

“The greatest discovery of my generation
is that a human being can alter his life by
altering his attitude.”

William James

RICH THINKING

DR ROBERT GIBSON

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Introduction

What makes one succeed, and others fail? And what separates the fabulously wealthy from those who are just making ends meet? If it were superior intelligence, or education, we wouldn't have some of the wealthiest people in the world with only high school educations. Others have said, "Some people are just born lucky. They just get all the opportunities." There is no such thing as luck, and further, I can assure you there is no such thing as a shortage of opportunities. Opportunities are everywhere, but you need to be looking for them!

Your opportunities are out there waiting to bless you. Opportunities come, and opportunities can go just as quickly. They often appear for a brief moment of time, a small window of opportunity, that if you don't seize the moment, the opportunity will be gone, vanishing before your eyes. While every one of us is presented with opportunities to become wealthy, only a small percentage of people actually grab hold of their opportunities and use them to prosper.

It's because of "poor thinking" that most people can't even see the opportunity, much less grab hold of it. And so, they struggle through life, wondering why they can't achieve their hopes and dreams. Hopes and dreams are nice things to have; but no matter how much you hope, hope can't and won't change your dreams into a reality.

It would be incredibly hopeful, but ignorant, to think that you can do the same thing over and over again but expect a different result. Likewise, it would be unwise to believe that you can continue "poor thinking" and end up a Millionaire. It's that "poor thinking" that has you living in the Land of Not Enough Money. It's time for change, and I'm not talking nickels and dimes. I'm talking about a lifestyle change. It will be virtually impossible for you to become a Millionaire without changing what you're doing, what you're thinking, how you're acting, and what you're saying. This book will help you to recognize your opportunities and will teach you how to apply "Rich Thinking" to every area of your life.

The lessons taught in this book are the first step to developing the attitude of success that self-made Millionaire's possess, that others do not. This book will teach you the valuable secrets on how to develop "Rich Thinking." You notice that I used the word develop. That is because you just don't wake up one morning and say, "I am going to start thinking rich." You must develop a habit of practicing "Rich Thinking." This book is

meant to challenge you into actively pursuing a new level of prosperity by incorporating these new concepts into your life.

Don't be discouraged if a circumstance arises that sends you back into your old "poor thinking" habit. Understand that this is a learning process and a life concept that takes time to master. It's been said, that we learn by trial and error. However, often times it is how we respond to the trials of life that actually cause us to err. By learning how to apply "Rich Thinking" to your circumstances, you can change your life for the better.

I am excited for you to begin experiencing the benefits of "Rich Thinking." Best Wishes on your journey to the new wealthy you.

“ Our attitudes control our lives. Attitudes are a secret power working twenty-four hours a day, for good or bad. It is of paramount importance that we know how to harness and control this great force. ”

Irving Berlin

Chapter 1

You Improve What You Measure

How is your attitude today? Most people view the quality of their attitude in generalized categories such as good, better, or great. This degree of measurement will not lead to improvement of this incredibly important asset... your attitude. The purpose of this life lesson is to lead you to an understanding of a principle that transcends all areas of life. You improve what you measure. Think about it. In literally every area of life and business there is some form of measurement when it comes to anything that is important. Doctors measure your heart rate, your cholesterol, your weight, your blood pressure and a dozen other factors that determine your physical health. In business, cash flow, income, depreciation, asset allocation and dozens of other measurable factors indicate the health of the business.

If attitude is the factor that determines the quality of your life, as will be proposed throughout this book, then why in the world wouldn't you measure it everyday to monitor how it is doing? The answer is you should!

Thus, a critical life lesson that I will teach you is to measure your attitude everyday for the next ninety days. This habit is very specific to the development, maintenance and protection of a great attitude. Now my hope is that you make this a life-long habit. But let's start with a reasonable goal of ninety days. Are you willing to do a very simple exercise for ninety days that could affect the quality of your life forever? If so, here is what to do. Rate the quality of your attitude for ninety straight days. Your rating of each day's attitude should take place at the end of the day before you go to bed. The rating should occur in front of the bathroom mirror. The only tools you will need for this rating will be a pad of post-it-notes and a pen.

At the end of each day rate yourself on a scale of 1-10. One means you had a terrible attitude that day. Ten means you had a spectacular attitude all day. Each night, write the honest rating for that day down on the post-it-note and stick it on the mirror for you to see in the morning. Honesty is more than a good policy here. Honesty is a lifeline to an improved attitude that will transcend all areas of your life. The purpose of you posting the note on the mirror at night is so it will be the first thing that you see in the morning. The sight of yesterday's score will start you out in the morning paying attention to the attitude that you bring to that day.

Next, as you take yesterday's score down, keep the yellow post-it-note that you wrote your score on. As you take each score down, put them in a separate pile that you can go back through at the end of the month. As you

place the notes in the pile, give some thought to the day's activities that are represented by the score. Ask yourself what circumstances or people affected your score and whether you had given other people or circumstances power over your attitude that day.

As you begin the measuring process of this vitally important part of your life, you will be amazed at the recognition of how the forces in your life affect your attitude. Once you begin to recognize the vulnerable nature of this incredible asset, you will begin paying closer attention to the potential thieves that lay in wait for your attitude. You will find yourself pausing during the day knowing that how you respond to a person or circumstances will affect your score for the day.

Not to worry if your score is all over the board for the first month. After the first thirty days you will see a steady number occurring day to day that is less likely to fluctuate based on the circumstances of your day. After one month of having the post-it-notes on your mirror, feel free to transition to the calendar in the back of this book.

Remember, you will improve what you measure. Your attitude is an asset every bit as important as your heartbeat. Pay attention to it and measure it with as much honesty as you can because it has the ability to define the quality of your life. Before long you will be scoring 9-10 every day, regardless of your life's circumstances. At that point, you will have learned the incredible lesson that your attitude sets the foundation for the quality of your life.

“ Attitudes are nothing more than habits of thoughts, and habits can be acquired. An action repeated becomes an attitude realized. ”

Unknown

Chapter 2

Consistent Behavior Always Creates Great Results

One of the keys to success in life is consistency. It matters not the area that we are talking about because the concept of consistency transcends all of life's pursuits. In my life's journey, I have noted that most people are consistent at one thing... being inconsistent. Most people are consistently inconsistent. If you are consistently inconsistent you will never build momentum in any area of your life.

Imagine the thickest sand on a beach you've been on, the kind where you almost sink up to your ankles because it's so soft. Now imagine trying to run a 100-yard dash in that sand. It would exhaust you. You're working your heart out, but you're exhausted because there's no consistency in the foundation that you're trying to run on. Think of inconsistency as soft sand that prevents you from getting traction or momentum in your life. Inconsistency means that you have not created the foundation for consistent results. Inconsistency in any area of your life that you are trying to improve will guarantee inconsistent results.

In all the areas of life where I've seen people succeed, they have a habit of consistency that underscores multiple areas of their lives. The most successful people don't pick and choose an area to exercise consistency. They make it a habit that transcends all areas of their life. It transcends eating, exercise, financial habits, relationships, parenting skills, and, certainly, business efforts. If you're going to have results like those of successful people, you have to create habits that are like those of successful people. One of those habits is consistency.

There are actually businesses that base their business model on the inconsistency of human beings. Take a look at any successful health club. There is no way they could accommodate every member they sell a membership to if everyone exercised consistently. The health club knows something about human nature. They know that human beings are, for the most part, inconsistent. They count on your inconsistency. Consistency takes self-discipline and most people will not exercise self-discipline for extended periods of time.

The good news here lies within a life lesson that this book will repeat many times. If you want better than average results in your life, you must separate yourself from the average performers when it comes to habits. Don't you love the concept of average? It leaves so much room for excellence! If you want better results than the average person, develop habits that are better than

the average person. The average person leads a life of consistent inconsistency. You simply need to develop a habit of consistent consistency.

Consistency has many positive side effects. It allows you to reach goals. It also helps you feel great about yourself because it takes self-discipline to be consistent. The more self-discipline that you apply in your life, the more you're going to create a positive self-image. The more you create a positive self-image, the better attitude you're always going to have. It just builds on itself.

Consistency in the area of attitude is a foundational element to great relationships, to business or personal pursuits, and to the degree of happiness that you experience in your life. It is impossible to get traction in any of these areas with an inconsistent attitude. My guess is that many of you have been on the receiving end of a person with an inconsistent attitude. I bet not much fun was had or progress made in that relationship.

One of the reasons for our exercise with the post-it-notes in the first chapter is to demonstrate to you the consistency or inconsistency of the attitude that fuels your life. You will be pleasantly amazed at the resulting transformation that will happen in your life when you underscore effort with the habit of consistency.

“ You cannot control what happens to you,
but you can control your attitude toward
what happens to you, and in that, you will
be mastering change rather than allowing it
to master you.”

Brian Tracy

Chapter 3

Protect Your Attitude by Defaulting to “Great Attitude Mode”

I'll bet you've experienced the following scenario. You wake up in the morning and you feel great. Your attitude's phenomenal. Then the drive to work starts. People are beeping and cutting you off. Traffic is slow. Things aren't working right. You get on your mobile phone and try to call someone, but you get cut off during the middle of the call. You try to reach them again... this time they're busy and they can't speak with you. Then by the time you get to work, your parking space is taken. The copying machine is jammed, obviously unaware that you must make photo-copies for each participant in the upcoming meeting. You knock yourself out to get to the meeting on time, miraculously make it, only to find everyone else is late.

