

## Life's Greatest Lessons 20 Things That Matter

All great truths are simple in the final analysis, and easily understood; if they are not, they are not great truths.

A Chinese proverb tells us:

I hear----and I forget

I see-----and I remember

I do-----and I understand

A Swedish proverb tells us that we get old too quick and smart too late.

Chapter 1 – Success is more than making money.

Money is not bad. The Bible does not say that money is the root of all evil. It says the love of money is the root of all evil. The keys to money are how we earn it and what we do with it.

Money will buy a lot more happiness than poverty will. Pearl Bailey best described it when she said, “Honey, I been poor, and I been rich and let me tell you, rich is better.” It is probably better in most cases. There’s nothing illegal or immoral about being rich, but it isn’t everything.

This is what happens when we lose perspective on money. Life gets distorted. It just wasn’t those who went to prison in the 1980’s or went bankrupt in the 1990’s and early 2000s who lost themselves in pursuit of the almighty dollar.

The Tom Peters Group conducted extensive interviews with thousands of business executives during this period. Almost half of them said that despite years spent striving to achieve their financial goals, their lives seemed meaningless and empty. Sixty-eight percent of the senior executives interviewed said they had neglected their family lives to pursue professional goals.

These are people who had money, property, power and status. Why weren’t they happy? Because having those things is not the same as being successful. They’d lost sight of what was essential. They got addicted, becoming slaves to big money and the things that go with it. Success is more than making money.

What does it mean to be successful? The great philosopher Thomas Carlyle once wrote, “Let each become all that he was created capable of being.” I can’t think of a better definition of success. Life challenges us every day to develop our capabilities to the fullest. We’re successful when we reach for the highest that’s within us. When we give the best we have. Success is in the doing, not the getting.

Qualities of successful people:

They say YES to life in spite of its negative elements and make the most of it, not matter what the circumstances.

Develop and maintain a positive attitude toward life. They look for good in others and the world. They see life as a series of opportunities and possibilities, and always explore them.

They have a way of bringing out the best in other people.

Accept and enjoy challenges.

Strong desire to learn and improve. They enjoy learning, improving and always discovering new things about the world and themselves.

John Gardner wrote in Excellence that too many of us never fully develop because of influences in our environment. We simply get blitzed with too many messages that don't have anything with real success. We're urged to look for the quick fix rather than look inside at our own resources. If we don't look, we don't find, and our capabilities remain hidden. We end up seeing limitations instead of possibilities.

We constantly urged our students to look inside-to discover what was good about them and to recognize how much potential they have. We encouraged them to be more and do more. They were eighteen years old and had never heard things like that before.

Chapter 2 – Life is hard and not always fair

One of life's lesson's; The world will not devote itself to making us happy.

If we don't understand and accept life as it is, we'll keep wishing for something else and never get it. Once we understand that the world will not devote itself to making us happy, we begin to accept that responsibility for ourselves.

Life is a lot like that, we get more out of it once we understand how it works.

Life is hard.

Buddha wrote what became known as the Four Noble Truths. The first one was "Life is suffering.

The three first words in Peck's The Road Less Traveled are "Life is difficult." Peck calls this one of the greatest truths because once we understand and accept it, we can live more effectively.

Failures try either to avoid their problems or to work around them. Successful people accept them and work through them, even when it includes some suffering. It's this process of meeting our problems head on and looking for solutions that give life meaning.

I warned the kids in advance that I was going to make them do two things teachers weren't suppose to do, think and work.

Once we accept the fact that life is hard, we begin to grow. We begin to understand that every problem is also an opportunity. It is then that we dig down and discover what we are made of. We begin to accept the challenges of life. Instead of letting our hardships defeat us we welcome them as a test of our character. We use them as a means of rising to the occasion.

Television tells us over and over that there's a quick and easy way to do just about everything. It tells us we can solve any problem with little or no effort. Advertisers and marketers know most people don't accept life as hard and will continue to look for the quick and easy way instead.

Unfortunately, life isn't always fair. It's probably the most painful truth we have to learn and the hardest to accept. Bad things happen to good people, sometimes to others, sometimes to us. In addition, we see good things happen to people who don't deserve that, either. As it says in the Bible, the sun rises upon evil men as well as good, and it rains upon the dishonest and the honest alike.

