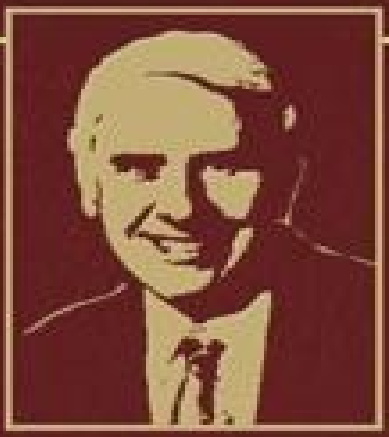

# Leading an Inspired Life

*Jim Rohn*

# LEADING AN INSPIRED LIFE

*JIM ROHN*

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**JIM ROHN RESOURCES**

# *Foreword*

***Y*ou're going to** learn a great number of ideas as you go through this book… ideas that have helped successful people accomplish their goals, achieve certain wealth, and experience greater joy and satisfaction in their lives. My hope is that you'll find these ideas very useful.

I don't know you personally; I'm not familiar with your dreams or problems. But I don't need to be, because the ideas you're about to discover are fundamental to the art of winning. They are guaranteed to help you achieve your most inspiring dreams.

Where did these fundamentals come from? I didn't make them up. I first discovered them when I was twenty-five years old, a time in my life when I needed some new ideas to help change my direction. I wasn't destitute at the time, but I certainly needed some help. I guess we could all use a little help at age twenty-five.

I had gotten off to a great start in life. I was raised in Idaho's farm country, in a small community of about five thousand souls. We were not far from the Snake River in the southwestern corner of the state, a great place to grow up.

After graduating from high school, I attended one year of college. Then I decided I was smart enough, so I quit—which was but one of the many major mistakes I made in those early days. But I was ambitious and willing to work hard, and I figured that I wouldn't have any trouble getting a job… which turned out to be accurate. So with a head full of dreams and ambitions, I started my first job.

About three years later, I got married, made lots of promises, and continued to work hard. A couple of years after that, we started a family. At age twenty-five, I began taking a new look at my life. My weekly paycheck amounted to a grand total of fifty-seven dollars. I was behind on my promises, behind on my bills, and discouraged—far from making the progress I should have made.

I was willing to work hard; that was not the problem. But it was clear that it was going to take more than hard work. And I didn't want to wind up broke at age sixty, needing assistance like so many people I saw around me—not in the richest country in the world. What, I wondered could I do to change the direction of my life?

I considered going back to school. One year of college doesn't look that good on an application. But with my family growing, going back to school seemed like a tough decision. I didn't have any money to start my own business. Money was one of my problems—I always had far too much month left over at the end of the money, if you know what I mean. I remember once losing ten dollars and being physically ill for two days. Over a ten-dollar bill! Some of my friends tried to be cheerful. They said, "Look, maybe some poor person who needed it found it." But that was not really helpful. At that time in my life, benevolence had not yet seized me. I was the person who needed to find ten dollars, not lose it.

So that's where I was at that time in my life—behind on my dreams, constantly wondering what I could possibly do to change things for the better. Then good fortune came my way. Sometimes, it's difficult to explain good fortune. Why do wonderful things happen to you when they do? I don't know. It's a mystery to me. My good fortune was meeting a very unique and successful man named Mr. Earl Shoaff. When I met him, I said to myself, "I would give anything to be like him. I wonder what it would take?"

To make a long story short, this very special gentleman took a liking to me. A few months after I met him, he hired me. I worked for him in several of his businesses until his unfortunate death five years later. The best thing he gave me during that time was not a job. The best thing he gave me was the benefit of his philosophy—the fundamentals of living successfully—how to be wealthy and how to be happy. Sure enough, his ideas worked for me.

I will always be grateful for meeting someone who made such a difference in my life. If Mr. Shoaff were still alive, I would call him and thank him again for sharing the ideas and inspiration that made the difference for me.

Now I have the chance to share these ideas with you. If you apply them to your own life, I know you will experience equally exciting results. And that’s a promise.

# Chapter One
# *A Magic Word: Discipline*

*"We must unweave every strand of our cable of habits, slowly and methodically, until the cable that once held us in place becomes nothing more than scattered strands of wire."*

*"How do you get a miracle going? It's all a matter of discipline. And it begins with one simple step: doing what you can do."*

*"Discipline enables you to capture your emotion and wisdom and translate them into action."*

*"Once you have seen and felt your ideal future, you will be ready and able to pay any price to get there."*

# The Bridge Between Thought and Accomplishment

*I***f there is** one magic word that stands out above all the rest, it is discipline. Discipline is the bridge between thought and accomplishment, between inspiration and achievement, between necessity and productivity. Remember, all good things are located upstream from us. The passing of time takes us adrift, and drifting only brings us the negative, the disappointment, and the failure.

Failure is not a cataclysmic event. It is not generally the result of one major incident, but rather of a long list of accumulated little failings. If your goal requires that you write ten letters today and you write only three, you are down seven letters. If you want to make five calls and only make one, you are down four calls. If your plan calls for saving ten dollars today and you save none, you are down ten dollars.

The danger is looking at an undisciplined day and concluding that no great harm has been done. But add up these days to make a year—and then add up those years to make a lifetime—and it will become apparent how repeating today's small failures can easily turn your life into a major disaster.

Success, on the other hand, is just the same process in reverse. If you plan to make ten calls and you end the day having made fifteen, you are up five calls. You can see what a massive difference this sort of thing could make in a year… and what wealth and accomplishment await over a lifetime.

Discipline is like a set of magic keys that can unlock all the doors of wealth, happiness, culture, high self-esteem, pride, joy, accomplishment, satisfaction, and success.

The first key to discipline is awareness of the need for and value of discipline, especially the discipline to make the necessary changes. What will it take? What must I do and what must I become to get all I want from life?

The second key is willingness. More than that, it is the eagerness to maintain your new discipline deliberately, wisely, and consistently.

The third key to discipline is the commitment to master the circumstances of your daily life—to see and harness the opportunities to make something of the good as well as that which comes in the guise of misfortune.

Discipline does many things, but most important of all is what it does for your mind-set—it makes you feel better about yourself. Even the smallest discipline can have an incredible effect on your attitude. And the good feeling you get—that surging feeling of self-worth that comes from starting a new discipline—is almost as good as the feeling that comes from the accomplishment the discipline brings.

A new discipline immediately alters your life direction. You don't change destinations immediately—that is yet to come—but you can change direction immediately, and direction is very important.

