

ONE WORD

ONE DECISION

ONE ACTION

How to break the status quo and move your life to the next level



Have you been lying on your couch, day in day out, going through the day and wondering what is out there for you?

How you experienced a moment where your girlfriend or boyfriend dumped you because you have nothing going on for yourself? Or you were unable to talk to him/her because you felt you are too inferior?

Have you felt the pain of empty pocket or empty bank with no resources to replenish it? Have you tried it all, yet you are still vegging out in the same situation while your friends are moving so fast in their life that you barely hear from them or only watch them show what they are becoming on social media?

Imagine for a moment what your life would be like if you could radically and positively transform every aspect of it... your health, your relationships, your

career, your finances, your experience, and even your contribution to the world.

Few years back, I did not know what I wanted in life. All I could dream of is the huge house, nice and shining cars, awesome job that pays tons of money. I know, right! Really! As years go by, I got lost in the status quo of a life that I was forced to bear: **work → bills → TV → sleep and REPEAT.**

Until one day, after attending a life coaching event, personal development seminars, reading few books, I started realizing that in life, things will keep on happening to me regardless of whether I want it or not; and things will only happen to me the way I want **unless** I design and make them happen for myself. I also realize that all the successful people did not just become a success overnight. Then how are they different from me? Did their parents give them money to start their business? Are they luckier? Am I just a loser?

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



I finally realize that there are life simple secrets to follow, some prerequisite to do some mental

abilities to develop, some goals to design, so beliefs to build, some determination and self-confidence to build up, some learning to do, some environment to create, some choices to make and above all some **MASSIVE ACTION** to take.

HOW TO SET GOALS AND ACHIEVE THEM?

“What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.” - Henry David Thoreau

“People with goals succeed because they know where they are going.” — Earle Nightingale

“Where are you going?” My mother shouted at to me one Friday evening as I was walking out of the door.

“Really mother? I don’t know. Why are you asking? I am a grown man, and I can go wherever I want and do whatever I want to do. I am 20 years old. What shall I be sitting here for?” I responded aggressively. “Do you want to know? Well, I am going to pick up a girl and some friends and head to Byblos Night Club. Do you expect me to sit at home doing nothing other than watching TV and hear my sisters argue all the time?

me?

“C’mon mother, it’s Friday, and you know quite well I go out on Fridays and Saturdays. I am doing very well at school, and you know it. Now is my time to party and kick it with my buddies ‘Maman Chérie’. Can we talk about this another day? I gotta go Ma’am.”

My mother answered, “Wisdom ‘Mon Chéri [French word for my baby],’ How long will you live this type of life? For the past three years, it has all been about parties, girls, and friends. Wisdom, how long will you continue on this path? I acknowledge that you have excellent grades; however, do they align with the lifestyle you are living now? I have been watching you going in and out for many years, in the same rut. Do you know that the rut can get so big that it will become a hole? Wisdom, you are my son.

At those words, I froze. Two wolves inside of my body started fighting. One told me not worry about what my mother was saying, the second said “you are a jerk. You’d better listen to her. You are drifting.” I did not know which one to hose out. Thus, I froze. Shall I continue my way out to pick the girl or stay and listen to my mother’s boring but true words?

Out of respect, I waited to listen to her.

She asked me “Son what are your goals”. What an easy question I thought. I went on saying: “I will be a rich businessman, I will build you a big house with a swimming pool. I will buy expensive cars and live like a king and spoil everyone. See mother I got it down pat.”

Then my mother went on and gave me that look, the type of look that says *“is that all you’ve got?”*

Unless you know exactly where you are going, you will end up where you don't want to.

Goal setting is a subject that changed my life forever. Goal setting gives you the chance to experience the power of your imagination. Think about it.

There are numerous traditional ways of setting goals. But I would like to share with you a different way to set your goals. Your own way; giving you power.

What are your dreams and goals? Not related to the past or what you think you can get, but what you really want. Have you ever sat down, thought through your life's values and decided what you **really** want?

This isn't what someone else says you should have or what the society norm tells us do or have. These are the dreams and goals born from your own heart and mind; goals unique to you and which come from who you were designed to be and gifted to become.

Imagine living your dream life not according the societal norms but rather based on the way you foresee your life. Until recently, it has been about writing your goals down, focusing on them and working toward achieving them. In this traditional format, we get a good education, a good job, or business, buy a house, get married and have three kids. This is a good format that allows us to think in a set way of achieving our dreams and goals. We are locked into the rules of the cultural norms; rules that the society has programmed us to live by rather than a life we truly desire.

How about we allow our bigger and inner self be the foundation of our goal setting? How about we design our goal not just based on the means, the material, the properties but also based on the end, the essence of our being.

So how do we know what our dreams are?

This is an interesting process and it relates primarily to the art of listening. This is not about listening to others; it's about listening to yourself first and foremost. If we listen to others, we hear their plans and dreams, and, at times, others will try to put their plans and dreams on us. If we listen to others, we can never be fulfilled. We will only chase elusive dreams that are not rooted deep within us. Instead, we must listen to our own hearts to hear the dreams born out of the passions and desires we each uniquely possess.

Let's think about goals that truly speak to our heart, our happiness, our excitement.

Thus, prior to jumping into the process of setting goals, it is important that we ask ourselves 4 major questions that determine the type of life we want to have on this earth

1- Ask yourself ***“what type of experience do I want to have in my life?”***

The reason behind this question is to allow you to think deep, examine your life, visualize the way you want you to live your life. It is not necessary in the number of cars you will own, the size of your house; but it is rather the inner experience that will give a selfless happiness and fulfilment. Life is not about having-doing-being. It is more about knowing your own “being”, who you really are, then comes the doing part which is the action we take in order to acquire something. As a result of the “doing”, we get to the “having” part. Consequently, we are, we do and we have.

When you ask a question about the type of experience you want to have in life, it typifies the beauty of life, for instance waking up next to someone you love, holding your first baby in your hand, drawing the nature, having an adventurous life.

2- ***Progress & Growth***

The second question is, for me to have all those experiences; how do I have to grow? Who do I have to grow to be? What type of progress do I have to make? As human beings, we are mostly driven by growth and progress (be it personal growth or society growth); how can I become a better man, woman, become a writer? Growth in itself is a goal. It is one of the key things that drives us forward.

3- ***Your contribution to the universe***

What do you bring on this earth? How are you contributing to someone's else? What gifts, abilities do you possess that can be transferred to other people. What do you give back to others? Can you mentor someone? Do you have the ability to sing, how can you use your talents to save someone, to inspire? Your list of

contributions become the steps for you to give back to the world. It takes you from happiness to fulfillment.

4- ***What is the source of my Happiness?***

In essence what makes me happy? What truly makes me happy? Is it the new car, the Nike pair of shoes, the new watches, and the new pair of Jeans I bought at \$140.00? What really makes me happy?

When you strip yourself naked, just as you were when you came out of your mother's womb and you look at yourself in the mirror, how happy are you?

Take a moment; go out in a park and examine the nature, see the sun rise and set, go beyond this physical world and feel the essence of your happiness.

After you work on those prerequisites to setting goals and identifying the type of life you want to live, then you can design your goals accordingly and put yourself immediately on the path to achieve them.

The first and foremost goal you want to set is:

1- Your health goals

How healthy are you right now and how do you want to feel in the future? What measures are you taking to experience a healthy lifestyle? The most important thing upon which you want to focus all your energy is your health. What are the habits you are developing to take care of your health? How pure, how controlled is your diet? How would your health be different if you fed your body the perfect food every day?