Suddenly your attitude, which started great, isn't so good anymore. In fact it's starting to slide down really quickly because there are so many things going wrong. The entire day is marked by roadblocks to the expectations you had in mind for this phenomenal day. For many of you, this is almost a daily scenario.

There is a way to avoid these pitfalls. First, realize a basic difference between average people and extraordinary people. In many cases, it boils down to attitude. Those who accomplish the extraordinary manage to maintain and protect a phenomenal outlook during times when the average person starts to lose a grip on their attitude. That is not something easy to do. It's something you have to work at, something you have to practice, literally, on a daily basis.

When your attitude starts to slip and things are going wrong, you have to be able to reach down inside of you and hit a default switch that puts you in protection mode. You have to tell yourself:

I am now in a danger zone. A red light is flashing. Sirens are going off. I am in that zone that is going to make the difference between greatness and average. I've got to reach down inside and flip the switch over to my default that says... I'm in protection mode. I am going to at least maintain the same fantastic attitude that I started with before these circumstances crossed my path. I will do this because it is MY attitude. No one else owns my attitude. No other circumstances own my attitude. I own my attitude. There's no one that can take it, steal it or influence it. It is mine and I refuse to give control of my attitude over to anyone or any circumstances.

Now here is where being able to recognize where your attitude is and doing something about it can separate you from the crowd. Discipline yourself to do the following. When things are going down hill fast, actually ratchet

your attitude up and make your attitude even better. Keep in mind that anyone can have a great attitude when things are going great. Anyone can have a bad attitude when things are going bad. But it takes the true winner to have a really fantastic attitude when things aren't going great.

One of the things I've trained myself to do when things are going badly, is push that default button down inside of me that puts me in protection mode. My personal default switch sends the following message. These circumstances are not going to steal my attitude, and I am about to ratchet my attitude up several notches because this is a moment to create even greater separation between me and the rest of the world. I can separate myself from those who allow circumstances and other people to dictate the quality of their attitude.

Defaulting to a better attitude in tough times creates better times. It's amazing how attitude precedes results. If you ever get to the point where you can develop that default switch within you, it will not only put you in a maintenance and protection mode but an enhancement mode when things don't go great. Once this mental muscle gets strong, you are on your way to whatever win you have in mind for your life.

“ Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so you shall become. Your vision is the promise of what you shall one day be; your ideal is the prophecy of what you shall at last unveil.”

James Allen

Chapter 4

The Importance of Having a Dream

Imagine waking up in the morning and realizing that you're just going through the motions. You don't have goals. You don't have a dream. You don't have something deep inside that drives your soul and contributes to the story of your life. I can't begin to imagine that state of being. I have been a blessed man to have lived the vast majority of my life in the passionate pursuit of a dream. I know in my soul that having a dream creates a perspective. It creates a focus. It creates a foundation for all behavior. But most importantly, it creates an anchor for your attitude. If you don't have a dream—a higher expectation that tomorrow is going to be a better day than today and that you're going to be accomplishing things with the actions you're taking today—then really all you are doing is going through the motions.

On the other hand, if you have something you are aiming for, you won't just roll out of bed, you will jump out of bed. You will naturally exude enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is the natural consequence of an expectation of greater things to come, especially when the accomplishment of those things is emotionally tied to your heart. When your day's activities are driven by a dream you are passionate about accomplishing, you bring a totally different person to life. If you know that today is a "purpose-driven day" and that your actions today all have meaning, it will dramatically affect the attitude you bring to life.

One of the biggest reasons kids get bored and do stupid things that get them in trouble is they are not taking on the day as though today's actions mean anything. It is the same thing with adults. The adults who change the world are not those who are merely going through the motions. The world has been changed one person at a time, one dream at a time. The progress of human kind has been the result of human beings who have realized a dream bigger than their personal today. A dream gives you hope in the future. When a human being has hope in the future, it gives them enormous power in the present.

One of my goals in life is to have people describe me this way: "This guy's got a phenomenal attitude. It doesn't matter whether times are good or bad. It doesn't matter if things are going great or poorly. It doesn't matter, his attitude is always phenomenal and I love being around him because his attitude is just so great."

I will tell you that one of the reasons I have always had a great attitude

is that I wake up in the morning and I have dreams on my horizon. There are things that I want to accomplish. And everything I want to do requires that I bring a spectacular attitude to life. So if I were to ask you, "What's your obsession... your dream? What are you doing today that stretches you as a human being?" What would your answer be? If you don't have a ready answer to that question, you need to take some time to define what it is you want out of life. Because when you take the time to define where you're going, it gives purpose to every single step that you take every single day. And when you're living a life expecting greater things than today, it's almost a natural consequence that you end up with a great attitude that will not only propel you, but will impact everyone around you.

Attitude separates you from the rest of the crowd. To get better results than the crowd, you must do everything you can to separate yourself from those who haven't yet tapped into the power of a dream.

“ Just remember all...that words are powerful, so very powerful, that they can change attitudes (for the better or for the worse), with or without provocation. They can be triggers, reminders, movers, and emotives... Be kind with your words and listen to positive messages in things that we have in common... Communication in the ways that make a positive impact and even possibly profitable (new friendships, good feelings, etc.) for all parties, is the key.”

Anonymous

Chapter 5

The Power of Language

Language is so incredibly powerful. It actually sends a message to the rest of the world about who you are. It defines you to others and it subtly defines you to yourself. The truth of the matter is what comes out of your mouth is always the perfect reflection of what is in your heart at that moment.

This human interaction tool is so powerful that it has the ability to affect the self-image of people with whom you interact. It is so powerful that it has the ability to define the degree to which someone believes in himself or herself and thus, who they become. It is so powerful that it has the ability to leave scars that last longer than the cut of a knife. It is so powerful that it can create or destroy life-long relationships. It is so powerful that it can impact generations of human beings. What a magnificent human interaction tool, yet so few of us take the time to understand, or even pay the slightest attention to, its power and lasting reach.

I cannot encourage you enough to pay close attention to the language that comes from your mouth. Imagine that I could record every word that you say tomorrow... without you knowing that you were being recorded. Imagine further that you and I had the opportunity to listen to that recording at a later date. Would you be proud of the language that you used? Would your language reflect a positive attitude? Would your language tell the world that you are an optimistic person? Would your language be uplifting to other people? Would your language give you away as a person with dreams and goals and a higher expectation of great events happening in your future? Would the recorded language of your day reflect well on you as a person? You have the power to impact people's lives in an incredibly positive way. Are you using this magnificent human interaction tool as a gift or as a weapon? How many great people were birthed from the language of expectation from someone else... an expression of belief from another human being? How many potentially great people were robbed as a youth of the full extent of their human potential by someone who used the gift of language as a weapon instead of a gift?

Remember too, your subconscious records everything that you say to others and all that you say to yourself. As powerful as the gift of language is as a tool to communicate with others, its power is magnified by the effect that it has on you. The subtle voice of your heart is reflected by the way you talk to yourself. Are your inner conversations uplifting? What if I could hear what you

say to yourself... your self-talk? Are you using your inner language as a gift or as a tool for destruction of your self-image?

It is a shame that your ability to communicate does not come with a surgeon general's warning. If it did, it might read something like this...

Warning! The use of the human empowerment tool called language can be hazardous to the mental and perhaps physical health of those who come into contact with any person who does not understand the power and lasting effects of the words they use. It is recommended you stay away from persons who demonstrate their lack of training or sensitivity to this incredible human interaction tool.

“ To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.”

Anatole France

Chapter 6

The Power of Belief

Do you completely believe in yourself? Belief is one of the primary foundations for success. Belief in yourself creates commitment and separates you from the rest of the crowd, because commitment is something most people avoid. Belief in yourself will dictate the degree of effort and the longevity of effort that you are willing to invest into any project. Belief in yourself will draw terrific people to you in any venture that you choose. Belief in yourself transcends difficulties, challenges, setbacks and delays in the accomplishment of your goals. Belief in yourself creates an unconscious swagger that makes you glow as you go through life. People will want to follow you if you believe in yourself.

The best kind of self-belief is tempered by humility and a sincere gratitude for the blessings of life. We have all seen people whose self-belief has become an obnoxious part of their personality. These “special” people genuinely think that they alone are responsible for their high degree of self-belief. These people could appropriately wear t-shirts with the words “I am great. Just ask me.” Those with true humility and a high degree of self-belief wear that belief with a gracious ease that tells people that they know they are blessed. They recognize that their self-belief has come from a long series of successes, failures, and relationships that have combined into their history. These people have an attitude of gratitude regarding their state of self-belief.

The true state of the universe is that everyone should believe in their unlimited potential to make the desires of their heart come true. You, and every other person alive, are a unique creation of an omnipotent God who placed within you seeds of greatness. These seeds give you the ability to achieve anything that your heart and mind conspire to achieve. Human beings were created with the awesome ability to choose to believe in the potential that was placed within them. Because they are human, most people need to create a record of small accomplishments to build the degree of belief that is actually theirs as a birthright.

Belief based on self-history may certainly create a self-belief substantial enough to accomplish great things in life. However, when one combines self-history with the fertilizer of encouragement, belief in others, and an absolute confidence that the desires of your heart are yours to claim because of your place in God’s universe, it makes you unstoppable.