Pain is inevitable, but misery is optional. We can avoid that misery by developing constructive ways of facing up to the pain life deals us.

Ben Franklin wrote, "Those things that hurt, instruct." Maybe that's why it's often said that some of life's most painful lessons are also the most valuable. The most important thing that we can do when we are hurting whether it's physical or emotional, is to find some meaning in it. Pain does teach us something but we have to be able to learn from it

The people who succeed in life don't escape unfairness. They learn to accept it and manage it more constructively.

Niebuhr's famous Serenity Prayer:

God grant me . . .  
The serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.

What we become depends not on conditions but on decisions. Some people are conditioned and determined by outward circumstances. They are on top when things are good and crumble when things go bad. What they don't seem to understand is that

when we are faced with miserable conditions, we're also faced with a decision: whether to give in to them or stand up to them.

### Chapter 3 – Life is also fun and incredibly funny

Human beings need to have fun.

But according to Einstein himself, some of the keys to life were simplicity, fantasy, and play. He said, "Everything should be made as simple as possible."

There is now clear evidence that laughter can be a strong painkiller. In addition, laughter can enhance respiration, produce morphine like molecules called endorphins, increase the number of disease fighting immune cells, reduce stress, stimulate the internal organs and improve the circulation of blood.

If it's true that an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure, then a joyful heart and laughter should be part of the daily routine.

Probably the most important discovery about the benefits of laughter is that it can strengthen our immune systems.

Finally laughter works wonders in relationships. Someone once said that laughter is the shortest distance between two people. It has a way of uniting them. "Laugh, and the world laughs with you."

There is an old axiom that says we usually find what we're looking for. And there's plenty of comedy and laughter to be found out there. I can't imagine a healthier pursuit.

### Chapter 4 – We live by choice, not by chance

God asks no man whether he will accept life. That is not the choice. You must take it. The only choice is how. Henry Ward Beecher

Do you realize how many people go through life thinking that the only choices they have are the ones in TV Guide and on the menu board at McDonald's.

Our ability to choose is a source of great strength and freedom.

God created us with free will. He gave us life, and then he gave us the freedom to decide for ourselves what we'll do with it. He gave us the power to choose our own way.

I had no control over events, but I was still free to choose how to respond to them. When I accepted responsibility for making better choices, life got better.

Animals in a zoo eat, sleep, seek shelter and breed. Those are all instincts. That's what they live by. Their sole purpose is to survive. They react to chance happenings and are conditioned by the environment. That's why it's easy to train them.

Like animals we react to what happens around us and we allow ourselves to become conditioned by the environment. And whether we like to admit it or not, we're also easy to train. The only difference for us, it doesn't have to be that way. We have more than instincts. We have the ability to choose.

The starting point for a better life is discovering that we have choices.

We live by choice not by chance. It isn't what happens that's most important. It's how we deal with what happens. It's what we choose to think and what we choose to do that are most important.

What is happening in the lives of a large percentage of people in this country? Nothing much. And whether we realize it or not, it's the result of choices. The choice to take what comes, the choice to let things happen, the choice to settle for less, the choice merely exist from one day to the next.

One of the biggest mistakes people make is thinking that life is one big "have-to". The truth of the matter is that we don't have to do anything. Some things might be important, and maybe they should get done, but now one has to do them.

It always amazes me how strongly people will argue when told they do everything by choice. They're so stuck on the "have-to" philosophy of life, it's hard to get them to let go. At any given moment, we're free to choose what to think and what to do. God gave us a free will. No one can take it away from us. We can alter the course of our lives any time we want, because whatever we do, we do by choice.

You don't have to do anything in life but you get to do a lot of things. And one of the greatest things you'll ever get to do is become educated.

Run off pages 34, 35, and 36 for the list of characteristics.

The most important thing to understand about all of this is that any given moment, we're making choices. Equally important is the need to understand that we're the results of our choices. We can't choose what happens in our lives, but we can choose how to respond.

Human beings were not designed to live by chance. We were designed to live by choice.

Chapter 5 – Attitude is a choice, the most important one you'll ever make.

Everything can be taken from a man but one thing; the last of human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

Viktor Frankl

Frankl wrote later that amidst all the brutality and suffering, what bothered him the most was to see his fellow prisoners decide that there was nothing left to live for, and then give up on life.