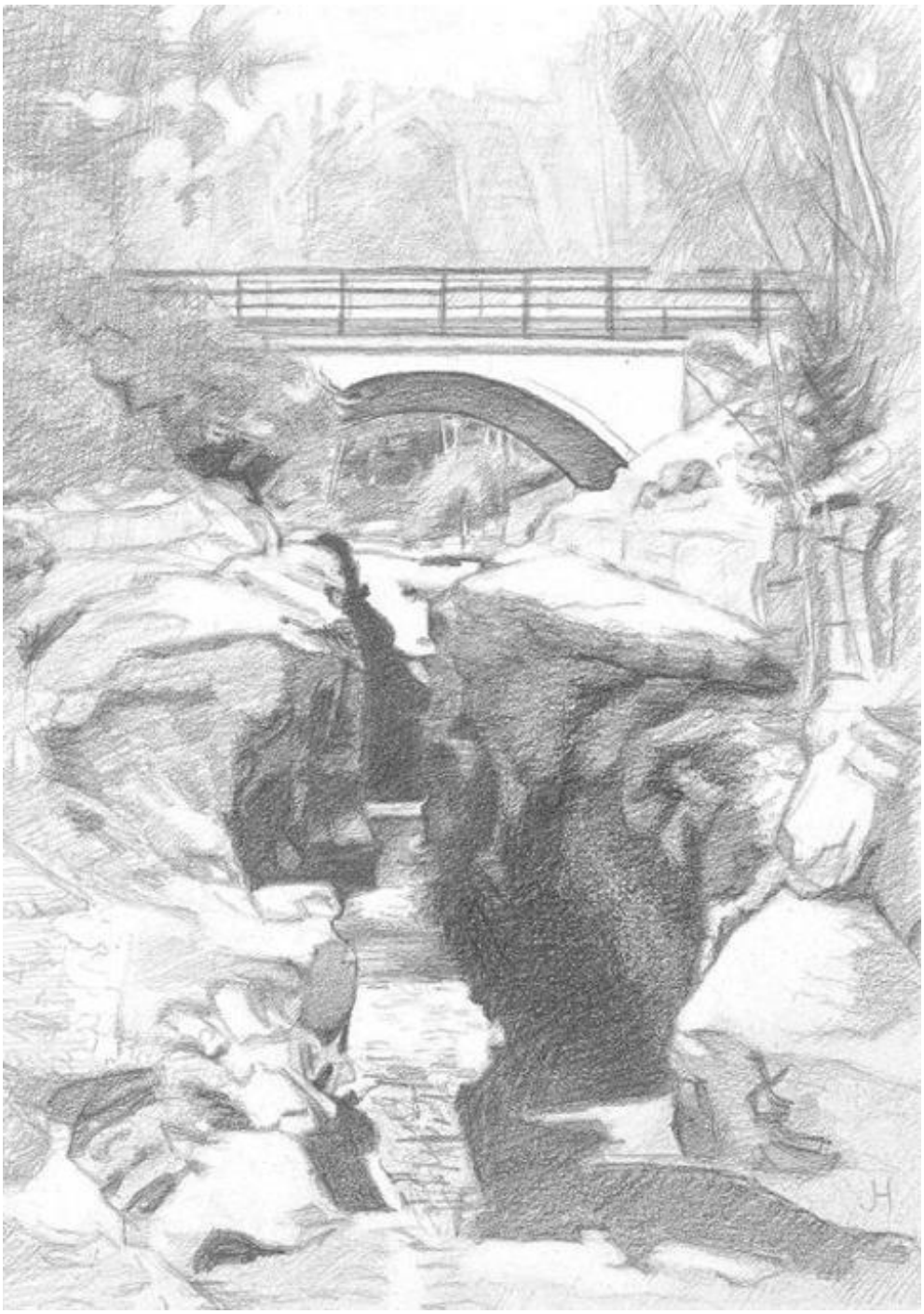
Discipline cooperates with nature. Everything strives. It is a common life function. How tall will a tree grow? As tall as it can. Everything strives to become all it can possibly be. And that is what discipline is all about… striving to fulfill our natural potential, to become all that we can be.

The human will in action—driven by inspiration, enticed by desire, tempered by reason, guided by intelligence—can bring you to that high and lofty place called the good life. Discipline attracts opportunity, which is always attracted to ambition and skill in action. Discipline taps the unlimited power of commitment.

Discipline: those unique steps of intelligent thought and activity that put a lid on temper and a faucet on courtesy; that develop the positive and control the negative; that encourage success and deter failure; that shape lifestyle and control frustration; that enhance health and curb sickness; that promote happiness and manage sadness.

Discipline: the continuing process that brings all the good things. Remember, anyone can start the process. It's not, "If I could, I would;" rather, it's "If I would, I could. If I will, I can."

So start the process. Begin a new habit, no matter how small it is. Size isn't important; whether or not you start and whether or not you continue are all that matter.



***Like a bridge connecting two sides of a river, discipline links thought and accomplishment… inspiration and achievement… necessity and productivity.***

# A Spiral of Achievement

**What's at the** core of achieving the good life? It is *not* learning how to set goals. It is *not* learning how to better manage your time. It is *not* mastering the attributes of leadership.

Every day in a thousand different ways, we are trying to improve ourselves by learning how to do things. We spend a lifetime gathering knowledge—in classrooms, in textbooks, in experiences. And if knowledge is power, if knowledge is the forerunner to success, why do we fall short of our objectives? Why, in spite of all our knowledge and collected experiences, do we find ourselves aimlessly wandering? Settling for a life of existence rather than a life of substance?

There may be many answers to this question. Your answer may be different from that of everyone else you know. While there may be many answers to this question, the ultimate answer may be the absence of discipline in applying our knowledge. The key word is discipline, as in self-discipline.

It doesn't really matter how smart you are if you don't use your knowledge. It doesn't really matter that you graduated magna cum laude if you're stuck in a low-paying job. It doesn't really matter that you attend every seminar that comes to town if you don't apply what you've learned.

We spend our lives gathering: gathering knowledge, gathering skills, gathering experiences. But we must also apply the knowledge, skills, and experiences we gather in the realms of life and business. We must learn to use what we've learned.

And once we've applied our knowledge, we must study the results of that process and refine our approach. Finally, by trying and observing and refining and trying again, our knowledge will inevitably produce worthy, admirable

results. And with the joy and results of our efforts, we continue to fuel our ambition with the positive reinforcement of continued progress. Pretty soon, we'll find that we're swept into a spiral of achievement, a vertical rise to success. And the ecstasy of that total experience makes for a life triumphant over tragedy, dullness, and mediocrity.

But for this whole process to work for us, we must first master the art of consistent self-discipline. It takes consistent self-discipline to master the arts of setting goals, time management, leadership, parenting, and relationships. If we don't make consistent self-discipline part of our daily lives, the results we seek will be sporadic and elusive. It takes a consistent effort to truly manage our valuable time. Without it, we'll be consistently frustrated. Our time will be eaten up by others whose demands are stronger than our own.

It takes discipline to conquer the nagging voices in our minds: the fear of failure, the fear of success, the fear of poverty, the fear of a broken heart. It takes discipline to keep trying when that nagging voice within us brings up the possibility of failure.

It takes discipline to admit our errors and recognize our limitations. The voice of the human ego speaks to all of us. Sometimes, that voice tells us to magnify our value or accomplishments beyond our actual results. It leads us to exaggerate, to not be totally honest. It takes discipline to be totally honest, both with ourselves and with others.

