

Personal Excellence

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The Magazine of Personal Leadership



January 2009

Be Good
at **Change**

**Moral
Leadership**

**Set Goals Right
Avoid Six Roadblocks**

Grow Deep Roots

Laura Lopez
Leadership Consultant

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—Sharlene Hawkes, Former Miss America,
award-winning ESPN broadcaster



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Personal Excellence

January 2009

The Magazine of Life Leadership

SERVICE • HONOR

A Life Well-Lived

It's a life of moral leadership.

by John McCain

SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO, IN THE LAST DAYS OF the Soviet empire, a young Czech student stood before a million of his countrymen, while 200,000 Soviet troops still occupied his country, and, trembling with emotion, read a manifesto that declared a new day for the captive peoples of Eastern Europe. He began with borrowed words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

For all the problems that afflict humanity, for all the mistakes America has made and all the imperfections we must confess, I can't imagine another nation's history will ever so profoundly affect the progress of the human race.

Theodore Roosevelt, one of my political heroes, celebrated the strenuous life—his definition of our pioneer ethos, the virtues that inspired our self-confidence, that bound us by sacred duty to suffer hardship and risk danger to protect our values and impart them to humanity. "We cannot sit huddled within our borders," he warned, "and avow ourselves merely an assemblage of well-to-do hucksters who care nothing for what happens beyond."

He exalted the morals and political values of a nation where the people are sovereign, recognizing not only the inherent justice of self-determination, that freedom empowered individuals to choose their own destiny, but that it empowers us to choose a common destiny. And for Roosevelt that common destiny surpassed material gain and self-interest. Our

freedom and industry must aspire to more than acquisition and luxury. We must live out the true meaning of freedom, and "accept that we have duties to others and duties to ourselves; and we can shirk neither."

Some critics saw in Roosevelt's patriotism only flag-waving chauvinism. They did not see the universal ideals that formed his creed.

In August 1914, Irishman Ernest Shackleton decided to attempt the first crossing of the

Antarctic on foot. He placed an ad in a London newspaper:

Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, safe return doubtful, honor and recognition in case of success. Twenty-eight men

answered the ad and began a 22-month trial of deprivation and grim endurance. These men spent four months

marooned on a desolate ice-covered island before being

rescued by Shackleton himself. They endured three months of polar darkness, and were forced to shoot their sled dogs for food. Their mission failed, but they recorded an epic of courage and honor. When they returned to England, most of them enlisted in World War I.

Years later, Shackleton looked back on the character of his shipmates. He had witnessed a thousand acts of unselfish courage and understood the greater glory that they had achieved. "In memories we were rich," he wrote. "We had pierced the veneer of outside things."

In that memorable phrase was the Roosevelt code—to pierce the veneer of outside things, to strive for something more ennobling than the luxuries that privilege and wealth place within



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easy reach. The memories of such are fleeting, attributable as they often are to fortunate circumstances and reflect little credit on our character.

We are not a perfect country. Prosperity and power might delude us into thinking we have achieved distinction, but inequities and challenges command every citizen's concern and labor. What we have achieved is proof that a nation conceived in liberty will prove stronger and more enduring than any nation ordered to exalt the few at the expense of the many or made from a common race or culture or to preserve traditions that have no greater attribute than longevity.

As blessed as we are, no nation complacent in its greatness can long sustain it. We must take our place in the enterprise of renewal, giving our time, counsel, labor and passion to the enduring task of making our nation and this world a better place. We must prove again, as those who came before us proved, that a people free to act in their own interests will perceive their interests in an enlightened way, will live as one nation, in a kinship of ideals, and make of our power and wealth a civilization for the ages, a civilization in which all people share in the promise and responsibilities of freedom.

Even in perilous times, when we confront enemies who share none of our values, who scorn the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, we must always show that those values are dearer to us than life itself. We must not sacrifice our values in the war against terrorism. We cannot win the war if we do, and we will lose our political soul. Although captured al Qaeda members would never protect our rights—they despise all human rights—we must adhere in our treatment of them to the standards of our values, not theirs. Because, the way we treat them is not about them. It is about us. That is why a young Czech student used the majestic prose of our *Declaration of Independence* to claim his own rights from a brutal dictatorship. No other country can claim such moral leadership. And we must never, never sacrifice it.

All lives are a struggle against selfishness. If my life had shared no common purpose, it wouldn't have amounted to much. There is no honor or happiness in just being strong enough to be left alone.

I've made plenty of mistakes and have many regrets. But those regrets last only when I separate my interests from my country's. That is the honor and privilege of public service in a nation that isn't just land and ethnicity, but an idea and a cause. Any benefit that ever accrued to me on occasions in my public life when I perceived my self-interest as unrelated to the nation I served and unresponsive to the demands of my

conscience have been as fleeting as pleasure and as meaningless as an empty gesture.

In America, our rights come before our duties. We are a free people, and among our freedoms is the liberty to not sacrifice for our birthright. Yet those who claim their liberty, but not their duty to the civilization that ensures it, live a half-life, having indulged their self-interest at the cost of their self-respect. The richest man or woman, the most successful and celebrated Americans, possess nothing of importance if their lives have no greater object than themselves. They may be masters of their own fate, but what a poor destiny it is that claims no higher cause than wealth or fame.

Should you claim your rights and leave to others the duty to the nation that protects them, whatever you gain for yourself will be of little lasting value. It will build no monuments to virtue, claim no honored place in the memory of posterity, offer no worthy summons to other nations. Success, wealth, or celebrity gained and kept for private interest is a small thing. It makes you comfortable, eases the material hardships your children will bear, purchases a fleeting regard for your life, yet not the self-respect that matters most. But sacrifice for a cause greater than your self-interest, and you invest your life with the eminence of that cause, your self-respect assured.

When I was a young man, I thought glory (self-glory) was the highest ambition. I didn't understand the lesson until later in life, when I confronted challenges I never expected to face.

In that confrontation, I discovered that I was dependent on others to a great extent, but that neither they nor the cause we served made any claims on my identity. On the contrary, they gave me a larger sense of myself—and I am a better man for it. Nothing is more liberating in life than to fight for a cause that encompasses you, but is not defined by your existence alone.

Far from here and long ago, I served with men of extraordinary character—better men than I, in many ways. They were often treated cruelly. Their captors would try to persuade them to make a statement by promising that no one would hear what they said or know that they had sacrificed their convictions. "Just say it, and we'll spare you more pain," they promised, and *no one will know*. But these men always responded: *I will know*.

This is your moment to pierce the veneer of outside things. I wish that you always hear the voice in your heart when you face hard decisions, to hear it say to you, again and again: *I will know*. *I will know*. *I will know*. PE



John McCain is a U.S. Senator (R-AZ) and was the R-nominee for president. This article is adapted from his speech to the convocation ceremony of Boston College.

ACTION: Face tough decisions with integrity.

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Executive Excellence Publishing
Ken Shelton, CEO, Editor-in-Chief
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Geoff Pace, Sales

Marketing Offices:
Leadership Excellence
1806 North 1120 West
Provo, UT 84604
1-877-250-1983
1-801-375-4060

Contributing Editors
Bob Davies, Michelle Call, Judith Glaser, Joan Marques, Brian Tracy, Denis Waitley

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Achieve Your Goals

Set them right, and you won't give up.



by Marshall Goldsmith

A KEY TO DEVELOPING YOURSELF is setting—and achieving—meaningful goals for personal change. Often, however, you don't set goals in a way that ensures the follow-through needed to turn great plans into successful outcomes.

What is required to produce positive, long-term change in behavior? Why do you often set great goals, yet lose the motivation to achieve them? How can you stick with the plan and ultimately reach your desired targets?

Whether you set a behavioral goal, such as becoming a better listener, or health goal, such as losing weight, you face challenges in changing behavior.

Why do goal-setters give up so soon? Why don't most New Year's resolutions last through January? What goes wrong?

Six Explanations

Six reasons explain why people give up on goals. Understanding these roadblocks can help you achieve your objectives.

1. Ownership: *I wasn't sure this would work in the first place. I tried it, and it didn't do much good. This was a waste of time.* One common mistake is starting a program that promises, "This will make you better." The problem is that the emphasis is on *this* and not on *you*. Ultimately, only *you* can make *you* better. Successful people have a high need for self-determination. The more you commit to behavioral change because you believe in the process, the more likely the process is to work. The more you feel that the change is imposed on you—or that you are just trying it out—the less likely the process is to work. You need to ensure that the change objectives come from inside—and are not externally imposed with no internal commitment. You are ultimately responsible for your own behavior.

2. Time: *I had no idea this process would take so long. I'm not sure it is worth it.* When you underestimate the time needed to reach your goal, you are tempted to give up on the goal. The optimism about time to meet goals is

evident when you are trying to change while others seem to ignore your new behavior. You tend to be seen in a manner consistent with previous stereotypes—people look for behaviors that prove their stereotype is correct. In setting goals, you need to be realistic about the time required to produce a positive, long-term change in behavior. Know that others' perceptions may seem unfair and that—as you change your behavior—others may not recognize the change for months. If you set realistic expectations, you won't feel that something is wrong with you when you face a time challenge. Ultimately, changed behavior will lead to changed perceptions and more effective relationships.

3. Difficulty: *This is harder than I thought it would be.* Most achievement takes longer and requires more work! Don't confuse *simple* with *easy*. You want to believe that once you set a *simple* goal, it will be *easy* to get results. If this were true, all people who know that they

should eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly would be in shape. The challenge is in the doing!

Long-term change requires real effort. It can be challenging for you to listen patiently while others say things you do not want to hear. While you may see the need to change—and desire to change—it is still hard to

have the discipline to change. Real change requires real work. Buying into statements like "this will be easy for you" makes you feel good in the short term, but backfires in the long term—when you realize that change is not so easy and begin to face trade-offs and challenges. Knowing the price for success at the start prevents demoralization that occurs when challenges arise.

