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

If attitude is such a critical factor in success, shouldn't you examine your attitude toward life and ask how your attitude will affect your goals?

## **ACRES OF DIAMONDS**

*There 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 to him 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 have your own city. If you had a diamond the size of your fist, you could probably own your own country." And then he went away. That night the farmer couldn't sleep. He was unhappy and he was discontent. He was unhappy because he was discontent and discontent because he was unhappy.*

*The next morning he made arrangements to sell off his farm, took care of his family and went in search of diamonds. He looked all over Africa and couldn't find any. He looked all through Europe and couldn't find any. When he got to Spain, he was emotionally, physically and financially broke. He got 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 a 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 it would look good on the mantle piece. He picked up the stone and put it in the living room. 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 recognize 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 five morals:*

- 1. When our attitude is right, we realize that we are all walking on acres and acres of diamonds.*
  - Attributed to Dr Russel Conwell .*
  - Opportunity is always under our feet. We don't have to go anywhere. All we need to do is recognize it.*
- 2. The grass on the other side always looks greener.*
- 3. While we are dyeing the grass on the other side, there are others who are dyeing the grass on our side. They would be happy to trade places with us.*
- 4. When people don't know how to recognize opportunity, they complain of noise when it knocks.*
- 5. The same opportunity never knocks twice. The next one may be better or worse, but it is never the same one.*

## **DAVID AND GOLIATH**

*We all know the story of David and Goliath. There was a giant who was bullying and harassing the children in the village. One day, a 17-year-old shepherd boy came to visit his brothers and asked, "Why don't you stand up and fight the giant?" The brothers were terrified and they 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 a sling. Same giant, different perception.*

Our attitude determines how we look at a setback. To a positive thinker, it can be a stepping stone to success. To a negative thinker, it can be a stumbling block.

Great organizations are not measured by wages and working conditions, they are measured by feelings, attitudes and relationships.

When employees say, "I can't do it," there are two possible meanings. Are they saying they don't know how to or they don't want to? If they don't know how to, that is a training issue. If they are saying they don't want to, it may be an attitude issue (they don't care) or a values issue (they believe they should not do it).

## **A HOLISTIC APPROACH**

I believe in the holistic approach. We are not an arm and a leg, but a complete human being. The whole person goes to work and the whole person comes home. 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 productivity comes down. Similarly, work and social problems have an impact on every aspect of our lives.

Take any one of those items and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life or your work or your government or your world and it holds true and clear and firm.

## **FACTORS THAT DETERMINE OUR ATTITUDE**

Are we born with attitudes or do we develop them as we mature? What are the factors that form our attitudes?

If you have a negative outlook on life because of your environment, can you change your attitude? Most of our attitude is shaped during our formative years.

There are primarily three factors that determine our attitude. They are:

1. environment
2. experience
3. education

These are called the triple Es of attitude. Let's evaluate each of the factors individually.

### **1. Environment**

Environment consists of the following:

- ◆ Home: positive or negative influences
- ◆ School: peer pressure
- ◆ Work: supportive or over critical supervisor
- ◆ Media: television, newspapers, magazines, radio, movies
- ◆ Cultural background
- ◆ Religious background
- ◆ Traditions and beliefs
- ◆ Social environment
- ◆ Political environment

All of these environments create a culture. Every place be it a home, organization or a country has a culture.

Have you noticed that sometimes you go to a store and you find the salesperson polite, the supervisor, manager and owner polite as well? Yet you go to another shop and you find everyone rude and discourteous.

You go to a home and you find the kids and parents well-behaved, courteous and considerate. You go to another home where everyone is fighting like cats and dogs.

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 tough time. Whereas in an honest environment, the corrupt one 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.

Culture in any place always goes top down, never bottom up. 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. Where lawlessness becomes the law, honest citizens become cheats, crooks and thieves.

Isn't it time to evaluate the environment that we are in or we have created for others?

## **2. Experiences**

Our behavior changes according to our experiences with people and events in our life. If we have a positive experience with a person, our attitude toward him becomes positive and vice versa.

### **3. Education**

I refer to both formal and informal education, not just academic qualifications. Knowledge strategically applied translates into wisdom, ensuring success. I talk of education in the broader sense. It makes the role of the ; educator vital. A teacher affects eternity. The ripple effect is immeasurable.

We are drowning in information but starving for knowledge and wisdom. Education ought to teach us not only how to make a living but also how to live.

#### **HOW DO YOU RECOGNIZE PEOPLE WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE?**

Just like an absence of ill health does not equal good health, an absence of negativity alone does not make a person positive.

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

These are many and easy to see. But what is easy to see is also easy to miss. To mention a few, a positive attitude

- ◆ increases productivity
- ◆ fosters teamwork

- ◆ solves problems
- ◆ improves quality
- ◆ makes for congenial atmosphere
- ◆ breeds loyalty
- ◆ increases profits
- ◆ fosters better relationships with employers, employees, and customers
- ◆ reduces stress
- ◆ helps a person become a contributing member of society and an asset to their country
- ◆ makes for a pleasing personality

## **THE CONSEQUENCES OF A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE**

Our life is an obstacle course and we become our own biggest obstacle by having a negative attitude. People with a negative attitude have a hard time keeping friendships, jobs, marriage and relationships. Their attitude leads to

- ◆ bitterness
- ◆ resentment
- ◆ a purposeless life
- ◆ ill health
- ◆ high stress level for themselves and others

They create a negative environment at home and work and become a liability to society. They also pass on their negative behavior to others around them and to future generations.

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

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

*Charles Dickens wrote about a prisoner who stayed 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 brought back to his cell into confinement. To him, the dungeon, the chains and the darkness were more secure and comfortable than accepting the change of freedom and the open world.*

## **STEPS TO BUILDING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE**

During childhood, we form attitudes that last a lifetime. Undoubtedly, it would be a lot easier and better to have acquired a positive attitude during our formative years. Does that mean if we acquire a negative attitude, whether by design or by default, we are stuck with it? Of course not. Can we change? Yes. Is it easy? Absolutely not. How do you build and maintain a positive attitude?

- ◆ Become aware of the principles that build a positive attitude
- ◆ 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 some time in our lives. We blame everyone and everything but ourselves. It is up to us to choose our attitude every morning. As adults, we need to accept responsibility for our behavior and actions.

People with negative attitudes will blame the whole world, their parents, teachers, spouse, the economy and the government for their failures.

You have to get away from the past. Dust yourself off, 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 us in a positive state of mind.

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

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### **Step 1: Change Focus, Look for the Positive**

We need to become good finders. We need to focus on the positive in life. Let's start looking for what is right in a person or situation instead of looking for what is wrong. Because of our conditioning, we are so attuned to finding fault and looking for what is wrong that we forget to see the positive picture.

Even in paradise, fault finders will find faults. Most people find what they are looking for. If they are looking for friendship, happiness and the positive, that is what they get. If they are looking for fights or indifference, then that is what they get. Caution looking for the positive does not mean overlooking faults.

## **LOOKING FOR THE GOLD**

*As a young Scots boy, Andrew Carnegie came to America and started doing odd jobs. He ended up as one of the largest steel manufacturers in the United States.*

*At one time he had 43 millionaires working for him. Several decades ago, a million dollars used to be a lot of money; even today it is a lot of money. Someone asked Mr. Carnegie how he dealt with people? Andrew Carnegie replied, "Dealing with people is like digging gold: When you go digging for an ounce of gold, you have to move tons of dirt to get an ounce of gold. But when you go digging, you don't go looking for the dirt, you go looking for the gold."*

What is your focus? Become a digger for gold. If you are looking for what is wrong with people or with things, you will find many. What are you looking for? Andrew Carnegie's reply has a very important message. There is something positive in every person and every situation. Sometimes we have to dig deep to look for the positive because it may not be apparent. Besides, we are so used to looking for what is wrong with other people and situations, we forget to see what is right. Someone once said that **Even a stopped clock is right twice a day.**

Remember when you go looking for gold, you have to move tons of dirt to get to an ounce of gold. But when you go looking, you don't go looking for the dirt, you go looking for the gold.

### ***Negative People will Always Criticize***

Some people criticize no matter what. It does not matter which side you are on, they are always on the other side.

They have made a career out of criticizing. They are "career critics." They criticize as if they will win a prize at a contest. They will find fault with every person and every situation. You will find people like this in every home, family, office. They go around finding fault and telling everybody how bad things are and blaming the whole world for their problems. We have a name for these people. They are called energy suckers. They will go to the cafeteria and drown themselves in 20 cups of tea and coffee and smoke to their hearts' content with one excuse: they are trying to relax. All that they are doing is causing more tension for themselves and for others around them. They spread negative messages like a plague and create an environment conducive to negative results.

Robert Fulton invented the steamboat. On the banks of the Hudson River he was displaying his new invention. The pessimists and the skeptics were gathered around to observe. They commented that it would never start. Lo and behold, it did. As it made its way down the river, the pessimists who said it would never go, started shouting that it would never stop. What an attitude!

### ***SOME PEOPLE ALWAYS LOOK FOR THE NEGATIVE***

*There was a hunter who bought a bird dog, the only one of its kind in the world. That could walk on water . He couldn't believe his eyes when he saw this miracle. At the same time, he was very pleased that he could show 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 run and fetch the birds. All day-long, the dog ran on water and kept fetching the birds. The owner was expecting a comment or a compliment about his*

*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 can't swim."*

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

- ◆ are unhappy when they have no troubles to speak
- ◆ feel bad when they feel good, for fear they will feel worse when they feel better
- ◆ spend most of their life at complaint counters
- ◆ always turn out the lights to see how dark it is
- ◆ are always looking for cracks in the mirror of life
- ◆ stop sleeping in bed when they hear that more people die in bed than anywhere else
- ◆ cannot enjoy their health 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, only the hole
- ◆ believe that the sun shines only to cast shadows
- ◆ forget their blessings and count their troubles
- ◆ know that hard work never hurts anyone but believe "why take a chance?"

Who is 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 there is something in them.

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 criticize others.**

Be too big for worry and too noble for anger.\*

## **Step 2: Make a Habit of Doing It Now**

We have all procrastinated at some time in our lives. I know I have, only to have regretted it later. Procrastination leads to a negative attitude. The habit of procrastination fatigues you more than the effort it takes to do it.

A completed task is fulfilling and energizing; an incomplete task drains energy like a leak from a tank.

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

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

## ***When I Become a Big Boy***

This is like the little boy who says when I become a big boy, I will do this and this and I will be happy. And when he

becomes a big boy he says, when I finish college and do this and this and I will be happy. And when he finishes college he says when I get my first job and do this and this I will be happy. And when he gets his first job he says when I get married and do this and this and then I will be happy. And when he gets married he says when the kids get out of school and I do this and this I will be I happy. And when the kids get out of school, he says when I retire and do this and this, I will be happy. And when he retires what does he see? He sees life has just gone by in front of his eyes.

