**How to Magnify Your Momentum to Build Your Business**

**10 Tactical Tips to find a mentor, have a vision, be action-oriented, manage change, and create a support team.**

**Book 1 of 5**

***Tips You Can Start Today to Create the Life You Want Tomorrow***

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**Chapter 1 - Do Something Worthwhile as Early in the Day as Possible**

Every morning, my siblings and I would be awakened by an ever approaching ominous vacuum cleaner. It was our mother beginning her day with doing something she believed to be worthwhile. We would burrow down into our warm beds but knew that inevitably, when the vacuum cleaner hit our door, it was time to get up.

Our first task was to make our bed. It sounds like a simple task and I did not realize until I grew older that it was a way to start my day on a positive note. When the bed was made, I soon was tidying up my room and started a routine of preparing for school and what was to follow.

Whatever you’re big goal in life happens to be, do something about it first thing each day. It’s a great way to show yourself that you’re serious about being successful. It’s also a way to build a lot of momentum that can carry you through the day. If you are interested in learning a certain topic, take time to read up on the subject. Most millionaires spend at least one hour a day reading and studying an area of interest that will propel them to meet their goal.

Be sure to download the accompanying checklist I have created to help you in building momentum in your life. You can find it at ????????????????

As your day goes on, you encounter fatigue. This makes it more difficult to make good decisions later on. You are at our most rested and with a positive attitude, you can tackle your day with the right approach. I have always been a morning person and usually exercise and meditate before my work day officially begins. If you consider momentum to be a challenge, by starting your day with a focus on your goals, you will believe you have a head start over your competition.

\*For example, if you need to drop a few pounds, get out of the door ASAP in the morning and go for a quick walk. By doing this, you feel a sense of accomplishment and can build it throughout the day. Opportunities to take the stairs instead of the elevator will further embolden you.

\*If you want to write a novel, write one page before you even take a shower. I have a small notebook and pen by my bed so if I wake up during the night with an idea for my book, I have the materials available to jot down my idea. It is often quiet in my house in the morning before the hustle and bustled of my family distract me from my work. Use this peaceful time to quiet your mind and sharpen your focus.

\*Are you interested in speaking Italian? Learn three new vocabulary words before you have your morning coffee. Practice them throughout the day. Phone apps are a great way to do this. I often try to incorporate the words into my conversations and it surprises co-workers and sparks an interesting exchange. They may join in, speak the language and share their support, and it shakes up the standard discourse, “How are you?”, rote answer of “Good, how are you?”. Won’t they be surprised if you say, “Bene, come stai”.

\*A small accomplishment early in the day can motivate you to do even more later on. A challenging morning usually drains your motivation, so ensure you have a great morning. How often have you found that if your day starts out on a bad note, it sets the tone for the rest of the day? Do whatever you can to make it a pleasant beginning and you will reap the benefits as your day progresses?

\*Plan the night before. Benjamin Franklin said, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Taking the time to lay out your clothes, what you will have for breakfast, pack a healthy lunch, and your computer or kid’s backpacks are ready to go is well worth the effort. You will be less stressed and feel a sense of accomplishment from the moment you get up. When you are less stressed, your children and significant other will benefit as well and the entire family can face the day on a positive note.

**a. Here are 7 energizing activities to kick-start your day.**

Mornings can be a tough part of the day. We don’t want to get up, and most of us certainly don’t want to go to work. But mornings are important. A good morning is the most important step to ensuring that you have a good day. If you stumble out of bed, shower, get dressed, and rush out the door with a cup of coffee, you’re not setting the stage for a productive day.

An effective day starts with an effective morning. You can’t be rushed and be at your best.

Get your day off to a good start:

**1. Make a to-do list the night before.** You can’t get your morning off to the best start if you don’t know what you have planned for the day. Do you need to wear a tie or skirt instead of your normal wardrobe choices? If you know what’s on tap, you can get your mind in the right place. Know how you’re going to spend your day.

1. **Drink a large glass of water.** After a night of sleep, you’re dehydrated. You’ve likely gone 8+ hours without a drink. Have a big glass of water. Leave a bottle of water on the bathroom counter if that’s more convenient. Just be sure to get your water – you’ll feel 10 times better in 10 minutes. So when you wake up, your body craves water. Consider avoiding caffeine. It’s hard on your body. If you’re too tired in the mornings, try going to bed earlier.

**3. Take a walk.** Put on your running shoes and head outdoors. The treadmill is another option. Feel free to run if the urge strikes you. A morning walk is a great way to wake up and clear your mind. You’ll feel great and get a jump on your day.

Any form of exercise is acceptable, provided you feel better at the conclusion than you did at the beginning. **It doesn’t matter which exercise you do, but do something.** Focus on positive thoughts and get your body moving. Now isn’t the time to wear yourself out. You should feel invigorated at the end. Find the best form of exercise for you.

**4. Have a good breakfast.** A good breakfast should make you feel good and provide the nutrition you require until lunchtime. You already know which foods are healthy and which aren’t. Make a few wise choices and note how you feel during the morning. Have some yogurt and fruit. Maybe a healthy cereal is more your style. But sit down and have at least a small meal. Again, focus on the positive affirmations. Enjoy telling yourself how wonderful you are while you’re savoring your food.

Continue experimenting with different combinations until you find one that works best for you.

**5. Recite affirmations.** You can say affirmations while in the shower, exercising, or driving to work. Find a time that works for you and be consistent. Use affirmations that address the challenging areas of your life. The things we say to ourselves repeatedly become the truth.

**6. Get up earlier than necessary.** If you start your morning behind schedule, you’re not able to take control of your morning. It’s much more enjoyable to spend your morning without the pressure of being on time. Go to bed earlier and get the sleep you require.

**7. Be prepared to deal with your most important task first.** This should be easy, since you made a to-do list the night before. Know your most important task and be prepared to face it head-on. Our resources are at full capacity earlier in the day. We start to run out of gas by the afternoon. Put your resources where they can do the most good. Have a plan and get busy.

Life can be hectic. You’re not helping the situation by crawling out of bed at the last possible moment and eating a donut on the way to work.

A good morning increases the odds of having a good day. Give yourself the time in the morning to gather your thoughts and prepare properly for the day ahead. You’ll be surprised how much you can accomplish before work.

1. **Not a Morning Person - Tips to Make Your Mornings Easier and More Productive**

Are mornings the hardest part of your day? Sometimes it's tough to get yourself going no matter how much sleep you've gotten. And if you need to get your family dressed, fed, and out the door with books, backpacks, and briefcases intact, it can often be a challenging and grueling morning.

The good news is that, even if you're not a morning person, there are strategies you can use that can help you get energized, motivated, and looking forward to your day rather than wishing you could just go back to bed.

**Try the following tips to help you cope with those early mornings:**

**1. Get adequate rest.** It's true that you'll sometimes feel tired no matter what, but you might not be getting quality rest without even knowing it. It could be a contributing factor to the reason why you can't get up with a smile on your face. **Try going to bed earlier and see how you feel.**

**2. Wake up earlier.** Sometimes you just need more time in the morning to get ready. If you're trying to squeeze every possible moment of sleep into your schedule, when you do get up you have to rush. That's too much stress for the morning. Going to bed earlier makes this task easier. You’ll need some extra time in the morning to accommodate your constructive changes.

• Wake up in time to give yourself a few calm and peaceful moments during your morning routine. Watch the sun rise, enjoy a leisurely cup of coffee, or partake in some relaxing conversation before the day's activities.

**3. Prepare for the morning at night.** The night before, take action to make your morning go more smoothly. **Leave your keys in the same spot, pack the backpacks, and get everyone's clothes ready.** You can even set the coffee timer to have freshly brewed coffee ready when you get up!

**4. Play music.** That moment when the alarm goes off might be the toughest part for you. Rather than being startled awake, wake to your favorite relaxing music. **Enjoying the first few minutes that you're awake can make a big difference in your whole morning.**

**5. Meditate.** Meditation can help you instill both energy and inner peace that you can carry throughout your hectic day.

• As you meditate, sit in an upright position so that you're not tempted to fall back asleep.

• Pay attention to your breathing and concentrate on the moment rather than all the things you need to accomplish during your morning.

**6. Develop a positive mindset.** If you tend to be grumpy in the morning, choose to start your day in a better way. **Think about all the great things that might happen today.** If you know you'll be encountering unpleasant situations, focus on the parts of your day that can and will be pleasant for you.

**7. Give thanks.** Another great way to start any morning is to **concentrate on the things that you're thankful for in life.** An attitude of gratitude puts you in a happy mood!

So if you have trouble with mornings, make them easier and more productive with these strategies. You'll be amazed at how productive you'll be throughout the rest of the day!

1. **The Power of a Positive Morning Routine**

Does your morning routine consist of staying in bed as late as possible while barely making it to work on time? Getting the day off on the wrong foot can negatively impact your entire day.

**Imagine how different your life would be** if you had a morning routine that ensured a good day, instead!

If you’re like most people, your morning probably goes something like this:

1. Alarm goes off.
2. Hit snooze (3 times, at least).
3. Lie there and think about how much you don’t want to get up. Or maybe you think about how much you dislike your job.
4. Shower.
5. Get dressed.
6. Run out the door with a granola bar (or nothing) in your hand.

How can you expect to have a great day when that’s your morning routine? **A good day requires preparation and a solid foundation.**

**Consider these additional ideas when developing your positive morning routine:**

1. **Get up immediately.** Avoid lying there and thinking negatively about your day, life, job, challenges, or anything else. It’s harder to think negative thoughts if you’re up and doing something.

**\*The moment the alarm sounds is called the Heroic Moment.** Be a hero and get your head up immediately before you convince yourself that five minutes won't hurt.

1. **Shower.** This is the perfect time to use affirmations. You’re not doing anything intellectually stimulating anyway. Use the time to tell yourself how great you are and how wonderful life is. It sounds silly, but try it and you’ll like it.
2. **Meditate or read something inspiring.** Take 10 minutes to meditate or read. **Inspiring reading material will motivate you and get your ready for the day.**
3. **Review your goals.** Take 5 minutes and review your goals. Goals that are reviewed regularly are far more likely to be met. Make your goals a priority.
4. **Attack the day.** Now you’re ready to get out there and accomplish something. How could you not be successful? Continue thinking positively for as long as possible. You’ll find that you can make it a little longer each day.

This routine outlined above may take 90 minutes or more to complete. If that’s longer than you can spend, come up with an abbreviated version that works for you. **The keys are to get your water, practice positive self-talk, and have time to eat in peace.**

A well thought out morning routine can have a significant impact on your life, happiness, and success. Give it a try and see how it changes your day. Your boss will be thrilled too, guaranteed.

1. **How to Develop an Empowering Morning Routine**

Would you like to feel more in control of your day? Developing a morning routine that will boost your productivity can help you stay on top of your commitments for the day.

Many people benefit from rising early and following a set routine every morning. While this won't benefit everyone, it might be just what you need to feel more in control of your daily life!

**Consider these additional ideas when developing a morning routine:**

**1. Avoid making any drastic changes.** Begin this process slowly. **Start by waking up just 15 minutes earlier than you normally would.** Allow yourself to get used to this over a few days to a week before waking even earlier. Continue this gradually until your goal wake-up time is met.

**2. Allow yourself to go to sleep earlier.** Staying up too late when you're trying to get up earlier will have negative consequences. Early rising will allow you to go to sleep more easily earlier in the evening so you can work on getting up earlier.

**3. Keep your alarm clock away from your bed.** If you keep your alarm clock close to your bed, you'll hit the snooze button and destroy your chances of improving your morning routine. Keep your alarm clock at a distance so you must get out of bed to deal with it and resolve not to climb back under the covers.

**4. Leave the bedroom as soon as your alarm wakes you.** Avoid rationalizing going back to bed. **Make yourself leave the room.** Create a habit, such as to use the restroom as soon as you get up, so you don't convince yourself to go back to sleep.

• By the time you've used the restroom or otherwise distracted yourself, you'll no longer be thinking about going back to bed, so you can proceed with your daily routine.

**5. Have your routine mapped out ahead of time.** Plan something important to do first thing in the morning. If you have a specific task at hand early in the morning, then this will motivate you to wake up and get out of bed.

•**It's important to have a good reason to wake up in the morning.** If you have a plan for your morning, you can slip out of bed and right into your routine.

•If you practice the same basic steps every day, you'll be able to automate many of your early morning tasks to make them easier.

**6. Follow the same basic routine daily.** If you practice the same basic steps every day, you'll be able to automate many of your early morning tasks to make them easier

1. **Take advantage of your extra time.** Don't wake up earlier than usual just so you can lounge around and read Facebook updates. Avoid wasting the extra time that you've created in your schedule.

• Instead, get a jump on your day, doing tasks that are best done in the early morning, such as reading, writing, and planning for the day.

Ultimately, you get to decide the best course of action when developing an early morning routine. These seven considerations should steer you in the right direction and can serve as a foundation for your own practice. When you customize and standardize your morning habits, they'll drive your productivity throughout the day.

**Chapter 2 - Make Your Bed Each Day & Get up When the Alarm Goes off**

How many times did your mother tell you to make your bed? It might seem like a trivial act, but it can make a big difference. You’ve barely woken up and you’ve already accomplished something.

It encourages cleanliness, productivity, lowers your stress, and increases efficiency. It sets the tone for your day. It also looks great! You’ll also appreciate it when you go to bed at night. When the end of the day comes, if you feel you didn’t accomplish anything, at least you made your bed! It prompts you to tidy you whole room. You will also feel comforted when you enter your bedroom and your bed is neat and ready for you to sleep in. It creates an environment that invites relaxation and a sense of calm prior to your laying down.

Try it for a week and notice how much better you feel about yourself.

1. **How to Get Up When the Alarm Goes Off**

When the alarm clock first wakes you each morning, do you have difficulty getting out of bed immediately? Do you usually find yourself pressing the snooze button, rolling over, and going back to sleep? Well, you're not alone. Most people do this.

But imagine if you could get up every morning right when the alarm went off. You'd have an extra ten or twenty minutes in every day, or maybe more. **How would you like to hear your alarm, turn it off, take a nice deep breath, and then get right out of bed? Believe it or not, this really can be you!**

Unfortunately, most of us have tried to do this before using our conscious will power. You already know what happens. At 10:30 P. M. you decide that you should get up at 5:30 A. M. Then 5:30 A. M. comes along, and you make an executive decision that it would be wiser to get up at 7:30 A. M. instead. This happens to the best of us, and most of us give up afterward.

**A Wiser Decision**

You may be thinking, "I just need more discipline.”**Perhaps, but you don't need it at 5:30 A. M.** You don't need an elaborate system of alarm clocks. And you don't need better or more self-talk in the wee hours of the morning. No one can be trusted to make a good decision when the alarm first wakes us up.

**What you really need is more discipline before you go to bed.** You need to have the discipline at night to recognize that your decision-making process can't be trusted at that critical moment in the morning. Your 5:30 A. M. brain is no good for decision-making. Take it out of the equation as much as possible.

**Physical Repetition: Practice**

**The following method may sound crazy, but it works!**

1. **Get in bed during the day or early evening.** Try to simulate your regular sleeping conditions as much as possible. Make the room dark, get into your normal sleeping attire, climb in bed and assume your favorite sleeping position.
2. **Set your alarm for 5-10 minutes earlier.**

**3. Try to just relax and zone out. Fall asleep if you can.**

**4. When the alarm sounds, immediately turn it off.** Now go through whatever routine you'd like to be able to follow in the morning. Stretch your arms and legs out, take a deep breath, smile, and put your feet on the floor. Now stand up.

**5. Repeat.** If you practice this strategy a couple of times each day, within a week you should be getting up in the morning without any problem.

**Mental Repetition: More Practice**

Getting up when the alarm sounds is one habit in which visualization can really be helpful as you work to develop it. Several times during the day, imagine your alarm going off and yourself immediately launching into your get-out-of-bed ritual. This mental practice is great, because it's fast and it's easy, and you can do it anywhere.

However, actually going through the motions is the most powerful tool you have. Even if you mostly practice mentally, do the physical practice at least a few times, because it allows your mental practice to feel a lot more realistic.

Getting up immediately in the morning is a habit that's actually easy to put into place. The warm covers and thoughts of just 10 more minutes are powerful motivators to stay in bed a little longer. **But getting up on time consistently is something anyone can do.** Imagine all the extra time you'll have each day!

**10 Advantages of Being an Early Riser**

It’s not easy to get out of bed earlier than absolutely necessary. But there are numerous benefits to being an early riser. The morning is an excellent time for many activities. You can also get your day off on the right foot. There are career, health, and psychological benefits to getting up early.

**The key is to use the extra time wisely.**

**Early risers have all the fun:**

1. **You start the day on your terms. Imagine getting out of bed and having time to do whatever you please before you have to get ready for work.** Most of us roll out of bed at the last possible minute and rush around until we arrive at work five minutes late.

**2. Studies have shown the early risers eat less.** If you sleep late, you likely eat twice as much fast food as early risers. Those that stay up late have been shown to have higher BMIs on the average. Get out of bed earlier and be healthier.

**3. You have peace and quiet.** The kids are asleep, no one is bouncing a ball against the side of the house, and the TV isn’t making any noise. When else do you have this same level of serenity? At night, you’re too exhausted to enjoy it.

**4. You can get more work done.** An extra hour of work each morning can make the rest of the day go more smoothly. You could clean up the house or prepare for a day at the office.

**5. You can enjoy the sunrise. It’s a spectacular sight.** Get up and witness it firsthand.

**6 .You can get in shape.** Working out after work is a crapshoot. You’re often too tired or busy to make it to the gym. If you get up early, you can grab your running shoes and head out the door. If running isn’t your thing, perform yoga on the living room floor. A treadmill in front of the morning news can work well, too.

**7. Indulge in a hobby.** Whether you like to read, do needle point, or play the violin, the morning can be a great time to enjoy yourself.

**8. There’s less traffic.** Everyone is on the road at 7:30AM. You can already be at the office and taking care of business by then. You might even be able to leave early and avoid the evening rush hour.

**9 .You have time to pray or meditate.** You can start your day on a positive note and create a good frame of mind for the rest of the day. The early morning is the perfect time to pray or meditate. Notice how much better your day goes when you partake in this morning activity.

1. **You’ll get better grades.** One university study showed that early risers’ GPAs are a full point higher than that of night owls. Your parents will be proud.

Are you convinced enough to set your alarm clock earlier? If you’ve been very consistent with your bedtime and wake time, your body has become used to that schedule. **Consider going to bed and waking up just five minutes earlier for the first few days.** Then work another five minutes into your schedule. Continue the process until you’ve reached your objective.

The early morning hours are valuable. **You can enjoy health, personal, and career advantages by becoming an early riser.** Get out of bed and take control of your morning. You’ll be pleased with the results.

**Chapter 3 - Find a Mentor That’s Doing Better than You Are**

I have worked in the corporate world and in the world of academia. In each position I held, I found someone who could mentor me. Acknowledging that you don’t know everything, is important to personal growth. Being open to the insights of your mentor can develop skills that will serve you moving forward.

Find a mentor that’s doing better than you are. Even the most successful people can use a good mentor. If you need to lose weight, find someone that’s lost 100+ lbs. If you want to make 6-figures, find a mentor that’s making seven. A good mentor will push you to be more than you’re currently demonstrating.

We all need encouragement from time to time. Even the most successful people. They can guide you, not do it for you, to meet realistic goals. You can benefit from their similar experiences.

A mentor can be someone you collaborate with and provide teaching advice. They can be a key part of your building a professional network. You can profit from their skills as leaders and receive useful feedback on your behaviors. They will tell you if the actions to be performing are helping you to reach or derail your goals.

It is valuable to have a mentor that is truthful about what you are doing well and opportunities for growth. Self-awareness is an important tool to you reaching and exceeding your goals. Mentors will be a valuable role model as you move forward in creating the life you want for yourself. Put the effort in today to create the life you want for yourself tomorrow.

1. **When we have stronger Self-Esteem, we can increase our motivation.**

We are better able to conquer challenges we face. A mentor can help you with your self-esteem by providing support and constructive criticism.

Do you feel as though you're in a rut? Does nothing feel engaging or entertaining? When you want to make sure you're still in the right direction and you don't want to settle for a mundane life, you'll discover that you need to start challenging yourself.

When you take on a challenge head first, you're forcing yourself to grow. When your self-esteem needs a boost, challenging yourself can help you see yourself in a new light.