Frankl says we can become the victim of circumstances or we can be victorious over them. We can renounce our freedom and dignity and let our circumstances mold us, or we can choose our own attitude and rise above them.

The major findings were that attitude is far more important than intelligence, education, special talent or luck. The people who did this study concluded that up to eighty-five percent of our success in life is due to attitude, while the other fifteen percent is due to ability.

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their destiny and their lives by altering their attitude.

William James

Our attitudes also operate somewhat like magnets. We are pulled in the direction of our thoughts, whether they are positive or negative. We usually get what we expect because the thoughts we choose set the wheels in motion and then move us in a particular direction.

In essence our attitudes are the way we approach life. And the way we approach it will determine our success and failure.

Think with an open mind. An open mind is the beginning of self-discovery and growth. We can't learn anything new until we can admit that we don't already know everything.

The purpose of education is not to fill minds but to open them. The more knowledge we have, the more we realize how much we don't know.

Think for yourself. Romans 12:2-Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold.

Without any effort or even realizing that it's happening, we can turn our lives into exercises in mindless conformity; go with the flow, be in, be cool. In other words, let others do our thinking for us. I know how easy it is because I've been there.

The media, the advertising world and other people try to do our thinking for us everyday.

We need to appreciate and develop our own character and not let it be shaped by someone or something else.

Think constructively. Positive thinking has a nice ring to it but to most people it's just wishful thinking. Positive thinking has to be accompanied with genuine belief. People who succeed in life don't think they can, they believe they can.

GIGO: Garbage in, garbage out.

Chapter 6 – Habits are the key to all success

In truth, the only difference between those who have failed and those who have succeeded lies in the difference of their habits.

Some psychologists believe ninety-five percent of our behavior is formed through habit.

Most habits start innocently and unintentionally. At the beginning they form a kind of invisible thread. But through repetition, that thread becomes entwined into a cord and later into a rope. Each time we repeat an act, we add to it and strengthen it. The rope becomes a chain and then a cable. As English poet John Dryden said over three hundred years ago, "We first make our habits, and then our habits make us."

Our personalities are actually a composite of our attitudes, habits and appearance. In other words, our personalities are the characteristics by which we're identified, the parts of us which we reflect to others.

Think about the kind of habits you are forming. Whether we like it or not we become slaves to our habits. They end up working either for us or against us. There has never been enough emphasis placed on forming good habits. Our bad habits get most of the attention which only reinforces them.

Those basketball skills didn't come to us naturally. They came as the result of what he'd said would determine our success: forming winning habits.

He said that developing little habits like that could make a big difference in my overall effectiveness. Then he added, "Good habits make the difference not just in the gym, but in everything that we do."

He was respected because of the principles by which he coached and lived. His high principles were actually how own habits, the successful things he did everyday.

We don't succeed by doing something right one time; we succeed by doing things right on a regular basis. Habits are the key to all success.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.

Chapter 7 – Being thankful is a habit-the best one you'll ever have

We seldom think of what we have but always of what we lack.

I asked my students to go twenty-four hours without complaining. The first response is usually a complaint about the assignment.

They usually learn that they don't have much to complain about and what they complain about is stupid.

When we focus on what's right instead of what's wrong, life improves considerably.

I urge you with equal passion to use the magic words "thank you" every chance you get. I'm not alone in my belief that thanking others seems to be a dying art.

Yet showing our appreciation to others is one of the highest expressions of respect and courtesy. It's also one of the surest ways of building and maintaining solid relationships. William James said, "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated. And it's as easy as it is rewarding to satisfy that need in others.

When someone dies, everyone else seems to have something good to say. I often wonder how many of those compliments were heard by the person while he or she was still alive? Did we take time to express our appreciation? Do people have to die to wake us up to how special they are? We need to express our thanks more often to those special people in our lives.

It's not real thankfulness if it is not expressed.

It is not how much we have but how much we enjoy.

Chapter 8-Good people build their lives on a foundation of respect

Treat other people exactly as you would like to be treated by them.

Mathew 7:12

"Reverence for life"

Albert Schweitzer

It means that life itself is sacred, and our duty is to cherish it. Schweitzer believed that too many people go through life without ever thinking about its meaning and value. He viewed life as a great gift that needed to be treasured and respected. Then, he said, we can raise it to its true value.

Reverence for life can be summarized as a deep love and appreciation for:

Life itself.

God, and the spiritual nature of mankind.