Be certain of one thing: every exaggeration of the truth, once detected by others, destroys our credibility. It makes all that we say and do suspect. As soon as a business colleague figures out that we tend to exaggerate, guess what… he'll think we always exaggerate. And he'll never quite hold us in the same regard again. Never.

The tendency to exaggerate, distort, or even withhold the truth is an inherent part of all of us. It's starts when we're kids. Johnny says, "I didn't do it. I didn't do it!" Well maybe Johnny didn't do it, but he probably had something to do with it. And then it continues when we're adults: exaggerating the benefits of a product

to make a sale, exaggerating our net worth to impress old friends, exaggerating how close we are to closing a deal to impress the boss. Only an all-out, disciplined assault can overcome this tendency.

It takes discipline to change a habit, because once habits are formed, they act like a giant cable, a nearly unbreakable instinct that only long-term, disciplined activity can change. We must unweave every strand of the cable of habits, slowly and methodically, until the cable that once held us in bondage becomes nothing more than scattered strands of wire. It takes the consistent application of a new discipline, a more desirable discipline, to overcome one which is less desirable.

It takes discipline to plan. It takes discipline to execute our plan. It takes discipline to look with full objectivity at the results of our applied plan. And it takes discipline to change either our plan or our method of executing that plan if the results are poor. It takes discipline to be firm when the world throws opinions at our feet. And it takes discipline to ponder the value of someone else’s opinion when our pride and our arrogance leads us to believe that we are the only ones with the answers.

With this consistent discipline applied to every area of our lives, we can discover untold miracles and uncover unique possibilities and opportunities.

# The Rewards for a Disciplined Existence

*D***iscipline is a** constant awareness of the need for action paired with a conscious act to implement that action. If our awareness and our implementations occur at the same time, then we begin a valued sequence of disciplined activity.

But if considerable time passes between the moment of awareness and the time of our implementation, that is called procrastination, putting off until tomorrow what you can do today. Procrastination is almost the exact opposite of discipline.

The voice within us says, “Get it done.” Discipline then says, “Do it now, to the best of your ability.” Heed this voice always, and the habit will become instinctive.

Procrastination says, “Later. Tomorrow. Whenever I get a chance.” It also says, “Do what is necessary to get by or to impress others. Do what you can, but not what you must.”

In every circumstance we face, we are constantly presented with these two choices: do it now or do it later, discipline or procrastination. Bearing the fruit of achievement and contentment (discipline) or living with the bare branches of mediocrity (procrastination).

The rewards of a disciplined life are great, but they’re often delayed until some time in the future. The rewards for a lack of discipline, on the other hand, are immediate. But they are minor in comparison to the immeasurable rewards of consistent self-discipline. An immediate reward for lack of discipline is a fun day at the beach. A future reward of discipline is owning the beach. Unfortunately, most of us would choose today’s pleasure over tomorrow’s fortune.

So how can you get rid of the easy distractions? How can you keep your mind on what you're trying to do? How can you keep an attitude of doing it all and doing it now? How can you make the choice of discipline over procrastination? How can you stay focused on your ambitions? How can you avoid conversations at the water cooler?

You can keep your focus on your work. You can get it done today instead of tomorrow. You can do your socializing when your work is done. You've got to really work on your consistent self-discipline on a daily basis. Otherwise, you'll find yourself distracted. Distracted by negative thoughts. Distracted by negative people. Distracted by water-cooler chatter. And pretty soon, depending on the type of people you associate with, distracted by self-doubt. Never underestimate the power of influence and associations. And never underestimate the power of your own consistent self-discipline.

# Improving the Quality of Your Life

*L***et me give** you some keys to discipline. Start with the little things and work up to the big ones. The little things are minor things you can do to make your life better and make you feel better about yourself. Make a list of them. Life will give you some pretty big challenges, but unless you practice on the small ones and master those, you don't have a chance on the major ones. A man strides out of his house to go straighten out the corporation, and he has not yet straightened out his garage. Who's he kidding? So work on all the disciplines, small as well as large, that will improve the quality of your life.

And here is an important thought: everything affects everything else. Every lack of discipline affects every other discipline. Mistakenly, the man says, "This is the only area I failed." It's obvious that's not true. Every failure, no matter how small, affects the rest of your performance.

Now here is the positive side: every new discipline affects every other discipline. Every new thing you try affects the rest of your performance. Isn't that exciting? So get started on every small discipline you can think of. You can't believe what it will do for your self-confidence. Remember, the greatest deterrent to success is lack of self-confidence; and lack of self-confidence comes from not doing what you could do.

Next comes self-motivation. Really, that's the only kind of motivation there is. I was on a lecture tour in Australia not long ago, and the press interviewed me. They asked, "Mr. Rohn, are you one of those American motivators?" I said, "No, I'm a businessman. I can share my ideas and my experiences, but people have got to motivate themselves."

I've discovered that you can't change people. They can change themselves, but you can't change them. Lord knows I've tried. I had a super group of salespeople back in those early days. I said, "I'm going to make them successful if it kills me." Guess what? I almost did! It can't be done.

Good people are found, not changed. If you want good people, you have to find them. That's the best answer I can give you. If you want motivated people, you have to find them, not motivate them. The first rule of management is this: don't send your ducks to eagle school. Why? Because it won't work. I've tried it all. I picked up a magazine not long ago in New York that had a full-page ad in it for a hotel chain. The first line of the ad was, "We do not teach our people to be nice." Now that got my attention. The second line said, "We simply hire nice people." I thought, what a clever shortcut!

Motivation is a mystery. Why are some people motivated and some are not? Why does one salesperson see his first prospect at seven in the morning while another sees his first prospect at eleven in the morning? Why would one start at seven and the other start at eleven? I don't know. I call it "mysteries of the mind."

I give lectures to a thousand people at a time. One walks out and says, "I'm going to change my life." Someone else walks out with a yawn and says, "I've heard all this stuff before." Why is that? Why aren't they both affected to the same extent? I don't know. Mysteries of the mind.

The wealthy man says to a thousand people, "I read this book, and it started me on the road to wealth." Guess how many of the thousand go out and get the book? Answer: very few. Isn't that incredible? Why wouldn't everyone go get the book? Mysteries of the mind.

To one person, you have to say, "You'd better slow down. You can't work that many hours, do that many things, go, go, go. You're going to have a heart attack and die." And to another person, you have to say, "When are you ever going to get off the couch?" What is the difference? It's called mysteries of the mind. Why wouldn't everyone strive to be wealthy and happy? I don't know. Mysteries of the mind.

So be self-motivated. Don't give that job away to someone else. The guy says, "Boy, if someone will just come by and turn me on." Hey, what if he doesn't show up? You've got to have a better plan for your life. You've got to have

discipline.

# Doing Your Best

***I*'ve got a** good question for you. Is the best you can do *all* you can do? Strangely enough, the answer is no. Imagine dropping to the floor right now and doing as many push-ups as you possibly can—and let's say for some reason you haven't been doing any push-ups lately, so the best you can do is five.