1. **What Kind of Challenges Should I Pursue?**

No matter what type of challenge you undertake, don't assume you're going to get started on it sometime soon. Think about what steps you need to take to get there today. Whether it involves making some phone calls or getting some certifications, make some time to get it done as soon as possible.

• If you have the desire to start a new career, call a career counselor for guidance or the local university for class schedules.

• If you challenge yourself to achieve better health, call a nutritionist or the local gym for rates and advice.

• If you always wanted to learn how to play a musical instrument, call the music store to inquire about lessons or rental fees.

Don't delay when something is this important, but remember that moving slowly is much better than not moving at all. When you want to make sure you're achieving the results that you deserve, you'll discover that choosing to move at all is a big step.

1. **Practice Setting Goals and Holding Yourself Accountable**

Another way you can start conquering small challenges is by setting some achievable goals. For instance, say you want to improve your writing skills. Then set yourself a goal to write at least a paragraph a day. It's a simple, realistic goal that will help you improve your skills.

It's very likely that you will become more productive when you have a limited amount of time to accomplish your simple challenge. So if you only have 15 minutes to concentrate on your challenge, then make the best use of it and simply focus your energy on making it the most productive 15 minutes of your day.

1. **Measure Your Progress Regularly**

In order to build your self-esteem, you regularly need to see how far you've come. Make sure you keep track of your progress on a regular basis.

• Keep a diary that lists all you've accomplished in the day.

• Keep a list of all books you read last month.

• Keep a weight journal to track how many pounds you've lost.

Over time, you'll find that this is a great way to keep yourself moving forward. Looking at past progress is a great way to replicate your success, so keep note of how far you've come.

1. **The Power of Numbers**

If you're struggling to challenge yourself, remember that you can get someone else to work with you. Do you have any goals that you and your loved ones share? If so, take some time and see if you can encourage each other. This encouragement will help to build your self-esteem because you'll see progress toward your goal.

We must always strive for constant self-improvement. In doing so, we'll see just how capable and competent we really are!

**Chapter 4 - Be Consistent**

It’s impossible to gain momentum without consistency. It allows you to focus on what you want. You use the power of intention when you work at something every day. Be specific on what you want to accomplish. Each time you stop, it’s necessary to get started again. That’s the opposite of momentum. Get started and keep going. When you demonstrate sustained action over a long period of time, you exponentially increase your ability to meet and exceed your goals. Consistent action is the key.

You can do this by building small habits every day that help you reach your end goals. Hold yourself accountable every day. A mentor can help you in this capacity as well. Don’t let yourself “off the hook” and instead, make these habits a priority. It would be easy to sit down and watch some TV at the end of the day instead of picking up a book about how to be successful. Consistently focusing on your goals and pushing aside temptations will help you sustain momentum. People are too easily distracted. Successful people are able to prioritize the steps they need to take to move forward.

Consistency takes effort through small progressive steps. It is l**earning, growing, and adapting your actions that can help lead to incremental improvements over an extended period of time**

Consider the skills you have developed over the years. It took time, practice, and discipline for you to develop and sustain them. You are worth it in the end. No one can make you do that. It is up to you! It is about repetition. What habits do you need to repeat to be successful?

1. **The Power of** **Consistency**

While many believe that knowledge is power, knowledge is only powerful when it’s consistently applied. Consistency may be the most important component of success. **A small step forward each day adds up to a lot of mileage over time.**

Are the little things you do each day adding up to something positive? Or is the quality of your life slowly slipping away?

With consistent action over the next 10 or 20 years, what could you accomplish? Five cold calls each day / 5 days per week equal 1300 sales calls in 1 year! Five small pieces of chocolate over the same schedule is roughly 25,000 calories, or the equivalent of over 7 lbs.

**Are your consistent behaviors helping or harming?**

Use the power of consistency to enhance your success:

**a. If you re-lived today for the next 10 years, where would you end up?** If you saved just a small amount of money each day, you’d eventually be wealthy. If you overeat slightly each day, you’d weigh 400+ lbs.

\*An effective way to predict your success is to examine your average day and project the likely outcome into the future. An hour each night spent practicing the piano would give different results versus spending an extra hour watching television.

\*Your teeth aren’t clean because you brushed them for an hour straight. They’re clean because you brushed them for 3 minutes for 3,000 days straight.

\*Consider where your daily habits and behaviors are leading you financially, socially, spiritually, and physically. What are the logical conclusions of your daily activities?

**b. Realize that many changes in life come slowly.** Many success gurus advocate taking massive action to see massive results, but that strategy is difficult to apply and maintain.

**\***Consider weight loss. You can’t lose 25 lbs. in a day. Small changes occur to your weight each day. Those small, regular changes add up to impressive results.

**\***Building a fortune, the perfect body, or a great relationship all take time and consistency.

**c. Consistency requires habits or discipline, and discipline is in short supply.** Use your discipline to develop useful habits. Relying on discipline day after day is a losing battle for most of us. While discipline can grow with effort, **having effective habits is more effective and much less painful**.

**d. Learn to act in the moment.** The greatest barrier to consistency is the belief that you can postpone an action to another day. Each day has the power to bring you closer to your goals. Each day lost is lost forever.

**\***The only real discipline required is the discipline to act right now.

**e. Have reasonable expectations.** When your time horizon is unrealistic, it’s not easy to be consistent. When you ask too much of yourself too soon, it’s just as challenging. Be positive and enthusiastic, but be reasonable. Put your focus on regular and consistent improvement. Perfection isn’t required.

**f. Use reminders or triggers in your environment to encourage consistency.** Think about the things that you do every day that could serve as reminders. Getting dressed, starting your car, and turning out the light each night are a few examples.

**\***Each night you turn out the light, you could visualize your goals. After getting dressed, you could do five pushups.

What you do once in a while doesn’t impact your life significantly. Rather, it’s what you do consistently. **Consistency is a major predictor of success in any endeavor.** Develop habits and routines that guarantee success. Consistent behaviors determine your outcomes, so choose behaviors that make sense.

**Chapter 5 - Perform a 30-Day Challenge**

1. **How to Overcome Challenges Worksheet**

1a. Why is it important to get your mind on the right track? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2b. Why should you always expect the best? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3c. What do removing negative thoughts do for you? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4d. How can searching for the silver lining help you overcome your challenge? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5e. Why should you seek solutions, instead of focusing on problems? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6f. How can you think more constructively about the negative situations you face? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7g. Why should stay away from asking “what ifs?” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

8h. What does worrying do? How does it affect you physically and mentally? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

9i. Why should you take advantage of readily available resources? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

10j. What are resources you can turn to? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

11k. Why is it important to listen to friends and family? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

12L. Why is it important to make a plan? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

13m. Why is it important to write that plan down? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

14n. What does taking decisive action do for you? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

15o. How can you learn from overcoming your challenges? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**b. How to Overcome Challenges Checklist**

CHECKLIST

1. \_\_ Evaluate the challenge you're facing.

2. \_\_ Expect the best of the situation.

3. \_\_ Remove negative thoughts.

4. \_\_ Use only positive, encouraging self-talk.

5. \_\_ Believe in yourself.

6. \_\_ Look for the silver lining.

7. \_\_ Avoid wasting time worrying.

8. \_\_ Remind yourself of previous challenges you've overcome.

9. \_\_ Find a mentor and take advantage of their experience with the same challenges.

10. \_\_ Use readily available resources, such as books, magazines, and the Internet to research.

11. \_\_ Ask friends and family how they overcame similar challenges.

12. \_\_ Decide your plan of action.

13. \_\_ Write your plan down.

14. \_\_ Follow through with each step of your plan.

15. \_\_ Learn from the positive and negative aspects of overcoming this challenge.

16. \_\_ Remember what steps you took to overcome this challenge.

17. \_\_ Apply what you've learned to other challenges.

Pick a habit you’d like to create and force yourself to do it each day for the next month. A 30-Day Challenge provides the lift you may need to get started making a change. Once started, the daily repetition boosts momentum to implement the desired change consistently. As you keep going, achieving small successes can help motivate you to keep going. I think of a 30-Day Challenge as a “snow ball effect”. Theoretically, when you start with a small snow ball and roll it down a hill, it gets bigger and bigger. It also starts moving faster and faster. The small habits you start with grow and you move faster towards your goals.

I also think of a 30-Day Challenges as a competition with myself. I make it into a game. Will I win today by completing my goal? There’s also a psychological draw towards completing a challenge. There is The Zeigarnik Effect. This Russian psychologist suggested that when we don’t finish a task, or in this case a 30-Day Challenge, it creates mental tension. We keep thinking about the fact that we didn’t finish it. It is an “active task” that we didn’t get done. It is unfinished business and when we complete it, we can check it off our “mental checklist”.

Each time you cross something off of that day’s challenge, dopamine is released by your brain. Dopamine is the “reward” hormone that makes you feel good and motivated after doing a certain activity. We quite often feel this after we have exercised for example. Then we want to repeat this feeling of euphoria again and again. Use this to gain even more momentum.

It takes 21 days to create a new habit so by continuing for 30 days, you are solidifying the desired behavior. You’ve already been doing it for a month after all. When the 30 days are up, you should be able to continue. What’s another month or decade? Easy.

**c. Here is a 30 Day Challenge to Boost Your Confidence**

Chances are you believe in others more than you believe in yourself. You're probably the first to encourage a friend to keep going because they have what it takes. But when it comes to encouraging yourself, it's easy to shy away due to self-doubt.

It's not fair to cheat yourself out of opportunities. Having low self-confidence can cause you to lose out on awesome experiences. And you certainly don’t want that, do you?

Now is a great time to start focusing on yourself and work on boosting your confidence. And it's surprisingly easy to do.

Follow these steps to boost your confidence and start believing in yourself:

1. **Avoid hesitation.** Self-doubt is often developed out of hesitation. Do you take a long time to act on an impulse? If you see an opportunity, does it take you a while to go after it? The longer you take to pursue something, the more reasons you'll find for justifying your unsuitability for the opportunity.
	1. Avoid "sleeping on it" if you can decide right away. For a self-doubter, delaying a response usually means losing the confidence to go after the opportunity.
	2. Do you think you’re not ideal for a new role you've been offered at work? Forget about that for a minute. Focus on the fact that you were actually offered the job for a reason!
2. **Challenge negative thinking.** It's easy to diminish self-confidence by harboring negative thoughts. But before you accept negative thoughts about yourself as a reality, challenge the thinking.
	1. Instead of accepting you're not good enough, take a moment to think about the facts. Have there been instances which support your negative thinking? If the answer is yes, then remind yourself of your many positive experiences as well.
	2. Beware of thought patterns that can eat away at your self-esteem. Avoid looking at life as "black or white" and live in the grey area sometimes. You may not have one trait or another, but you could have the perfect combination of what you need for your life!
	3. Always be sure to differentiate between feelings and facts. Just because something makes you feel a particular way doesn’t mean there’s any fact in it.
3. **Be kind to yourself.** As someone who rarely displays self-confidence, you probably give yourself a hard time and consider yourself inadequate or ill-equipped. But when was the last time you were actually kind to yourself?
	1. Spend some time each day highlighting your positive traits. Remind yourself what makes you beautiful inside and out.
	2. Celebrate the small successes to help remind yourself that you're actually more amazing than you give yourself credit for.
	3. Try spending some time with positive people. Their energy rubs off quite easily!
4. **Learn to listen to and accept compliments.** Most of the time when people say nice things about you, they mean it! Take the time to really hear what positive things are being said about you. Absorb the thought and believe them!
	1. If someone says you're beautiful, believe them!
	2. Spend some time listening to the kind things said by others. And remember to say thanks each time. It helps to cement the positive thoughts in your mind.

During the next 30 days, be patient with yourself. Consider each of these tips on a daily basis. Gradually, as with anything else, practicing self-confidence becomes second nature.

In no time, you'll see the world is in the palm of your hand. And you'll hear every opportunity calling your name. Aren't you excited for that time? Start building your confidence now and soon it will be yours forever!

**Chapter 6 - Have a Vision**

A compelling vision for the future can be the motivation needed to get started and to continue until you experience success. Vision gives you a sense of purpose for your life and your business. It gives you direction. Think about what you want to accomplish. What do you want for your business? Who do you want to become? What type of life do you want to live? Create an attractive vision of a future that fills you with excitement.

For many years, I have used a Vision Board. I have it in my bedroom where I can see it every morning and every night. I have empowering images and words to inspire me. Those images come to me throughout the day and help to keep me on track with my goals.

Few people have a long-term plan for their life. Even fewer have a plan that excites them. Be one of the few. According to Merriam-Webster, vision is defined as, “the act of power of imagination.” When times are difficult, if you have a vision of what your future will be, it will keep your spirits up believing that things will be better in the future and you can get through the troubling times. It gives you something to work towards and look forward to.

As a single mom, working, going to school, and trying to make it from one day to the next, my Vision Board helped keep hope alive. I saw myself living in my dream home, traveling, having a healthy income, and living the life I wanted to create for myself. I am now traveling and have a solid income and continue to learn and grow. When you graduate from school, your formal education may be done but we never stop learning.

A vision gives your actions purpose – you are working towards a goal. Life is filled with uncertainty and if you can have a vision and take small steps each day to reach your goals, you increase your chances of success. Make sure each small goal is measurable and you will feel more empowered with the completion of each one. Vision tells the “why” of your life.

Your vision can be around your career, business, family, physical health, or a plethora of other topics that cover many aspects of your life. Regardless of what they are, you can define and achieve your vision with hard work, focus, and determination. Close your eyes. Can you see your future?

1. **CREATING A WORKPLACE CULTURE THAT WORKS ALL**

 “We believe that it’s really important to come up with core values that you can commit to. And by commit, we mean that you’re willing to hire and fire based on them.” –Tony Hsieh

1. **Introduction**

It’s no accident that companies with the highest-rated work cultures are also among the most successful companies. If you started out as a one-man or one-woman company, you might not have a well-defined culture. **However, as your company grows, your culture plays an increasingly important role in your future and success.**

The earlier you decide on and establish a company culture, the better off you’ll be. It’s a mistake to wait.

1. **What is a company culture?**

Think of it as the shared beliefs, standards, values, and procedures of a company and its employees. The culture is created via the goals, structure, customers, strategy, and communication of the company.

To determine the basic culture of any company is quite simple with a few questions:

● Who gets promoted? Who gets fired? Who is stuck in their position for life?

● What types of behavior are rewarded and punished?

● What’s really important to the company?

● Who fits in? Who doesn’t fit in?

● How would you describe this company in a few words?

Take a look at a few companies you know well and ask yourself the above questions.

"CORPORATE CULTURE IS THE ONLY SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THAT IS COMPLETELY WITHIN THE CONTROL OF THE ENTREPRENEUR. DEVELOP A STRONG CORPORATE CULTURE FIRST AND FOREMOST.”

- DAVID CUMMINGS, CO-FOUNDER OF PARDOT

**III. The Benefits of Having a Winning Workplace Culture**

What does a good culture mean for your company? This question is often asked by new entrepreneurs. But remember, entrepreneurs don’t think like employees, or they’d still be one.

You might not need a culture. You might be content with a desk, computer, phone, and some peace and quiet. However, most of us aren’t wired that way. We need a little more to be happy, inspired, and content.

**The benefits of a strong and positive workplace culture are well documented:**

**1. Less stress.** A positive environment that is both safe and supportive results in a less-stressed employee. When people enjoy their work environment, they are more eager to get to work and to be at work.

**2. Less absenteeism.** A pleasant and enjoyable workplace results in fewer people calling sick. Sick employees are getting paid without providing any value on that day. How many times have you called in sick just because you didn’t want to go to work? Sick days are expensive for a company, especially a smaller one.

**3. Greater productivity.** Lower absenteeism and a happy and inspired workforce get more work done. It’s as simple as that. **The more productive your employees are, the fewer of them you need.** Greater productivity leads to lower costs and greater profits.

**4. Employee satisfaction.** When employees like and respect their workplace culture, their overall satisfaction increases.

**5. Creativity.** It’s hard to be creative in an unpleasant environment. **Creativity is the key to the success of any business.** Whether it’s developing exciting and innovative products and services or finding new ways to decrease costs, creativity is vital.

**6. Better teamwork.** When everyone buys into the company culture, it’s easier to work together. Teams can accomplish more than individual employees, so teamwork is essential to the long-term success of a company. Companies with inspiring workplace cultures have great teams and teamwork.

**7. Employee retention.** Companies with highly rated cultures have significantly fewer employees jumping ship. Everyone that’s had at least a couple of jobs knows the value of an enjoyable work experience.

**8. Better customer service.** An engaged employee provides better customer service, particularly if the culture emphasizes the importance of customer relationships.

Your company requires a definitive corporate environment once it grows beyond a few employees. There are many benefits to finding an effective culture for your company. Failing to establish a culture means that you’re neglecting the above items. Can your business thrive that way?

"IF YOU ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE SOMEONE’S EMPLOYER, THEN YOU HAVE A MORAL OBLIGATION TO MAKE SURE PEOPLE DO LOOK FORWARD TO COMING TO WORK IN THE MORNING.”

- JOHN MACKEY, CEO OF WHOLE FOODS MARKET

**IV. A STARTING POINT FOR YOUR COMPANY CULTURE**

A good place to begin is by considering the common features found in many successful cultures. **While your company is unique, the most effective culture for your workplace will likely share many of the same characteristics.** Consider how you would address each of these items in your own company culture.

**A successful company culture requires several things:**

**a. Clear core values.** One thing all successful workplace cultures share is a set of core values that are perfectly clear to all employees. What will your company values be? There are a variety of things a company can emphasize.

● Innovation and creativity

● Home/work balance

● Aggressiveness

● Results

● Casual or not?

● Team work

**b. Respect.** Respect is an important part of a workplace culture. This means respect between peers and between the highest-level employees and the lowest. Employees that feel disrespected quickly become disgruntled. The quality and quantity of their work suffers.

**c. Communication. Open communication within the company fosters greater success.** Again, this means between peers and between the various levels of the organization.

● Have regular communication across all levels. Company-wide meetings can be very effective if logistically possible.

**d. Inclusivity.** Significant separation between the upper level employees and the lower level employees has often been a source of friction. Establish a corporate culture that includes all employees from the CEO to the person that empties the garbage cans.

**e. The culture matches the business and the employees.** Different cultures are suitable for different industries.

● Banking is a traditionally conservative business. It might be hard to make a culture of jeans and golf shirts work.

● A tech company would struggle to find the right employees if it’s culture were overly conservative. Can you imagine everyone at a tech startup wearing a suit to work? Or a tech company that doesn’t value creativity and innovation?

● It’s okay to be innovative and push the envelope. Just remember that the culture has to support your business type, clients, and employees.

**f. The culture needs to go from the top to the bottom. Everyone needs to be held to the same standards.** In many companies, people look the other way when an executive fails to abide by the culture or rules of the company. This breeds dissent and anger.

**g. Employee recognition.** Positive work cultures give employees recognition for their accomplishments above and beyond the norm. This can take the form of monetary awards, additional days off, lunch with the CEO, or even just mention in an email or company newsletter.

● Regardless of the size of your company, find a way to recognize an employee when they do something exceptional.

**h. Keep the employee’s goals in mind.** No employee has the dream of working in a cubicle for the rest of their lives. **Your dream isn’t their dream.** It’s important to find ways to help your employee’s progress forward in life.

● Every manager should know his employees’ goals, whether it’s to learn a new software program, move into a sales job, or become an executive down the road.

● Strong company cultures support employees in the pursuit of their goals.

**i. Employee feedback.** Ask for and use employee feedback. You can’t be everywhere at once, and you don’t know the absolute best way to perform every job in your company. Your employees know things, and it would be wise to extract this information from them.

● Encourage your employees to provide regular feedback on all aspects of the company.

**j. Transparency.** This goes back to communication. Be as transparent as possible. The old mentality of, “You don’t need to know anything beyond what you need to know to do your job” is dead. **Keep employees in the loop and be respectful.** They can handle the truth.

**k. Consistency.** Consistency means it applies to all employees and at all times. If you’re willing to throw out your values during a mini-crisis, you don’t have a stable culture.

● The culture needs to come before everything else, or everyone understands that it’s all just smoke and mirrors.

Give these items some thought when crafting your own culture. Think about how you would implement each of these items in your company. **What do you think would work the best for you, your employees, and your customers?** Sketch something out on paper and think on it for a few days.