Other people, and the desire to serve them.

All living things.

Beauty in the world of nature.

The mysteries of life we'll never understand.



Honesty and integrity in all things.

Respect is still the most important quality a human being can have. And it'll always be the primary source from which the good things in life flow.

Showing our respect is the only proof there is that we have it. Since the beginning of time, the world's most successful people have shown their respect in the following four ways. They're the pillars of a reverence for life.

Manners. Without good manners human society becomes intolerable and impossible.

Our manners are who we are. We'll always be known by the way we treat others. And the way we treat others will always be a key factor in determining how successful we become.

Language. A man's words will always express what has been treasure in his heart.

Luke 6:45

The wise Solomon wrote thousands of years ago that only gracious words come from the mouth of wise people, and that fools are consumed by their own lips.

Most students admitted more negatives came out of their mouths than positives. We focus on the wrong side of life. What comes out of our mouths does, indeed, reveal what's stored in our hearts.

Honoring the rules. When, we, as individuals, obey laws that direct us to behave for the welfare of the community as a whole, we are indirectly helping to promote the pursuit of happiness by our fellow human beings.

Aristotle

Rules aren't made to be broken. They are made to be honored. And everybody doesn't break the rules; it's just that the ones who do get more publicity.

Appreciating differences. The truth never becomes clear as long as we assume that each one of us, individually, is the center of the universe.

Ben Franklin vowed to look for the good in others instead of finding fault with them, and to only say kind things about people.

We're all self-centered. We look out for ourselves and too often make the mistake of confusing reality with our limited perception of it. When we criticize people what we are saying is that you're not ok because you're not like me. Only what I like is good.

No person has the “right” life. The more we learn to appreciate our differences and uniqueness in others, the closer we come to developing our own reverence for life.

Good people build their lives on a foundation of respect.

Chapter Nine-Honesty is still the best policy

You’ll never be truly successful unless everything you do is undergirded with honesty and integrity.

Honesty always was, is now, and always will be the best policy.

Honesty is the most essential ingredient of real success.

Honest is respect in it’s highest form.

To have integrity is to be a complete person-honest and with consistently high moral standards.

Dishonesty retards both our personal and social development. It causes us to fall short of realizing our full potential for lives with inner peace, feelings of self-worth, and healthy relationships.

I went away from that discussion realizing that all of us are caught in a battle between right and wrong, good and evil.

Being able to “pull off” something is often considered an achievement, a feat worth openly bragging about. Only the dumb and unlucky ones get caught. “Everybody’s doing it” is both the rallying cry and the justification for this type of behavior. To reinforce it, there are a number of movies and TV programs which seem to glorify deceit and deception. They virtually exalt them to fine arts. To top it all off, the advertising world bombards us daily with not-so-subtle messages that we should be someone other make a good impression on others.

Another reason we all struggle with honesty is that it’s hard work. It requires more time, thought and energy than we’re sometimes willing to expend.

Dishonesty, more than anything else, prevents us from being the type of persons we can and want to be. It’s like a cancer. It starts small, and if not detected and completely eradicated, it spreads out of control until it finally destroys us.

William James wrote that we create our own hell in this world. He said we do it “by habitually fashioning our characters the wrong way.” He believes dishonest behavior is the root of most of our psychological problems.

Dishonesty is a vicious circle. One dishonest act leads to another. Rarely does a dishonest person lie, steal or cheat one time. In other words it is a habit-the worst one of all.

Dishonesty turns us into phonies and manipulators. If we play a role too long, we lose ourselves in it.

Dishonesty usually catches up with us. Dishonesty can't be hidden.

Dishonesty ruins relationships. When we lie to other people, we make it hard for them to believe us in the future. It's more difficulty to restore a relationship than to form one.

Dishonesty attacks our nervous system. SMU found evidence to suggest that the effort required to sustain a false intention places an enormous amount of stress on the body's nervous system. We literally stir up inner turmoil when we're dishonest. In essence, we punish ourselves.

Dishonesty prevents us from fulfillment. One of the most rewarding things in life is to discover our potential for personal fulfillment, and then grow into it. But we can't do this when we get into dishonest habits.

Six reasons for being honest:

Peace of mind-If someone asked me what I would do differently if I had the opportunity to live over again, my answer would be; I'd be honest in all things.

Character and reputation.

Relationships.