But is five all you can *ever* do? The answer is no. If you rest a little, you can do five more. And if you rest a little more, you can do five more. How did we get from five to fifteen? It's a miracle!

If you continue that pattern, is it possible to get up to fifty push-ups? Of course! How do you go from five to fifty? It's a miracle!

So how do you get that miracle going? It's all a matter of discipline. And it begins with one simple step: doing what you can do. Once you have done that, you can keep working to bring your best to a higher level. Each time you complete an activity and take a rest, you're preparing yourself for even greater accomplishment. But here is a note of caution: don't rest too long.

Why? Because the weeds can take over the garden. You've probably noticed that kids have that figured out. Here's how they keep things moving: they take rest as a necessity, not an objective. The objective of life is not to rest. The objective of life is to act, to think of more disciplines.

Think of more ways and means to use your own wisdom, your own philosophy. Use your own attitude, your own faith, your own courage, your own commitment, your own desires, your own excitement. Invest yourself in discipline so your talents are not wasted. The smallest of disciplines can thereby transform your life.

Join that small percentage of truly disciplined people and discover what your best truly is.

# Reaping a Multiple Reward

*F***or every disciplined** effort, there are multiple rewards. That's one of life's great arrangements. In fact, it's an extension of that Biblical law that says that if you sow well, you will reap well.

Here's a unique part of the Law of Sowing and Reaping. Not only does it suggest that we'll all reap what we've sown, it also suggests that we'll reap much more. Life is full of laws that both govern and explain behaviors, but this may well be the major law we need to understand: for every disciplined effort, there are multiple rewards.

What a concept! If you render unique service, your reward will be multiplied. If you're fair and honest and patient with others, your reward will be multiplied. If you give more than you expect to receive, your reward is more than you expect. But remember: the key word here, as you might well imagine, is discipline.

Everything of value requires care, attention, and discipline. Children require discipline. They must have a structure built for them. They must have boundaries to work within so they feel secure and comfortable to explore and grow. They must learn to recognize what's right and what's wrong, what's acceptable behavior and what's not acceptable. Children require constant and consistent discipline. Otherwise, they'll be confused as to how they're supposed to behave.

Likewise, our thoughts require discipline. We must consistently determine our inner boundaries and our codes of conduct, or our thoughts will be confused. And if our thoughts are confused, we will become hopelessly lost in the maze of life. Confused thoughts produce confused results.

Remember the law: "For every disciplined effort, there are multiple rewards." Learn the discipline of writing a card or a letter to a friend. Learn the discipline of paying your bills on time, arriving to appointments on time, or using your

time more effectively. Learn the discipline of paying attention, or paying your taxes. Or paying yourself. Learn the discipline of having regular meetings with your associates, or your spouse, or your child, or your parent. Learn the discipline of learning all you can learn, of teaching all you can teach, of reading all you can read.

For each discipline, multiple rewards. For each book, new knowledge. For each success, new ambition. For each challenge, new understanding. For each failure, new determination. Life is like that. Even the bad experiences of life provide their own special contribution.

But a word of caution here for those who neglect the need for care and attention to life's disciplines: everything has its price. Everything affects everything else. Neglect discipline, and there will be a price to pay. All things of value can be taken for granted with the passing of time.

That's what we call the Law of Familiarity. Without the discipline of paying constant, daily attention, we take things for granted. Be serious. Life's not a practice session.

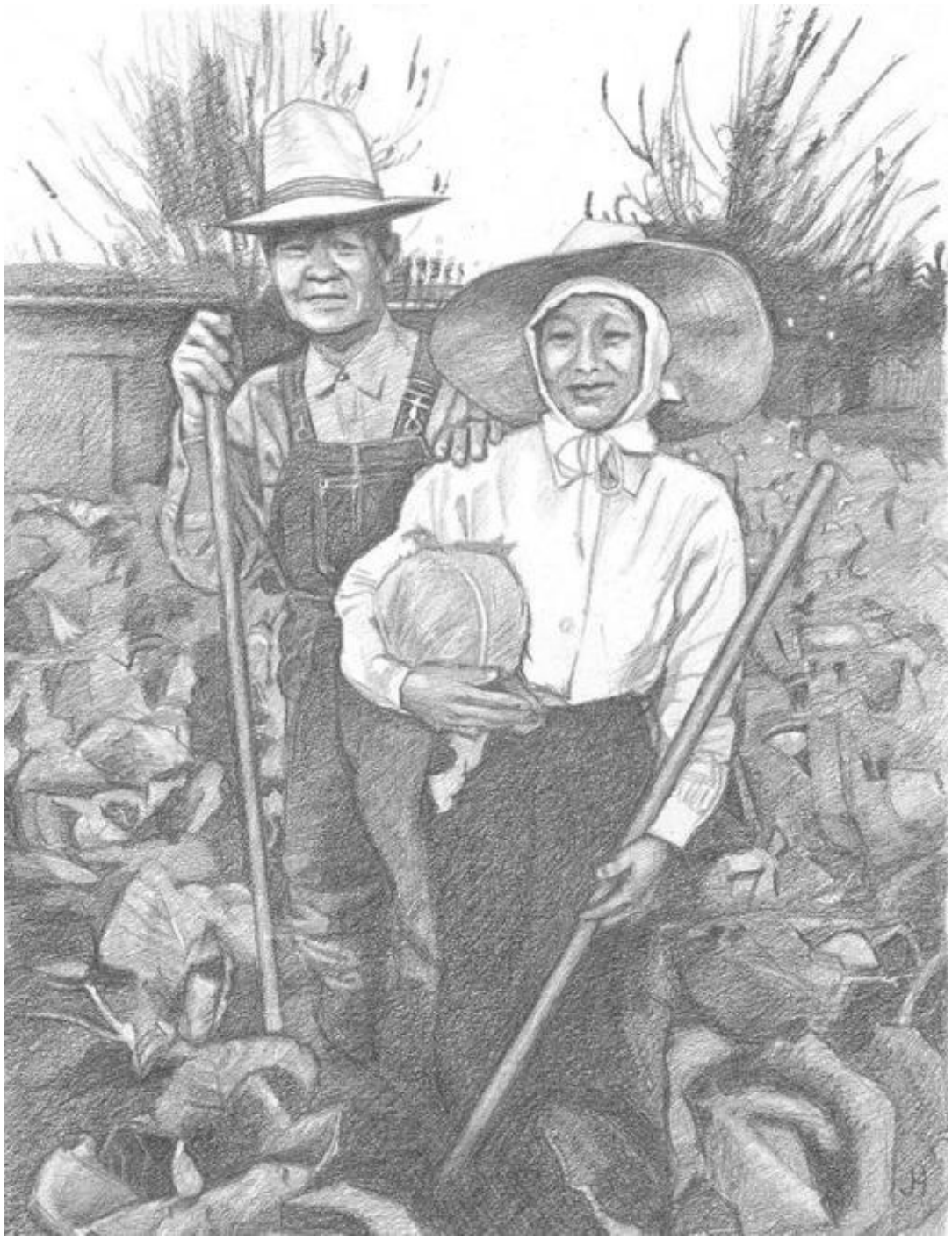
If you're often inclined to toss your clothes onto the chair rather than hang them in the closet, be careful. It could suggest a lack of discipline. And remember, a lack of discipline in the small areas of life can cost you heavily in the more important areas of life. You cannot clean up your company until you learn the discipline of cleaning your own garage. You cannot be impatient with your children and be patient with your distributors or your employees. You cannot inspire others to sell more when that goal is inconsistent with your own conduct. You cannot admonish others to read good books when you don't have a library card.