"COMING TOGETHER IS A BEGINNING; KEEPING TOGETHER IS PROGRESS; WORKING TOGETHER IS SUCCESS.” - HENRY FORD, FOUNDER OF FORD MOTOR

**V. BUILDING A CULTURE**

You’ve started the ball rolling and given it some thought. Now, let’s take the next step and get more specific. **There are many things to consider when building the best culture for your business.** And a few of them you probably haven’t considered.

Questions to ask yourself to build the most successful workplace culture:

**1a. What are my employees like?** Think about your typical employee. Is it a 20- something liberal techie? Or is it an Ivy League MBA with a trust fund?

● Certain cultures suit certain types of employees. Design a culture that supports the characteristics of your employees.

**2b. What are my customers and clients like?** Who are your clients and customers? Doctors? Investment bankers? Children? People who just want their car washed?

● Do your customers and clients come to your workplace? What would you want them to see?

● An investment banker might not be impressed by the sight of everyone wearing shorts and playing frisbee on the front lawn on “Casual Friday”.

● Consider the people and businesses you serve.

**3c. What are my values?** What are your personal values? If you value family and a balanced life, then a take-no prisoners aggressive workplace environment will be at odds with your personal values.

**4d. What type of workplace culture would I enjoy?** It’s your company, and you’re going to be there all day and many nights. What type of environment would you find pleasant?

● You can’t choose the culture of a company you work for, but you can choose the culture of your own company. Choose something that you will enjoy.

**5e. What type of workplace culture is needed for success?** Of course, it’s not just about making yourself happy. You want to be successful, too. The key is to find something that checks all the boxes.

Establish a culture that meets your values that you also enjoy. The culture must also have a high level of potential for success and address the needs of your employees and customers. This can be challenging, but life is all about compromises. Take your time and get it right.

“YOU CAN BUILD A MUCH MORE WONDERFUL COMPANY ON LOVE THAN YOU CAN ON FEAR.”

- KIP TINDELL, CEO OF THE CONTAINER STORE

**VI. IMPROVEMENTS**

A corporate culture isn’t completely static, especially at the beginning. **There will be opportunities to strengthen and evolve your culture.** One way of doing this is through feedback. While you can, and should, encourage random feedback, having an established process can be even more effective.

**Questions to ask to employees to strengthen your workplace culture:**

**1a. What improvements or changes would you like to see in the culture?** Every employee has at least an idea or two about how things could be made even better. Many ideas won’t be feasible, but you’re sure to get a couple of good suggestions.

**2b. What is your biggest gripe or pet peeve about the current culture?** If you’re hearing the same couple of complaints from multiple employees, you have a great opportunity to make everyone happy with a few alterations.

● Fixing something that annoys everyone is more powerful than adding something that everyone likes.

**3c. What do I need to do to be a better leader or CEO?** You’ll have to dig to get honest answers, as many employees are reluctant to criticize their boss. But, this is some of the best information you’ll receive. It’s not easy to see our own shortcomings.

**● The use of anonymous suggestions might be beneficial.** You could require all employees to submit a form each month with replies to all of these questions.

**4d. What have you been doing to grow yourself as an employee? What have you learned on your own?** Encourage employees to strengthen their talents and develop new ones. This does great things for the culture of your company. By asking the question, you create action in your employees.

**5e. What is the one thing you would change about our product or service?** Your employees are bound to have some good ideas on how to improve your products and services. Many heads are better than one.

Get some form of feedback from your employees each month regarding your products, services, culture, and management. Don’t just ask for this, require it.

**It not only gives you a ton of valuable information, but your interest in these things also sets the tone for your workplace culture.**

You’re simultaneously showing that you value communication and regular improvement. The employees also know that you value their opinions and feedback.

“THERE’S NO MAGIC FORMULA FOR GREAT COMPANY CULTURE. THE KEY IS JUST TO TREAT YOUR STAFF HOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED.”

– RICHARD BRANSON, FOUNDER, VIRGIN GROUP

**VII. COMMON TYPES OF WORKPLACE CULTURES**

There are many types of workplace cultures. Understanding the various basic types can provide a good insight into which type of culture might best work for your company. As you read through this list, ask yourself, “Would this work for my company?” Remember that you're free to develop your own unique culture.

**Consider these types of workplace cultures:**

**1a. Outcome oriented.** Results are what matter and results are rewarded. This type of culture is often found in sales driven companies.

**2b. Innovative.** Creativity and new ideas are the order of the day. It’s about figuring out what the marketplace needs and being the first to deliver it.

**3c. Lottery.** The people near the top have it made. The hours are decent, and the pay is exceptional. Everyone below this level is overworked and underpaid. This is common in investment banking and consulting firms.

● The carrot of that great job makes this scheme work. Everyone is willing to drive themselves incredibly hard to attain one of those rare, coveted positions.

**4d. Casual.** Wear what you want within reason. The hours are flexible, so work when you choose, as long as you do your job.

**5e. People-oriented.** This culture puts the value of the employee above all else. These companies are often willing to sacrifice profits to pay their employees above the normal rate.

● The company policies focus on fairness, and the work environment tends to be casual regarding hours and family obligations.

● These companies have better retention than others.

**6f. Aggressive.** Aggressive cultures are focused on outperforming competitors. This type of culture can also be quite competitive and aggressive between employees, too. The battle cry is, “We will destroy our competitors one way or the other.”

**7g. Stable.** This type of culture is common in many large, well-established companies. There are rules, so follow them. It’s a very hierarchical structure and very bureaucratic.

● Decisions are made centrally. So, the headquarters in Milwaukee is making the big decisions for the office in Miami.

**8h. Detail-oriented.** Often found in the hospitality industry, these companies emphasize the little things. It’s all about the details each and every day.

This just a sampling of some of the types of cultures you can choose for your company. Which one do you think would be a good starting point? Perhaps you want to use elements of different cultures for your company.

"I USED TO BELIEVE THAT CULTURE WAS ‘SOFT,’ AND HAD LITTLE BEARING ON OUR BOTTOM LINE. WHAT I BELIEVE TODAY IS THAT OUR CULTURE HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH OUR BOTTOM LINE, NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE.”

 – VERN DOSCH, AUTHOR, WIRED DIFFERENTLY

**CONCLUSION**

Defining and creating a workplace culture that works for your business is one of the more challenging tasks as a business owner. You can’t make everyone happy, as you well know.

However, creating an effective culture for your business is the one of the best ways to raise the odds of your company succeeding in the future.

1. **10 Day Leadership Challenge**

## DAY 1:

# **Clarifying Your Personal Mission**

Welcome to Day 1 of Ten Days to Better Leadership.

Position alone doesn’t make you a good leader. Today we’ll learn how clarifying your **personal** **mission** is the foundational step to helping your team align with goals and then execute them.

### Reflection:

**Leadership is about more than just managing human resources. If you want to be successful at leading others, you have to first master the art of leading yourself.**

* **Phil Owens, corporate behaviorist**

Creating an environment of success and communicating purpose to others requires first understanding yourself and what motivates you.

When you know what YOU want to **accomplish**, and why, you can communicate purpose and values to those you lead, so they embrace team goals.

To gain insight into what you want to achieve, **ponder** what your life might look like 10 or 20 years down the road. The desire for significance in life is universal - and critical to achieving your goals over the long term.

Defining what brings significance to your life will help you focus on ways you can achieve your life purpose. Answer a few questions to help you determine your **personal mission** as the first step toward cultivating effective leadership.

### Action:

A **personal mission statement** is not a list of specific goals or tasks. It’s broader than that. It’s a philosophy of life that guides your planning and goal setting.

Steven Covey calls it “...your constitution, the solid expression of your vision and values.”

Here are two examples of mission statements, one work-related and one related to family:

* Use my skills and position to be a source of emotional, social, and financial good in this company.
* Parent my children to become responsible, independent, and empathetic adults.

It’s okay to create just one statement, or one that’s work-related and one for your personal life. Don’t worry if they’re not perfect! You can refine them anytime.

Take a few minutes right now. Step away from everyday pressures and write answers to the questions below.

**Use these questions to help you craft your personal mission statement:**

1. What motivates you? What brings you the greatest joy or satisfaction?
2. What does success look like to you?
3. What unique role(s) are you able to fulfill in people’s lives?

Now write out your personal mission statement.

**My personal mission:**

Once you’ve stated it clearly, ask yourself: Am I bringing my personal mission to bear in all areas of my life?

Tomorrow we’ll work on clarifying personal goals that spring out of your mission.

See you then!

## Day 2:

# **Clarifying Your Personal Goals**

Welcome to Day 2 of Ten Days to Better Leadership. Yesterday was an exercise to clarify your personal mission. Now let’s look at crafting goals that flow out of that personal mission.

### Reflection:

Now that you’ve crafted and refined your personal mission, you can begin to create goals that will help you fulfill that mission. Again, you can be working on both work and personal areas.

**What do you want to accomplish this month toward your personal mission?**

Start by doing a mind dump. Make a list of whatever it is that keeps you up at night - those situations or tasks that if changed or completed would make life more peaceful.

* Is it a stack of unfiled but important papers on your desk?
* Unanswered email?
* The need to research and implement new software?
* An unresolved or uncomfortable relationship issue that has the potential to reach a crisis?

For example, using the mission statement: “I want to use my skills and position to be a source of emotional, social, and financial good in this company,” ...

...a simple goal this month could be to have lunch once a week with an employee you don’t know well or aren’t comfortable with.

This one simple goal moves you toward fulfilling your mission. This would fall under being a source of emotional good - fostering a warm and friendly environment.

Plus, you’ll be amazed at what one good interaction can do for building a positive relationship!

For the parenting example we used yesterday, you could schedule one hour one Saturday each month with a specific child to teach them a particular skill from a predetermined list.

For young kids, it could be how to sort or fold laundry.

For older kids, how to safely use a weed eater or the best way to clean out and organize a closet - not exciting stuff, but you get the idea. They grow in responsibility, and you spend time with them.

Over the long haul, you’ll both benefit.

These planned activities might seem small, but they fit your mission with long-term payoffs when they’re put on the calendar and followed through.

### Action:

First, restate your personal mission(s):

Choose no more than 3 goals for **this month**. Be as specific as possible, and work on those that fit into your mission statements.

Looking further ahead, what are a few goals you want to accomplish **this quarter**?

How about by the end of **this year**?

Tomorrow we’ll look into personal roadblocks that can trip you up.

## Day 3:

# **Identifying Your Personal Roadblocks**

Welcome to Day 3 of Ten Days to Better Leadership. I hope yesterday you were able to establish some goals that got you really excited about your future.

### Reflection:

If you’re going to achieve your personal mission by meeting the goals you’re setting, you need to identify potential roadblocks. These are simply the interests, demands, people, situations, or habits that will keep you from achieving what you’re really after.

Some things that might sound like good things might not fit into your mission. Volunteering as treasurer of your homeowners’ association sounds like a noble undertaking, but it’s probably not going to help you achieve your goals - and it will take up quite a bit of valuable time.

When you look back at your mission statement and goals, **what could possibly hold you back from achieving your goals this month, this quarter, or this year?**

* Your goals might be too vague (“I want to be a good person”).
* You’ve developed poor habits like procrastination, checking social media throughout the day, or watching TV.
* You may have chosen goals that are too big and that need to be broken down into increments which are more realistic to accomplish monthly.
* Perhaps you just have WAY too much on your plate and need a trusted friend, co-worker, or mentor help you to pare it down, learn to say no, and point out which things are important, and which are time wasters.
* Do you need accountability to someone who’s not afraid to confront laziness, lack of follow-through, or poor planning? Perhaps even a mentor or life coach?
* People can be roadblocks too. Is there someone keeping you from getting things done, or being a negative influence? This can be a bit trickier and you would benefit from getting help or wise counsel.

### Action:

**What are your specific roadblocks?** (Go back and look at your mission statement(s) and goals if that helps you pinpoint specific issues you might face.)

Be as detailed as possible in describing each roadblock and exactly how it prevents you from moving forward with your goals.

How will you handle each roadblock?

How and where can you get help if it’s needed?

Is there anything on your plate that you can eliminate, delegate to another, or simply decide it’s never going to happen? Take steps as needed.

Tomorrow you’ll settle on that ONE thing that you want to focus on first.

## Day 4

# **Determine Your Personal ONE Thing**

Welcome to Day 4 of Ten Days to Better Leadership. Did you learn more about roadblocks that could trip you up yesterday? Be on guard for those as you plan. Today we’re going to be diving into the one thing you’ll want to focus on FIRST.

### Reflection:

Now that you’ve clarified your mission, set some goals, and defined real or potential roadblocks to avoid or conquer, it’s time to determine the ONE thing you’re going to focus on that will move the needle most for you.

Being a “starter” or an “ideas person” is great but having too many things going at once is self-defeating.

You’ll miss out on the satisfaction of finishing a project well and won’t focus clearly on anything, since you’re always aware of everything else you haven’t gotten to yet.

**Determine one thing that, if you do it, will have a positive effect of making everything else begin to fall into place.** You’ll feel like you’re making forward progress once you’ve begun it.

Pushing that first domino that falls and knocks down all the succeeding dominoes is a huge stimulus for success. Determine that no matter what, this one item is what’s going to take precedence over any other project.

**It can be a small thing.** Sometimes getting something (anything!) off the list will energize you. Or it could be that one thing you’re dreading, and you know you want to get it over with. Think about how much better you’re going to feel when it’s finished!

One quick caveat - unexpected challenges and setbacks are common in any area of life. Avoid letting that derail your determination. We learn from these situations and grow stronger as a result. Look for the lesson, pick right back up where you left off, and keep moving.

### Action:

Write down the ONE thing you are going to start, work hard at, and concentrate on until it’s been implemented.

Should this ONE thing be broken down into increments, each of which can be finished and checked off individually?

Consider telling someone ahead of time about your plans and exactly when you’re planning to complete this ONE thing. Give them permission to check on your progress.

When you’re finished with it, feel the freedom to pat yourself on the back and brag a little!

Tomorrow you’ll create an action plan for this ONE thing you’re starting with.

## Day 5

# **Create a Personal Action Plan**

Welcome to Day 5 of Ten Days to Better Leadership. Hopefully, you have your ONE thing picked out and ready to work on from yesterday’s lesson. Today it’s time to take ACTION.

### Reflection:

Now it’s time to create an action plan that will enable you to do your ONE thing.

Be specific. Ensure that it’s attainable, not frustrating or unrealistic. Break it down into steps to take. Have an end date for each specific step.

Let’s go back to the example of having lunch/getting to know an employee once a week. (You’ll recall that this originated from one aspect of your mission - to use your skills or position for the emotional good of the company.)

**Specific steps would be something like this:**

* Choose 4 people.
* Contact each one to choose a date, time, and location. Assure them that there's no underlying agenda!
* Confirm and add each date to your calendar.
* Enjoy your lunch and conversation with them.

This is a very simple example, but you can see how each step is do-able and you know when it’s been completed.

Your ONE thing may be a little more complex. Or a lot more complex! Take the time to break it into manageable components, each of which will be completed before moving to the next.

The goal is focusing on your ONE thing to the exclusion of other projects, but **let’s be realistic** - there are often urgent situations, sudden demands, unexpected phone calls and more that will interfere with even the best of plans.

**Knowing where you are in the sequence of steps helps you to recover** and get right back to what you were doing before an interruption came along. You’ll find you can accept those interruptions a lot more peacefully.

Once you complete your ONE thing, prioritize what you’ll be tackling next. Getting one item done leads to achieving your next one thing and starts a healthy chain reaction.

### Action:

Using the ONE thing you decided on yesterday, write out the specific manageable steps you’ll take to ensure completion.

Where possible, assign a date for each step to be completed.

Assign an end date for the entire goal to be complete and add it to your calendar.

Does the overall plan, and each step leading up to completion, appear to be realistic? If not, make adjustments to the plan, keeping in mind there will likely be unexpected interruptions.

Tomorrow we’ll find out how to clarify your team mission. See you there.

## Day 6

# **Clarify Your Team Mission**

Welcome to Day 6 of Ten Days to Better Leadership. Realistic and manageable steps were assigned yesterday to your ONE thing. I hope that inspired you! Now let’s transition from focusing on your personal mission to focusing on the team you lead.

### Reflection:

**Each team has a unique mission and place within the whole organization.** Now that you have clarity about your own personal mission and you’ve set measurable, realistic goals, it’s time to clarify the primary mission for your team.

To get the discussion started with your team, you could share briefly how you’ve created a personal mission statement, used that mission to create realistic goals, and how you’re implementing your plan.

Your team mission may have already been established by a superior, or by you, or by the team as a whole. If it hasn’t been established yet, it’s crucial to get this foundational step in place.

Without a clear purpose behind what they’re doing, it’s difficult for team members to “own” or feel a connection to the larger picture.

**When every team member supports the mission, you end up with a team that places a high value on each individual’s contribution, including their own.**

If your team’s mission hasn’t been clearly determined yet or needs to be clarified, below are questions that help to clarify it.

As a team leader, you can answer these questions yourself, but discussion with the whole team serves to get everyone on board, build camaraderie, and reveal weak areas.

### Action:

Ask yourself and the team, “What does this team exist to do?”Be as specific as possible.

What specific part does each individual member fulfill to accomplish what the team does?

Ask each member to articulate their portion. Ask others to help clarify and determine overlap or holes.

Is each member clear on how their part fits into the whole? Does each member understand the value of every other member’s part?

What does success look like for this team?

What does failure look like?

With these answers in mind, you can now clearly determine the primary mission of your team. **Write out a specific team mission statement.** There may be several components but simplify and clarify each section.

Tomorrow we’ll get into identifying your team goals. See you tomorrow!

## Day 7

# **Identify Your Team Goals**

Welcome to Day 7 of Ten Days to Better Leadership. Yesterday we focused on how to clarify your team mission for the benefit of each member and the team as a whole. Now it’s time to get very practical with goal setting.

### Reflection:

You have clarity on your team’s overall mission and how each team member fits into making the team a success. Now it’s time to determine the real and measurable goals of your team.

These may be assigned to you by someone else, like a superior, or you may be the one who comes up with these. Either way, it’s important to be clear on what your goals are for your team.

What is your team trying to accomplish this month? This quarter? This year?

If you need to get clarity on these from a supervisor, do that first.

If you need to take some time to set goals for your team, when exactly will you do that? Get it on the calendar ASAP. Many successful team leaders meet with their team once a week for continuity and accountability.

If setting goals involves team members, get them to clear their schedule and join you for goal setting. Do something to make it fun!

**Your action for today is simply identifying goals for the team.** No implementation of these is necessary yet until further planning is in place.

### Action:

First, restate your team mission:

Choose 3 goals for your team for only **this month**. Using those as a starting point, what goals does each team member need to have so that their part is finished on time? Be as specific as possible.

Can you and/or team members articulate how these monthly goals fit into your mission statement?

Looking further ahead, what are a few goals you want to accomplish **this quarter**? How do this month’s goals fit (if they do) into those longer-range goals?

Are there long-term goals that need to happen by the end of **this year**? Is there a way to work on those long-term goals by meeting monthly and quarterly goals?

Tomorrow we’ll get into determining your team’s ONE thing.

## Day 8

# **Determine Your Team’s ONE Thing**

Welcome to Day 8 of Ten Days to Better Leadership. Your team benefited from identifying team goals yesterday, which leads into today’s topic of choosing one focus.

### Reflection:

Yesterday you and your team determined 3 monthly team goals, as well as looked ahead at longer range goals. Now, it’s time to pick the one BIG goal that will move the needle the most for your team currently.

This goal is going to be your primary focus and your team’s primary focus. By centering the attention of your team on this particular goal with everyone working to that end, you make it much more likely that the team is going to achieve it.

**This ensures that your team is getting high-value work done,** not just busy work or putting out fires, since this ONE goal has been determined to be a high priority.

**There are two approaches to selecting this ONE thing out of the list of 3:**

1. You choose the ONE thing to focus on and simply tell the team. Sometimes that’s necessary to avoid long discussions or wasting time.
2. Or, choose the ONE thing along with your team members. It doesn’t have to be unanimous but listen closely if there are dissenting voices. Assure all team members that the other goals will be implemented before long.

Your primary job once the team’s ONE thing is decided, and responsibilities are divided up, is to become the overseer and progress checker - in other words - to ensure the “doing” is happening.

You’ll be checking in regularly, not waiting until the deadline is just around the corner!

### Action:

You should have 3 specific goals with clear descriptions that were decided on for this month.

**Decide with the team, (or on your own if necessary), which out of the 3 is the ONE thing the team will focus on until it is finished.**

Identify the role and responsibilities that each team member has to fulfill to meet the overall goal. Discuss with each team member to be sure their assignments are understood. You’ll head off challenges later if you’re a stickler on this step!