4. Distractions: *I'd like to work toward my goal, but I'm facing a unique challenge right now. Perhaps I should stop and pursue this goal later!* Goal-setters tend to underestimate the distractions and competing goals that appear. Be assured: some distraction or crisis will emerge! It may come from a problem or opportunity. It's hard to focus on long-term development when

you face a short-term crisis—or a "once in a lifetime" short-term opportunity. In planning, assume that distractions and competing goals will occur. Expect the unexpected, and build in time to deal with it. You'll be less likely to give up when problems or opportunities appear.

5. Rewards: *Why am I working so hard at change when, after all my effort, I'm not making any more money!* You tend to be disappointed when achieving one goal doesn't immediately translate into achieving other goals. For example, dieters who lose weight may give up on weight loss when prospective dates don't soon become more attracted to them. You need to buy in to the value of a long-term investment in your development. If you mistakenly believe that improving your skills will quickly lead to short-term profits, promotions, or recognition, you may become disappointed and give up when these benefits don't immediately occur. If you see personal change as a long-term investment in development—one that will help you become more effective over time—you'll pay the short-term price.

6. Maintenance: *I improved when I was being coached, but I have let it slide since then. I can't work on this stuff for the rest of my life!* Once you achieve a goal, the work required to maintain changed behavior can be tough to face. For example, upon reaching your weight reduction goal, you might think, "This is great! Now I can eat again!" Of course, this mind-set leads to weight gain and the yo-yo effect. Change is a process: you never *get* there—you are always *getting* there. The only way exercise helps you stay in shape is when you face reality: "I have to work on this for the rest of my life!" Your development is an ongoing process, including your relationships. When you change, your relationships change. Maintaining positive relationships or results requires ongoing effort. There is no easy answer. Real change requires real effort. The quick fix is seldom the meaningful fix.

I encourage you to get a good coach to ensure that behavioral change becomes a reality and that your goals are met. Set challenging goals—just understand the commitment required to reach them. Clear and specific goals that produce a lot of challenge—when coupled with an assessment of roadblocks—produce strong long-term results. Coaching can make a big difference in your life. **PE**

Marshall Goldsmith is a leadership coach who helps successful people achieve positive, lasting change and the author of What Got You Here Won't Get You There. Visit www.MarshallGoldsmithLibrary.com.

ACTION: *Don't give upon your goals this year.*



Work Smarter

Be more enterprising.



by Jim Rohn

ONE GREAT SATISFACTION OF life is doing the best you can with what you have. Doing anything less erodes confidence. We are creatures of enterprise. Life says to us, "Here are the raw materials, your creativity, and 24 hours to use it. What splendid things can you produce?"

Enterprising people are disciplined and dedicated enough to seize opportunities—regardless of the situation or struggles. They always manage to succeed, regardless of the obstacles. They're always on the go, developing a plan, following a plan, reworking the plan until it fits. They're resourceful, never letting anything get in the way. They don't understand the word *no* when it applies to their visions of the future. And, when faced with problems, they say, "Let's figure out a way to make it work," instead of, "It won't work." They see the future in the present. They find a way to take advantage of situations, not be burdened by them. And they aren't lazy. They don't wait for opportunities to come to them; they go after them.

Enterprising means finding a way to keep working toward your ambition.

Work Smarter

Successful people may work harder and longer, but they almost always work smarter. Try practicing three simple disciplines daily:

1. Run the day, or it will run you.

Some people are masters of their time; others are servants. Enterprising people become masters of their time. To master your time, you need clear, written goals for each day. Create each day's list the night before. Prioritize your goals for the day and review them. Ask yourself: *Is this a major activity or a minor activity?* You'll stop spending major time on minor things. If you are not careful, you'll spend more time "on the way to" than "in the presence of" your goals. Before you answer an email, ask yourself, is this a major activity or a minor activity? Before you make a phone call, ask yourself, is this a major phone call or a minor phone call? Don't let the minor activities distract you from the major activities—the ones that hold the keys to your success.

2. *Don't mistake activity for productivity.* To be successful, you must be busy being productive. Don't mistake activity for productivity, movement for achievement. Evaluate your use of time; look for wasted time that you could manage better. There is an opportunity cost to every activity. The time you spend doing one thing is time you could spend doing something else. Before investing your time in anything, briefly ask yourself if this is the highest leverage activity you could be doing to accomplish the most important priority on your list for the day. And, make sure the activities on your list for the day are the highest leverage opportunities to accomplish your short- and long-term goals.

3. *Focus.* Concentrate on the job at hand. Let nothing stand in your way or distract you from the task. Invest your

time in major activities, pursuing the highest-leverage opportunity. Concentration takes discipline. It takes discipline to demand privacy, to not react to minor activities that demand attention. If you have a long list of things to get done, do the toughest one while your concentration is at its peak.

Don't let worry distract you. Stay focused on changing what you can change. Enterprise is always better than ease. Every time you choose to do less than you possibly can, you limit your possibilities and stifle your potential.

Imagine what you could accomplish if you never quit and always did all that you could do! PE

Jim Rohn is a popular motivational speaker and business coach. Visit www.jimrohn.com.

ACTION: Practice these three disciplines.

PROFESSIONAL • RUT

Are You a Hollow Tree?

Don't get stuck in a job rut.



by Laura Lopez

MY FAMILY AND BUSINESS are based in Houston. When Hurricane Ike came through, it rattled our city and lives. It will be hard to forget the devastation.

When we awoke Saturday morning, we found our home intact, but several trees had fallen. We were fortunate.

As the rain subsided, we ventured outside to see if others were in need around us and to survey the damage. Many trees were down, and some had destroyed homes.

As the days passed, I noticed more trees down. And many of them were hollow and had shallow roots.

Days earlier, I would not have suspected that these seemingly strong trees were hollow on the inside.

Mother Nature understands the need for pruning to promote growth. She has a way of weeding out the debris that can be stifling and impeding growth. *What can Hurricane Ike teach us about getting stuck in a job rut?*

Are You a Hollow Tree?

Like seemingly strong, functioning trees, many people get by when revenue is high, but when it falls, these people fall. Why? They are hollow—there is nothing inside holding it intact to the earth. They were just taking up space in the Corporate Jungle.

You see, like Mother Nature, the Corporate Jungle understands that pruning can promote growth. I am not trying to sound callous, but if you are a Hollow Tree in the Corporate Jungle, it might just be time to re-root yourself somewhere else, or Corporate Mother Nature will do it for you.

Re-rooting yourself requires finding your passion again. Hollow Trees are just "hanging out" because the sunshine and water is good where they are, because they feel safe, but they aren't producing fruit, flowers, or seeds.

If your life blood isn't pumping and your roots are growing shallow, you've lost the passion for where and what

you are doing. Do yourself and others a favor and re-root yourself, or others will do it for you!

I was re-rooted, initially unwillingly, by others. I was starting to become a Hollow Tree. When my job scope began to change and my company wanted me to pursue other opportunities in Atlanta, what do you think? It was time to go.

Hollow Trees in nature don't hang on to deadness; no, they just fall when Mother Nature pushes them. Well, people like you and I, we love to hold on to deadness—holding on to stuff that isn't working for us any longer in our lives. That could be a relationship, a job, a habit. We get stuck in a rut.

Don't be a Hollow Tree. Find your passion and grow deep roots. It will promote growth in you, in all you do, and in all around you. PE

Laura Lopez is author of The Connected and Committed Leader. Visit www.laura-lopez.com.

ACTION: Bring your heart to work.



Do You Procrastinate?

And find yourself being an avoidance machine?



by Bob Davies

DO YOUR INTENTIONS match your performance? Have you ever said you were going to do something that you were motivated to do and, despite your positive attitude, you didn't take the action?

Consider this. Exactly at 4:50 a.m., the alarm clock rings awakening you from a deep sleep. You intend to get up and go for your workout. You want to do this. However, you cancel your alarm with the thought that it's Saturday, and you've already hit your commitment to run four times a week. You don't feel like it this morning, and your final thought before drifting back to sleep is "I need to sleep in!"

Problem: Genetic Coding

On the surface, this sounds reasonable. However, being *reasonable* results in low performance! What's really going on is genetic coding—the survival mechanism. We have a narrow range of perceptual abilities: we hear a limited range of frequencies, for example, and see only certain wavelengths of light. Other frequencies exist, but they are outside of our perceptual abilities.

The brain processes 400 billion bits of information per second. Usually you are only conscious of about 2,000 of those bits of data. Of this input, you are only conscious of up to seven inputs, and able to take action on one item at a time.

Since you have such a narrow bandwidth of perceptual abilities, you are predisposed to see what can hurt you and then avoid that stimulus. All performance is the avoidance of pain and the seeking of comfort.

The instinct of *see-recognize threat-avoid* ensures survival. All of life has this survival mechanism or "fight or flight" response. But the survival mechanism doesn't only operate when it's appropriate—it is easily triggered and often operates inappropriately.

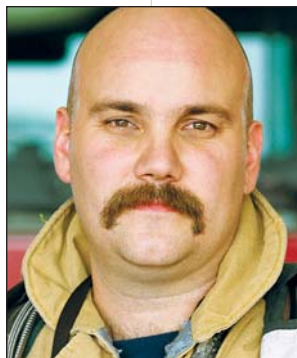
For example, suppose that you are driving on a crowded highway and

someone suddenly pulls in front of you! Your brain interprets this as a threat, and you get the same physiological response that you would if you were threatened by a mountain lion. This is inappropriate, and yet it occurs anyway. I call this *evolutionary debris*.

Here is another example. The appetat area of the brain stimulates the fat cells to release the hormone leptin to signal that you are full, and you stop eating. There is a delay in this signaling of between 10 to 20 minutes. This delay favors survival and enables you to binge. It does not favor your survival to be coded to overeat since your next meal is a certainty! However, the instinct still exists. *More debris*.