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

Some people practice procrastination by hiding behind high sounding words, saying "I'm analyzing" and six months later they are still analyzing. What they don't realize is that they are suffering from a disease called, "Paralysis of Analysis" and they will never succeed.

Then there is another breed of people who procrastinate by saying "I'm getting ready" and a month later they are still getting ready and six months later they are still getting ready. What they don't realize is they are suffering from a disease called "Excusitis." They keep making excuses.

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. The stakes are the future generations.

What time is it and where are we? The answer is now and we are here. Let's make the best of now and utilize 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 utilize our present to its fullest, we are sowing the seeds for a better future automatically, aren't we?

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 should have."
- ◆ "I could have."
- ◆ "I wish I had."
- ◆ "If only I had given a little extra."

*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 lights to turn green before they leave home. That will never happen and they fail even before they start. That is sad.

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

### **Step 3: Develop an Attitude of Gratitude**

Count your blessings, not your troubles. Take time to smell the roses. It is not uncommon to hear that someone, because of an accident or illness, became blind or paralyzed but won a million dollars in settlement. How

many of us would like to trade places with that person? Not many. We are so focused on complaining about things we don't 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, the message is not to become complacent. If complacency was the message you got, then I would be guilty of faulty communication and you of selective listening.

*To give you an example of selective listening, let me share with you a story I heard about a medical doctor who was invited as a guest speaker to address a group of alcoholics. He wanted to make a demonstration that would be powerful enough to make people realize that alcohol was injurious to their health. He had two containers, one with pure distilled water and one with pure alcohol. He put an earthworm into the distilled water and it swam beautifully and came up to the top. He put another earthworm into the alcohol and it disintegrated in front of everyone's eyes. He wanted to prove that this was what alcohol did to the insides of our body. He asked the group what the moral of the story was and one person from behind said, "If you drink alcohol you won't have worms in your stomach." Was that the message? Of course not. That was selective listening--we hear what we want to hear and not what is being said.*

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

-----25/10/2004-----

#### **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. I run seminars in many different countries and ask my audiences

all the time, "Do we really get educated in schools and colleges?" Generally, there is a consensus that some do but most don't. We receive a lot of information in schools and colleges. Don't get me wrong. We do need information to be educated. But 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 values education. I would stress that 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. Character building and teaching values and ethics come in the formative years because a child is not born with this knowledge.

### ***Education Without Values***

True education is training of both the head and the heart. An uneducated thief may steal from the freight car but an educated one may steal the entire railroad.

*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

We need to compete for knowledge and wisdom, not for grades. Knowledge is piling up facts, wisdom is simplifying it. One could have good grades and a degree without learning much. The most important thing one can learn is to "learn to learn." People confuse education with the ability to memorize facts. Education of the mind without morals creates a menace to society.

### ***EDUCATION DOES NOT MEAN GOOD JUDGEMENT***

*There is a story about a man who sold hot dogs 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 hot dogs. His sales and profit went up. He ordered more meat and got himself a bigger and a better stove. As his business was growing, the 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 is even worse. We should be prepared for the coming bad time." 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 enthusiastic. Very soon, fewer and fewer people bothered to stop at his hot dog 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 is the moral of the story?**

- 1. Many times we confuse intelligence with good judgment.*
- 2. A person may have high intelligence but poor judgment.*
- 3. Choose your advisers carefully and use your judgment.*
- 4. A person can and will be successful with or without formal education if they have the 5 Cs:*
  - ◆ character*
  - ◆ commitment*
  - ◆ conviction*
  - ◆ courtesy*
  - ◆ courage*
- 5. The tragedy is that there are many walking encyclopedias who are living failures.*

Intelligence is quickness to learn. Ability is the skill to apply what is learned. Competence is the ability and the desire to apply what is learned. Desire is the attitude that makes a skillful person competent. Many skillful people are incompetent. Ability without the right attitude is wasted.

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

*--Winston Churchill*

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### **Educated**

Whom, then, do I call educated?

*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 (47~399 B.C.)

In a nutshell, educated persons are those who can choose wisely and courageously under any circumstances. If they have the ability to choose between wisdom and foolishness, between good and bad, between virtuousness and vulgarities, regardless of the academic degrees they have, then they are educated.

An expert is someone who knows all the answers if you ask the right questions.

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 & a mentally retarded eel. A board was formed and it was decided that flying, tree climbing, swimming, and burrowing would be part of the curriculum in order to 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 and was getting A's, but was failing in swimming. The fish was the best swimmer but couldn't get out of the water and 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.*

*What a broad-based education really means is that the student is prepared for life, without losing their areas of specialization or 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 75 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 50 miles per hour, taking strides of 12--15 feet.

## **Ignorance**

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

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

*--Benjamin Franklin*

There is nothing wrong with ignorance, but making a career out of it is stupidity. Some people accumulate ignorance and they confuse it with education. Ignorance is not bliss. It is misery, tragedy, poverty, and sickness. If ignorance were bliss, how come not more people are 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.

We live in an information age. It is estimated that the amount of knowledge 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 (reading, writing, arithmetic), but what good is intellectual

education without understanding human dignity and compassion?

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

### **Common sense**

Education and knowledge without common sense has little meaning. Common sense is the ability to see things as they are and do them as they ought to be done.

We are born with five senses touch, taste, sight, smell, and hearing. But successful people have a sixth sense common sense. Common sense is gained in spite of, not necessarily as a result of, education. The best education without common sense is worthless. An abundance of common sense is called wisdom.

### **SHARPEN YOUR AXE**

*Jo John, a woodcutter, worked for a company for five years but never got a raise. The company hired Bill and within a year he got a raise. This caused resentment in John and he went to his boss to talk about it. The boss said, "You are still cutting the same number of trees you were cutting five years ago. We are a result-oriented company and would be happy to give you a raise if your productivity goes up." John went back, started hitting harder and putting in longer hours but he still wasn't able to cut more trees. He went back to his boss and told him his dilemma. The boss told John to go talk to Bill. "Maybe there is something Bill knows that you and I don't." John asked Bill how he managed to cut more trees. Bill answered, "After every tree I cut, I take a break for two minutes and sharpen my axe. When was*

*the last time you sharpened your axe?" This question hit home like a bullet and John got his answer.*

My question is, when was the last time you sharpened your axe? Past glory and education don't do it. We have to continuously sharpen the axe.

### ***Feed Your Mind***

Just like our bodies need good food every day, our minds need good thoughts every day. The key words in the preceding sentence are good food and good thoughts. If we feed our body with junk food and our mind with bad thoughts, we will have both a sick body and mind. We need to feed our mind with the pure and the positive to stay on track. Through constant practice and exposure, we can learn the principles that make a person successful just like we learn to play basketball.

### ***Knowledge is Power***

We hear every day 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? Not a whole lot.

Learning is like eating food. It is not how much you eat that matters, what counts is how much you digest.

Knowledge is potential power, wisdom is real power.

Education takes many forms, it is not just grades and a degree. It is

- ◆ cultivating your strength

- ◆ learning self-discipline
- ◆ listening
- ◆ desiring to learn

Our minds, like muscles, stretch or shrink depending on how much or how little we exercise them.

*If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.*

*--Derek Bok*

Continuous positive education leads to positive thinking.

### ***Education is a Reservoir***

Positive thinkers are like athletes who, through practice, build an inner reservoir of stamina that they draw on in competition. If they don't practice, they have nothing to draw on.

Similarly, positive thinkers regularly build a reserve of positive attitude by constantly feeding their mind on the pure, the powerful and the positive on a daily basis. They realize that we are all going to be faced with the negative and if we have the reserve of positive attitude we will be able to overcome; otherwise the negative will prevail.

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

## **Step 5: Build a Positive Self-Esteem**

### **What is Self-Esteem?**

Self-esteem is the way we feel about ourselves. When we feel good within, our performance goes up, our relationships improve both at home and at work. The world looks nicer. What is the reason? There is a direct correlation between feeling and behavior.

## **How Do We Build Positive Self-Esteem?**

If you want to build positive self-esteem quickly, one of the fastest ways is to do something for others 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 learned more than I had learned in years .*

*After attending my program for two weeks ;one of the inmates stopped me and said, "Shiv, I want to talk to you. I'm going to be released from prison in a couple of weeks." I asked him what he 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 he read his Bible every day since I started the program. I then asked him what reading the Bible did to him. He replied that he felt comfortable with himself and others which he hadn't felt before. I said, "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. Then I asked him the same question again and he gave me the same answer. For the third time I asked him the same question 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 then and what he said now. Earlier 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." He got rid of the word trying and that made sense. Either we do it or we don't. The word "trying" keeps 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 that the feeling that I just experienced was worth more than all the money in the world. He then asked, "Why do you come here?" I said, I come here for my own selfish reason, and my selfish reason is that I want to make this world a better place to live." This kind of selfishness is healthy. In a nutshell, what you put into the system, you always get back, and most times 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 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 when they get behind the wheel of a car and have an accident, the only thing they will ever hit is a tree, I will compromise. But if you cannot guarantee that when they take drugs and have an accident, then you or your kids or I or my kids could be dead under the wheels, you better believe it is my business. I have to get this person off the road."

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 I'm sure that was not the intent.

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 realize that we are sharing this planet and we must learn to behave responsibly.

There are two kinds of people in this world--takers and givers. 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.

As human beings, we all have the need to receive and take. But a healthy personality with high self-esteem is one that not only has its need to take but also 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's response was, "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 way to go!*

## **Step 6: Stay Away from Negative Influences**

Today's teenagers learn from adult behavior and the media. They face peer pressure. Peer pressure is not just limited to 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: What are the negative influences?

## **1. Negative People**

*An eagle's egg was placed in the nest of a prairie chicken. The egg hatched and the little eagle grew up thinking it was a prairie chicken. The eagle did what the prairie chickens did. It scratched in the dirt for seeds. It clucked and cackled. It never flew more than a few feet because that is what the prairie chickens did. One day he saw an eagle flying gracefully and majestically in the open sky. He asked the prairie chickens: "What is that beautiful bird?" The chickens replied, "That is an eagle. He is an outstanding bird, but you cannot fly like him because you are just a prairie chicken." So the eagle never gave it a second thought, believing that to be the truth. He lived the life of and died a prairie chicken, depriving himself of his heritage because of his lack of vision. What a waste! He was born to win, but was conditioned to lose.*

*The same thing is true of most people. 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.*

If you want to soar like an eagle, you have to learn the ways of an eagle. 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 complainers, 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? Even to block you require energy. Why not use it more productively? Similarly, in order to fight petty people, you have to come down to their level. This is what they want, because now you are one of them.

Don't let negative people drag you down.

Remember, a person's character is not only judged by the company he or she keeps but also by the company he or she avoids.

## 2. Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol

*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.*

In my travels, I have noticed that in some countries drinking 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.

Drinking and smoking are glamorized 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 (it is cool to drink); to be fashionable; to mingle; for business purposes.