Clearly communicate the date each team member needs to have their portion ready.

Tomorrow we’ll identify roadblocks that can derail a team’s focus on their ONE thing. See you tomorrow!

## Day 9

# **Identify Current Team Roadblocks**

Welcome to Day 9 of the Ten Days to Better Leadership Challenge. We focused yesterday on getting the team’s focus narrowed down to one specific goal to work on together. That’s great progress!

### Reflection:

Let’s try to identify some roadblocks that could keep your team from achieving their ONE thing (and that could be derailing other goals too).

As the team leader, there’s a degree to which you should look in the mirror first. **Just by virtue of their position and skill level, leaders can sometimes intimidate.**

Team members who are intimidated can be fearful to share problems they’re running into or feel dumb asking questions. If they get stuck and can’t move forward with their portion, it’s going to affect the whole team’s progress.

**What’s your personal leadership style like?**

* Do you ever share freely about mistakes you’ve made, bad decisions, or failures? This openness won’t cause your team to lose respect - they’ll know you’re human too and love you for that.
* Do you ever make a point of walking around to chat and see how everyone on the team is doing, aside from their work?
* Are you trustworthy? If you say that you’re going to do something or will get back to them on a question, ensure that you do.

**What about the overall work culture?** Are there aspects of the work culture in general that keep your team from feeling like a unit?

Too many interruptions, no opportunities for fun or relaxation as a team, one or two people carrying the bulk of the work while others have a much lighter load - these can all keep a team from feeling cohesive.

### Action:

Go back and review the exercise on Day 3 about personal roadblocks. Choose a few of the personal roadblocks you uncovered that derail your plans and goals.

Share your roadblocks honestly with the members of your team. Do it today. Ask them what personal roadblocks they encounter.

Transition to asking about roadblocks your team members experience in their current work culture. This typically is hard for people to feel comfortable sharing. You’ll need to encourage them - give examples again if they’re hesitating. You could give an example that you’ve seen in the office or experienced in another workplace.

**Encourage team members to talk about what they see or experience and help each other find strategies to combat these issues.**

Tomorrow we’ll formulate the steps of a team action plan for your ONE thing.

## Day 10

# **Create a Team Action Plan**

Welcome to the final day of your Ten Days to Better Leadership Challenge. You’ve come a long way in developing an effective and successful leadership style!

Yesterday, we worked on identifying and eliminating team roadblocks. Now it’s time to put an action plan in place.

### Reflection:

It’s time to create an action plan to enable your team to accomplish that ONE thing you are all focusing on.

It’s a good practice to **plan backward.** That’s where yearly or quarterly goals are useful, and why we keep bringing up long-term goals in these exercises.

If your team has a project due 12 months from now, for example, use that end date to figure out where the project has to be 6 months from now.

* How does that 6-month deadline inform what has to be completed in 3 months?
* What must happen this month to stay on track?
* What about this week?
* Today?

**Each member of the team needs to see the increments and understand how their part fits into this ONE goal.** Individuals can then break their personal portion into manageable tasks. Each member knows what they’re responsible for achieving, and when it’s due.

As the team leader, determine how often to check on the progress of each team member. Add reminders to your calendar so you don’t forget!

### Action:

The steps outlined below may seem like overkill at first, but the process gets easier each time you implement the steps. The whole team is learning communication skills that leave little room for misunderstanding and delay.

Clearly describe the ONE thing your team agreed to be working on this month. Be **specific.**

Ensure that the goal is **attainable** - not frustrating or unrealistic.

If this ONE thing is one component of a much longer-range project, ensure that everyone understands how this month’s goal fits into the entire plan.

Have the entire team help to break this month’s goal down into **incremental** steps. What portion has to be done this week, the week after, and so on? Assign an end date for each specific step.

Doing this **visually** is best (a whiteboard if you’re in the same physical location, shared monitors if not together). Everyone sees how the pieces fit together.

If it’s better for your team’s scope, the steps above can be implemented for year-long projects first, instead of beginning with monthly goals. Select a long-range project, and then break it down following the same steps to create 6-month, quarterly, monthly or weekly goals.

Congratulations on completing the 10 Days To Better Leadership Challenge! You should be really proud of yourself! Not only has your personal leadership been transformed, but the way you lead your team has been as well. Great job!

1. **Create a Vision for Your Life Today**

You've probably heard that you can only get where you want to be if you know where you're going. This pithy statement is as true now as the first time it was said. So how do you come to know where you're going, so you can get where you want to be?

To start with, goals are crucial. When we set goals, what we're really trying to do is to bring each piece of our lives in line with our overall vision for ourselves. Using a powerful vision-setting process can help you set more effective goals, since you can chart a course that will take you toward and support your vision.

Do you have a vision for each segment of your life? Do you know where you're headed spiritually, socially, relationally, physically, financially, and more?

Use this process to help you create a vision that works for you:

1. Write down your vision for a particular aspect of your life. Write a couple of paragraphs describing what you'd like to have or be. There's no right or wrong. In fact, you probably won't precisely articulate your dreams the very first time you try the exercise. A reasonable guess is a good place to start.

a. In writing your vision, avoid focusing on what you don’t want, because this will only bring about more of that. Turn your back on negativity and focus on what you do want to bring about.

b. For example, if you want more money: Avoid wording your statement like: “I don’t want to be poor anymore.” Instead, envision what it would be like to be rich, which is what you want, and write about what that would be like for you.

c. Although you may feel challenged when first learning to focus on what you want, it gets easier. Plus, the rewards are spectacular when you can do it consistently. You'll start to notice that your life seems as if you can change it at will, which you can.

2. Visualize. Read your vision statement 2-3 times a day and imagine that aspect of your life matches your vision perfectly. How does your vision make you feel? Are you really excited and enthusiastic? Is it appealing to you on all levels? This shouldn't take more than 60 seconds to do each time.

3. Refine. If you feel really good about your vision, that's great. If not, now is the time to make some alterations. Continue refining the image of your dream life until doing your visualization feels spectacular. Re-write each new version.

a. At this point, you may be wondering when this process ever ends. Fortunately, it never ends. Your vision will forever be changing slightly throughout your life, which is good, since your desires will also change over time.

4. Review your vision daily and ensure that it continues to attract you. This will rapidly usher change into your life. In turn, these changes will demonstrate that you're actually moving towards that vision.

5. Create separate vision statements for all the areas of your life. Consider your finances, relationships, adventure, health, social life, and spirituality. If you can get all these visions to look just the way you want, imagine what your life will look like!

Why Spend Time On This Process?

Consider all the things you do every day. Everything you do is either helping you reach your vision or helping someone else reach theirs. Wouldn’t you rather help yourself reach yours?

Creating a vision is the first step to creating the life you desire. Tweak your visions a couple of times a day and really focus on the experience of living that vision. This gets easier all the time, because imagining something enjoyable is pleasurable in itself.

Don't hesitate; create your visions today. Then, start reviewing and improving them immediately. Your life will change rapidly for the better. You'll then be spending your time making your own visions a reality instead of making someone else's dream come true.

**Chapter 7 - Be Action-Oriented**

Most of us do too much planning and spend too much time gathering more information. The people that accomplish the most are those that take action quickly, consistently, and aggressively. Focus on the actions you can take and actually take them. Momentum is the result.

All the dreaming in the world means nothing unless you take action to make them a reality. Do you “talk the talk or walk the walk”? Words are not enough. You need to take action to be successful. When you are disciplined you get it done.

Here are some tips to be more action-oriented.

1. Give yourself a time limit to plan before taking action. We often get stuck in overthinking and not doing. Pick it and stick it! Make a choice and go with it.
2. Be disciplined. Don’t be lazy and complacent. This will only lead to more frustration. Set tasks for yourself and complete them accordingly.
3. Be willing to fail. You can’t know the wonderful feeling of success unless you have tasted failure. It is an important part of learning and growing. Failure is part of the process and is actually a good thing. You learn about yourself and further define what it is you want and what you don’t want. You learn to change your behaviors moving forward. Embrace it! It may be uncomfortable but it is helpful in the long run.
4. Visualize your life, business, family, and so on as you want them to be. This will help you take action to make it a reality. It allows you to create the life you want for yourself.
5. Give yourself small rewards when you complete a certain number of tasks. Don’t reward procrastination but instead, treat yourself when you take action earlier rather than later. Be brave!
	1. **Passion and Purpose Visual Exercise**

Sit down in a quiet place. Get comfortable and focus on your breathing.

After a couple of minutes, imagine yourself in five years doing what you love to do – fulfilling your purpose. Spend five minutes or more just observing.

Next, answer the questions below after you finish this visualization exercise.

What do you like to do? Are you sitting at a computer? Teaching a class? Doing karate? Participating in a strike? Meditating?

What is going on around you? Is it quiet? Loud? Dark? Still? Are there other people? If so, what are they doing? Are people rowdy? Silent? Laughing? Studying? Take in the environment.

Who/what is there? Are there children? Adults? Couples? Cats? Dogs? Mountains? Rain?

How are you interacting with them? Sitting with them in an audience? Talking one-on-one? Lecturing at a podium? Climbing a mountain? Watching a movie or concert?

Are you at work? A home office? Sitting in your living room in your PJs? Walking a dog? Stroking a cat? Driving a car? Hugging your child? Kissing your spouse?

Pay attention to the details. What else do you notice? Feelings? Smells? Sounds? Sights? Tastes?

Notes:

* 1. **Passion and Purpose Action Plan Implementation Worksheet**

Develop a specific plan to implement each of your action steps. Each step may be very involved, so prioritize and use deadlines or milestones to stay on track.

**Example:**

**Step 1:**

● What: Write proposal for middle school diversion program

● How: Outline the benefits of karate and evidence to support decrease in school and family problems

● When: by August 1

**Actions:**

a. Research benefits of karate for teens and school programs that show success.

b. Design a one-page summary with highlights, goals, evaluation of success and requirements for enrollment, such as: Do they need a physical? If so, what if they don’t have money to pay? What about uniforms?

c. Write program with details, such as meet twice weekly, limit of 10 kids, class is for one quarter, and more.

**My Action Plan:**

**Step 1:**

● What:

● How:

● When:

**Actions:**

a.

b.

c.

* 1. **How to Take Action Consistently**

Actions speak louder than words. Talking and planning aren’t enough to make progress with most tasks. Some of us specialize in daydreaming and planning. We might have the best ideas, but ideas without action are a waste of time and mental energy. It’s important to spend the majority of your time actually doing something. Action is the key.

Those with control over their lives and their time are able to take action on a consistent basis.

**Become more action oriented and gain control over your time:**

**1a. Realize that nothing changes until your behavior changes.** Visualization and positive self-talk have their place, but they’re only effective if your behavior changes. You can try to wish your way to a new Bentley, or to make a million dollars by aligning your chakras with the universe, but it won’t happen unless you’re actually doing something different.

Understand that a consistent change in your behavior is the key to real change.

**2b. Know the outcome you desire.** It’s not easy to take action if you don’t know what you’re attempting to accomplish. Be clear on your intention. Take the time to determine what you want to accomplish. Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years? What actions can you take today to move in that direction?

**3c. Start by taking small steps.** Do you want to jog for 60 minutes each day? Get started by jogging for one minute each day. You won’t get in shape by exercising for only one minute, but you will develop the habit of getting out the 1 door each day. After a week, up the time by another minute or two.

\*After 4-6 weeks, you’ll have developed an exercise habit and can begin to exercise for real.

\*Does it seem like that schedule is too easy? Good! How much running did you accomplish in the previous 12 months? There’s nothing wrong with easy, provided you’re patient and can see the big picture.

**4d. Limit your planning time.** Those that are slow to take action love to plan, but the best plans are worthless until they’re executed. While you’re trying to work out the fine details, everyone else is already taking care of business.

\*There’s no reason to be hasty, but set a limit on how long you’re going to strategize before you actually do something.

**5e. Use rewards wisely.** Small, meaningful rewards can help you to get off the couch and get busy. Decide on a few rewards and when you’ll receive them. Get excited and begin taking action. When you’ve earned a reward, enjoy it.

**6f. Get started early in the day.** If you can accomplish something worthwhile before 9AM, you’ll be motivated to do even more during the rest of the day.

**\***If you fail to do anything substantial by noon, you’ll feel bad about how you wasted the morning. Then you won’t feel like doing anything in the afternoon. Then you’ll let yourself off the hook by telling yourself that you’ll get twice as much done tomorrow. Many people make this process a habit. Avoid becoming one of these people.

Take a close look at the most successful people you know. Notice that there’s nothing exceptional about them. They aren’t smarter or more capable than you. **But they do manage to get things accomplished each day by taking action consistently.**

The good news is that you don’t have to be spectacular either.

You only need to learn how to avoid wasting your precious time. Consistent action is the key to wealth, weight loss, strong relationships, and anything else that matters in your life.

* 1. **Shift from “Thinking” to “Action” in 6 Steps**

There are many people that do an excellent job of visualizing, setting goals, making plans, and creating contingency plans for every obstacle that might occur on the way to accomplishing a goal. However, many of these same people never take the first step in the real world. All of their activity is occurring between their ears.

While being clear on your intentions and making plans are important initial steps, nothing actually happens until you take action.

Those that take a lot of action are often successful. **Those that take action intelligently and thoughtfully are incredibly successful.** Those that plan and never do anything are never successful.

**Follow these steps to switch from planning to action and create real results:**

**1a. Set a time limit on your planning phase.** There’s no set amount of time this phase should last. If you’re planning on building a rocket ship to send to Mars, the planning period will be longer than that for a goal of losing 10 pounds of body weight.

**2b. Begin taking some action immediately. There is always a step you can take immediately.** You might need a day or two to plan out your diet and exercise program, but you can throw out all the junk food in your house this moment.

\*Or you could drive to the post office and start the process of obtaining your passport for the trip to China you’re finally going to take.

**\*What can you do today** to begin working toward your goal? Create a little momentum. Avoid letting a day go by without taking a concrete step toward the achievement of that goal.

\*Plan your daily action as early in the day as possible. You’ll be less likely to procrastinate, and you might get a surge of motivation while there’s still enough time in the day to do something constructive with it.

**3c. Remind yourself of all the previous times you’ve planned and failed to take that first step.** You’ve thought about doing plenty of things that never moved beyond the planning stages. It’s easy to feel regretful about the things we failed to do in the past. Good! Use that pain to motivate yourself this time.

**4d. Understand that the difference between a decent plan and the perfect plan is minimal.** The difference that matters is how diligently you put a plan into action. Getting started is more important than perfecting your initial approach. You can alter your plan as you go.

**5e. Determine the real reason you’re taking too long to actually do something.** It’s an issue of fear. It might be the fear of making a mistake, failing, making the wrong decision for the direction of your life, or maybe you’re afraid of succeeding. But you can bet that there is fear at the core of your procrastination.

**6f. Create a ratio for the time spent planning vs. the time spent doing.** Many people will spend seven hours each day planning and researching vs one hour of real activity. Switching those values would be beneficial. The most successful people you can find do more in a day than most of us do in a month.

It’s time to change your life, rather than just thinking about it.

Find out how good your plan is, so you can alter it if you need to. Your thoughts don’t make things happen in the real world. They just shape the actions you choose to take. So, take that action - today!

**Chapter 8 - Schedule Time for Change**

You need to schedule time to work on things. When we get started on something new, we need to start with a big push. When you schedule time, you are setting your intention and telling your brain that it needs to prepare for action. Write down what you want to change and how you will do it. If you want to increase relationships with your customers, mark time off on your calendar to do just that. Schedule 30 minutes every day to achieving your goals. After a week, it all adds up and before you know it you have spent 3-4 hours on your intention. It will become part of your daily routine. Don’t let distractions derail you.

When people think about change, they often think about what they will lose instead of what they will gain. At first, it is uncomfortable but with consistent focus on what you want to accomplish, the positive results will come from change. What you focus on grows. If you see the positive, that is what will expand in your life. If you choose to focus on what you are “losing”, the negative attitude takes over. Companies love people who embrace change. You will need to keep your goals in your mind and don’t slip back into your old ways.

* + - * 1. **Are You Always Playing Catch-Up?**

**Use These Tips to Get More Done Each Day.**

Do you ever feel like your productivity level is slipping a bit? You thought you’d get four projects done today but you completed only two. You ask yourself where the time goes and you’ve noticed you’re feeling disappointed in yourself and how you perform at work or at home.

So what can you do to increase your efficiency and get more out of your life?

**Use these tips as inspiration:**

**Tip 1. Hit the ground running.** Be ready to go to work as soon as you arrive, whether you’re headed to work or home. Using the example of work, imagine yourself driving or riding to the office. Think about what it’s going to be like when you get there.

a. Do you have three large stacks of paperwork to do? Think about what you’ll do first. Perhaps you can complete that project you started last Friday with just a couple more hours of work. Put your mind ahead of your body’s arrival so you can get started quickly.

**Tip 2. Learn to anticipate.** When you ponder what will be happening when you arrive, you’ll be ready to meet whatever challenge is occurring at the time. You might think, “I know the kids will be hungry for a snack. I’ll get out that fruit salad from yesterday and give them glasses of juice right away so I can get to the laundry.” Anticipate what might happen.

**Tip 3. Develop a method of keeping track of tasks that works for you.** Whether it’s speaking your list into your smartphone, jotting down things to do in your calendar, or carrying a spiral notebook, having a running list to look at or listen to will help you get more things done.

a. Having some way to check-off items is helpful so you can tell at a glance which tasks you’ve completed and which ones remain.

b. Try a couple of methods until you find the list that’s easiest for you to use. There’s no one-size-fits-all solution here. The one that helps you get the most done is the one you should stick with.

**Tip 4. Politely tell others you don’t “have a minute.”** If you’re at work and people stop by your office to chat, feel free to say, “I’m sorry. I can’t talk right now but I’d love to have lunch today and hear more about this.” When you don’t allow yourself to be interrupted, you can get a lot more done. Plus, others learn to avoid interrupting your work time.

**Tip 5. Keep meetings brief.** If you’re in a position to have control over meetings at work, make a goal to meet for 30 minutes max. If you go into a meeting with a written agenda, you’ll be ready to cover your points quickly.

**Tip 6. Reinforce your efforts to achieve.** Praise yourself each day. Maybe you completed a work project you’ve been working on for several weeks or cooked a great meal for friends and family. Recognize the efforts you make to complete tasks.

**Tip 7. Allow yourself plenty of time in the morning.** If you need an hour to shower, have breakfast and get your task list written for the day, then get up early enough to have your full hour. When you respect your own needs, you’ll be better emotionally prepared to get things accomplished.

Even if you feel like you never get anything accomplished, the great news is that you’ve got lots of choices when it comes to increasing your efficiency. Perhaps while reading this list you were inspired to come up with your own methods to get more done in a day. That’s great! Try them all. The strategies that work for you are the ones worth continuing.

If you put forth some effort to change your approach, you’ll be pleasantly surprised to see you’re getting more done each and every day.

**b. 13 Proven Techniques for Overcoming Worry and Anxiety**

1. **Don’t Let Fear Hold You Back** - All of us struggle with fear and worry from time to time. In fact, in many cases, fear is actually a good and healthy thing. It causes us to wear seatbelts and try to eat healthy. It keeps us from doing things that will hurt us, like getting too close to a fire or jumping into a lion’s cage at the zoo.

It’s also natural to be concerned about our health, bank account, job status, children, and more. When something threatens one of those things, we take notice. We work hard to protect ourselves and those we love.

In some ways, fear is both a natural and helpful part of what it means to be human.

But if fear gets out of control, it can take over and prevent us from enjoying life. When we’re consumed by fear, we can’t be present for others or do the things we love. Overwhelming fear affects our health, saps our strength, makes it difficult to concentrate, and robs us of sleep.

It also keeps us from taking any risks. If we’re afraid, we won’t start new businesses, write books, or initiate relationships. We’ll constantly play it safe, always trying to insulate ourselves from any negative consequences. When we play it safe, we don’t grow. We stagnate. We miss out on great opportunities.

We can’t run from fear or simply hope it goes away. There will always be something to worry about. If we’re going to successfully navigate the often-difficult world in which we live, we need effective strategies for coping with worry and fear. We must be able to deal with our anxieties in healthy and productive ways.

Franklin D. Roosevelt famously said, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” And while this isn’t 100% true (there are real things to fear), his point is well made. Fear holds us back from living life to the fullest. We must learn how to overcome our fears, so we can move toward the things we desire.