An instinct is an inherent disposition toward a particular behavior. Instincts are inherited, fixed, action patterns of responses or reactions to stimuli.

The survival mechanism of the subconscious recognition of pain and the automatic avoidance is hard-wired in all



of life. It is a neurological firing process that does not ask for your compliance or agreement. This is automatic and results in avoidance and rationalization. Rationalization is the justification of avoidance. It protects you from feeling guilty for not doing what you said you would do, and it leads to mediocrity. Most people fall

between +1 and -1 standard deviation of the mean. About 70 percent is clustered around the average.

Where do you see this in your own life? What rational lies (rationalization) do you buy into and accept as being true? Where in your life are you living in resignation, accepting that you are doing the best that you could be doing? How does this affect your health, business, or personal life?

You tend to operate up to the range of your comfort zone and rationalize. Hence, you tend to settle for mediocrity—unless there is an intervention.

Solution: Behavioral Contracting

The solution to the limits of the human condition is behavioral contracting. It has two components.

First, declare your intention. Plan and declare the specific activities that you say you will execute this week in your health, business, and personal life. This is called the specific declaration.

Second, set a consequence for non-performance. Your brain is coded to seek and find the highest level of perceived pain and then avoid that pain for comfort. This is an automatic neurological process that does not ask for your conscious participation. Hence, you tend to be an avoidance machine.

It is futile to fight human nature. Good news—you don't have to. You can operate at peak performance in accordance to your coding of avoidance. You would do this by making sure that the consequence for non-performance is perceived as the highest level of pain.

Attach painful consequences to your commitments. Your brain already clearly recognizes the "pain" associated with the activities. For example, let's look at the pain embedded in the commitment to workout. It hurts, takes time, and takes energy, so you say, "I'm tired." How about sales prospecting? You have the pattern of previous experiences of rejection already running on automatic.

I used to think that rejection could not hurt you—that it was all mental. However, rejection stimulates the area of the brain called the anterior cingulate. This is the same area that gets stimulated and fires if you stub your toe. Yes, this is real physical pain, not just psychological pain. Those neurological patterns are automatically compelling avoidance. There must be an intervention to approach extraordinary results.

So make a new pattern. Add the intervention of a painful consequence of paying a \$100 fine to someone you don't like, or contributing to a cause or political party you don't believe in. Do you want to do this? No. How do you avoid having to make the contribution? By doing what you said you would do! You don't need to worry about penalty if you do the stated activity.

Implement this for one week and see what happens. You'll take actions associated with the painful consequence. Make a commitment that will be due within the time frame of the moment you wake up on Monday and the time you go to bed on Sunday. Be specific. Declare a penalty that will be enforced if you don't execute your promise. As for accountability, I'm only an e-mail away. **PE**

Bob Davies is a speaker, author, trainer, coach, and president of High Performance Training; 949-830-9192, fax 949-830-9492, Email: Info@bobdavies.com, Website: www.Bobdavies.com or www.bobdaviescoaching.com.

ACTION: Set a consequence for nonperformance.

Have-to vs. Get-to

Change your mindset.



by Barry Eisen

THE CHOICE OF WORDS YOU pick to describe a task or event colors the way you do it, the success you have with it, and the pleasure you derive from it.

Think about the mindset that says, "I have to make those calls. I have to do my homework. I have to get organized." When you "effort hard" by using *will power* to make changes and to get things done, the more you do, the more resistance you can create. Doing something with a not-so-great attitude will likely produce not-the-best outcome.

Reframe the task by saying, "I get to" and the previous experiences of those great moments of anticipation and excitement shift your outlook, your physical and mental behavior. When you "have to," you slump, feel the energy drain, and hide. When you "get to," you straighten up, look forward, make eye contact, and allow yourself to enjoy the task. Why not choose pleasure?

When you characterize something as "hard" or "difficult," you associate the task with an element of discomfort that you hold as an idea from your past. In reality, the thing to be done is simply the thing to be done. You've never done it *This Time* before. It's new. If you've given the same presentation 1,000 times, isn't this a new audience? This simple perspective creates new experience, fresh task, an adventure. By holding to a past idea of a past experience (or someone else's experience or negative view!), the old ideas conjured by such words as *hard* or *difficult* color what you are about to do. It is an attitude and a choice you make. Consider *challenging* or *exciting* for the same act—and you gravitate with different posture and heightened expectation.

If making contacts (prospecting or lead generating) was easy and fun, everyone would be doing it. Many, with the best of intentions, don't. With more contacts, appointments go up, sales increase, financial stress is reduced, and you have better health and emotional peace. *This we all know.*

If your kids came home from school looking forward to doing their homework, they would procrastinate less, do better in school, have less pressure, and have more free time to do things that

interest them. *We and they know this.*

If you dealt with the clutter that surrounds you daily and kept your home, office, and car neat and orderly, how much high drama could you eliminate about losing papers and keys and stressing over loose ends (to say nothing of sleeping better at night and experiencing greater calm)? *You know this too.*

If you're tired of doing the same old things, or if you do them kicking and screaming, there is a better way.

Four Action Items

Before doing anything that has been hard, difficult or uncomfortable, do this:

1. Tell yourself that you'll do the activity well and comfortably. Your thoughts and words, even if contrived, make a difference in your outcome. Soon you'll approach your tasks automatically this way.

2. Do the activity with the mindset that when you look back, you'll take pride in not just doing the activity well, but effortlessly, with class and style. If you were being watched by your kids,

what message would your better attitude teach? Probably a great life lesson that you can control the way you handle your life. The feelings of how you did something will last far longer than the result of most actions you perform.

3. Practice seeing yourself in situations you normally find distasteful or difficult and change the script in your head by seeing yourself enjoying the event. If you rehearse the positive behavior in your head (in a state of relaxation) you'll soon be demonstrating this behavior in your life. Thoughts are things!

4. Until the ease of performance becomes automatic, act "as if" it already is. The more you show yourself what you can do rather than what you can't, the easier a change of behavior becomes.

Little shifts in consciousness make huge differences in performance. **PE**

Barry Eisen is a speaker, coach, and the founder of D.E.I. Call 818-769-4300, email BarryEisen@roadrunner.com, or visit www.BarryEisen.com.

ACTION: Have a get-to mindset.

Accountability

It starts with language.



by Gregg Thompson

THE NEXT TIME YOU LISTEN to a leader speak, listen carefully to the speaker's use of the word "I." The manner in which a leader uses this one word reveals much about his or her inclination towards accountability.

Most leaders learn early in careers to speak in terms of "we." What should *we* do? How will *we* work together? What did *we* accomplish? They recognize that much of their role is to give voice to the team's or organization's plans and performance, and in that context, the use of *we* is most appropriate. But in their personal accountability, it's all about the "I" word.

As you listen, you'll soon become adept at spotting leaders who have a strong sense of personal accountability—and those who do not.

Consider these four sample **non-accountable statements**: "I had to . . . I cannot . . . I need to . . . I am unable to . . ." When leaders use these or similar statements, they are signaling a lack of accountability.



Conversely, these **accountable statements** signal a strong sense of personal accountability: "I chose to . . . I will not . . . I want to . . . I am unwilling to . . ."

The difference between these phrases may appear subtle, but they speak volumes about the degree to which a leader takes responsibility for his or her thoughts, opinions, and actions.

How often do you hear a leader say: "I had to fire him," "I can't get along with the Board." "I need to get more support," "I can't agree with you."

These comments denote a lack of personal accountability and erode leadership effectiveness. I believe that we are always listening to those around us, almost unconsciously, and grading them on the accountability scale. We attribute the qualities of leadership to those individuals who assume personal accountability and discount the leadership of those who do not.

Think about the language you use. Does your language suggest that you hold yourself accountable for your own performance, or do you deflect responsibility elsewhere? It may seem like a small matter of language choice, but its impact on how you are perceived as a leader is enormous. **PE**

Gregg Thompson is President of Bluepoint Leadership Development and author of Unleashed: Expecting Greatness. Email greggthompson@bluepointleadership.com or visit www.bluepointleadership.com.

ACTION: Use accountability language.

Be Good at Change

Find your change quotient!



by Ariane de Bonvoisin

EACH YEAR IN THE U.S., 55 million people will lose their jobs, 45 million will go on a diet, and two million will get divorced. These are all life changes.

Change surrounds us on a grand, scale but also in unique personal ways with our families, friends, careers, finances, health, and spiritual outlook.

Change is omnipresent and indiscriminating. All human beings, regardless of their age, economic standing, religious affiliation, or educational background are either secretly hoping to make a change, facing an unexpected change, or helping someone else through a change. Think of all of the changes you may have been through: divorce, illness, losing a loved one, becoming a parent, moving, changing jobs, graduating, and so on. The core of your being is wrapped up in change.

Since change is the only thing you can expect, getting good at it should be the number-one life skill to cultivate! The Dalai Lama said that it is essential for kids to learn how to navigate change. But for those who missed out on a change education—that's most of the population—the learning has just begun. When asked how they feel about change, most people will say that they *hate* going through it. They will say that change is *hard* and that they feel *alone* when going through transitions. Most people find that change makes them feel *confused* and *overwhelmed*.

Our initial reaction to change is negative because we haven't learned the best way to initiate it or to handle the unexpected changes that can turn our lives upside down. *The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought about progress*, wrote Charles Kettering.

While we can't avoid change, we can become better at navigating transitions. People who are good at change (*change optimists*) know that their beliefs, feelings, thoughts, and actions directly affect how easy or hard a change can be.

