honesty.

Youth are impressionable. When they see their mentors—such as parents, teachers or political leaders—cheating with pride or bragging about petty dishonesty such as stealing a towel in a hotel or cutlery from the restaurants, the following happens:

- They are disappointed.
- They lose respect for their mentors.
- Constant exposure breeds acceptance in them.

POOR ROLE MODELS

A school teacher asked a little boy what his father did for a living. The boy replied, “I’m not sure, but I guess he makes pens, pencils, light bulbs, toilet paper rolls, because that is what he brings home every day in his lunch box.”

Making Unfair Comparison

Another cause of low self-esteem is unfair comparisons. Unfair comparisons are not OK because they make a person feel inferior and their self-esteem goes down. Fair comparisons are OK. E.g. Many times, parents make unfair comparisons amongst siblings e.g. How come your brother is a doctor and you are not. How come your sister is an accountant and you are not? The question is, “Do I have to be?” That’s unfair. Now, what is fair? “If you studied as hard as your brother or sister, you could do just as well or even better.” I consider this as a fair comparison because you are not questioning the ability of the other person. People with high self-esteem don’t compete with others; instead, they improve their own performance. They compete against themselves. They compare their performance against their capabilities or past performance.

Failure or Success: A Ripple Effect

There is a lot of truth in the statement, “success breeds success and failure breeds failure.” When a person fails their self-esteem goes down. When self-esteem is low, it is easy to fail again. When they fail, self-esteem goes down further and so on and on. In sports, we often see that whenever the champion’s morale is low—and it does get low at some point—the coach will never put him up against a good fighter because if he suffers one more defeat, his self-esteem will go down even further. To bring his self-confidence back, the coach puts him against a weak opponent and that victory raises his self-esteem. A slightly stronger opponent is next and that victory brings up the level of confidence even further and on and on until the day comes when the champion is ready to face the ultimate challenge.

With every success, self-confidence goes up and it is easier to succeed the next time. For this reason, any good leader, be it a parent, teacher or supervisor, would start a child off with easy tasks. Add to that positive strokes and encouragement, and this will start solidifying positive self-esteem. Our responsibility is to help break the failure chain and move into the success chain.

Confusing Failing with Failure

Success is 99 per cent failure.

– Soichiro Honda (founder, Honda Motor Corporation)

When people fail in any particular event, most get so disheartened that they start looking at themselves as failures, not realising that failing does not equal failure. I might have failed but that does not mean that I am a failure. I might

have been fooled but that does not mean I am a fool.

Unrealistic Expectations of Perfection

A child comes home with a report card with five As and one B. Usually the first thing his parents will say is, “Why the B?” You think the child tried for the B? What is going through the child’s mind? What happened to my five As? Does that mean that the parents should accept the B? If you accept the B today, what will you get tomorrow? Cs, Ds and Zs. We should never lower our standards. How would a responsible parent handle this situation? They would say to the child, “You’ve got five As, great job. Next time, we will see all six.”

What the child is really looking for is acknowledgment and encouragement for the effort in getting the five As.

Similarly at work, an employee can do a hundred things right and one thing wrong. Guess what the boss picks? Acknowledge the positive, but don’t lower your standards by accepting substandard performance.

Lack of Discipline

What is Discipline?

Discipline does not mean punishment after a wrong is done. Is it imposition? Does it take away freedom?

The answer is none of the above. Discipline does not mean that a person takes off his belt and beats up others. That is madness. Discipline is loving firmness. It is direction. It is prevention before a problem arises. It is a track to run on. It is harnessing and channeling energy for great performance. Discipline is not something you do to others, but something you do for those you care about.

Discipline is an act of love. Sometimes you have to be unkind to be kind: Not all medicines are sweet, nor all surgeries painless, but we have to take them. We need to learn from nature. We are all familiar with that big animal, the giraffe. A mother giraffe gives birth to a baby giraffe standing. All of a sudden, the baby falls on a hard surface from the cushion of his mother’s womb onto the ground. The first thing the mother does is to get behind the baby and give it a hard kick. The baby gets up, but the legs are weak and wobbly, and the baby falls down. The mother goes behind the baby again and gives one more kick. The baby gets up but falls down again. The mother giraffe keeps kicking till the baby is able to get on its feet. Why? Because she knows that the only chance of survival for the baby is to get on its feet, otherwise it will be eaten up by predators.

My question to you is: Is this an act of love? You bet it is. Children brought up in a loving, disciplined environment, when they grow up, end up respecting their own parents more and become law-abiding citizens. *The reverse is just as true.*

If discipline were practiced in every home, juvenile delinquency would be reduced by ninety-five per cent.

– J. Edgar Hoover

Good parents are not afraid to enforce discipline because of momentary dislikes by children.

Discipline Gives Freedom

Freedom is not procured by a full enjoyment of what is desired but controlling the desire.

– Epictetus

There is a misconception that freedom means doing your own thing. One cannot always have what one desires. Many times it is not easy to comprehend the benefits of good values and discipline. It may even seem more profitable, enjoyable and convenient to do otherwise. All we need to do is see countless instances where lack of discipline has prevented people from succeeding.

Rather than the restraints of discipline pulling us down, discipline is really taking us up. That is what discipline is all about.

A boy was flying a kite with his father and asked him what kept the kite up. Dad replied, “The string.” The boy said, “Dad, it is the string that is holding the kite down.” The father asked his son to watch as he broke the string. Guess what happened to the kite? It came down. Isn’t that true in life? Sometimes the things that we think are holding us down are the very things that are helping us fly. That is what discipline is all about.

I Want to Be Free

We hear this phrase all the time: “I want to be free.” If you take the train off the track, it is free, but where does it go? If everyone could make their own traffic laws and drive on any side of the road would you call that freedom or chaos? What is missing is discipline. By observing the rules, we are actually gaining freedom.

Discipline is Loving Firmness

I have asked this question to many participants in my seminars: “If your child had a fever of 105°F and did not want to see the doctor, what would you do?” Invariably they said they would get medical help even if the child resisted and even go to the extent of forcing him physically. Why? Because it is in the best interest of the child. What is so different in giving the right values in life?

Parenting is Not a Popularity Contest

There are only two relationships in life that care to correct, the rest of the world punishes. Which are the two relationships? Only **parents and teachers** in life care to correct, the world punishes.

A judge, when sentencing a man for robbery, asked if he had anything to say. The man replied, “Yes your Honor. Please sentence my parents to jail also.” The judge asked, “Why?” The robber answered, “When I was a little boy, I stole a pencil from school. My parents knew about it but never said a word. Then I stole a pen. They knowingly ignored it. I continued to steal many other things from the school and the neighborhood till it became an obsession. They knew about it, yet they never said a word. If anyone belongs in jail with me, they do.”

He is right. Although it does not absolve him of his own responsibility, the question is did the parents do their job right? Obviously not. If we analyse one step further, the robber actually paid for the carelessness/negligence/irresponsible behavior of his parents.

Giving choices to children is important, but choices without direction results in disaster. Complete mental and physical preparation is the result of sacrifice and self-discipline.

Parents spend an average of fifteen minutes a week in ‘meaningful dialogue’ with their children—the balance is spent gleaning values from peers and TV.

– Adapted from Journal of the American Family Association

Ask yourself: Without discipline,

- Can a captain run a ship effectively?
- Can an athlete win a game?
- Can a violinist play well at a concert?

The answer is, “Of course not,” to each of the above questions. Why then do we question today whether discipline is necessary in matters of personal

conduct or to achieve any standard? It is absolutely necessary.

Today the philosophy is: “If it feels good, do it.” I have heard parents naively saying, “I don’t care what my kids do so long as it makes them happy. That is all that matters.” I ask them, “Wouldn’t you want to know what makes them happy?” If beating people up on the streets and taking their things away are what make them happy, there is a word in the English language for them, it is called ‘Perversion’.

How and where we derive our happiness from is just as important as the happiness itself. It is a result of our values, discipline and responsibility. **Feeling good is a natural outcome of doing good and doing good is a natural outcome of being good.**

We keep hearing, “Do what you like.” The reverse is just as true. Like what you do. Many times we need to do what ought to be done whether we like it or not.

A mother comes home after a long day’s work, takes care of the household chores, looks after the baby and goes to sleep exhausted. In the middle of the night the baby cries. Does mama feel like getting up? No, but she gets up anyway. Why? For three reasons:

- Love
- Duty
- Responsibility

We cannot live our lives by emotions alone. We need to add discipline, regardless of age. Winning in life comes when we do not succumb to what we want to do but do what ought to be done and that requires discipline.

Labeling and Put-Downs

Constant put-downs and negative criticism destroys self-confidence and leads to low self-esteem.

Have you heard some parents sometimes playfully/affectionately or sometimes angrily call their kids ‘stupid, idiot, dummy, duffer’? The child keeps looking at the parents and teachers as authority figures and they keep saying “You stupid, idiot, dummy, duffer...” The child thinks, because my parents know more than I do and if mom or dad says I am stupid, I must be stupid. Labels stick for life. When the kids grow up, they will make sure to prove the parents right. Labels not only stick for life but they stick for generations. The caste system in India is a prime example of how labeling can hurt and lead the society to self-destruction. Is there anything known as upper caste or lower caste? The answer is, they are all labels.

Common put-downs/labels parents use for their kids:

- You are dumb.
- You never do anything right.
- You will never amount to anything.
- You are totally useless.
- You are stupid or an idiot.
- You are good for nothing.

Teaching the Wrong Values

Whenever we go against our value system, our self-esteem goes down. The magic of self-esteem is that whenever we do something positive in life, even if no one is watching, we rise a little bit in our own eyes. Whenever we do something wrong like lying, stealing, cheating, even if no one is watching, we fall down a little bit in our own eyes. Many times, inadvertently and innocently, we end up teaching wrong values within our families and organisations. For example, we tell our children or staff to lie for us.

- Tell them I am not here.
- Tell them the cheque is in the mail, when actually it is not.

We all look to our parents, teachers and supervisors to teach us integrity. And many times we are disappointed. Practicing these petty lies turns a person into a professional liar. When we teach others to lie for us, a day will come when they will lie to us too. For example, a secretary calls in sick when she really wants to go shopping. Maybe the boss gave her enough practice lying for him that she has become an expert in lying to him. Every time a person lies and teaches his children to lie, they fall down a little bit in their own eyes. Their self-esteem goes down and the inferiority complex goes up. Only the first lie is difficult. The second becomes easier and the third and fourth are easier still and so on. Very soon they become accomplished liars. It is seen that people who lie also steal.

STEPS TO BUILDING A POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM

Step 1: Read biographies and autobiographies of successful people who have turned their weakness into strength

Read the life histories of people who have turned a negative into a positive, adversity into advantage, stumbling blocks into stepping stones. They refuse to let disappointment and failures pull them down.

Some of the best music was composed by Beethoven. What was his

handicap? He was deaf. Some of the best poetry on nature was written by Milton. What was his handicap? He was blind. One of the greatest world leaders was US President Franklin D. Roosevelt. What was his handicap? He served from a wheelchair.

THE WILMA RUDOLPH STORY*

Wilma Rudolph was born into a poor home in Tennessee. At age four, she had double pneumonia with scarlet fever, a deadly combination which left her paralysed with polio. She had to wear a brace and the doctor said she would never be able to put her foot on the ground. But her mother encouraged her; she told Wilma that with God-given ability, persistence and faith she could do anything she wanted. Wilma said, "I want to be the fastest woman on the track on this earth." At the age of nine, against the advice of the doctors, she removed the brace and took the first step the doctors had said she never would. At the age of thirteen, she entered her first race and came way, way last. And then she entered her second, and third and fourth and came way, way last until a day came when she came in first.

At the age of fifteen she went to Tennessee State University where she met a coach by the name of Ed Temple. She told him, "I want to be the fastest woman on the track on this earth." Temple said, "With your spirit nobody can stop you and besides, I will help you."

The day came when she was at the Olympics and at the Olympics you are matched with the best of the best. Wilma was matched against a woman named Jutta Heine who had never been beaten. The first event was the 100-meter race. Wilma beat Jutta Heine and won her first gold medal. The second event was the 200-meter race and Wilma beat Jutta a second time and won her second gold medal. The third event was the 400-meter relay and she was racing against Jutta one more time. In the relay, the fastest person always runs the last lap and they both anchored their teams. The first three people ran and changed the baton easily. When it came to Wilma's turn, she dropped the baton. Wilma saw Jutta shoot up at the other end; she picked the baton, ran like a machine, beat Jutta a third time and won her third gold medal. It became history: That a paralytic woman became the fastest woman on this earth at the 1960 Olympics.

What a lesson to be learnt from Wilma. It teaches us that successful people do it in spite of, not in the absence of, problems.

When we hear or read real life stories of real people who have turned a negative into a positive, does it not motivate us? If we regularly read biographies and autobiographies of such people, won't we stay motivated?

Step 2: Learn Intelligent Ignorance

Education teaches us what we can do and also teaches us what we cannot do.

I'm looking for a lot of men with an infinite capacity for not knowing what cannot be done.

– Henry Ford

Henry Ford gave this world the V8 engine. He did not have much formal education. In fact, he did not go to school beyond the age of fourteen. He was

intelligent enough to know that a V8 engine would be of great value to his company but he didn't know how to build it. So he asked all his highly educated or qualified people to build one. According to them, a V8 was impossible to build. But Henry Ford insisted on having his V8. A few months later he asked his people if they had the V8 and they replied, "We know what can be done and we also know what cannot be done. The V8 is an impossibility." This went on for many months and still Henry Ford said, "I want my V8." And shortly thereafter the same people who said it was impossible produced the V8 engine.

Why? They let their imaginations run beyond academic limitation. Education teaches us what can be done and sometimes also teaches us what cannot be done. Formal education teaches us our potential and many times, it also teaches us our limitations.

Step 3: Do Something for Others Who Cannot Repay You in Cash or Kind

Dr Karl Menninger, a world-renowned psychiatrist, was once asked, "What would you advise someone if you knew that person was going to have a nervous breakdown?" The audience expected Dr Menninger to advise consulting a professional. But he didn't. He said, "I would advise that person to go to the other side of town, find someone in need and help that person. By doing that, we get out of our own way." A lot of times we get in our own way, don't we?

Be a volunteer. It builds self-worth. Helping others by the process of giving without having expectations or getting anything in return, gives a feeling of gratification and raises one's self-esteem.

Step 4: Learn to Give and Receive Compliments

Don't miss out on any opportunity to give sincere compliments. Remember, the key word is sincerity. It makes a person feel good and their self-esteem goes up. When others give you a compliment, accept it graciously and gracefully with two words, "Thank you." Be grateful that they feel you're worthy of it. That is a sign of humility.

Step 5: Accept Responsibility

We need to accept responsibility for our thoughts, behavior and actions and insulate ourselves from excuses. Don't be like the student who failed just because he didn't like the teacher or the subject. When we don't accept responsibility, who are we hurting the most? Obviously ourselves. We need to accept responsibility and stop blaming others. Then, and only then, will

productivity and quality of life improve.

Our privileges can be no greater than our obligations. The protection of our rights can endure no longer than the performance of our responsibilities.

– John F. Kennedy

Excuses make the problem worse than the problem itself. We owe responsibility

- to Self
- to Society
- to Family
- to the Environment
- to Work

On a daily basis, we need to do something that makes this world a better place to live. We are custodians for the future generations. If we do not behave responsibly, can future generations forgive us?

If the average life expectancy of a person is seventy-five years and if you are forty years old, you have 365 days x 35 years, to live. Ask yourself this question: What are you going to do with this time? When we accept or add responsibility, we make ourselves more valuable.

Step 6: Practice Discipline

Self-discipline does not take away, but gives joy. You see people with talent and ability, and yet they are unsuccessful. They are frustrated and the same behavior pattern affects their business, their health, and their relationships with others. They are dissatisfied and blame it on luck or something outside themselves without realising that many problems are caused by their own lack of discipline. If we discipline ourselves, others won't have to. If we don't, others will. Self discipline enhances self-worth. Self discipline may be painful in the short run, but tremendously gainful in the long run.

Step 7: Set Goals

Well-defined goals give a person a sense of direction and a feeling of accomplishment when he reaches his goals. More important than goals is a sense of purpose and vision. They give meaning and fulfillment to life.

What we become is more important than what we get upon achieving our goals. It is the process of becoming that gives us a good feeling. That is what

self-esteem is all about.

In goal-setting, we need to be realistic. Unrealistic goals remain unaccomplished, leading to low self-esteem, whereas realistic goals are encouraging and build high self-esteem.

Step 8: Associate with People of High Moral Character

A person's character is judged not only by the company they keep but also the company they avoid.

Associate yourself with people of good quality if you esteem your reputation, for it is better to be alone than to be in bad company.

– George Washington

Test of Friendship

Many times, negative influences come in the form of false friendship and peer pressure. People get you involved in something wrong by saying, “Aren’t you my friend?” When you get involved in something wrong by giving in to peer pressure, and then when you are in trouble, guess where will they be? Nowhere close. If they don’t have character today, where are they going to get character from tomorrow? That’s the question. **Remember, true friends never want to see their friends hurt.**

What starts as friendship may be in reality a test of friendship. Associating with people of high moral character helps build self-esteem.

It is common to see people doing wrong things to get accepted, saying, “It is cool,” not realising that they will be left cold.

Peer Pressure

When the desire to belong to the herd becomes stronger than the desire to stand up for what is right, it is evident that what is lacking, is courage and character. Going along to get along appears to be a safer path by keeping one’s peers happy. That is where people with high self-esteem draw the line. That is what separates the men from the boys.

Examples:

- School kids conform because they do not want to be laughed at.
- Students don’t give answers in class because others will make fun of them.
- Factory workers keep performance low to keep peers happy.

Everything within limits is ok—is it?

Many people say, “Moderation is OK. Everything within limits is OK.” My question is, is it really OK?

- Is cheating within limits OK?
- Is lying within limits OK?
- Is stealing within limits OK?
- Is drugs within limits OK?
- Is smoking within limits OK?
- Is adultery within limits OK?
- Is HIV within limits OK?