Think about your life at this moment. What areas need attention right now? Perhaps you've had a disagreement with someone you love or someone who loves you, and your anger won't allow you to speak to that person. Wouldn't this be an ideal time to examine your need for a new discipline?

Perhaps you're on the brink of giving up, or starting over, or starting out. And the only missing ingredient to your incredible success story in the future is a new and self-imposed discipline that will make you try harder and work more intensely than you ever thought you could.

The most valuable form of discipline is the one that you impose upon yourself. Don't wait for things to deteriorate so drastically that someone else must impose discipline into your life. Wouldn't that be tragic? How could you possibly explain the fact that someone else thought more of you than you thought of yourself? That they forced you to get up early and get out into the marketplace when you would have been content to let success go to someone else who cared more about themselves?

Your life, my life, the life of each one of us is going to serve as either a warning or an example. A warning of the consequences of neglect, self-pity, lack of direction and ambition… or an example of talent put to use, of discipline self-imposed, and of objectives clearly perceived and intensely pursued.



***Like farmers, we all reap the fruits of what we have sown... For every disciplined effort, there are multiple rewards.***

# Price vs. Promise

**Our lives are** affected by two major things: one is *price*, and the other is *promise*. And it's not that easy to pay the price if you can't see the promise.

I think kids are having problems these days trying to pay the price because they can't see the promise. But nobody would mind paying the price if they could have a clear view of tomorrow—next week, or next month, or next year. If we had the assurance that everything were going to work out, do you think we would hesitate to pay? The answer is no, but everybody hesitates if the future isn't clear. So we've got to do two things to help our kids: help them see the promise and help them pay the price.

It is so much easier to pay the price if we can see the promise. My karate instructor said, "Mr. Rohn, you cannot believe the incredible feeling of walking down any city street unafraid." I said, "Let's get on with the classes." I was willing to sweat; I was willing to put myself through the paces to achieve that feeling.

What would you do for an extraordinary promise? The most unbelievable things. Would you crack the books? Would you burn the midnight oil? Would you engage in the extra thoughts and the extra disciplines if the promise were adequate? And the answer is, of course. But who wants to read, who wants to burn the midnight oil, who wants to put themselves through the paces if the promise isn't clear? Nobody. So do what it takes to discover what you truly want. Once you have seen and felt that ideal future, that promise of achievement, you will be ready and able to pay any price.

# The Time to Act

*E***ngaging in genuine** discipline requires that you develop the ability to take action. You don't need to be hasty if it isn't required, but you don't want to lose much time. Here's the time to act: when the idea is hot and the emotion is strong.

Let's say you would like to build your library. If that is a strong desire for you, what you've got to do is get the first book. Then get the second book. Take action as soon as possible, before the feeling passes and before the idea dims. If you don't, here's what happens. You fall prey to the Law of Diminishing Intent. We intend to take action when the idea strikes us. We intend to do something when the emotion is high. But if we don't translate that intention into action fairly soon, the urgency starts to diminish. And a month from now the passion is cold. A year from now it can't be found.

So take action. Set up a discipline when the emotions are high and the idea is strong, clear, and powerful. If somebody talks about good health and you're motivated by it, you need to get a book on nutrition. Get the book before the idea passes, before the emotion gets cold. Begin the process. Fall on the floor and do some push-ups. You've got to take action, otherwise the wisdom is wasted. The emotion soon passes unless you apply it to a disciplined activity. Discipline enables you to capture the emotion and the wisdom and translate them into action. The key is to increase your motivation by quickly setting up the disciplines. By doing so, you've started a whole new life process.

Here's the greatest value of discipline: self-worth, also known as self-esteem. Many people who are teaching self-esteem these days don't connect it to discipline. But once we sense the least lack of discipline within ourselves, it starts to erode our psyche. One of the greatest temptations is to just ease up a little bit. Instead of doing your best, you allow yourself to do just a little less than your best. Sure enough, you've started in the slightest way to decrease your sense of self-worth.

There’s a problem with even a little bit of neglect. Neglect starts as an infection. If you don’t take care of it, it becomes a disease. And one neglect leads to another. Worst of all, when neglect starts, it diminishes our self-worth.

Once this has happened, how can you regain your self-respect? All you have to do is start with the smallest discipline that corresponds to your own philosophy. Make the commitment: “I will discipline myself to achieve my goals so in the years ahead I can celebrate my successes.”

# Chapter Two
# *The Art of Personal Development*

*"It's not what happens in the world that determines the major part of your future. What happens, happens to us all. The key is what you do about it."*

*"Whether you're on your way to achieving your goals or you've already gotten there, you'll be as happy as you make up your mind to be—right now."*

*"Accepting responsibility is one of the highest forms of human maturity. A willingness to be accountable, to put yourself on the line, is really the defining characteristic of adulthood."*

*"Once we understand and accept the truth, the promise of the future is freed from the shackles of deception."*

# Starting the Process of Change

*O***f all the** things Mr. Shoaff taught me, the biggest challenge for me was personal development. It was hard to give up my old blame list. I was so comfortable blaming my shortcomings on the government, my negative relatives, the company, unions, the economy, interest rates, prices, and every other imaginable circumstance. It was quite a transition for me to change from blaming everyone and everything else to taking responsibility for my life.

But Mr. Shoaff made me realize the importance of making that transition with a simple statement. He said, “It’s not what happens in the world that determines the major part of your future. What happens, happens to us all. The key is what you do about it.” He encouraged me to start the process of change, to do something different in the following ninety days than I had done in the previous ninety days. And I’m asking you to do the same. Whether it’s picking up a book, starting a new health discipline, improving your relationship with your family—whatever it is, however small the action, you need to start the process.

Mr. Shoaff then gave me another secret to success when he said, “All that you have at the moment, Mr. Rohn, you’ve attracted by the person you are.” Once I began to understand this principle, it explained so much.

Mr. Shoaff continued, “Mr. Rohn, you’ve only got pennies in your pocket. You’ve got nothing in the bank. The creditors are calling, and you’re behind on your promises. Here’s how that occurred: misfortune has taken place because of the kind of person you are.” I said, “Well, how can I change all that?” He answered, “If you will change yourself, everything else will change for you. You don’t have to change what’s outside, all you’ve got to change is what’s inside. To have more, you simply have to become more.”

And then he said, “Don’t wish it were easier, wish that you were better. Don’t wish for fewer problems, wish for more skills. Start making these personal changes, and it will all change for you.” He was absolutely right.