2- Your Family Goal

What kind of a lifestyle do you want to create for yourself and your family? Why does that matter to you so much?

What type of girlfriend/wife, boyfriend/husband, and children do you want to have? You need to take a look at your current situation regarding your family in order to allow you to identify what you want to achieve and then how to set goals to achieve it. Communication - Families benefit from open two-way communication that is loving, understanding and patient. How do you want your family to stay together and solidly involved in each other? Families are made up

of different individuals with different needs and, sometimes, different values and beliefs. How can you create and show acceptance of these individual differences.?

3- Social Goals

What kind of people, friends do you want to hang around. What types of values do they have. What are the events you want to attract into your life? What types of mentors, support systems do you have? Have you thought about the environment you want to thrive or prosper in? What are the values you are bringing in your community? What type of relationships do you want to build around you?

4- Financial goals

Are you more business orientated? What problems does your business solve? How do you impact humanity through your business? When do you want to start your business?

What type of career are you interested in? How does it impact humanity? What positions do you want to have in the company? What are the company's culture and visions? Your career goals also include educational goals. If you want to determine and achieve educational goals; think of a course, degree, or certification related to field you intend to excel in.

[In this goal, include, your savings, investments.....]

Remember that in goal setting, you need to consider achievable goals, have a very strong determination for the accomplishment, and take action tasks accordingly.

Goal setting gives you the opportunity to experience the power of your imagination.

Imagination leads to invention and creativity, imagination develops careers, imagination is where all tangible and intangible values begin.

5- Your faith goals.

"It is the lack of faith that makes people afraid of meeting challenges."

— Muhammad Ali

Do you have faith in yourself and your ability to achieve your goals?

Do you live by faith? It is not if I can see it, I believe it; instead, by faith "If I believe it, I can see it."

Do not neglect your inner spiritual values while pursuing your life goals. Spiritual and emotional traits like determination, discipline, happiness, courage, wisdom, and focus emanate from the mind. Your inner disciplines such as meditation, prayer, reflection, and concentration for the mind and spirit is just as important as outer disciplines such as hygiene and good food.

Faith is not the power to succeed, but rather the guidance toward what you want to achieve. Your faith is limited by your capacity to believe. To develop faith with the end of attaining a goal, you must continuously repeat what you wish to come true.

Developing faith is vital because, by it, you can translate your thoughts into reality. Anything given to the subconscious mind with faith and positive emotions will be met with success because thoughts attract other similar or related thoughts.

I've often said that the major reason for setting a goal is for what it makes you do to accomplish it, what you become in the process of achieving your goals. This will always be a far greater value than what you get. That is why goals are so powerful. They are part of the fabric that makes up our lives.

Goal setting provides focus, shapes our dreams and gives us the ability to hone in on the exact actions we need to take in order to get everything we desire in life. Goals are exciting because they provide focus and aim for our lives. Goals cause us to stretch and grow in ways we never have before. In order to reach our goals, we must become better. We must change and grow.

When your goals inspire you, when you believe and act on them, you will accomplish them!

KEY ASPECTS OF GOAL SETTING

So, let's take a closer look at the topic of goal setting and see how we can make it forceful yet practical.

What key aspects should we learn and remember when studying and writing our goals? I believe there are four main areas of emphasis:

1. Evaluation and Reflection

The only way we can reasonably decide what we want in the future and how we will get there is to first know where we are right now and what our level of satisfaction is for where we are in life. With our focus on goal setting, the first order of business is for each of us to set aside some serious time for evaluation and reflection.

2. SMART Goals

SMART means Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-sensitive.

Specific: Don't be vague. Exactly what do you want?

Measurable: Quantify your goal. How will you know if you've achieved it or not?

Attainable: Be honest with yourself about what you can reasonably accomplish at this point in your life while taking into consideration your current responsibilities.

Realistic: It's got to be doable, real and practical.

Time: Associate a time frame with each goal. When should you complete the goal?

3. Accountability

How responsible are you towards your goals? When someone knows what your goals are, they help hold you accountable. Whether it is someone else trying to reach the same goal with you or just someone you can give the basic idea to, having a person who can hold you liable — an accountability partner—will give you another added boost to accomplishing your goals.

EVALUATION AND REFLECTION

The basis for knowing where we want to go is knowing where we came from and where we are. It is also knowing how well we have done achieving things we have previously set our eyes on. This is the essence of evaluation and reflection.

We need to understand how to look at what we have done and then use that as a benchmark, a platform for what we want to do next.

Here is the basic process for evaluation and reflection:

1. Find a Quiet Place

Reflection is best done away from distraction. It gives your mind space to think.

2. Take a Regular Time

Whether it is once a week, every other week, once a month or quarter, be sure to set aside a regular time at regular intervals to evaluate and reflect.

3. Look Back

Look at what you have accomplished and where you are. Be specific. Be truthful. Be ruthlessly earnest and authentic.

4. Write It Down

Keep a record. This gives you the chance at the next stage of evaluation to see exactly where you were last time and keeps it as objective as possible. Write down all of your dreams as you have them. Don't think of any as too outlandish or foolish—remember, you're dreaming! Let your thoughts and pen fly as you take careful record.

Now look at your list and prioritize those dreams. Which are most important? Which are most feasible? Which would you love to do the most? Put them in the order you will actually try to attain them. Remember, we are always moving toward action, not just dreaming.

5. Look Forward

Set your next goal. Stretch yourself according to what works for you.

That is the basic process of evaluation and reflection. If you have not done this before, then this will get you going. Be sure to follow the general idea and set aside time for your evaluation and reflection.

Now, the purpose of evaluation is twofold. First, it gives you an objective way to look at your accomplishments and your pursuit of the vision you have for your life. Second, it shows you where you are so you can determine where you need to go. In other words, it gives you a baseline from which to work.

We have all heard the quote, "The unexamined life is not worth living" by Socrates. To evaluate and reflect brings us face to face with who we are and what we have become.

FIVE THINGS THAT AFFECT OUR LIFE

Before we really get into goal setting, I want to outline five primary things that affect all of us.

1. The Environment

It doesn't hurt to make a simple contribution to the environment. Pick up a piece of trash and throw it in the receptacle. If everybody did that, what a better world it would be. A little contribution costs nothing. If everybody contributed, what a difference it would make!

Beside the sanity our physical, what social, mental, emotional environment are you in? Are you in an environment that pollutes your mind more than it empowers you?

2. The Events & Knowledge

Think of any big event of local, national or global significance. There are small daily, family and community events. We're affected by whatever we know or don't know. Ignorance creates lack. What you don't know will hurt you. What you don't know will tragically affects your life in many aspects. What you don't know will leave your life empty. What you don't know will leave you without a relationship. That's why it is necessary to read books, or listen to audios. Remember, the books you don't read won't help you.

3. Our Decision & Choices

The type of life we are living today is the consequence of the decision and choices we made in the past. Thus, they definitely affect us.

What are the choices and decisions are you making now that will define your future?

4. Our Dreams

We're affected by our dreams, our vision of the future. Goals are like a magnet—they pull. And the stronger they are, the more purposeful they are, the bigger they are, the more unique they are, the stronger they pull.

So, first and foremost, it is our responsibility to hold ourselves accountable. We answer to ourselves. Here are few idea on how we take charge of ourselves

* Be ruthlessly honest with yourself when you assess whether or not you have met the goal. Of course, if you were specific in setting your SMART goals, you won't have many options anyway.