Some things are just not OK.

Some people frequently rationalise, “I’ll try a little and quit”, or “I can quit anytime” or “When ever I want.” They don’t realise that it always starts with the first one. Negative influences start as weak threads till they become chains too strong to be broken.

Step 9: Become Internally Driven, Not Externally Driven

No one can make you feel inferior without your permission.

– Eleanor Roosevelt

There is a story about an ancient Indian sage who was abused and called ugly names by an angry passerby. The sage listened unperturbed till the man ran out of words. The student of the sage got rather perturbed and asked the sage, “Why did you not give him a befitting reply?” The sage asked the student, “If an offering is not accepted, who does it belong to?” The student replied, “It belongs to the person who offered it.” The sage said, “I refused to accept his offering,” and the sage walked away calmly, leaving the student dazed. The sage was internally driven.

So long as we blame outside sources, our miseries will continue and we will feel helpless. Unless we accept responsibility for our feelings and behavior, we cannot change. The first step is to ask:

- Why did I get upset?
- Why am I depressed?
- Why am I angry?

Then we start getting the clues to overcome them.

Step 10: Develop a Mindset That Brings Happiness

Happiness is a result of positive self-esteem. If you ask people what makes them happy, you will get all kinds of answers. Most of them would include material things but that is not really true. Happiness comes from being and not having. One can have everything in life and yet not be happy. The reverse is also true.

Happiness is internal. Happiness is like a butterfly. If you run after it, it keeps flying away. If you stand still, it comes and sits on your shoulder.

Bitterness is a sign of emotional failure. It paralyses our capacity to do good. Set your own standards. Be honest to yourself. Compete against yourself. Do the following:

- Look for the positive in every person and in every situation.
- Resolve to be happy.
- Set your own standards judiciously.
- Develop an immunity to negative criticism.
- Learn to find pleasure in every little thing.
- Remember all times are not the same. Ups and downs are part of life.
- Make the best of every situation.
- Keep yourself constructively occupied.
- Help others less fortunate than yourself.
- Learn to get over things. Don't brood.
- Forgive yourself and others. Don't hold guilt or bear grudges.

Step 11: Give Yourself Positive Auto-suggestions

Autosuggestions are positive statements of the kind of person you want to be or the things you want to have or do.

Develop the habit of giving yourself positive self-talk. Autosuggestions alter your belief system by influencing your subconscious mind. Your behavior reflects your belief system. Hence, auto-suggestions affect your behavior by influencing your belief system. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Examples:

- I can handle it.
- I am good at math.
- I can do it.
- I have a good memory.

Step 12: Turn your weakness into strength

A. Our Greatest Strength Can Become Our Greatest Weakness

Any strength overextended becomes a weakness. For example, in sales, good speaking ability is a strength. It is not uncommon to see salespeople with good speaking ability talk themselves into a sale, then talk too much and talk themselves right out of the sale. Their strength got them into it; however, overextended, it becomes a weakness and they lose the sale.

Listening is a strength. Overextended, however, it could mean that a person listens a lot but does not speak enough. It becomes a weakness.

B. Our Greatest Weakness Can Become Our Greatest Strength

Anger is a weakness. How can it be turned into a strength? One lady demonstrated by getting MADD! MADD stands for Mothers Against Drunk Driving. This woman lost her child because of a drunk driver. She got so angry that she resolved that society should not tolerate this kind of irresponsible behavior. She organised people all over the United States to fight drunk driving. She and her association, with thousands of members, became a significant force and succeeded in their pursuit to change legislation in Congress and various state legislatures. That is an example of turning a negative emotion, like anger, into a strength by doing positive. She converted her anger into a resolution.

Step 13: Have Patience

Patience creates confidence, decisiveness, and a rational outlook, which eventually leads to success.

– Brian Adams

Many times people go through motivational programmes or read books and get all charged up, and they put learning into practice, but don't see immediate results. They get disheartened and they give up. Then we hear people saying that one exposure to a positive or a negative material does not have any impact. That is not true. The difference may not be visible, but something is happening.

In China there is a bamboo tree that is planted, watered and fertilised for the first four years and nothing happens. There is no visible sign of growth. But sometime during the fifth year, the bamboo tree grows about ninety feet in six weeks. The question is: Did the bamboo tree grow in six weeks or did it take five years to grow? If the bamboo had not received water and fertiliser during the four years, when there was no visible sign of growth, would the plant have flourished? No. The bamboo tree would have died. The lesson is

clear. Have patience and faith and keep doing the right thing. Even though the results may not be visible, something is happening.

Caution: We must distinguish between patience and laziness. Sometimes a person may be sheer lazy but they might think that they are being patient.

A good beginning makes a good ending.

– English proverb

Step 14: Take Inventory: Make a List of All Your Strengths and Weaknesses

Successful people realise their limitations but focus on their strengths. Failures recognise their strengths but focus on their limitations. Unless we know what our strengths and weaknesses are, how can we build on our strengths and overcome weaknesses?

STRENGTHS WEAKNESSES

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The crux of self-esteem cannot be expressed better than in the following words by Abraham Lincoln.

WORLD, MY SON STARTS SCHOOL TODAY!*

World, take my child by the hand—he starts school today!

It is all going to be strange and new to him for a while and I wish you would sort of treat him gently. You see, up to now, he has been king of the roost. He has been the boss of the backyard. I have always been around to repair his wounds and I have always been handy to soothe his feelings.

But now things are going to be different. This morning he is going to walk down the front steps, wave his hand and start on a great adventure that probably will include wars and tragedy and sorrow.

To live in this world will require faith and love and courage. So, World, I wish you would sort of take him by his young hand and teach him the things he will have to know. Teach him—but gently, if you can.

He will have to learn, I know, that all people are not just—that all men and women are not true. Teach him that for every scoundrel, there is a hero; that for every enemy, there is a friend. Let him learn early that the bullies are the easiest people to lick.

Teach him the wonder of books. Give him quiet time to ponder the eternal

mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun and flowers on a green hill. Teach him that it is far more honorable to fail than to cheat. Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if everyone tells him they are wrong.

Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone else is getting on the bandwagon. Teach him to listen to others, but to filter all he hears on a screen of truth and to take only the good that comes through.

Teach him never to put a price tag on his heart and soul. Teach him to close his ears on the howling mob—and to stand and fight if he thinks he is right. Teach him gently, World, but do not coddle him, because only the test of fire makes fine steel.

This is a big order, World, but see what you can do. He is such a nice son.

– Signed, Abraham Lincoln

ACTION PLAN

1. List three strengths that I will reinforce.

1..... 2..... 3.....

2. List three activities that I shall do without any expectations of cash or kind.

1..... 2..... 3.....

3. List three negative influences I will stay away from.

1..... 2..... 3.....

4. List three areas where I will accept greater responsibility.

1..... 2..... 3.....

5. List three people of high moral character that I would like to associate with.

1..... 2..... 3.....

6. List three self-help/motivational books that I will read in the next three months.

1..... 2..... 3.....

7. List three people who I shall make an effort to give sincere compliments to.

1..... 2..... 3.....

*From *The Moral Compass*, edited by William J. Bennett, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1995, pp. 523–24.

*Adapted from “How to Make a Child into a Delinquent in 12 Easy Steps”, thought to have been prepared over fifty years ago by a police captain in USA. Source:

<http://gracegems.org/C/delinquent.htm>

*Adapted from *Star Ledger*, November 13, 1994.

*Adapted from “Pulpit Helps” February 1991, quoted in *Apple Seeds*, Volume 10, No. 1, 1994.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Building a pleasing personality

Technology and technicians you can always buy with money, but the wealthiest person must build relationships.

I will pay more for the ability to deal with people than for any other ability under the sun.

– John D. Rockefeller

ALL over the world, we find that we don't have business problems, we have people problems. When we take care of our people problems, most of our business problems are automatically resolved.

Why do people deal with us? They deal with us not because we are the smartest people. They deal with us because they are comfortable dealing with us. What gives them the level of comfort? People don't care how much you know. They want to know how much you care. It is never the tangible that connects people, it is always the intangible, which is called the X-factor. The question is, how do you build that X-factor?

People knowledge is more important than product knowledge. Successful people build pleasing and magnetic personalities, which is what makes them charismatic. This helps in getting friendly cooperation from others.

A pleasing personality is easy to recognise but hard to define. It is apparent in the way a person walks and talks, his tone of voice, the warmth in his behavior and his definitive level of confidence. A pleasing personality is a combination of a person's attitude, behavior and expressions. You will never lose your attractiveness regardless of age when the path of your personality

flows both from your face and your heart. Wearing a pleasant expression is more important than anything else you wear. It takes a lot more than a shoeshine and a manicure to give a person polish. Charming manners that disguise a poor character may work in the short run, but character reveals itself rather quickly. Relationships based on talent and personality alone, without character, make life miserable. Charisma without character or personality without character is like good looks without goodness and becomes irritating after some time. The bottom line is, that a lasting, winning combination requires both character and charisma.

Be courteous to all, but intimate with a few and let those few be well tried before you give them your confidence.

True friendship is a plant of slow growth, and must undergo and withstand the shocks of adversity before it is entitled to the appellation.

– George Washington, January 15, 1783

LIFE IS A BOOMERANG

Just the way a boomerang comes back, we get back in life what we give to others.

Benjamin Franklin said, “When you are good to others, you are best to yourself.”

Whether it is your thoughts, actions or behavior, sooner or later they return—and with great accuracy.

Treat people with respect on your way up because you will be meeting them on your way down.

The following story is taken from *The Best of... Bits & Pieces*.[*](#)

Many years ago two boys were working their way through Stanford University. Their funds got desperately low and the idea came to them to engage Ignacy Paderewski for a piano recital. They would use the funds to help pay their board and tuition.

The great pianist’s manager asked for a guarantee of \$2,000. The guarantee was a lot of money in those days, but the boys agreed and proceeded to promote the concert. They worked hard, only to find that they had grossed only \$1,600. After the concert the two boys told the great artist the bad news. They gave him the entire \$1,600, along with a promissory note for \$400, explaining that they would earn the amount at the earliest possible moment and send the money to him. It looked like the end of their college careers. “No, boys,” replied Paderewski, “that won’t do.” Then, tearing the note in two, he returned the money to them as well. “Now,” he told them, “take out of this \$1,600 all of your expenses and keep for each of you ten per cent of the balance for your work. Let me have the rest.”

The years rolled by. World War I came and went. Paderewski, now premier of Poland, was striving to feed thousands of starving people in his native land. The only person in the world who could help him was Herbert Hoover, who was in charge of the US Food and Relief Bureau.

Hoover responded and soon thousands of tons of food were sent to Poland.

After the starving people were fed, Paderewski journeyed to Paris to thank Hoover for the relief sent to him.

“That’s all right, Mr Paderewski,” was Hoover’s reply. “Besides, you don’t remember it, but you helped me once when I was a student at college and I was in trouble.”

It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.

– **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

Goodness has a way of coming back; that is the nature of the beast. One does not have to do good with a desire to get back. Infact when goodness is done with ulterior motives it is not goodness, it is trading. It just happens automatically.

Factors That Prevent Building and Maintaining Positive Relationships

Most of them are self-explanatory or elaborated on later in this chapter.

- Selfishness and inconsiderate behavior
- Not meeting commitments
- Rude & discourteous behaviour
- Unrealistic expectations from each other
- Low moral values or conflicting values
- Lack of integrity and honesty
- Self-centeredness
- Arrogance, conceit
- Negative attitude, closed mind
- Poor listening
- Jealous and suspicious nature
- Lack of discipline
- Non-caring attitude and lack of compassion
 - Impatience, anger (temper gets a person in trouble and ego keeps him there).
- Manipulative behavior, inconsistency
- Escapist behavior
- Touchy nature
- Unwillingness to accept the truth

- Past bad experience
- Nagging and negative criticism
- **Greed—is like sea water: the more you drink, the thirstier you get.**

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EGO AND PRIDE

The biggest hurdle in building a positive relationship is Ego. Ego is self-intoxicating. Ego is an unhealthy pride that results in arrogance. Healthy pride is a feeling of the pleasure of accomplishment with humility. Ego gives a swollen head while pride gives a swollen heart. A big head gives a big headache whereas a big heart gives humility.

No matter what the size of a person's accomplishments are, there is never an excuse for having a big head. Pride: Yes! Big head: No!

John bragged, "My son gets his intelligence from me." His wife replied, "I am sure he does, because I still have mine."

Ego—The "I Know It All" Attitude

To an egocentric person, the world begins, ends and revolves around him. An egotist person may have a weird sense of humor.

A boss asked one of his employees how badly he wanted a raise. The employee said, "Real badly. I have been praying to God for one." The boss replied, "You are not going to get it because you went over my head." An egotist talks down to and looks down on others.

Egotism is the anesthetic that deadens the pain of stupidity.

– Knute Rockne

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SELFISHNESS AND SELF-INTEREST?

It is important to understand the distinction between selfishness and self-interest. Selfishness is based on the principle "For me to win, if the world has to lose, it's OK." Whereas, self-interest says, "For me to win, the world does not have to lose. We can both win together."

Selfishness is negative and destructive. It destroys relationships because it is based on negative values. It believes in the win-lose principle. Self-interest is positive. Self-interest believes in win-win situations.

One Should Have an Open Mind Rather Than an Empty Mind

What is the difference between an open mind and an empty mind? An open

mind is flexible; it evaluates and may accept or reject ideas and concepts based on merit.

An empty mind is a dumping ground. It accepts without evaluation. If someone dumped garbage inside your house, would you tolerate it? You would not only make them clean up the mess, but you would possibly penalise them and make sure they never repeat it again. This is about throwing garbage in the house. Doesn't the same principle apply when people dump garbage into our minds? Why do we allow others to dump garbage into our minds, either in person or through the media? Why don't we insulate ourselves from such garbage in order to maintain cleanliness and positivity?

Don't let others pollute your mind.

WE SEE THINGS NOT THE WAY *THEY* ARE BUT THE WAY *WE* ARE

According to a legend, a wise man was sitting outside his village when a traveler came up and asked, "I am looking to move from my present village—what kind of people live in this village?" The wise man asked, "What kind of people live in your village?" The man said, "They are mean, cruel, rude." The wise man replied, "The same kind of people live in this village too." After some time another traveler came by and asked the same question, and the wise man asked him, "What kind of people live in your village?" And the traveler replied, "The people are very kind, courteous, polite and good." The wise man said, "You will find the same kind of people here too." We see the world not the way it is but the way we are.

Can we change other people's behavior?

We cannot change other people's behavior towards us. But most of the time we find that other people's behavior is reactionary to our behavior towards them. By changing our behavior, we can influence their behavior towards us.

ACTION PLAN

1. List three actions where you demonstrated the following in the last thirty days:

- Selflessness

1..... 2..... 3.....

- Courtesy

1..... 2..... 3.....

- Considerate behavior

- 1..... 2..... 3.....
- Keeping commitments
- 1..... 2..... 3.....
- Polite behavior
- 1..... 2..... 3.....
- Integrity and honesty
- 1..... 2..... 3.....
- Understanding
- 1..... 2..... 3.....
- Humility
- 1..... 2..... 3.....

[*](#)Economic Press, Fairfield, NJ, 1994, pp. 84-85.

BUILD A POSITIVE PERSONALITY

Simple but effective steps

Personality opens the doors, character keeps it open.

Step 1: Accept Responsibility

“Responsibilities gravitate to the person who can shoulder them.”

– Elbert Hubbard

WHEN people accept additional responsibility they are actually giving themselves a promotion.

Responsible behavior is to accept accountability. That represents maturity. Acceptance of responsibility is a reflection of our attitude and the environment we operate in. Most people are quick to take credit for what goes right but very few would readily accept responsibility when things go wrong. A person who does not accept responsibility is not absolved from being responsible. Your objective is to cultivate responsible behavior.

Stop the Blame Game

Avoid phrases such as:

- everyone else does it, or
- no one does it, or
- it is all your fault.

People who don't accept responsibility shift the blame to their parents, teachers, genes, God, fate, luck or the stars. Responsible behavior should be inculcated right from childhood. It cannot be taught without a certain degree of obedience.

Johnny said, "Mama, Jimmy broke the window." Mama asked, "How did he do it?" Johnny replied, "I threw a stone at him and he ducked."

People who use their privileges without accepting responsibility usually end up losing their privileges. Responsibility involves thoughtful action.

Pettiness Causes Us to Ignore Our Responsibilities

Think about it. Petty minds are busy passing the buck rather than doing what needs to be done.

Social Responsibility

Ancient Indian wisdom teaches us that our first responsibility is to society, second to our family and third to ourselves. When this hierarchy is reversed, a society starts degenerating. Social responsibility ought to be the moral obligation of every citizen. Responsibility and freedom go hand in hand. The sign of a good citizen is that he is willing to pull his own weight.

The price of greatness is responsibility.

– Winston Churchill

Societies are not destroyed so much by the activities of rascals but by the inactivity of the good people. What a paradox! If they were really good, would they be inactive? Or are they rascals just labeled as good? If good people can tolerate destruction by being inactive, how can they be good?

For evil to flourish, good people have to do nothing and evil shall flourish.

– Edmund Burke

Step 2: Show Consideration

A ten-year-old boy went to an ice cream shop, sat at a table and asked the waitress, "How much is an ice-cream cone?" She said, "Seventy-five cents." The boy started counting the coins he had in his hand. Then he asked how much a small cup of ice cream was. The waitress impatiently replied, "Sixty-five cents." The boy said, "I will have the small ice cream cup." The boy ate his ice-cream, paid the bill and left. When the waitress came to pick up the empty plate, she was touched. Underneath were ten one-cent coins left as the tip. The young boy had consideration for the waitress before he ordered his ice cream. He showed sensitivity and caring. He thought of others before himself.

If we all thought like the little boy, we would have a great place to live. Show consideration, courtesy and politeness. Thoughtfulness shows a caring attitude.