Every time that you take on a task, regardless of its magnitude, it should never be a matter of if; it should always be a matter of when. Know your place

in the universe. Know your birthright to greatness. I cannot begin to tell you how good it feels to know that the desires of my heart are within my reach if I am willing to become what I need to become to achieve what I desire. Remember that becoming always precedes accomplishment. Take on any task with the complete belief that you can accomplish it, and that you will give such a massive effort that failure does not stand a chance.

You can become unstoppable in your life. You can marshal the forces of your life into a level of belief that makes you a juggernaut in the pursuit of your dreams and goals. It is all about believing who you are and taking action on your belief.

“ It is a mistake to suppose that men succeed through success; they much oftener succeed through failures. Precept, study, advice, and example could never have taught them so well as failure has done.”

Samuel Smiles

Chapter 7

The Power of Failure in Your Life

There's a classic scene in the timeless movie "It's a Wonderful Life" with Jimmy Stewart. Two angels are discussing the urgent mission to visit earth and to help poor George Bailey. "What's wrong?" the first angel asked, "is he sick?" The second angel replied, "No, its worse than that...he's discouraged." George saw his life as a failure, largely due to the combination of circumstances that conspired to keep him from realizing his boyhood dream of traveling the world. Setbacks will happen and they are painful. Believe me, I know. Setbacks are incorporated into the laws of the universe. Therefore, rather than viewing failure as a deadly enemy that destroys your dreams, you must learn to change your perspective.

Teach yourself to see failure as an important ally, which increases your knowledge and builds your internal fortitude. Indeed, failure has tremendous value. This is a good time to tell you about John, a close friend of mine and an accomplished trial lawyer. He took the Law School Admission Test, better known as the LSAT, and failed. He didn't fail it once. He failed it four times! Most people would have given up after the third or fourth attempt to pass the test, but not him. He went on to take the test a fifth time and passed. John went on to finish school and won the coveted title of National Trial Competition Champion of the United States. Imagine that, from failure to National Champion! Bottom line is that his failure experience was a forced multiplier for him. Failure brought out the best in him and prepared him to succeed not only on the test and in the competition, but in many other areas of his life. Learning from failure taught him how to win and it will do the same thing for you, if you learn how to harness the power of failure. People who achieve great things are not afraid to fail. This is because they recognize that failure is an excellent teacher when it is viewed through the eyes of a winner. As children we fall down countless times learning to walk. Today we walk around all over the place without giving the task a conscious thought.

Thomas Edison failed more than a thousand times before he invented the working light bulb. Today he is remembered as a great inventor, not a great failure. Babe Ruth struck out more than a thousand times, and yet he is called the Sultan of Swat to this day, not the Wizard of Whiff. I'm convinced that neither Edison nor Ruth was some type of freak possessing some vastly superior mental or physical ability that separated them from all other mortals. What does set winners apart from the average individual is

they treat failure as an event, not a destiny. All successful achievers know that a crucial key to moving on towards victory is being willing to face down failure along the way. If we learn to see failure as a signpost that points us towards success, we understand that giving ourselves freedom to fail creates the opportunities for the big wins. It's obvious that you have experienced your own failures and lived to tell about it. More importantly you've learned from them and you've used them to add to your knowledge base.

There are several things that you can do to turn your discouragement into determination. First, make time to study the attitudes and actions of those who have earned great victories in the world. Read the biographies of men and women who have overcome adversity and gone on to great success. The more you see how other people experienced similar struggles in their early years, the more you will reinforce your determination to push past setbacks or failures that you are experiencing.

Second, you will turn discouragement associated with failure into determination when you create written values, a mission statement and a vision statement, which spell out who you are and what you want your life to become. When setbacks have left you momentarily disheartened, pull out your written statements, and remind yourself of whom you are and of the emotionally compelling vision you are working to achieve. This will help you refocus on your ultimate destination and reconnect with your passion. You will note that we have included a Life Achievement Plan worksheet in the back of this book.

Third, you will turn discouragement into determination by developing a method that enables you to put things into perspective at will. Whether you take a drive with the top down, listen to soothing music, go for a walk or engage in strenuous exercise, you should create a life mechanism that offers you a way to return your thought process to a place where mental clarity and confidence in your vision are restored and reinforced.

And finally, and most importantly, you will turn discouragement having to do with failure into great triumphs by developing the right attitude towards failure. When I made a living as a trial lawyer I didn't lose very often, but it did happen occasionally. For me, victory typically leads to celebration. A loss occasioned a careful moment-by-moment examination of how I prepared for the case and how I actually litigated it. I painstakingly sought to identify what I had done wrong so that when I faced similar circumstances in the future, I would be more effective. I always learned more from a failure than a victory. I always entered the courtroom to try the next case with an extra measure of confidence because the lessons failure had taught me made me that much more effective and skillful. If you allow your

mistakes to stop you from moving forward, you've allowed failure to have the victory. Why in the world would you give the potential of failure or failure itself that much power over your destiny? Don't do it. Harness the power of failure and continue to pursue your dream.

“ The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it. ”

William James

Chapter 8

Writing the History of Your Life Day by Day

Most people never pay enough attention to the events of their life to realize they are in a constant state of writing the history of who they are. Living in our fast-paced world rarely gives us pause to consider the fact that our lives are being recorded by the memory of dozens, if not hundreds, or perhaps even thousands of people every day.

Imagine that you knew that the world was watching. Imagine that you knew that you were being assessed against a list of issues to see how you measured up everyday. Remember the chapter that addressed how you improve what you measure?

Let's accomplish two important things in this chapter. Let's get you to understand that, like it or not, you are being assessed every day by many people as you write the history of your life. Second, and very importantly, your subconscious is making a continuous assessment of how much you like and respect yourself. This continuous assessment by your subconscious of the history of your life leads to the creation, good or bad, of your self-image. Your self-image is the most determinative influence on your attitude. Because the quality of your attitude will determine the quality of your life, it is probably a great moment in time to start writing some terrific chapters in your life's book.

Here is a short list of issues that you and other people are measuring as you write your life's history. I encourage you to review this list every day for a month to deepen your sensitivity to these issues. The more acutely aware you are of the issues that you are being measured by, the more you will pay attention to them in your actions.

How do you deal with problems? Do you dwell on the problems of life or are you a solution-oriented thinker? The most successful people in life are in a constant state of focusing on the solution and not the problem. Do problems cause you to lose enthusiasm in the journey? Successful people use problems as great moments of opportunity to stand out from the crowd.

How do you deal with adversity? Do you run from adversity and view it as an enemy? The most successful people view adversity as a friend. They view adversity as a time to accelerate the growth that they must experience to move on to the next level. They realize it gives them the ability to increase their self-image by dealing with adversity in a way that would be opposite of how the average person deals with adversity. They view it as an opportunity to shine.

What is the quality of your attitude? Is your attitude dictated by circumstances and other people? The most successful people in life refuse to

let circumstances and other people steal their attitude. The more other people or circumstances try to steal their attitude, the more successful people steel their attitude. The most successful people view their attitude as an incredibly valuable asset that deserves protection and attention. These people know they could lose all their material wealth and yet gain it all back ten times over if they have the right attitude in life.

What is the longevity of your effort? Do you grow impatient and give up on your vision quests or do you see each and every task through to completion and victory? Most people lose steam along the way to a victory. Because we live in an I-deserve-it-right-now society, average people look for quick results or they lose interest. The most successful people understand that success is a process. They understand that many of the people who have “suddenly” become “overnight” successes took twenty years of struggle to get there. They also understand that it is more important to measure what you become in the accomplishment of a task than it is to measure what you accomplished.

What is the degree of your honesty? Is your degree of honesty worth sacrificing money in the moment? The average person learns how to “justify” and “rationalize” moments of dishonesty that occur along life’s continuum. The most successful people live and die by total integrity. They will cost themselves a lot of money in their lives to do the right and honest thing, with no thought of ever recovering the money. The money isn’t important. It is the ability to look in the mirror and know that when the choice was theirs, they chose complete and total honesty. Regardless of the financial ramifications. These people are driven by values, not dollars. They are able to go through life feeling good about who is in the mirror.

What is the depth of your character? Is the depth of your character dependent on how tough the issues or tasks are before you, or is it consistent in all of life’s situations? Here is an absolute fact. True character always shows itself over time. People can change behavior temporarily. True character is consistent through all circumstances. Successful people view their most significant asset as the balance in their character account not their bank account. It just so happens that it is not unusual for people with high character to also have a significant bank account.

What is your willingness to passionately pursue your dreams? Do you live life in the guarded pursuit of safe harbor or do you actively engage in the passionate pursuit of your dreams? If the safe harbor is your answer, there is a substantial likelihood that if you were to turn around, you won’t find many people following you. People follow people of passion. The progress of human kind has resulted from someone having a dream that they could not live

without accomplishing. As you drive down the road tomorrow realize that every car, every house, every office building, every development, and every airplane began as a dream in someone's head. Few persons impact the human race as much as persons who are willing to risk it all in the passionate pursuit of a dream that ignites the power of the heart. Remember, you are writing the history of your life with your actions everyday of your life.