A Life of Change

I learned about change while building First30Days, a company dedicated to helping people through change, and through my own life experience. I grew

up in six countries speaking four languages. I balanced different cultures, religions, foods, and schools. I've had seven jobs in many industries—from high-powered corporate positions in NYC to volunteer work in the non-profit sector in Africa. I've been in dozens of relationships. I've been fat and thin, happy and sad. I've had lots of money and no money. The changes kept coming—change is inevitable. Everyone is going through his or her own version of change; some are better at handling it than others. Whether trying to lose weight, find a job, deal with the loss of a loved one, quit smoking, or end an unhealthy relationship, *change optimists* have a unique outlook on life and the transitions it produces.



Questions and Principles

To understand how change affects you, answer these questions: Are you good at change? Would someone who knows you well say so? Are you better at making or facing changes? What's the best change you've made? What is the hardest change you've faced? What change do you want to make? Why hasn't it happened yet? What's in the way? How much change are you now experiencing in your life? On a scale of 1 to 10, how willing are you to welcome change into your life?

Now that you understand how change is part of you and where you are on the change scale, you can apply nine basic principles. To get through tough transitions, change optimists:

1. Have positive beliefs. They are optimistic, believe that life is on their side, and reach for good thoughts. They believe that they can initiate and follow through with changes in their own lives. Change is good and possible.

2. Believe that change always brings something positive into their

lives. When faced with change, they know the *change guarantee*: "From this situation, something good will come."

3. Activate their change muscle, making them resilient. We all have this muscle; we are smarter, more intuitive, and more resilient than we've been told. Our change muscle is strengthened each time we go through a change. Draft a *change resume* listing all of the changes—good and bad—that you've experienced. You'll be amazed at how much change you've already navigated.

4. Refuse to allow change demons—challenging emotions that arise during change—to stop their forward momentum. Fear, doubt, impatience, blame, guilt and shame are the main demons that come up during change, but change optimists don't allow these emotions to slow their progress, choosing instead to focus on faith, surrender, honor, forgiveness, and other positive emotions.

5. Understand that they will experience less pain and hardship if they accept the reality of their situation. Resisting change is not the answer.

Change optimists let go of the idea of how life should be and accept where they are now. Acceptance gives you relief and allows you to move forward.

6. Control what they say, think, and feel while going through change. They understand that empowering questions like "How might this change be good for me?" and positive thoughts and language (instead of why-me victim vocabulary) helps them move through change.

7. Look within. Change optimists know that part of them never changes. It is calm, centered, and knows what to do. This place can be accessed through silence, meditation, talking a walk, spending time in nature, or through religious practice. During change, you need to reconnect with this part of yourself, to wake up, to be more conscious.

8. Turn to a change support team. They know they are never alone—there is always someone who can help. Moving through change is easier when you seek the help and support of others.

9. Take action. People who are good at change don't remain stagnant. They take care of themselves physically, they make decisions, and they have a plan.

When you look at these nine principles, which ones challenge you? Which do you need to work on to become the type of person who can handle change—who is open to the unexpected and eager take on changes that need to be made? **PE**

Ariane de Bonvoisin is author of The First 30 Days. Visit www.first30days.com.

ACTION: Navigate your life transitions.

Make the Choice

Take control of your emotions.



by Karen Sherman

MANY PEOPLE CAN HOLD IT together at work and stay cool, calm, and collected; but when they get home, they turn into a crazy person, exploding, losing control, and hurting the very people who are most important to them. And this happens without their knowing why!

There's a way to end this mindless, reactive, and destructive pattern. It's possible to stay calm and in control of your emotions. But being able to stay present, to stay centered, doesn't always happen easily. You've got to choose to take control and then rewire your brain.

I know first-hand what it's like growing up in a dysfunctional family. To get control of my emotions, I had to reach through the depths of despair, choose to face the pain, heal the wounds, and then recreate my life. I realized that mindfulness is a choice. I developed the tools to change how people can get in the here and now and have better relationships.

Many of us operate like robots. We function without being aware. We exist rather than live, as if we're on autopilot emotionally and unconscious of what we're doing. You can break this cycle.

You have to be in the here and now. You have to be truly engaged in what's happening. You have to be in charge and be able to handle your emotions.

To heal old wounds, you have to be able to revisit your past and change the way emotions are triggered. Once you are no longer responding in an emotionally reactive way, a new world of possibilities is revealed—and you'll have the ability to look at all different and wonderful opportunities that are there.

Here are some of the simple ways you can get control of emotions:

- Pay attention to your body. If your body is tense or tight, you are feeling emotion. You can't make changes unless you are more aware of yourself.
- When you get excited, learn to relax. Take a long, slow, deep breath and exhale slowly to create relaxation. Pretend that you're blowing on lit birthday candles, but you don't get to blow them out.
- Take a time out. If you see that you are reacting and taking your reactions out on someone else, try to take a time out. Move away out of earshot for a minute or two until the energy subsides.

You can acknowledge that you got grabbed. People are usually forgiving if you take responsibility for your actions.

- Write it all down. Get some paper, get a notebook. Whenever you are upset, start to write. Write as fast as you can, and don't worry about spelling or grammar. But keep writing! This will allow you to release your feelings. Then, when you're done, read what you've written. It will help you gain insight as to what was bothering you.
- Imagine yourself as a child. Allow that child to communicate feelings with you. Allow these old feelings to be expressed to yourself as an adult who is unconditionally loving. This will help to heal and create a new brain connection.
- Recognize your feelings. Say how you feel out-loud. Know that these feelings are from the past. Do not be afraid

of them. They will pass. The more you accept them, the easier the process is.

- A better home relationship brings in a better bottom line at work. Most people work hard and are under stress. When you get home, it takes extra effort not to lose control and hurt the people you care about the most.
- Focus on people you care about and express sincere interest in them. Spend quality time with them. It's easy to get caught up with toys and technology. Pay attention to the people at home without being distracted. When someone is talking, pay attention. To really score points, help with chores and with dinner. **PE**

Karen H. Sherman is a psychologist and author of Mindfulness and The Art of Choice (Loving Healing Press). Call 516-935-5033 or email DrK723@aol.com visit www.ChoiceRelationships.com.

ACTION: Gain greater control over your emotions.

EMOTIONAL • BALANCE

Gain Life Balance

Start multi-purposing.



by Carol Ring

YOU'VE LIKELY ENCOUNTERED situations where you *had* to do something, even though there was something else you really *wanted* to do. Perhaps you wanted to take the kids to a movie, but you had to finish a project. Chances are that whatever you *had to do* won out, and what you *wanted to do* got deferred.

This scenario happens all the time. We're torn between doing what we *want to do* and doing what we *have to do*. We're continually searching for life balance—running at a crazy pace, only to end up exhausted, unfulfilled, stressed, and dreading that it'll be the same tomorrow.

Fortunately, you don't have to choose between what you *have to do* and what you *want to do*. You simply need to stop multi-tasking and start multi-purposing. This means you use one event, situation, or activity for more than one purpose. You scratch two items off your to-do list (one you *have to do* and one you *want to do*) with one activity.

For example, suppose you have to attend a local awards dinner; you don't want to go. You also have some people whom you mentor regularly. You love mentoring, so this is a "want to do."

To multi-purpose, you could invite your mentees to the dinner, thus integrating two activities so everyone wins.

Rather than focus on many things you have to do, focus on things that bring joy to your life and incorporate other tasks into those activities.

Follow these three tips:

1. Discover your personal values.

Brainstorm a list of key words that reflect who you are. Review them to look for themes. When you engage in activities that epitomize your values, you're much happier, even when working in your "have to do" list. This exercise will crystallize the things that are most important to you. It will give you the freedom to say "no" to certain "have to do" items and spend time on those things that mean the most to

you. Your life will take on a new purpose full of promise.

2. Get perspective on where you spend your time.

Think of your health, family, finances, friends, work, community, and spiritual life. Rate 1 to 10 how you're doing in each area, with 10 being "this is great" and 1 being "this is suffering."

Review your answers. Do you spend enough time in the areas that matter most to you? If not, decide what's best for you and choose to do it.

3. Build a library of experts.

To alleviate the burden, turn to your network. You will find people who can help you, save you time, and keep you from re-inventing the wheel.

To keep your sanity and happiness, integrate your "have to do" and "want to do" activities. **PE**

Carol Ring is VP of strategic initiatives at Rogers Cable, speaker, co-author of Awakening the Workplace, and author of Who Hid My Crayons? Call 905-326-3251, e-mail carol@carolring.ca or visit www.carolring.ca.

ACTION: Practice multi-purposing.

Weapon of Mass Reduction

You and others can have tons of fun.



by Carole Carson

SIX YEARS AGO, I WAS A walking time bomb.

Focused on the demands of running my company while heading a single-parent household, I brushed personal needs aside. The results were predictable. I loaded 60 surplus pounds on my 5-foot-2-inch frame. I was more than overweight. I was obese.

But denial is wonderful. I saw myself as *pudgy*, not obese. I convinced myself that my weight didn't matter. I had lots of energy and didn't have any pressing medical problems. Plus, I was certain that I didn't eat too much. Obviously, my metabolism had changed over time, and my body structure was genetically determined. The demands on my time didn't permit regular exercise. Besides, everybody around me was heavy.

When I stepped on my bathroom scale, the numbers raced to 183 pounds. I was forced to face the truth—I was fat! At that moment, I decided to get fit once and for all. A lifetime of failure with popular diets loomed large. Success would require a different approach.

Shifting the Context

My first insight involved changing the context. What if I could make the project fun? Instead of grim dieting, I would seek a way that I could enjoyably eat for the rest of my life. I would find ways to exercise that were so engaging that I would pursue them for their own sake. With a torn hamstring from a recent fall, I would hire a personal trainer at my local health club. That way, I wouldn't try to do too much and set myself back. Beginning that day, I was free to create a wonderful new life.

And, I decided to take this private matter public. Swallowing my pride, I chronicled my makeover in the local newspaper. Week by week, readers watched me shrink from a size 18 to a size 6, from 183 pounds to 122. Faced with the challenge of keeping the weight off, I continued to share my joys and setbacks in fitness. Later, when I invited readers to join me in getting fit, I wondered if my story would have an impact.