Step 3: Think Win-Win

A man died and St Peter asked him if he would like to go to heaven or hell. The man asked if he could see both before deciding. St Peter took him to hell first. There the man saw a big hall containing a long table, laden with many kinds of food. He also saw rows of people with pale, sad faces. They looked starved and there was no laughter. And he observed one more thing: Their hands were tied to four-foot long forks and knives and they were trying to get the food from the center of the table to put into their mouths. But they couldn't.

Then, St Peter took him to see heaven. There he saw a big hall with a long table, with lots of food. He noticed rows of people on both sides of the table with their hands tied to four-foot forks and knives also. But here people were laughing and were well fed and healthy-looking. The people realizing that they could not feed themselves with four foot forks, were feeding one another across the table. The result was happiness, enjoyment and gratification because they were not thinking of themselves alone; they were thinking win-win. The same is true of our lives. When we serve our customers, our families, our employers and employees, we automatically win.

Step 4: Choose Your Words Carefully

A person who says whatever he likes usually ends up hearing what he doesn't like. Be tactful. Tact consists of choosing one's words carefully and knowing how far to go. It also means knowing what to say and what to leave unsaid. Talent without tact may not always be desirable. Words reflect attitude. Words can hurt feelings and destroy relationships. More people have been hurt by an improper choice of words than by any natural disaster. Choose what you say rather than say what you choose. That is the difference between wisdom and foolishness.

Excessive talking does not mean communication. Talk less; say more.

A fool speaks without thinking; a wise man thinks before speaking.

Words spoken out of bitterness can cause irreparable damage. The way parents speak to their children in many instances shapes their children's destiny.

SPOKEN WORDS CAN'T BE RETRIEVED

A farmer slandered his neighbor. Realising his mistake, he went to the preacher to ask for forgiveness. The preacher told him to take a bag of feathers and drop them in the center of town. The farmer did as he was told. Then the preacher asked him to go and collect the feathers and put them back in the bag. The farmer tried but couldn't as the feathers had all blown away. When he

returned with the empty bag, the preacher said, “The same thing is true about your words. You dropped them rather easily but you cannot retrieve them. You need to be very careful in choosing your words.” Something commonly used but very profound is “Lost time, a fired bullet and spoken words cannot be retrieved.” Words can make or break life.

Step 5: Don’t Criticize and Complain

When I talk of criticism, I refer to negative criticism. When a person is criticised, he becomes defensive. A critic is often like a back-seat driver who drives the driver mad. Does that mean we should never criticise, nor give constructive criticism?

Constructive Criticism

How do you offer constructive criticism?

Some suggestions for giving criticism that motivates others:

- Be a coach—criticise with a helpful attitude.
- Be specific, rather than saying things like ‘You *always*’ or ‘You *never*’.
- Get your facts right.
- Don’t be sarcastic as it builds resentment.
- If criticism is given appropriately, it will reduce the need for repetition.
- Criticise in private not in public.
- Show them a benefit from correcting.
- Point out the loss from not correcting it.
- Criticise the performance, not the performer.
- Don’t express personal resentment.
- Keep criticism in perspective. Don’t overdo it.
- Close on a positive note with appreciation.

Receiving Criticism

There will be times when you will be criticised. An inability to accept constructive criticism is a sign of poor self-esteem. Suggestions for accepting criticism:

- Take it in the right spirit. Deal with it graciously rather than grudgingly.
- Evaluate it with an open mind, if it makes sense accept it, learn from it and implement it.

- Don't be defensive. Accept constructive criticism immediately and emphatically.
- Thank the person who gives constructive criticism.

A person with high self-esteem accepts positive criticism and becomes better, not bitter.

DON'T BE A PERMANENT COMPLAINER

Complain—Yes, but don't become a permanent complaining personality. If you don't get good food at the hotel, of course, you must complain. But don't become a permanent complainer.

Some people are chronic complainers. It becomes a personality trait. They complain no matter what. To them—if it is hot it is too hot, if it is cold it is too cold. If it is raining it is too wet. To them everyday is a bad day. They complain no matter what. Even when things are going perfectly right they still find something to complain about. Why should one not be a permanent complainer? Because fifty per cent of the people don't care that you have a problem and the other fifty per cent are happy that you do have a problem. What is the point of complaining? In fact a chronic complainer spends half his life at the customer service counters.

Step 6: Smile and Be Kind

*SMILE**

A smile costs nothing, but it creates much.

It enriches those who receive it without impoverishing those who give it.

It happens in a flash and the memory of it may last forever.

It creates happiness in the home, fosters goodwill in a business and is the countersign of friends.

It is rest to the weary, and nature's best antidote for trouble.

In the course of the day, some of your acquaintances may be too tired to give you a smile. Give them one of yours.

Cheerfulness flows from goodness. A smile can be fake or genuine. The key is to have a genuine one. It takes more muscles to frown than to smile. It is easier to smile than frown. It improves face value. Who likes to be around a grouch? No one except may be a bigger grouch! A smile is contagious and is an inexpensive way to improve looks. A smiling face is always welcome.

Step 7: Put a Positive Interpretation on Other People's Behavior

Always start a relationship on a positive note. Give the other person the benefit of doubt e.g. How often have we put through a call and not received a reply for two days. What is first thought that comes to mind, "They ignored me." It never occurs that may be : (a) They never got the message (b) They got the message but might be having an emergency. (c) They tried but couldn't get through (d) Got through, left the message and you never got it.

There could be many reasons. It is worth giving the benefit of doubt to the other person and start on a positive note.

Some people suffer from 'paranoia': They think the world is out to get them. That is not true. By starting with positive assumptions, we have a better chance of building a pleasing personality resulting, in good relationships.

Step 8: Be a Good Listener

Why is listening important?

Listening shows caring. When you show a caring attitude towards another person, you make the other person feel important. When he feels important, what happens? He is more motivated and more receptive to your ideas.

Good listening brings people together. It solidifies relationships and avoids misunderstanding.

Step 9: Be Enthusiastic

Nothing great is ever achieved without enthusiasm.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Enthusiasm and success go hand in hand, but enthusiasm comes first. Enthusiasm inspires confidence, raises morale, builds loyalty and is priceless. Enthusiasm is contagious. You can feel enthusiasm by the way a person talks, walks or shakes hands. Enthusiasm is a habit that one can acquire and practice.

Many decades ago, Charles Schwab, who was earning a salary of a million dollars a year, was asked if he was being paid such a high salary because of his exceptional ability to produce steel. Charles Schwab replied, "I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm among the men the greatest asset I possess and the way to develop the best that is in a man is by appreciation and encouragement."

Live while you are alive. Don't die before you are dead. Enthusiasm and desire are what change mediocrity to excellence. Water turns into steam with a difference of only one degree in temperature and steam can move some of

the biggest engines in the world. That is what enthusiasm helps you to do in your life.

Step 10: Give Honest and Sincere Appreciation

The psychologist William James said, “One of the deepest desires of human beings is the desire to be appreciated. The feeling of being unwanted is hurtful.”

Sincere appreciation is one of the greatest gifts one can give to another person. Why is appreciation important? It makes a person feel important. Their self-esteem goes up. It makes them feel good. It brings them closer.

The desire to feel important is one of the greatest cravings in most human beings. It can be a great motivator.

The biggest disease today is not leprosy or tuberculosis but rather the feeling of being unwanted.

– Mother Teresa

Typically, as parents, teachers, supervisors, we say, “You did a good job” and go away without being specific and we think we have given appreciation. Just evaluate, is this really appreciation? After we leave, the person who received the appreciation, is more confused than before, asking themselves, “What did I do good?” This kind of appreciation is totally wasted.

Appreciation, in order to be effective, must meet the following criteria:

1. It must be *specific*. When I say, “The way you handled that difficult customer under time pressure was great,” then he knows what he is being appreciated for.
2. It must be *sincere*. It must come from the heart. You must mean every word. It is better not to appreciate if you don’t mean it because insincerity comes through.
3. It must be *immediate*. The effectiveness is diluted if we show our appreciation for someone six months after he has done something commendable.
4. Don’t qualify praise with a *but*. By using the but as a connector, we erase the appreciation. Use ‘and’, ‘in addition to that’ or some other appropriate connector. Instead of saying, “I appreciate your effort but....”, say something like, “I appreciate your effort and would you please...”
5. After giving appreciation, it is not important to wait for a receipt or acknowledgment. Some people are looking for a compliment in return. That is not the purpose of appreciation.

If you are receiving appreciation, accept it graciously with a ‘Thank-you’.

It is far easier for people to deal with honest rejection than insincere appreciation. At least the person knows where he stands. Don’t miss out any opportunity to give sincere appreciation. It builds the other person’s self-esteem and automatically your own self-esteem goes up. Public appreciation is recognition.

Caution: Without clear benchmarks, public appreciation may cause resentment in people with low self-esteem.

What is the difference between appreciation and flattery?

The difference is sincerity. One comes from the heart, the other from the mouth. One is sincere and the other has an ulterior motive. Some people find it easier to flatter than to give sincere praise. Don’t flatter or get taken in by flatterers.

It’s an old maxim in the schools that flattery’s the food of fools Yet now and then you men of wit will condescend to take a bit.

– Jonathan Swift

Remember, the keyword in sincere appreciation is ‘sincerity’. If it is not sincere, don’t give it. People can smell a fake and it will come back to haunt you.

Insincere appreciation is like a mirage in the desert. The closer you get, the more disappointed you become because it is nothing more than an illusion. People put up a front of sincerity as a cover up.

Step 11: When You Make a Mistake, Accept It And Move On

A great philosopher said, “When I am wrong, make me easy to change; and when I am right, make me easy to live with.” This is a great philosophy to live by.

Some people live and learn while others live and never learn. Mistakes are to be learned from. The greatest mistake a person can make is to repeat it. Don’t assign blame. When you realise your mistake, immediately accept it and apologise for it.

- Don’t drag it.
- Don’t deny it.
- Don’t dodge it.
- Don’t dwell on it.

Don't defend it. Why? Because it takes a big person to accept a mistake. Acceptance disarms the other person. Acceptance of mistake should be sincere, not fake. Some people apologise because they mean it whereas others apologise as a tactic to buy time. The key to a positive personality is to accept one's mistake sincerely.

Step 12: Discuss But Don't Argue

Have you noticed that there are some argumentative personalities? Being argumentative comes naturally to them. It does not matter which side you are on, they are permanently on the other side. Arguments can be avoided and a lot of heartache prevented by being a little careful. The best way to win an argument is to avoid it. **An argument is one thing you will never win.** If you win, you lose; if you lose, you lose. If you win an argument but lose a good job, customer, friend or marriage, what kind of victory is it? Pretty empty. Discuss—Yes; Argue—No. Arguments result from inflated ego.

Arguing is like fighting a losing battle. Even if one wins, the cost may be more than the victory is worth. Emotional battles leave a residual ill will even if you win.

In an argument, both people are trying to have the last word. An argument is nothing more than a battle of egos and results in a yelling contest. A bigger fool than the one who knows it all is the one who argues with him!

Is It Worth It?

The more arguments you win, the fewer friends you have. Even if you are right, is it worth arguing? The answer is pretty obvious. A big no. Does that mean one should never bring up a point that contradicts another? One should, but gently and tactfully, by saying something neutral such as “based on my information...” If the other person is argumentative, even if you can prove him wrong, is it worth it? I don't think so. Do you make your point a second time? I wouldn't. Why? Because the argument is coming from a closed mind trying to prove who is right rather than what is right.

For example, at a social get-together, especially after a few drinks, someone may say authoritatively, “The current year's export figures are \$50 billion.” You happen to know that his information is incorrect and the right figure is \$45 billion. You read it in the paper that morning, or you heard it on the radio on the way to the get-together and you have a bulletin in your car to substantiate it. Do you make your point? Yes, by saying, “My information is that the export figure is \$45 billion.” The other person reacts, “You don't know what you are talking about. I know exactly what it is and it is \$50

billion.”

At this point, you have several choices:

1. Make your point again and start an argument.
2. Run and bring the bulletin from your car and make sure you prove him wrong.
3. Discuss but don't argue.
4. Avoid it.

The right choices are number 3 and 4.

If one wants to accomplish great things in life one has to practice maturity. Maturity means not getting entangled in unimportant things and petty arguments.

What is the Difference Between an Argument and a Discussion?

- An argument throws heat; a discussion throws light.
- One stems from ego and a closed mind whereas the other comes from an open mind.
- An argument is an exchange of ignorance whereas a discussion is an exchange of knowledge.
- An argument is an expression of temper whereas a discussion is an expression of logic.
- An argument tries to prove who is right whereas a discussion tries to prove what is right.

It is not worthwhile to reason with a prejudiced mind; it wasn't reasoned into him so you can't reason it out. A narrow mind and a big mouth usually lead to pointless arguments.

In order to discuss, let the other person state his side of the case without interruption. Let him blow steam. Don't try to prove him wrong on every point. Never let him drag you to his level. Treat him with courtesy and respect; that will confuse him.

Regardless of the cause, the best way to diffuse the situation is to:

- Give a patient hearing.
 - Not fight back or retaliate—not fighting back will confuse the other person because he was expecting a fight.
- Not expect an apology. For some people, apologising is difficult even if they have made a mistake.

- Not make issues out of petty matters.

Discussion entails not only saying the right thing at the right time but also leaving unsaid what need not be said. Children should be taught the art of speaking up but not talking back. The way a person handles an argument reflects his upbringing.

I learned a long time ago never to wrestle with a pig. You get dirty and besides, the pig likes it.

– Cyrus Ching

Steps to Opening a Discussion

1. Be open-minded.
2. Don't be dragged into an argument.
3. Don't interrupt.
4. Listen to the other person's point of view before giving your own.
5. Ask questions to clarify. That will also set the other person thinking.
6. Don't exaggerate.
7. Be enthusiastic in convincing, not forceful.
8. Be willing to yield.
9. Be flexible on petty things but not on principles.
10. Don't make it a prestige issue.
11. Give your opponent a graceful way to withdraw without hurting his pride. Rejection can be hurtful.
12. Use soft words but hard arguments rather than hard words and soft arguments.

It is impossible to defeat an ignorant man in an argument. His strong and bitter words only indicate a weak cause.

During a discussion, it may be a good idea to use phrases such as:

- It appears to me ...
- I may be wrong ...

Another way to defuse arguments is by showing ignorance and asking questions such as:

- Why do you feel that way?

- Can you explain a little?
- Can you be more specific?

If nothing works, it may be worthwhile to politely, gently and with courtesy, agree to disagree. Remember: As mature adults we should learn the art of disagreeing without being disagreeable.

Cardinal Rule

Never argue.

Why?

1. Argument is one thing you will never win.
2. Even if you win an argument, you will end up losing respect anyway. It is not worth it.

Step 13: Don't Gossip

Remember, people who gossip with you will also gossip about you.

Gossiping and lying are closely related. A gossip listens in haste and repeats at leisure. A gossip never minds his own business because he has neither a mind nor a business. A gossip is more concerned about what he overhears than what he hears. Gossip is the art of saying nothing in a way that leaves nothing unsaid.

Someone said it well: "Small people talk about other people, mediocre people talk about things, great people talk about ideas."

Gossip can lead to slander and defamation of character. People who listen to gossip are as guilty as those who do the gossiping.

A gossip usually gets caught in his own mouth trap. Gossip has no respect for justice. It breaks hearts, ruins lives and is cunning and malicious. It victimises the helpless. Gossip is hard to track down because it has no face or name. It tarnishes reputations, topples governments, wrecks marriages, ruins careers, makes the innocent cry, causes heartaches and sleepless nights. The next time you indulge in gossip, ask yourself.

- Is it the truth?
- Is it kind and gentle?
- Is it necessary?
- Am I spreading rumors?
- Do I say positive things about others?
- Do I enjoy and encourage others to spread rumors?
- Does my conversation begin with, "Don't tell anyone?"

- Can I maintain confidentiality?

Refrain from indulging in gossip. Remember, small talk comes out of big mouths.

Step 14: Turn Your Promises into Commitments

A commitment is a promise that is going to be kept no matter what. Commitment comes out of character and leads to conviction.

Uncommitted relationships are shallow and hollow. They are a matter of convenience and are temporary. Nothing lasting has ever been created without commitment.

Commitment does not take away freedom; it actually gives more freedom because it provides a sense of security.

The most important commitment we ever make is to our values. That is why it is imperative to have a good value system.

Commitment leads to enduring relationships through thick and thin. It shows a person's character.

Step 15: Be Grateful But Do Not Expect Gratitude

Gratitude is a beautiful word. Gratitude is a feeling. It improves our personality and builds character. Gratitude develops out of humility. It is a feeling of thankfulness towards others. It is conveyed through our attitude towards others and reflects in our behavior. Gratitude does not mean reciprocating good deeds, gratitude is not give and take. Kindness, understanding and patience cannot be repaid. What does gratitude teach us? It teaches us the art of cooperation and understanding. Gratitude must be sincere. A simple thank you can be gracious. Many times we forget to be thankful to the people closest to us, such as our spouse, our relatives, our friends. Gratitude would rank among the top qualities that form the character and personality of an individual with integrity. Ego stands in the way of showing gratitude. A gracious attitude changes our outlook in life. With gratitude and humility, right actions come naturally.

Gratitude ought to be a way of life, something that we cannot give enough of. It can mean a smile, or a thank you, or a gesture of appreciation.

Think of your most precious possessions. What makes them special? In most cases, the gift is less significant than the giver. Seldom are we grateful for the things we already possess.

Think back and try to recall the people who had a positive influence on your life. Your parents, teachers, anyone who spent extra time to help you. Perhaps it appears that they just did their job. Not really. They willingly

sacrificed their time, effort, money and many other things for you. They did it out of love and not for your thankfulness. At some point, a person realises the effort that went in to help them shape their future. Perhaps it is not too late to thank them.

The Story of Christ

The example of Christ says it all. Once ten lepers stopped Christ and said, “You have miraculous powers, give us new life.” Christ said, “I don’t have the powers but come, walk with me and pray together anyway.”

As the story goes, they were all healed. And when Christ turned back, he saw they were all gone except one. Only one had the courtesy to thank Christ. Christ said, “ I didn’t do a thing.” Christ literally gave them a new life and nobody had the courtesy to thank Christ except one. What is the moral of the story?