In this guide, you’ll discover proven strategies for facing and overcoming your fears. You’ll learn effective, healthy strategies for handling worry and anxiety. No, your fears won’t suddenly vanish. But you’ll be equipped to face them and deal with them.

Ready? Let’s dive in.

1. **What exactly is Fear?** Fear is a biological response to an internal or external stimulus.

Let’s break this down. Fear is:

● A biological response. When you’re afraid, your body goes into “fight or flight” mode. Your heart rate goes up and your adrenaline increases. Your brain starts to race, and you may start to sweat. All these things together create the emotion of fear.

● To an internal or external stimulus. Fear can arise from within or without. Thinking about losing your job (internal stimulus) causes fear. Coming face-to face with a grizzly bear (external stimulus) also causes fear.

When dealing with your own struggles, it’s important to understand the source of your fear. Is it arising internally or coming at you externally?

What you’ll probably discover is that most of your fears are internally created. Very rarely will you find yourself in an actual life-or-death situation. Most of the time, you are afraid because of what you think will happen rather than what is actually happening.

Put another way, the majority of fears simply aren’t connected to reality. What you feel is real, but the circumstances you’re imagining are not. The fundamental truth is that most fear is a response to an imagined reality.

For example, say you find a strange lump on your neck. Immediately, you begin to fear the worst, thinking you have a bad disease. Are you actually sick? You won’t know until you see the doctor, but you’re afraid, nonetheless. You are worrying in response to your imagination.

As the author Mark Twain said: “I've had a lot of worries in my life, most of which never happened.”

**When you understand the true nature of fear, it becomes easier to overcome.**

You are able to closely examine your anxiety and determine if there is any substance to it. Some of your worries may have merit, but you’ll discover that most of them don’t. And even the ones that do have merit probably aren’t nearly as bad as you imagine.

1. **Change Your Biology** - Before we talk about changing your fearful thoughts, let’s talk about changing your fearful body. As we noted above, when you’re afraid, it affects your body in many different ways. When your body is ramped up, it can be very difficult to control your thinking.

**Thus, one of the most effective ways to deal with fear is to take control of your body.** When you dispel the physical side effects of fear, it becomes much easier to dispel the mental effects of fear.

So how do you change your biology?

**Consider these strategies:**

**1. Exercise.** Working out is nature’s antianxiety drug. When you work out, your body releases endorphins, which make you feel good. The tightness in your chest melts away, your mind slows, and you have more clarity. If you’re feeling worried, go for a brisk walk or hit the gym.

**2. Do breathing exercises.** When you’re anxious, you breathe rapidly, which raises your heart rate, increases muscle tension, causes dizziness, and creates other negative effects. **To counteract, focus on changing your breathing patterns.**

● Inhale slowly through your nose, hold the breath for several seconds, then slowly exhale. Repeat this pattern until you feel your anxiety beginning to dissipate.

3. **Relax your muscles.** Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a technique for releasing muscles that have been tensed due to anxiety. Start by flexing your toes for 10 seconds and then slowly releasing them for 10 seconds. Then do the same thing with your calves, thighs, and so on up your body.

**4. Eat and sleep right.** Your diet and the amount of sleep you get has a huge impact on the way you feel.

● As much as possible, try to eat healthy, nutritious foods and avoid processed ones. Fruits, vegetables, and meat that you obtain fresh or frozen are best. Processed foods, on the other hand, list many chemicals in their ingredients, which can wreak havoc with your health and mood.

● Stay away from mood-altering substances like alcohol and caffeine.

● Shoot for somewhere between seven to eight hours of sleep every night.

Consistently practicing these strategies will put you in a better position to tackle your fears, anxieties, and worries.

1. **Identify Your Fears** - Before you can overcome fear, you must be able to identify it. In other words, you must be able to specifically name the thing that you’re afraid of. If you’re not clear regarding the source of your anxiety, you’ll struggle to resolve it.

To identify your fears, ask yourself a series of questions:

● What am I afraid of?

● Why am I afraid of it?

● What do I try not to think about?

● When do I feel afraid?

● What emotions do I feel?

● What negative outcomes am I envisioning?

● What pictures do I have in my head about this situation?

You may need to work a bit to get to the bottom of your fears. It’s common to have smaller fears stacked on top of a much larger one.

For example, say you’re afraid of losing your job. Is that the ultimate fear? Probably not. More likely, you’re afraid of not having enough money to pay the bills or losing the respect of your peers when being forced to restart your career.

When identifying your fears, keep pushing until you get to the root cause. Work to determine the root fear that is causing all your other anxieties. Keep asking yourself, “So what?”

For example:

● So, what if I lose my job? I won’t make any money.

● So, what if I don’t make any money? I can’t pay the bills.

● So, what if I can’t pay the bills? I can’t provide for my family.

Dig until you determine what you’re ultimately afraid of.

**Next, become aware of all the different ways your fear is affecting your life.** Is it...

● Causing you constant emotional distress?

● Keeping you from doing things you want to do?

● Hampering your relationships?

● Hurting your work performance?

● Stealing your happiness?

● Preventing you from enjoying the present?

The goal of this exercise is to bring you face-to-face with the consequences of your fear. When you see how worry and anxiety damage your life and hold you back, you become much more motivated to take action.

It may help you to write out your thoughts as you work through the above processes. Writing things down helps you think clearly and forces you to give voice to your anxious thoughts and feelings.

**You can’t avoid your fear. The more you try to avoid it, the more it will grow. The only way forward is to look it in the eye.**

Thich Nhat Hanh put it well when he said, “Every time your fear is invited up, every time you recognize it and smile at it, your fear will lose some of its strength.”

Confront your fears face-to-face and put a name to them. Then you can begin to dismantle them.

1. **Practice Worst-Case and Best-Case Thinking** - Considering the worst and best-case scenarios can dramatically alter your perspective and give you much-needed clarity about your fears.

**When you feel afraid, think about the worst case scenario.** If everything went wrong, what is the worst that could happen? Now, what are the odds of that actually happening? Probably pretty low. The worst case very rarely happens.

For example, say you’re afraid of public speaking. The worst that could happen is you freeze up on stage, can’t say anything, and are completely embarrassed. But will that happen? Almost certainly not. And even if it did, would it actually be that bad? Sure, you’d be embarrassed, but that’s about it.

When you engage in worst-case thinking, you’ll often discover that the worst isn’t nearly as bad as you think it is. This enables you to move forward and overcome your fears.

**After thinking through the worst-case, think through the best-case.** If everything goes right, what awesome things will you experience?

Instead of freezing on stage, you totally knock it out of the park. You get a standing ovation, receive tons of compliments, and get invited to speak at other places. Your confidence goes through the roof.

When you envision the good things that will come your way, it motivates you to take action in the face of your fears. You are able to see what you will miss if you let your worries control you.

Will everything go perfectly? Probably not. But the reality is that things don’t have to go perfectly for you to reap the benefits of taking action.

Now, to be clear, there may be times when the worst-case scenario is very bad, like with a cancer diagnosis. In these scenarios, it can be especially helpful to think about the best case. If things go well, you’ll still have many years of life to enjoy with your family. Focusing on this can give you the strength you need to keep going forward.

1. **Focus on What You Can Control** - How much time and energy do you spend worrying about things you can’t control? If you’re like most people, probably a lot. After all, a huge portion of life is out of your control, and if you focus on those things, you’ll be constantly worried.

**For the most part, you can’t control:**

● The actions and responses of others

● Local and global events

● Traffic

● Weather

● What others think

● Aging

● People’s opinions of you

● The past

● The inevitability of death

● And a whole lot more!

Worrying about the things you can’t control is a waste of time. It literally won’t change a thing. And what’s worse, it can divert your focus from the things you actually can control. When you fear things outside of your control, you have less energy to use on the things where you can make a difference.

What you focus on grows. If you only think about the negative outcomes, that is what will happen and it will overwhelm you. If you focus on the positive outcomes and what is happening in your life that is what will grow and help you reach all the goals. To help you create the life you want for yourself.

What can you control?

● How you respond

● What you think about

● The ways you treat others

● The information you consume

● How you treat your body

● Your self-talk

● Your sleep habits

● How consistent you are

● And much more

When you focus on what you can control, your fears will significantly lessen, and your life will significantly improve.

Think of it in terms of American football. A defensive back can’t control where the quarterback throws the football, but he can control his response to the throw. The more the defensive back focuses on how he will respond, the better he’ll play.

The same is true in life. You can’t control a significant portion of what happens, but you do have power over how you respond. The more you focus on your own actions and thoughts, the better things will go for you.

In his book *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*, Steve Maraboli said, “Incredible change happens in your life when you decide to take control of what you do have power over instead of craving control over what you don't.”

When you find yourself dealing with fear, stop and ask yourself, “What things are under my control?”

Once you identify those things, give all your time and energy to them. Avoid spinning your wheels over things where you have no control. Turn your fears into action.

1. **Choose Gratitude** - Fear is almost always rooted in a scarcity mentality. In other words, you are afraid that you won’t have something you want or desire.

**You’re afraid that you’ll lack:**

● Love

● Respect

● Money

● Health

● Possessions

● Or something else

Obviously, these are all good things and it’s not wrong to desire them. But it’s easy to become so fixated on them that you become fearful of not having them.

**Gratitude completely shifts your perspective, fixing your gaze on the things you already have.** It’s hard for gratitude and fear to coexist. They’re like oil and water. In fact, a study of breast cancer patients showed that those who intentionally practiced gratitude were much less likely to experience anxiety.

When you feel fear beginning to rise in you, embrace gratitude. Look for ways to be grateful that are specifically related to your anxiety.

Are you worried about a medical condition? Express gratefulness for the health care available to you. Are you concerned about losing your job? Express gratitude for the chance to find something even better.

Every morning, Tony Robbins focuses on gratitude. He says:

I focus on three moments in my life that I’m grateful for, because gratitude is the antidote to the things that mess us up. You can’t be angry and grateful simultaneously. You can’t be fearful and grateful simultaneously. So, gratitude is the solution to both anger and fear, and instead of just acting grateful, I think of specific situations that I’m grateful for, little ones and big ones. I do it every single day, and I step into those moments and I feel the gratitude and the aliveness.

When you’re consistently grateful, it’s hard to be fearful. You’re more aware of the good things you have.

Some simple ways to practice gratitude include:

● Keep a daily gratitude journal.

● Send a weekly text message of gratefulness to a friend.

● Send out handwritten note cards once a month.

● Tell your loved ones why you love them.

● Embrace every challenge as an opportunity to grow.

● Post about gratefulness on social media.

**8. Practice Mindfulness and Meditation** - Fear consistently takes you out of the present. Instead of focusing on the here and now, you are constantly worried about what could happen in the future. Worrying about bad things that might happen prevent you from enjoying good things that actually are happening.

Practicing mindfulness and meditation keeps you firmly rooted in the present. All of your energy and focus is given to the current moment. Simply put, you are able to be fully present in the present.

Now, to be clear, there is a difference between mindfulness and meditation. Mindfulness, generally speaking, simply means being aware of and savoring the present moment without thought of anything else. Any activity can be done mindfully.

When you eat mindfully, you savor every bit, absorbing all the rich flavors you are experiencing. When you jog mindfully, you feel the burn in your muscles and focus on putting one foot in front of the other.

**Mindfulness is a way of life.**

**Meditation is a specific practice that helps you grow in mindfulness.** Although there are many different forms of meditation, they all involve focusing on the present for a set period of time. Some meditations help you clear your mind, while others promote positive feelings like peace, love, or compassion.

**If you’ve never practiced meditation, there are numerous tools available that provide expert guidance:**

● Headspace has a huge number of guided meditations, sleep sounds, mini meditations, and more.

● Hallow is a faith-based app that helps you find peace and grow in your spiritual journey.

● Calm offers numerous meditations of varying lengths, breathing exercises, nature sounds, sleep stories, and much more.

● Aura offers personalized meditations, music, stories, and coaching based on your mood.

● Glo combines yoga and meditation, allowing you to strengthen body and mind simultaneously.

Mother Theresa said, “Be happy in the moment, that's enough. Each moment is all we need, not more.” The more you meditate and practice mindfulness, the less anxiety you’ll experience. Instead of being preoccupied with the future, you’ll savor the present.

1. **Schedule Your Worries** - One of the big challenges in dealing with fear is that it’s always present. At any moment, worries can crowd into your mind, disrupting your day, stealing your energy, and making it difficult to be present.

On top of this, many people find it difficult to turn their brains off. Once anxiety has wormed its way into their minds, they can’t stop thinking about it. As a result, the same fears circle in their brains again and again. It’s a vicious cycle that can be difficult to break.

One technique recommended by psychologists is actually scheduling a time when you will think about the things that worry you.

**It works like this:**

● Set aside 15-30 minutes per day.

● During that time, write down everything that worries you. You don’t have to create solutions. You just need to get things down on paper.

● If you start to worry about something at any other point in the day, tell yourself that you will think about it during your “worry time”.

In the beginning, you may find it challenging to put off your worries, but over time it will become easier. Your control over your mind will increase and you’ll find it less difficult to clamp down on your swirling mind.

An additional benefit of planned worry is that it increases your sense of control over your life. Though you may not be able to control the circumstances that are causing your fears, you can decide exactly when you want to think about them.

1. **Get Support** - Dealing with fear is a lonely battle, often waged just in your mind. Most of the people around you have no idea what you’re dealing with, especially if you’re able to maintain external appearances.

What’s more, it can be difficult to know if your fears are reasonable or simply the product of your imagination. **This is why getting support from others is crucial if you regularly deal with worry.**

When you tell others what you’re thinking, you’ll get to look at your worries from a different perspective. You can receive encouragement and clarity. You’ll find that they can often shine light into the darkness of your fears.

**Some ways to get needed support are:**

**1. Talk to a friend.** Unburden yourself to someone that you know well and can trust. This person should be completely accepting and not think that your fears are silly, no matter how small.

**2. Join an online support group.** There are a number of online organizations specifically designed to help you cope with anxiety, including:

● Turn2Me

● Anxiety and Depression Association of America

● 7 Cups of Tea

● Daily Strength

**3. Join a local support group.** Depending on where you live, there may be in person anxiety support groups which you can join.

**Don’t be embarrassed if you struggle mightily with fear.** Every person has their own share of worries and anxieties. You’re not any different. Talking to others about your struggles can go a long way in helping you make progress. It can lighten the load you’re carrying.

Author Maya Angelou said:

Each one of us has lived through some devastation, some loneliness, some weather superstorm or spiritual superstorm, when we look at each other we must say, I understand. I understand how you feel because I have been there myself. We must support each other and empathize with each other because each of us is more alike than we are unalike.

When you get support from others, you feel empathy and understanding. This can give you the strength you need to keep fighting.

1. **Talk with a Therapist or Coach** - If you struggle with significant amounts of fear on a regular basis, consider talking with a therapist. Therapists or coaches can help you identify what you’re afraid of and then guide you forward.

Using both their extensive training and experience, **they can give you specific exercises that will help you overcome your fears.**

Therapists can be especially helpful if you struggle with phobias, like fear of flying or dogs. Equipped with proven techniques like exposure therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy, they can help you overcome issues that have hampered you for years.

**How do you know if you should go to a therapist?** The American Psychological Association poses these questions:

● Do you or someone close to you spend some amount of time every week thinking about the problem?

● Is the problem embarrassing, to the point that you want to hide from others?

● Over the past few months, has the problem reduced your quality of life?

● Does the problem take up considerable time (e.g., more than an hour per day)?

● Have you curtailed your work or educational ambitions because of the problem?

● Are you rearranging your lifestyle to accommodate the problem?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you would probably benefit from seeing a therapist. When it comes to finding a therapist or coach, you have several options. First, you can find one locally. If you don’t know of a good local therapist, Psychology Today has a searchable directory and the International Coaching Federation has a coach finder.

There are also numerous online therapy options available. Most of these online options offer both video sessions and text chat options. They will also try to work with your insurance provider.

Check out these websites:

● Betterhelp

● Talkspace

● Amwell

● DoctorOnDemand

● MDLive

Unfortunately, there can be a stigma surrounding therapy or coaching. A person who sees a therapist is considered weak somehow, like they weren’t strong enough to deal with their challenges.

Don’t buy into this idea. **Many of the strongest, most successful people in the world go to therapy.** CEOs, professional athletes, and military leaders have therapists or coaches. If they can benefit, you can too.

1. **Have Self-Compassion** - It’s essential to remember that you’re not defective if you regularly experience fear and anxiety. There are many factors that contribute to fear, including:
	1. ● Biology
	2. ● Genetics
	3. ● Experience
	4. ● Environment
	5. ● Current circumstances
	6. ● Family history

Any one of these things can cause you to feel afraid. It’s not as though you’re choosing to be afraid because you like it.

In light of this, be compassionate toward yourself. Don’t try to deny the existence of your fears or act like you have it all together. Accept and love yourself, fears and all.

If you’re unwilling to accept yourself until you completely overcome your fears, you’ll be perpetually unhappy. The reality is that fear will never be completely absent from your life. Even the most courageous people in the world feel anxiety from time to time.

If you want to overcome fear, you must have the courage to first accept yourself as you are. Sociologist Brene Brown said, “I now see how owning our story and loving ourselves through that process is the bravest thing that we will ever do.”

Own your story. Own the factors that cause fear to rise in you and own the actions necessary to still those fears.

1. **Courage is not the absence of fear.** A person who never feels fear isn’t courageous, they’re crazy. The world can be a pretty scary place and there are lots of reasons to feel afraid.

**Courage is feeling afraid and acting anyway.** Courageous people acknowledge their fears and then move forward to overcome them.

Nelson Mandela said it this way:

I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.

It’s okay to feel fear or worry but avoid letting them get the best of you. Don’t let anxiety keep you from living the life of your dreams.

**We’ve talked about a number of different ways to deal with fear and worry:**

**●** Change your biology

● Identify your fears

● Practice worst-case and best-case thinking

● Focus on what you can control

● Choose gratitude

● Practice mindfulness and meditation

● Schedule your worries

● Get support

● Talk to a therapist

 ● Have self-compassion

These techniques won’t eliminate fear from your life, but they will make it easier for you to cope with it.

Make no mistake, it’s not easy to overcome fear. It takes consistent work. You must have the courage to come face-to-face with the things that truly frighten you. You have to expend energy to get your thoughts under control.

**But the work is worth it.** As a result, you experience freedom, peace, and confidence. You aren’t easily rattled by circumstances. You FIGHT YOUR FEARS • 54 know that you can handle whatever comes your way.

Author Judy Blume said, “Each of us must confront our own fears, must come face to face with them. How we handle our fears will determine where we go with the rest of our lives. To experience adventure or to be limited by the fear of it.”

A wonderful, adventurous future awaits you. You just need to step forward and take it.

**c. Coping with Personal Change**

Wanting to change is a courageous and laudable decision. However, like most people, you may find intentional transformation to be at least a little challenging.

**This guide gives you several tips to help you make the changes you desire in your life.** You can learn from the personal stories within and apply these lessons into your own life. Try out the many strategies, one by one, to effect the changes you want. Soon, you’ll find that not only are you used to change, but you’re embracing its possibilities and enjoying the results!

The first step to personal change is to identify what you want to change about yourself. Then, take small steps until you reach your goal. The changing itself happens in an instant. But getting to that point can take a long time. How long the process takes is largely dependent on the strength of your motivation.

**Motivation is essential to the process of personal transformation.** Why do you want to change? If you just want to please someone, long-lasting effects are unlikely. Eventually you’re probably going to find yourself sliding back to where you were.

On the other hand, if you genuinely want to change for your own reasons, then the transformation will be quicker, easier, and long-lasting. Everyone – especially you – has the strength and inner resources to cultivate change as long as there’s strong motivation.

**➡ WHY CHANGE IS CHALLENGING**

You’re probably aware of your usual sleeping posture, your preference for the right or left side of the bed, or for a particular place at the table. Chances are good that you like to vacation in the same place and eat the same foods.

Wouldn’t you be uncomfortable if you had to modify these behaviors? As humans, we seem built to resist change. Once you learn how to do something, you’d rather stick to it because you find comfort in repetition.

“No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man.” - Heraclitus

**➡ CHANGE IS CONSTANT**

**The only thing you can be sure of is change.** Most often we’re not aware of when we change because this process happened slowly and nearly effortlessly. That’s why making small changes don’t have to be so difficult.

Think of the millions of cells constantly transforming in your body. The seasons change, fashion changes, hairstyles change. Hasn’t yours?