Wholeness. The great psychologists Carl Jung said that our deepest desire is for wholeness. I take that to mean reaching our potential as humans, becoming the type of persons we're capable of being.

We become what we were meant to be. Something happens inside of us, but we can't explain it to anyone else. We just feel something unbelievably good, and we begin to respect ourselves more than ever before.

There is only one way to cope with life, namely, to find that system of values which is not subject to fashionable trends, which will never change, and will always bear good fruit in terms of bringing us peace and health and assurance, even in the midst of a very insecure world.

Dr. Thomas Hora

## Chapter 10-Kind words cost little but accomplish much

He seemed to have a special talent for bringing out the best in other people. With his students instead of emphasizing their mistakes, he emphasized either what they did right or what they could do. In each of his classes he consistently did three things: he greeted the students as they came in the room, he praised them for achievements, and he constantly encouraged them to be their best.

Affirm, in my opinion, is the most powerful word in our language. It means looking for and finding good in people.

More than fifty years ago, Dale Carnegie said, “Any fool can criticize, condemn, and complain-and most fools do.”

I was fascinated by the descriptions of the diverse people who surrounded him in the White House. They all had two things in common; enormous talent and an ego to match. They also thought they were superior to Lincoln. But instead of getting rid of them, Lincoln honored them. He praised their abilities, sought their advice, and encouraged them to devote their talents and energy to serving the country. And everyone came out a winner.

Nothing feels better than genuine praise from others.

Kind words do not cost much, yet they accomplish much.

## Chapter 11-Real motivation comes from within

I believe that one person can help another understand what motivation is and where it comes from. I also believe that one person can teach another the key ingredients of self-motivation, which is the only real kind. Most importantly, I believe that one person can help another stay motivated by giving needed encouragement, just as the friend I described in the previous chapter did for me.

So instead of trying to motivate people, I try to teach them about motivation and they can motivate themselves.

Successful people accept responsibility for their own lives. That means they don't wait for someone else to motivate them; they do it themselves. The second thing we need to understand is the origin of the word motivation.

When it's internal and deeply rooted, it can propel us to achievements beyond anything we ever thought possible.

Three keys to motivation, desire, belief and a clear mental picture of achieving the goal.

Desire. Motivation starts with a sense of desire, when you want something, you become motivated to get it.

Denis Waitley

Desire, not ability, separates average people from those who excel. People who have a burning desire are almost impossible to stop. The stronger the flame burns, the greater the determination and the more likely the success. An important aspect of desire is commitment-a promise that we make to no one but ourselves. This is what keeps us going when things are the toughest.

Belief. More than any other single lesson my experiences have conspired to teach me the value of determined, confident effort.

Mental picture. You must first clearly see a thing in your mind before you can do it.

Peak performers all reported a highly developed ability to imprint images of successful actions.

Chapter 12-Goals are dreams with deadlines

Success is the progressive accomplishment of worthy goals.

Success doesn't happen by accident. It happens by design.

He believes that any type of success starts with a mission: a specific goal accompanied by strong desire.

Pages 104-107, information on how to set goals.

Chapter 13-There's no substitute for hard work

The best prize life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

Teddy Roosevelt

Success requires a certain amount of toughness. It comes to people who aren't afraid of a challenge and some good, old-fashioned hard work.

Hard work helps us realize our potential.

Hard work helps us face up to life. Hard work and a good attitude are the best tools we have.

Hard work builds character. There's no better measure of who we are than our willingness to work.

Hard work earns the respect of others. We're admired when we give our best, especially when it's done consistently. We earn the confidence and trust of others. We also earn a solid reputation.

Hard work gets the best results.

High achieving people had one common thread: the willingness to work long hard hours. All of them agreed that success wasn't something that had just happened to them due to luck or special talents. It happened because they'd made it happen through great effort and dogged determination. Instead of looking for shortcuts and ways to avoid hard work, these people welcomed it as a necessary part of the process.

Virtually all of them placed a high premium on the willingness to work hard over a long period. They agreed that establishing good work habits is the most important ingredient in any type of success.

I think the media blitzes us today with a message that's just the opposite: There's a quick and easy way to get everything we want. Anyone can quickly lose fifty pounds, speak a foreign language, get a contractor's license, become a disc jockey, and earn millions in the real-estate market. The main part of each message is that we don't have to work, wait, struggle, or make any sacrifice.