What is your vision? Are you a person who has vision and are you the type of person who takes action on your vision? Average people fall into one of two categories regarding vision. Either they live life in a short sighted manner, or if they do have a vision, they never take action on it. The most successful people are inevitably described by their peers as visionaries. They see how things could be. They harness the power of their imagination and apply it to areas of their passion to change the world one project at a time. Think about a great person you admire. Would you describe them as a visionary? Do they take action on their visions?

What is your willingness to celebrate the success of others? Are you the type of person who is unable to celebrate another's success if they gained success beyond yours? Many people will write a personal history that reflects jealousy regarding their contemporary's success. I would hope that your personal history reflects a self-confidence that allows you to celebrate other's successes even if they are more significant than yours. Successful people are patient in their quests and know in their heart that their time will come. This inner peace gives them the ability to be genuine in the success of others regardless of the timing or the magnitude.

What is the degree of your humility? Are you your biggest fan? Average people have to lift themselves up in lieu of others to feel successful. These people grab the spotlight anytime they can because they know the moment may never come again. The most successful people in life live a life underscored by an attitude of humility. When there is blame, they take it. When there is credit, they always pass it on to someone else. Humility is an outward reflection of the inner knowledge that your accomplishments reflect the blessings of God and your committed efforts.

Whereas these measurements are only a start, now you can reflect on how the history of your life is unfolding one day at a time.

“ Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

Thomas Edison

Chapter 9

Quitting is Never an Option

If you are a person who wants to win in every aspect of your life, the concept of quitting must be dismissed from your conscious mind. I have previously mentioned that you must achieve separation from the masses if you are going to get better results than the masses. Life's reality tells us that the masses have perfected the art of quitting. People quit school, they quit jobs, they quit marriages, and they quit exercising. Quitting is a human epidemic. The reason is quitting is easy. People, by their nature, quit things when they get tough.

As I approach any project, I make a conscious decision that quitting is not an option. Are you willing to make that decision? I cannot conceive what it would be like to face myself in the mirror knowing that I had quit. Can you imagine going through life with a voice inside of you crying out that it knows you are a quitter? What a terrible thing to think of someone else. What an unimaginable thing to go through life believing about yourself. We've all heard the story of the great orator, Winston Churchill, giving a graduation speech shortly after the allies had defeated Hitler. Churchill's entire speech is said to have consisted of six words. "Never, never, never, never give up." Churchill's statement is incredibly profound and undeniably true. Quitting is not an option if you are going to win in life. The very thought of quitting is repulsive to me. Quitting is a disease that will grow if it finds a host to live in. Kill me and drain all the blood out of me. Then maybe I'll quit. Short of that, if I still have a pulse, there is still the possibility of a win and I refuse to quit. I can assure you that virtually every day of your life you'll hear an inner voice encouraging you to quit something. Quitting always represents the easy road, the path of least resistance. The path of least resistance leads to a lack of belief in yourself and your ability to accomplish what you have conceived in your mind and tied to your heart. The path of least resistance leads to doubt and disappointment. It is the path that ultimately leads to failure. The path of least resistance destroys any potential for character because it steers clear of those events that must occur in your life if you are ever to test your metal, toughen your character, and temper your resolve. Each time you embrace challenge and don't quit, you will become more and more disdainful of the path of least resistance. You will be too busy blazing the trail to your greatest potential to even think about quitting.

Imagine for a moment what kind of place America would be if Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had quit. Don't you know he faced moments when

he felt that he was making absolutely no progress in his quest for racial equality? Do you suppose there were times when he was tempted to forget about excellence and reset his personal default on average?

What about the engineers who worked for NASA in the early days of the space race? With the threat of communism looming, the possibility of losing the battle for technology staring them in the face, and rocket after rocket failing, falling back to earth, they persisted. What would the world be like today if they had quit? The pages of history are packed with tales of great victories that were won by those who refused to quit and the tragedy of the unfulfilled potential of those who gave in and gave up. Quitting is about one thing and one thing only, the depth of one's character. Quitting is simply not an alternative in my life.

One of the greatest gifts you can give yourself is the promise not to quit. Making the promise is one thing. Fulfilling the promise is entirely another. You see, quitting is easy. It creates that immediate gratification. Quitting does not call on you to dig deep within yourself to test your measure or your character. Decide right now... Quitting is not now, nor will it ever be, an option!

“ Everything can be taken from a man
but... the last of the human freedoms – to
choose one’s attitude in any given set of
circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”

Viktor Frankl

Chapter 10

Attitude Trumps Circumstances

To have an incredible life it is vitally important for you to gain a full understanding of the power of your attitude and how it can completely determine the quality of your life.

Recently, the human race lost an incredible hero named Christopher Reeve. Most of you know his story. Christopher Reeve was an amazing success story. He had reached superstar status in Hollywood. Good looking, vibrant, great family, incredible career, blessed with talent...he was superman. He had actually landed and successfully played the role of Superman among the plethora of movie roles in his career. In fact, Superman was a fairly accurate way to describe Christopher Reeve until an accident in which he was thrown from a horse.

This accident left him completely paralyzed. The only parts of his body that he could voluntarily control were his eyes, his mouth, and his mind. Can you for a moment begin to imagine the mental state of mind that someone goes into when they transition from Superman to quadriplegic without a moment's notice? Can you imagine doctors telling you your spine is severed and there is no hope of ever being more than a dormant body imprisoned by permanent paralysis? Do you ever wonder how you would respond to these circumstances?

If you ever had the honor of watching an interview with this remarkable man subsequent to the accident, you would be less than human if you were not brought to tears by the inspiring attitude that he responded to these circumstances with. Not only did he have a positive attitude, he had an optimistic attitude. He was talking about having more children, making more movies, raising money to research spinal cord injuries. This remarkable human being taught us an incredible lesson regarding the power of attitude in the years that he survived after his accident. The lesson is that attitude is such a powerful force it can totally trump the circumstances of life.

There is not a soul in the world who would blame this guy if he felt a bit sorry for himself. Not only did he not feel sorry for himself, he viewed his circumstances as a temporary state despite the diagnosis of the best physicians. If you ever had an opportunity to hear his physicians interviewed, they were always careful not to give false hope because the injury was so severe. Christopher Reeve, Superman, did not care what they had to say.

There is little doubt in my mind that there was a moment when this incredible human being had a conversation with himself that centered on the

attitude he was going to bring to life, despite his accident. That conversation had to address the fact that besides his loving family and supportive friends, his greatest asset that he had left was his attitude. I know in my heart that he either knew at that moment or concluded through reason that his attitude could literally define the quality of the rest of his life. He made a remarkable choice...he chose a phenomenal attitude as the brand of his life.

If you look closely, you will see people, perhaps not as high profile as Christopher Reeve, whose attitude quite simply trumps the circumstances in life. People, regardless of their circumstances, have a choice when it comes to their attitude. Tomorrow, you have a choice regarding the quality of the attitude that you bring to life. I implore you to remind yourself everyday that the right attitude can trump any circumstances that life brings your way. Remember, the quality of your attitude will determine the quality of your life. If you doubt it for a moment, think of our friend and hero to the human race, Christopher Reeve. Thanks for your example, Superman!

“ My will shall shape the future. Whether I fail or succeed shall be no man’s doing but my own. I am the force; I can clear any obstacle before me or I can be lost in the maze. My choice; my responsibility; win or lose, only I hold the key to my own destiny.”

Elaine Maxwell

Chapter 11

The Power of Focus

The difference between persons who WANT to accomplish great things and people who DO accomplish great things many times comes down to FOCUS.

I sincerely believe that all people are capable of accomplishing great things. In fact, a close look at human history will reveal that average people have accomplished the greatest feats of human kind. These people shared the burning desire to accomplish a dream, goal, or desire. Every human being has within them the ability to accomplish great things because of their ability to learn, improve, emulate, and change. Many people arguably work hard enough to accomplish great things. Yet, hard work and good intentions will always fall by the wayside due to frustration and disappointment if a person does not have the appropriate focus.

There is a huge difference between being busy and having focus on the things that must be accomplished for you to reach your goals and dreams. Focus is only effective when it is part of a strategic plan that has a beginning, middle, and end. It amazes me that the average person spends more time planning their vacation than they do creating a strategic plan and delineating the accomplishments that will mark their life. This is one of the reasons we have included a Life Achievement Plan in the back of this book. My hope is that you will review the life lessons within this book on a regular basis and that you will create, with great specificity, a strategic plan that defines the purpose of your focus... and then review it multiple times each week!

When you focus on key issues specific to your dreams, you make significantly greater progress. Significant progress towards heartfelt goals acts like gasoline on the fire we call your Attitude. Think about it. If you have something in your heart you want so badly you feel as though you will not be complete as a human being unless you accomplish it, and you make progress on the accomplishment of that something everyday... doesn't that give significance to the tasks of the day? Doesn't that change the dynamics of how you show up, the attitude that you bring to life, and the focus that you are willing to commit?

The proper creation of a strategic plan for your life will create milestones that you must reach on the way to your accomplishments. The plan will detail a well thought out task list of things that you need to do to make your dreams, goals, or ambitions a reality. When you are truly focused is when you are able to assess the activity of the day in light of the following question.

Is this activity creating progress towards the accomplishment of your heartfelt dreams, goals, and desires? If it is... great! If it is not, then that task represents the proverbial "leg of the stool" of a lion tamer. A lion tamer uses the four legs of the stool to paralyze the lion's activity. The lion can't focus on all four legs, so it becomes dormant. Living life without focus on the issues that will progress you towards your dreams can have the same effect as the legs of the stool.