1. Human beings are ungrateful.
2. A grateful person is the exceptional person.
3. Like Christ we should not expect gratitude.

How does this translate in our real lives? We feed or give shelter to someone for a few days and say “Look what I did for him.” It is not uncommon to hear people saying, “If it wasn’t for me, this person would be on the street.” What an ego!

Gratitude does not mean that people are beholden to each other. Rather, it is a very humbling feeling.

By the Way

When people ask others to do something for them by using the phrase ‘By the way, can you do this for me?’, they undermine the importance of doing or not doing. I have found that if we have to do anything for anyone it is never ‘by the way’, it is always ‘out of the way’.

This does not amount to doing favors from the doer’s perspective. If one doesn’t do things that can be done to help another person, then it is sad. But I am convinced that there is no such thing as ‘By the way’, it is always ‘out of the way’ and it is *worth it*.

Step 16: Be Dependable and Practice Loyalty

The old adage, “An ounce of loyalty is worth more than a pound of cleverness,” is universal and eternal.

Ability is important but dependability is crucial. If you have someone with a lot of ability but who is not dependable, do you want him as part of your team? No, not at all.

I KNEW YOU WOULD COME

There were two childhood friends who went through school, college and even joined the army together. War broke out and they were fighting in the same unit. Bullets were flying all over, out of the darkness came a voice, "Harry, please come and help me." Harry immediately recognised the voice of his childhood friend, Bill. He asked the captain if he could go. The captain said, "No, I can't let you go, I am already short-handed and I cannot afford to lose one more person. Besides, the way Bill sounds he is not going to make it." Harry kept quiet. Again the voice came, "Harry, please come and help me."

Harry, sat quietly because the captain had refused earlier. Again and again the voice came. Harry couldn't hold himself any longer and told the captain, "Captain, this is my childhood friend. I have to go and help." The captain reluctantly let him go. Harry crawled through the darkness and dragged Bill back into the trench. They found that Bill was dead. Now the captain got angry and shouted at Harry, "Didn't I tell you he was not going to make it? He is dead, you could have been killed and I would have become more short handed. You made a mistake." Harry replied, "No Captain, I did not make a mistake. When I reached Bill he was not dead. His last words were, "Harry, I knew you would come."

Good relationships are hard to find and once developed should be nurtured.

We are often told: Live your dream. But you cannot live your dream at the expense of others. People who do so are unscrupulous. We need to make personal sacrifices for our family, friends, those we care about and who depend on us.

Step 17: Avoid Bearing Grudges

Don't be a garbage collector. Have you heard the phrase I can forgive but I can't forget? There is a tremendous value in forgiving and forgetting. When a person holds a grudge, who is he hurting the most? Himself. Who has the blood pressure? He does. Even for selfish reason, forgive and forget makes sense. Forgiveness always starts from ourselves. Many times, we keep punishing ourselves for our past mistakes more than others ever do, by retaining guilt and resentment. This is called excess baggage for which, we always have to pay a price. How long are we going to punish ourselves? Besides, if we cannot forgive ourselves, how can we forgive anyone else? We can only give what we have. When a person refuses to forgive, he is locking doors that some day he might need to open.

Jim and Jerry had been childhood friends but for some reason, the relationship fell apart and they

hadn't spoken for twenty-five years. Jerry was on his deathbed and didn't want to enter eternity with a heavy heart. So he called Jim, apologised and said, "Let's forgive each other and be done for the past." Jim thought it was a good idea and went to visit Jerry at the hospital.

They spent a couple of hours together catching up on the last twenty-five years—and patching up their differences. As Jim was leaving, Jerry shouted from behind, "Jim, just in case I don't die; remember, this forgiveness doesn't count." Life is too short to hold grudges. It is not worth it.

Shame on Me

While it is not worth holding grudges, it doesn't make sense to be bitten time and again. It is well said, "Cheat me once, shame on you; you cheat me twice, shame on me."

John Kennedy once said, "*Forgive the other person but don't forget their name.*" I am sure that his message was that one should not get cheated twice.

Step 18: Practice Honesty, Integrity and sincerity

Honesty means to be genuine and real versus fake and fictitious.

Build a reputation of being trustworthy. If there is one thing that builds relationships, it is integrity.

Not keeping commitments amounts to dishonest behavior.

Honesty inspires openness, reliability and frankness. It shows respect for one's self and others. Honesty is in being, not in appearing to be. Lies may have speed but truth has endurance. Integrity is not found in company brochures or titles but in a person's character.

Is it worth compromising one's integrity and taking shortcuts to win? A person may win a trophy. But knowing the truth, that he did not win fair and square, he can never be a happy person. More important than winning a trophy is being a good human being.

A POUND OF BUTTER

There was a farmer who sold a pound of butter to a baker. One day the baker decided to weigh the butter to see if he was getting a pound and found that he was not. This angered him and he took the farmer to court. The judge asked the farmer how he was measuring the butter he was selling. The farmer replied, "Your Honor, I am primitive. I don't have a proper measure, but I do have a scale." The judge asked, "Then how do you weigh the butter?" The farmer replied "Your Honor, long before the baker started buying butter from me, I have been buying a pound loaf of bread from him. Every day when the baker brings the bread, I put it on the scale and give him the same weight in butter. If anyone is to be blamed, it is the baker." We get back in life what we give to others.

Whenever you take an action, ask yourself: Am I giving fair value for the wages or money?

Honesty and dishonesty becomes a habit. Some people practice dishonesty and can lie with a straight face. Others lie so much that they no longer know what the truth is. But whom are they deceiving? Themselves— more than anyone else.

Honesty can be put across gently. Some people take pride in being brutally honest. It seems they are getting a bigger kick out of the brutality than the honesty. Choice of words and tact are important.

Truth May Not Always Be What You Want to Hear

The most important responsibility of an honest friend is to be truthful. Some people, in order to avoid confronting painful truths, select friends who tell them what they want to hear. They kid themselves despite the fact that deep down they know they are not being truthful. Honest criticism can be painful. If you have many acquaintances and few friends, it is time to step back and explore the depth of your relationships.

A lack of honesty is sometimes labeled as tact, public relations or politics. But is it really so? It is not uncommon to see people lying and calling themselves ‘diplomatic’. In fact, they are just being manipulative. Being diplomatic really means that a person is sensitive to the other persons’ feeling and conveys, the message tactfully, but without lying. When they very proudly say “I am being diplomatic” they know in their hearts they are outright liars.

The problem with lying is that one has to remember one’s lies.

Honesty requires firmness and commitment. How many times have we all been guilty of:

- Little white lies?
- Flattery?
- Omitting facts or giving half-truths?
- Telling the greatest lies by remaining silent?

Make yourself an honest man and then you may be sure there is one rascal less in the world.

– Thomas Carlyle

We all know the story of the shepherd boy who cried wolf. The boy shouted, “Wolf!” The villagers came to help. There was no wolf. He made fun of them and they left. Next day he did the same thing and again the same thing happened. The third day the wolf actually came. He shouted for help and nobody came. His sheep got eaten up. What’s the moral of the story? Very simple: When a person gets labeled as a liar, even when he tells the truth, nobody believes him. And why should they? What did he earn? People with integrity never put their credibility on the line.

Be Sincere

What is Sincerity? It is authenticity. It is genuineness. People who are sincere say what they mean and mean what they say. Is sincerity any measure of judgment? May or may not be. Somebody can be sincerely wrong but they are authentic.

Sincerity is a matter of intent and hard to prove. We can achieve our goals by having a sincere desire to help others.

Stay Away from Pretense

Asking a friend in trouble, “Is there anything I can do for you,” is really annoying. It is more lip service than a sincere offer. If you really want to help, think of something appropriate to be done and then do it.

Many people put on the cloak of sincerity more out of selfishness than substance, hoping that some day they could claim the right to receive help.

Stay away from meaningless and phony pleasantries.

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

Steve came back from school, had his snacks and juice that his mother had prepared and said, “I love you Mom” and ran away. Knowing fully well that mother had to take care of the laundry and cleaning the house. John also came from school and said, “I love you Mom, more than my words can express.” He also had his snacks and juice and went away to play. Then came Paul who also said, “I love you Mom. Today, I will help you all the way.” He took care of the chores, cleaned the house and put the garbage outside. While going to bed, all three said to their mother, “I love you Mom.” Do you think mother was able to guess who loved her the most?

Step 19: Practice Humility

Confidence without humility amounts to arrogance. Humility is the foundation of all virtues. It is a sign of greatness. Humility does not mean self-demeaning behavior that would amount to belittling oneself. Sincere

humility attracts but false humility detracts.

Many years ago, a rider came across some soldiers who were trying to move a heavy log without success. The corporal was standing by as the men struggled. The rider asked the corporal why he wasn't helping. The corporal replied, "I am the corporal; I give orders." The rider dismounted, went up to the soldiers and helped them lift the log. With his help, the log was moved. The rider quietly mounted his horse and went to the corporal and said, "The next time your men need help, send for the Commander-in-Chief." After he left, the corporal and his men found out that the rider was George Washington.

The message is clear. Success and humility go hand in hand. When others blow your horn, the sound goes further. Just think about it? Simplicity and humility are two hallmarks of greatness.

Step 20: Be Understanding and Caring

In relationships we all make mistakes and sometimes we are insensitive to the needs of others, especially those very close to us. All this leads to disappointment and resentment. The answer to handling disappointment is understanding.

Relationships don't come about because people are perfect. They come about because of understanding.

There is more gratification in being a caring person than in just being a nice person. A caring attitude builds goodwill, which is the best kind of insurance that a person can have and it doesn't cost a thing.

Some people substitute money for caring and understanding. Being understanding is far more important than money and the best way to be understood is to be understanding.

Practice Generosity

Generosity is a sign of emotional maturity. Being generous is being thoughtful and considerate without being asked. Generous people experience the richness of life that a selfish person cannot even dream of.

Be considerate; selfishness brings its own punishment. Be sensitive to other people's feelings.

Be Tactful

Tact is very important in any relationship. Tact is the ability to make a point without alienating the other person. Being tactful means being truthful while being sensitive and considerate for the other people's feeling.

Kindness

Money will buy a great dog but only kindness will make him wag his tail. It is never too soon for kindness because we don't know how soon is too late.

Kindness is a language the deaf can hear and the blind can see. It is better to treat a friend with kindness while he is living than display flowers on his grave when he is dead.

An act of kindness makes a person feel good regardless of whether he is doing it or it is done to him. Kind words never hurt the tongue.

Step 21: Practice Courtesy on a Daily Basis

Practice courtesy. Courtesy is nothing more than consideration for others. It opens doors that would not otherwise open. A courteous person who is not very sharp, will go further in life than a discourteous but sharp person.

It is the little things that make a big difference. Have you ever been bitten by an elephant? The most obvious answer is no. Have you ever been bitten by a mosquito? Most of us have. It is the little irritants that test your patience. Courtesies are made up of little-little kindnesses.

Small courtesies will take a person much further than cleverness. Courtesy is an offshoot of deep moral behavior. It costs nothing but pays well.

No one is too big or too busy to practice courtesy. Courtesy means giving your seat to the elderly or to the disabled. Courtesy can be a warm smile or a thank you. It is a small investment but the payoffs are big. It enhances the other person's self-worth. Courtesy requires humility. It is unfortunate when people become obnoxious; they detract from their positive traits. I have overheard people saying with pride, "I can be pretty obnoxious." It makes you wonder about them.

Manners

Courtesy and manners go hand in hand. It is equally important, if not more, to practice manners at home and not just on outsiders. Showing consideration and good manners brings out a feeling of warmth and acceptance in the home. Courtesy means practicing good manners.

People like to avoid dealing with rude people. Courteous behavior ought to be taught to children at an early age so that they can grow and become mature, considerate adults. Courteous behavior, once learned, stays for life. It demonstrates a caring attitude and sensitivity to other people's feelings. It seems trivial and unimportant, but little phrases such as, "Please," "Thank-you" and "I'm sorry" take a person a long way.

Remember, being courteous will breed courtesy in return. Practice as much

and as often as you can. Initially, it may require attention, but the effort is well worth it.

Politeness is the hallmark of gentleness. Courtesy is another name for politeness. It costs a little but pays a lot, not only to the individual but also to the entire organisation.

Have you noticed that sometimes when one person is telling a joke, another person will jump in and give the punch line, drawing attention to himself? And after everyone laughs he will reveal where he read it. This may show superior knowledge but it shows inferior manners.

Courtesy Shows Good Upbringing

Many brilliant and talented people have destroyed their own success because they lack courtesy and manners. Politeness and courtesy are signs of being cultured. Rudeness and discourtesy show the lack of it. Always treat other people with respect and dignity.

Rudeness is the weak man's imitation of strength.

– Eric Hoffer

Step 22: Develop a Sense of Humor

Life without humor becomes very dry and tough. Humor is the lubricant that tides the person through tough spots in life. Any humor which is hurtful to others is not humor any more. Some people are humor-impaired. A sense of humor makes a person likable and attractive. The best kind of humor is when we can laugh at ourselves. It is a sign of maturity.

Learn to laugh at yourself because it is the safest humor. Laughing at yourself gives you the energy to bounce back. Laughter is a natural tranquiliser for people all over the world. Humor may not change the message, but it certainly can help take the sting out of the bite.

THE HEALING POWER OF HUMOR

Dr Norman Cousins, author of *Anatomy of an Illness*, is a prime example of how a person can cure himself of a terminal illness. He had a one in 500 chance of recovery, but Dr Cousins wanted to prove that if there was anything like mind over matter, he'd make it a reality. He figured if negative emotions caused negative chemicals in our body, then the reverse must be true too. Positive emotions, like happiness and laughter, would bring positive chemicals into our system. He moved from the hospital to a hotel and rented humorous movies and literally cured himself by laughing. Of course, medical

help is important, but the will to live for the patient is equally, if not more, important.

A funny bone could be a lifesaver. Besides, it makes life's adversities easier to handle.

Step 23: Don't Be Sarcastic and Put Others Down

Negative humor may include sarcasm, put-downs and hurtful remarks. Any humor involving sarcasm that makes fun of others is in poor taste.

When someone blushes with embarrassment, when someone carries away an ache, when something sacred is made to appear common, when someone's weakness provides the laughter, when profanity is required to make it funny, when a child is brought to tears or when everyone can't join in the laughter, it's a poor joke.

– Cliff Thomas

To a sadist everything is funny, so long as it is happening to someone else. It is not an uncommon sight to see boys throwing stones at frogs just to have fun. The boys' fun means death to the frogs. It is not fun for the frogs.

Humor can be valuable or dangerous, depending on whether you are laughing with someone or at someone. When humor involves making fun of or ridiculing others, it is not in good taste nor is it innocent. Hurting others' feelings can be cruel. Some people get their fun by putting others down. Sarcasm alienates people. It is a good idea to avoid sarcastic humor and keep it 'low-risk'. **It is very important to be cognizant of the fact that 'People forget injuries, they don't forget insults'. Laugh with people—not at people.**

Step 24: To Have a Friend, Be a Friend

We keep looking for the right employer, the right employee, spouse, parent, child and so on. We forget that we have to be the right person too.

Experience has shown that there is no perfect person, no perfect job and no perfect spouse. When we look for perfection, we are disappointed because all we find is that we traded one set of problems for another set of problems. Having lived in the West for over twenty years, I have observed that with the high divorce rate, people find after they get married for the second time that their new spouse doesn't have the problems of the first one but has a totally new set of problems. Similarly, people change jobs or fire employees looking for the right one only to find that they traded one set of problems for another. Let's try and work around these challenges and make divorcing or firing the

last rather than the first resort.

Sacrifice

Friendship takes sacrifice. Building friendships and relationships takes sacrifice, loyalty and maturity. Sacrifice takes going out of one's way and never happens by the way. Selfishness destroys friendships. Casual acquaintances come easy but true friendships take time to build and effort to keep. Friendships are put to tests and when they endure, they grow stronger. We must learn to recognise counterfeit relationships. True friends do not want to see their friends hurt. True friendship gives more than it gets and stands by in adversity.

Fair-Weather Friend

A fair-weather friend is like a banker who lends you his umbrella when the sun is shining and takes it back the minute it rains.

Two men were traveling through the forest and came across a bear. One of them quickly climbed a tree but the other was unable to, so he lay on the ground and played dead. The bear sniffed around his ear and left. The fellow from the tree came down and asked him, "What did the bear tell you?" The man replied, "He said, don't trust a friend who deserts you in danger." The message is as clear as daylight.

Mutual trust and confidence are the foundation stone of all friendship.

These are people who have the good of each other at heart and act accordingly. It is based on character and commitment. There is lasting goodness at both ends. This lasts forever.

Step 25: Show Empathy

The wrong we do to others and what we suffer are weighed differently. Empathy alone is a very important characteristic of a positive personality. People with empathy ask themselves this question: "How would I feel if someone treated me that way?"

A PUPPY

A boy went to the pet store to buy a puppy dog. Four puppies were sitting together, in the center, priced at \$50 each. There was one puppy sitting alone in a corner. The boy asked if that was from the same litter, and why it was sitting alone. The store owner replied that it was from the same litter but it was a defective one. It was born without a hip socket and had only three legs and so

would be put to sleep.

The boy asked if he could play with that puppy. The store owner said, "Sure." The boy picked up the puppy and the puppy started licking his face and hands. Instantly the boy decided that that was the puppy he wanted to buy. The store owner said "That is not for sale!" The boy insisted and said, "I will pay you good money for the bad one".

The store owner said, "If you insist, who am I to stop you? Go ahead". The boy pulled out \$2 from his pocket and ran to get \$48 from his mother. As he reached the door the store owner shouted from behind, "Son, I understand you want to pay good money for the bad one, but I still don't understand when, for the same amount of money, you can get a good one, why do you want to buy the deformed one? The boy did not say a word. He just picked his left trouser leg up, he was himself wearing a brace. The store owner said, "I understand now. Go ahead. Go get your money." This is empathy.

Be Sympathetic

When you share sorrow, it divides; when you share happiness, it multiplies.