They've adopted a push button mentality along with the quick-and-easy philosophy of life. They focus on consuming rather than producing. They focus on short-term pleasure rather than long-term satisfaction. And then they make the painful discovery that life doesn't work the way it's portrayed in the media.

But we also need to understand that work and fun are not exclusive of each other. We can laugh, play and enjoy ourselves while we're working.

I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live.

George Bernard Shaw

So much unhappiness, it seems to me, is due to nerves; and bad nerves are the result of having nothing to do, or doing a thing badly, unsuccessfully, or incompetently. Of all the unhappy people in the world, the unhappiest are those who have not found something they want to do. True happiness comes to him who does his work well, followed by a relaxing and refreshing period of rest. True happiness comes from the right amount of - work for the day.

Lin Yu-tang

Chapter 14-You have to give up something to get something

Add self-discipline, and you'll get even farther.

I like the way Webster defines discipline: “training that corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects. Self-discipline means training yourself to get things done. It means developing your own plan of achievement, committing yourself to it, and then following through.

You alone determine what you’ll accomplish, and when. And you alone decide what you’ll make of your life.

Self-discipline is this: “getting yourself to do something, even though you don’t feel like it, because the reward for getting it done far exceeds the temporary unpleasantness of the task itself.”

YES! The reward is greater than what you give up, and it lasts a lot longer.

If we do things only when we’re in the mood, then it’s no more than a hobby. He says we’ll never be good at anything until we do it in a disciplined way.

That’s what self-discipline is. It means accepting the fact that life is hard, and that nothing worthwhile ever comes easily or without a price.

Self-discipline puts us in charge of both the pain and the gain. That’s when real accomplishment takes place.

We live in a society that worships comfort, ease, pleasure, and instant gratification.

“You can have it all!”

“You can have it now!”

“You deserve it!”

“Master the possibilities!”

Play now, pay later!

Real success comes when we pay now and play later.

It means the work, the pain, and the sacrifice come now, and good things come afterward.

Peck says if we learn to schedule the pain and sacrifice first, and get them over with, we’ll enhance the pleasure that comes later. Notice that he doesn’t say avoid pain; he says schedule it. Whatever the price is for getting something done, pay it first. You have to give up something to get something.

Discipline means choices. Every time you say yes to a goal or objective, you say no to many more. Sybil Stanton

Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.

Most people either watch things happen or wonder later, what happened. Self-discipline helps us make things happen.

True discipline isn't on your back needling you with imperatives; it is at your side, nudging you with incentives. When you understand that discipline is self-caring, not self-castigating, you won't cringe at its mention, but will cultivate it.

Chapter 15-Successful people don't find time-they make time.

Time is life. It is irreversible and irreplaceable. To waste your time is to waste your life, but to master time is to master your life and make the most of it.

The most important step is to develop a new way of looking at time. We need to view it as a resource. It can be put to use or it can be wasted. But there's one big difference between this resource and others: we can't save it, store it up, stockpile it, or hoard it. We're forced to spend it minute by minute. That's why the way we spend our time is the way we measure the quality of our lives. Time is life.

Always concentrate on the most valuable use of your time. This is what separates the winners from the losers.

The key is balance. The main point here is that the people who succeed in life understand that time is their most valuable resource. It's a resource that's distributed evenly. Everyone gets twenty-four hours a day. It's what we do with it that defines our lives.

They simplified their lives and said they had more time for relaxing and doing enjoyable things. Actually, they didn't have any more time than they had before. They just chose to spend it differently. They learned to treasure it.

Using time effectively, like operating a computer, is a skill that can be acquired.

1. Plan your day

Before you do anything else, make the decision that it's going to get done. Then decide when you're going to do it, and commit yourself to that specific time. As simple as it sounds, this technique not only helps you get more done but also has some side benefits: it develops self-discipline, aids in goal-setting, helps overcome procrastination, and teaches you to use your time more effectively.

## Chapter 16- No One Else Can Raise Your Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is that deep-down inside the skin feeling you have of your own self-worth. Denis Waitley.



Many people were starting to confuse self-esteem with downright selfishness. Maybe because so many marketers and advertisers were telling us to be good to ourselves because we deserved it.

And too many young people were being told that everything they did was good, whether it was or not. That was not only wrong but damaging. Teachers across the country were playing “feel-good” games with their classes in hope of enhancing self-esteem.