People want to conform to peer pressure. I am amazed at the way peer pressure compels with phrases such as: "Aren't you my friend?"; "One for the road"; "One for my 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 cost lives. According to Jerry Johnson,\* the American Hospital Association reports that half of all hospital admissions are alcohol-related and according to the National Safety Council's 1989 Accident Facts Edition, a person is injured in an alcohol-related crash every 60 seconds.

### **3. Pornography**

Pornography is nothing short of dehumanizing women and children.

The consequences of pornography are that it

- ◆ dehumanizes women
- ◆ victimizes children
- ◆ destroys marriages
- ◆ encourages sexual violence
- ◆ makes fun of ethical and moral values
- ◆ destroys individuals, families, and communities

A woman is raped in the United States every 46 seconds. (National Victim Center/crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, 1992). Eighty-six percent of rapists admit to regular use of pornography, with 57 percent 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. What about the sick people who buy it?

\* "In his book *It's Killing Our Kids*, Word Publishing, p. xv.

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

#### **4. Negative Movies and Television Programs**

Today's kids are learning their attitudes and values more from television and movies than from anywhere else. 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.\*

They 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 glamorize 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 it is, we are all impressionable to varying degrees.

## 5. Profanity<sup>^</sup>

Using profanities show a lack of self-control and discipline.

## 6. Rock Music

The lyrics of some hit songs are obscene. We can be subconsciously influenced by the music we hear and the performance we watch.

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

Some things need to be done whether we like them or not; for example, mothers caring for their young. They may not be fun and games, and may even be painful. But if we learn to like the task, the impossible becomes possible.

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

*--St. Francis of Assisi*

## Step 8: Start Your Day with a 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 every day a positive day. In order to bring about change, we need to make a conscious effort. Andre 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 and do it flamboyantly."

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

## **WINNERS VERSUS LOSERS**

- ◆ The Winner is always part of the answer;  
The Loser is always part of the problem.
- ◆ The Winner always has a program;  
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 an answer 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 see the gain;  
Losers see the 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 are like a thermostat;  
Losers are like thermometers.
- ◆ 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 it happen;  
Losers let it happen.
- ◆ Winners plan and prepare to win.  
The key word is preparation.

## **BE A WINNER--ACTION STEPS**

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

1. Be a good finder.
2. Make a habit of doing it now.
3. Develop an attitude of gratitude.
4. Get into a continuous education program.
5. Build positive self-esteem.
6. Stay away from negative influences.
7. Learn to like the things that need to be done.
8. Start your day with a positive.

**ACTION PLAN :**

1. Write these action steps down on a 3-by-5 index card and read them every day for the next 21 days.  
For the next 30 minutes, answer the following questions.

2. How can you use each step

- at home?
- at work?
- socially?

3. Make a list of the things you would like to change about yourself.

4. Then list the benefits to you (and others) of each change.

5. Finally establish a timetable and commit yourself to make the change

## CHAPTER 2

# **SUCCESS**

## **Wining Strategies**

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

Most crackpots keep waiting for a jackpot. But can that bring success?

A priest was driving by and saw an exceptionally beautiful farm. He stopped his car to appreciate the bountiful crop. The farmer was riding on his tractor and saw the priest at the corner. He drove towards the Priest and when he got there the priest said, "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!"

How come one person moves forward with one success after another, and yet some are still getting ready?

How come one man goes through life crossing one hurdle after another, accomplishing his goals while another struggles and gets nowhere?

If the answer to these two questions can become part of the curriculum, it could revolutionize the educational system. The uncommon man seeks opportunity, whereas the common man seeks security. We need to keep our minds on what we want, not on what we don't want.

## **WHAT IS SUCCESS?**

A lot of research has gone into the subject of success and failure. All that we need to do is learn our lessons from history. When we study the life histories of successful people, we find that they have certain qualities in common no matter which period of history they lived in. Success leaves clues and if we identify and adopt the qualities of successful people, we shall be successful. Similarly, there are characteristics common in all failures. If we avoid those characteristics, then we shall not be failures. Success is no mystery, but simply the result of consistently applying some basic principles. The reverse is just as true: Failure is simply a result of making a few mistakes repeatedly. All of this might sound too simplistic, but the fact is that most truths are very simple. I'm not saying they are easy, but they certainly are simple.

To laugh often and love much;  
To win the respect of intelligent persons  
and the affection of children;  
To earn the approval of honest critics  
and endure the betrayal of false friends ;  
To appreciate beauty;  
To find the best in others;  
To give off one's self without the  
slightest thought of return;  
To have accomplished a task, whether  
by a healthy child, a rescued soul, a  
garden patch, or a redeemed social condition;  
To have played and laughed with  
Enthusiasm and sung with exaltation;  
To know that even one life has breathed  
easier because you have lived;

This is to have succeeded.

Anonymous

## HOW DO WE DEFINE SUCCESS?

What makes a person successful? How do we recognize success?

To some people, success might mean wealth. To others, it is recognition, good health, good family, happiness, satisfaction, and peace of mind. What this really tells us is that success is subjective. It can mean different things to different people. The definition that I feel summarizes "success" well is:

*Success is the progressive realization of a worthy goal.*

Earl Nightingale

Let's look at these definitions carefully.

"Progressive" means that success is a journey, not a destination. We never arrive. After we reach one goal, we go on to the next and the next and the next.

"Realization" means it is an experience. Outside forces cannot make me feel successful. I have to feel it within myself. It is internal not external.

"Worthy" refers to our value system. Which way are we heading? Positive or negative? Worthiness determines the quality of the journey. That is what gives meaning and fulfillment. Success without fulfillment is empty.

Why? "Goals" are important. Because they give us a sense of direction.

Success does not mean being accepted by everyone. There are some groups I would not want to be accepted by,

out of choice. I would rather be criticized by fools than appreciated by unsavory characters.

I define success as a manifestation of good luck that results from inspiration, aspiration, desperation and perspiration; generally in that sequence.

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. Rhodes

## **SOME OBSTACLES TO SUCCESS (REAL OR IMAGINED)**

- ◆ Ego
- ◆ Fear of failure success ; lack of self esteem
- ◆ No plan
- ◆ Lack of formalized goals
- ◆ Life changes
- ◆ Procrastination
- ◆ Family responsibility
- ◆ Financial security issues
- ◆ Lack of focus, being muddled
- ◆ Giving up vision for promise of money

- ◆ Doing too much alone
- ◆ Over-commitment
- ◆ Lack of commitment
- ◆ Lack of training
- ◆ Lack of persistence
- ◆ Lack of priorities

## **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, because there is nothing that can't be done better or improved.

All that we need is a little edge. The winning horse in the races wins 5-to-1 or 10-to-1. Do you think he is five or ten times faster than the other horses? Of course not. He may only be faster by a fraction, by a nose, but the rewards are five or ten times greater.

Is it fair? Who cares? It doesn't matter. Those are the rules of the game. That is the way the game is played. The same is true in our lives. Successful people are not ten times smarter than the people who fail. They may be better by a nose, but the rewards are ten times bigger.

We don't need to improve 1,000% in any one area. All we need is to improve 1% in 1,000 different areas, which is a lot easier. That is the winning edge!

## **STRUGGLE**

*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 one of the students took pity on it and decided to help the butterfly out of the cocoon against the advice of his teacher. He broke the cocoon to help the butterfly so it didn't have to struggle anymore. But shortly afterwards the butterfly died.*

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

*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 to gain strength.*

## **OVERCOMING OBSTACLES**

People who have overcome obstacles are more secure than those who have never faced them . We all have problems and we feel discouraged some time. Most people get disappointed; but winners don't get disheartened. The answer is perseverance.

An English proverb says, "A smooth sea never made a skillful mariner." Everything is difficult before it becomes easy. We cannot run away from our problems. Only losers quit and give up.

Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

--Abigail Van Buren

## **HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?**

True success is measured by the feeling of knowing you have done a job well and have achieved your objective.

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 by how many times we bounce back when we fall down. It is this bounce back ability that determines success.

## **EVERY SUCCESS STORY IS ALSO A STORY OF GREAT FAILURE**

*Failure is the highway to success. Tom Watson Sr. 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. But people don't see the failures. They only see one side of the picture and they say that person got lucky: "He must have been at the right place at the right time."*

*Let me share someone's life history with you. This was a man who failed in business at the age of 21 ; was defeated in a legislative race at age 22; failed again in business at age 24; overcame the death of his sweetheart at age 26; had a nervous breakdown at age 27; lost a congressional*

*race at age 34; lost a senatorial race at age 45; failed in an effort to become vice-president at age 47; lost a senatorial race at age 49; and was elected president of the United States at age 52.*

*This man was Abraham Lincoln.*

*Would you call him a failure? He could have quit. But to Lincoln, defeat was a detour and not a dead end.*

*In 1913, Lee De Forest, inventor of the triodes tube, was charged by the district attorney for using fraudulent means to mislead the public into buying stocks of 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 December 10, 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 65, with a beat-up car and a \$100 check from Social Security, realized he had to do something. He remembered his mother's 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 mouse infested shed near the church. After seeing a small mouse, he was inspired. That was the start of Mickey Mouse.*

*Successful people don't do great things, they only do small things in a great way.*

*One day a partially deaf four year old kid came home with a note in his pocket from his teacher, "Your Tommy is too stupid to learn, get him out of the school." His mother read the note and answered, "My Tommy is not 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 and he was partially deaf.*

*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 the outside world, 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 moving.*

*In 1914, Thomas Edison, at age 67, lost his factory, which was worth a few million dollars, 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:

1. Thomas Edison failed approximately 10,000 times while he was working on the light bulb.
2. Henry Ford was broke at the age of 40.
3. Lee Iacocca was fired by Henry Ford II at the age of 54.
4. 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 in life. 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. We need to learn to become victors, not victims. Fear and doubt short-circuit the mind.

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

### **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.

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.

## **THE GREATEST GIFT**

Man, of all creatures, is physically the most ill equipped in this world. He cannot fly like a bird, can be killed by a tiny insect, cannot outrun a leopard, cannot swim like an alligator, cannot climb the tree like a monkey, doesn't have the eye of an eagle, nor does he have the claws and teeth of a wild cat. Physically, man is helpless and defenseless. But nature is reasonable and kind. Nature's greatest gift to man is the ability to think. He can create his own environment, whereas animals 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 our 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.

## **LIFE IS FULL OF CHOICES AND COMPROMISES**

There is a contradiction here. If life is full of choices, where is the question of compromises? Remember, 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 you drink and drive, you make a choice to risk being killed or killing someone in an accident. When we ill treat people, we make a choice to be ill treated in return. When we don't care about other people, we make a choice not to be cared for by other people.

Choices have consequences. We are free to make our choice but after we have chosen, the choice controls us. We have 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 mold our lives into any shape we want.

### **How is Life Full of Compromises?**

Life is not just party and pleasure; it is also pain and despair. Unthinkable things happen. Sometimes everything turns upside down. Bad things happen to good people. Some things are beyond control, such as physical disability and birth defects. We cannot choose our parents or the circumstances of our birth. So if the ball bounced that way, sorry. But what do we do from here; cry or take the ball and run? That is a choice we have to make.