* If you fall short of your goal, or if you are falling short while on the way, don't blame your cat, your dog or the tree; be accountable and start again and again and again until you hit that goal!

* Set a time frame in which you will evaluate your progress and hold yourself accountable. Also, it important to allow others to hold you accountable. When we commit to giving an account to someone else for our actions and goals, we take it to the next level. Having an accountability partner or an outside source of accountability is a powerful force if done right.

* Choose someone who can be upfront with you and tell you bluntly and honestly whether you are slacking or being irresponsible about your objectives

You have read it. Get to work and take immense action NOW.

CONQUER YOUR MIND

We usually allow our mind to rule our life and impose a sense of surety and security, thus preventing us from taking the necessary steps and determination to break some barriers. As a result, we sabotage our life.

Sabotaging yourself means that you stop yourself from following through something you made a previous commitment to doing.

One of the reasons why we fail to follow through is because we associate more pain to that action.

One of the efficient ways to break away from that self-sabotaging is:

*Change your associations to the things that we are sabotaging.

*change your patterns that lead you to the pain of the past.

Whatever we are doing is done with positive intent, we don't to choose to sabotage our life. For instance, if you smoke cigarette, you're not doing it to create cancer in your body and destroy yourself; the fact is that your brain as some point says "if I am bored, frustrated, stress, I need to distract myself by

taking a puff in order to get rid of the pain and create a relief through pleasure of smoking.”

Our life has always been about gaining pleasure and avoiding pain. We do the same for alcohol, drug, TV, pornography, games addiction... For instance, you have just got into a relationship where everything goes smoothly with excitement, loving, cuddling and suddenly our brain takes you back to previous experiences or others' experiences and make us believe that the relationship can turn into pain because we had pain in that past experience; a girl / man dumped us, or did not treat us right. It also creates a mixed emotion where we start having an internal dialog between pain from a previous relationship and pleasure from what we are now experiencing. We start making up things, maybe he/she is going to dump me like the other girl or like the other guy; maybe he is hiding something and consequently, we become cautious, fearful and observant of the other person's behavior; we even start eyeing a plan B, C and D. We create an experimental cage in our brain where we literally begin to link pain to everything in our life. We are the ones that create those connections on our mind because we choose what we associate with.

Not all relationships equal pain, it is a mere generalization that we do in our daily life. We are endowed with the skills necessary to change what we associate with. It starts with the questions we ask ourselves:

What type of pain did I encounter in those previous relationships and what did I learn out of them?

What responsibility did I partake into?

How can I rewire that pain and leave it where it belongs so that I enjoy my current relationship?

Just Stop the finger pointing. OK? 

You can free yourself from self-sabotage by stopping the assumptions and jumping in the conclusions that because you have done something in the past and it did not work out, you have to immediately throw in the towel and relate the failure in the current circumstance to your past experience.

Instead of giving up so quickly, how about you try another approach, it may not be self-sabotage, it may be that you have some habits, some patterns that you need to work on and change.

Refocus and decide what you want to accomplish.

- *Identify a behavior that is keeping you from getting to your goal?
- *Ask yourself “what is the positive intent behind? What is my brain trying to protect me from, maybe from being rejected?
- *Train your brain by having a conversation with yourself about what you really want. Take a paper and write all the pain you can feel if you don’t change your pattern and all the pleasure you can get if you change the pattern or make it work.
- *Interrupt the pattern. Be outrageous with your body and thought process
- *Take on new pattern, replace your old habits and substitute them with new paradigms.

WHAT IS YOUR SELF- CONFIDENCE LEVEL?

“I am the greatest. I said that before I even knew I was.”

—Muhammad Ali

Self-confidence is an essential part of success. You can’t expect others to have confidence in you unless you have confidence in yourself.

Confidence is not something you have but rather you create at any moment of your life. A sense of confidence is a sense of certainty, power; it is a feeling you can literally bring forth at any given moment.

There is no one I have ever encountered that is always in a state of confidence.

We get knocked out umpteen times. The key is “can you turn the confidence on when you need it so you can get the most out of yourself?”

Feeling confident is nothing but a state of mind and you can change and create any state of mind at any time no matter what is happening in your life.

Let me share with 3 ways to produce self-confidence whenever you desire:

1- *Your physiology*: any feeling you have ever had in your body whether it is fear, anxiety, depression, frustration, or ecstasy, success are all emotions. Those

emotions come from the way you use your physical body. If you are not feeling confident, you don't have to intellectually pump yourself because it does not always work. The best way is to change your physiology radically. For instance, when you sit down in a certain position that makes think sadly, it will take to change the place you are sitting in and move your body in a different way to create a new set of energy which will progressively change your sadness into any emotion you focus on. Emotion is created by motion, so the way we move our body instantly affects our emotional state, the way we feel, the way we think. If you need self-confidence you must operate in a confident way.

2- *Control your mental focus*: what do you put your attention onto? What are you occupying your mind with? We experience whatever we focus on. If you put your mind on how things might not work out and you keep wondering "what if this does not work, what if I don't receive this promotion?", without hesitation your brain will be put in state that will ultimately attract what you are thinking about. You will indeed lack that confidence. What you focus on will determine how you feel.

3-*Your commitment and belief* lead to your level of mental focus necessary to achieve what you want. Your potential is unlimited. Your belief level determines how far you want to go and how great you want to be. For instance, if you believe you can't achieve or do something, obviously you will be unable to do it. You can actualize your belief by changing your end results. Let's assume you used to believe that you cannot reach a certain goal, by creating limiting beliefs; now this time, you change your results by assuring that you will reach that goal. Your belief system immediately pushes you higher with more excitement. Negative thoughts will always invade your mind, you have to choose whether you will give more values to them or change your motions that will impact your emotions and focus on what you desire.

Our brain has a built-in confirmation bias. That means it stores information that are consistent with our own beliefs, values and self-image. This selective memory system helps to keep the brain from getting overloaded with too much information.

So, recognize that your memory does not always provide you with accurate information. For example, if you have low self-esteem, your brain tends to store information that confirms your lack of confidence.

How to make it work for you: revisit the facts of a memory loaded with self-limiting beliefs and try to gain a more accurate perspective on the events. Talk with others that might have a different perspective.

Each of us has a unique mark to make on the world, and when we are caught up comparing ourselves to others, it only leaves us feeling less than or not enough and it diminishes our capacity to make the impact we can make.

When you focus so much on the low self-confidence, most of your comparisons are unfair because you have a tendency to compare:

- Your weaknesses to others' strengths

- Your insides to others' outsides

- Where you are now starting out against someone who's been in the game far longer.

You are already more than enough to achieve all that you want in life, so be confident in your happiness and your goals. Confidence can be the difference-maker in your success. The things other people don't have the confidence to do can be your open door to a different life.

WHAT IS YOUR SUCCESS LEVEL?

"Your level of success will rarely exceed your level of personal development, because success is something you attract by the person you become."

– Jim Rohn

Success is no accident. It's hard work, perseverance, learning, action, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do.

Our success in life is determined by the choices we make. You can't change your past, but your future is a clean slate and can be shaped by the choices you make today.

What is success to you? How will you know you are successful?

When most people think of success, the first thing that comes to mind is having lots of money, money and more money.

Your habits determine your potential for success and also your tendency towards failure.