It’s common for people to get bored with a certain style and go in for another. That energy can be applied to changing habits, too. It’s just a matter of altering your perspective.

”As the great Confucius said, ‘The one who would be in constant happiness must frequently change.’ Flow. But we keep looking back, don’t we? We cling to things in the past and cling to things in the present . . .

Do you want to enjoy a symphony? Don’t hold on to a few bars of the music. Don’t hold on to a couple of notes. Let them pass, let them flow. The whole enjoyment of a symphony lies in your readiness to allow the notes to pass.” - Anthony de Mello

**➡ LIMITING BELIEFS**

Perhaps your limiting beliefs are hindering your transformation. How often do you tell yourself, “I can’t do that?” For example, if you want to quit smoking or start exercising, you’ve got to believe that you can. **A belief is a self-fulfilling prophecy.**

A belief such as “I’m a bad person” will prevent you from taking personal responsibility for the behavior which prompts you to think of yourself as a bad person. But a person can’t be condemned because of his poor behavior. There’s much more to any of us than a single act.

Each of us undoubtedly has many good traits. The person who thinks of himself as a bad person could be an animal lover, a generous individual, or someone who can make others laugh.

 For example, look at John’s story: John has a challenge with alcohol. Every celebration such as a birthday or Christmas becomes an excuse for him to get drunk. His wife and kids dread these “good times” because John gets aggressive. The alcohol brings out his argumentative side and he looks for openings for arguments.

It’s a vicious cycle. The more he argues, the more he drinks in an attempt to drown his sorrows. John blames his outbursts on his wife, insisting that she must not argue with him, especially when he’s intoxicated. Secretly, he believes he’s a drunk and a bad person who can’t change.

John needs to accept himself. But self-acceptance doesn’t mean that he should condone his negative behavior and continue doing it. It means that he should recognize that he sometimes engages in unacceptable behavior**. With self-acceptance, John is more likely to learn from his mistakes.**

Once John admits that he has a problem with alcohol and wants to change, he will need support from his family and friends. Joining Alcoholics Anonymous is a great idea because meeting others who’ve transformed or are in transformation can be highly motivating.

**If you want to change your destructive or socially unacceptable behavior:**

➡ Take personal responsibility for your actions.

➡ Be specific in identifying the behavior - what exactly are you doing wrong?

➡ Develop a game plan.

“Only the wisest and the stupidest of men never change.” - Confucius

**➡ KEEP A JOURNAL**

**Writing your thoughts down every day will help you keep track of your thinking process and clarify your insights.** You’ll be able to see both big and small transformations more clearly. If you’ve always kept a journal, you’ll be able to trace your transformation across the years.

To get an idea of your habitual thought patterns, sit quietly and write down each of your thoughts as it occurs. After you’ve done this for a few days, you’ll be able to tell whether you tend to think negatively or positively. This is an important exercise because **thoughts control our experiences.**

If you find that your thoughts are hindering your progress, it’s time to replace them with ones that allow you to progress. Next, **make a new list of what you’d like to think and believe instead.** These thoughts could be related to health and fitness, skills and capabilities, and more.

Now it’s time to make the change to your new thoughts. To do this, all you have to do is keep thinking of the outcomes.

For instance, if you, like most people, associate exercise with effort, think instead of the effect exercise will have on your body and mind. You’ll feel happier because of the endorphins being released; you’ll be healthier, trimmer, and you’ll sleep better and be less stressed out.

Think these new and positive thoughts each day. You’ll be amazed with the results you will achieve!

**➡ LOVE YOURSELF**

Self-esteem is central to motivation. If you respect yourself and believe that you’re valuable and worthy, you’re not likely to have destructive habits. This doesn’t mean you won’t acknowledge your imperfections. Quite the contrary: you get to acknowledge your imperfections as part of the whole picture of yourself.

**Acknowledging is quite different from criticizing and hating yourself.** If you have issues with self-esteem, don’t hesitate to consult a professional counselor.

“When I experience and accept myself exactly as I am, then I change.” - Cherie McCoy

**➡ TYPICAL REACTIONS TO CHANGE**

Changes often bring with them a feeling of fear, panic or grief, followed by denial, and finally, acceptance. Such reactions are common in someone who has just lost a loved one or gotten fired from his job.

In the case of a loved one’s death, grief is important. If you refrain from grieving, you block your transformation, and with it, your return to normalcy. Coming to terms with your loss is important, and may help prevent long-term depression.

”If you don’t get what you want, you suffer; if you get what you don’t want, you suffer; even when you get exactly what you want, you still suffer because you can’t hold on to it forever.

Your mind is your predicament. It wants to be free of change. Free of pain, free of the obligations of life and death. But change is a law, and no amount of pretending will alter that reality.” - Dan Millman

**➡ CHANGING FROM WITHIN**

Melissa was deeply involved in her spiritual community. Her mentors there pointed out that she had a habit of drawing attention to her helplessness in certain situations. This made the other devotees pity her, instead of being inspired by her.

As a senior devotee, Melissa was expected to set a good example. She was shocked by the revelation of her needy attitude. Melissa had never perceived herself in this manner, but her mentors were right. She did tend to play the role of the lost little girl.

Thinking that this difficulty had come about because of her openness, Melissa decided to stop discussing her personal life with others. However, two weeks later, she made the same mistake again. Although she wasn’t complaining about the difficult situation in which she found herself, her aura was so full of that helplessness that others sensed her negative emotions.

**Melissa began to observe her thoughts more closely in trying situations.** How was she projecting an aura of helplessness? Why was she feeling helpless when every circumstance she encountered was meant for her spiritual growth?

Through practice, **Melissa trained her brain to think differently.** In a few months, she became the strong senior devotee whom others could emulate.

You, too, can bring about this kind of change in your own life. But like Melissa’s transformation, **it must start from within.** A comment from a friend or mentor may catalyze your growth process, and you may be motivated by your support network, but the actual desire to grow must begin with you.

“Don’t be deceived into thinking that by changing the external, the internal will be changed. It works the other way around. The path that needs changing is the one in your mind.” - Susan Jeffers

**➡ OUR HABITS AND ATTITUDES CREATE US**

Although you make your own habits and believe they’re part of your identity, you weren’t born with any. Without your habits, you’re closer to your true self. For example, you’re not born with a drug addiction or a tendency to procrastinate or bite your nails. But when you watch others doing (or enjoying!) these things, it’s easy to copy their behavior.

Take smoking, for example. How many of us smoked our first cigarette because we thought it looked cool or because it seemed like the thing to do because our friends were doing it?

“You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself.” - Jim Rohn

**➡ SKINNER’S EXPERIMENT**

In the 1940s, the behavioral psychologist B.F. Skinner conducted an experiment involving rats and people. He built a maze for each segment and placed chocolate in the middle of the rat maze and $10 bills in the middle of the human maze.

When the chocolate was removed from the first maze, the rats gave up trying to locate it. In the other maze, though, the people did not cease their quest for the cash even after it was removed.

**The mind latches on to such pleasure-seeking behaviors. It sees them as solutions to feelings of discomfort. Thus, habits are born.** So you’ll see people smoking in uneasy situations, or stuffing themselves with food whenever they’re depressed.

Because these behaviors make them feel good, they focus on the pleasure. Usually, while smoking or compulsively eating, you don’t spend much time thinking about how bad the activity is for you. Nor did the humans in the maze obsess about the futility of their hunt for the money; they just kept looking.

“Those who are victorious plan effectively and change decisively. They are like a great river that maintains its course but adjusts its flow.” - Sun Tzu

**➡ REPROGRAMMING THE BRAIN**

When little Elizabeth fell down and grazed her knee in the school playground, a teacher gave her candy to distract her from the pain. It worked, but Elizabeth liked the candy so much, she would bruise herself on purpose to get more. Her brain associated pain with sweets and this pattern stayed with her as she grew up.

Can she reprogram her brain and change the habit? Sure, she can replace the eating of sweets with another behavior like taking a nap or reading a book whenever she feels any sort of pain.

If she does this often enough, she will create new neurological pathways in her brain which will tell her body how to behave in new ways. **Her unhealthy old habit will wither away.**

Contrary to what researchers believed in the past, new research indicates that our brains, just like our other organs, are always capable of building new cells. **We’re never too old for change.**

“There is only one way in which you can “change your luck” and that is by altering your thoughts.” - Eric Butterworth

**➡ THOUGHT FORCES**

We attract the things on which we focus. So if we want to give up smoking, constantly thinking about cigarettes will prevent us from busting this bad habit.

Instead, we need to think about the person we’ll be if we don’t smoke: someone who’s more energetic and healthier and more mindful of others. After all, we affect those around us with our second-hand smoke.

Take a moment to consider the absurdity of the following attitude: when you want to buy a new home, do you tell the estate agent what you don’t want? When you’re shopping, do you look at the clothes you don’t want to buy?

To effect change in your life, you’ll find it very helpful to train your mind to think in a constructive way. **Before you know it, you’ll begin attracting what you do want.** By default, you’ll experience less of what you don’t want.

“Thought is cause: experience is effect. If you don’t like the effects in your life, you have to change the nature of your thinking.” - Marianne Williamson

**➡ STEP OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE**

**Prepare yourself for the big changes by making small changes in your lifestyle.** Shun the familiar and do things differently. For example:

➡ Instead of watching your favorite TV program, read a book.

➡ At the dinner table or in the living room, sit in a different chair.

➡ Sleep on the other side of the bed.

➡ Buy a different brand of soap.

**Just by taking these small actions, you’ll begin to prime your mind to receive change positively.** Then, when it comes to larger transformations, you’ll feel more confident. You’ll already have a sense that change can be enjoyable and fascinating, and this will help motivate you.

➡ **SMALL CHANGES LEAD TO BIG CHANGES**

**If you find big changes difficult to make right away, try making small ones that lead toward your goal.** You’ll eventually get to the big ones. For instance, with cigarettes, you could try cutting down gradually. So for a week you might cut down to 20 and the following week to 15. For losing weight, you might find that losing 1 pound in a week isn’t so difficult.

Some may find it easier to make big changes right away. Just decide one day that you want to stop smoking and do it. To help you with the change:

➡ Request family members and friends to avoid smoking in your presence.

➡ Throw away any remaining cigarettes.

➡ Keep the ash tray away. Give your lighter away.

➡ Every time you feel like a cigarette, chew some gum instead or eat a carrot stick.

➡ Avoid going to bars and other places where people smoke.

Part of retraining your brain does involve the physical world, especially when the change itself is physical, such as quitting smoking. So you may find it useful to take small steps. Also, **set yourself up for success by preparing your environment for your transformation.**

“If we don’t change, we don’t grow. If we don’t grow, we are not really living. Growth demands a temporary surrender of security.” - Gail Sheehy

**➡ THE POWER OF SPIRITUAL MOTIVATION**

You may find spiritual practice extremely helpful when you wish to make personal changes. Find a path you can believe in, a teacher you can trust, and give yourself completely to your spiritual cultivation.

Your perspective will shift. All of your actions will be determined by your purpose and new priorities.

Remember, change doesn’t need to be associated with discomfort. Although you may experience some in the process of transformation, ultimately it will lead you to true liberation and peace of mind.

“Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change.” - Wayne Dyer

**➡ THE BOOK OF CHANGES**

The Chinese I Ching, the oldest oracle in the world, owes its existence to China’s first emperor Fu Hsi, a great sage. According to this book, the only constant is change.

The oracle helps you live in harmony with changes, so you go with the universal flow. You act when required to act, retreat or refrain from action when required. Harmony is assured if you follow this path, the way of the “Superior Man.”

“If you tell me, I will listen. If you show me, I will see. But if you let me experience, I will learn.” - Lao Tzu

**➡ BUILDING THE MOTIVATION TO CHANGE**

**For the most effective motivation, make your goal compelling.** Also, envision what you no longer want to do as repellant. Think of how your circumstances will turn out if you don’t do something about it right away.

Carter had difficulty making the decision to give up smoking until a girl he was dating told him his mouth smelled like an ash tray and refused to kiss him. Carter felt like she’d slapped him. It woke him up.

He imagined what it would be like to spend the rest of his life without a woman to love him. He pictured himself coming home to an empty house every day and was filled with remorse. It was too much to bear and he decided to give up smoking effective immediately.

The last time he used tobacco, he made himself quite ill by smoking two packs of cigarettes in quick succession. He found his breath and the taste in his mouth repelling. He noticed he did not have an appetite. Did Carter succeed? Of course he did. His date’s bluntness galvanized him into doing something about his habit.

Chances are that most people with unhealthy or socially damaging habits attract such derogatory comments, but usually they don’t take them seriously. Could this be you? To effect change, all you have to do is ponder the consequences of your behavior like Carter did.

**➡ THE POWER OF PICTURES**

Einstein said: “Imagination is more important than knowledge.” **If you can envision it, you can be it.**

You use your imagination all the time, but possibly not consciously and constructively. If someone asks you what you had for dinner last night, a picture of the food you ate will pop up in your mind’s eye. The same thing will happen when you’re asked to describe your friend.

The brain uses visualization to process information about the world. One of your brain’s functions is to make you feel good.

**So if you imagine how amazing you’ll feel and the wonderful life you’ll lead as a result of personal change, your brain will latch on to that thought.** Once this happens, you’re well on your way to seeing the changes you want become reality.

“You want to change your life? Control the only thing you can control: the meaning you give something.” - Tony Robbins

**➡ HOW TO CHANGE BELIEFS** Once you change your beliefs, you can change your circumstances. In other words, your outer world reflects your inner one.

You’ll find some powerful exercises in the Coping with Personal Change Workbook to help you break old habits and replace them with healthier new ones. Make a commitment to practice these exercises because experience is the only teacher.

To get results, you should practice the exercises several times. This will form new neural pathways in your brain and soon you’ll have fresh, life affirming habits.

Try doing one exercise over and over again for days or weeks before you move on to the next one. Remember to take breaks between practice sessions. Studies have shown that this is the best way to improve performance.

“Thinking is a habit, and like any other habit, it can be changed; it just takes effort and repetition.” - John Eliot, Ph.D.

**➡ CONCLUSION**

Changes are essential. Either we make them ourselves or we’re forced into making them. Ultimately, you get to be the one to decide. Start today to choose new habits, and soon you’ll have the life you dream of.

“We first make our habits and then our habits make us.” - John Dryden

**d.Coping with Personal Change Worksheet**

Before you begin with the techniques and exercises that will propel you towards personal change, clarify which habits you want to break. You may already have made a list of these.

When you make your list, be specific. For instance, you can decide that you want to be 20 pounds slimmer in three months, or to stop smoking within six months. Keep this list in front of you.

1. Do the warm up exercise below under “6.” Now think about what you want to change in this workbook.

2. Can you experience with all of your senses what achieving your goal will feel like? Use every sense: see it, hear it, taste it, smell it, and feel it. Does the experience make you feel good? If so, you’ll be able to visualize it easily and often.

3. Are other people going to play a part in your achievement? Or do you have complete control? If you can depend entirely on yourself to make the change, you may find you’re more successful.

4. Make a detailed plan. Think of the steps you need to take in order to reach your goal.

➡ To make the process easier, break down the desired change into a series of small changes. This way you’ll be able to track your progress, reward yourself whenever you achieve a mini goal, and make adjustments in the plan if necessary.

5. Can you easily fit your desired change into your current routine? If not, you may want to make changes in your lifestyle too.

6. Now think about what you want to change. Write it down here:

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7. Read out what you’ve written. Imagine that you’ve already made the change.

8. Sit comfortably, making sure you have enough time at your disposal, and answer the following questions: What do I specifically want? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ When and where do I want it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What will be the effects of achieving this goal on my:

Family \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Job

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Friends \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ What will I get from this achievement? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What are the resources I need to make this change? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What will I feel, see, hear, taste, and smell when I achieve this goal? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How will I look? How will I sound when I talk about my accomplishment? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What will happen as a result? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What won’t happen? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What will happen if I don’t achieve my goal? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What won’t happen if I don’t achieve it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**➡ TIPS FOR PRACTICE**

➡ Choose a time for your exercises when you won’t be distracted.

➡ Keep a notebook handy.

➡ Keep your head up and gaze on the horizon when you prepare to do an exercise. Look up and things will look up too!

**➡ PREPARATORY EXERCISE**

The following is a preparatory exercise you only need to do once. Doing this will help you identify the habits you want to give up and those you want to adopt.

For this exercise, you’ll need a notebook and three highlighters of different colors.

Go through the list below. Highlight in one color the habits you want to give up. With the second highlighter, mark those habits with which you’re happy. Use the third highlighter to highlight the practices you’d like to adopt.

➡ Biting your nails

➡ Smoking

➡ Brushing your teeth

➡ Exercising regularly

➡ Eating enough fruits and vegetables

➡ Bathing

➡ Overeating

➡ Relaxing

➡ Gambling

➡ Getting stressed

➡ Procrastinating

➡ Having a hobby

➡ Listening to people

➡ Eating slowly

➡ Eating too fast

➡ Laughing more often

➡ Wearing clean clothes

➡ Getting enough sleep

➡ Taking drugs

➡ Getting drunk

➡ Gardening

➡ Being too critical of yourself

➡ Getting angry

➡ Having low self-esteem

➡ Cooking

➡ Speaking face to face with friends instead of texting them

➡ Drinking enough water

➡ Brushing your hair

➡ Gardening

➡ Hugging

➡ Other? Add them below...

Now look at the habits you’d like to get rid of in the list above and write them down in your notebook.

Under each of these, answer the following questions:

1. Can you tell from whom you learned this habit or how you got it?

2. Why isn’t this practice good for you?

3. Is this a behavior with which you can happily grow old?

4. Are you prepared to change this practice?

5. In regard to this habit, what do you need to do in order to move toward your higher vision of yourself?

6. What quality in you will help you to change?

**➡ LEARNING HOW TO VISUALIZE**

The brain processes information through visualization and adopts any behavior that makes you feel good. If you can imagine vividly how a particular change can elicit positive feelings, your brain will set up a new neural pathway which will turn the visualization into a habit. This will help you turn your dreams into reality.

Here’s an exercise which will sharpen your visualization skills:

1. Picture a tiny, green watermelon.

2. See the watermelon expand until it’s bigger than a soccer ball.

3. On the watermelon, pink and purple spots appear.

4. The spots turn into red roses.

5. Inhale the fragrance of the roses.

6. The roses turn back into spots.

7. They begin to fade.

8. The watermelon begins to shrink in size until it’s back to the original size.

9. The melon begins to bounce around.

10. It bounces higher and higher.

11. The watermelon breaks open, scattering pink flesh all over.

12. The bits of splattered fruit begin to shrink until they vanish.

**➡ WARM UP EXERCISE**

This practice will help you to relax and prepare yourself for change. It’s a quick warm up for your brain before trying the following exercises. To get started, remember what you look like when you’re relaxed. When you’re loosened up, you’re actually in greater control.

 Now, do this exercise repeatedly until you’re ready for the first habit changing technique listed immediately afterward. This exercise is also good to do before a challenging event such as an exam or a seminar where you have to speak.

1. Pay attention to your breathing (relaxed people breathe slowly).

2. Notice the look in your eyes.

3. Now project this picture of yourself onto your mental screen. Once it’s clear, bring it close.

4. The picture gets closer and bigger. It moves into you. You become the picture.

5. What does it feel like to be this person?

6. Now make the person in the picture much more relaxed and in control.

7. Project this image onto a movie screen. Give it vivid colors and surround sound.

8. Make this image 20 times larger. Move it closer until you become the image.

9. Now say what your goal is. For example, “I want to stop smoking.”

**➡ TECHNIQUE #1: YOU IN THE FUTURE**

People who smoke heavily often find it impossible to imagine not smoking in particular situations such as at the bar or a party. This is why they may find it challenging break the habit.

To create personal change, you’ll need to imagine yourself making it. Do this exercise each day. You’ll attract what you focus on. The second time you do this exercise, imagine that you’ve been doing it for years.

1. Do the warm up exercise.

2. Stand up and visualize your front door before you. The door is life-sized. Behind it is the future you who has given up the habit you’re trying to break.