“I wish more of these well-meaning teachers understood that self-esteem will take care of itself if we can help our students learn the skills and attitudes they need to be successful.”

It isn't something another person can give to us. It's how we truly feel about ourselves, even when no one else is around. If self-esteem is real, it comes from within. By itself, the word esteem means “to appreciate the worth of, to hold in high regard, to have genuine respect.” So self-esteem is really self-respect.

That's why the California Task Force on Self-Esteem, a group of dedicated people who met regularly and conducted research for two years, emphasized personal and social responsibility in its final report. We can only feel good about ourselves when our behavior is positive and we can be fully accountable for it. Ultimately, the development of personal character is both a choice and a responsibility. Other people may help or hinder, but we build our own character, and with it, we determine our level of self-esteem. It's strictly an inside job.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” It would follow, then, that no one can make you feel anything without your consent.

Chapter 17-The body needs nutrition and exercise-so do the mind and spirit

The more we get caught up in the incredibly fast pace and conveniences of modern life, the less we take time to think. It's easier to let our electronic devices do it for us. And eventually we end up wondering how to make sense of our life.

We're discovering that no matter how great our technology is, it can't produce either happiness or fulfillment.

At no time in our history have we been more aware of the benefits of caring for the body. We have knowledge about nutrition and exercise that wasn't available as recently as ten years ago. And we've experienced a genuine fitness explosion. People of all ages are paying closer attention to what goes into their bodies and are

becoming more physically active. And they're living longer, healthier, and more productive lives.

They want to succeed in life and are smart enough to know that it won't happen if they poison their own bodies.

The first step is that it helps to have a practical attitude about the role of your body. It's not the most essential thing about you, but it's the vehicle that carries what is essential. If you were told when you got your first car that it would be your only one, and would have to last a lifetime, I suspect that you'd take excellent care of it. That's the way it is with your body-it's the only one you'll ever have. It'll run better and last longer if you take care of it.

While keeping the body in good condition is important, how it looks in comparison to other bodies is not important.

We need to pay more attention to the garbage that's being dumped into our heads every day. It happens without us even being aware of it.

The media doesn't present us with a healthy mental diet. But remember, we live by choice. We need to be just as selective about what goes into our minds as we are about what goes into our bodies. We can't control all the garbage, but we can be more aware of it and learn to screen much of it out.

Set aside time each morning to read something that's uplifting and thought-provoking. It helps you focus on what's good about life and also helps to screen out a lot of negatives. It's a great habit.

On the bookshelf of life, God is a useful work of reference, always at hand but seldom consulted.

While I'll never be able to fully explain it, I believe in a God who was powerful enough to create the universe, yet is personal enough to want an intimate relationship with each of us.

I pray every day. I belong to a great church and attend it regularly. I study the Bible and try to apply the it's principles to my life. I believe in a place called heaven and hope to be there someday.

He said people who practice their faith and live by their principles seem to enjoy life at a deeper level.

Exploring our spiritual side is a move toward becoming complete, not away from it. And there's nothing easy about it. It's much more difficult to explore the depths of our souls than it is to dismiss our entire spiritual nature. What's easy is to ignore God and to reject all religion with simpleminded explanations of why it doesn't work.

In *The Road Less Traveled*, Scott Peck says that “the journey of spiritual growth requires courage and initiative and independence of thought and action.” He adds that it’s often lonely and difficult because we live in a society that wants quick and easy answers, even to life’s most complex questions. But life is difficult, and that includes the spiritual part.

Merton says we too often focus our lives on the immediate satisfaction of material things. We ignore our spiritual nature because it isn’t something we can see or touch, so we think it isn’t real. Merton believes the opposite. He considers the spiritual life to be part of our search for the real self. It’s what sustains us and gives us hope when those material things lose their meaning. Merton helped me realize that I needed to put my spiritual life in order before I could feel integrated and complete.

He felt that a relationship with God was necessary for overcoming our narrow self-interest and for developing the knowledge that helps us become complete human beings. When we begin to live in that relationship with God, we also begin to live for others. We do this, he says, in order to save both our soul and our self-esteem.

Some of the most valuable and practical wisdom the world have ever known still lies recorded in the great holy books of history. For thousands of years they’ve helped people understand that there’s a relationship between spiritual development, character and overall well-being.