The answer surprised me. Over 1,000 people in our small foothill community attended the opening session of what

would become the Nevada County Meltdown. We organized into teams of five and registered 128 teams. Over the next two months, participation grew to 206 teams. Hundreds more people participated informally through a community network of employers, businesses, restaurants, grocery stores, churches, schools, and members of the medical community.

Over 1,000 friends and neighbors lost nearly four tons in eight weeks—the equivalent of 40 people!

We had tons of fun as we lost tons of fat. We helped each other face private demons. Age, race, politics, economic status, and profession didn't matter—the issue of obesity cut through our differences. The event created civic



pride—the Nevada County Meltdown restored the *unity in community*.

The context for the event was the same as I used to generate my own success. We had fun—we encouraged individuals to meet their nutrition and exercise needs in appropriate and enjoyable ways, and we worked together.

Steps in the Process

The Nevada County Meltdown consisted of these seven steps:

1. Put down the fork in your mouth. Instead, take the fork in the road. We must decide to change and begin to make those changes today.

2. Tell the truth and go public. We need to announce our decision to get fit and lose weight. By announcing our intent, we receive support and realize that we are not alone and that others are facing the same challenge.

3. Find supporters and create teamwork. Teamwork takes many forms. The first kind involves our personal resources—a medical doctor, physical therapist, dietitian, personal trainer, or

lifestyle counselor—who can help us reach our goal. The second kind consists of fellow fitness travelers. This team can be assembled at work, home, social organizations, or Web site forums. The third kind involves the community. During the Meltdown, businesses donated prizes, fitness centers provided free use of gyms, restaurants offered special menus, and grocery stores featured specials on fruits and vegetables combined with recipes. The local newspaper and other media created a Web site and featured success stories and fitness tips.

4. Design your own unique program. Set goals and create structure. My goal was overall fitness with a weight loss of 60 pounds in six months. The goal of the Meltdown was improved fitness with a weight loss of 1,000 pounds a week. Our structure consisted of hundreds of teams, volunteer event organizers, and volunteer speakers.

5. Establish a system of accountability. In the card game of life, honesty trumps denial. During my makeover, I reported my results to a personal trainer once a week. During the Meltdown, team members reported to their captain, who fed the results back to the community. The feedback returned quickly through a Web site, newspaper features, radio shows, and television reports.

6. Become a student again—learn, experiment, and celebrate. During my makeover, I began experimenting with new foods, recipes, and ways to exercise. During the Meltdown, we educated ourselves about critical issues involving nutrition and exercise and about the medical implications of obesity. We tried new foods and ways of exercising and celebrated our successes.

7. Share the health—recruit or regress. Become an advocate and example of fitness. I decided to use my own fitness journey for the benefit of others facing similar challenges. At the Meltdown's conclusion, we resolved to be an example for other communities and to promote healthful changes.

Today, I'm replicating our successful experiment to create weapons of mass reduction in other communities. I'm also eating carefully and exercising regularly. I'm fortunate to have made lifestyle changes before my body imploded. As soon as I began to make healthier choices, my body was amazingly responsive and forgiving of past abuses. Although vanity triggered the transformation, the big benefit is a longer, healthier life. PE

Carole Carson is a fitness advocate and the author of From Fat to Fit. Visit www.fromfat2fit.com.

ACTION: Achieve your fitness goals.

Self-Discipline

It's the key to winning.



by Dave Durand

WINNING THE WORLD depends on exercising self-control and self-discipline. When you desire immediate gratification, you compromise these essential practices. It's easy to fall into short-term gratification traps without even realizing what's happening.

The pathway to winning the world requires you avoid short-term gratification traps that knock you off course and keep you from your ultimate goals.

You don't choose many of your duties and obligation. For example, you are obligated to follow the law, pay taxes, remain loyal to your country, perhaps even defend the country in war. These are the laws of the land.

The obligation to maximize your potential is also a duty you may not choose, but it exists anyway. That obligation is not subject to the laws of the land; however, it is subject to natural law and the laws of nature.

Natural law is based on the structure of reality and is an unchanging rule or pattern, not made by human beings, but all people are capable of discovering it and living by it. Natural law guides you to choose good over evil and do what's in your best interest. Disciplines such as philosophy and theology seek to understand natural law and how it relates to human life.

The laws of nature guide the natural world and are described in such disciplines as physics and biology. If you break a national or state law, you can be fined or imprisoned; if you break the natural law or the laws of nature, you will interfere with your ability to thrive and grow. You may become sick, confused, guilt-ridden, or depressed.

Every time you make a decision that violates your values or hurts someone else simply to serve your own need for instant gratification, you compromise your ability to reach your full potential.

Most poor decisions are made for the purpose of immediate gratification. You face countless opportunities to choose: to spend money you don't have on things you don't need, to sleep in when you should get up, to eat a second piece of pie when you've already eaten too much, to watch TV when you could play with the kids or do the dishes, or

to cut ethical corners at work.

The outcome of serving your need for immediate gratification includes dissatisfaction, ranging from a minor sense of guilt or inconvenience to painful and soul-wrenching shame.

Joy and Happiness

Daily, you make choices between short- and long-term gratification and joy and happiness. You're born with a desire for joy. Almost everything you do, you do to achieve joy. The problem is that you often confuse joy with happiness. That confusion leads to falling into the short-term gratification trap.

The road to joy is paved with dedi-

cation, and the road to happiness is paved with diversion. Happiness wears off as soon as the source of your happiness is consumed, discarded, or ended. It goes away after the positive feelings associated with it dissolve. Joy continues even in the midst of pain and suffering.

Unfortunately, you sometimes mistakenly believe that the path to happiness is the same as the road to joy.

To reaching your potential, what changes would you make in your attitude and behavior? What would a 12-month plan look like?

PE

Dave Durand is author of *Win the World (Crossroad) due out in April*. Visit www.davedurand.com.

ACTION: Make a 12-month plan of discipline.

PHYSICAL • STRESS

Good vs. Bad Stress

Distinguish between the two.



by Vidula Bal, Michael Campbell and Sharon McDowell-Larsen

STRESS IS UNAVOIDABLE. WHAT'S IMPORTANT is to know when you're moving from good stress to bad stress—to be aware of the difference—and to manage stress properly so you can be more effective over time.

When you have the resources you need to meet or exceed the demands put on you, stress can show its positive side. That good kind of stress—*eustress*—acts as a stimulating factor that contributes to success. *Eustress* is the energy you feel when tackling a challenging assignment and feeling confident in your abilities. However, when demands exceed your resources and resilience, you experience the type of stress associated with health problems and deteriorating relationships: *distress*.

The key is to know which stress is which, how to judge reactions to various stressful situations, and how best to manage the negative stress. This is especially important when you face the additional stress brought about by the unique demands of leadership—having to make decisions with limited information, manage conflict, and do more with less.

We offer practical tips on the causes of leadership stress. We have identified 10 factors inherent to leadership roles that contribute to increased stress: ambi-

guity; lack of control; working beyond technical expertise; too much success; doing more with less, faster; building relationships and managing conflict; developing and supporting others; personal insecurity; high expectations; and performance demands.

So what can you do to better manage your stress? Here are eight tips:

1. Know the signals—pay attention to your body's response to stress.
2. Create a ritual—make it a habit to have a stress break.
3. Get away—find effective ways to set boundaries between work and home.
4. Build a support system—build a network of people who can assist you at work and thus alleviate some of the stress you feel.
5. Regroup on the task—look for ways to organize and streamline your work.
6. Recover—build time into your routine to recharge.
7. Redefine balance—link balance to your values and choose supportive activities.
8. Exercise—create a regular exercise regimen, which

can help you regulate emotions, induce relaxation, and increase self-esteem.

Work is a primary source of stress in our lives, and having a leadership role only increases that stress. More leaders believe their stress level is higher than it was five years earlier, and that their organizations fail to provide them with the tools they need to manage stress.

We encourage you to practice these strategies for identifying and managing leadership stress.

PE

Vidula Bal is a senior enterprise associate, Michael Campbell is a senior research analyst, and Sharon McDowell-Larsen is an exercise physiologist at the Colorado Springs campus of the Center for Creative Leadership. They're authors of *Managing Leadership Stress*. Call CCL at 336-545-2810 or visit www.ccl.org/guidebooks.

ACTION: Take these tips to better manage stress.

Write Your Own Paycheck

Use the law of compensation to earn more.



by Ingunn Aursnes

NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO for a living—whether you're a salesperson, a business owner, a self-employed professional, or office worker—the paychecks for people performing the same job functions as you vary greatly. Some people are earning a lot, while others are just barely scraping by. Even though you may be in the same market or industry and doing the same day-to-day things, your outcomes are very different.

Why is there such an earnings discrepancy among people in the same or similar jobs? Those who emerge as the top performers know how to use the *Law of Compensation* to their benefit.

According to the *Law of Compensation*, there are no coincidences or circumstances as to why some people earn more than others. Even though you'll likely hear people say: "He sells more because he has a better market," or "The downturn has hit me much harder than others," or "Of course she's paid more . . . she's the boss's niece," those external circumstances have little to do with a person's earnings.

The *Law of Compensation* is a physical law and always works; however, to have it work for your advantage, you need to understand the elements involved.

Five Elements

According to the *Law of Compensation*, the money you earn will always be in exact ratio to the following five things:

1. The need for what you do. For you to be successful, there has to be a market for what you do—the product you sell or service you offer. If you're an employee or salesperson in a company, this point is taken care of for you. As long as the company you work for is viable and has hired you for a certain position, then there's a need for what you do. If you're a business owner or self-employed professional, you'll have to do some research to determine if there's a market for your offering. Find out if anyone else is offering the same product or service as you. If yes, how much competition is there? Even if the marketplace seems saturated, you can set yourself apart. If no one else is doing what you do, why not? Have many people before you tried and

failed? Are you the first in your market to come up with the idea? Whatever the situation, get a clear picture of whether the marketplace can sustain you.