On a clear day, there are hundreds of boats sailing in all different directions in a lake. How come? Even though the wind is blowing in one direction, the sailboats are going in different directions. What is the difference? 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 the sail.

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 our destiny.

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 and bright spots. If we can handle adversity, 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 in 1904. It was very hot and no one wanted to sample his tea. Blechnyden saw that all the other iced drinks were doing flourishing business. It dawned on him to make his tea into an iced drink, mix in sugar and sell it. He did and people loved it. That was the introduction of iced tea to the world.

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will, we can react responsibly or resentfully.

Human beings are not like an action which has no choice. An action cannot decide whether to become a giant tree or to become food for the squirrels. Human beings have choices. If nature gives us a lemon, we have a choice: either cry or make lemonade.

# 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. Socrates asked the young man to walk with him toward the river. When the water got up to their neck, Socrates took the young man by surprise and ducked him into the water. The boy struggled to get out but Socrates was strong and kept him there until the boy started turning blue. Socrates pulled his head out of the water and the first thing the young man did was to gasp and take a deep breath of air. Socrates asked, "What did you want the most when you were there?" The boy replied, "Air." Socrates said, "That is the secret to success. When you want success as badly as you wanted the air, then you will get it." There is no other secret.*

*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."

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

## **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; whereas 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. Playing to win comes out of inspiration, whereas playing not to lose comes out of desperation.

There are no ideal circumstances. There will never be. To reach anywhere we cannot just drift nor lie at anchor. We need to sometimes sail with the wind and sometimes against it, but sail we must.

Ask any coach or athlete what the difference between the best and the worst team is. There would be very little difference in their physique, talent and ability. The biggest difference you will find is emotional difference. The winning team has dedication and they make the extra effort.

To a winner, the tougher the competition

- ◆ the greater the incentive
- ◆ the more motivated he is
- ◆ the better the performance
- ◆ the sweeter the victory

New challenges develop new potential. Most athletes' best performances have come when the odds are slightly against them. That is when they dig deeper into their reservoir.

*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 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 water face risk from a storm. But if they sit in the harbor, they would rust and that is not what they were built for. That is the difference between playing to win and playing not to lose. One 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.

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

## **Conviction Leads to Commitment**

There is a difference between preferences and conviction. Preferences are negotiable; convictions are not. Preferences give way under pressure; 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.

## **3. Responsibility**

*A duty which becomes a desire will ultimately become a delight.*

*--George Gritter*

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 pay or .  
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

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."

Responsible people accept and learn from their mistakes. Some people never learn.

We can do three things about mistakes:

- ◆ Ignore them

- ◆ Deny them
- ◆ Accept and learn from them

The third alternative takes courage; it is risky but rewarding. If, instead, we defend our weaknesses, we actually start building our lives around them, making them a center point, rather than overcoming them.

#### **4. Hard Work**

Success is not something that you run into by accident. It takes a lot of preparation and character. Everyone likes to win but how many are willing to put in the effort and time to prepare to win? 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.

*I like to work half a day. I don't care if it is the first 12 hours or the second 12 hours.*

*--Kammons Wilson, CEO of Holiday Inn*

One cannot develop a capacity to do anything without hard work, just as a person cannot learn how to spell by sitting on a dictionary. Professionals make things look easy because they have mastered the fundamentals of whatever they do.

*If people knew how hard I had to work to gain my mastery, it wouldn't seem wonderful at all.*

--*Michaelangelo*

An executive called a company to check on a potential candidate. He asked the candidate's supervisor, "How long has he worked for you?" The man replied, "Three days." The executive said, "But he told me he was with you for three years." The man replied, "That is right, but he worked three days."

*The average person puts only 25% of his energy and ability into his work. The world takes off its hat to those who put in more than 50% of their capacity, and stands on its head for those few and far between souls who devote 100%.*

--*Andrew Carnegie*

Success is the result of believing in asking how much work and not how little work, how many hours not how few hours. The best musicians practice every day. Winners don't need to apologize for winning because they work hard and long. It didn't come easy. Everything that we enjoy is a result of someone's hard work. Some work is visible and other work goes unseen, but both are equally important. 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 people don't understand the difference between idle time and leisure time. Idle time amounts to wasting or stealing time; leisure time is earned. Procrastinating amounts to not working.

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

*Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle.*

*--Abraham Lincoln*

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 will power and hard work is a waste.

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

*Once when Fritz Kreisler, the great violinist, 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.*

*Without hard work there is no success.*

*Nature gives birds their food but does not put it in their nest. They have to work hard for it. Nothing comes easy. 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 and are better than big talk.*

## **5. Character**

Character is the sum total of a person's values, beliefs and personality. It is reflected in our behavior, in our 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 opinions but the character of the leader that determines the course of history. There is no twilight zone in integrity. 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.

How come most people love success but hate successful people? Whenever a person rises above average, there will always be someone trying to rip him apart. Chances are pretty good when you see a person on top of a hill, that he just didn't get there, but had to endure a tough climb. It's no different in life. In any profession, a successful person will be envied by those who are not. Don't let criticism distract you from reaching your goal. Average people play it safe to avoid criticism, which can be easily avoided by saying, doing or being nothing. The more you accomplish, the more you risk being criticized. It seems there is a relationship between success and criticism. The greater the success the more the criticism.

Critics have always been sitting at the sidelines. They are underachievers who shout at doers, telling them how to do it right. But remember critics are not the leaders or doers and it is worthwhile asking them to come down to where the action is.

*The critic is one who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.*

*Oscar Wilde*

There is another breed of people who are willing to help others until the others are able to help themselves. But as soon as they are able to help themselves, this group of people make life as miserable and as uncomfortable as possible. This is part of life and if we have to succeed, we have to do it in spite of them. This kind of behavior is the result of jealousy.

## **Character is a Combination**

Character is a combination of integrity, unselfishness, understanding, conviction, courage, loyalty and respect. What is a pleasant personality with character?

- ◆ It is a class by itself.
- ◆ It is composure.
- ◆ It is poise.
- ◆ It is surefootedness and confidence without arrogance.
- ◆ It is being considerate.
- ◆ It is never 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 can 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 secret pride that stands against tyranny.
- ◆ It is comfortable with itself and others.
- ◆ It is the classic touch that gives the winning edge.

- ◆ It works wonders.
- ◆ It accomplishes miracles.
- ◆ It is easy to recognize, hard to define.
- ◆ It is accepting responsibility.
- ◆ It is humility.
- ◆ It is graciousness in victory and defeat.
- ◆ It is not fame and fortune.
- ◆ It is not a plaque.
- ◆ It is permanent.
- ◆ It is intangible.
- ◆ It is being courteous and polite without being subservient.
- ◆ It is being classy without being corky.
- ◆ It is self-discipline and knowledge.
- ◆ It is self-contained.
- ◆ It is a gracious winner and an understanding loser.

More difficult than success itself is; how we handle success. 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.

## **Adversity Builds and/or Reveals Character**

Under adverse circumstances, some people break records and others break down. A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor can you get the finest steel without putting it through fire. Similarly, adversity reveals a person's character and introduces it to himself.

There is a saying that came from Russia: "A hammer shatters glass but forges steel." There is a lot of truth in it. Are we made of glass or steel? It is the same hammer. Just like carbon determines the quality of steel, character determines the quality of man.

## **6. Positive Believing**

What is the difference between positive thinking and positive believing? What if you could actually listen to your thoughts? Are they positive or negative? How are you programming your mind, for success or failure? How you think has a profound effect on your performance.

Having a positive attitude and being motivated is a choice we make every morning.

Living a positive life is not easy; but then neither is negative living. Given a choice, I would go for positive living.

Positive thinking is better than negative thinking and it will help us use our abilities to the fullest.

Positive believing is a lot more than positive thinking. It is having a reason to believe that positive thinking will work. Positive believing is an attitude of confidence that comes with preparation. Having a positive attitude without making the effort is nothing more than having a wishful dream. The following illustrates positive believing.

*Does Lockheed organization have a reason to believe positively? You bet.*

*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 treatment for 18 months, costing \$1.5 billion. Hydraulic jacks, electronic sensors and a computer put the airplane through its paces for more than 36,000 simulated flights, amounting to 100 years of airline service, without one single malfunction. Finally after hundreds of tests the aircraft was given the seal of approval. \**

*There is every reason to believe that this plane would be safe to fly, because of all the effort put into preparation.*

## **7. Give More Than You Get**

It is easy to succeed today. We have no competition. If you want to get ahead in life, go the extra mile. There is no competition on the extra mile. Are you willing to do a little more than you get paid for ? How many people you know are willing to do a little bit more than what they get paid for? Hardly any. Most people don't want to do what they get paid for and there is a second category of people who only want to do what they can get by with. They fulfill their quota just to keep their jobs. There is a small fraction who are willing to do a little bit more than what they get paid for. Why do they do more? If you fall into the last category, then where is your competition?

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.

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

--Kim Hubbard

These people are always wanted everywhere regardless of age, experience or academic qualifications: hardworking people who can work without supervision; people who are punctual and considerate; people who listen carefully and carry out instructions accurately; people who tell the truth; people who don't sulk when called upon to pitch in at the time of an emergency; people who are result rather than task oriented; people who are cheerful and courteous.

Always think in terms of giving value added whether to customers, friends, your spouse, parents or 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 100% and then some more.

Ability without dependability, responsibility and flexibility is a liability.

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

Why are some highly intelligent people, with impressive academic qualifications living failures, or at best practicing mediocrity? Because they become experts at why things won't work and build a reserve of negative energy. They don't want to do what they get paid for or they only want to do what they can get by with. No wonder they are living failures. When we give or do more than what we get paid for, we eliminate our competition. In fact, we become the competition. This attitude is much more important than intelligence or a degree.

## 8. The Power of Persistence

*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.*

--Calvin Coolidge

The journey to being your best is not easy. It is full of setbacks. Winners have the ability to overcome and bounce back with even greater resolve.

## 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 mustn't quit.

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."

Persistence means commitment and determination. There is pleasure in endurance. Commitment and persistence is a decision. Athletes 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. He endures pain and finishes what he started. Lots of failures have begun

well but have not concluded anything. Persistence comes from purpose. Life without purpose is drifting. A person who has no purpose will never persevere and will never be fulfilled.

## 9. Pride of 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. However these should be avoided no matter how great the temptation. Pride comes from within, which is what gives the winning edge.

Pride of performance does not represent ego. It represents pleasure with humility. The quality of the work and the quality of the worker are inseparable. Half-hearted effort does not produce half results; it produces no results.

*Three people were laying bricks and 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." Three people doing the same thing gave totally different replies. The question is : did they have different attitudes? And would their attitude affect their performance? The answer is a clear yes.*

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 was working on a statue for several days and he was taking a long time to retouch every small detail which seemed rather insignificant to a bystander. When asked why he did it, 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.*

*One cannot compromise on quality and service. It is said that Ray Kroc, founder of McDonald's, found a fly during one of his visits at a franchise. Two weeks later the franchisee lost his franchise. Ray Kroc said, "You should work for pride and accomplishment. I was brought up to understand that reward will come later."*

*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 accept you as a mentee or a student. Choose your mentor carefully. A good one will guide and give direction; a bad one will misguide. Show respect. Be an interested student. Teachers like interested students.