Remember, when you define where you are going it should give meaning to the next task that you perform. I encourage you to keep a log of the activities of your day to see what percentage actually create progress, and which ones simply waste your time.

“ Opportunity is missed by most because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work. ”

Thomas Alva Edison

Chapter 12

Accomplish Five Things Per Day

My friend told me a wonderful story about an old, retired Marine colonel who gave a presentation at his Junior College. The Colonel announced that he was going to teach on the secret for success. This got the attention of the class.

He went on to explain the following principle for success. “When you wake in the morning,” he crowed, “make a list of things you have to do for that day. Reshuffle the list and prioritize those things that you want to do least and do them first. If you take on the tasks of your day in this fashion, you will eliminate those things that you do not want to do first, making the things that you DO want to do easy tasks in your day. If you take on this life strategy, then you will never procrastinate, and if you never procrastinate, you will get much more done than the average person will. This high degree of productivity will lead to your massive success.”

This one class had a life changing effect on my friend. This created a life habit that made a huge difference in the level of his accomplishments. The principle is sound, and will work for anyone. If you put this principle into practice it will make a difference in the level of YOUR accomplishments.

I have combined this principle with one additional rule to create a foundation for a higher level of productivity. Each day when I sit at my desk, I make a prioritized list of at least five things that I will accomplish that day. If it takes me to midnight that evening, I will accomplish the five items that I have identified everyday. The power in accomplishing at least five things each day that move you towards your goals, dreams, and ambitions is the effect of this principle over time.

When you multiply five accomplishments per day that will move you towards your goals, dreams, or ambitions times five days in a week, or twenty days in a month, or 240 days in a year, or 2400 days in a decade... it becomes staggering what you will accomplish over time. The journey of one thousand miles starts with the first three feet. If you add three feet enough times, it will equate to 1000 miles.

Do not be concerned with racing to goals and dreams. Be concerned with making progress on goals and dreams. At the end of the journey, you

will realize that what you became on the way to your accomplishments will become your greatest asset. Becoming takes time. Get there ve accomplishments at a time, and enjoy the view on the way.

“ You cannot dream yourself into a character;
you must hammer and forge yourself one. ”

James A. Froude

Chapter 13

The Power of Self-Discipline

Self-discipline holds the potential of being one of your greatest assets. It holds the potential of being the great divider between you and your competition. It holds the potential to make the difference in your life in literally every single area. Your willingness to apply self-discipline to your life will separate you from the average person as clearly as the difference between a great attitude and a terrible attitude.

This is one of those areas in life where you have the ability to choose which side of the line you are on: the side that exercises self-discipline, or the side that exercises immediate gratification. Which side of the line that you choose will have a direct impact on the quality of your life and your achievements. This is an area of life where you have total control over the person you become.

Self-discipline is your choice to deny yourself pleasure in the moment in trade for a better moment sometime in the future. Inherent in the concept of self-discipline is a willingness to opt for delayed gratification versus instant gratification. It is a willingness to listen to your inner voice that demands excellence instead of average.

You will have a higher degree of satisfaction in your life, and will accomplish much more as a human being if you learn to discipline your decisions and seek a long-term perspective on the issues of today. In other words, as you make decisions, you must put yourself in the position to consider the long-term consequences of that decision multiplied many times over.

Your ability to exercise self-discipline is dramatically increased if you have goals in your life. If you have a goal to be in shape, if you have goal to be respected by your peers, if you have a goal to have personal excellence in your business or in your personal life, the goals put the immediate decision in an entirely different framework. Having a goal gives purpose to each decision that is related to your goal. If a decision has no anchor, like a goal or a dream, there is no purpose in the moment other than that enemy of success called instant gratification.

One of the tough things about the application of self-discipline is that on the other side is immediate gratification. The long-term results of a decision, whether you choose self-discipline or immediate gratification, don't necessarily show right away. Thus, the voice of immediate gratification can be very convincing in the moment.

Why is the exercise of self-discipline tough for the average person? It

is very simple. It's that constant voice inside of everyone that wants life to be easy and opts for pleasure. It's a default. It's like a default on your computer. Every human being has the same default setting that is part of your genetic makeup. What makes self-discipline tough is that you have to create a voice in your head that competes with and can overcome your desire for immediate gratification. With this voice, you have to DECIDE to throw the switch to activate its powers. It will not go on automatically because it is not within your genetics to avoid pleasure in the moment. This simple mental exercise is a habit to those persons who exercise great self-discipline. They feel the genetic call for pleasure in the moment; however, they have the ability to pause and to make a determination as to the effect of that decision on their goals.

One of the greatest ways to bring a remarkable attitude to life is to develop a great self-image. There are few ways to create a great self-image more powerful than the consistent application of self-discipline to your life. The long-term application of self-discipline is a constant reminder to yourself that you are not a self-indulgent person. The long-term application of self-discipline in your life will create a personal pride that will allow you to look in the mirror and be proud of the person you see.

Give yourself the gift of self-discipline.

“ To put the world right in order, we must
rst put the nation in order; to put the
nation in order, we must rst put the family
in order; to put the family in order, we must
rst cultivate our personal life; we must set
our hearts right. ”

Confucius

Chapter 14

You are a Center of Influence

The rapid pace of life rarely allows for moments of pause. I am hopeful that this chapter causes a moment of pause because I am about to make you aware of a heavy responsibility that you have as a member of the human race. Now, I know that some of you say to yourself, no thanks... I already have plenty. Well, this responsibility is already yours. It is only a matter of whether you are going to claim it and live up to its demands.

You are a center of influence. People are watching you. People are watching the attitude that you bring to life, the responsibility that you take, the integrity that you exhibit, and the degree to which you are chasing dreams and the depth of your character. Truth be known, you are being watched by more people than you can count making you a center of influence. I can already hear you saying... no way. Not me. Yes, you, day in and day out, are influencing the behavior, the expectation levels, and the attitudes of dozens or hundreds, even thousands of people by your actions.

It starts with your family. You have or will have a partner. You may have children. You have or have had parents, siblings, and an extended family. They watch you everyday. Your immediate family is on a continuum that results in them seeing your attitudes and behavior through your life's experiences. They are clearly influenced by the way you respond or react to life's circumstances. As a human being in relationships, others are not only watching, they are learning from your attitudes and behaviors. In the introduction, I noted that I have been blessed with parents who were constantly encouraging big dreams and the belief that whatever I thought was possible was possible. Have you ever heard of someone doubting their abilities because their childhood was spent within the influence of someone who was full of negative thoughts and actions? A person who convinced them at a young age that they were not worthy of success and were not going to amount to anything of significance?

I awaken everyday knowing that I am being watched each day by my family. I accept, with pride, the responsibility of being a center of influence with these people who are so dear to my heart. However, I clearly recognize that the responsibility as a center of influence goes much further in my life. I know that living life is like going through a giant mall. Have you ever waited for someone in a mall while he or she was shopping? What did you do? You watched people. What do you do while you are waiting for an airplane? You watch people. There are so many people watching you right now in your life,

you would be amazed if you truly knew the number. Your work contemporaries, church associates, friends, business relationships... they are all watching you as a center of influence.

Once you understand that responsibilities accompany your trek through life, and realize that you are a center of influence, it makes you pay greater attention to the attitudes and actions that you bring to everyday life. I wake up realizing I have been given the gift of influence, whether I like it or not. People are watching my life. My life is a learning laboratory for anyone who cares to observe. Once the dust settles and your physical body is gone, what will you have left as a benefit to the human race?

Do not bring an average attitude to your life. Bring a world-class attitude to display to your world. You never know who is watching.

“ To succeed, we must first believe that we
can. ”

Michael Korda

Chapter 15

Goodbye to the Word “Try”

People who create great success in their lives remove words that express equivocation about the likelihood of their eventual success. If you are ever in a conversation with me and I hear you use the word TRY, I will stop you in mid-sentence and encourage you to remove completely that word from your vocabulary. TRY means there is the potential for failure. When you use the word TRY, you send an unconscious message to your brain and heart that you believe that you may fail.

There is a famous scene in the Star Wars movie where young Luke Skywalker is in his training to become a Jedi Master. Using his mental powers, he wills his spaceship half way out of the swamp prior to losing concentration and seeing the ship sink back into the muck of the swamp. Taken aback by Master Yoda’s frustration with him, Luke cries out to Yoda, “But I tried!” The wise Yoda retorts with clear and great disdain for the word try and states, “There is no such thing as try... only DO.”

I implore you to fine yourself \$20 every time you use the word try. Your attitude needs to become an attitude where you know that when you decide to get something done, it gets done. Truly successful people develop an attitude that they are unstoppable. You cannot genuinely believe that you are unstoppable and take on a task that you are going to TRY. I meet many people that tell me they “tried” some form of business that did not work out for them. Their problem is they “tried” to be successful in that business venture. Allow me to swat the proverbial fly with the proverbial barn door just to really get the point across.

If your spouse or child was in the hospital and they needed a transfusion of blood to live and they could only be infused with your blood, would you TRY to get to the hospital? No way, you would get to the hospital. You would pull out all the stops, do whatever it took. You would make it happen. You would do anything and everything possible to get there. TRY would not be an option in this scenario. You would not TRY, you would DO!