2. Your ability to do your job. Each day you must wake up and ask yourself key questions: How can I do my job with excellence? How can I best use my resources to excel? How can I be an expert by targeting a certain demographic? How can I improve given the circumstances I have?

Many people focus on challenges they face rather than on possibilities. They look at their job and how they should be compensated backwards. For example, they may say to their boss, "Give me more money (or a company car or stock options or better



health benefits) and I'll do a better job." But such a mindset is the equivalent of saying to your fireplace, "Give me heat, and I'll give you wood."

The *Law of Compensation* states that you need to start with what you offer, and then the money will come. Always focus on how you can do your job better, how you can be different, how you can improve, and how you can turn challenges into opportunities for yourself and your company. The more you keep your focus on serving and improving, the more money you'll earn.

3. How easy or difficult you are to replace. Your monetary worth is in direct proportion to how easy it is to replace you. If you're easy to replace, then your monetary worth is low. But if you are the best one at your job and giving good service to your customers, then you are extremely valuable.

To raise your worth and earnings, always do more than what is expected from you. Too many people rely on the old phrase, "That's not my job." But going the extra mile and doing those

things that aren't in your job description will help you stand out and get the recognition that leads to more money. Many opportunities start with someone seeing a need and filling it. If you are the person who always volunteers and takes on new responsibilities willingly, people will remember you and you'll be the first in line for new business, bonuses, promotions, and raises.

4. Your attitude. Your attitude at work is often more important than your skill set. The way you view the world and handle challenges definitely impacts your bottom line. For example, someone who complains all the time about not being paid enough, how tough the economy is, and how mean or unthankful the customers are, won't be viewed as favorably as someone who is proactive about solving problems and dedicated to customer service. As the old saying goes, "Where attention goes, energy flows." The things you spend your time thinking about will multiply. What do you continually think about at work—the problems, the unfairness, your low pay check? Or do you think about rendering great service, finding solutions, and creating opportunities?

Focus on your own ability to do your work. Be honest with yourself. Give your full attention to your work and be positive. You become a happier person; and when you're happier and focusing on how you can do better and improve service, you stand out as someone who deserves more money.

5. Your belief in the Law of Compensation. To make the *Law of Compensation* work for you, you must believe in it and trust that it works. It might take some time until you see noticeable results. You can't start on Monday and expect results by Friday. You need a long-term focus. So, believe that you deserve more money and acknowledge that there is an indisputable law to your earnings success. Doing so will help you keep your perspective and strive to always do better on the job.

If you're not earning what you want, examine yourself and your on-the-job behaviors and actions. Are you following these guidelines? Or are you just hoping that by some stroke of luck you'll earn more? Luck has nothing to do with your salary. When you follow these principles and believe in yourself, your salary will rise, and your future income potential will be limitless. **PE**

Ingunn Aursnes is an author, LifeSuccess consultant, and owner of Quantum Leaps Consulting. Call 561-868-1815 or visit www.quantumleapsconsulting.com.

ACTION: Apply the law of compensation.

Get Ahead in Life

Ask questions of people.



by Andy Andrews

EVERYONE HAS SETBACKS. When I was struggling, my passion was to know how other people overcame rejection and defeat. To succeed in life, you must understand how to deal with criticism, how to overcome challenges, how to balance your life, and how to deal with success. To understand these things, you need to talk to those who have suffered, persisted, and eventually succeeded.

I asked various celebrities, politicians, and professionals some key questions to find out what has made them successful. I asked them great questions: What is the greatest disappointment in your life and how did you overcome it? What's the most important decision you've ever made in your life? What's the worst decision you've made in your life? If you were to give an 18-year-old one specific wisdom, what would it be?

Whenever you talk to a successful person who has overcome adversity and overwhelming odds, have some questions in mind—as their answers will provide you with an education.

Jimmy Dean told me that success and wealth are a state of mind. "My grandfather, W. J. Taylor, was the most successful and wealthy man I ever knew, and yet he never made more than \$10,000 in any year in his life. But he was the best farmer in Hale County, Texas. He had the straightest fences, the cleanest end-rows, the neatest barn, and the neatest house. He raised nine kids, he had a great relationship with the man upstairs and a wonderful inner peace. To me, this is success and wealth."

Regarding setbacks, he said: "Being knocked down is part of life—and getting up is also part of life. Find ways to bounce back from temporary setbacks. Delete the word *defeat* from your vocabulary. Be self-reliant. With all the welfare available today, many talented people are never forced to find out what their talent is and use it."

Bob Hope was a great entertainer. I worked with him for a time and asked him about his first break. He'd changed his name from Lester to Bob because Bob Hope sounded more "chummy," but he still wasn't booking shows. He said, "I was about ready to go home to get a full meal and my laundry cleaned when this

friend walked up. He was a successful Vaudevillian, Charlie Cooley; he said, 'How you doing?' He introduced me to Charlie Hogan, who booked small theatres around Chicago. He said, 'I can give you one day at the West Inglewood Theatre for \$25.' I'd only been making \$10 a show. That booking got me rolling."

Joan Rivers is one of the nicest, most generous people with whom I have ever had the privilege of working. She never refused to sign an autograph, and always had time for me. She encouraged me with one of her stories about persistence: "On December 7, 1958, I walked into The Showbar in Boston. I was to be paid \$125 for the week, two shows a night. I had already checked into the hotel across the street. It was a dirty, horrible place, but I didn't care. This was my first job. After the first show, the manager fired me. As

far back as I can remember, I wanted a career in show business, but people were always telling me 'no.' I tried everything and called on every one, but everyone said no. My own mother said, 'You have no talent. You're throwing your life away.' Even in my darkest moments, I knew instinctively that my unyielding drive was my most valuable asset. Perseverance will always be just as important as talent."

Consider the people you meet to be treasure troves of knowledge. Ask them to share their stories with you—words that will encourage, inspire, and help you. Life provides you with many opportunities to seek wisdom. Persevere in your talent, and you'll succeed. PE

Andy Andrews is author of *The Traveler's Gift and Mastering the Seven Decisions That Determine Personal Success*. Visit www.AndyAndrews.com.

ACTION: Ask questions of successful people.

FINANCIAL • IDEAS

Million-Dollar Ideas

They're only valuable when applied.



by Michael Angier

AT THE TURN OF THE LAST century, officials considered disbanding the U.S. Patent Office; many believed that *there were few inventions left to be patented, that all the great inventions had already been taken*. No doubt some people today feel the same way.

I disagree. I believe we're entering a time of unprecedented innovation. We're experiencing some of the greatest prosperity we've ever known. Productivity is at an all-time high. And when basic needs are met, it's easier to be creative.

Innovation is not only for so-called "creative" minds. We're all creative, and each of us has the ability to generate ideas to solve problems in our lives and businesses and improve our relationships.

Innovation is simply reorganizing information in new ways. Take some of your time saved from increased productivity to think and create. Ask questions. Dig deep. Think about what you want and what others might want. What problems need to be solved? How can we solve them? Remember that it's okay to borrow ideas, as long as you don't borrow them all from one source.

Arnold Glasgow said, "Ideas not coupled with action never become big-

ger than the brain cells they occupied."

Ideas are cheap—it is the implementation that creates the real value. Ideas by themselves are worthless. Plans are nothing—unless they are followed with action. An idea without a strategy, without action, is useless.

Still, you need to keep track of the ideas you have. Record them in some fashion. And make them easy to access later. You never know when an idea may trigger another one that could be just the one to make you a million dollars or save a million. An idea you have today may be impractical. Or perhaps you may be unable to do any-

thing about it at the moment. No matter. Make sure you record it somewhere. If you make it easy to do, you'll do more of it.

I use my *Task List* in Microsoft Outlook to track ideas. I can categorize them and they're easy to find. Index cards also work well. They fit in a shirt pocket or purse and are easy to sort

and categorize. You can even use your journal or a separate document on your word processor. The easier it is to find and review them, the more valuable your ideas will be to you.

I also use a hand-held tape recorder in my car to record ideas as they occur to me. It's handy, and safer. I don't try to write as I'm driving. Later, I transcribe the ideas into my Outlook files.

Your best ideas are answers to your problems. So, pick the best, implement them, and watch your life improve. PE

Michael Angier is founder of SuccessNet.org, and author of the *SuccessNet Resource Book*.

ACTION: Capture and apply million-dollar ideas.



Leaders as Elders

Who are the Elders in your tribe?



by Richard Leider

ON MY 20TH WALKING SAFARI in Tanzania, I find myself with my team of “inventurers”—individuals who adventure inward through outdoor experience—sitting around the fire late into the evening with a small group of Hadza elders.

Living on the edge of a primeval Baobab tree forest, the Hadza are grounded with the natural world.

The elders of the tribe, in keeping with tradition, sit closer to the fire. Younger members form a larger circle around them. Our team is honored to sit among the elders. In the glow of the firelight, I see expressions of respect and deference on the faces of our group as we lean forward to take in the words of wisdom being shared with us.

The man speaking is Maroba, a Hadza elder, deeply immersed in the ways and stories of his people. He is sharing a story about the Honey Guide, a small gray and rust-colored bird that flutters about the Baobab and Acacia trees in the Hadza homeland. Maroba tells us that from his youth, he was taught that the Honey Guide is the friend of his people. He is the “indicator” bird, pointing the way to life’s sweetness—where to find the honey on which our lives depend.

We’re reminded to keep our eyes and ears open for the Honey Guide. Should we hear the “Weet-terr, weet-terr” of this wise bird, we must whistle back. The Honey Guide will then fly close to us, and flash his white tail feathers to get our attention. Follow him, whistling to him as he sings back, “Weet-terr, weet-terr” and he will lead us to a bees’ nest dripping with honey. We must then climb the tree, smoke out the bees, and take the honeycomb.