# Preparing Yourself Mentally

*P***icture for a** moment a little wildebeest in Africa. Do you know how much time it has after birth to learn how to run with the pack so it's not eaten by the lions? A few minutes! As soon as the little wildebeest is born, it tries to stand up. When it falls down, its mother nudges it and gets it to stand back up. Then it falls back down.

Finally, on little shaky legs, it tries to nurse. The mother pushes it away. She moves so it can't nurse. Why? She's sending a message: you can't nurse now, you've got to develop some strength, or the lions will get you. You've got to get these legs strong. We don't have much time.

How long does this process take for a human baby? As a parent of grown children, I'm still not sure! It's unbelievable the amount of time it takes for personal development, for spiritual development, for physical development. But there's something else that takes time, and that's your mental development: feeding the mind. Some people read so infrequently that they've got rickets of the mind. They couldn't give you a good, strong argument as to their own personal beliefs.

Here's one of the challenges we have to face as parents: getting our kids ready to debate today's major life issues. They've got to develop their own well-informed opinions. You can help them do just that, but only if you first commit to doing it yourself.

And here's the next challenge. You've got to be able to defend your opinions. If you can't defend your virtues and if you can't defend your values, you'll fall prey to philosophies that are not in your best interest.

We've got to help our kids. They need to be well-informed about the major life issues: the political issues, the social issues, the religious issues, the spiritual

issues, and the economic issues.

You’ve got to get yourself and your kids ready for the great challenge of today: to develop your philosophy and defend your virtues and your values.

# The Principles of ‘Self-Making’

**When most people** think of Ben Franklin, they remember the kite and the lightning bolt and the discovery of electricity. What a lot of people may not know is that Ben Franklin was one of the first writers to address “self-making.” When Franklin started *Poor Richard’s Almanac* in 1732, he used the blank spaces between the crop data and the weather information to insert clever bits of moral and practical advice.

I’m sure you’ve heard the saying, “Fish and company start to stink in three days.” That was one of hundreds of Ben Franklin’s comments on life. Another was, “Diligence is the mother of good luck.” You know, it’s amazing how hard-working, intelligent people have all the luck!

We sometimes hear of a brand new musical group, an overnight success. They must have been in the right place at the right time… knew the right people… had a friend help them out. But if you’ve ever watched an interview with some of these folks, you’ll probably hear that their “overnight success” actually took several years! Diligence is the mother of good luck.

In addition to those witticisms, Ben Franklin gave us three principles of success that have withstood the test of time.

Number one: happiness doesn’t come from big pieces of great success but from small, daily achievements. What Mr. Franklin is saying is that we must be happy with what we’ve got when we’re in pursuit of what we really want.

Too often we say, “Oh, I’ll be happy when I just get that promotion. I’ll be happy when I just land that contract. I’ll be happy when I just have more money. I’ll be happy when I just…” Just what? You won’t be any happier when you reach your goals than you are right now. It just doesn’t work that way.

Abraham Lincoln said it best. He said, “You’ll be as happy as you make up your mind to be.” Whether you’re on your way or you’ve already gotten there, you’ll be as happy as you make up your mind to be—right now.

Being happy on the way doesn’t mean you can’t aim for great things. After all, look at everything Franklin accomplished in his lifetime. It means that big achievements come one small step at a time. It means that you’ve got to enjoy the journey. It means that you must enjoy and take pride in your little accomplishments. It means celebrating who you are becoming in pursuit of your larger goal. And it means doing so every single day.

Ben Franklin’s second principle was: life is not rigid. Within each of us lies the power to mold ourselves and our environment. It is up to each of us to begin this molding process with a final product in mind. And it is within your power to work on your goals regularly. By using your mind and your abilities, you’ll soon see how much power you have to achieve your goals. It takes little steps to build up to success.

Principle number three: success is a pleasure. If what you are doing today isn’t satisfying or gratifying, guess what! You’re really not successful. If you are not fulfilled with what you are doing today, you cannot possibly be successful. It doesn’t matter how many worldly possessions you own—how many cars, how many toys, how much money—if you are not happy with your life as it is, you cannot be successful.

I know that success is a relative term. It means different things to different people. To a school kid, success may mean a star on his latest test. To a homemaker, it probably means having a well-run household and a wonderful family. To a businessperson, it’s most likely the thrill of closing a major contract, the pride in accepting a performance bonus or being named the top-producing salesperson. But the one testimonial you will hear from all successful people is that they are happy with who they are and what they are doing. They are content, satisfied. Success is a pleasure.

What have you done today that makes this day successful? Think about it. Write

it down. If at the end of each day you can jot down the things that have made it a good day, you will soon see patterns forming. This really is a good habit to get into. When you can see a pattern of pleasure, you'll know you're on the road to success.

So take note of Mr. Franklin's three principles of success. Number one: big achievements come one step at a time, one day at a time. Number two: you have the power to mold your life. You can make it whatever you want. You can shape it and reshape it. And number three: success is measured through pleasure. This is the key principle. You've got to be happy along the way. You've got to learn to give yourself a pat on the back. You need to tell yourself, "I'm proud of me today!" You've got to learn to enjoy the process.

# Accepting Responsibility

*D***uring the years** when professional basketball was just beginning to become really popular, Bill Russell, who played center for the Boston Celtics, was one of the greatest players in the professional leagues. He was especially known for his rebounding and his defensive skills, but like a lot of very tall centers, Russell was never much of a free-throw shooter. In fact, his free-throw percentage was quite a bit below average. But this low percentage didn't really give a clear picture of Russell's ability as an athlete, and in one game he gave a very convincing performance.

It was the final game of a championship series between the Celtics and the Los Angeles Lakers. With about twelve seconds left to play, the Lakers were behind by one point and the Celtics had the ball. It was obvious that the Lakers would have to foul one of the Boston players in order to get the ball back, and they chose to foul Bill Russell.

This was a perfectly logical choice, since statistically, Russell was the worst free-throw shooter on the court. If he missed the shot, the Lakers would probably get the ball back, and they'd still have enough time to try to win the game. But if Russell made his first free throw, the Lakers' chances would be seriously diminished—and if he made both shots, the game would essentially be over.

Bill Russell had a very peculiar style of shooting free throws. Today, no self-respecting basketball player any-where in America would attempt to shoot this way. Aside from the question of whether it was an effective way to shoot a basket, it just looked too ridiculous.

Whenever he had to shoot a free throw, the six-foot-eleven-inch Russell would start off holding the ball in both hands, about waist-high. Then he'd squat down, and as he straightened up, he'd let go of the ball. It looked like he was trying to throw a bucket of dirt over a wall.

But regardless of how he looked, as soon as Russell was fouled, he knew the Celtics were going to win the game. He was absolutely certain of it, because in a situation like that, statistics and percentages meant nothing. There was a much more important factor at work, something that no one has yet found a way to express in numbers and decimal points. Simply put, Bill Russell was a player who wanted to take responsibility for the success or failure of his team. He had no reason for excuses, no possibility of blaming anybody else if the game was lost, no second guessing. Bill Russell wanted the ball in his own hands and nobody else's.