How do you actually 'measure' success? Is it a feeling or a sense of recognition? Is it a journey or a destination?

Your success 'target' is not a stationary one, but definitely a moving target.

Henceforth the answers to the hypothetical questions posed above are always 'yes.' Success is BOTH internal and external, related to your feelings about yourself AND recognition by other people. Success is also both a journey and a destination, a process with important milestones along the way.

Thus far, one of the things I have realized is that we must each define 'success' for ourselves. Why? Because it allows you to measure your progress, determine whether you are succeeding in the areas most important to you, and make changes if you're not

So, how do you know when you're successful?

First, you define success for yourself, and then you act intentionally with that definition in mind.

Your success is the sense of accomplishment you have, the goals you achieve, the small wins in daily life, the positive outcome of each of your actions, and making your vision a reality.

And the levels of success are determined by the things you do daily, by your ability to improve yourself, learn new things and exceed in life. In a nutshell, it's a result of your personal and spiritual growth. Just look at your past successes in life, analyze them and you'll see that it was during a period in which you were working on yourself, or had a positive influence, or the right mindset and were motivated and consistent in something.

But many people are lost. They truly want to succeed in life, but don't know where to start, or have barriers – both mental (such as negative thoughts and big expectations) and physical (like other people).

So, if you're looking for a way to become more successful, start by improving yourself first.

Work on things like your habits, efficiency, mental health, spiritual life, and relationships, and soon you'll start seeing changes in every other area of life too.

Personal excellence goes together with working on yourself daily.

But first, you should realize the importance of personal development and how it affects your success in life, or the lack of it.

HOW IS YOUR LEVEL OF SUCCESS CONNECTED TO PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT?

1. Building Good Habits Leads to Willpower and Discipline.

From waking up early and having a successful morning routine, to meditating and reviewing your goals every evening, all these seemingly unimportant daily actions are what shapes your future and who you become in the long-term.

So, start with them. Take control of your behavior by replacing the non-constructive habits with the productive ones one step at a time.

Start small, focus on one change at a time. Give it some moment before you move onto the next. That's how you get used to the new habit and make it a permanently part of your life.

All this makes you more successful and disciplined. You build willpower each time you stick to your habit and don't let distractions get in the way.

That helps you say no to many other bad influences and stay focused on your self-improvement regardless of the situations you encounter daily.

2. More Confidence Leads to Taking Opportunities.

If you don't believe in yourself, you won't dream big. But confident people are so sure of their abilities and know they can succeed, that they look out for opportunities and make the most out of them.

Confidence is a skill that can be learned. It's part of your personal growth and takes time. But the results are tremendous.

3. Taking care of your body results in having a higher opinion of yourself.

Shaping your body is just one of the many benefits of working out. By making it a daily part of your life, you become energetic and lead a healthier lifestyle, you look and feel better, gain self-esteem. That helps you in social life, at work and everywhere you go as you feel good about yourself and no one can bring you down.

4. Trying Again after Failing Makes You Stronger and More Experienced

Failure goes together with success. There's no shortcut so trying to find it is time-wasting. Be alright with failing in many of them. But once you do, you'll know what doesn't work, will be more experienced, and will be able to try again. Eventually, you'll find what works best and will succeed in every endeavor.

5. Increasing Productivity by achieving a lot and working smarter.

We can all learn the right strategies, make the necessary changes and build the right habits in order to become more productive.

The result? We'll get all the work done in less time and will save ourselves time and worries in the future.

Successful people are productive before anything else. They know how to work smarter rather than harder.

The first step is to overcome procrastination and develop some productivity habits.

6. Appreciating Yourself Leads to Better Relationships.

Let's face it, relationships are hard. It takes a lot of patience, compromises and honest communication in order to have a healthy one.

But I believe we must first fix the relationship we have with ourselves before we move onto forming relationships with other people.

So, understand yourself, be compassionate. Accept yourself for who you are before you try to change for the better. Love and be honest to yourself. Then, you'll know how to do the same with others.

7. Finding Focus Leads to Better Performance.

It's more difficult than ever to stay focused while working on something. Distractions are everywhere. And in the long-term they prevent us from doing our job and achieving our goals.

Focus is a must on the way to success. And without it, you can't really get anything done properly.

DEVELOP A HEALTHY SELF-IMAGE

You also need to develop a healthy self-image as well as loyalty to yourself. Your self-image will play a major role in how high you go in your company, your life because it plays a major role in your ability to develop leaders who will follow you on the ladder of success.

Loyalty to yourself means looking for the evidence that supports why you should believe in you. The best way to feel good about yourself is to do things you are proud of. Feeling good about yourself -not arrogant but good - means you will be able to attract people who will have the same feelings about themselves.

You can also feel good about yourself if you are taking care of yourself physically, mentally, and spiritually. Teach yourself how to be more enthusiastic about life, how to graciously deal with other people, and how to encourage others. When you develop a pleasing personality by being a little friendlier and outgoing, it can be enormously helpful to you socially, professionally, and spiritually.

Finally, get involved in continuing education, seminars, books and tapes. Your thirst for knowledge and understanding must never cease. You don't need to know everything, or memorize everything. Just determine that you will continue to grow and learn as a leader, and you will greatly improve your self-image.

You can valuably increase your sense of control by developing a self-image as people who are in control and who can turn their beliefs into realities. Those

who feel out of control and as if they never have enough time are letting others determine their fate and will benefit from using techniques to develop a more positive self-image and a decisive attitude.

Self-image is the blueprint of a person's life. A healthy, positive self-image provides supportive, happy feelings as well as persistence and steady action toward goals. A negative self-image, however, almost guarantees a lack of success. Essentially, people achieve what their self-images tell them they can achieve.

* Daily strengthening. A person should set aside time each day to focus on lifting up his or her self-image.

* Emulating others. It is important to associate with people who support and reflect the self-image a person desires.

* Picturing the future. Visualization is a great tool. Creating a picture board of inspiring people and images of goals (vacation homes, a new car, etc.) is helpful.

To improve their self-images, people need to be aware of the thought patterns of their daily lives, and realize that their thoughts can either limit or expand their perceptions of their abilities.

A person's self-image drastically determines many aspects of his or her life. If a person's self-image is that of a risk taker, regardless of whether or not it is accurate, eventually his or her actions will align with those of a risk taker. If a person's self-image is that of a victim, most--if not all--experiences will align with the concept of victimhood. Role models may shape individuals' initial self-images, but as they mature their self-images will become shaped more frequently by their own social interactions.

Peoples' self-images determine more than they think. Self-images are not constant--humans change their self-images throughout their lives to adapt to different situations.

WHAT ARE YOUR GIFTS?

Everyone has a unique gift — something that is just undeniably “you” and is precisely useful to those around you. It’s much more than a skill — it is an ingrained strength fueled by your deepest passions, and nurtured by an unwavering sense of purpose. Most people never find their unique gift, either because they don’t realize they have one, don’t believe they have one, haven’t attempted to find it, or don’t recognize it when it is staring them in the face.

In case you know your gifts yet, take some moments and seek them inwardly, discover that which is unique to you.

Your “What” is the one amazing thing you were born to do and is comprised of your inherent gifts, the means you will use to share your gifts with the world and the people you are most compelled to serve.

To identify your gifts, follow these three steps that worked for me and others.

Step One: Answer the question: *What do you love to do?*

Think about all the things you love doing and write them down.