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

*There is a story about a king in ancient times who wanted to honor a person that made the greatest contribution to society. All kinds of people came, including doctors and entrepreneurs, and they all presented their case for receiving the honor. The king wasn't impressed. Finally an elderly person with a glow on his face walked in and said he was a teacher. The king came down from his throne and bowed to honor the teacher. It is the teacher who makes the highest contribution in shaping the future of society.*

## **DO WE 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 have all of these qualities. They may not be developed to the level that we want them but they are there. We may not know that they are there, but when we find out, our performance changes.

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.

The same thing is true with people. We all have hidden treasures. All we need to do is bring them to the surface and use them.

## **WHAT IS HOLDING US BACK?**

What would happen if we drove our car with the brakes on? It wouldn't be smart, would it? What would happen to our car? It will never go full speed because the brakes offer resistance. The car will overheat and break down. If it doesn't break down, the resistance will strain the engine. You have two choices. You can either press the accelerator harder and risk damage, or release the brakes to make the car go faster. This is a good parallel to life, because we go through life with our emotional brakes on. What are the brakes? They are the factors that prevent us from achieving success. The way to release our emotional brakes is by building a positive attitude, high self-esteem and by accepting responsibility.

## **REASONS FOR FAILURE WHY WE DON'T ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE**

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

### **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, careful study, confidence and competence which give a person the courage to act while facing fear. The person who never does anything makes no mistakes. However, he doesn't realize that not doing anything is his biggest mistake.

Many opportunities are lost because of indecision. It is habit-forming and contagious. Take risks but don't gamble. Risk-takers go with their eyes open. Gamblers shoot in the dark.

*Once someone asked a farmer if he had planted wheat for the season. The farmer replied, "No. I was afraid it wouldn't rain." Then the man asked, "Did you plant corn?" The farmer said, "No. I was afraid of insects eating one corn. Then the man asked, " What did you plant ? " The farmer said, "Nothing. I played it safe."*

## **RISKS**

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.

To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.

To reach outfox 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.  
They may avoid suffering and sorrow, but they  
cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love, or live.  
Chained by their attitudes, they are slaves,  
they have forfeited their freedom.  
Only a person who risks is free.

## **2. Lack of persistence**

When problems seem insurmountable, quitting seems to be the easiest way out. It is true for every marriage, job and relationship. Winners are struck but not destroyed. We all have had setbacks in life. Failing does not mean we are failures.

More people fail not because they lack knowledge or talent but because they quit. The total secret of success lies in two words, persistence and resistance. Persist in what must be done and resist what ought not 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**

We think short term, not long term. That is limited vision. 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. When people want to be instant millionaires, they take shortcuts and compromise on their integrity.

The desire to make a million overnight has made the lottery a flourishing business.

Remember that instant gratification 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 any more birthdays but want all the presents.

#### **4. Lack of Priorities**

People make substitutes 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.

When we don't have our priorities right, we waste time, not realizing that time wasted is life wasted. Prioritizing requires discipline to do what needs to be done rather than going by our moods and fancies. 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 to success is understanding. Some people have their mind set on money, power, fame or possessions. We have to understand our priorities.

Success does not come by reading or memorizing the principles that lead to success, but by understanding and applying them.

## **5. Looking for Shortcuts**

### ***No Free Lunch***

*There is a story about a king who called his advisers and asked them to write down the wisdom of the ages so that he could pass it on to future generations. After a lot of work, the advisers came up with several volumes of wisdom and presented them to the king. The king called his advisers and said that it was too long, people would not read it. They had to condense it. The advisers went back to work and came back with one volume. The king said the same thing. They came back again with one chapter and then one page, and the king said the same thing still until they came up with one sentence that satisfied the king. He said that if there was one piece of wisdom that he wanted to pass on to future generations, it is this one sentence: "There is no free lunch."*

*In every organization or society, there are freeloaders. They are people who want to get a benefit without paying for it. They are looking for freebies. By and large, sometime or the other, most of us have been guilty of being a freeloader. This is typically seen in associations and organizations. Most members are inactive. They want and get the full benefit of the effort of the active ones.*

***The Easier Way May Actually Be the Tougher Way***

*Once there was a lark singing in the forest. 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 couldn't fly and hunt for worms. It started looking ugly and stopped singing and very soon it died.*

*What is the moral of the story?*

*The moral is quite clear what the lark thought was an easy way to get food turned out to be the tougher way after all. 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.*

## **Losers Look for Quick Fixes**

There are two ways of getting rid of weeds in your yard. The easy way and the not so easy way. The easy way may be to run a lawn mower and the yard looks fine for a while, but that is a temporary answer. Soon the weeds are back. But the not-so-easy way may mean getting down on your hands and knees and pulling out the weeds by the roots. It is time consuming and painful, but the weeds will stay away for a longer time. The first solution appeared easy, but the problem remained. The second solution, was not so easy, but took care of the problem from the roots. The key is to get to the root of the problem.

The same thing is true of our attitude in life. Some people spread their attitude of bitterness and resentment and this attitude keeps cropping up in different parts of their lives. The problem with people today is that they want instant answers. They are looking for one-minute solutions to everything. Just like instant coffee, they want instant happiness. There are no quick fixes. This attitude leads to disappointment.

## **6. Selfishness and Greed**

Individuals and organizations that have a selfish attitude toward each other and toward their customers have no right to expect growth. Their attitude is to keep passing the buck without regard for the welfare of others. Greed always wants more. Needs can be satisfied but greed cannot. It is a cancer of the soul. Greed destroys relationships. How do we gauge our greed index? By asking ourselves three questions:

- ◆ Can I afford it?
- ◆ Do I really need it?
- ◆ If I have it, will it give me peace of mind?

Greed comes out of poor self-esteem, which manifests itself as false pride, pretense or keeping up with the Joneses. The way out of greed is to learn to live within your means and be satisfied. Being contented does not mean lacking ambition.

## **WHERE DOES IT END?**

There is a story about a wealthy farmer who was once offered all the land he could walk on in a day, provided he came back by sundown to the point where he started. To get a new 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 miss this once in a lifetime opportunity to gain more wealth.

Late in the afternoon he realized 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 enough. 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, out of breath and 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 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 they are doing is wrong. They behave like part of a herd.

Some people consider themselves a shade better because they do not support the wrong; however, they lack the conviction to oppose. They do not realize that by not opposing they are actually supporting.

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. If you think you can or if you think you can't, you are right.*

*--Henry Ford*

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

There are three kinds of people in this world:

- ◆ People who make things happen
- ◆ People who watch things happen
- ◆ People who wonder what happened

Which category do you fall into?

## **8. Lack of Understanding of Nature's Laws**

Success is a matter of laws and these are the laws of nature. Change is nature's law. We are either moving forward or we are going backward. We are either creating or disintegrating. There is no status quo.

A seed, if it is not planted in the earth to create, disintegrates. Change is inevitable. It is going to happen whether we like it or not. All progress is change but all change is not progress. We must evaluate change and accept it only if it makes sense. Acceptance without evaluation amounts to conforming behavior, a sign of lack of confidence and of low self-esteem.

There is a lot to be said about tradition. Growth for the sake of growth is the philosophy of a cancerous cell. It is negativity spreading all over. That is not growth, that is destruction. Growth, in order to be meaningful, must be positive.

Success is not a matter of luck, but of laws.

## **Law of Cause and Effect**

In order to succeed, we need to understand the law of cause and effect and the relationship between actions and results.

For every effect, there is a cause. The law of cause and effect is the same as the law of sowing and reaping. The law of sowing and reaping says five things:

- ◆ We must have the desire to sow. Desire is the starting point.
- ◆ What we sow, so shall we reap. If we sow potatoes, we are only going to reap potatoes, not tomatoes.

- ◆ We must sow before we reap. Sowing takes place before reaping; we must give before we get. We cannot expect the fireplace to give us heat before we put in the fuel.

Some people are constantly looking to get before they give. It does not work this way.

- ◆ When we sow a seed, we do not reap a fruit--our harvest is manifold. If we sow a positive seed our harvest will be manifold in the positive, and if we sow a negative one the harvest shall be manifold in the negative. It is not uncommon to see people going against nature's law.
- ◆ A farmer knows that we cannot sow and reap in the same day. There is always a period of gestation.

It is like the law of physics. For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Most of the time people are trying to change the effect while the cause remains. Either we feed our mind with positives constantly or negativity automatically fills the vacuum. Many ancient sages have said what James Allen said in his book *As a Man Thinketh*. A man's mind is like a garden. If we plant good seeds, we will have a good garden. But if we don't plant anything, something will grow and they will be weeds. That is nature's law.

The same is true in our lives. I would go a step further. Even if we plant good seeds, weeds will still grow. The process of weeding goes on forever.

If you put water in a glass and put it in sub-zero temperature, it will freeze. That is not surprising, that is nature's law. In fact, that is the only thing that will happen.

Our thoughts are causes. You sow a thought, you reap an action. You sow an action, you reap a habit. You sow a

habit, you reap a character. You sow a character, you reap a destiny. It all starts with a thought.

### **Laws of Attraction**

We attract to ourselves not what we want but what we are. The old phrase, "Birds of a feather flock together," holds true.

Negative thinkers are dangerous. They attract other negative people, react negatively, expect the worst and they are not disappointed.

Have you observed how at any social occasion successful people attract other successful people? Failures attract other failures, and together they will moan, groan and complain.

Our friends are not the kind of people we want but the kind of people we are.

## **9. Unwillingness to Plan and Prepare**

*Everyone has a will to win but very few have the will to prepare to win.*

*--Vince Lombardi*

Most people spend more time planning a party or vacation than planning their lives.

### **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 people take the easy way.

Preparation is the necessary edge to succeed in any field.

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

### **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 it quickly
- ◆ not dwell on it
- ◆ learn from it
- ◆ not repeat it
- ◆ not assign blame or make excuses

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 paralyze when a person is not prepared. Just like water gravitates to its own path, success gravitates to those who are prepared. Weak effort gets weak results.

Persistence is a name we give to

- ◆ a purpose
- ◆ preparation
- ◆ patience
- ◆ principles
- ◆ positive attitude
- ◆ a plan .
- ◆ price .
- ◆ practice
- ◆ pride

### **Ask yourself:**

- ◆ Do you have a clearly defined purpose?
- ◆ Do you have a plan of action?
- ◆ What effort are you putting into preparation?
- ◆ What price are you willing to pay? How far are you willing to go?
- ◆ 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?
- ◆ Do you have pride in your performance?
- ◆ Do you have the "can do" attitude?

## **10. Rationalizing**

Winners may analyze but never rationalize that 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 born under the wrong stars.