To separate yourself from the crowd, it is critical that you act differently than the crowd. The crowd will TRY many things and then spend their lifetimes making excuses about why they did not accomplish this, that and the other. The most successful people dump words of equivocation that leave room for the possibility of failure, and they do not spend their breath making excuses. They realize that you can make excuses or you can make things

happen, but you cannot do both.

Another commonly used word of equivocation that you should dump is the word BUT. The word BUT emanating from your mouth puts a gigantic obstacle between you and a lifetime of wonderful achievements. BUT is a word of apology for not stepping up and getting something done. I could have... BUT. I would have BUT. I should have BUT. I will BUT. I would like to BUT. Do yourself and the people who are watching you a great big favor. Get your BUT out of the way.

Don't assassinate your potential through words that set up failure. Bring an attitude to life that recognizes the power of the language coming out of your mouth that originates in your heart. Don't become hung by your tongue!

“ High expectations are the key to
everything. ”

Sam Walton

Chapter 16

Who is Your CEO?

Every person has a CEO in their head and their heart. Your attitude will convey upon your CEO one of two job titles. Depending on your attitude, your CEO will be either your Chief Excuse Officer or your Chief Expectation Officer.

Most people make their CEO their Chief Excuse Officer. They spend their lives making excuses as to why they didn't take action on their dreams or why they didn't give a project a full "throw your heart over the bar" effort. The art of justification is a collateral skill-set for people who make excuses. It is the art of convincing oneself that the lack of accomplishment was for the best. Excuses are as common as the air that we breathe. The number of people who are willing to accept excuses from others is equally as large because they have spent the majority of their lives making excuses to themselves.

Have a clear rule in your life. Refuse to empower your CEO with the title of Chief Excuse Officer. That title should not exist. Refuse to be average in areas of your life where you have a choice. This rule will allow you to hold other people to the same standard when it comes to excuses. You are not doing another human being a favor by wallowing with them in a cesspool of excuses. Give them a better place to spend their time and energies.

Make sure your CEO is your Chief Expectation Officer. Your CEO will invigorate your attitude and expect a win in everything that you do. Expect great things to happen and then "throw your heart over the bar" with every ounce of energy and passion that you can muster. If you take on a task expecting great results, you have now set your mind and heart in the right gear to gain great results. Your attitude creates the road to accomplishments. Depending on your expectation level you can make that road quicksand or concrete.

If you are a golf fan, you undoubtedly know who Tiger Woods is. If you follow Tiger, he always wears RED on the last day of a golf tournament. This is his personal victory color. Now, does he always win? No, however, he always shows up EXPECTING to win.

When you expect great things of yourself, you also expect great things from your associates. You will be amazed how people will live up or down to your expectations of them. When your expectations are high, and you combine that genuine expectation with positive reinforcement from your heart, you have an unstoppable combination of human dynamics.

Work on bringing an attitude to life that empowers a Chief Expectation Officer and leaves no room for a Chief Excuse Officer.

“ Each man is questioned by life; and he can only answer to life by answering for his own life; to life he can only respond by being responsible.”

Viktor Frankl

Chapter 17

The Difference Between Reacting and Responding

One of the key factors in maintaining and protecting your attitude is knowing the difference between reacting and responding. Most people react to the circumstances in life.

Reaction is a “knee jerk” to individuals or situations that a person cannot control. If you go through life in the reaction mode, you might as well give everyone in the world the combination to the lock box that contains your most prized asset, your attitude. Reaction does not call for a level of maturity in a person. Reaction does not call for a strategic response by a person. Reaction depends solely on emotion and is devoid of contemplation of the consequence of the moment or future moments. Reaction does not call on one’s character to deal with the issues of life. Reaction by its nature means that you are out of control.

A stark reality of life is that many people go from one crisis in life to another. Life is simply a series of events, both successes and challenges. It is not a matter of whether the challenges are coming; it is a matter of how you handle them.

Response contemplates a calm assessment of the circumstances and a measured response. It has a core of maturity and control. Rather than a “knee jerk” reaction, the concept of response is: taking a seat, having a glass of water and thinking about the circumstances that have caused the need for a response. There are times when no response is the correct response. One of the greatest lessons that a person can learn is to not react to anger, and to put a full day between the anger and expressing that anger. Anger is looking for immediate release. It can only be released with its full potential for damage through reaction. A careful response to feelings of anger will increase the likelihood that the situation will have a positive conclusion.

Reaction causes you to use words that you would never use if you had given careful thought to the circumstances. How many times in your life have you said something to another person in reaction to a situation, and then you felt terrible about it later? That later moment allowed a full assessment of the circumstances, which is the underlying principle of responding. Reaction inevitably causes regret.

Successful people work hard to develop a habit of careful response. Not only will this gain you the admiration of your peers as an unappable problem solver, you will protect your attitude from the challenges that you encounter.

“ Storms make trees take deeper roots.”

Dolly Parton

Chapter 18

The Root System of a Great Attitude

Have you ever seen a tree withstand terrific winds and continue to stand? Most trees of any significance have been wind tested more times than you could count. A tree can survive huge winds only if it has a deep, quality root system that anchors it during these tough times. Your Attitude is much like a tree in the sense that a great root system will allow you to withstand adversity and remain steadfast. There are ten “root systems” that will create an unwavering Attitude for you.

1. **Develop a Great Self Image** – When you have a great self-image the winds of life actually inspire you because you know you can withstand them and they will make you stronger. Challenges to a person with a great self-image become positive events and opportunities for personal growth.
2. **Practice Positive Self Talk** – Positive self-talk acts as a life raft for times when the winds of life are threatening to knock you over. Just as athletes can push themselves at the right moment when something gets in their souls and inspires them, a regimen of positive self-talk creates a moment of reinvigoration for your attitude. You should always be your own greatest cheerleader.
3. **Live Life with Enthusiasm** – Genuine enthusiasm always neutralizes the winds of life. An enthusiastic spirit will not allow you to weaken your attitude defenses for very long. Enthusiasm is tough to fake to yourself. You are either living life enthusiastically or you are not. If you live with enthusiasm, you have an extra layer of protection against a bad or depressed attitude.
4. **Express Passion in Your Pursuits** – Passion is another area that is impossible to fake to yourself. Living ALL of life with passion is a mental decision that only needs to be made once. Once the decision has been made, living life passionately should come as easily as breathing air. Passion demands that you throw your heart over the bar in your pursuits. When that becomes your standard, it is tough to leave your attitude behind. It all follows your heart.

5. Be a Visionary – By their nature, visionaries see beyond the circumstances or “winds” of the moment. Visionaries expect challenges along the way. Visionaries keep their eye on the prize and not the price. Heavy winds are just part of the journey. Visionaries welcome them as signs of progress.
6. Develop a Servant Spirit – When you serve other people or causes, challenges in life take on a completely different perspective. Your challenges become insignificant compared to the trials and struggles of others. Losing altitude in your attitude during trying times demonstrates that your focus is completely on the “winds” affecting you.
7. Develop a Deep Sense of Pride – Pride, combined with a heavy dose of humility, is a powerful force in your life. Self-pride is an important component of self-image. Personal pride will not allow you to be broken by the challenges of life. People with this “root” simply stiffen their back during tough times and maintain a great attitude.
8. Be Consistent – Consistency makes tough times pass quickly because people who are consistent in life have habits that protect against the catastrophic loss of attitude. Consistency creates an expectation that results and circumstances can be controlled by a methodical approach to life’s tasks and challenges.
9. Be in a Constant State of Improvement – If you are in a constant state of improvement, it is difficult to lose the altitude in your attitude because you are in a red up state of working on you. Self-development is like exercising a mental muscle that prevents the slide of your attitude.
10. Live Life with Integrity – When you live life with integrity, you can’t let your attitude disintegrate because you know that others are watching. Your integrity is on display and you are in a constant state of making sure that your attitude is as high as possible. Letting your attitude slide would be unthinkable because it would violate the standards you set for others to follow.

If you work on a “root system,” very few “winds” will ever threaten the quality or altitude of your attitude.

“ Success is dependent on effort. ”

Sophocles

Chapter 19

Longevity of Effort

Most people do not completely understand that success is not an event, it is a journey, and it is usually a long journey. Many people who have enormous potential for success never achieve it because they do not understand the concept of longevity of effort. With very few exceptions in life, success comes after a long period of diligent effort. In fact, if you expect to succeed and accomplish something great in life, get ready to buckle down and to do whatever you have to do for as long as it takes to get it done.

You have to plant in your heart an attitude that says, "I don't care how long this takes, it is not over until I win." In other words, you must ignore any measuring device in your head or heart that says, "Hey, this is taking too long." The only measuring device must be the one that goes off indicating that you have won.

I can give you example after example of people who appeared in the media seeming to have burst on to the scene as a success. Remember when Tiger Woods became a professional golfer, and within two years had become the number one player in the world and won four major tournaments in a row? Didn't it appear as though he had just burst on to the scene as a mega-success? The truth is that Tiger Woods spent a large portion of his childhood, teenage years and college career on the golf course or on the practice range. Tiger Woods had spent years in the gym doing two-hour workouts when others had given up on ever making it to the PGA tour. The guy worked for decades, sacrificing a normal childhood, to bring himself to the point where it looked as though he had burst on to the scene. He burst on to the scene all right... over a twenty-year period.