Look back:

What did you enjoy doing as a teenager? Even if you haven’t done something for years, if it would still bring you pleasure, write it down.

Focus on the activities and interactions that lift your soul. Avoid listing skills you’re good at simply because you’ve practiced them over time.

Now, dig even deeper.

Remember years ago when you laughed hysterically? What triggered that laughter?

And as an adult, what gives you goose bumps? Maybe it’s the moment when you come up with a really good idea and realize you’ve found the solution you’ve been looking for.

When recalling a special moment, try not to be too literal; look for the subtext. For example, imagine you have a fond memory of an evening spent bowling with your brother or sister. Instead of writing “bowling with bro or sissy” on your list, broaden it to “investing time with a beloved family member.”

As another example, you closed a huge deal last year and felt really good about it. The monetary rewards are the tangibles, but what matters for this exercise is the sense of accomplishment you felt and how it enhanced your self-worth. This might be summed up as “closing a big deal.”

Next, think about your character traits. Are you bold, fearless, adventurous, funny and/or entertaining? Perhaps you’re creative, intuitive, a great organizer or have an ear for music. Think about how these traits are expressed through your interactions and activities. For example, if you’re an extraordinary organizer, maybe you love arranging people’s schedules or homes.

Next, put the activities you’ve identified in order of preference.

Step Two: Answer the question: What disgust you? If you’re clear about which activities you despise, you can establish a strong foundation for moving your life forward by starting to let them go.

Whatever it is that pushes your buttons (in a bad way), write them down. Even if you worry that others might see these things as petty, include them. The key is to acknowledge your thoughts and feelings.

Now, reflect on why you deplore an activity. Tie these moments to descriptions that encapsulate the activity in noun or adjective form — for example, cleaning, watching TV, eating unhealthy food, being around miserable people, shopping.

Next, put the activities you’ve identified in order, from most to least distasteful. I came up with 10 activities. These were my Top Three:

Dealing with lack of positivity.

Being affected by others’ lack of integrity (e.g., people not honoring their commitments).

Being with people who minimize or mitigate my feelings.

Now think about how you spend a typical day and figure out how much time is devoted to these activities you despise. You have to stop doing most of these things because life is too short and they’re slowly killing you.

Step Three: Discover the Seven Seeds of your Soul.

Now, get your lists of Things I Love Doing and Things I Hate Doing. Start with the top item on your list of Things I Love Doing and ask yourself each of the six questions below as it relates to the activity. Each answer should be a definitive yes or no.

1. Even if you didn't get paid a cent for it, would you still do this?
2. Would doing this inspire you every day?
3. Does doing this come as naturally to you as breathing?
4. Do you feel you've been given a special gift to do this?
5. Does time seem to fly by when you're engaged in this activity?
6. Can you possibly make money doing this?

Continue this process until you reach an activity which results in a yes to all six questions.

When you arrive at an item with six YES answers, circle it and then ask yourself this final question:

Does performing this activity involve anything on my list of Things I Hate Doing?

If you can answer YES less than three times, double circle the activity because you'll be returning to it.

It's possible that your inherent gifts won't appear in the first half or even the first two-thirds of your Things I Love Doing list, so be patient and work through every item.

Now, write down the activities you double circled. If you came up with more than three, chances are you weren't being sufficiently honest with yourself. In that case, try again.

Once you've identified three or fewer activities, your last job is to identify synergies between them and/or choose the specific nouns or adjectives that best

define your gifts. These will typically be the first words of your activity statements.

Review your results and write down your gifts using one or, at most, two words for each. If possible, identify an over-arching theme.

If you can pinpoint your gifts and complete your “What” equation by also identifying the means you will use to share your gifts with the world and the people you're most compelled to serve, you'll probably feel a heavy weight on you.

Identifying your "What" is often a very emotional experience. It should move you and put a fire in your belly.

BREAKING MY PARADIGMS

Habits? We all have them. As good or bad, we embody habits and we live with them every second of our life.

I could not fathom how a vibrant, energetic man, full of dreams visions and goals, suddenly fell deep in the abyss of habits that turn me into a fat, stressed, disenchanted man who only went to work, paid bills, became immediately financially broke and the cycle begins again. I was frightened by myself and what I became throughout the time. Not only I was eager not to fall back, I wanted to identify and know how I got there so that in the future I could prevent myself from plunging into a depressive mindset and back to the old habits non empowering habits.

I started wondering how I ended up with habits that I allowed to destroy my well-being for so many years. One day on my way to work, I came across a lady in downtown Saint-Paul holding a book *The Now Habit*, by Neil Fiore. I was intrigued by the title and asked her how interesting the book was and what she intended to get out of it. Little that I knew of, she was a psychology professor specialized in human behavior and other technical words I could not remember.

She invited me at the library of the University of Minnesota and literally handed me six books on habits that she collected.

At first, she asked me those types of questions to which you can't answer Yes or No but you have to go through a deep development of the topic before reaching the idea. Instead of going home after work and lie on the couch flipping channels and getting fatter, uncomfortable, I had to read the books, summarize the content in order to present it to Mrs. Nawal, the Professor.

"*Seek and you will find.*" It was amazing to browse through the leaves of those books and learn new things.

I came to the realization that our habits are formed and developed after a person has learned something new, applies it in a repetitive way. This process engages the basal ganglia, or the part of the brain located in the prefrontal cortex that works to start and control movement and emotions. It starts with a trigger which orders the brain to turn a new behavior into an automatic routine that we repeat; then the routine becomes an actual routine of the behavior into an action.

How does our brain find its own personal way to implement the automatic behavior? For instance, you hold your door and car keys in the left hand and when you walk in your house you put the keys at a precise spot till it become a habit, a second nature, something you execute with normalcy and when you are leaving your house, you walk straight to the spot and grab your keys till the day you leave your keys in your bag and you move into a full panic mode when you don't find the habitual spot. Does it ring a bell?

Any set of mental actions which are perpetuated have the tendency to repeat itself; thus, we are prompted to think, feel, do without any consciously formed purpose, or anticipation of results.

Aristotle famously proclaimed that "*We are what we repeatedly do*"; in other words, we consciously form our habits either good or bad till they put us on an autopilot mode where we act, behave, do things automatically without the need to process them.

Do you know that sometimes we develop habits to unconsciously declare defeat when we are unable to solve a problem and feel that we can only settle?

It became clearer to me as I remembered my inability to save more than \$50.00 every paycheck; thus, I found comfort in hating rich people, money; I put a cap on my abilities to earn more income and grow higher.

The person who fails to achieve some goals in life might give himself the unconscious permission to fall into the bad habits. That person settles in a still nature and thinks that his life is already a failure and so it wouldn't make a difference if something else went wrong. That was how I felt when I impounded my mind after the death of my mother, followed by my sister's.

This happened at the subconscious level in such a way that I never noticed that the desire to feed those habits was a declaration of defeat and not a willpower issue.

Bad habits can also be the result of being unable to tolerate failure, fear, incapacity, wanting to escape, lacking control of one's life, having emotional unmet needs, denying something that happened in the past or giving up your dreams.

Clarity started settling in my brain where throughout those researches, I was able to understand the inner "me", the deep reason why people get lost in habits that do not sustain their life in the direction they actually want.

In many cases a person gets addicted to chemicals that bad habit produces in his brain and not to the habit itself. Porn addiction for example, smoking, fried food, chocolate, are popular cases where a person gets addicted to the dopamine produced by the brain as he/she gets immersed into those habits.