I'm too young.

I'm too old.

I'm handicapped.

I'm not smart enough.

I'm not educated.

I'm not good looking.

I don't have contacts.

I don't have enough money.

I don't have enough time.

The economy is bad.

If only I had the opportunity.

If only I didn't have a family.

If only I had married right.

The list can go on and on.

## ***HOW THEY CATCH MONKEYS IN INDIA***

*Monkey-hunters use a box with an opening at the top, big enough for the monkey to slide its hand in. Inside the box are nuts. The monkey grabs the nuts and now its hand becomes a fist. The monkey tries to get its hand out but the opening is big enough for the hand to slide in, but too small for the fist to come out. 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 some nuts that keep us from going forward in life. We keep rationalizing by saying, "I cannot do this because . . ." and whatever comes after "because" are the nuts that we are hanging on to which are holding us back.

Successful people don't rationalize. Two things determine if a person will be a success: reasons and results. Reasons don't count while results do. A good advice for failure is: Don't think, don't ask and don't listen. Just rationalize.

## **11. Not Learning from Past Mistakes**

People who do not learn lessons from history are doomed. Failure is a teacher 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 wiser people learn from other people's mistakes. Our lives are not long enough to learn only from our own mistakes.

## **12. Inability to Recognize Opportunity**

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

## **13. Fear**

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

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

Some of the 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 felt. Fear leads to anxiety, which in turn leads to irrational thinking, which actually sabotages our solution to the problem. The normal response to fear is escape. Escape puts us in our comfort zone and reduces the impact temporarily, while keeping the cause. Imaginary fear magnifies the problem. Fear can get out of hand and destroy happiness and relationships.

Fear of failure often can be worse than failure itself. Failure is not the worst thing that could happen to someone. People who don't try have failed before attempting. When infants learn to walk, they keep falling; but to them it is not failing so they get up. If they got disheartened, they would never walk. It is better to die on one's feet than to live with fear on one's knees.

## **14. Inability to Use Talent**

Albert Einstein said, "I think I used about 25% of my intellectual capacity during my life."

According to William James, human beings use only 10-12% 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 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. Rusting out is idleness and passivity. Patience is a conscious decision, it is active and involves perseverance and persistence.

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**

Have you ever wondered why some people never reach their goals? Why they are always frustrated with reversals and crises? Why is it 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.

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

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

control tower telling me what to do."

Lack of consistency is 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 used to brag about his speed and challenged the tortoise to a race. The tortoise accepted the challenge. They appointed the fox as the judge who gave them the starting and finishing points. The race started and the tortoise kept going steadily. The hare ran quickly, left the tortoise behind and decided to take a nap since he was so confident he would win the race. By the time he woke up, remembered the race and started running, he saw that the tortoise had already reached the finish line and won.*

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.

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. Poor self-esteem**

Poor self-esteem is a lack of self-respect and self-worth. 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. One's self is not to be found but to be created.

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

## **17. Lack of Knowledge**

The first step towards knowledge is awareness of areas of ignorance. The more knowledge a person gets, the more he realizes 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, which can mislead a person.

## **18. Fatalistic Attitude**

A fatalistic attitude prevents people from accepting responsibility for their position in life. They attribute success and failure to luck. They resign themselves to their fate. They believe and accept the predestined future written in their horoscope or stars, 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. They wait for things to happen rather than make 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's men who are sometimes conmen. They become superstitious and ritualistic.

Shallow people believe in luck. People with strength and determination believe in cause and effect. Some people

consider a rabbit's foot lucky; but it wasn't lucky for the rabbit, was it?

### ***Some People Think They are Just Unlucky***

This breeds a fatalistic attitude. People who get involved halfheartedly say things like:

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

These people guarantee failure because they get into a project with no dedication or determination. They lack courage, commitment and confidence. They are starting with complacency and call themselves unlucky.

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.

### ***Effort Does it***

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.

Athletes train 15 years for 15 seconds of performance. Ask them if they got lucky. 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. His threshold for tolerating pain becomes higher because in the end he is not training so much 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 safety except 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, and a boat came to help him. Again he refused to go, Belying, "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?"*

The only way to overcome the 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 or wishing, to accomplish anything 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 opportunity meets preparation. 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**

If we read stories of people who overcame serious disabilities, it becomes 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 do it 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.

According to Glen Cunningham, "Desire is what made a boy with burnt legs set the world record in the one mile run."

A polio victim at the age of five started swimming to regain strength. It was because of her desire to succeed that she went on to become a world record holder at three events and won the gold at the 1956 Olympics at Melbourne. Her name is Shelley Mann.

When people lack purpose and direction, they see no opportunity. If a person has the desire to accomplish something, the direction to know his objective, the dedication to stay focused, and the discipline required to put in the hard work, then other things come easy. But if you don't have them, it doesn't matter what else you have. Character is the foundation upon which all else is built. It endures.

## **20. Lack of Courage**

Successful people are not looking 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. It is courage and character that is the deadly combination for

success. This is the difference between the ordinary and the extraordinary.

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

## **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 overtake it or undercook it. Once you have the right recipe and with practice and the occasional disaster, it becomes a lot easier.

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

You have the recipe. To use it is your choice.

## **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. Come up with three suggestions how you can do your job better, faster, and more effectively:

(a)

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(b)

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(c)

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2. Write down three ways you can use the success principles in each area of your life:

(a) Work

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(b) Home

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(a) Socially

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3. List the areas in your life where lack of discipline is hurting you. Estimate its cost to you.

4. The next time you meet with adversity, stop and ask yourself these two questions: What can I learn from this challenge? How can I turn this lesson in life to my advantage?

5. Write your definition of success.

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6. Define your goals in life.

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Why are they important?

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7. Think back: Have your goals changed in the last 10 years? If yes, why?

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **MOTIVATION**

Motivating yourself & others every day

I believe in two premises: (i) most people are good people, but can do better; and (ii) most people already know what to do, so why aren't they doing it?

What is missing is the spark--motivation. Some self help books adopt the approach of teaching what to do; we take a different approach. We ask, "Why don't you do it?" If you ask people on the street what should be done, they will give you all the correct answers. But ask them whether

they are doing it and the answer will be no. What is lacking is motivation. The greatest motivation comes from a person's belief system. That means he needs to believe in what he does and accept responsibility. That is where motivation becomes important. When people accept responsibility for their behavior and actions, their attitude toward life becomes positive. They become more productive, personally and professionally. Their relationships improve both at home and at work. Life becomes more meaningful and fulfilled.

After a person's basic physical needs are met, emotional needs become a bigger motivator. Every behavior comes out of the "pain or gain" principle. If the gain is greater than the pain, that is the motivator. If the pain is greater than the gain, then that is a deterrent.

Gains can be tangible, such as: monetary rewards, vacations, and gifts. They can be intangible, such as: recognition, appreciation, sense of achievement, promotion, growth, responsibility, sense of fulfillment, self worth, accomplishment, and belief.

## **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INSPIRATION AND MOTIVATION?**

I run seminars internationally and people often ask me if I can motivate others. My answer is no, I cannot. People motivate themselves. What I can do, however, is inspire them to motivate themselves. We can create a conducive environment which can be motivating. In order to inspire people to motivate themselves, we need to understand their needs and wants. There is a direct correlation between motivation and productivity. People who do just

enough to get by so they don't get fired will never be valuable to any organization.

Inspiration is changing thinking; motivation is changing action.

Motivation is like fire unless you keep adding fuel to it, it dies. Just like exercise and food don't last long, neither does motivation. However, if the source of motivation is belief in inner values, it becomes long--lasting.

What is the greatest motivator? Is it money? Recognition? Improvement in our quality of life? Acceptance by those we love? All these can be motivating forces.

Experience has shown that people will do a lot for money, more for a good leader, and do most for a belief. We see this happening every day all over the world. People will die for a belief. My objective is to share the fact that when we believe that we are responsible for our lives and our behavior, our outlook toward life changes for the better.

## **LET'S REDEFINE MOTIVATION**

The next logical question is, what is motivation? Motivation is something that encourages action or feeling. To motivate means to encourage and inspire. Motivation can also mean to turn on or ignite the feeling or 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 and at home.

Often life becomes like a lopsided wheel giving a bumpy ride.

The greatest enemy of motivation is complacency. Complacency leads to frustration, and when people are frustrated they give up because they cannot identify what is important.

## **MOTIVATION--HOW DOES IT WORK?**

Once you understand the principle that motivates the motivator, you can proceed to achieve your goal and can motivate others too.

Your internal motivation is your drive and attitude. It is contagious. Attitude is 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 called auto-suggestion. Auto suggestions are positive statements made in the present tense and repeated regularly. In other words it is positive self-talk.

Motivation is classified into two types: external and internal.

## **EXTERNAL MOTIVATION**

External motivation comes from outside, such as money, societal approval, fame or fear. Examples of external motivation are fear of getting spanked by parents and fear of getting fired at work.

A company wanted to set up a pension plan. In order for the plan to be installed, it needed 100% participation. Everyone signed up except John. The plan made sense and was in the best interest of everyone. John not signing

was the only obstacle. John's supervisor and other co-workers had tried to persuade him without success.

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 right away. The owner asked John why he hadn't signed earlier. John replied, "No one explained the plan quite as clearly as you did."

## **Fear Motivation**

The advantages of fear motivation are:

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

## **Performance Goes Up**

It is not uncommon to see the prey outsmarting the predator, because one is running for its food and the other for its life.

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

- ◆ It is external, which means the motivation is there while the motivator is there. When the motivator goes, the motivation also goes.
- ◆ It causes stress. Performance is limited to compliance.

- ◆ In the long run, performance goes down. It destroys creativity.
- ◆ They get used to the stick and then need a bigger stick.

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, etc.

What are the advantages of incentive motivation? The major advantage is that it can work very well as long as the incentive is strong enough. Think of a donkey with a carrot dangling in front and with 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. From time to time, you have to let the donkey take a bite of the carrot; otherwise it is going to get discouraged. After the donkey takes a bite, its stomach is full, and you need to wait for the donkey to get hungry again before it will pull the cart. This is typically seen in our business environment. The moment salespeople meet their quota, they stop working. This is because their motivation is limited to meeting their quota. That is external, not internal.