His quest now is to be recognized as the greatest golfer of all time. That person at this moment is Jack Nicklaus. Jack Nicklaus has won more major titles in golf than any other golfer in the history of the game. It will take Tiger decades to approach Jack's 18 major victories. I know in my heart that Tiger is not measuring the years. He "gets" the concept of longevity of effort. He is only measuring how many more wins he needs to surpass his hero. Any bets on whether he will pull it off?

Most people think they know the story of Bill Gates. Few really realize that he worked like a dog for years before several significant contracts helped turn his nearly bankrupt company into the wealthiest company in the world. Gates is famous for answering the door for one of his first dates with his wife and falling asleep standing in front of her. The guy worked his can off for as

long as it took to win. For Gates, it was not over until he won. Even now, he is still at it.

Success is not a gift. It is not a birth right. It is not an entitlement. Success is a precious prize to those who understand that there is a price to pay. Success takes longevity of effort. The effort must take place devoid of a measurement of time. You must be committed until you win. You have to have an attitude that says, "It's not over until I win!"

“ Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier ”

Colin Powell

Chapter 20

The Power of Optimism

Do you have an optimistic attitude? There is a difference between a good attitude and an optimistic attitude. Optimism is the foundation for a spectacular attitude. An optimistic attitude changes the lives of people because optimism tends to set the bar of expectation higher than it would be with a “realistic” attitude.

I recently watched the funeral of Ronald Reagan. Whether you agree with his politics or not, you have to admire the incredible optimism that underscored everything that this man did. In pictures of him throughout his life, it is obvious how incredible he thought life was in general and as a citizen of the United States. If there was one word to describe this great man, it would have to be optimistic.

As the funeral went on, and dignitaries from around the world commented on his life, each person described how President Reagan lived in a continuous state of high expectation. It was even mentioned that Reagan, and his optimistic attitude, was so powerful that he converted the attitude of the entire country. I lived through those times, and have a distinct memory of how the United States was at a less than optimistic point when he took over as President. His optimism was more than contagious, it was highly infectious. How could you not feel optimistic about our future and the future of the world as he confidently strode through his two term presidency?

Optimism creates a spirit that transcends behavior and interactions. Wouldn't it be great to have people describe your life as one that was lived with an attitude of continuous optimism? In good times or in bad times, make optimism your foundation for a spectacular attitude.

Winston Churchill is another example of a leader with a great attitude. His attitude literally kept his country alive as the Germans relentlessly bombed London and other industrial cities of Great Britain.

There is a wonderful story of a shopkeeper in London coming into work one day after a night of merciless bombing and finding the front window blown out of his shop. With an attitude that exuded optimism he hung out his sign that said... “open as usual.” The next day when he came in after yet another night of bombing the roof was now blown off his shop. His new sign read... “more open than usual.”

Optimism is not blind to circumstances. Optimism simply sees the positive, the good, the great, the best, and the benefit in everything. I encourage you to invest your life with an undying optimism in all things.

“ A noble person attracts noble people, and knows how to hold on to them. ”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Chapter 21

A Great Attitude Attracts Great People

A great measure of your attitude is the quality of people who follow you and enable you to accomplish your vision in life. If your dreams and goals are significant, you will have to assemble a team to make them happen. Even Tiger Woods, who appears to achieve great things by himself, has a team of people behind him. A team of people buying into your vision is a predicate to dream accomplishment, and you must find the best people available in all that you do. A great attitude attracts great people.

Your attitude is the most visible manifestation of you as a person. Your attitude conveys your degree of confidence in your vision, your energy level, your ability to deal with adversity, your degree of confidence in yourself and your degree of optimism for life in general. There are very few qualities so revealing as your attitude. The quality of the team that you develop in life will have everything to do with the quality of the attitude that you bring to life every day.

If you were going to invest your time in another person's dream and vision, would you even consider that journey if the person you were following had anything less than a stellar attitude? Of course not! Your attitude has the power to inspire others to reach their full potential and to achieve higher levels of excellence. In any restaurant or service oriented business, if the employees have great attitudes and exude happy and pleasant manners in their service, you have just seen the perfect reflection of their leader's attitude.

One of the greatest compliments that another human being can give to you is to dedicate time in their life to your vision and become inspired by the person you are. The person you are is a manifestation of the quality of attitude that you bring to life.

Those who accomplish the most and affect other lives in positive ways are those who develop the best teams of people. Remember, birds of a feather flock together. Work on an attitude that attracts the eagles of life instead of the pigeons. Your results in life will always be determined by the people you attract. The team that you attract will always be dependent on the attitude that you possess throughout your life.

The great people you want on your team will not invest their precious time in someone who has anything less than an inspirational attitude. People are watching your life's progress. Your attitude is on display right now, today. Become a magnet for great people by developing, maintaining and exhibiting a spectacular attitude that is worthy of following! The attitude that you bring to life is important. Make it great!

“ It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause, who at best knows achievement and who at the worst if he fails at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.”

Theodore Roosevelt

Chapter 22

Are You Playing Offense or Defense?

How many times have you seen this? One football team has simply rolled past the other team for three quarters of the game. The team that is behind has been struggling all day to accomplish even a few first downs. Then suddenly, unexpectedly, the momentum of the game shifts. The team that is doing so well changes their tactics. Instead of throwing on the first down and going into their no-huddle offense, the dominating team gets conservative and starts running the ball, passing less and obviously trying to protect the lead. In the blink of an eye, they appear far less effective in the execution of what appeared easy earlier in the game.

Suddenly, the losing team is scoring. They are getting breaks that they could not buy earlier in the game. Momentum has changed. The team that was being dominated begins dominating. The team who was struggling makes a miraculous comeback and wins the game. Sound familiar? We have all seen it happen. The team that was winning quit playing offense and switched entirely to playing defense.

There is a great life lesson in this sports analogy. The people who accomplish the most in life have learned to play offense rather than defense. That does not mean that they throw caution to the wind and negligently put themselves, their family and their finances at risk. What it means is that the most successful people are willing to take risks and leave the safe harbor of predictability. All progress made by human kind has been due to individuals willing to play offense instead of defense in life and take risks to accomplish dreams and goals.

Playing offense in life requires an entirely different mindset that becomes fertile ground for innovation and motivation. Taking risks is the only way to make significant progress in anything that you do. Think of the space race. How many times did NASA have to push the envelope of knowledge and experience? What if they had played defense instead of offense in the race for technology in the early 1960's? NASA did not abandon caution. They kept safety in mind each time they calculated the risks of taking their program to the next level.

Are you playing offense or defense in life? Playing offense in life is necessary for the accomplishment of dreams and goals. You will never go anywhere with your ship tied to the dock. The minute you untie and sail into the sea, you have shifted from defense to offense and have positioned yourself to get somewhere beyond where you were. You must be willing to accept the risk of failure if you are going to progress in life. Wouldn't you rather pursue your full potential?

“ If you are distressed by anything external,
the pain is not due to the thing itself, but
to your estimate of it; and this you have the
power to revoke at any moment. ”

Marcus Aurelius

Chapter 23

Create an Attitude Recovery System

Are there times in your life when your attitude is less than exemplary? If the answer is yes, then consider yourself a part of the human race. Temporarily losing a great attitude is as human as contracting a cold. It is not a matter of whether it is going to happen, it is a matter of when. You must establish an attitude recovery system to get the air back in your attitude balloon when it begins to deflate. What mechanisms can you use in your recovery system when your attitude is in distress?

Exercise is a wonderful attitude recovery system for many people. Vigorous exercise creates a number of triggers that allow you to put things in a proper perspective. The exertion of massive physical effort creates a tension release that is always a good first step in adjusting your attitude. Exercise also allows you to connect with a number of foundational principles that help create a great attitude in the first place. Because self-image is such an important building block of a great attitude, anything that you do that improves your self-image is like hooking up to an oxygen tank when you are gasping for air. Additionally, self-discipline fuels your self-image because so few people demonstrate self-discipline over time. Exercise depends on one's ability to demonstrate self-discipline. Anyone can exercise when they feel like doing so. You have to be truly connected to the concept of self-discipline to exercise when you don't feel like it.

Re-connecting to your dreams, goals and desires is another very effective way of rescuing your attitude. It is very important that the activity of each day is anchored to your dreams or goals. If there is no connection, it is natural for you to feel as though you are simply going through the motions of life and lose the passion that is the foundation for a spectacular attitude. There are times when pausing, taking a deep breath and refocusing on why you are doing something is an important mental exercise to reestablish your attitude.

Sometimes it is important just to disconnect with the issues that are causing the stress and compromising your attitude in the first place. There are times in your pursuit of excellence that you may reach the point of physical and mental exhaustion. At that point, walk away for a day or two. Take a walk on the beach with your partner or friends, indulge in your favorite hobby, or get some sleep. An occasional escape from the moment can be the best medicine.

As a human being living life, there will be times when your attitude becomes dramatically impaired. When that happens, know it is normal, decide

that it will only be momentary and rely on the mechanisms in your life to
re ll your attitude balloon. After all, the quality of your attitude always
determines the quality of your life. Therefore, work hard to create an
attitude rescue system.

Chapter 24

Find a Mission

Are you going through life on a mission? When you go through life simply pursuing a paycheck each month, or limiting your tasks to the mundane necessities of life, you will find it impossible to have a spectacular attitude. Serving a mission that is bigger than yourself is critical to the quality of your attitude.