Maroba instructs: Before we eat the honey ourselves, we must break off a piece of the honeycomb and leave it for the Honey Guide to thank him for his guidance. If we do not do so, he will no longer sing to us. Or worse, he may sing when we are hunting, giving us away to the prey we are stalking.

Listening to Maroba’s story, we know that it is true because we have seen the Honey Guide and witnessed this amazing interaction—a relationship that benefits both species.

Maroba’s story calls us back to that miracle we have seen and reminds us that what we need in life is available to us, if only we know how to look for it. And only if we remember that getting what really matters in life depends, above all, on giving it back.

At the end of the story, I ask our team, “Do you have elders, like Maroba, who guide you?” Many reply sadly, “I don’t know. No matter whom I think of, their role seems narrow or fragmented. We don’t have real elders anymore.”

As we stare into the coals of the fire, Maroba asks me, “Who are the elders of your tribe?” I draw a blank. My “tribe?” My elders? Who are they? I can’t answer. The concept of “elder” for our tribe—contemporary men and



women—seems foreign. And yet Maroba’s question begs for an answer.

The next day, Maroba’s question—*Who are the elders of your tribe?*—stays with me. Clearly, the idea of elder, for us, is distinct from being old. Those of us who aspire to being elders in our communities know that we are older; what is most important to us is a sense of vitality and purpose, a sense that we still matter and can make a difference. We aspire to a purposeful sense of self.

We live in a culture that celebrates youth. Many “boomers” have celebrated youth most enthusiastically. Now, though, we wonder about our place in the world and what we have to offer as a result of our life experience.

The place of respect that elders enjoy in tribal groups represents a sharp contrast to how older adults in our society are seen. The elders earn and accept the respect they’re given. It’s not just that they’re acknowledged by their people—they claim themselves as vital resources for their communities. Becoming an elder is, for them, an

active step that involves staking out a place of power around the fire. A person closest to the flames has something valuable to bring forth and takes the initiative to do so. In this way, he or she claims that place of respect at the fire.

We see this step of owning our power as the missing piece to the role of elders. To some degree, we have accepted our culture’s picture of aging. We realize that it is time for us—individually and as a group of people in the second half of our lives—to create a new picture of vital aging. It is time to claim our places at the fire. A new language emerges from our discussions. We begin calling ourselves the *new elders*—people who use the second half of life as an empty canvas, a blank page, a hunk of clay to be crafted on purpose; people who never stop reinventing themselves.

For new elders, the past predicts but does not determine the future. New elders live the second half of their lives in ways characterized by an aliveness and vitality grounded in a deep sense of purpose. We realize that it is time for us—in the second half of our lives—to create a new picture of vital aging and to claim our places at the fire.

New elders put to use their deep wisdom. They experience a sense of liberation by discovering who they truly are and how best to express that.

Four Flames

Late one night, alone, gazing into the fire, I reflect on four questions: “Who am I? Where do I belong? What do I care about? Why am I here?” Suddenly I see four flames—one for each question.

1. The flame of identity—*who am I?* It is the flame of our life’s stories. By recalling our story, we rediscover and reinvent ourselves in the second half of life.

2. The flame of community—*where do I belong?* It is the flame of our place. By re-finding our place, we embrace a sense of intimacy for life’s second half.

3. The flame of passion—*what do I care about?* By renewing our life’s calling, we stay connected and mentor those who’ll see to things after we’re gone.

4. The flame of purpose—*why am I here?* This flame illuminates our life’s meaning. By reclaiming our purpose, we find creative expression and make a difference in the lives of others.

In life’s second half, the reward for surviving is the freedom to become yourself and to claim your place at the fire. **PE**

Richard Leider is Founding Partner of the Inventure Group and coauthor with David A. Shapiro of Claiming Your Place At the Fire (Berrett-Koehler, 2004). Visit www.inventuregroup.com.

ACTION: Claim your place at the fire.

Be the Change

And allow change to be.



by Kathryn
and Dannion
Brinkley

WHY IS CHANGE SUCH A SCARY PROPOSITION to face? When change rears its ugly head, we all tend to break out in a cold sweat and panic. We're afraid that if we're not in charge of every detail of our lives, something will come along and change it all without our permission, leaving us dazed and confused.

Yet, if a miracle is merely a shift in perception, could we choose to see all change as a choice we've made and a new road we've volunteered to travel?

Long before we arrived in this land of dreams and illusion, we created a destiny for ourselves—a life mission, a soul contract that we vowed to honor. So, might unforeseen, even dreaded changes, be sacred patterns designed to accent the highlights of our spiritual tapestry? Could these changes be golden threads intended to weave together our deepest fears with our most treasured aspirations so that we can manifest our true magnificence? Imagine how our experiences might be transformed, if only we viewed change as the spiritual compass used to correct our course and align us with our divine destiny.

Mahatma Gandhi instructed us to *be the change we want to see in the world*. If we want to be the change, we have to learn to *allow the change to be*. We can't run around trying to fix everyone, save the world, and hold the space for galactic love and peace before we truly comprehend the divine wisdom of allowing life to unfold naturally through inspired change. Of course, this does not mean that we can do whatever we please and simply let the chips fall where they may. We've got to walk the golden mean, live with integrity, give more than we get, love with an open heart, forgive, and love some more. Only then can we trust that the changes we allow are the changes that are meant to be.

We refer to this realm as *The Free Will Zone*. Every thought and emotion you choose to put out into the spiritual ethers will return to you in form. Your inner thoughts and emotions will create a tangible reality. The outer landscape of your life mirrors the intentions of your soul. As your thoughts and emo-

tions change, so will your life experiences. Your true destiny, however, remains the same. This is where your spiritual stamina gets put to the test. Are you living in alignment with your destiny, or are you challenging your fate? How do you know the difference?

There is no easy answer, since bad things happen to good people and injustice, intolerance, and prejudice still exist. Yet, so do love, tenderness, hope, and compassion. Which will you choose to embrace and pass forward? Little acts of random kindness can create huge waves of positive change—waves capable of washing away misunderstanding or hate.

Such sweeping change is more than just a possibility—it is a global destiny

longing to unfold. We all share a common heart, an inner wisdom directly connected to Infinite Intelligence. You can find this wisdom through a deliberate inner search. Meditation, prayer, journaling, and spirit quests are excellent ways to facilitate this reconnection and define your alignment to the spiritual missions that you've pledged to accomplish.

Take time daily to look deep within to recover your soul wisdom. Once you enter into that sacred space, allow changes to be your guide into a higher awareness of life's unfolding perfection. **PE**

Dannion and Kathryn Brinkley are authors of The Secrets of the Light (Harper Collins). Visit www.dannion.com.

ACTION: Embrace life's changes.

Soul Currency

Invest your inner wealth.



by Ernest D. Chu

AS A WALL ST. INVESTMENT bank executive, I discovered the power of invested capital to create market value. But as a life coach and spiritual teacher, I realized that the greatest resource is the inner wealth that lies within us—our spiritual or inner qualities such as insight, intuition, and vision. Learning how to awaken and invest this immense inner wealth will enable you reach your goals, increase income, and find deep personal fulfillment.

Do you judge yourself as not being special enough, not being smart enough, or not knowing the right people or having what it takes? You are sitting on your own acres of diamonds, and you can either lament the cards dealt to you or recognize that not only are you a diamond in the rough, but indeed you are sitting on a huge treasure trove of inner assets that can be correlated to the material world.

You have many choices in how you create income. You likely spend most of your waking time in work-related activities. If you look at work as simply an activity that generates a paycheck, you will have to find meaning in other parts of your life. You don't have to work in a non-profit company. What you bring to your work, not just the work itself, contributes to the experience. When you begin to value yourself and what you have to offer, you

will ultimately seek to share with the world what is uniquely yours.

Come from Strengths

When I was growing up, I was ashamed that I was short and looked different. But when I went to Wall St., one of the hottest fund managers was Gerald Tsai, a Chinese American. I discovered that it was okay to be Chinese, and that there were a few advantages. I could walk into a crowded room, and most people would remember me. I'd inherited a solid work ethic and could take in a huge amount of information, sort it out, and glean insights from it.

When you use your inner assets and direct them with intention and focus,

you only need to add the source energy of love to harness the spiritual capital. The feeling of love, the soul's real currency, is more than a feeling of well-being—it is creative, connective, and transformative. When you invest your spiritual capital, the ROI is not simply monetary,

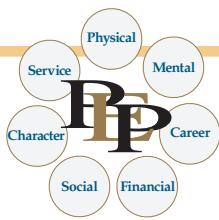
but it opens up other possibilities.

Soul currency investing is more powerful than simply investing the symbols that represent money. Soul currency enables you to live from possibility rather than investing from fear and risk. From an open heart, you can share and put yourself in the flow of material prosperity and the deep fulfillment and right action that love produces. The message you receive is one of greater connection to others around, to the collective good, and to Spirit that brings you fulfillment and a sense of greater purpose. **PE**

Ernest Chu is a finance expert, strategic advisor, pastor for the Religious Science church, and author of Soul Currency (New World Library). Visit www.SoulCurrency.org or 800-972-6657.

ACTION: Invest your inner wealth.





GOAL GETTERS



New Year's resolutions usually evoke feelings of guilt. Most verbs associated with resolutions are restrictive in nature (*quit, stop, loose, reduce, or eliminate*), implying that you need to improve, fix, or repair something that's broke or incomplete. So, you tend to see New Year's resolutions as a difficult exercise, requiring discipline, determination, and willpower. As a result, you "make" the resolutions January 1, and begin to "break" them by February 1 as your commitment and enthusiasm wane.

This year, create New Year reVolutions—transformational actions that energize and invigorate by the thought of "what's possible" and lead to breakthrough results. A resolution is a solution, accommodation, or settling of a problem; a revolution is a change in ways of thinking and behaving.