What is the Difference Between Sympathy and Empathy?

Sympathy is, "I understand how you feel." Empathy is, "I feel how you feel." Both sympathy and empathy are important. But of the two, empathy is certainly more important. Sympathy has an element of pity. Sympathy stops with words, whereas empathy triggers the action to relieve the other person's pain.

When we empathise with our customers, employers, employees and families, what happens to our relationships? They improve. It generates understanding, loyalty, peace of mind and higher productivity.

How do you judge the character of a person or, for that matter, of a community or a country? It is very easy. Just observe how the person or community treats these three categories of people:

1. The disabled
2. The elderly
3. Their subordinates

These are the three groups of people who cannot stand up as equals for their rights.

This quote by Lloyd Shearer on empathy says it all.

Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and wrong. Because some time in our lives we would have been all of these ourselves.

If you want to achieve greatness in life, strive to be good. The greatness will come automatically.

ACTION PLAN

1. Evaluate yourself on the following on a scale of 1 to 10:

Do you/Are you:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Accept responsibility?										
Practice win-win relationships?										
Choose your words carefully?										
Give constructive criticism?										
Receive criticism constructively?										
Come across as a warm person?										
A good listener?										
Start relationships on a positive note?										
An enthusiastic person?										
Give sincere appreciation?										
Stay away from argumentative behavior?										
Gossip?										
Keep your commitments?										
Practice gratitude?										
A dependable person?										
Practice integrity?										
Maintain your credibility?										
Exaggerate the facts?										
Practice empathy?										
Have a sense of humor?										

2. Identify three areas from the above that you commit to improve:

1.....
 2.....
 3.....

* Adapted from *The Best of...Bits & Pieces*, Economic Press, Fairfield, NJ, 1994, p. 170.

SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

Form positive habits and character

Habits start as weak threads till they become chains too strong to be broken.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence is not an act, but a habit.

– Aristotle

We have a trademark title “Winners don’t do different things, they do things differently”. Many times, I am asked what do winners do differently? My answer is, winners form the habit of doing things losers don’t like to do. What are the things losers don’t like to do? They are the same things winners don’t like to do either, but they do them anyway.

- a. Losers don’t like to get up in the morning. Winners don’t like to get up in the morning either, but they get up anyway.
- b. Losers don’t like to work hard. Winners don’t like to work hard either, but they work hard anyway.

To the winners, positive behavior comes habitually, as a reflex action.

We are all born to lead successful lives, but many times, we get conditioned to lose. We often hear comments like, “This person is just lucky, he touches dirt and it turns to gold” or, “He is unlucky; no matter what he touches, it turns to dirt.” These comments are not true of anyone.

If you were to analyse the lives of the people—labeled as lucky and unlucky, you’d find that the so-called lucky person is doing something right in

each transaction. The positive behavior has become habitual. His reflexes have been conditioned **to do things right the first time every time**. For the person we call unlucky, if you analyse his life and every transaction in his life, the negative behavior has become habitual. It happens that every time they do something, they just do it wrong. It is reflex action in a negative manner.

We often hear, practice makes perfect. This statement is incorrect. Practice does not make perfect. **Practice only makes permanent whatever we practice**. Only *perfect* practice makes perfect. Some people keep practicing their mistakes and they become perfect in making mistakes. I am not playing on words. Let me share with you an example. When people start learning martial art, specially young kids like to develop speed, but the instructor teaches them to learn the correct form first and speed later. If their form is incorrect and if that's what they practice, that's what will become permanent and they will injure themselves. The teacher ensures that the wrong form does not become permanent as, practice only makes permanent whatever you practice.

When a student starts learning martial art, right from day one when he gets his white belt, he starts with the basic block/punch. Even when he gets his green, brown and black belts five years later, he's still practicing block/punch. The teacher wants to bring the block/punch into his reflex action. Why? Because the teacher realises that if the student is ever in a street fight and if he has to think to block/punch, guess what'll happen. He'll be in trouble. A martial art student never has to think to block and punch. A martial art student never commits his blow till the opponent does and then, his reflexes move so fast, all it takes is one punch and it's all over. If he has to think to do the right thing, he can never do it right. It must come automatically.

Many times we hear people saying, "This is a little lie, when the big one comes, I'll tell the truth." If we practice enough little lies in our lives, when the big one comes, what happens? We end up telling a big lie, because that's what has become permanent. Similarly, when people say this is the little one, when the big one comes, I'll show courage, if we practice cowardice in enough little things, when the big one comes, what happens? We end up being a big coward. Why? Because with practice of cowardice, cowardice became habitual or permanent.

We are all creatures of habit, because ninety per cent of our behavior is habitual. We don't think, we just act. If we have positive habits, we are a positive character, and if we have negative habits, we are a negative character. By the time we get the habit, the habit has got us.

Cultivating a habit is like plowing the field. It takes time. Habits generate other habits. Inspiration is what gets us started, motivation is what keeps us on track and habit is what makes it automatic.

The ability to show courage in the face of adversity; show self-restraint in the face of temptation, choose happiness in the face of hurt, show character in the face of despair and see opportunity in the face of obstacles are all valuable traits to possess. But these traits do not just appear; they are the result of consistent training and conditioning both mental and physical. In the face of adversity, our behavior, whether positive or negative can only be what we have practiced. When we practice negative traits such as cowardice or dishonesty in small events and hope to handle major events in a positive way, it won't happen because that's not what we have practiced.

If we permit ourselves to tell a lie once, only the first one is difficult, the second becomes easy and the third becomes easier and so on, until it becomes a habit. Success lies in the philosophy of 'Sustain and Abstain'. Sustain what needs to be done and abstain from what is detrimental until this becomes habitual. Human beings are more emotional than rational. Honesty and integrity are the result of both our belief system and practice. Anything we practice long enough becomes ingrained into our system and becomes a habit. A person who is honest most of the time gets caught the first time he tells a lie, whereas a person who is dishonest most of the time gets caught the first time he tells the truth.

Honesty—or dishonesty to self and others becomes a habit: The choice is ours as to which we practice. Whatever response we choose, our thinking pattern becomes habitual. We form habits and habits form character. Before we realise that we have got the habit, the habit has got us!

FORM GOOD HABITS

Most of our behavior is habitual—comes automatically without thinking. Our character is the sum total of our habits. Habits are a lot stronger than logic and reasoning. In the life cycle of habit formation, **a habit starts by being too weak to be felt, and ends up becoming too strong to be broken.** Habits can be developed by default or determination. If we don't *decide* what habits to form, by default we may end up with bad habits.

How Do We Form Habits?

Anything we do repeatedly becomes a habit. We learn by doing. By behaving courageously, we learn courage. By practicing honesty and fairness, we learn these traits. By practicing these traits, we master them. Similarly if we

practice negative traits such as dishonesty, unjust behavior, or lack of discipline, that is what we become good at. Attitudes are habits of thoughts or thought patterns, which reflect in behaviour. They become a state of mind and dictate our responses.

CONDITIONING

Conditioning is the psychological process whereby we get used to (or become conditioned to) specific events occurring in association with each other. The most famous example of conditioning is Pavlov's dog. The Russian scientist Pavlov would ring a bell each time before he fed his dog. Of course, the dog would salivate at the sight of his meal. Pavlov did this for some time. Then Pavlov rang the bell and did not produce the food. The dog still salivated because it had been conditioned to expect food when the bell rang.

Most of our behavior comes as a result of conditioning. We are all being conditioned continuously by the environment and the media and we start behaving like robots. It is our responsibility to condition ourselves in a positive manner.

If we want to do anything well, it must become automatic. If we have to consciously think about doing the right thing, we will never be able to do it really well. That means we must make it a habit.

Professionals make things look easy because they have mastered the fundamentals of whatever they do. Many people do good work with promotions in mind. But the one to whom good work has become habitual, positive results come consistently.

HOW DO WE GET CONDITIONED?

Think of the mighty elephant that can lift in excess of a ton of weight with just its trunk. How does an elephant get conditioned to stay in one place, tied with a weak rope to a small stake. They catch the baby elephant from the jungle and tie him with a strong chain to a strong tree. The baby is not used to being tied down, so the baby keeps tugging and pulling the chain from one direction to the other. The chain is strong, the tree is strong and the baby is weak. A day comes when the baby realises that all the tugging and pulling will not help. He cannot get free. He stops moving and stands still. Now he is conditioned.

And when the baby elephant becomes the mighty full grown elephant, it is tied with a weak rope to a small stake and he goes nowhere. The elephant could, with one tug, walk away free, but it goes nowhere, because it has been conditioned forever.

We are constantly being conditioned, consciously or unconsciously, by exposure to:

- The kind of books we read;
- The kind of movies and TV programs we watch;
- The kind of music we listen to;
- The kind of company we keep.

While driving to work, if you listen to the same music every day for a few weeks, then one day even if the player breaks down, guess what tune you will be humming? The same one!

Insanity is defined as doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. If you keep doing what you have been doing, you will keep getting what you have gotten. The most difficult thing about changing a habit is unlearning what is not working and learning positive habits.

THE GIGO PRINCIPLE

The computer phrase GIGO (garbage in, garbage out) is very sound.

Negativity in; negativity out.
Positivity in; positivity out.
Good in; good out.
Obscenity in; obscenity out.

Our input equals our output. Our subconscious mind does not discriminate. Whatever we choose to put into our mind, our subconscious will accept and our behavior will reflect accordingly.

Television has a considerable impact on influencing our morals, thinking and culture. **Today, most of the values are coming from the media.**

While bringing us lots of useful information, television has also contributed heavily to degrading our tastes, corrupting our morals and increasing juvenile delinquency. By the age of eighteen, a child sees more than 2,00,000 violent acts on TV*.

In the last few years, there have been mass killings in a few of the schools in the US. Many concerned citizens feel that there is a tremendous correlation between the violence and crime on the media and its manifestation on the streets. They have tried to influence the media to cut down violence and crime to prevent negative influences.

Advertisers are good at conditioning the minds of their audience through the media. Companies spend millions of dollars on advertising during a major

event. Why? Obviously, the ads are working and they are getting results. We see an advertisement for a particular brand of soft drink or toothpaste and we buy that brand. We don't want just any soft drink or toothpaste but only that brand, because we are programmed and act accordingly.

When we watch TV or listen to a radio advertisement, our conscious mind is not active, but our subconscious is open and receives whatever is being dumped in.

Many times, we get totally distorted messages. Going back several years ago, I saw a beer commercial. It showed a shapely young lady in a bikini, running with three guys chasing her from behind. She took a jump and there was a big splash on the screen 'A-Ha' with a can of beer in her hand. What is the message people are getting? 1) Shapely young lady in bikini, three guys chasing—excitement is the message. 2) You drink this beer you'll also have the a-ha. What is the distortion? Do you think this shapely young lady is drinking beer morning and evening? 3) If she was drinking beer morning and evening, do you think she would be that shapely? 4) The reality is, that she's probably exercising morning and evening to keep her job as a model. But that's not the message anyone is receiving. It is totally distorted.

Another example, many years ago, I saw a commercial of a toothpaste. A man and a woman brush their teeth with this toothpaste and then they have a smooching kiss in the air with the big splash '**A-Ha**'. The message viewers are getting is, you brush your teeth with this toothpaste, you'll also have the **a-ha**. Next day, a man goes to the super market and buys the same toothpaste and in the morning, he brushes his teeth with this toothpaste and looks around, there is no **a-ha**. The crucial point here is, that the advertiser is not selling you on the idea that you need to brush your teeth for hygienic reasons too, because if you don't brush your teeth, you will have no teeth. You'll have a tunnel there. But they sell you something else, not the hygiene.

Another example: A study was done that ninety per cent of people become smokers before the age of eighteen and if they have not become a smoker by the age of eighteen, there is less than ten per cent chance, that they will ever become smokers. Till this study came, guess who was sponsoring all the major sporting events? The cigarette companies. They knew their target age group and the impressionable age people impacting their subconscious mind. In fact, fourteen year old kids started thinking that if you're a smoker, you'll also be a good player. Since this study came, laws in many countries changed and cigarette companies are not allowed to sponsor any such sporting events.

Similarly, just the way advertisements influence our mind and behavior, all radio and TV programs also influence our thinking and behavior. Some of the lyrics of the rock songs are full of obscenity. If we ourselves view and allow

our kids to view this obscenity, is it any wonder our behavior becomes obscene? The same thing is true with soap operas. What are soaps? Soaps are nothing else but bed-hopping glamorising immoral behavior. Provided we have a definition of morality. If we have no definition of morality, then obviously none of these things matter. If we keep watching such immoral programs or listen to obscene music or let our kids do the same, what happens? They become our benchmarks. We also get conditioned gradually. And what was unacceptable at one time, becomes acceptable. And what becomes acceptable, eventually turns into involvement and indulgence.

According to Alan J. Hawkins, Ph.D. member of the faculty at Brigham Young University & Tamara A. Fackrell, J.D. fifty per cent of divorces take place because of infidelity or spouses cheating on one another. If this is not direct correlation of the media influencing immoral behavior, then what is it?

We do some voluntary work with the schools for prevention of HIV. Research shows that the significant causes for the spread of HIV are three things: 1. Multiple partners, 2. Homosexuality, 3. Drug needles. And less than ten per cent comes from parent-child or blood transfusions. Looking at these facts, if we don't get the message clear that HIV is not a medical problem, it is a moral problem, then we are totally naive.

When we go to the movies, we laugh and we cry because the emotional input has an immediate emotional output. Change the input and the output changes.

YOUR CONSCIOUS AND SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

The conscious mind has the ability to think. It can accept or reject. What books to read is a conscious choice. What music to listen is a conscious choice. What friends to choose is a conscious choice. What movies to watch is a conscious choice. We are all free to the point of choice but after we make our choices, the choice controls the chooser. We have no more choice. Consciously we decide what movies to watch. The conscious mind closes then and the sub-conscious is open. When there is a gruesome scene, people feel repulsed, when there is an angry scene, people get angry. When there is an exciting scene, people get excited. When there is a sad scene, people start crying. What happens? Consciously we decided what movie to watch. The conscious mind closed and the sub-conscious received and the body reacted.

The subconscious only accepts. It makes no distinction regarding input. If we feed our mind with thoughts of fear, doubt and hate, the auto-suggestions will activate and translate those things into reality. The subconscious is like a databank. The subconscious is like the automobile while the conscious is like the driver. Of the two, the subconscious is more powerful. The power is in the

automobile but the control is with the driver.

The conscious mind is the thinker and decision maker, gives instructions to sub conscious mind to obey. From this perspective, the conscious mind becomes the master and subconscious mind becomes the servant. Since the conscious mind is the thinker, it also has the responsibility to condition the sub-conscious mind in a positive manner.

The subconscious mind can work for us or against us. It is not rational. If we are not successful, we need to reprogram the subconscious.

The subconscious mind is like a garden; it doesn't care what we plant. It is neutral; it has no preferences. If we plant good seeds, we will have a good garden; otherwise, we will have a wild growth of weeds. The human mind is no different. Positive and negative thoughts can't occupy the mind simultaneously.

In order to succeed, we need to get programmed in a positive way.

HOW DO WE GET PROGRAMMED?

Remember how we learnt to ride a bike? There are four stages: The first stage is called *unconscious incompetence*. At this stage, we don't know that we don't know. The young child doesn't know what it is to ride a bike (unconscious) nor can he ride a bike (incompetence). This is the stage of unconscious incompetence.

During the second stage, *conscious incompetence*, as the child grows, the child becomes conscious of what it is to ride a bike but cannot ride one himself, so he is consciously incompetent.

But then he starts learning and is at the third stage of *conscious competence*. Now he can ride a bike, but has to concentrate on the mechanics of the process. So with conscious thought and effort, the child is competent to ride a bike.

The fourth stage of *unconscious competence* comes when the child has practiced consciously riding the bike so much that he doesn't have to think. It becomes an automatic process. He can talk to people and wave to others while riding. He has reached the stage of unconscious competence. At this level, he doesn't need the concentration and thinking because the behavior pattern has become automatic. Now it is a reflex action.

This is the level that we want all our positive habits to reach. Unfortunately, we probably also have some negative habits that are at the unconscious competence stage and are detrimental to our progress.

NATURE ABHORS A VACUUM

When I wrote this book, I had two nephews who were tennis buffs. One day their father said to me, “This game is getting very expensive. There’s the rackets, balls, lawn fees and now they have a coach. It all costs money.” I asked him, “It is getting expensive compared to what?” He could have stopped them playing tennis and saved some money. But if they stopped, and came home from school with all their time and energy at hand, what would they do? He stopped to think quietly for some time and then said, “I think it is cheaper this way. I will have them continue.” He realised the importance of keeping them involved in positive activities. Otherwise they would be attracted to the negative because nature abhors a vacuum. There is either a positive or a negative; there is no neutral.

Character building becomes a habit. If we want to build a pleasing personality, we have to examine our habits closely. What begins as an occasional indulgence turns into a permanent flaw. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do you let the quality of your work deteriorate?
2. Do you indulge in gossip?
3. Are envy and ego constant companions?
4. Is empathy in short supply?

We are creatures of habit. That is good because if we have to constantly think before doing anything, we would never get anything done.

We can control our habits by exercising self-discipline over our thoughts. We need to harness the power of our subconscious mind. We need to cultivate positive habits during childhood which builds character in adulthood. But it is never too late to start. Every exposure to a positive or negative makes a difference. Learning new habits takes time but positive habits, once mastered, give new meaning to life.

Having an optimistic or pessimistic outlook is a habit. Habits are a matter of the pain and pleasure principle. **We do things either to avoid pain or to gain pleasure.** So long as the gain is more than the pain, we continue with the habit. But if the pain exceeds the gain, we drop it. For example, when the doctor tells the smoker to stop, he replies, “I can’t stop! I enjoy it! It relaxes me!” and he goes on smoking knowing fully well it is injurious to health. The pleasure is greater than the pain. Then one day he is faced with a major medical problem and the doctor checks out and says, “You have cancer. If you want to see daylight tomorrow morning, you better stop smoking right now.” Most people would stop because now the pain is greater than the pleasure.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

When people recognise or become aware of their negative habits, why don't they change?