In other words, people mistakenly believe that they are addicted to something where in fact they are subdued to the chemicals produced in the brain when that habit is done.

As I dived into more books I received from the lady, I slowly understand the impact of habits in our lives. They are necessary, they are part of us but the main question remains in the purpose behind their development, the awareness we place into ourselves while consistently operating in a habitual way.

Finally, I was able to identify the cues I used to fuel and feed my "*bad*" habits.

Most people resign in their habits and hide behind "*You just don't understand*" concept; or "*I have always been like that. Either you accept me as I am or you don't*".

Such a defense mechanism proves that some people are not ready to break their habits or they find it too difficult of a task to embark on unwinding a set of automaticity that they call "*second nature*". Good alibi!

People who are usually unable to break or change their paradigms are more focused on the rewards they get from their habits. Mainly "bad" habits give a sense of instant reward, instant gratification that "soothes" "solves" or "reduces" their lacks, pain, and more.

As a result, I finally understood that our life today is essentially the sum of our habits.

How healthy or sick you are? *A result of your habits.*

How happy or unhappy you are? *A result of your habits.*

How successful or unsuccessful you are? *A result of your habits.*

How passionate or lazy you are? *A result of your habits*

How financially broke or rich you are? *A result of your habits.*

How brave or fearful you are? *A result of your habits.*

In other words, the things you repeatedly do, the thoughts you constantly focus on, and the being you always portray, constitute the person you are this day.

Good or bad, all our habits have one element in common: once created they're extremely hard to break. It's especially true for habits that work against our health, such as those involving caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, unhealthy foods, and exercise--or the lack thereof. We look for emotional stimulation, through habits we develop as time goes by.

Beginning a new life helps you break old habits, stop old patterns, and end the destructive behaviors, replacing them with new habits, more effective patterns, and more productive ways of living.

At first it is important to take a moment to identify various habits we have in different areas of our life: TV habits, pornography, internet, social media, emails, brushing your teeth, working out, foods, alcohol, video games, drugs,

partying, and some subtle ones like, pessimism, nail biting, hair pulling, criticizing, being angry and many more. You can't uproot some habits as if they were so simple to handle.

Ask yourself "WHY" you want to drop the habits; identify the pain and pleasure behind those habits and how they make you feel.

What are the motivating factors that push you to change those habits?

Is it external, are you criticized by people?

Are you annoyed by their judgment?

Do they make you feel uncomfortable when you are in full automaticity of your habits?

Or do you want to change those habits because you feel addicted, rejected, lonesome, destroyed, held from your greatest potentials in life?

Next step is to be accountable, responsible for your "bad" habits. You can't play the victim as I was doing and think that you will break out of your habits. It is important to take full responsibility and do whatever it takes to change your bad habits. No one pushed you to drink excessively, no one forced you to stick to your TV, video games the entire day, and no one pushed you to be angry as you are. You have to accept the fact you are solely liable for your lack of discipline and authenticity, your lousy behavior, your stuck-up mindset, your low self-esteem, your lies. Unless you accept to be vulnerable and embrace your flaws, you will struggle a lot to get them off, dilute and break those habits.

You have to believe in your abilities to change them and move away from the constant complaints, saying that you have tried it all; quit trying and start doing it.

Goodness!

What is wrong with you? If you don't believe you can change your habits, you are stuck and you will fall short of your potential. Either you are a whiner or you don't. Don't stop at the first attempt; keep on doing until you start seeing some shifts. Results will not occur after the first or second attempt.

Most habits have cues, triggers. For instance, you may only feel like eating junk food because you have them at your house or they are available at a friend's house, that is why you always visit him; or you tend to drink heavily when you

go out with a precise group of friends. Breaking the habit requires some planning and taking a practical approach. That means planning ahead to address bad behaviors or avoiding them altogether.

Eating junk food could just come down to having junk food available, so remove them from your home or don't go grocery shopping when you have a craving for them. You may subconsciously (or consciously) be perpetuating your own bad habits by creating an ideal environment for the habits to thrive.

Don't only focus on breaking "bad" habits and leaving the space. Identify new focus, purpose, visions, dreams, goals, activities aligned with your values and where you want to be in your life. You can't just decide to break the habit of sticking onto the TV when you come home, watching Netflix episodes back to back until you are too lazy to take a shower, wondering what else you will do to occupy that moment. I can guarantee you that you will fall back into those habits in jiffy.

*Instead, choose some activities in congruence with your visions and goals to fill that gap of free time you have created.

You should pat yourself on the back whenever you're making progress away from bad habits. Many unhealthy habits come from the weakness we created by guilt or shame, which lead to the inability to avoid them.

*Reward yourself when you reach a milestone. But that doesn't mean eating ice cream as a reward for avoiding ice cream for a long period of time. Instead, use an alternate reward such as buying yourself a new outfit, a watch, or lingerie.

*Don't just go back and reward yourself with the same "bad" habits. You will find yourself back at the starting point and with the cop out "I tried; it just doesn't work for me; I guess it's in me." **Oh please. Knock it off! Stop it!**

*Be committed to your decision to change your "bad" habit. Tell yourself you are going to stick to it no matter what happens. That is how I broke my habits of watching TV shows, lying on the couch whining all day. Don't tell yourself "today is the holidays and I can skip going to the gym, eating healthy "; then the following day you come up with another excuse to prolong those habits.

*Remind yourself of your commitment hourly, at the beginning and end of each day. Create a plan and read it as often as possible.

You can even make it more visual by writing down the new and "positive" habits. There's something about committing a promise to paper which makes that promise more realistic. Researchers have found that just by writing out a goal and keeping it handy to look at every day - or as many times as you need to - can help you stay on track. So, write down your promise to yourself and read it. That's a prescription with no side effects.

*Beware of your self-talk and switch to a more positive, encouraging talk.

Most of our dialog happens in our head. We talk to ourselves all the time — but often we're not aware of these thoughts. Start listening to your thoughts because they can easily derail any habit change, any goal. They're often negative: "This is too much for me. I can't do this. It is too hard. It is not that bad anyhow, John's case is worse than mine. Ok I promise I will start tomorrow. I suck."

It's necessary to quickly change your thought pattern when you notice the negative, procrastination, laziness, alibi based self-talk.

If you fail, don't beat yourself out; figure out exactly what went wrong and be honest with yourself. In most cases we fail, not because of an outside force but because we allow it. So, plan for it, and try again and again and again and again. Don't let failure and guilt stop you. You won't be perfect. Almost everyone slips up anyway. I slipped up several times until I succeeded. It's only human. Think hard about why you slipped and get back on board.

There's a reason why many recovery programs include group meetings and individual sponsors or therapists. Being accountable to others is a powerful incentive to keep on. By both giving and receiving support, you keep the goal in focus. Seeking support from a friend, a mentor, a buddy can help you deal with the basis of your "bad" habits and find positive, healthy ways to take care of yourself instead.

Don't be ashamed.

*Make a decision, and if you find your passion, you will have this tremendous energy to change your "bad" habits. That will bring the momentum and by doing the next thing after another next thing. If you make the decision to change your habits while you had no passion, you will not get the momentum to keep up with your decision.

Above all the aforementioned steps, the most paramount one is taking immense action. It is the cure-all.

*Don't be all serious; make the process fun and enjoyable.