Those who have grown the most spiritually are those who are experts in living. And there is yet another joy, even greater. It is the joy of communion with God.

Scott M. Peck

Chapter 18-It’s okay to fail-everyone has

Failing is a fact of life, a necessary part of the process that no one escapes. It isn’t whether we fail that matters; it’s how we fail. The difference between the people who succeed in life and the ones who don’t isn’t found in the number of times they fail. It’s found in what they do after they fail.

Someone asked Edison how he could continue failing that many times, he said he didn’t see it as failure. He said that he’d successfully identified over ten thousand ways that didn’t work and that each attempt brought him closer to the one that would. Einstein, reputed to be the smartest person who ever lived, said, “I think and think for months and years. Ninety-nine times the conclusion is false. The hundredth time I am right.”

Failing is a natural outcome of trying. Success rarely comes on the first attempt. If we think it does, all we're doing is setting ourselves up for a big fall. Success comes only as a result of time, determination, and prolonged effort.

Edison himself gave us that famous definition of genius: "one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration." The problem with too many people today is that they're not willing to perspire long enough, if at all. They want their success instantly. But it rarely comes that way. We have to be willing to fail first.

Failure teaches us humility. It confronts us with our limitations and shows us that we're not invincible.

Failure teaches us to correct our course of action. It forces us to look at what we're doing and give us the opportunity to try a new direction.

Failure teaches us that we can't always have what we want. Sometimes, even when we do all the right things, it still doesn't work out.

Failure teaches us about the strength of our character. It challenges us to dig deeper into our resources.

Failure teaches us about perseverance. It asks us whether we're going to quit or become more determined and keep trying.

Failure teaches us that we can survive defeat. There's no shame in falling, only in being afraid to get up and try again.

When Smart People Fail, rather than a book of gloom, it's a book of hope and I found it tremendously inspiring. It made me realize that I hadn't stopped pounding myself for mistakes of the past, and it helped me focus instead on what I'd learned from them. One of the main points in the book is that most people don't realize that hidden in our failures are sources of growth and renewed strength.

The wrong way to fail. If we're afraid to fail, we play it so safe that we never take any risks. But risk is both an important part of success and a necessary condition of growth.

If you can't make a mistake, you can't make anything. If we're not willing to risk failure, we're not deserving of success. Success doesn't come to us; we have to go out and get it. That involves sticking our necks out a bit. Not risking failure is the worst failure of all.

The second mistake we make is to allow failure to defeat us. There is nothing wrong with suffering after failure but it should not destroy us. It should help us check our level of determination and our resolve to bounce back. Thousands of years ago

Confucius said, "Our greatest glory is not ever falling, but in rising every time we fall."

The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. The world does, indeed, break everyone, and usually not just once. But as a broken bone becomes even stronger when it heals, so do we. It all depends on our attitudes and choices.

Don't be afraid to fail. Don't waste energy trying to cover up failure. Learn from your failures and go on to the next challenge. It's OK to fail. If you're not failing you're not growing.

H. Stanley Judd

#### Chapter 19-Life is simpler when we know what's essential

Einstein said we need to be reminded that even God always takes the simplest ways. While we live in a complex world, it doesn't mean we have to lead complicated lives.

What's Essential:

1. Choose a good attitude, no matter what the circumstances. Keep a positive outlook on life and always be thankful.
2. Build your life on a foundation of respect. Love God, your family, and friends, and be kind to others. Bring out the best in everyone, including yourself.
3. Make integrity the cornerstone of your life. Follow the rules, play fair and be honest in all things.
4. Accept the difficulties and challenges of life. Work hard at everything you do. And if you fail, try again.
5. Have a passion to learn. The more you discover about life and the world, the more complete and fulfilled you'll become. Make it a lifelong process.
6. Enjoy life. Remember that you need to play and have fun. And most of all, you need to laugh.

One cannot participate in this mysterious act of living with any hope of satisfaction unless one understands a few simple rules.

#### Chapter 20-Essential #1 is being a good person

One of the most common mistakes we make is to overlook life's simplest and greatest truths.

What do I mean by old-fashioned goodness? I mean living by great moral values that have been with us since God created the world. These time-honored values are the precious guidelines that bring order and give meaning to our lives.

Only a life of goodness and honesty leaves us feeling spiritually healthy and human.