The reason they don't change is because any change, even for the better is uncomfortable. The short term pleasure is greater than the long term pain. They may:

- Lack the desire to change—their desire is more of a wish than a commitment
- Lack the discipline to change
- Lack the belief that they can change
- Lack the awareness for the need to change

All of these factors prevent us from getting rid of our negative habits. We all have a choice. We can ignore negative behavior and hope it will go away—the ostrich approach—or face up to it and overcome it for life. Behavior modification comes from overcoming irrational fears and getting out of the comfort zone. Remember, fear is a learned behavior and can be unlearned.

The following excuses are the most common explanations for not changing negative habits:

1. I have always done it this way.
2. I have never done it that way.
3. That is not my job.
4. I don't think it will make any difference.
5. I 'm too busy.

FORMING POSITIVE HABITS

It is never too late to change, regardless of your age and how old the habit is. We can change by being aware of what needs to be changed and using techniques that modify behavior. The old adage that you can't teach an old dog new tricks has to be put to test. We are human beings, not dogs. Nor are we performing tricks. We can unlearn self destructive behavior and learn positive behavior.

Attitudes are habits and can be changed. It is a question of breaking and replacing old negative habits with new and positive ones.

It is easier to prevent bad habits than to overcome them. Good habits come from overcoming temptation.

Happiness and unhappiness are a habit. Excellence is the result of a

repeated conscious effort until the behavior or the attitude becomes a habit.

HOW CAN WE GET RID OF NEGATIVE HABITS AND INCULCATE POSITIVE HABITS

- Auto-suggestion.
- Visualisation.

Auto-Suggestion

What is an auto-suggestion? For our purposes, **an autosuggestion is a positive statement, of the kind of person we want to be and they are made in the present tense.** Auto-suggestions are like writing a commercial about yourself, for yourself. They influence both your conscious and subconscious mind and they, in turn, influence attitude and behavior.

Auto-suggestions are a way to program your subconscious mind. They can be either positive or negative.

Examples of negative auto-suggestions are:

- I'm tired.
- I have a poor memory.
- I'm not an athlete.
- I'm not good at math.

When you give yourself a negative auto-suggestion repeatedly, your subconscious mind believes it and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and starts reflecting in your behavior. For example, when a person who gives himself the auto-suggestion, "I have a poor memory," is introduced to a new person, he will not make the effort to remember the name because he tells himself, "I have a poor memory, so there's no point in even trying to remember." Of course, he won't remember the person's name the next time they meet and will again tell himself, "I have a poor memory." It's a never-ending cycle—a self fulfilling prophecy.

When a person repeats a belief often enough, it sinks into the subconscious and becomes a reality. A lie that is repeated often enough becomes accepted as the truth.

Why make positive statements? Because every word creates a picture. You want to create only a positive picture in your mind of what you want to have, be or do rather than what you don't want. Any picture that you hold in your mind becomes a reality. Auto suggestions are a process of repetition to condition the subconscious mind. For example, if you tell yourself, "I am relaxed. I am cool, calm and collected," you will start responding to situations

in a cool, calm and collected manner.

Auto-suggestions should be **positive statements** because we think in pictures, not in words. If I say 'Mother', what comes to your mind? Most likely a picture of your mother comes to your mind, and not the word 'Mother'.

Auto-suggestions should not be phrased in a negative way. When a negative word comes in the auto-suggestion, it forms a negative picture that we want to avoid. If I tell you, "Don't think of the blue elephant," it's likely that the image of a blue elephant immediately popped into your mind.

Make your auto-suggestions in the **present tense**. Why? Because your subconscious mind cannot tell the difference between a real experience and an imagined one. For example, if parents are expecting their child to come home at 9:30 pm but the kid is not home and it is now 1 am, what is going through the parents' mind? They are probably hoping everything's OK. "I hope the kid didn't get into an accident." What is happening to their blood pressure? It is going up! This is an imagined experience. The reality could be that the kid is having fun at a party and is just plain irresponsible.

Reverse it. The kid is a responsible kid and was actually coming home at 9:30 p.m. but got into an accident, and still didn't show up till 1 a.m. What is happening to the parents' blood pressure? It is still going up! The first scenario was the imagined experience whereas the second scenario was a real experience. But in both cases, the body's response was identical. Our subconscious mind cannot tell the difference between a real and an imagined experience.

Prepare the Subconscious

Auto-suggestions can be used to eliminate negative habits and develop positive ones. We have all used autosuggestions unconsciously. For example, if we have to catch an early morning flight at 7.30 a.m., when we get into bed we instruct our subconscious mind that we have to wake up at 5 a.m. And invariably, we do (often, even without an alarm clock). What is this? It is an autosuggestion. We instructed our mind and the mind obeyed. This is a onetime instruction. What if we instructed our mind every night in a positive manner? It can be life changing. This principle is being used in the field of athletics, medicine, aviation etc. A prepared subconscious mind works for us.

Auto-suggestion is a way to program and condition our mind to make a statement into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

An auto-suggestion is a repetitive process through which we feed our subconscious with positive statements that translate into reality. Repetition alone is not enough. It must be accompanied by emotions and feelings.

Auto-suggestions without visualisation will not produce results. The first time our mind receives an auto-suggestion, it rejects it. Why? It is an alien thought, contrary to our belief system. Success depends on our ability to concentrate and repeat the process.

Visualisation

Visualisation is the process of creating and seeing a mental picture of what we want to have or do, or the kind of person we want to be. Visualisation goes hand in hand with auto-suggestion. Auto-suggestion without visualisation is mechanical repetition and will be ineffective. In order to see results, auto-suggestions and visualisations must accompany feelings and emotions.

Infuse the visualisation with as many positive feelings as you can. This will make your visualisation far more effective and therefore successful.

According to some research, it takes a minimum of twenty-one consecutive days of conscious, consistent, continuous practice to make or break a habit. If you listen to an audio tape for twenty-one days and your player suddenly breaks down, guess what tune you will be humming! Better still, practicing forty-one days would be better and more fruitful.

The big question is: Is twenty-one days of conscious effort a heavy price to pay to change a lifetime for the better?

Not really but only the committed do it. The autosuggestion process sounds simple, but it is not easy. However, you can do it. Follow the steps in the next section to turn your auto-suggestions into reality.

FORTY-ONE DAY FORMULA TO FORM POSITIVE HABITS

Translating Auto-Suggestion into Reality

1. Go to a quiet spot where you won't be disturbed.
2. Autosuggestions to begin with, must be in writing. Make a list of your auto-suggestions. Make sure they are positive and in the present tense. You can also write each auto-suggestion on a few small sticky notes. Place them in places you will see them throughout the day (on your bathroom mirror, on your car's dash-board, inside your daily planner, inside your desk drawer). Seeing the notes throughout the day will cause you to repeat the auto-suggestions again.
3. Practice your autosuggestions for a minimum of twenty-one days, preferably forty-one days.
4. Ideally practice five times, but minimum twice a day: first thing in the morning and last thing at the end of the day. In the morning, your body is relaxed, the mind is fresh and receptive. Feed the mind with

positive information, and it will set the tone for the entire day. Why the last thing at night? Because again, the body is coming to a rest, the subconscious is receptive and you feed your mind with positive instructions at night and go to sleep. All night, the instructions keep working in the sub-conscious mind.

5. Auto suggestions will only work when they are accompanied with conscious effort and actions. Auto suggestions are a supplement, not a substitute to an action plan.
6. Be prepared for rejection but don't accept it. Reject the rejection. What does it mean? Auto-suggestion may not be acceptable to our mind the first time we do it because it is an alien thought. For example, if for the past few decades I have believed that I have a poor memory and now all of a sudden, I tell myself that I have a good memory, my mind will reject it, saying, "You liar! You have a bad memory!"— because that is what I have believed up to this point. It will take a minimum of twenty-one days to dispel this notion.
7. Auto suggestions must be done in your language of fluency only. If I did autosuggestions in some other language that I don't understand, I don't know what I am saying, nor will I get any picture.
8. How many autosuggestions can be done at one time? The answer is, all of them. Example: if I have ten to twelve autosuggestions and each autosuggestion takes me less than a minute. It will take approximately ten minutes.
9. Autosuggestions will only work if they are accompanied with visualisation. If they are done mechanically, without visualising, you will not get the desired results.
10. What do you do after forty-one days? You continue. Why? Because the negativity all around us has not stopped. We need to continuously feed our mind with the positive to stay on track. Otherwise, we start slipping back.
11. Autosuggestions should be done with eyes closed. Why? 1. It avoids distraction; 2. It helps focus (visualisation) much clearer and better.
12. Should autosuggestion be spoken out loudly or done silently? I prefer to do them silently as I speak to myself internally.
13. Autosuggestions can be done at any time, anywhere but of course, when you're not involved in any other activity.

The following are some suggested auto-suggestions. However you can create your own

1. I always look for the positive things in every person and every situation.
2. I always count my blessings.
3. I am committed to self-improvement every day.
4. I commit to work hard.
5. I always do the right thing first time, every time.
6. I give more than what I get, to my family, my organization and my society.
7. I take pride in my performance.
8. I prioritize things and lead a purposeful life.
9. I surround myself with good and positive people.
10. I am a courageous person.
11. I practice self-discipline & always finish what I start.
12. I am an honest person. I practice integrity in every walk of my life.
13. I motivate myself in a positive manner.
14. I take full responsibility for my thoughts and actions.
15. I respect myself and others.
16. I am courteous and polite.
17. I am a fair person.
18. I work hard and expect success.
19. I am relaxed, cool, calm and collected.
20. I always practice healthy habits.

ACTION PLAN

IMPORTANT: AUTO-SUGGESTIONS AND VISUALISATIONS WILL ONLY WORK AS A SUPPLEMENT (NOT A SUBSTITUTE) TO AN ACTION PLAN.

1. Take fifteen minutes alone to make a list of all the negative habits that you want to get rid of.

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2. Take fifteen minutes alone to make a list of all positive habits you want to develop, reinforce or inculcate.

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3. Make a list of auto-suggestions you can give yourself to develop the positive habits listed above.

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4. Follow the forty-one day programme with visualisations.

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^{*} “As in Selling Power”, *National Times*, March 1996, p. 40.

GOAL SETTING

Set and achieve your goals

So long as you have your eyes on the goal, you don't see obstacles.

On the journey to life's highway, keep your eyes upon the goal. Focus on the donut, not upon the hole.

– Anonymous

KNOWLEDGE helps you to reach your destination— provided you know what the destination is.

An ancient Indian sage was teaching his disciples the art of archery. He put a wooden bird as the target and asked his disciples to aim at the eye of the bird. The first disciple was asked to describe what he saw. He said, "I see the trees, the branches, the leaves, the sky, the bird and its eye."

The sage asked this disciple to wait. Then he asked the second disciple the same question and he replied, "I only see the eye of the bird." The sage said, "Very good. Now shoot." The arrow went straight and hit the eye of the bird.

Unless we focus, we cannot achieve our goal. It is hard to focus and concentrate, but it is a skill that can be learned.

KEEP YOUR EYES UPON THE GOAL

On 4 July 1952, Florence Chadwick was on her way to becoming the first woman to swim the Catalina Channel. She had already conquered the English Channel. The world was watching. Chadwick fought the dense fog, the bone-

chilling cold and the sharks. She was striving to reach the shore but every time she looked through her goggles, all she could see was the dense fog. Unable to see the shore, she gave up.

Chadwick was disappointed when she found out that she was only half a mile from the coast. She quit, not because she was a quitter but because her goal was not in sight anywhere. The elements didn't stop her. She said, "I'm not making excuses. If only I had seen the land, I could have made it."

Two months later, she went back and swam the Catalina Channel. This time, in spite of the bad weather, she had her goal in mind and not only accomplished it but beat the men's record by two hours.

Why are Goals Important?

On the brightest sunny day, the most powerful magnifying glass will not set a piece of paper afire if you keep moving the glass. But if you focus the light and hold it on one spot, the paper will burn. This is the power of concentration.

A man was traveling and stopped at an intersection. He asked an elderly man, "Where does this road take me?" The elderly person asked, "Where do you want to go?" The man replied, "I don't know." The elderly person said, "Then take any road. What difference does it make?"

How true. As the Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland* told Alice, "When you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there."

Suppose a football team is all charged up and enthusiastically ready to play a game, when someone takes the goalposts and goal lines away. What would happen to the game? There is nothing left. How do you keep score? How do you know you have arrived? Enthusiasm without direction is like wildfire and leads to frustration. Goals give a sense of direction.

Would you board a train or plane without knowing where it was going? Of course not. Then why do people go through life without knowing where they are going?

DREAMS

People confuse goals with dreams and wishes. Dreams and wishes are nothing more than desires. Desires are weak. Desires become strong when they are supported by:

- Direction
- Discipline
- Dedication

- Determination
- Deadlines.

These are what differentiate a desire from a goal. Goals are dreams with a deadline, clear directions and an action plan. There is a big difference between a written and an unwritten goal. A written goal brings clarity and has the magnetic power to attract the goal. Goals can be worthy or unworthy.

Steps to turn a dream into reality:

1. Have a definite, clear written goal.
2. Have a written action plan to accomplish your goals.
3. Read your goals and action plan twice a day.

Why Don't More People Set Goals?

The men who try to do something and fail are infinitely better than those who try to do nothing and succeed.

– Lloyd Jones

There are many reasons why people don't set goals, including:

1. A pessimistic attitude—Looking for the pitfalls rather than the possibilities.
2. Fear of failure—thinking. “What if I don't make it?” Subconsciously people feel that if they don't set goals and don't achieve them, they feel they haven't failed. They don't realise that they have failed to begin with by not having any Goals.
3. Fear of success—A low self-image or fear of having to live up to their success causes some people to fear success.
4. A lack of ambition. Our limited thinking prevents us from progress. There was a fisherman who, every time he caught a big fish, would throw it back into the river, keeping only the smaller ones. A man watching this unusual behavior asked the fisherman why he was doing this. The fisherman replied, “Because I have a small frying pan.” Most people never make it big in life because they are carrying a small frying pan. That is limited thinking.
5. A fear of rejection—worrying that, “If I don't make it, what will other people say?”
6. Procrastination—thinking “someday, I will set my goals.” This ties in with a lack of ambition.
7. Low self-esteem—because a person is not internally driven and has no

inspiration.

8. Ignorance of the importance of goals—nobody taught them and they never learned the importance of goal setting.
9. A lack of knowledge about goal-setting—people don't know the mechanics of setting goals. They need a step-by-step guide so that they can follow a system.

Goal setting is a series of steps. When you buy a plane ticket, what does it say?

- Starting Point
- Finish Destination
- Class of travel
- Price
- Starting Date & Time
- Finish Date & Time

If you ask most people what is their one major objective in life, they would probably give you a vague answer, such as, “I want to be successful, be happy, be rich, make a good living,” and that is it. Those are all wishes and none of them are clear goals. Goals must be SMART:

1. **S**—specific. The statement, “I want to lose weight” is wishful thinking. It becomes a goal when you pin yourself down to “I will lose ten pounds in ninety days.”
2. **M**—must be measurable/quantifiable. Measurement is a way of monitoring your progress. I want to be happy. Is it a goal? The answer is No because happiness is a state of mind. Can we convert it into a measurable goal? The answer is, Yes. How? “By asking what will give me happiness?” The answer is, “If I spend one hour a day with my family that will give me happiness.” Now, it is a measurable/quantifiable goal. If you cannot measure it, you cannot achieve it.
3. **A**—achievable. Achievable means that your goal should make you stretch or be challenging, it should be slightly out of reach, but not out of sight. Out of reach is motivating, but out of sight is demotivating.
4. **R**—realistic. If your goal is to lose fifty pounds in thirty days, you're being unrealistic.
5. **T**—time-bound. You should set a starting date and a finishing date to reach your goal.

Goals can be:

1. Short-term—up to one year.
2. Mid-term—up to three years.
3. Long-term—up to five years.

Goals can be longer than five years but then they become a purpose of life. A lifetime goal is called a Purpose. Our short term and midterm goals must lead us to our purpose to achieve what is called Alignment. Having a purpose is very important. Without a purpose, you are likely to develop tunnel vision where you are obsessed only with achieving your goals. Goals are more easily achieved if they are broken into small ones.

*Life is hard by the yard,
But by the inch, It's a cinch*

– Gean Gordon

Goals Must Be Balanced

Our life is like a wheel with six spokes.

1. Family. Our loved ones are the reason to live and make a living.
2. Financial. Represents our career and the things that money can buy.
3. Physical. Without good health, nothing makes sense.
4. Mental. This represents knowledge and wisdom.
5. Social. Every individual and organisation has social responsibility, without which, society starts dying.
6. Spiritual. Your value system represents ethics and character.

If any of these spokes is out of alignment, your life goes out of balance. Take a few minutes to just consider if any one of these six spokes were missing, what would your life be like?

BALANCE

In 1923, eight of the wealthiest people in the world met. Their combined wealth, it is estimated, exceeded the wealth of the government of the United States at that time. These men certainly knew how to accumulate wealth. But let's examine what happened to them twenty-five years later.

1. President of the largest steel company, Charles Schwab, lived on borrowed

capital for five years before he died bankrupt.

2. President of the largest gas company, Howard Hubson, went insane.
3. One of the greatest commodity traders, Arthur Cutton, died insolvent.
4. President of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, was sent to jail.
5. A member of the President's Cabinet, Albert Fall, was pardoned from jail to go home and die in peace.
6. The greatest 'bear' on Wall Street, Jessie Livermore, committed suicide.
7. President of the world's greatest monopoly, Ivar Krueger, committed suicide.
8. President of the Bank of International Settlement, Leon Fraser, committed suicide.

They all knew very well how to make a living. What they forgot was how to make a life! It is stories like these that gave the readers the false impression that money is the root of all evil. That is not true. Money did not cause their problems. In fact, money is wonderful. Money provides food for the hungry, medicine for the sick and clothes for the needy. Money is only a medium of exchange. In fact, it was the pursuit of money to the exclusion of the other five spokes in their lives that caused the downfalls.