I went through this exercise to break out of my “bad” habits that I developed in my mental cage and throughout the time. I was able to tear down the walls I built around my mind; I peeled off the layers of shame, blame, procrastination, laziness and more. I started with the gym and became more health conscious; I gained my energy back and worked strictly towards my dreams and goals.

Your turn!

PROCRASTINATION

The same way our physiology determines our emotions, the same way procrastination impact our current lifestyle and robs us of our future.

We talk to ourselves all the time in our mind. Even when we're not paying attention, these relentless mental debates deeply influence our feelings and ultimately, our behaviors and actions.

The good news is that if you can become aware of these mental dialogues, notice the patterns, and turn them into productive statements, and then you are empowered to overcome many unwelcome feelings and behaviors. We often say “I can't do it now because it is too sunny out, it is raining, it is snowing, I will do it tomorrow ...”

It is the desire to be idle, to do nothing, and to resist effort. It is a state of passivity and of letting things stay as they are.

Procrastination has kept people in mental, physical, emotional, financial poverty. You can easily and simply become rich in all areas of life if you choose to beat procrastination. The fact is, when we miss to take one action, it creates a chain of events that impact the rest of our life.

*For instance, as a student, you procrastinate in doing your homework on time, in studying, and as a result, you fail your class. It impacts you and your family

finances through the students loans (or however you paid for your classes); it delays the advancement and grows you were supposed to reach. Your parents have to buckle hard again and find the funds to pay for your classes. And all these factors occur as a result of one thing: procrastination.

*Procrastination has kept people in boundaries where they are very conscious of their weight, the career level...yet they do not take the necessary actions to beat that procrastination.

There are many other examples.

Will you let your mind drift you further away from who you want to be?

In order to carry out our chores, work efficiently, live to the fullest, and achieve success, we must learn how to overcome procrastination. Beating procrastination is a simple matter of the mental rut by taking control of your mood. With the right strategies in place, you can take the reins and get yourself in the mood to get things done. The strategies that follow will help you to make this happen.

***Figure out why.** When you aren't in the mood to work, procrastination is telling you something important. It could be something simple, such as you need to take a break or get something to eat. It could also be something complex, such as you're carrying the team on your back or you're dissatisfied with your job. Whatever it is, instead of punishing yourself for procrastinating, take a moment to reflect and figure out why you're procrastinating. This could end up being the most productive step you take in conquering your task.

***Remove your obstacles.** Prior to getting started on a task, take a moment to carefully consider the obstacles that might get in your way. Then, develop a plan to ensure that they don't. For example, you might have instructions for a task in your e-mail inbox, and if you don't do anything about it, you'll repeatedly go back to your inbox to look at them, only to get distracted by other incoming e-mails. In this case, your management plan should be to get the instructions out of your inbox prior to starting your work. By planning ahead,

you can maintain your focus and avoid procrastination. After all, it's much harder to regain focus than it is to maintain it.

***Recognize procrastination.** If you're a chronic procrastinator, chances are you repeat it to yourself very frequently — daily, perhaps. But what's so wrong about the Procrastinator's Motto? In what ways do these words encourage procrastination so much — and what can we do about it? Let's consider each part of this statement in turn, replacing each of them with an empowering alternative. In doing that, we'll create a productive call to action. 'I have to' is every procrastinator's favorite expression. Remember that you don't 'have to' do anything. It's also the most disempowering. Every time you say to yourself that you have to do something, you imply that you don't have any choice, that you feel forced or coerced to do the task — that you don't really want to do it. That perception, of course, elicits a strong feeling of being victimized and resistance toward doing the task. The solution to this problem is to replace 'I have to' with the immensely more empowering alternative 'I choose to' or 'I shall'. Everything you do is ultimately a choice. Using language that expresses choice reminds you of that and brings the feeling of power back.

***Jump right in; get started right now no matter what.** Sometimes it's really hard to get started on something, even when it's something that you love to do. I might be staring at a blank Word document or standing at the gym in the morning. That first step is difficult, but once you get going—typing that first paragraph or taking off on that first wave—your mood improves dramatically. When you focus your attention on how difficult and cruddy it is to get started, you discourage yourself from doing so. When you dive right in no matter what, your mood quickly improves, which helps you to stay on task.

***Focus on starting, rather than finishing.** When you focus on finishing something, you direct your attention to a vague, highly idealized future. Visualizing a finished project is motivating for many people, but for someone who's having a hard time starting a task, visualizing a hard-to-grasp future can be overwhelming — even depressing. The solution in this case, is not to focus on finishing, but on starting. Forget for a minute about the finish line; just

concentrate on giving your first step. Bring your focus from the future to what can be done right now. We all know that if we start something right away, we'll eventually finish the task. Starting — all by itself — is usually sufficient to build enough momentum to keep the ball rolling.

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started” Mark Twain

***Break a long project down into short tasks.**

We often avoid tasks because we find them too big, too overwhelming, too tiring, or taking too much of our time.

Breaking a task into several smaller tasks can solve this problem. Then, each one will not seem so difficult or intimidating. Instead of having one big task, we will have a series of small tasks, which do not require too much effort.

This approach can be applied not only to tasks, but also to goals and everything else we have or need to do. This will tend to melt much of the laziness and inner resistance we often experience. Dwelling on the size and difficulty of a looming task will overwhelm us, and this will promote procrastination. Any undertaking, no matter how daunting, can be broken down into smaller steps. The trick is — with each step along the way — to focus solely on the next, achievable chunk of work. Ignore the big picture for a while and just tackle that next small task. Make sure you can easily visualize the outcome of your small task. Don't write a book; write a page. If it is still intimidating, commit yourself to working on it for a specific period of time. Keep the big picture in mind, of course, but don't allow it to frighten you. Use it for motivation and direction.

***Take control of your self-talk.**

Saying to yourself, “I'm not going to procrastinate. I will not procrastinate,” virtually ensures that you will procrastinate. There's a classic study where participants were told not to think about a white bear. It turns out it's nearly

impossible to avoid thinking about something that you tell yourself not to, as your mind gravitates towards the thing you're trying to avoid. The trick is to shift your attention to something completely different (and positive). Instead of telling yourself not to procrastinate, think about what you will do and how great it's going to feel to have it done. This way, your mind fixates on the action you want to take instead of the behavior you're trying to avoid.

***Don't place too much pressure on yourself.**

“I need to get this right; I really can't blow this opportunity.” Placing such high hopes on a project only adds anxiety and fear of failure. Perfectionism fuels procrastination. Overcome this mental block by simply giving yourself permission make mistakes. Allow yourself to be imperfect with the next small task. You can always refine your work later. If you're a serial perfectionist, go one step further and commit yourself to doing a sloppy job on purpose — at least at first. Instead of making every step perfect, think of them as steps toward perfection. For instance, write a page or two now, then proofread and correct them later. We tend to freeze up when it's time to get started because we know that our ideas aren't perfect and what we produce might not be any good. But how can you ever produce something great if you don't get started and give your ideas time to evolve? Author Jodi Picoult summarizes the importance of avoiding perfectionism perfectly: *“You can edit a bad page, but you can't edit a blank page.”*

***Stop thinking about the way things 'should' be.**

The expression “should” invokes blame and guilt. When you say you should be doing something (instead of what you're actually doing), you focus on comparing an ideal reality with your current, “bad” reality. You focus not on what is, but on what could have been. Misused 'should' can elicit feelings of

failure, depression and regret. The solution is not to focus on how you feel now, but on how good you will feel after you begin to take action.