***WE ARE ALL MOTIVATED EITHER POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY***

*When I was in Toronto, I heard a story of two brothers. One was a drug addict and a drunk who frequently beat up his family. The other one was a very successful businessman who was respected in society and had a wonderful family. Some people wanted to find out why two brothers from the same parents, brought up in the same environment, could be so different.*

*The first one was asked, "How come you do what you do? You are a drug addict, a drunk, and you beat your family. What motivates you?" He said, "My father." They asked, "What about your father?" The reply was, "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."*

*They went to the brother who was doing everything right and asked him the same question. "How come you are doing everything right? What is your source of motivation?" 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 were deriving their strength and 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.*

## **DIFFERENT THINGS MOTIVATE DIFFERENT PEOPLE**

*Internal motivation comes from within, such as pride, a sense of achievement, responsibility and belief.*

*There was a young boy who used to come for regular practice but always played in the reserves and never made*

*it to the soccer eleven. While he was practicing, his father used to sit at the far end, waiting for him.*

*The matches had started and for four days, he didn't show up for practice or the quarter or semifinals. All of a sudden he showed up for the finals, went to the coach and said, "Coach, you have always kept me in the reserves and never let me play in the finals. But today, please let me play." The coach said, "Son, I'm sorry, I can't let you. 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. I beg of you, 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 house on fire. Every time he got the ball, he shot a goal. Needless to say, he was the best player and the star of the game. His team had a spectacular win.*

*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. What happened? How did you play so well?" 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 no one there. 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."*

## **Internal Motivation**

Internal motivation is the inner gratification, not for success or winning, but for the fulfillment that comes from having done it. It is a feeling of accomplishment, rather than just achieving a goal. Reaching an unworthy goal does not give the 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. Keep your goals in front of you and read them morning and evening.

The two most important motivating factors are recognition and responsibility.

Recognition means being appreciated; being treated with respect and dignity; and feeling a sense of belonging.

Responsibility gives a person a feeling of belonging and ownership. He then becomes part of the bigger picture. Lack of responsibility can become demotivating.

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 by itself is motivating.

## **THE FOUR STAGES FROM MOTIVATION TO DEMOTIVATION**

### **1. Motivated Ineffective**

When is an employee most motivated in the cycle of employment? When he joins an organization. Why? Because he wants to prove that by hiring him, the employer

made the right decision. He is motivated but because he is new to the environment, he does not know what to do. So he is ineffective.

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

Unprofessional organizations have none or very poor orientation programs. The first day on 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. The organization loses the opportunity to mold the individual to the culture of that organization.

Professional organizations, on the other hand, take special care to induct people into their organizations. They explain to them, among other things, the following:

- ◆ the hierarchy
- ◆ expectations of each other
- ◆ do's and donuts
- ◆ parameters and guidelines
- ◆ what is acceptable and what is not
- ◆ what are the resources

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 goes down and the employee starts learning the tricks of the trade. This is the stage when the employee is not motivated. He continues doing just enough so that the employer has no reason to fire him but he is really not motivated.

This stage is detrimental to growth--most people in organizations fall into this third stage. A motivated professional learns the trade and leaves the tricks to cheats and crooks, but a demotivated employee starts sabotaging the company. His performance is marginal. He makes fun of the good performers. He rejects new ideas and spreads the negativity all around.

Our objective is to bring them back to the second stage of motivated effective through training. An employee ought not to stay in the third stage too long; because from here either they move back to the second stage, which is being motivated and effective, or they move into the fourth stage.

### **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 at this point.

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 achieve their own success.

## **DEMOTIVATING FACTORS**

Some of the demotivators are:

- ◆ Unfair criticism
- ◆ Negative criticism
- ◆ Public humiliation
- ◆ Rewarding the non performer which can be demotivating for the performer
- ◆ Failure or fear of failure
- ◆ Success which leads to complacency
- ◆ Lack of direction
- ◆ Lack of measurable objectives
- ◆ Low self-esteem
- ◆ Lack of priorities
- ◆ Negative self-talk
- ◆ Office politics
- ◆ Unfair treatment
- ◆ Hypocrisy
- ◆ Poor standards
- ◆ Frequent change
- ◆ Responsibility without authority

A satisfied person is not necessarily a motivated person. Some people are satisfied with very little. In this case, satisfaction may lead to complacency. Motivation comes from excitement and excitement does not come unless there is full commitment.

New methods of motivation will not work till the demotivating factors are removed. Many times, just removing the demotivating factors can spark motivation.

## **Motivators**

What we really want to accomplish is self-motivation, when people do things for their own reasons and not yours. That is 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 motivate others:

- ◆ Give recognition
- ◆ Give respect
- ◆ Make work interesting
- ◆ Be a good listener
- ◆ Throw a challenge
- ◆ Help but don't do for others what they should do for themselves

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

## **ACTION PLAN**

1. Develop a sense of pride through training.
2. Reward performance.
3. Set well-defined, clear goals.
4. Set high expectations.
4. Set clear, measurable benchmarks.
6. Evaluate the needs of others.
7. Make others part of your big picture. Set a good example by being a positive role model.  
Build the self-esteem of others.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **SELF-ESTEEM**

Building a positive self-esteem & image

*A beggar was sitting at the train station with a bowl full of pencils. A young executive passed by and dropped a dollar in the bowl. He then boarded the train. Before the doors closed, something came to his mind and he went back to the beggar, grabbed a bunch of pencils, and said, "They are priced right. After all you are a business person and so am I," and he left. Six months later, the executive attended a party. The beggar was also there in a suit and*

*tie. The beggar recognized the executive, went up to him and said, "You probably don't recognize me but I remember you." He then narrated the incident that happened six months before. The executive said, "Now that you have reminded me, I do recall that you were begging. What are you doing here in your suit and tie?" The beggar replied, "You probably don't know what you did for me that day. You were the first person in my life who gave me back my dignity. You grabbed the bunch of pencils and said, 'They are priced right. After all, you are a business person and so am I.' After you left, I thought 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 back my dignity. 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. This is the magic of self-esteem in our lives.

Simply put, self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves. Our opinion of ourselves critically influences everything, from our performance at work, our relationships, and our role as a parent to our accomplishments in life. 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 worthwhile, 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 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 can give and receive criticism and compliments, tactfully, and with ease.

Self-esteem is a feeling which comes from an awareness of what is good and having done it.

### **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 had grown, equivalent only to the shape and size of the jar. Just as the pumpkin could not grow beyond the boundaries restricting it, human beings cannot perform beyond the boundaries of their self-concept, whatever it may be.

### **SOME ADVANTAGES OF HIGH SELF-ESTEEM**

There is a direct relationship between people's feelings and their productivity. High self-esteem is evident in respect for one's self, others, property, law, parents and one's country. The reverse is also true.

## **Self-esteem :**

- ◆ Builds strong conviction.
- ◆ Creates willingness to accept responsibility.
- ◆ Builds optimistic attitudes.
- ◆ Leads to better relationships and fulfilling lives.
- ◆ Makes a person more sensitive to others' needs and develop a caring attitude.
- ◆ Makes a person self-motivated and ambitious.
- ◆ Makes a person open to new opportunities and challenges.
- ◆ Improves performance and increases risk-taking ability.
- ◆ Helps a person give and receive both criticism and compliments tactfully and easily.

How do we recognize poor self-esteem? What are the behavior patterns of a person with poor self-esteem? The following is a brief list, which is not all inclusive but is indicative.

- ◆ They are generally gossip mongers.
- ◆ They have a critical nature. They criticize as if there is a contest going on and they have to win a prize.
- ◆ They have high egos they are arrogant and believe they know it all.

People with low self-esteem are generally difficult to work with and for. They tear down others to get a feeling of superiority.

- ◆ They are closed minded and self-centered.
- ◆ They constantly make excuses--always justifying failures.
- ◆ They never accept responsibility--always blaming others.
- ◆ They have a fatalistic attitude no initiative and always waiting for things to happen.

- ◆ They are jealous by nature.
- ◆ They are unwilling to accept positive criticism. They become defensive.
- ◆ They are bored and uncomfortable when alone.
- ◆ Poor self-esteem leads to 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, the jokes get dirtier and dirtier.
- ◆ They don't have genuine friends because they are not genuine themselves. I
- ◆ They make promises they know they are not going to keep. A person with low self-esteem would promise the moon to make a sale. Unkept promises lead to loss of credibility. A person with high self esteem would prefer loss of business than loss of credibility because they realize that one cannot put a price on one's credibility.
- ◆ Their behavior is senseless 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 lack balance.
- ◆ They alienate people and tend to be lonely.
- ◆ They are touchy in nature--this is called the fragile ego. Anytime something is said, a person with a fragile ego takes it personally and gets hurt. It leads to dejection.

What is the difference between being touchy and being sensitive? Touchiness is the cactus approach; you touch me and I will hurt you. Being sensitive is the positive approach, the caring approach. Many times the two are used interchangeably. People say be careful when talking

to so and so, he or she is very sensitive. What they are really saying is that the person is touchy, so be careful.

- ◆ They have negative expectations of themselves and others and are seldom disappointed.

- ◆ They lack confidence.

1. They constantly seek approval and validation from others. Seeking approval is different from seeking a second opinion, which really means consultation.

2. Bragging about themselves is also a sign of lack of confidence.

3. Submissive or timid behavior. These are people who constantly apologize for their existence. They are always putting themselves down, which is different from being humble. Humility comes from confidence whereas putting yourself down comes from lack of it.

A person who lacks confidence cannot be an effective leader. Others sense this lack of confidence, which results in a lack of respect.

4. Lack of assertiveness. People with low self esteem are not willing to stand up for their belief. On the other hand, being unduly aggressive is also a sign of poor self-esteem. Being aggressive in situations that require compassion does not amount to assertiveness.

5. A lack of confidence results in conformist behavior. If everybody is doing it, then so should I. Every day we see people giving in to peer pressure, knowing full well what they are doing could be detrimental yet they do it to be accepted. People with low self-esteem go along to get along. They are looking for outside validation because they lack confidence in themselves.

6. Keeping up with the Joneses--pretense

When people try to keep up with the Joneses, they spend money they haven't earned, they buy things they don't need, and they try to impress people they don't like.

## 7. Nonconformist or attention-seeking 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 deferent and gain attention. Examples are people who brag excessively, the classroom clown, etc.

- ◆ They are indecisive and do not accept responsibility. Lack of courage and fear of criticism lead to indecisive behavior.
- ◆ They rebel 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 rebel 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 are anti-social and may be withdrawn.
- ◆ They lack a sense of direction and have an "I don't care" attitude which is reflected in their behavior. 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.
- ◆ Too much emphasis on material things

People with poor self-esteem judge a person's worth by his possessions, not by who he is. They constantly look at what kind of car you are driving, what kind of home you live in, what kind of clothes and jewelry you wear. They forget that people make things, and not vice versa. People with poor self esteem place more emphasis on net worth than self worth. Their lives revolve around ads and fads. Designer labels are their status symbols. Take away their things and they will die of shame. They get into a rat race. "The problem with the rat race is that even if you win, you are still a rat."\*

- ◆ Lack of pride in themselves--they are shabbily dressed and uncouth.
- ◆ They are takers, not givers.

Low self-esteem could lead to extremes of behavior. A person with high self-esteem could choose identical behavior for different reasons: He may be alone because he prefers solitude, whereas a person with low self-esteem prefers to be alone because he is uncomfortable in groups.