We need two kinds of education—one that teaches how to make a living and one that teaches us how to live.

There are people who are so engrossed in their professional lives that they neglect their families, health and social responsibilities. Ironically, if asked, why they do this, they probably would reply that they were doing it for their families.

Our kids are sleeping when we leave home. They are sleeping when we come home. Twenty years later, we turn around, and they are all gone. We have no family left. That is sad.

Quality Not Quantity

It is not uncommon to hear that it is not the quantity of time that we spend with our families but the quality that matters. Just think about it—is it really true?

Supposing you went to the best restaurant in town where they gave you white-glove service with cutlery from England, crockery from France, chocolates from Switzerland and so on. You picked up the gold-plated menu and ordered a dish of barbequed vegetables. The waiter within minutes brought back a small cube of the most deliciously prepared dish. You ate it

and asked, “Is that all I am going to get?” The waiter replied, “It is not the quantity but the quality that matters.” You said, “I am still hungry.” He replies, “It’s not the quantity but the quality that matters.”

I hope the message is clear. Our families need both, quality and quantity.

You can’t mandate quality time. You can’t say, “Now we will spend quality time with each other.” Moments of quality come out of a larger quantity of experience. When adults were asked to recall their fondest childhood memories, they recalled moments such as their mother bringing them a cool drink and reading them a story when they were sick. Out of the time spent in mundane situations with friends and family members come precious moments like sharing a joke or insight, receiving a smile of encouragement when it is most needed, or helping a friend through a tough time.

Health

If we lose our health in the process of earning money, then we lose money in trying to regain our health.

Social Responsibility

In the process of making money, if we neglect our social responsibilities and let society deteriorate, we will become a victim ourselves.

Scrutinise Your Goals

A person who aims at nothing never misses. Aiming low is the biggest mistake people make. Winners see objectives: losers see obstacles.

Goals should be challenging enough to motivate yet realistic enough to avoid discouragement. Anything we do, either takes us closer to our goal or further away. **In order to prioritise all goals must be divided into needs and wants.**

Each goal must be evaluated in light of the following (similar to the Rotary Club’s Four-Way Test):

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it get me goodwill?
4. Will it get me health, wealth and peace of mind?
5. Is it consistent with my other goals?
6. Can I commit myself to it?
7. Why is this goal important?

The following examples fail the test:

- a. If one of a person's goals is to be the embodiment of good health with no money, it is quite obvious that it will be hard to achieve. That means it is not consistent with their other goals.
- b. A person could make all the money in the world, yet if he loses his family and health, is it worth it? Obviously Not.
- c. A person could make a million dollars by selling drugs but then for the rest of his life, he would be running from the law. This kind of behavior would be socially reprehensible, illegal, and takes away peace of mind and goodwill.
- d. We must be able to answer the question 'why' this goal is important. Because 'why' is your motivation. The bigger the 'why', the easier the 'how'. In fact, don't even worry about the 'how' just get the 'why'. Get a compelling reason. The more compelling the reason, the greater the motivation. All great achievers had a big 'why'. They did not know 'how'. In fact, the 'how' came later and much easier, because they had a big 'why'.

Evaluate each of your goals by putting it to the seven question test above, and make sure all your goals are in congruence.

Goals without action are empty dreams. Actions turn dreams into goals. Even if a person misses his goals, it does not make him a failure. Delay does not mean defeat. It only means we have to revise our plan to reach our target.

Just like a camera needs focus to take a good picture, we need goals to make a productive life.

Goals Should Be Consistent with Our Values

Goals lead to purpose in life. It is the starting point for success. Aim for the moon. Even if you miss, you will become one of the stars.

All of us in this world have a purpose in life. And that purpose of course varies from person to person. An orchestra would be pretty dull if everyone played the same instrument.

Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men's blood... Make big plans, aim high in hope and work.

– Daniel H. Burnham

It doesn't matter where we are today. What really matters is the direction we are heading in.

Effort and courage without purpose is wasted. Worry leads to negative goal

setting. It is thinking about things that you don't want to happen.

Activity is Not the Same as Accomplishment

Do not confuse motion and progress. A rocking chair keeps moving but covers no distance.

There is a big difference between activity and accomplishment. This was demonstrated by a French scientist named Fabre. He conducted an experiment with processionary caterpillars. These caterpillars instinctively follow the one in front of them. Fabre arranged them in a circle on the rim of a flowerpot; thus the lead caterpillar was behind the last one. Fabre put pine needles (food for the caterpillars) in the center of the flowerpot. The caterpillars kept traveling around in a circle on the pot's rim. Eventually, after a week of circling around, they dropped dead of exhaustion and starvation with food only inches away from them. We need to learn a lesson from the caterpillars. Just because you are doing some thing, doesn't mean you are getting anywhere. One must evaluate one's activity in order to have accomplishment.

A pilot got onto the public address system and said, "We have good news and bad news. The good news is, the tail winds are favourable and we shall reach our destination one hour ahead of time. And the bad news is, our navigation system is not working and we do not know where we are heading."

If we confuse activity with accomplishment, we could be making great time but we don't know our destinations.

MEANINGLESS GOALS

Many times we have totally useless goals and we end up losing our energy in life. We all have seen a dog sitting relaxed by the roadside corner. The moment a vehicle comes he jumps up, runs behind the car, goes fifty yards but doesn't catch the car. He comes back relaxed and sits back at the same spot. Till how long? Till the next car comes. Again he jumps, runs full speed behind the car goes fifty yards, doesn't catch the car, comes back relaxed. Again he sits back at the same spot. Till how long? Till the next car comes. A man was observing this dog's behavior and he asked his friend, "Do you think this dog will ever be able to catch the car." His friend replied, "That's not even the question that came to my mind, I am wondering, what he will do, if he ever caught one." Many times in life we keep behaving like the dog chasing totally useless goals and losing energies in life."

A good plan executed now is better than a perfect plan next week.

– Gen. George S. Patton, Jr.

ACTION PLAN

1. List at least one important Goal in each of the following areas, that would lead you to success.

1. Family

2. Financial

3. Physical.....

4. Mental/Knowledge.....

5. Social.....

6. Spiritual.....

2. Write down why these Goals are important?

.....

.....

.....

3. Identify the specific goals you want to accomplish in one month, one year, three years and five years. For each goal, list smaller, specific, measurable steps you can start now to achieve them. Add deadlines to each step.

Goal Actions Necessary to Accomplish Goal within Target Date

One-month

.....

.....

One-year

.....

.....

Three-years

.....

.....

Five-years

.....

.....

VALUES AND VISION

Values guide decisions

Values are priceless. The moment you put a price tag on values, they lose value.

Our task now is not to fix the blame for the past, but fix the course for the future.

– John F. Kennedy

WHEN a child is born, who rejoices? The parents, relatives and friends. But who cries? The child. However, when we die, it should be the other way round. We should be rejoicing and have the satisfaction that we made a contribution to the world and left the world a better place than we found it. Let the world cry that it has lost a good soul and become poorer today.

Hindu philosophy believes that when good people pass away, they don't die. They only depart. Their names live on forever through their good deeds. Recall the last time you heard an eulogy. As people pay their respects, the most common things talked about are the little acts of kindness performed by the person during his lifetime. Little acts of kindness don't go unnoticed. In fact, their impact becomes even more potent after a person is gone. That is when people realise how much those little acts of kindness meant to them.

No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.

– Calvin Coolidge

HOW DO WE JUDGE OUR VALUE SYSTEM?

The seven deadly sins according to Mahatma Gandhi are:

- Wealth without work
- Pleasure without conscience
- Knowledge without character
- Commerce without morality
- Science without humanity
- Religion without sacrifice
- Politics without principle

Each of these sins reflects a lack of values.

How do you put your value system to the test? I believe there are three tests: 1. **Mama** test; 2. **Baba** test; 3. **Headline** Test

Of these the ultimate test is the '**Mama Test**'. Whatever you are doing, at home or at work, alone or with someone—if values are in question—ask yourself, 'If my mama were to see me doing this right now, would she be proud of me and say "Attaboy!" or would she hang her head in shame'? Your values would then be clarified rather quickly. If you passed the Mama Test and failed all other tests, you have passed. If you failed the Mama Test and passed all other tests, you have failed.

A young accountant was once offered a large sum of money for a job that made him somewhat uneasy. It wasn't quite illegal but bothered him and he requested the client to give him a day to decide. That night, he went home and told his mother about the terms and conditions of the contract and the big money that was involved. His mother was totally illiterate. After listening to him for two hours she said, "Son, I don't understand anything of what you said. The final decision is yours. All I can say is one thing—that every morning when I come into your room, I find you fast asleep. I have a very hard time waking you up. I would hate to walk into your room one day and find you awake. You decide." With these words the mother left the room. The young man, after some introspection, said to himself, "I got my answer."

If the Mama Test doesn't do it, there is another test called the '**Baba Test**'. Whatever you are doing, at home or at work, alone or with someone—if values are in question—ask yourself, "If my children were to see me right now doing what I am doing, would I want them to see it, or would I be embarrassed?" Again the clouds will clear rather quickly and you will get your answers.

Many years ago, at the airport lounge, a person recognised me and

introduced himself as a practicing criminal attorney at the Supreme court. I said, “I’m sure you’re the kind of a person who makes sure that honest citizens get justice and the criminals are held accountable.” He said, “No, I’m the other kind.” Instinctively, I said to him “You are truly a practicing criminal attorney. I’m not sure if your mother is proud of you and your children are not embarrassed by you.”

If these two tests don’t clarify a person’s values— they’re not human beings any more. They’re worse than animals. Whenever humans stoop to the level of animals, they don’t behave like animals. They behave much worse.

‘The **Headline Test**’—The headline test says, ask yourself, if whatever I am doing right now, at home or at work, alone or with someone, were to become the headline news tomorrow morning, would I or my family be proud or embarrassed?

The above three tests, if applied with integrity, will clarify values very quickly.

HOW DOES OUR VALUE SYSTEM CHANGE?

With constant exposure, what is intolerable becomes acceptable and eventually translates into involvement.

As you make the transition from intolerant to involved, justification keeps taking place.

TIMES ARE CHANGING

We worry about the declining morals of the younger generation: where will they end up? Before we point a finger at them, let’s evaluate who is to blame.

Values and virtues are not hereditary; they are learned. We need to get our priorities right if we are to influence the next generations positively.

WHAT WE DO FOR A LIVING VERSUS WHAT WE DO WITH A LIVING

Money is not the payoff for every kind of work. Parents bring up children with no paycheck in mind. **Many people have lots of money but they are very poor.** Our objective ought to be both to have money and be rich. The most unfortunate part of life is when people want to make money without earning it.

Hard work teaches a person the value of money. It is important that parents teach their children this lesson. I feel sorry for those of the younger generation who inherit money without values. Without lessons and guidance, they often equate everything with money. They think everything and everyone can be bought and sold. Of course this is not true.

TRAGEDIES IN LIFE

Not Getting What We Want

*I asked God for strength, that I might achieve.
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey...
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life.
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things ...*

– Anonymous

Getting What We Want

When our value systems are not clear, getting what we want can be a bigger tragedy. The story of King Midas says it all.

THE MIDAS TOUCH

We all know the story of the greedy king named Midas. He had a lot of gold and the more he had, the more he wanted. He would spend his days in his vaults counting his gold. One day a stranger appeared and told King Midas he would grant him a wish that would make the king the happiest person on earth. The king was delighted and immediately said: "I would like everything I touch to turn into gold." The stranger asked the king, "Are you sure?" The king replied, "Yes." So the stranger said, "Starting tomorrow morning, with the first rays of the sun, you will have the golden touch."

The king thought he must have been dreaming, that this couldn't be true. But the next day when he woke up, he touched the bed and it turned to gold. It was true—everything he touched did turn to gold. He said to himself, "My wish has come true. I am the happiest person on earth." But for how long? He looked out of the window and saw his daughter playing in the garden. He decided to give her a surprise and thought she would be happy. But before he went to the garden, he decided to read a book. The moment he touched it, it turned into gold and he couldn't read it. He sat down to breakfast and the moment he touched the fruit and the glass of water, they turned to gold. He was hungry and he said to himself, "I can't eat and drink gold." Just then his daughter came running into the room and King Midas hugged her and she turned into a gold statue. There were no more smiles left.

The king bowed his head and started crying. The stranger who had granted him the wish appeared again and asked the king if he was happy with his golden touch. The king said he was the most miserable man in the world. The stranger asked, "What would you rather have, food and a loving daughter or lumps of gold and her golden statue?" The king cried and asked for forgiveness. He said, "I will give up all my gold. Please give me back my daughter because without her I have lost everything worth having." The stranger said to the king, "You have become wiser than before" and he reversed the spell. King Midas got his daughter back in his arms and learned a lesson that he never forgot for the rest of his life.

What is the moral of the story?

1. Distorted values lead to tragedy.
2. Sometimes getting what you want may become a bigger tragedy than not

getting what you want.

3. The king got a second chance in life but many times we don't get second chances and we lose out forever.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED?

About a hundred years ago, a man looked at the morning newspaper and to his surprise and horror, read his name in the obituary column. The newspapers had reported his death by mistake. His first response was shock. Am I here or there? When he regained his composure, his next thought was to find out what people had said about him. The obituary read, 'Dynamite King Dies' and that, 'He was the merchant of death'. This man was the inventor of dynamite and when he read the words 'merchant of death', he asked himself, "Is this how I am going to be remembered?" He decided that this was not the way he wanted to be remembered. From that day on, he started working towards peace. He, the Dynamite King, was Alfred Nobel and he is remembered today by the great Nobel Prizes.

Just like Alfred Nobel, supposing one day we were to read our own obituary, how would we like to be remembered? As a rascal, a cheat, a crook or someone who left this world a little better place than he found it? What is your legacy? Will you be spoken well of? Will you be missed?

Once a crooked politician died and there was a huge funeral procession. Knowing the politician rather well, a passerby asked "Why is there such a big procession for such a crooked man?" A man replied, "To make sure he is dead."

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

A man was taking a morning walk on the beach. He saw that hundreds of starfish came in with the morning tide and when the tide receded, the starfish were left behind on the beach. With the heat of the morning sun's rays, they would die. The tide was fresh and the starfish were still alive. The man took a few steps, picked one up and threw it into the water. He did that repeatedly. Another man came along who couldn't understand what this man was doing. He asked, "What are you doing? There are hundreds of starfish. How many can you help? What difference does it make?" This man did not reply, took two more steps, picked up another one, threw it into the water and said, "It makes a difference to this one."

Why don't we ask this question—What difference are we making? Big or small, it does not matter. If everyone made a small difference, we'd end up with a big difference, wouldn't we?

IS YOUR LIFE WORTH SAVING?

A boy was drowning in a river and he shouted for help. A man risked his own life, jumped into the water and saved the boy's life. As the man was leaving the boy stopped him and said, "Thank you." The man asked, "For what?" The boy replied, "For saving my life." The man looked into the boy's eyes and said, "Son, make sure when you grow up that your life was worth saving."

This is a wake-up call. It is time to think.

Success without fulfillment is meaningless. Unless there is a sense of meaning and purpose, life is empty and unhappy regardless of how much prestige, money or education you have.

Success begins with developing your personal success philosophy, about your health, money, family, society and values. Without a clearly defined purpose and a philosophy to guide you, your life will be guided by fantasies. If you have not defined a philosophy of success, you have actually defined a philosophy of failure by default.

COMMITMENT

What is the difference between a promise and a commitment?

A promise is an agreement with the world, whereas a commitment is an agreement with oneself. A promise is a statement of intent, whereas the commitment is a deliverance of intent.

Conviction Leads to Commitment

There is a difference between preferences and convictions. Preferences are negotiable; convictions are not. Under pressure, preferences become weak whereas convictions become stronger. That is why it is important to have a good value system so that our convictions are worthy because convictions in turn lead to commitment.

ETHICS

Bad circumstances are not excuses for making bad choices. **Values and ethics are not just designed for good times, but also to get you through bad times.** They are like the laws of the land—you need them when circumstances are good, but they're even more valuable to protect you when things are bad.

Most choices are not ethical choices. For example, what color clothes to buy or what TV to get are personal choices based on what is most appropriate for your situation. They are not ethical choices. Personal choices are subjective, not objective. Even though these are not ethical issues they certainly involve responsibility.

Ethical choices reflect objective choice between right and wrong. That is why your conscience hurts when making an unethical choice and does not hurt when you make a wrong personal choice—because in ethical matters there is a clear right choice. Just as with a math test, who takes it and whatever answer they give varies, but what makes it right is not the choice, but the actual correctness of the answer.

Being a nice person is not the same thing as being a good and ethical person. A person can be socially nice yet be a cheat and a liar. That makes him nice but unethical. However, niceness reflects social acceptability. Nice does not mean good.

Unfortunately, many of our choices today seem to be based on:

- Our desires—for convenience, comfort and pleasure.
 - Our feelings—the criteria is to feel good rather than do what is responsible.
- Social fads and ads—the philosophy that everyone else is doing it, so why shouldn't I?

It is a common belief that ethics and ethical choices are confusing. The big question is to whom? Only to those with unclear values.

SITUATIONAL ETHICS

Those who believe that ethics cannot be generalised but vary with every situation, come up with justifications and keep changing their ethics from situation to situation and person to person. **This is called situational ethics. This is an ethics of conveniences rather than conviction.** Inner peace and tranquility only comes by following the moral compass which always points in the right direction regardless of trends or fashions.

BENCHMARKS

Why do we have standards? Standards are a measure. One meter in Europe is one meter in Asia. One kilogram of flour is one kilogram of flour wherever you go. People who do not want to adhere to any moral standards keep changing the definition of morality by saying nothing is right or wrong and that one's thinking makes it so. They put the onus on interpretation rather than on their behavior. They feel 'my behavior is OK, your interpretation was faulty'.

For example, Hitler could have believed he was right. But the big question is, "Was he right?" Giving money to the hungry for food is right but at the

same time giving money to buy drugs is not.