3. The door opens. You see the back of the “future you.”

4. Notice the different clothes you’re wearing. Observe that you’re feeling free of your habit.

5. Now the “future you” turns so you can see your profile.

6. Your future self faces you. Notice your vibrant expression and look.

7. Ensure the image of the “future you” is sharp. Move it around so you can see various angles. Take a good look.

8. Step into the image and embrace how it feels to have broken the habit.

9. Step into your future self again and feel the change more intensely.

10. Physically take a step forward. One more time, in your mind’s eye, step into the future you.

11. Experience life without the habit. Use your senses - hear through your ears, see through your eyes.

12. When you’re finished, take a few deep breaths.

**➡ TECHNIQUE #2: MOTIVATION**

This two-part exercise will help motivate you to change. The first part will get you to see what your life will be like if you don’t change. In the second part, you’ll imagine the opposite scenario. Do this exercise as often as you need to until you’re ready to make the change.

**Part 1:**

1. Sit comfortably.

2. Think about the habit you want to get rid of.

3. With yours eyes closed, do the warm up exercise.

4. Imagine the consequences of not changing.

5. Now, imagine that it’s six weeks from now and you still have the habit. Notice how you feel, how you smell. Imagine looking into a mirror. How do you look?

6. What do you think and feel about yourself? How would you describe yourself? What might your friends say about you?

7. Hold the feeling of discomfort and imagine yourself six months in the future, still with the habit.

8. Look at yourself in another mirror. What do you look like? Notice the expression in your eyes, muscle tone, complexion. What do you smell like? How do you feel?

9. How would you describe yourself now? How would others describe you?

10. A year has passed and you still haven’t changed. Look into the mirror. What do you see? How do you feel? What do you smell like?

11. How would you describe yourself? How would others describe you?

12. Hold onto the magnified discomfort and imagine that five years have gone by. Look into the mirror again. Notice how you look and feel. How would you describe yourself now?

13. Ten years down the line with your habit, look into the mirror again and ask yourself if you like what you see.

14. What would your friends say about you now? Look honestly at what you’ve become. Is this the person you want to be? Are you at your best?

Now pause for a moment. Breathe deeply and be grateful this scenario hasn’t happened yet. But it could. Now do you feel the urge to change? If you don’t, repeat the exercise until you do.

If you’re repelled by what your habit could do to you and are ready to change, take a short break. After that, settle down comfortably, take a few deep breaths and prepare to continue on to part 2 of this exercise.

**Part 2:**

1. Do the warm up exercise.

2. You’ve broken the habit and six weeks have gone by. Look into the mirror. How do you feel? How do you look?

3. How would you describe yourself? What are others saying about you? What are the other positive changes you’ve made as a result of getting rid of your habit?

4. Hold on to the feelings of pleasure and project yourself six weeks farther into the future.

5. Look into the mirror. You’re free from the habit and in control. How do you look? What do you smell like? What does it feel like to have more energy and zest for life?

6. How would you describe yourself? What are others saying to you? What are they saying about you now?

7. One year into the future, you’re still free of the habit. Look into the mirror again. What can you see and feel?

8. How would you describe yourself? What are others saying to you now that you’ve changed? Is your life different?

9. Now imagine yourself five full years ahead. It’s been so long since your change that you can barely remember what it was like to have the habit.

10. Look into another mirror. What do you see? What does being in control feel like?

11. How would you describe yourself? How do others see you?

12. Ten years into the future, you’re still free from the habit. Look into the mirror. Pay attention to how you look and feel.

13. What are you saying about yourself? What do your friends say about you? Dwell in the feelings of success and being in control.

14. Now breathe slowly and deeply. As you breathe in, imagine inhaling confidence. You feel relaxed and positive.

After doing these exercises, you should begin to feel ready to make some positive changes for yourself. If not, try doing them again.

And remember, when you change, the world around you transforms to support your endeavors. No matter what your highest vision is for yourself, you can start today. You will find all of the support you need in the process!

**Chapter 9 - Tackle Your Fears**

For most of us, fear of failure is very real. We don’t want to look weak, inadequate, or vulnerable. The feeling that comes from facing your fear is incredible. Accept yourself for who you are and your imperfections. We all have them. You are not alone.

I have had many challenging jobs in my life. The most difficult part is getting up after you fail and moving forward. To this day, I am still working to create the life I want. If you work hard and know you did your best, you shouldn’t be ashamed. Your fears stem from knowing you didn’t do your best and gave your best effort and failed. There is growth in failure and you will want to embrace it and learn from it. If you know you gave it your all, you won’t have any regrets. You won’t wonder if you could have done something else. Some things are simply out of our control. Concentrate on what you can control and let the rest go.

Some people have a fear of success. Sometimes, as hard as we try, we are afraid of putting ourselves out there because we feel we don’t deserve it. We have all had bad experiences. Over the years, people have made hurtful comments to us. For me, I changed my “inner recording” to tell myself that I am worthy of success. Affirmations such as, “I deserve to be successful” and “I am smart and deserve to be loved” all helped me. I have my clients work on this as well. Look at yourself in the mirror, look into your eyes, and speak aloud the positive affirmations several times a day. When people say hurtful remarks to us, it impacts us greatly. They often look at us in the eyes and we internalize it. To change that “internal recording” you need to speak the words so you hear it and see your eyes. This will help your brain to rewire itself for success.

**Here are situations that encompass fear and suggestions for handling them.**

**1. Remove Fear and Eliminate Many of Your Challenges**

It’s unlikely you have any issues in your life that weren’t created by fear. You might not think that your financial or relationship challenges are rooted in fear. However, if you’re honest with yourself, you’ll probably realize that many of your obstacles are caused by your fears and your inability to deal with them in an appropriate way.

Consider these examples:

**a. Relationship issues.** Fear of abandonment is a common fear. It’s also common to fear the loss of autonomy or freedom. Trust issues can also be fear-based. You might be afraid that you won’t be accepted fully.

 **b. Money issues.** Many people deal with fear and anxiety by shopping, which can create debt. Some simply fear discomfort and are unable to let go of that expensive car or morning coffee.

**c. Procrastination. Procrastination can be caused by fear of failure or the perceived discomfort of performing an unpleasant task.**

* For example, you might fear you’re missing out on something exciting and check your email instead of working.

**d. Stuck in a job you dislike.** You might be afraid that no other decent jobs exist for you. You might be fearful of giving up your benefits or getting a new job that pays less. You might be afraid of going through the application process and competing for a better job.

These are just a few examples. Consider the other parts of your life that are challenging. Can you see how fear is having a negative impact?

**How to handle your fears that are holding you back:**

**Realize that fear is uncomfortable, but it isn’t a good reason to avoid doing something.** Fear is helpful if you’re considering doing something physically dangerous. But at the end of the day, fear is simply a feeling.

**\* There’s no reason to let fear guide every decision you make.**

**2. Think about the fearful activity and simply breathe.** Your body is unable to maintain a fear reaction in the long term. There’s a psychological technique called “flooding.” In flooding, a person is exposed to their fear without being allowed any reprieve.

1a. Think about the activity that makes you uncomfortable and focus on taking long, deep breaths. Notice how you start to feel better.

**3. Make a list of the ways that fear is holding you back. If some part of your life is in complete turmoil, it’s likely that you made poor decisions in the past.** How did fear affect your decision-making abilities at that time?

**4. Remember the times you were fearful and still made a good choice.** You’ve likely had times where you felt fear but managed to take the appropriate course of action anyway.

a. Remind yourself of those times and remember how strong you can be.

**5. Practice dealing with discomfort.** Take a situation that you find mildly uncomfortable. Perhaps it’s eating peas or talking to an attractive member of the opposite sex. **Force yourself to deal with small doses of the discomfort, and increase the level of exposure over time.**

a. Although it’s challenging to give up the habit of avoidance, you’ll be surprised at how much you can tolerate.

**6. Realize that discomfort and fear are frequently good things.** If you’re not doing anything that makes you uncomfortable, your life is likely to stay the same. It’s only when you push your comfort level that new things can begin to happen.

Fear is the most common cause of challenges in life. **Learn to work through fear and gain the ability to make positive choices.** You’ll boost your self-esteem and enjoy a happier life. Learn to embrace discomfort as a positive sign that your life is about to change for the better. Get started today!

**b. Stop Using Fear as an Excuse and Get What**

Fear is the primary obstacle keeping you from pursuing what you want. Think about all you would try if you were assured success. How different would your life be? **Conquering fear is perhaps the most important self-development goal anyone could achieve.**

Use these tips to kick fear to the curb and get what you really want:

**1. Realize what fear really is.** Realize that fear is a just a name you give to a certain physical feeling. Fear really is more of a psychologically created construct.

**2. Fear is there to serve you, not to guide you. It can be useful to think of fear as a message from your subconscious.** The message states, “Hey, we think something might be wrong.” It is then your job to rationally determine if there really is something to be concerned about.

\*Hanging off the side of a cliff would be a legitimate cause for concern in most cases. In this case, your life may be in danger so there is something to fear.

\*However, being afraid of speaking to a group of people may be uncomfortable, but there is no real danger. What is the worst that could happen other than a little embarrassment if it doesn’t go well?

**3. Build your bravery “muscle.” Each time you push through fear, your fear-conquering muscle gets stronger.** Unfortunately, the opposite is equally true. Every time you avoid taking an action due to fear, you’re strengthening your fear.

**\***Psychologists call this type of avoidance negative reinforcement. This is a fancy way of referring to avoidance being psychologically rewarding. If you run away from the scary thing, you do feel better.

**\***While you may feel better at first, it also increases the fear felt the next time in a similar situation.

**\***If you avoid what frightens you, your brain realizes the fear manipulated you and will use the same strategy against you the next time.

**4. Focus on what you want.** Keep the desired end result in mind. No human is capable of thinking of two things simultaneously. You might be able to switch back and forth between several things rapidly, but that’s not the same thing.

\*Only focus on your goal and it is impossible to feel the fear.

\*It’s easier said than done, but that’s what meditation really is: the ability to focus on something to the exclusion of everything else.

**5. Just get started.** The hardest part of facing your fear is getting started. Avoid getting bogged down with the details. Most people never get out of the planning stage. Take the first step, and the next step will reveal itself.

**6. Remember that you’ve already done more difficult things.** Consider how long it took you to learn to walk and talk. If you can learn to do those things, you can certainly learn how to face and eliminate your fears. Be confident in yourself and you will succeed.

In this day and age, fear has limited usefulness. We live in a civilized society where most of us are safe and secure. We no longer have to live in caves and fear the wild animals lurking outside.

Fear is more like a state of mind. If you let it, fear will hold you back. Let today be the day that you stop using fear as an excuse and go after what you really want.

**c. Transcend the Fear in Your Life and Find Freedom**

Fear is a part of life, and some fear is helpful. You’re afraid to stick your hand into a fire or to jump off a cliff. If you weren’t afraid of anything, you wouldn’t live long. But most fears are crippling and influence your decisions in negative ways.

Imagine you’re walking through the woods and get a thorn in your arm. You would likely remove it and go about your life with little thought of that mild injury. **But imagine if you didn’t deal with it.**

Eventually, that thorn would affect many of your decisions:

\*It would become infected and sore.

\*You would be careful not to bump anything.

\*You’d avoid most sports.

\*You would protect yourself anytime someone walked to close.

\*Eventually, you might even develop a special cover to tape over it.

\*Then you must worry about finding clothes that fit over it.

\*You couldn’t swim because the tape might come off.

\*It would affect your sleeping position, and so on.

Fears are the same way. A fear of talking to strangers affects the decisions you make in your social life and career. **We avoid all types of things to ensure we don’t stir up the negative emotions caused by our fears.**

The more fears you have, the less freedom you enjoy.

**Try these techniques to transcend your fears and claim the level of freedom you deserve:**

**1. Become more aware.** There’s a big world out there with a variety of perspectives. Yours might not be the best perspective. You might believe that a fear of public speaking is totally normal and justified. But is it? What is the worst that could happen if you make a mistake? No one is going to stone you.

\*Look at all your fears and make a list of them.

\*Decide which are causing your life the most grief. Which fears do you spend the most time working around? Which are the most limiting?

**2. Determine why you’re afraid.** What are the possible consequences that cause you to be afraid?

**3. Deal with your fears a little at a time.** For example, if you’re afraid of public speaking, try giving a speech to your child, nephew, or niece. Then trying giving it to three of them. Build up your tolerance until you can speak to thousands.

**4. Use techniques to lower your fear.** There are many tools for dealing with fear:

**\***The Emotional Freedom Technique is popular. EFT works by tapping on acupressure meridians to release blockages. When these blockages are released, the problem feeling can be released and move through the body. The process starts with a beginning statement of what the problem feeling is and includes a complete acceptance and acknowledgement of the problem. To start the process of EFT, the person would say something like, “Even though I have this (fear) about (the time I was criticized for being clumsy), I completely accept myself anyway." Often that will not feel true to a person, so they would modify the statement to say, “I am willing to learn to accept myself” or “I want to accept myself." The client says the statement three times while tapping on the karate chop point. In the second part of this treatment, the client focuses on the feeling (fear) in the body and rates it at an intensity between 1-10. Then the client begins to tap on points around the face while saying “this fear” simultaneously. Several rounds of this can be done until the fear is rated at a zero on a scale from 1-10. Once that fear is gone, the therapist will guide the client to feel into other fears that will then come up from different aspects of the same situation or emotional state.

**\***So is the Sedona Method. There are five ways to approach the process of releasing, and they all lead to the same result: liberating your natural ability to let go of any unwanted emotion on the spot, and allowing some of the suppressed energy in your subconscious to dissipate revealing your unlimited potential.

The first way is by choosing to let go of the unwanted feeling. The second way is to welcome the feeling, to allow the emotion just to be. The third way is to dive into the very core of the emotion. The fourth way is by dissolving the opposing polarities we all carry, and the fifth way is by seeing through the feeling to the effortless Awareness that is right behind it.

**\***Hypnosis and meditation are also options.

**\***You can also use a psychologist if you’re not making a lot of progress on your own.

**5. Use a journal. Writing can often be more helpful than thinking.** We take the things we write more seriously than our self-talk. You talk to yourself constantly throughout the day. What will one more thought accomplish? Use a journal to record your thoughts, fears, and your progress.

**6. Develop a new understanding of failure.** Many of the silly fears we have are related to a fear of failure. Ask yourself what can happen if you fail? Failure can be a great thing if you learn from it and apply it to your life.

Imagine a life without any irrational fears. What would you do if you weren’t afraid of failing? **You can measure your personal freedom by number of fears you possess.** Everyone develops fears as a natural consequence of living. You have a choice. You don’t have to keep your fears. Spend some time each day dealing with your fears and reclaim your life.

1. **8 Ways to Take Advantage of Your Fears**

If you’re not afraid, you’re not human. Everyone is afraid of something. Fears tend to evolve and change over time. A young child might be afraid of the dark. A middle-aged man is afraid of embarrassing himself during a speech. A newborn is afraid of loud noises. All other fears are learned. What have you learned to be afraid of?

Turn the tables and use fear to your advantage:

**1. Determine why you’re afraid.** If you’re afraid of falling off a cliff and dying, your fear might be warranted, and further evaluation is required. If it’s just your ego talking, you know that the fear isn’t in your best interest. That’s the fear that keeps you in your current situation.

**2. Reframe the situation.** The fact that you’re physically uncomfortable doesn’t have to control your thoughts or actions. **When you’re feeling anxious, take that as a sign that something great might be getting ready to happen.** Step outside your comfort zone and take advantage of the opportunity.

\*Use your fear to your advantage. It’s a good thing, not something to be avoided. Embrace it.

**3. Review the list of all of your fears you wrote above.** You’ll notice a pattern. It might be a fear of embarrassment, success, or becoming isolated. By understanding the core of your fears, you can better deal with them.

**\*By addressing the core issue, you may be able to eliminate many of your fears at the source.**

**4. Use fear to propel you forward.** The most successful people have been those that faced fear successfully. Conquering one fear makes you more capable. The next fear will be even easier. **Defeating a small fear makes the more significant fears more manageable.** The confidence you gain can be applied to all areas of your life.

**5. Use fear as an opportunity to practice relaxation techniques.** You might hate dinner parties, but they’re a great chance to work on your conversational skills. When you’re feeling fear, you have the chance to practice relaxing. Focusing on breathing slowly and think positive thoughts. You might as well get something out of your suffering!

**6. Recognize that fear is self-induced.** It’s only your perception of the event that creates your fear. And fear is just a feeling. It may include physical symptoms, but it’s a feeling nevertheless.

**\*If your life isn’t in danger, your fear is just a guess.** When you can realize this fact, you’ll also realize that all of your other feelings follow the same rules. If you can make yourself feel bad, you can make yourself feel good, too.

**7. Use fear to enhance your discipline.** Fear occurs when your brain tries to stop you from doing something. It makes you uncomfortable until you run away from the source of your fear. **Use the opportunity to exercise your ability to push through the anxiety.**

\*Discipline is the ability to do things you don’t feel like doing. You don’t need discipline to do the things you enjoy. Does it take discipline to eat a potato chip? No. It takes discipline to stop. You need discipline to face your fears. Begin cultivating it.

**8. Get the help you need.** Perhaps you need help getting over deep-seated fears. There’s probably a good reason why they’re deep-seated. Use your fear as motivation to get help. You might find you need help with a few other mental health issues too. Getting help for your fear could help you move forward with a myriad of new benefits.

Fear isn’t something to be avoided. **Use fear to your advantage.** Fear is a wonderful opportunity to learn about yourself. Fear can also be used as chance to grow on a personal level. If you’re not afraid, you’re not living.

**NOTE: It is important to me that I am creating books that are meaningful to my readers. If you could review this book on Amazon, I would appreciate it. I read each one and it will help me to write books that are having a positive impact. Thank you!**

**Chapter 10 – I. Create Your Support System**

Studies have shown that people that have a support system in place experience less stress and are less likely to be depressed or have anxiety. People live healthier and longer lives, have better coping skills, and report higher levels of well-being. Here are some strategies to build your support system.

1. **Ask for help.** It is actually a sign of strength to recognize and reach out for help when you need it. Some people see that as a weakness but it actually means you have a good understanding of yourself and what you need. Consider who you want to ask for help to be sure they are a reassuring person to bring into your Circle of Support. Bravo!
2. **List all the resources that are available to you right now.** This is as easy as making a list. Ask yourself: "Who would I want as a member of my team so that I can achieve success? Are you a member of a social group or networking organization? Do you know a colleague at work you could ask for support? Do you have close family and friends you can rely on? You have many more resources available to you than you realize.
3. **Write a list of resources you would like to have access to.** Do you want to join a gym? Could you become a member of a networking group? Do you want a mentor in your field? Can you take a course or seminar? Is there a colleague you admire and could befriend?
	* + - 1. **Identify Your Support Worksheet**

It helps to have a clear picture of the supports that are available to us. Complete the following:

‣ Name the people in your personal life who provide you with support and encouragement.

 ‣ List the formal support in your life, ie. church, counselor/coach, service organizations, etc.)

‣ List the resources you have access to for use as needed (people, assets, institutions, etc.)

‣ List personal qualities of resilience that you possess to bounce back from difficulties in life.

**II. Build Your Tribe - The Ultimate Guide to Becoming an Influencer**

The Age of Influencers

Now, more than ever, we are living in an age of influencers. In years past, you had to be a well-known celebrity, politician, or leader to be considered an influencer. If you were just an average Joe, nobody paid much attention to you. The path to influence usually involved years of climbing social or political ladders.

Then the internet, social media, and smartphones came along and changed everything. **Now, literally anyone can build an audience and become an influencer.** You don’t have to be famous. You don’t have to be good looking. You don’t have to have access to the halls of power.

**You just need to know how to create content that interests people.**

The beauty of the internet is that it allows people to find others like them. It makes it easier to form “tribes” around narrow shared interests. And within every tribe, there are influencers.

There are running, finance, gaming, knitting, coffee, business, mental health, beauty, vegan, keto, fashion, and spirituality influencers. Name a subject and you can be sure that there are influencers.

Of course, this does create a challenge. If everyone can be an influencer, it’s much harder to stand out. It can be difficult to cut through the noise and capture the attention of others. It can be hard to build an audience when a lot of other people are trying to do the same thing.

In this guide, we’re going to walk you through the what, why, and how of becoming an influencer. **You’ll discover a step-by-step process for finding your tribe, building an audience, and even monetizing that audience.**

**What is an Influencer?**

Before we get into the nitty-gritty of actually becoming an influencer, let’s ensure that we’re all on the same page regarding exactly what an influencer is.

At a high level, **an influencer is someone who has a following and is able to influence that following to do specific things,** such as purchase products, attend events, wear certain items of clothing, and more.