### **Some characteristics of people with:**

High Self-Esteem	Low
Self-Esteem	
Talk about ideas	Talk
about people	
Caring attitude	Critical attitude
Humility	Arrogance

Respects authority  
 against authority  
 Courage of conviction  
 along  
 Confidence  
 Concerned about character  
 about reputation  
 Assertive  
 Accepts responsibility  
 world  
 Self-interest  
 Optimistic  
 Understanding  
 Willing to learn  
 Sensitive  
 Solitude  
 Discuss  
 Believes in self-worth  
 worth only  
 Guided  
 Discipline  
 freedom  
 Internally driven  
 Respects others  
 others  
 Enjoys decency  
 Knows limit  
 Giver

Rebels  
 Goes along to get  
 Confusion  
 Concerned  
 Aggressive  
 Blames the whole  
 Selfish  
 Fatalistic  
 Greedy  
 Know it all  
 Touchy  
 Lonely  
 Argue  
 Believes in net  
 Misguided  
 Distorted sense of  
 Externally driven  
 Looks down on  
 Enjoys vulgarity  
 Everything goes  
 Taker

The objective of this list is to provide a basis for self evaluation rather than produce guilt. It is not necessary to have all the traits. Some characteristics may be present to a greater or lesser degree. So long as we are able to

recognize them, we can make an effort to correct ourselves.

## ***THEY 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 this comes from insecurity and poor self-esteem.

### **Why Pretend?**

Our character can be judged by everything we do or don't do, like or don't like, such as:

- ◆ The kind of movies we enjoy.
- ◆ The kind of music we listen to.
- ◆ The kind of company we keep or avoid.
- ◆ The kind of jokes we tell or laugh at.
- ◆ The kind of books we read.

Every action of ours gives us away anyway, so why pretend? I believe that if a person lives with conviction, sensitivity and cooperation, he can move others with his effort. That person becomes worthy of self-respect.

**Positive Self-Esteem  
Self-Esteem**

**Negative**

- |                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. self-respect<br>down          | self-put    |
| 2. self-confidence<br>doubt      | self-       |
| 3. self-worth<br>abuse           | self-       |
| 4. self-acceptance<br>denial     | self-       |
| 5. self-love<br>centered Ness    | self-       |
| 6. self-knowledge                | self-deceit |
| 7. self-discipline<br>indulgence | self-       |

Self-esteem does not mean having a big ego. 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 self esteem, we cannot share it with others. We need to first get in touch with ourselves and put ourselves in order.

Even in an aircraft, the safety instructions tell you to put on an oxygen mask on yourself first and then on your child. We are not talking about selfishness.

Self-esteem can be defined as the way we feel about ourselves. Self-image is the way we see ourselves. When we feel good, our productivity goes up.

## **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**

This is when we say to ourselves, consciously or unconsciously, statements such as:

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

Such statements only reinforce the negative and put ourselves down. Very soon our mind starts believing these statements and our behavior changes accordingly. They become self-fulfilling prophecies.

### **Environment**

#### **Home**

The greatest thing that a parent can give to 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."

## **Upbringing**

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

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 be ignorant as an adult.

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

It is a great heritage to have honest parents. Parents who participate in crooked business 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 adults in positions of influence. Even as adults, we look to our supervisors and managers as role models.

\* Socrates

**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.

## ***BUILDING CONFIDENCE***

*A young couple used to leave their daughter at a day-care 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.*

## What Makes a Child a 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.

\*\* From *The Moral Compass*, edited by William J. Bermet, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1995, pp. 52~24.

Make him believe that winning is not everything. 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 21 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, etc. 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.
- ◆ 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 or 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, comfort. Deprivation can cause frustration.
- ◆ Side with him against neighbors, teachers, etc., 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.
- ◆ What children get, they give to society.

## **CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE**

*If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.*

*If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.*

*If a child lives with hostility, he learns tonight.*

*If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.*

*If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.*

*If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.  
If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.  
If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.  
If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.  
If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.  
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,  
he learns to find love in the world.*

## **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 profession, whether in a contractor, attorney, accountant, politicians police officer, or judge. Integrity is a lot stronger than honesty. In fact, it is the foundation of honesty.

Youths 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 schoolteacher 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 rolls, etc., because that is what he brings home every day in his lunch box."*

## **Making Unfair Comparison**

Fair comparisons are OK but unfair comparisons make a person feel inferior. Comparison basically brings out the competitive spirit to outperform the next 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.

## **Failure or Success: A Ripple Effect**

There is a lot of truth in the statement, "success breeds success and failure breeds failure." 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 even lower. To bring his self-confidence back, the coach pits 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, 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. With every successful completion, the child's level of confidence and self-esteem go up. Add to that positive strokes of encouragement, and this will start solidifying positive self-esteem. Our responsibility is to help

break the chain of failure and put ourselves and our children into the chain of success.

## **Confusing Failing with Failure**

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

## **Unrealistic Expectations of Perfection by Parents, Teachers and Supervisors**

Suppose 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?" What do you think will go through the child's mind? Did he try for the B? Or should his parents congratulate the child for the B and accept a lower standard? Not at all.

What the child is really looking for is acknowledgement and encouragement for the effort in getting the five A's. A parent, after acknowledging and praising the As, can make clear his expectations of seeing all six A's and offer help if needed. If we lower our standards, the chances are pretty good that the performance next time would drop to those expectations.

Similarly at work, an employee does 100 things right and one thing wrong. Guess what the boss picks on. Acknowledge the positive but don't lower your standards.

## **Lack of Discipline**

## What is Discipline?

Is it absolute freedom to do what a person wants? Is freedom regardless of consequences? Does it mean corrective action after a problem occurs or a wrong is done? Is it imposition? Is it abuse? Does it take away freedom?

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

*Discipline is an act of love. Sometimes you have to be unkind to be kind: Not all medicine is sweet, not all surgery is painless, but we have to take it. We need to learn from nature. We are all familiar with that big animal, the giraffe. A mama giraffe gives birth to a baby giraffe, standing. All of a sudden, the baby falls on a hard surface from the cushion of mama's womb, and sits on the ground. The first thing mama does is to get behind the baby and give him a hard kick. The baby gets up, but his legs are weak and wobbly and the baby falls down. Mama goes behind again and gives him one more kick. The baby gets up but sits down again. Mama keeps kicking till the baby gets on its feet and starts moving. Why? Because mama knows that the only chance of survival for the baby in the jungle is to get on its feet. Otherwise it will be eaten up by wildcats and become dead meat.*

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

The reverse is just as true.

*If discipline is practiced in every home, juvenile delinquency would be reduced by 95%.*

*--J. Edgar Hoover*

Good parents are not afraid of momentary dislikes by children to enforce the subject.

### **Discipline Gives Freedom**

Allowing a child to eat a box of chocolate could lead to sickness. At the same time, the discipline of eating one or two pieces a day can be an enjoyable experience for a longer time.

Our instinct makes us do whatever we want regardless of the consequences.

*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. What we think is pulling us down 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 very things that we think are holding us down are the 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 rule, we are actually gaining freedom, aren't we?

## **It is Loving Firmness**

I have asked this question to many participants in my seminars: "If your child had a fever of 105degF and did not want to go to the doctor, what would you do?" Invariably they said they would get medical help even if the child resisted. Why? Because it is in the best interest of the child.

## ***Parenting is Not a Popularity Contest***

*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 prisoner 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. In not discharging their responsibilities, his parents are also to blame although it does not absolve him of his responsibility.*

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

*Parents spend an average of 15 minutes a week in "meaningful dialog" with their children--children who are left to glean whatever values they can from peers and TV.*

*--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." Why then do we question today, in matters of personal conduct, or to achieve any standard, if discipline is necessary? It is absolutely necessary.

Today the philosophy is: "If it feels good, do it."

I have heard parents innocently 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.

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, no matter what age we are. Winning in life comes when we do not succumb to what we want to do but do what ought to be done. That requires discipline.

## **Labeling and Put-Downs By Parents, Teachers and Supervisors**

Have you heard some parents playfully or affectionately calling their kids "dummy" and "stupid"? Labels stick for life. When the kids grow up they will be sure to prove the parents right. Labels do not only stick for life but for generations. The caste system in India is a prime example of how labeling can hurt. Upper caste or lower caste, "If it is not a label, what is it?"

Common put-downs parents say to their kids are:

- ◆ You are dumb.
- ◆ You never do anything right.
- ◆ You will never amount to anything.

## **Teaching the Right Values**

Many times, inadvertently and innocently, we end up teaching wrong values within our families and organizations. For example, we tell our children or staff to lie for us.

- ◆ Tell them I am not here.
- ◆ The check is in the mail.

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.

## **STEPS TO BUILDING A POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM**

## **Turn Scars into Stars**

*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 written 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 paralyzed with polio. She had to wear a brace and the doctor said she would never put her foot on the earth. 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 13, 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 15 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. But 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.*

\*Adapted from Star Ledger, November 13, 1994.

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

When we hear or read stories of people who have turned adversity into opportunity, doesn't it motivate us? If we

regularly read biographies and autobiographies of such people, won't we stay motivated?

## ***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 14. He was intelligent enough to know there had to be a V8 engine but he was ignorant and didn't know how to build it. So he asked all his highly qualified, educated people to build one. But they told him what could be done and what couldn't. According to them, a V8 was an impossibility. 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 and 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 produced his V8 engine.*

*How come? They let their imagination run beyond academic limitation. Education teaches us what can be done and sometimes also teaches us false limitations.*

## ***THE BUMBLEBEE***

*We need to learn from nature. According to scientists, the bumblebee's body is too heavy and its wing span too small. Aerodynamically, the bumblebee cannot fly. But the bumblebee doesn't know that and it keeps flying.*

*When you don't know your limitations, you go out and surprise yourself. In hindsight, you wonder if you had any limitations. The only limitations a person has are those that are self-imposed. Don't let education put limitations on you.*

### **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 lock home, 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 as you would expect others to help you gives a feeling of gratification. It is a good feeling which represents high self-esteem. The process of giving without having expectations or getting anything in return raises one's self esteem.

A healthy personality has the need not only to get but also to give.

### **Learn to Give and Receive Compliments**

Don't miss out on any opportunity to give sincere compliments. Remember, the key word is sincerity. When others give you a compliment, accept it graciously and gracefully with two words, "Thank you." That is a sign of humility.

## **Accept Responsibility**

We need to accept responsibility for our behavior and our 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. Who is he hurting the most? We have 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 family
- ◆ to work
- ◆ to society
- ◆ environment

We can add to the greenery by planting trees, stopping soil erosion, preserving natural beauty.

We cannot live as if we have another earth we can move to. 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, how can future generations forgive us?

If the average life expectancy of a person is 75 years and if you are 40 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. Don't we?

Self-discipline does not kill joy but builds it. 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 without realizing that many problems are caused by lack of discipline.

## **Set Goals**

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

What we get upon achieving our goals is a lot less important than what we become. It is the becoming which 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 poor self-esteem, whereas realistic goals are encouraging and build high self-esteem.



Nikhil Shambhu  
The quality of being something that  
holds you back

Nikhil Shambhu  
promote the growth of

Nikhil Shambhu  
profanity-- Vulgar or irreverent  
speech or action

profane-- Corrupt morally,  
blasphemous





























































































































































































































