Even if he'd missed every free throw he'd ever shot in his life, he knew he was going to make this one.

And that is exactly what happened. That is what virtually always happens when a man or woman eagerly and confidently accepts responsibility.

I've always felt that accepting responsibility is one of the highest forms of human maturity. A willingness to be accountable, to put yourself on the line, is really the defining characteristic of adulthood.

Anyone who has raised children knows how true this is. Just look at a baby during the first few years of life. Every gesture, every facial expression, every tentative word has one message for the baby's parents.

The message is: "I am totally dependent on you. I can't do anything for myself, and even if I try, I can't be held responsible for the consequences. After all, I'm just a baby!"

Ten or twelve years later, of course, as the boy or girl enters adolescence, the message to parents will be very different. It will sound something like this: "Why don't you just leave me alone? I want to be totally independent. I don't want to do anything but think about myself. I certainly don't want to accept any responsibility for anything beyond my own well-defined needs and desires."

It’s only when we’re at last grown up that the first two messages—“I am totally dependent on you,” and “I am totally independent of you”—finally turn into “You can depend on me,” which is the truly adult outlook. Strange as it may seem, of course, there are people in their thirties and forties who are still acting like adolescents. And there are even people in their forties and fifties who are still acting like babies as far as their attitude toward responsibility is concerned. These kinds of people can be hard to have around, especially if you have to work with them, but the large number of people who shirk responsibility can also provide opportunities for you. If you decide to be one of the few who embraces responsibility, you can lead and you will deserve to lead. Churchill said, “Responsibility is the price of greatness.” And in my opinion, it’s really a rather small price to pay.

***Anyone who has raised children knows how important it is to accept responsibility. In the first few years of life, every gesture and expression a baby makes indicates that she is dependent on her parents.***

# Increasing Your Value to the Marketplace

*W***e get paid** for bringing value to the marketplace. That is a simple statement of economics. We don't get paid for the number of hours we work; we get paid for value.

Since that's true, is it possible to become twice as valuable and make twice as much money in the same amount of time? The answer is: of course. Could you become three times more valuable than you are right now and make three times as much money in the same time? The answer is: of course. Could you become twenty times more valuable than you are right now to the marketplace and make twenty times as much money in the same time? The answer is: of course.

Becoming successful in America is like climbing a ladder. This ladder starts at minimum wage and reaches all the way to two hundred million dollars a year—and more. Why would the marketplace pay someone only minimum wage? The answer is, he or she is not very valuable to the marketplace. That person might be a valuable sibling, a valuable member of the family, a valuable member of the church, or a valuable citizen of the country. Of course, he or she is valuable in the sight of God. We're all of equal value in the sight of God. But if you're not very valuable to the marketplace, you won't earn much money.

Why would the marketplace pay someone fifty dollars an hour? The answer is, evidently, he or she must be that valuable to the marketplace. Why would the marketplace pay someone five hundred dollars an hour? Evidently, he or she must be that valuable. Why would a company pay one person two hundred million for a year's work? Evidently, this person must be very valuable.

Would any company pay one person two hundred million dollars? The answer is yes. If that person helped a company make four billion dollars, they would be more than happy to give him or her two hundred million dollars a year.

You can learn to increase your value to the marketplace. Mr. Shoaff taught me how to climb this ladder, and here's what he said: "Work harder on yourself than you do on your job." That bit of economic philosophy changed my life.

Up until the age of twenty-five, I worked hard on my job and made a living. Starting at age twenty-five, I worked hard on myself, and I made a fortune. And I learned a valuable lesson: success is not something you pursue. Success is something you attract because of the person you become. What you pursue usually eludes you like the butterfly you can't quite catch. But if you want to be successful, you must attract success by developing the skills and the appropriate mind-set. What you learn about the marketplace and its goods and services… that's what's valuable. The key to getting paid very well in the marketplace is to develop very valuable skills.

# The Promise of the Future

*L***et me tell** you what I think messes up the mind the most: doing less than you can. It causes all kinds of psychic damage. Being less than you can be—trying less than you can try—somehow damages your mind, your self-image.

Here's what I've discovered: the minute you turn this cycle around and start motivating yourself, you'll see immediate rewards. Maybe not monetary ones, not yet. But it's how you feel about yourself that's of the greatest value. Discover all you can do. See how much you can earn, how much you can share, how much you can start, how much you can finish, how far you can reach, and how far you can extend your influence.

Some people out there would have us believe that positive affirmation is more important than activity. Instead of doing something constructive to change their lives, they would have us repeating slogans and canned affirmations like, "Every day and in every way, I'm getting better and better."

Well, improving our lives doesn't just happen with wishful thinking. Getting better and better only happens with the discipline of doing better and better. Discipline is the requirement for progress. And affirmations without discipline are—in all reality—delusions.

Affirmations can be effective as long as you remember two very important rules. Number one, you should never allow affirmation to replace action. Feeling better is no substitute for doing better. And number two, whatever you choose to affirm must be the truth.

If the truth happens to be that you're broke, the best affirmation would be to simply say, "I'm broke." Face it. Accept it. Be responsible for it. And change it. By admitting that you're broke, by saying it out loud, you'll probably be disgusted enough to start thinking about how to change the situation. Anyone

saying “I’m broke” with any conviction will most likely be motivated to take action.

Confronting harsh realities has an incredible effect. Confronting the truth and then disciplining yourself—instead of failing to take responsibility—inevitably leads to positive change.

Reality is always the best beginning. You see, within reality lies the possibility to create your own personal miracle. And the power of faith starts with reality. If you can bring yourself to state the truth about a situation, then, as the saying goes, the truth will set you free.

Here’s another old saying. “Faith isn’t faith unless it’s all you’re holding onto.” If your life and your circumstances have resulted in a situation that is ugly, call it ugly. If you’ve lost it all, admit that you’ve lost it all. Be responsible for it. And if faith is all you’ve got left, use it. Create your own personal miracle.

Once you understand and accept the truth, the promise of the future is freed from the shackles of deception. Once you accept the truth, the promise of the future will pull you forward.

# Maintaining the Physical

**Ancient scripture says,** "Treat your body like a temple." That is excellent advice. Treat your body like a temple, like something you'd take extremely good care of. Not a woodshed, a temple. And here's why.

The mind and the body work together. You've got to have both functioning well. Here's one of the best ways I've come to look at the connection between the two. Your body needs to be a good support system for the mind and the spirit. Your body must support you with the strength, energy, power, and vitality to take you wherever you want to go.

Here's a major part of success: vitality. Some people don't do well simply because they don't feel well. Feeling well is a personal responsibility. You need to take care of the temple. Cherish it!