Take some directed action. Even the tiniest progress is success — moving toward a goal is the best motivator. The trick is to bring that expected feeling of accomplishment into the present — and know that the real joy of progress is only a small task away. That small step is success.

Success is not the end of your task. Success is the progress that leads to your next step.

***Make it fun!** “I’ve got to work all weekend”. “I am trapped in this laborious project”. Long periods of isolation can bring an enormous feeling of resentment. These feelings generate a strong sense of deprivation and resistance toward the task. Have fun in the process.

ADAPT TO CHANGE

Change is challenging, change can be difficulty. Things change constantly. Loved ones die; jobs end, as do relationships. People get promoted, couples bond in marriage, and babies are born. Technologies are replaced, companies are closes, new ones are emerging...Guess what? The positive changes can be as hard to adapt to as the negative ones.

Major change is triggered when people face a significant discrepancy between what they expected and what actually happens during change. People adjust to change, not by learning to like what is taking place, but by forming new expectations that can lead to success under the new conditions. At a personal level, three types of energy are required to make these adjustments in expectations:

***Mental** (to figure out what is happening and how to respond)

*Emotional (to deal with various feelings like loss, anxiety, threat, relief, joy, optimism, etc.)

*Physical (to accommodate the physiology implications of stress, excitement, etc.)

To realize the intended benefits of a major change, the people affected must possess sufficient energy for the adaptation process to unfold. The capacity to adapt involves the mental, emotional, and physical means to incorporate new mindsets and behaviors—to absorb the key implications of a change. Aggregate change demand that exceeds available adaptation capacity leads to overload, which causes dysfunctional mindsets and behaviors—in other words, future shock

When a good change appears, accept it with grace. You may not believe you deserve it, or you just may not be ready for it, but the only way to move forward and get the most out of it is to embrace the positivity, however it shows up.

When a negative change is looming, start looking for alternatives before it actually happens, if you can. For example, if you know your company is in trouble and you are hearing things that are making you insecure, don't wait to get laid off, but start looking for another job. Even if your current position isn't changed, you will have gained valuable experience and maybe a better opportunity.

Change is constant, so we usually don't notice the little or the expected changes; it's when you are caught off-guard that you can get discombobulated. The trick is to know that it is just one of the millions of changes that are going to happen in your life and, good or not so good, do what you can to just roll with it. If you want to change the course of your life for the better, you should first realize that change is in your hands.

The quality of vision separates the achiever from the non-achiever. Achievers think about the future, while the non-achievers think about the pleasure and

problems of the present and continuously worry about the past, which cannot be changed.

Take responsibility for how you deal with changes. If the changes in your life are overwhelming, you don't have to deal with them all by yourself. Friends, family, support groups, and counselors are available, but you do have to reach out and ask, which can be hard. It may be a struggle, but you don't have to suffer. The love of those who care for you can make life much easier to deal with.

If you are someone who hates change, then you are going to have to at least tolerate it when it happens. There is no law saying that you have to like what's going on, but you do have to find a way to cope, because change happens, like it or not.

We should be able to recognize that the circumstances are always changing. We should always be prepared to make the necessary changes in your game plan to adjust to the situation.

The capacity people have for change and the organizational resources needed to implement change are often confused. Both are assets needed to properly address transitions, but they are not the same.

Capacity relates to how much disruption people can absorb before displaying dysfunctional behaviors and mindsets. There must be enough available capacity for people to adapt to the new requirements.

Resources relates to the means for change. There must be enough available resources (people, money, technology, etc.) to conform to the new requirements.

Whether the constraint is capacity related or resource related, the success of an initiative is at risk any time either one is exceeded by the demands of the change.

Adaptation capacity is an individual phenomenon (although it can also be aggregated to reveal a group's or an entire organization's readiness for change). Organizational resources are the enablers of change that reside outside a person or group (e.g., capital, technology, available time, headcount). Both are vital for

reaching intended outcomes; however, there are important differences. For example, resources lay the groundwork so installation of change is possible, but it is capacity that allows an organization and its people to fully realize their aspirations.

Lisabeth Saunders Medlock, was in accident, that caused her the loss of sight. She became blind. She had to adapt to her new disability and find a way to function, operate and live a fulfilled life. There are always key lessons about going through a major life change as she said.

1. It's okay to be emotional. It's natural to have feelings of sadness, to grieve over the loss of something, to feel angry about your situation, or to place blame. You have permission to feel that way, but only for moments. You can have your pity party, but only for a day or two, and then you have to move on. If you spend too much time in that place of anger or pity or blame, you end up not being able to adapt to your change.

2. You can give yourself permission to be vulnerable: Some of us like to project an image of being strong and fearless, but sometimes it's not the truth. The truth is that we're scared, vulnerable, weak and in need of help. We need to allow ourselves to rely on others. And showing that vulnerability is OK. It may feel like you are exposed, but being completely exposed is not always a bad thing. There is always learning and growth that can come from it. You allow people to really see you and when they do, they can know your stress or pain, they can help. Vulnerability is just part of who we are as human beings.

3. You are never alone: Sometimes when we go through major changes we think we are dealing with something no one else can understand or no one else is going through. But there are others that can empathize with you. You're not alone. Even if you don't ask people to be around you, family and close friends will come to your side. You're also never alone because you always have yourself to rely on.

4. You have to ask for help: Often people don't know what to say or what to do. So it is your job to tell people what to say and what to do that will be

helpful. Being able to clearly articulate what you need gives people a sense of relief. In the end, people really like to be told how they can help you in very specific terms. They need it defined for them so they can feel like they are helping and supporting you. Left on their own to guess this information, they feel helpless. And when they feel helpless they do not act. So empower them and empower yourself by letting them know specifically how they can help.

5. You can adapt to anything. Our ability to adapt is amazing. Necessity is the mother of invention and you will naturally find ways to solve your problems and do things in new and different ways when you're presented with challenges. The adaptability and flexibility of our spirits and of our beings is a given. Those who cannot change and adapt have convinced themselves it is not possible. If you trust that you can adapt, then you will. And if you believe that you can change, then you will, no matter what the challenge.

6. You have to have hope for the future: Despite these setbacks, I have to believe that there is hope in the future. A belief I will get my sight back. Having that hope and having the positive perspective is what keeps me moving forward every day. If I gave up that belief it would be like letting go of a rope that pulls me forward. Believing that things can and will be different, and that you will see the light at the end of the tunnel, even if you can't see like me, is the most important thing in getting through a change process. Knowing that there is an end in sight, knowing there are possibilities, and having hope that things are going to be better. And, ultimately, things are going to work out.

7. You will grow as a person, but you are still the same: Going through a change, especially one that is traumatic, changes you forever. It changes how you see life and deal with things. You're never going to be the same again and that's a good thing. Because in the midst of change is a great deal of learning, if you are willing to have vision and perspective. And if you are willing to continually ask yourself the question, "What am I supposed to be learning from this?" "How am I supposed to grow?" "How will I become a better person because of this?" In any change process, you can become stronger, and a better version of you. Just

because something changes about you, even something radical, doesn't change the core of who you are as a person. I, as now a visually impaired person, have my same mission, my same purpose, and my same values. So, having something different about you, doesn't make you a different human being. If you are strong and centered and grounded, that is still who you are. Sometimes you have to remind yourself of that.

We used to say "Go with the flow," and that may be the most comfortable way to deal with the future.

ONE WORD – ONE DECISION – ONE ACTION to live an amazing life