The generalisation sets the benchmark; the exception is the situation. For example, murder is wrong. That is a general statement and a generalised truth and ethical standard. Unless it is in self-defense. This doesn't say that it is OK to murder if the weather is good or if you feel like it.

Our standard of ethics is revealed by the advisors we hire, the suppliers we choose, the buyers we deal with, as much as how we spend our leisure time.

Opinions may vary from culture to culture. But values such as fairness, justice, integrity and commitment are universal and eternal. They have nothing to do with culture. Never has there been a time when society has not respected courage over cowardice.

Ethics and justice involve the following:

- Empathy
- Fairness
- Compassion for the injured, the ill, and the aged
- The larger interest of society

Just because a majority of people agree on something doesn't make it right. If the citizens of a country voted to disenfranchise all blue-eyed people, that doesn't make it right. Basic ethics are pretty universal. **Just as freedom without discipline leads to destruction, similarly, society without a set of principles destroys itself.** If values were so subjective, no criminals would be in jail.

A society becomes good or bad, based on the ethical values of individuals. And what gives a society its strength is its underlying ethical values.

People who believe in the relativity of ethics get stuck in their own paradox. They say, "Everything is relative." The statement itself is an absolute truth. It is self-contradictory. The distinction between right and wrong, dishonesty and honesty presupposes their existence. **Changing terminology does not change the meaning. Just like changing labels does not change the contents.**

Low moral values become more accepted by giving them new names. The media glamorises immorality— liars are called extroverts with an imagination.

To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.

– Theodore Roosevelt

When Michael Severn, the president of Columbia University resigned in 1993, a reporter asked him if there was any task left incomplete. “Yes,” replied Severn. “It sounds complacent, but there is really only one.” He referred to the lack of instructions in ethics: “The average undergraduate, however, gets no training in these areas. Most educators are afraid to touch the subject. The subject of ethics is usually left to parents to address.

The result is that young people who need moral and ethical training more than ever are getting less than ever. Morals and ethics are not religion. They are logical, sensible principles of good conduct that we need for a peaceful society.”*

ETHICS AND LEGALITY

If a man has acted right, he has done well, though alone; if wrong, the sanction of all mankind will not justify him.

– Henry Fielding

Most will agree that legality and ethics are not the same thing. What may be ethical may or may not be legal and vice versa. For example:

- An insurance salesperson more concerned with getting a larger commission than selling the best policy for that particular client sells an unsuitable policy. This may be legal but it is unethical.
- A young executive is driving over the speed limit, trying to reach the hospital with his bleeding child in the back seat of his car. Hardly anyone would question the ethics of breaking the law in this situation. It would be unethical not to get medical help to save the child’s life, even if it meant breaking the law.

Legality establishes minimum standards, whereas ethics and values go beyond those standards. Ethics and values are about fairness and justice. They are not about pleasing or displeasing people. They are about respecting people’s needs and rights.

PURPOSE IN LIFE

There are many kinds of desires—desire for success; desire to do one’s duty even at the cost of pleasure; desire for purpose—something worth dying for which gives meaning to life.

What good is it if you gain the whole world and lose your conscience?

A purposeless life is a living death. What is *your* purpose? Do you have one? Purpose brings passion. Find or create a purpose and then pursue it with

passion and perseverance.

Every day we need to ask ourselves: “Am I getting any closer to my purpose in life? Am I making this world a better place to live in?” If the answer is no, then we have just wasted a day of our life. Life will reward us in proportion to our contribution.

The earlier we find a purpose in life, the better our life will be. The greatest challenge lies in the unending search for the purpose of life, not only as an individual but also for our family, organisations and country. Once our purpose and values are clear, conflicts between self interest and social obligations find a moral balance amongst themselves. We become aware of when to take a stand. That is when we start making the right decisions for long-term gain rather than making the wrong decisions for short-term gain. Wisdom and maturity lead to greater understanding of major issues.

We cannot help ourselves without helping others.

We cannot enrich our lives without enriching others.

We cannot prosper without bringing prosperity to others.

– Janette Cole, Spellman College

Janette Cole once said, “Show me a person who is content with mediocrity and I will show you a person destined for failure.” Life is not a spectator sport. We cannot sit back and watch things happen. We need to find a purpose in order to make life meaningful and then strive to achieve that purpose.

LIVING WITH A PURPOSE

All of us are put on this planet for a purpose. We are part of a big picture. But very few people discover their purpose in life. Most of us just exist and keep counting our days rather than making our days count.

Dr Albert Einstein was once asked, “Why are we here?” He replied, “If the universe is an accident, we are accidents. But if there is meaning in the universe, there is meaning in us also.” And he added, “The more I study physics, the more I am drawn towards metaphysics.”

I would rather fail in a cause that will ultimately succeed than succeed in a cause that would ultimately fail.

– Woodrow Wilson

Purpose: A lifetime goal is called a purpose. To identify your purpose, ask yourself “If my age was a hundred today and I looked back at my life, what is it that I want to say is my accomplishment?” The answer is your purpose.

Mission: A mission is an action that leads a person to a purpose through a philosophy.

Philosophy: Philosophy is a guiding principle to live by. It is like the North star. Example: Treat others the way you want to be treated.

We need to define the above in our own lives:

Purpose
Mission
Philosophy

FROM WHERE DO WE LEARN OUR VALUES?

I recently read the story of a high-school values clarification class conducted by a teacher in Teaneck, New Jersey. A girl in the class had found a purse containing \$1,000 and returned it to its owner. The teacher asked for the class's reaction. Every single one of her fellow students concluded the girl had been foolish. Most of the students contended that if someone was careless, they should be punished. When the teacher was asked what he said to the students, he responded, "Well, of course, I didn't say anything. If I come from the position of what is right and what is wrong, then I'm not their counselor. I can't impose my views."*

If we do not learn values from our parents and teachers, whom do we learn them from? And when they don't teach us values, we pick them up by default from television and other such undesirable sources. No wonder society gets messed up. The teacher in the example above is not only irresponsible with distorted values but does not deserve to be teaching our kids.

WINNING VERSUS WINNERS

What is the difference between winning and being a winner? Winning is an event. Being a winner is a spirit. Winners have kept winning in perspective based on their value system.

THREE INSPIRATIONAL WINNERS

1. The Olympics for most sportspeople is a once in a lifetime event. Lawrence Lemieux stopped racing in an Olympic yacht race to help a fellow competitor who was in trouble. The whole world was watching. His priority of safety and concern for other people's lives was greater than his desire to win. Even though he did not win the race, he was a winner. He was honored by kings and queens all over the world because he kept the spirit of the Olympics alive.

2. Reuben Gonzales was playing the world title. The world was watching. In the final game, at match point, Gonzales played a super shot. The referee and the linesman both confirmed that the shot was good and he was declared the winner. But Gonzales hesitated and after a little pause, he went to his opponent and said, "The shot was faulty, let's play again." The service changed and he lost the match. Everyone was stunned. Who could imagine that a player with everything officially in his favor, with winning in his pocket, would disqualify himself and lose. When asked why he did it, Gonzales replied, "It was the only thing to do in order to maintain my integrity." In other words, he was saying that "If I took the medal and came home and saw it every day, it would not be a reminder of my victory, but a permanent reminder of my dishonesty." What was Gonzales saying in unsaid words? **I would rather deserve a medal and not have it, than to have it and not deserve it.** He lost the match, yet he was a winner.
3. A group of salespeople left town for a meeting and told their families they would be back home Friday evening for supper. But with meetings the way they are, it didn't end on time. They had to catch their flight back home, but arrived at the airport with only a few moments to spare. They ran, with tickets in hand, hoping to be able to board the plane. While running, one of them hit a table knocking over a fruit basket. The fruit scattered and lay bruised all over the floor but they didn't have time to stop. They made it to the plane just in time. All of them breathed a sigh of relief except one. He got up, said good-bye to his friends and returned to the table with the fruit. What he saw made him glad that he had come back. Behind the table was a ten-year-old blind girl who was selling the fruit to make a living. He said, "I hope we haven't ruined your day." He pulled out ten dollars from his wallet, handed it to her and said, "This will take care of the fruit," and left. The girl couldn't see what was going on; but as the man's footsteps faded away, she shouted from behind, "Are you God?" The salesman missed his flight but was he a winner? You bet.

In the 1968 Olympic Marathon in Mexico City, John Stephen Akhwari was competing in the forty-two km race. Accidently, he got hit. He hurt his knees badly and dislocated some joints at the nineteenth kilometer point. He could have quit the race at that point, but in spite of severe pain, he continued running and eventually finished last amongst fifty-seven competitors who completed the race out of seventy-five. He ran approximately three and a half hours even when the crowd had dispersed and it was after sunset. The winner of the Marathon was someone else. When the medal were being awarded, the television crew came to know that there was one person who was still running

and was about to finish the race. As he finally crossed the finish line, the remaining people cheered him and when asked by the television crew why he had continued running, he said, “My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race; they sent me 5,000 miles to finish the race.” What a spirit!

One can be a winner without a medal and a loser with a medal if winning is not kept in perspective.

WINNING IS AN EVENT; BEING A WINNER IS A SPIRIT

Three people ran a marathon along with hundreds of others. None of them won the race. Does that mean that these three people were losers? Not at all. Each went into the race with different objectives. The first ran the race to test his endurance—he came out better than his expectations. The second wanted to improve on his previous performance, and he did. The third person had never run a marathon—his objective was to complete the race and he did. Each of these three entered the race with different objectives; they all met them, and they were all winners, regardless of who won the medal.

Mark Twain said, it is better to deserve an honor and not have it than to have it and not deserve it. Dignity is not in possessing but deserving.

If winning is your only objective, you may miss out on the internal rewards that come with doing something well. More important than winning is winning with honor and deserving to have won. It is better to lose honorably than to succeed dishonestly. **Losing honorably may signify lack of preparation but dishonest winning signifies lack of character.**

The real test of a person’s character is what he would or would not do, even if he knew he would not get caught. It is not worth compromising one’s integrity and taking shortcuts to win. One may win a trophy but knowing the truth that it was not won fair and square, can never let him be a happy person. More important than winning a trophy is being a good human being.

Winners live and work every day as if it were their last day because one of these days it is going to be and nobody knows which one. But when they leave, they leave as winners.

There are some defeats more triumphant than victories.

- Michel de Montaigne

WINNERS ARE GRACIOUS

Winners are gracious. They never brag about themselves, they respect and appreciate their team members and opponents.

Many people know how to be successful. Very few know how to handle

SUCCESS.

BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

I conduct a three-day seminar, ‘Hi-Impact Leadership— Blueprint for Success’, internationally, both in-house for organisations and in open public programs. The seminar is based on the philosophy ‘*Winners don’t do different things, they do things differently*’. This philosophy came as a counter to the belief ‘*Winning is not everything, it is the only thing*’. This latter philosophy leads me to question the integrity of people who believe it to be true. It gives a distorted meaning to the words ‘killer instinct’. If you ask a person on the street, “What is the meaning of killer instinct,” most responses would be, “*You have to win by hook or by crook.*” That is not killer instinct that is pure dishonesty. To a good sportsman, killer instinct means:

1. You don’t put in 100 per cent; you put in 200 per cent.
2. To win, we must cash in on our opponent’s mistake. Not taking advantage of your opponent’s mistake is foolish. However, playing foul in order to win is not killer instinct, it is outright dishonesty. Unfair winning may give temporary success, but certainly not fulfillment.
3. Our life is like playing a game of football. Winning and losing does not depend on how many goals you saved, but how many you missed. Isn’t the same principle true in our lives?

The reality is that life is a competition and we have to compete. In fact, competition makes competitive people grow. The objective is to win, no question—but to win fairly, squarely, decently and by the rules.

WINNERS LEAVE A LEGACY

Great people leave something behind. Winners recognise that no one can make it alone. Even though champions get the medals, they realise that there are many people behind their success, without whom success would not have been possible—their teachers, parents, coaches, fans and mentors. You can never fully repay those who have helped you. The only way to show a little gratitude is by helping those who are following. The following poem says it all.

THE BRIDGE BUILDER

*An old man, going a lone highway,
Came, at the evening, cold and gray,*

*To a chasm, vast, and deep, and wide,
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim;
The sullen stream had no fears for him;
But he turned, when safe on the other side,
And built a bridge to span the tide.
“Old man,” said a fellow pilgrim, near,
“You are wasting strength with building here;
Your journey will end with the ending day;
You never again must pass this way;
You have crossed the chasm, deep and wide—Why build
you the bridge at the eventide?”
The builder lifted his old gray head:
“Good friend, in the path I have come,” he said,
“There followeth after me today A youth, whose feet
must pass this way.
This chasm, that has been naught to me,
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building the bridge for him.”*

– Will Allen Dromgoole

Socrates taught Plato; Plato taught Aristotle; Aristotle taught Alexander the Great. Knowledge, had it not been passed along, would have died.

Our greatest responsibility is to pass on a legacy that the coming generations can be proud of.

CHANGING VALUES—TODAY’S VALUES

Change is inevitable. Whether we like it or not, it is there. We have had too much of the ‘me’ generation and situational ethics, which have led to the loss of strong communities. People of the ‘me generation’ feel sadness for getting caught rather than remorse for having done wrong.*

A survey of high school principals in 1958 asked this question: What are the main problems among your students? The answer was:

1. Not doing homework.
2. Not respecting property—for example, throwing books.
3. Leaving lights on and doors and windows open.

4. Throwing spitballs in class.
5. Running through the halls.

The same survey question was asked thirty years (one generation) later, in 1988. The answers were startlingly different. Here are the main problems of today's high school students:

- Abortion
- AIDS
- Rape
- Drugs
- Fear of violent death, murder, guns and knives in school

OLD VALUES ARE NOT OBSOLETE

A nation is held together by shared beliefs and shared attitudes. That is what enables them to rise above the conflicts that plague any society. That is what gives a nation its tone, its fiber, its integrity, its moral style, its capacity to endure.

– John Gardner

Values such as responsibility, integrity, commitment and patriotism are considered old fashioned by some. These may be old values but they are certainly not obsolete. They have stood the test of time and will be here forever. These values have the same meaning in New York as in New Delhi or New Zealand. They are universal. I don't know of any time or culture in history that did not respect these values.

VALUES ARE AT AN ALL-TIME LOW

In any society, basic immorality and injustice lead to despair. The greedy and inconsiderate who seek immoral pleasures must be stopped by those committed to real values. We have strayed in the process of change. Unfortunately, today, money has become the prime measure of success.

Any society that has lost its moral bearing is heading for disaster because all failures in history have been moral failures.

More than half a century ago, America was in the middle of a wrenching depression. One-third of the nation's wealth vanished in a matter of months. Manufacturing declined seventy-seven per cent. One-fourth of the labor force was left idle. Many cities could not afford to keep schools open. A fifth of New York school children were malnourished. At one point, thirty-four

million men, women and children were without any income at all.

Yet in the depths of that hardship, with its soup kitchens, bank closings and hunger, Franklin D. Roosevelt could tell the nation in a radio address, “Our difficulties, thank God, concern only material things.”*

HOW HIGH ARE OUR ETHICAL STANDARDS?

What would you do in the following situations?

1. You know the taxi fare from your home to the airport is \$64. You have paid that price several times before; you know it is the correct fare. This time the taxi driver asks for \$32. What would you do?
2. You are dining in a restaurant. You ordered four dishes and the waiter brings all four but, by mistake, billed you for only three. What would you do?
3. Your best friend is terminally ill and you are a life assurance salesman. Your friend needs \$100,000 worth of insurance. No one knows and no one can find out that your friend is dying. Would you write the policy?

You cannot legislate ethics. What advice would you give to your children under the same circumstances? Is your behavior in conformance with the advice you would give your children under the same situation? We start learning ethics right after birth and continue all through our lives. Can we change ethical behavior? Yes. We need ethical training.

WHAT AFFECTS ETHICS?

- Greed
- Fear
- Pressure

Pressure to perform does not justify unethical acts. To be treated fairly is not the same thing as being treated equally.

ETHICS IN BUSINESS

Ethics or lack of it is evident in every profession. Greedy doctors do unnecessary procedures and surgery. Lawyers bend the truth. Parents and children alike tell white lies. Accountants and secretaries often falsify reports.

When we cheat the people around us, most of all we are cheating ourselves. We are preparing ourselves to be cheated. Additionally, when we cheat others, we start believing that others will do the same to us and we become

suspicious and pessimistic.

Prosperity brings responsibility. **We cannot build industry and infrastructure while destroying the moral and social fiber of society.**

The consequences of not following ethical behavior are the same as not following legal behavior. Some people will never be ethical. They think they are taking the easy way. In reality it is the tougher way. Could you face yourself if you didn't do the right thing for your client? Could you tell your kids and be proud and feel good? If you can't, then that behavior is unethical.

A sense of humor and pride in yourself will keep you on course.

CONCLUSION

Why don't people achieve excellence? The big reason is the lack of vision or limited vision. We need to dream beyond what is possible. Everything that we see today was a dream before it became reality. Live with enthusiasm, direction and a sense of purpose. Do you have a dream? What is your dream? Every day that you live, are you getting closer to your purpose? Don't listen to living failures—they will give you faulty advice on how to succeed. Instead get your advice from successful people.

Where the vision is one year, cultivate flowers. Where the vision is ten years, cultivate trees. Where the vision is eternity, cultivate people.

– Oriental Saying

Remember:

Winners don't do different things, they do things differently!®

– Shiv Khera

ACTION PLAN

... to become what we are capable of becoming is the only end of life.

– Benedict Spinoza

1. Take fifteen minutes to reflect quietly: What three things would you most like to be remembered for?

A

.....

B

.....

C
.....

2. For each of the above things you would like to be remembered for, list one action that will help you achieve the above objectives.

A
.....
.....

B
.....
.....

C
.....
.....

 *Adapted from John Beckley, "Isn't It Time to Wake Up?" In *The Best of ...Bits and Pieces*, Economics Press, Fairfield, NJ, 1994, p. 129.

 * Journal of the American Family Association, *November/December 1991*.

 * Journal of the American Family Association, *November/December 1991*.

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