Obviously, celebrities who have millions of followers on social media are influencers. But you don’t have to be Kylie Jenner or Will Smith to be considered an influencer. Depending on your niche, you can be an influencer even if you have only 1,000 followers.

**There are basically 3 types of influencers:**

**1. Mega-influencers.** These are celebrities with millions of followers. These individuals can literally charge hundreds of thousands of dollars for sponsored posts on social media. Unless you’re a well-known actor or rock star, you probably won’t fall into this bracket.

**2. Macro-influencers.** These are individuals who, while not exactly celebrities, have still built up a large online following. They probably have somewhere between 50,000 - 1,000,000 followers. With hard work and consistency, you can build this kind of following.

**3. Micro-influencers.** These are normal people who have built up an audience in a specific niche and are known for their knowledge and expertise. Maybe they run a sizable online group or have a devoted following on YouTube. Typically, they’ll have less than 50,000 followers but more than 1,000.

**Platforms for Influencers**

Most people think about influencers in terms of social media, but the reality is that there are all sorts of ways to be an influencer. If you’re able to attract a following, you can be an influencer.

Some of the most common platforms are:

**1. Blog.** Blogging is a great way to be an influencer because it allows you to share your expertise and insights in an in-depth manner.

● If you want to be an industry specific influencer, blogging Build Your Tribe • 10 is a great way to go about it.

**2. YouTube.** If you can be engaging on camera, YouTube may be the right platform for you. There are influencers on every subject on YouTube, from makeup to mental health to spreadsheets.

**3. Podcast.** Podcasts are absolutely exploding right now, and if you can develop an interesting show that attracts a lot of listeners, brands will want to work with you.

**4. Social media.** Social media is both a blessing and a curse when it comes to being an influencer.

● It’s a blessing because there’s a low barrier to entry and it’s easy to create content.

● It’s a curse because so many people use social media and it can be difficult to stand out.

**5. Email.** In recent years, there has been a resurgence in email newsletters. If you know how to build an engaged email list and write newsletters that others actually want to read, this can be an effective way to become an influencer.

The point is **if you can build a substantial following on any platform, you can become an influencer that brands want to work with.**

You don’t have to be photogenic or able to speak eloquently. If you can command people’s attention and move them to take action, you are an influencer.

Some influencers, like popular YouTubers, have a very broad audience. Others speak to a smaller, niche group, such as business influencers on LinkedIn. Some focus on being fun and entertaining. Others try to deliver valuable insights and expertise.

The bottom line is that no matter who you are, you can be an influencer. Benefits of

**Being an Influencer**

There are a number of substantial benefits associated with being an influencer.

If you build up a big enough audience, you can make substantial amounts of money by partnering with various brands. But even if you don’t make much money, there are still perks:

**● Build your reputation.** If you consistently provide your audience with expertise and knowledge, you’ll develop a reputation as the go-to person in your industry**. You also may get invited to speak at conferences, appear on podcasts, or do in-person workshops at companies.**

● **Attract new clients.** The more you grow your reputation the more people will want to work with you. You’ll be able to grow your business without having to constantly hunt for new clients.

**● Connect with others.** As an influencer, you can authentically connect with a large number of people. You can build meaningful relationships that you wouldn’t be able to otherwise.

Becoming an influencer isn’t easy, and it takes a significant amount of work. But it definitely pays off in the long run. Whether you want to become a full-time influencer or simply boost your career, it’s definitely worth the time and effort required.

Now let’s get into the details of how to become an influencer.

**Step #1: Choose your Niche**

The first step in becoming an influencer is choosing a niche. It’s possible to be a “general” influencer and build an audience of people who simply enjoy watching you go through life. However, this can be pretty difficult unless you’re really able to make yourself stand out in some way.

You’ll probably have more success if you pick a specific niche in which to build your audience. Because you’ll be making so much content in the niche, it should be something you enjoy and in which you have some amount of expertise.

The niche you choose should be broad enough that you can build a sizable following. If the niche is too narrow, not enough people will be interested in the content you produce.

**When choosing your niche, ask yourself these questions:**

● What am I good at?

● What do I like to do?

● What problems can I help people solve?

● What value can I deliver to my audience?

● What can I offer that no one else does?

● What are my unique skills?

**Your goal is to find a niche that’s broad enough that many people will care but narrow enough so that you can stand out.** One way to do this is to start at a wide level and progressively narrow it down to a certain specialty, or subcategory of the broader niche.

For example, say you’re a therapist. There are many sub-topics that fall under the category of therapy, including marriage, work, sex, parenting, relationships, health, weight loss, and many more.

Instead of trying to cover all these subjects, **pick one to focus on in the beginning.** As you begin to grow your following, you can begin to expand into other subtopics.

It may be helpful to do some research before finalizing the niche you want to operate in. **One simple way to do research is to search different platforms for answers to common challenges that your audience struggles with.**

For example, if you’re a career coach, you could search YouTube for tips on finding a new job. If you’re a financial adviser, you could search Facebook or Instagram for financial advice. A Google search can also help you find the most popular websites in your niche.

**The search results will help you learn who the influencers in your niche are and the kinds of content they produce.** Armed with this information, you can determine whether a particular niche is right for you.

**Step #2: Define your Audience**

Once you’ve determined your niche, it’s important to define your audience. In other words, you want to gain clarity on who is in your niche and what they care about.

**Knowing your audience allows you to create content that is valuable to them.** If you don’t have clarity on your audience, you may end up creating irrelevant content, which will hamper you from attracting followers.

**To help you define your audience, think through these questions:**

● What is their age range?

● What are their hopes and dreams?

● What do they fear?

● What motivates them?

● What do they want out of life?

● What are their biggest struggles?

● Who do they look up to?

● Who do they dislike?

● Whose opinions influence them?

● Where do they go for information?

If you’re not sure about the answers to any of these questions, you may want to actually post them on social media and see how people answer. This can give you more insight into how your audience thinks.

Facebook Audience Insights can also be useful when it comes to understanding your audience. It provides a treasure trove of data about the preferences of specific groups of people. You can see the pages they like, education level, relationship status, and more.

Another way to get insights into your audience is to join relevant online groups (like Facebook groups) and pay attention to what the group members discuss. What topics come up regularly? What common problems do group members struggle with? What specific words and phrases do they use?

**You may be tempted to skip this step, thinking that you already know your audience. Don’t do it.** Even if you have a good grasp on who is in your audience, this exercise will give you even more valuable insights and help you to quickly build a following.

**Step #3: Pick your Platform**

Once you’ve defined your audience, you’re in a good place to choose your platform. You may think that you should try to be present in as many places as possible, but this usually isn’t a good idea. You’ll end up getting spread too thin, and your overall impact will be diluted.

**Choose one or two primary platforms where you will focus the majority of your attention.** The platform you choose should be in line with the type of content you produce.

For example:

● If you’re a writer, your best bet is to create a website where you can regularly blog.

● If your brand is visually heavy, Instagram is probably your best bet.

● If you’re a video creator, your primary focus should be YouTube.

● If you’re in a B2B industry, LinkedIn is a good option.

**If you aren’t sure which platform to choose, think about your audience.** Where do they spend most of their time? What apps do they use most frequently? Who do they follow on social media and where do they follow them? You want to be where your audience is.

Also, what platform do other influencers in your niche use? By being on the same platform, you can interact with them, which may open the door for collaboration at some point.

In addition to choosing a primary platform, **it will benefit you to choose a supporting platform where you’ll share smaller pieces of content.** For example, if you’re a blogger, you may also want to utilize Facebook or LinkedIn where you can share snippets from your posts.

If you’re a video creator, you may want to use Instagram to share short clips from longer videos posted on YouTube.

**As much as possible, use your supporting platform to drive people back to your primary platform.** For example, if you share a short clip of a video on Instagram, link to the full video in your profile and use the caption to encourage others to watch it.

As you grow your audience, you can consider expanding to other platforms in order to gain more exposure. In the beginning, however, it makes more sense to focus on just a couple of platforms.

**Step #4: Spice Up your Social Media Profiles**

You’ll want to optimize your social media profiles so that you stand out from the crowd. When someone visits your profiles, give them a great first impression so that they’ll want to follow you!

**Try these easy techniques to make your profiles pop:**

**1. Add a great profile picture.** Your profile is an integral part of your brand and identity. Use a high quality picture that matches your personality. Avoid using a low quality picture that you snapped with your phone.

**2. Add a cover photo.** A solid cover photo allows you to convey additional information about yourself, such as a motto, media outlets where you’ve been featured, or even a picture of you with your family. Use a photo that further solidifies your overall brand.

**3. Switch over to a business account.** Almost every social media platform allows you to switch to a business account. When you do this, you gain access to numerous additional options, such as analytics and advertising.

**4. Craft a compelling bio.** Your bio communicates who you are and what you’re all about, and it needs to do so in a manner that is compelling and interesting. Include relevant keywords in your bio, too, so you appear in searches.

**5. Untag yourself from bad posts.** Some platforms allow other people to tag you in posts. If you are tagged in any “bad” posts, such as inappropriate photos, be sure to untag yourself.

**6. Pin your best content.** Most social media platforms let you pin your best content to the top of your profile. Pin the post that best shows off who you are and the value you offer.

Depending on the platforms you choose, there are some other ways you can spice up your profiles. For example, YouTube allows you to add an introductory video to your channel, which is a great way to let others get to know you. LinkedIn lets you add in resume information. **Take advantage of all these additional options.**

**Step #5: Map Out your Content**

Before you begin creating and posting content, it’s smart to develop an overall content strategy. Mapping out your content will help you know what to publish and when to publish it. It will also come in handy if you find yourself creatively blocked at any point.

As you think through your content, consider your audience. Your goal is to deliver content that is valuable to your audience and allows you to show off your personality. Both of these elements are critically important.

If you don’t provide valuable content, people will have no reason to follow you. If you don’t show off your personality, you won’t stand out from other influencers who are sharing similar content.

**The combination of value and personality is what will help you rise to the top.**

**Creating High-Value Content**

What makes a piece of content valuable? That depends entirely on what you audience wants.

**Content is valuable to your audience if it:**

● Helps them solve a problem

● Gives them valuable knowledge

● Evokes emotion in them

● Entertains them

● Makes their life better in some way

Obviously, all sorts of content can meet these requirements. Everything from a video tutorial to a beautiful photograph to a meme can be valuable to your audience. It just needs to add value to them in some way.

Luckily, you don’t need to create all this yourself. **The best influencers also share valuable content created by others.** This also can get you noticed by the person who created the content, which can open up relational doors.

**One effective strategy for content is the 5-3-2 principle.** For every 10 social media posts:

● 5 are by someone else

● 3 are valuable content you created

● 2 are about you

Using this strategy ensures that you don’t get overwhelmed with content creation, establishes your credibility, and helps your audience get to know you personally.

**Finding Content Ideas**

If you’re having trouble coming up with ideas, there are a number of strategies you can use, such as:

● Type a relevant phrase into Google and then look at the related searches at the bottom of the page. This will give you a sense of different things your audience is searching for that are related to the main topic you typed in.

● Answer the Public is another helpful tool for finding content ideas. You type a set of keywords and it spits out a large list of commonly asked questions related to the keyword.

● Quora can also be helpful for generating ideas. If you type in a keyword, it will show you related questions that actual people have posted on the site. If you click on the questions, you can also see all the answers that have been provided.

**Step #6: Publish your Content**

After mapping out your content strategy, you’re finally ready to start publishing. If you want your content to be seen by as many people as possible, **it’s important to post consistently.** When it comes to social media, most of the platforms tend to prefer accounts that are active.

For an in-depth look at the best times to post on each social media platform, read this article. As a general rule, the best day to post is Wednesday and the most engagement happens between late morning and the middle of the afternoon.

That being said, avoid getting too hung up on posting at the perfect time. **You’ll have the most success if you post consistently throughout the week.**

**Using Social Media Schedulers**

If you’re like most people, the thought of having to log in and post multiple times per week is probably a bit overwhelming. After all, you’ve got a lot going on. This is where social media scheduling tools can be very helpful. They allow you to schedule your posts in advance and then automatically publish them for you. **Some of the best social media schedulers are:**

● Buffer

● Hootsuite

● CoSchedule

● Sprout Social

With these tools, you can create a posting schedule, fill your queue with posts, and then let them handle actually publishing them when the time comes.

**Optimizing Your Posts**

Optimize each of your posts for the channel on which it is being published. A video clip on Instagram looks different than a video clip on Facebook. Photos on Facebook look different than photos on Twitter. Ensure that each post looks great on the platform where it’s published.

Your posts also need to be optimized for mobile devices. With the majority of people consuming content on mobile devices, you’ll want to ensure that your posts look great on mobile, desktop, and tablets.

Depending on the platform you’re using, you also may want to optimize your posts with hashtags. Hashtags allow others to find posts related to specific subjects that they’re interested in. For example, if someone wants to find Instagram posts about vegan foods, they may search the hashtag #vegan.

Using relevant hashtags on your posts can help you get discovered by people who wouldn’t otherwise know about you. If you’re not sure which hashtags to use, these tools can help:

● All Hashtag

● Ritetag

● Instavast Hashtag Generator

● #HashMe

**Step #7: Engage with Your Audience**

The importance of engaging with your audience can’t be overstated. Engaging simply means interacting with your followers, such as responding to their comments, answering their questions, and more.

**Influencers who engage get traction faster than those who don’t.** In fact, if you’re not willing to regularly engage your audience, you’ll most likely struggle to succeed in becoming an influencer.

Why is engagement so important?

**Consider these reasons:**

**1. Engagement allows you to build positive relationships with those in your audience.** When you reply to comments, answer questions, and provide helpful resources, it causes your audience to trust you more. They can see that you’re a real person who actually cares about them.

● If you don’t engage with your audience, you’ll seem cold, distant, and aloof. You’ll seem like a corporation rather than a human. People won’t feel like they know you and will be less interested in following you.

**2. Almost every social media platform boosts posts that have more engagement.** When they see a post with lots of comments and likes, it’s a signal to them that the content is valuable and that more people should see it. The more engagement you have on your posts, the more people will see it.

**3. Comments on your posts give you more insight into how your audience thinks.** You can hear what they want in their own words. You’ll understand more about what drives them and learn how you can better serve them.

Yes, it takes some time to respond to comments and have meaningful conversations, but it’s worth it. **Your audience will see you as more authentic and you’ll get a nice boost from social media algorithms.**

**Step #8: Analyze your Results**

One of the biggest keys to succeeding as an influencer is regularly analyzing your results. You want to know what sorts of content resonate most with your audience and get the most interaction.

On top of this, if you want to work with brands, it’s important to be able to provide them concrete data about the content you produce. They will want to know the size of your audience and how much engagement your posts get. If you can’t give them this information, they won’t feel confident that they’ll get much ROI from working with you.

**Almost every platform offers analytics of some kind that you can use to evaluate your progress.**

You’ll want to compile these types of data:

● If you’re a blogger, you’ll want to analyze how many people visit your site, which pages they visit most, how long they stay on your site, and more.

● If you’re a podcaster, take a close look at the number of downloads you’re getting per episode and which episodes get the most downloads.

● If YouTube is your platform of choice, dig deep into your overall subscriber growth, which videos get the most views, how long people watch each video, and similar statistics.

● On social media, analyze which posts get the most likes, comments, and reposts. Also take a close look at the demographics of your followers.

**As you evaluate your results, pay close attention to content that performs really well, as well as the comments left by your audience.** This information shows you what matters most to your followers.

If a blog post, video, podcast episode, or social media post performs really well, consider doubling down on that type of content. As you focus on producing more of the content that performs best, **you’ll pick up momentum and your audience will grow faster.**

**Step #9: Collaborate with Brands**

The final step in being an influencer is collaborating with brands in exchange for products or money.

How do you connect with these brands?

**There are several different ways you can connect:**

**1. You can wait for brands to reach out to you.** If you get big enough, you will eventually be noticed by brands who are interested in working with you. Ensure that you put your contact info in all your online profiles, so it’s easy for brands to get in touch with you.

● Consistently tagging specific brands and products in posts is one way to get the attention of companies and show them that you are open to collaboration. It isn’t the fastest approach, but it can yield good results over the long run.

**2. If you want to take a more proactive approach, consider reaching out to relevant companies in your niche.** When you do this, be very clear about the value you offer to them. You’ll want to provide statistics about the size of your audience and the type of engagement your content gets.

● To save time on this outreach, consider creating a template that you can use over and over.

**3. Use an influencer platform.** These platforms serve as marketplaces, bringing together influencers and companies interested in collaborating. There are ton of different influencer platforms out there, including:

● Activate

● AspireIQ

● Find Your Influence

● Grin

● Hypr

● And many more

You’ll need to spend some time researching which influencer platform is right for you. Some are more narrowly focused and cater to a specific audience, while others are much broader.

Find the strategy that works best for you and start collaborating with brands.

1. **Your Tribe is Waiting**

It’s easier than ever to become an influencer. You don’t have to be a famous celebrity. You don’t have to write a book or be a powerful politician. You just need to be willing to put in the work.

We’ve covered a lot of different topics in this guide.

**We’ve talked about:**

● What an influencer is and the benefits of being an influencer

● Choosing your niche

● Defining your audience

● Picking your primary platform

● Spicing up your social media profiles

● Mapping out your content

● Publishing your content

● Engaging with your audience

● Analyzing your results

● Collaborating with brands

Becoming an influencer doesn’t happen overnight. It takes a lot of time and effort. You need to figure out your niche and get clarity on your audience, optimize your social media profiles and create a content map, publish great content, analyze the results, and then double down on what works best.

1. **Consistency is the key to success.**

If you get discouraged when you don’t see immediate results, you’ll be tempted to give up. Don’t do it

**In the end, it will be worth it.**

You’ll develop authentic relationships with those in your audience.

Opportunities will arise that never would have before. You’ll establish your expertise and others will see you as a thought leader.

So do the work.

Put in the time.

Work hard to consistently deliver value to your audience. As a result, your following will grow.

Your tribe is waiting for you. Go find them!

1. **How Your Support Group Can Ensure Your Success**

It's natural to strive for solving your problems on your own. Sometimes pride holds you back from asking for help, or it could be embarrassment or fear. Either way, you'll soon realize **that you can solve your problems quicker and more efficiently by joining or developing a support group.**

**The Benefits of Support Groups**

Support groups have many benefits. Just the venting factor alone can be enough to make support groups worth it. Even if a solution may not exist, just knowing there are others enduring your situation can help you feel at ease.

**A support group can provide many other added benefits:**

**1. Confidence.** Support groups can restore your confidence. With confidence and drive, there will be nothing in between you and your ultimate goals.

**2. Emotional Release.** You may often forget the true importance of an emotional release. When everything is all bottled up inside of you, **you can get agitated and your emotions will manifest themselves in unhealthy ways.** Support groups give you the important emotional releases that can open you up to a breakthrough.

**3. Information.** Knowledge is power. Support groups give you an amazingly concentrated way of sharing a wealth of knowledge. When you listen to a speaker or counselor, you're only getting one perspective. When you listen to the members of a support group, you can share real experiences through many different perspectives.

**4. Relationships.** Being a member of a support group will not only help you find success in the topic of the group, but with general relationships as well. Support groups can be thought of as little samplings of the world at large. When you frequently listen and relate to others, you'll become a better communicator.

**III. How to Develop A Strong Support Group**

Developing your own support group is always an option. In fact, all you need is a couple of other people that would like to be a part of the same type of group as yourself.

You simply need to **determine what methods of communication will work best for the group.** If it's best to meet face to face, inquire about times and potential venues to hold your discussion sessions.

**Nowadays, online support groups and forums are also an option.** This is helpful because you'll always be able to refer back to the helpful advice and personal reflections from others in the forum. There is also no set time that everyone has to meet. You can simply post or chat with the group when it's convenient for you.

**How to Find a Good Support Group**

Nowadays with all the social networks, it's getting easier to get involved with others going through similar experiences. You can search Google for relevant forums or websites, and you can also take a look at Facebook groups and MeetUp.com, too.

If you're involved with any type of one-on-one counseling, you can also inquire if there are any group sessions in your local area.

Often times your insurance company will cover support group sessions - at least partially. If this is the case, get on the phone with someone from your insurance company and see if they can match you up with a good group.

**A good support group will strengthen you and help you build your confidence.** Find a group that you can identify with and get active, today!

With momentum, it’s easy to believe that you can accomplish anything. Without it, everything feels impossible. There’s no substitute for work ethic and perseverance, but there are plenty of things that you can do to create momentum. If you’re feeling stuck, work on creating momentum and then fight to keep it going.