New Year's reVolutions require you to decide what do you *want* to be, as opposed to what do you *need* to do. What accomplishments do you want to be known for? Are you on track to be that person? If not, what steps can you take today to help you get there tomorrow?

To keep inspired (vs. disciplined) with your New Year's revolutions, **follow these 10 tips:**

Goals are dreams with a deadline. Dreams are all about "wants and desires" with no commitment; goals are "concrete and defined" with commitment. Where do you want to be and what do you want to do? Imagine limitless opportunities and commit to achieve them. Write down three actionable goals that you can visualize and achieve by the end of 2009. Keep them in front of you so your daily actions lead to attaining these goals.

Positive attitude plus positive actions equal positive results. Having a positive mental attitude is a good start, but it is the positive actions that follow that lead to success (vs. wanting, hoping, and waiting for them to happen). Plan how you will achieve each goal with mini-plans, mini-goals, and corresponding dates for each.

Follow your passion. Commit

to doing more of what you enjoy doing, that invigorates and satisfies you, and less of what you do not enjoy that leads to procrastination and stress. Your *chores* are other people's *challenges*.

Soar with your strengths.

Spend more time on those projects, tasks, or activities that accentuate your talents and natural gifts. By focusing on your strengths, you'll have a higher self-esteem, be more professionally fulfilled, and will ultimately be far more successful.

Be organized. Start the year by doing a total catharsis or cleansing of clutter. Go through every paper in every file with a goal to *trash* it, *box* it (future needs), or *re-file* it (near-term needs). Invest 20 minutes each day in organizing.

Prioritize your to-do list. Have three columns: "do it," "delegate it," or "scratch it." Do more of what brings you rewards and less of what steals your time. Add *want to-do* items, not just *have-to-do* tasks.

Compartmentalize your priorities. Once you decide on your priorities, focus on the tasks at hand—keeping distractions from diluting your focus. It's difficult to concentrate on two or more projects and do them well at the same time.

Change the way you see everything. By seeing opportunities vs. obstacles, challenges vs. chores, and by celebrating what you accomplish vs. feeling bad about what you don't, you increase your energy, improve your attitude, and raise your level of satisfaction.

Surround yourself with positive people. Good attitudes elevate you to new heights, but bad attitudes drain energy, accelerate discontent, and destroy morale. Spend your precious time with people who will support you, encourage you, and celebrate your success.

Reinvent yourself. Realize that change can be cathartic, energizing, and good. Shake things up every once in a while. Reinvent yourself in your dress and surroundings.

Decide on what results you want to achieve in 2009, and spend your time, energy, and focus to achieve your New Year's reVolutions.

—Michael Guld, www.talkingbiz.net.

PersonalCOACH



Discipline of Winning Overcome tyranny of the urgent. by Andy Cindrich

SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE CONSISTENTLY DO THINGS failures don't like to do. They don't necessarily like doing those things either, but they have the discipline to do them anyway. They take difficult extra steps that few others take.

Who are these *successful people* delivering *great performances* and what *difficult things* do they do that make them so rare? Winners create a compelling vision that defines their futures clearly in terms of what *winning* means to them, and they decide what's most important now to achieve that future state.

That's the easy part. What's difficult is *doing* what's required to *win*.

To win consistently, take these three steps:

1. Commit to a focused strategy. Commit to a focused and sustainable strategy that will take you toward an envisioned future. The essence of strategy is choice. You can't do everything. You have to make choices daily about how you use your resources to create value. Do you focus your time, talent, and money on things that matter most, or do you spread your limited assets across all opportunities, diluting your resources and influence.

Many people are afraid to focus, worrying that they might fail to do some good thing. This is why "good" is so often the enemy of "great." This fear causes many to *not* choose and to try to "do it all." You need to define and do what's necessary to ensure a win. Not deciding puts you at the mercy of the daily pressure, noises, urgencies, politics, and convenience. You must make strategic choices, and your choices should be aligned with a clearly defined purpose and vision.

2. Deploy performance mechanisms (a set of rules or a system that help you do what you know you need to do to get better—what you've committed to do—even when it is hard). Such mechanisms include such things as clearly defined goals, scoreboards that show short-term progress, and a rhythm of accountability around your scoreboards. These pull you out of the daily whirlwind so you can make progress toward your goals.

3. Persist. One barrier to winning is a lack of persistence and patience. Consistent, focused effort enables breakthrough performance. The nature of the tasks doesn't change, but your capacity to do is increased as you develop the discipline of winning.

You can overcome the tyranny of the urgent by using these three means. PE

Andy Cindrich is an expert in business execution. Call 801-766-4761 or email andy@1consulting.org.

ACTION: Overcome the tyranny of the urgent.

Reclaim the Dream

Do it for yourself and others.



by Barack Obama

I HEAR A LOT ABOUT THE DIVISIONS in our country—how we're becoming more separated by geography and ideology; race and religion; wealth and opportunity. But as I travel, I'm not struck by our differences—I'm impressed by the values and hopes that we share. We all share a faith in simple dreams. A job with wages that can support a family. Health care that we can count on and afford. A retirement that is dignified and secure. Education and opportunity for our kids. Common hopes. American dreams.

These are the dreams that led me to Chicago 22 years ago to become a community organizer. The salary of \$12,000 a year wasn't what my friends would make in business or law. I didn't know a single person in Chicago. But I knew there were folks who needed help. The steel plant had closed. Jobs were disappearing. In a forgotten corner of America, the American dream was slipping away. And dreams are worth fighting for.

What is unique about America is that we want these dreams for more than ourselves—we want them for each other. That's why we call it *the American dream*. We want it for the kid who doesn't go to college because she can't afford it; for the worker whose wondering if his wages will pay this winter's heating bill; for 47 million Americans living without health care; for the millions more who worry if they have enough to retire with the dignity they have earned.

When our fellow Americans are denied the American dream, our own dreams are diminished. And today, the cost of that dream is rising faster than ever before. While some have prospered beyond imagination, middle-class Americans—and those working hard to become middle class—are seeing the American dream slip further away.

You know it from your own life. You are working harder for less and paying more for health care and college. For most folks, one income isn't enough to raise a family and send your kids to college. Sometimes, two incomes aren't enough. It's harder to save. It's harder to retire. You're doing your part, you're meeting your responsibilities, but it seems like you're treading water or falling behind. As I see this every day, I'm reminded of

how unlikely it is that the dreams of my family could be realized today.

I don't accept this future. We need to reclaim the American dream by putting an end to the politics of polarization and division that hold this country back; standing up to lobbyists who stand in the way of progress; by telling people not just what they want to hear, but what they need to know.

Americans want to come together again behind a common purpose. We want to reclaim our American dream because in this country that dream is worth fighting for—not just for ourselves, but for each other. We need to give working families a break. The cost of the American dream must never come at the expense of the American family.

There was a lot of talk in the cam-

paign about the politics of hope. But this doesn't mean hoping that things come easy. It's a politics of believing in things unseen; of believing in what this country might be; and of standing up for that belief and fighting for it when it's hard.

America is the sum of our dreams. And what binds us together, what makes us one American family, is that we stand up and fight for each other's dreams, that we reaffirm the fundamental belief—I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper—through our politics, our policies, and in our daily lives. It's time to do that once more. It's time to reclaim the American dream. PE

Barack Obama is president of the United States of America. Visit www.BarackObama.com.

ACTION: Reclaim your dreams.

SERVICE • MOTHERS

Bring Home the Gold

Reflect on the service of moms.



by Jamie Woolf

AFTER THE OLYMPIC GAMES I reflected on favorite moments. I was dazzled by the ceremonies, feats of athleticism, and displays of emotion evoked by victory and defeat. Yet for me, the most moving moments involved Debbie Phelps and her eight-gold-medal-winner son, Michael. Since becoming a mom, I couldn't help but wonder: How *does* a parent nurture a child's ability and motivation to achieve greatness?

We *all* want to raise confident, hardworking, optimistic children who will succeed in life. And who better to learn from than the parents who inspired Olympic dreams?

Here are *seven tips*:

Set a good example. Kids live what they learn and learn what they see. So if you want to raise a winner, be a winner. Set goals and work toward them. Practice good time management. Do your work cheerfully and tirelessly. Let your kids see how passionate you are about what you do every day.

Seek out your child's aptitudes, subtly. Watch for the early emergence of talent and skills, but let them play and develop on their own rather than enroll them in an array of classes and regimented activities. Your child's unique gifts will show up. Then you can add more intensive classes.



Don't let kids give up. Encourage your children to keep reaching for their goals—even when they're sick of practicing or studying or working. Many kids believe that if something's not immediately attainable, it must not be worth the effort. Teach children that perseverance eventually pays off, that their success depends on their ability to bounce back and keep practicing.

Help your kids put their goals into perspective. Remind your kids that they still need to be conscientious citizens and good siblings, and do their chores and homework. In this way, you help them balance their lives.

Keep egos in check. Remind your kids that they have no more (or less) inherent value than anyone else. Don't allow their talent, luck, and hard work

to go to their heads. Keep them humble. They'll grow up with a good attitude and be more likeable.

Believe in your children.

When they make mistakes, don't be overly critical or condemning. Debbie Phelps did not give up on Michael (who struggled with ADHD). She accepted his strengths and weaknesses, supported him, and believed in him.

Stress sportsmanship. Teach children to show respect and support for other people's achievements. Avoid catty comments and gossip, and insist that your kids do the same. Make sure that they congratulate the victors. Teaching kids how to handle losses helps them maintain perspective and makes them gracious winners. PE

Jamie Woolf, founder of *The Parent Leader and Pinehurst Consulting*, is author of *Mom-in-Chief* (Wiley). Visit mominchief.com or call 800-225-5945.

ACTION: Support your children wholeheartedly.

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