When you really understand the principles of a great attitude, it will become clear that human beings are complicated creatures who yearn for satisfaction beyond monetary compensation in their human experience. Most of us would like to leave a legacy that affects human kind in a deeper way than simply having been a participant. Is there something inside of you that you are currently not pursuing with all of your passion? Are you using your talents to improve the world around you? Would you like your eulogy to say something more than you were very good at bringing home enough money, or you kept a very tidy house?

We all possess enormous potential to achieve great heights. Most people never get there because they are unwilling to take action and to leave the safe harbor of going through the motions of life. Spend ten minutes in the presence of a person who possesses, and is driven by, a mission in life. In that person, you will see an attitude that demonstrates the traits that we have discussed in these life lessons. In that person, you will see an attitude that survives exhaustion, the circumstances of life and attacks by other people. In that person, you will see a glow that reflects an optimistic heart and an expectation level that encompasses all areas of their life. In that person, you will see the power of deep-seeded meaning. In that person, you will see a human being who is truly alive.

I sincerely challenge you to determine a mission that will create this type of meaning in your life. I challenge you to challenge yourself. Find out what you are really made of and who you really are in this life. There is no feeling more satisfying than knowing that your days are spent in the passionate pursuit of living up to your full potential. I know, in my heart, that the human race will benefit from you throwing your heart over the bar to fully engage in your passions. The human race will reap the rewards of your spectacular attitude grounded in purpose.

I expect great things from you.

“ One needs something to believe in,
something for which one can have whole-
hearted enthusiasm. One needs to feel that
one's life has meaning, that one is needed
in the world.”

Hannah Senesh

Life Achievement Plan

Your Blueprint for Creating a Personal Success Strategy

Introduction

As in any journey, the plans for your personal journey to success must contain three things:

1. Where you want to go – a destination
2. Where you are starting from
3. A plan, or road map, for how to get to your destination

Phase 1 of your Personal Success Strategy will help you define all three of these components.

In Phase 2, you will learn the simple process of defining specific actions and scheduling them into your day.

Congratulations on taking the initiative to begin. You are in for an exciting time on your personal journey to success!

Lifetime Achievement Vision

Your Lifetime Achievement Vision will be a one or two sentence description of what your life is dedicated to. It will describe your future successes and achievements as vividly as you can see them today. You'll first imagine, and then put into words, a colorful and vibrant mental picture. Your Lifetime Achievement Vision will express commitment, purpose and focus.

To begin, imagine how old you want to be at the end of your life. *What age is that? 80? 110?*

Whatever you believe, write that down:

Now subtract 1 year and write that down:

Now visualize yourself at that age. What will life be like as you see yourself at that age? Who will be sitting around you? Who will be in your life? In looking back on your many years of experiences, what achievements will you cherish

most? What will you be the most proud of? How have you impacted the world around you? In whose lives have you made the most impact? What are people saying about you? What adjectives are people using to describe you and what you have done in life?

Write several short phrases that describe what you are visualizing.

Example:

Loving spouse/son/daughter/friend
Very supportive
Always willing to help
Tremendous provider
Role model

Now, put those short phrases into a one to three sentence description.

Example:

I am a loving spouse who is very supportive of my family and friends. I have developed a lasting and cherished image as a tremendous provider and someone who is always willing to help others in need. My children and grandchildren consider me their greatest role model and they seek me out for wisdom and direction in making important decisions about life.

Battle Cry

Your Battle Cry is a short phrase of one to six words that captures your Lifetime Achievement Vision in one snap. Make a list of some phrases that, when you say them out loud, the mental picture you created with the Lifetime Achievement Vision jumps immediately into mind. Your Battle Cry should give you chills and inspire you to action anytime you read it or write it.

Example:

Winning With Honor!

Current Status

Now we need to define your starting point – that is, where you are today as it relates to the picture you have created with your Lifetime Achievement Vision. In defining your “starting point,” it is helpful to compartmentalize life into logical segments or areas of focus. In this exercise we will use eight different areas.

As you think about each area of life, review the “trigger questions” for each,

then rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5. A score of “5” means that you are completely satisfied with that area as it stands today, and you feel that you are heading directly for fulfilling your Lifetime Achievement Vision as it relates to that aspect of life. A “1” means that this particular life area could not be more misdirected, has no momentum and will not achieve the Vision you’ve painted. Keep in mind that there may be other questions or issues within each area that you may use personally to measure your progress toward your Vision. These questions are only to “prime the pump.”

Physical Health

How do you feel about what you see in the mirror?

Are satisfied with your diet and exercise habits?

Do you have good sleep habits?

Is your endurance and vitality at its optimum level?

Finances

Are you satisfied with your current monthly income stream?

Do you have an adequate debt elimination/management strategy?

Do you have an adequate retirement plan?

Is your asset accumulation plan adequate to meet long-term goals?

Relationships

Do you feel you spend enough time with those close to you?

Do you have enough friends and fans?

Are you satisfied with your ability to create new relationships?

Is the quality of most relationships in your life rich and void of conflict?

Community

Do you feel you are adequately contributing to the world around you?

Are you able to fulfill your goals to contribute to causes or groups that you care about outside your family and close friends?

Is your circle of influence broad enough?

Are you on track to leave the legacy you intend?

Fun and Recreation

Do you have enough fun?

Do your activities outside work and family satisfy you personally?

Do you laugh enough?

Do you feel rested and energized enough to accomplish the goals you set?

Spiritual

Do you feel an adequate connection with a greater power?

Do you spend enough time seeking a relationship with this power?

Are you satisfied with your understanding of where you fit in to a bigger plan?

Are you satisfied with the people and organizations that support your growth in this area?

Career and Business

Are you satisfied with your progress and proportion of focus in this area of life?

Is your career and business focus heading in a satisfying direction?

Do you feel you are compensated fairly for the amount of work you are doing?

Are you satisfied with the development of your business or trade skills?

Personal Balance

This area is defined by you and may include any compartment of life not defined in the other seven categories.

Now that you have defined your starting place and the ultimate destination, it is time to set some goals to map the route.

Goal Setting

An easy way to set your goals is to simply ask the question, “*What will it take for me to move from the score I gave myself to a higher number?*” Of course, if you are a “5” in a particular area, you may only need to set a goal for maintaining the course. But most of us have room for improvement in most areas so that we feel more confident and productive about our direction and velocity.

As you define your goals, keep in mind Denis Waitley’s “five P’s.” That is, goals must be:

- P**ossible
- P**ersonal
- P**recise
- P**ositive
- P**resent

In other words:

Make sure you believe you can achieve the goal

Be sure that the goal pertains to actions that you personally can control

State them very specifically and in measurable terms so that there is no question when you have achieved them or not within a specifically stated time frame

For example:

I have accumulated \$50,000 in savings by
January 1, 2010. Not...

I want to be rich. Or

I currently weigh 180 pounds. Not...

I will lose 20 pounds and get in better shape.

Write one or two major goals for each area of life that, when accomplished over the next 12 months, will increase your “satisfaction score” for that area by at least one point.

Action Items

Now that you have specific targets set for each Life Area, it’s time to break down each one into achievable pieces or “Action Items.” Each of your goals will likely take several weeks or months to complete, but to make them attainable, it is important to identify the key steps that will lead to the ultimate goal. Action Items are those incremental steps that you will need to take and that will be assigned to specific times, days or weeks in your calendar. Each Action Item will move you farther down the road to ultimate achievement of your goal.

For example, if you have a goal of attaining a new body weight goal in the coming 12 months, you may need to include the following action items:

- Measure current weight accurately
- Join the Health Club
- Purchase exercise clothes
- Exercise at Health Club for 30 minutes on
Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

Congratulations!

So far, you have: identified your long-term Vision; developed a motivating Battle Cry to keep the Vision in front of you; identified specific Goals that will lead to achievement of the Vision; and defined Action Items for your Goals.

Now, in order to move this process from “paper to pavement,” we need to do some scheduling.

Scheduling

Now you’re ready to schedule the Action Items. Scheduling your activities is essential to goal attainment. *Here’s how you will prepare your calendar for the next 30 days:*

Step 1: Start by blocking out all of the time you are at work.

Step 2: Block out all the time for family commitments, such as taking the kids to school, coaching little league, going on a date with your spouse, family time and so on.

Step 3: Block out all the time dedicated to personal commitments such as church, working out, entertainment, clubs, and so on.

Step 4: Block out all the time for one-time or additional events (doctor's appointment, dance recital, etc.).

Visually it works best to use a colored pen or marker so that it's easy to see the remaining blank areas. These blank areas show where Action Items can be scheduled.

Now take a look at your action items and ask yourself, "*When will I be able to do that activity?*" and schedule that item on your calendar. You will then ask that same question for each Action Item listed.

When the month is complete, go back over your calendar and evaluate your priorities and success in completing scheduled items. Once you do this month after month, you will soon get to the point where you know exactly what actions will be necessary to accomplish your objectives. You will love the feeling that you have when you realize that you know exactly what you need to do to reach all of your life objectives. And it is within your total control just to implement the actions!

Congratulations!

This important process has helped you to paint a long-term picture of life ahead and chart a course to make that picture become reality. We wish you tremendous success and are certain that you are on the way to the life of your dreams!