Ancient scripture says, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." That's a sad combination. It's hard to think of a much more pitiful combination than a willing spirit and a weak body. You wake up in the morning and the mind says, "Let's go get 'em." And the body says, "I can't even get out of bed!" So you have a conversation with yourself, and the mind says, "That's the last time you're going to fail me. Don't give me the excuse that you can't get out of bed. I'll drive you to your knees to do push-ups until you're exhausted. I've got these plans for fortune and enterprise. And there's one thing that I'm going to demand: a strong, unbelievably powerful support system. And from now on, I'm going to have a support system that'll take me wherever I want to go. It will support me with power, vitality, strength, and zest. Anything less than that, I will not settle for."

I'm telling you, it's so important to take care of your physical self. Be conscious of your support system. Be conscious of yourself. But don't be self-conscious. Don't work on it too much. You don't have to spend six hours a day to have a good support system. Thirty minutes to an hour a day, and you can have a strong, healthy body.

What is adequate exercise? You can do just a few simple things. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. When you're looking for a parking space, don't look for one that's right by the front door; park a block away and get in a little bit of exercise. Pick the exercise program that'll work for you, one that you'll perform, one that won't bore you or hurt you.

If you don't like to jog, if your joints can't handle it, go for a walk. If you don't like to walk, take up swimming half a mile a few times a week. If you don't like exercise that seems like exercise, get into a sport like tennis, racquetball, basketball, or softball. You don't have to do too much, just enough to give your body a good workout.

Here's what else happens when you participate in a regular exercise program: you just plain feel better in both body and mind. It's kind of a paradox, but the more physical activity you do, the less sleep you need, and the better your mind works.

We've all heard of the runner's high. Well, it's not just a myth. Twenty to thirty minutes of sustained activity starts releasing endorphins into your bloodstream. And endorphins are your body's natural version of morphine! No wonder they call it a runner's high!

Take care of your physical health so you can achieve your goals. You will then have the muscle, strength, and vitality to take you wherever you want to go and accomplish whatever you want. Develop a good exercise program, and you can make all your dreams come true.

# Taking Care of the Temple

*M***y mother studied** health and lived to pass what she learned along to me, my father, my children, and my grandchildren. What a legacy that was! Learning to take care of yourself is one of the most important lessons in life. Some people don't *do* well because they don't *feel* well. They've got the gifts, they've got the skills. Maybe they just haven't taken care of themselves. They don't have the vitality. If you want to avoid that unhappy situation, you need to take care of yourself.

I know a man who raises race horses. He's so careful how he feeds his horses, that they get everything they could possibly need. And because of that extreme care, these are magnificent animals. They can run like the wind. But you ought to see this guy. After ten steps up a flight of stairs, he's out of breath. His horses can run like the wind, and he can hardly make it up the steps. The guy takes care of his animals better than he takes care of himself.

Would you want that said about you? All it takes is a few minutes a day. A small study of exercise and nutrition, a little more focus, and you can have the good health that you deserve.

# Chapter Three
# *Setting Compelling Goals*

*"Go where the expectations are so strong that they provoke you, push you, urgently insist that you not remain in one place. That way, you will grow and change."*

*"Achievement depends on effective goal setting and monitoring in the same way that a successful drive to the grocery store depends on knowing when to apply the brakes and step on the gas pedal."*

*"Ambitious people know that everything they do and every discipline they adhere to form the links in the chain of events that will lead them to their final destination."*

# Knowing Where You're Going

**Goals are important** for a genuinely success-oriented person. Without them, you're just playing around. The difference between a goal-directed individual and someone without goals is like the difference between a Wimbledon champion and a kid batting a tennis ball around on a court with no net, no opponent to bring out the best in him, and no way of keeping score.

Despite everything that's been written about the importance of goal setting, very few people actually put it into practice. It's always amazed me, the way the average person devotes more thought and effort to planning his or her two-week vacation than to planning his life.

Goals represent challenge in its most positive form. Leaders have their personal goals, as well as those of their organization, clearly in focus. In fact, one of the principle responsibilities of leadership is defining goals for the vast majority of people who aren't able to do it for themselves.

Over the years, I've developed some ideas about effective goal setting, and I'd like to share those with you. I also want to point out some traps of goal-directed behavior that aren't usually talked about but certainly ought to be.

When I was a kid, I used to dream what it would be like to buy a ticket on a train and just go someplace. I didn't really think about where I'd be going or how long it would take to get there. I just loved the idea of getting on the train and letting it take me someplace.

I guess there's still something appealing about that idea, but it's not really the way you should live your life as a mature human being. When you grow up, you buy a ticket on a train or a plane because you want to go someplace and you know exactly where you're going.

You may have to change planes in a different city, your flight may be canceled, or you may have to switch to another flight. You may not feel like talking to the person seated next to you. But you will persist. You know where you're headed, and you're quite determined to get there. That's goal-directed behavior in its simplest form.

There are short-term goals and long-term goals. Sometimes, you're flying across the country; other times, you're just walking down to the corner grocery store. Long-term goals are the equivalent of a major journey. When you reach the point where you've achieved your long-term goals, your life will be fundamentally changed, and the process of getting to that point will have transformed you into a stronger, wiser, and higher-performing person.

How can you identify your long-term goals? On a sheet of paper or in a notebook, write these five headings:

(1) What do I want to do?

(2) Who do I want to be?

(3) What do I want to see?

(4) What do I want to have?

(5) Where do I want to go?

Under each of these categories, write down several possible long-term goals. Be very relaxed about this. Just allow your mind to flow, and come up with three to six ideas for each category. Don't worry about a lot of details at this point, and don't spend too much time describing a particular goal.

For example, refer to category one. Suppose you want to write a book about the

history of your family going back to the arrival of your great-grandparents in the United States. Just quickly jot down, “family history.” Then it occurs to you that you’ve always wanted to see the pyramids in Egypt, so you write “pyramids.”

Keep writing down ideas as long as the list of categories continues to inspire you. You’ll probably be surprised at some of the things that turn up. You may have kept a great many desires and aspirations hidden in the back of your mind, but the opportunity to write them down will move them to the forefront of your consciousness. That’s one of the benefits of this technique.

When you’re satisfied with your list of long-term goals, read through the list once again. Then beside each item, write the number of years that you believe it will take you to achieve that particular goal.

It’s best to round off the numbers into one-year, three-year, five-year, and ten-year time frames.

For example, you may estimate that it will take you ten years to research and write the book on your family history, but you’ll need only five years to reach a position where you can take a trip to the pyramids. Create a time frame like this for every one of your long-term goals.

When you’re finished entering your time frames, there should be a fairly balanced distribution for all your goals. If there are many one- and three-year objectives but only a few in the ten-year category, maybe you need to think more about what you really want your life to add up to… what kind of life you really want to build over the long run. But if there’s a preponderance of ten-year goals and relatively few of the shorter-term variety, this may be an indication that you tend to put things off. Keep working on your list, adding and subtracting goals with various time frames, until you’ve created a more or less even distribution.

Now comes the really challenging and interesting part. So far you’ve just been adding things to the list, but now it’s time to start making some selections. Now you’re going to start asking yourself what’s really important compared to what

might just be fun.

Choose four goals from each of the four time frames: one-year, three-year, five-year, and ten-year. You now have sixteen separate goals. So far you've only referred to them in short-hand fashion, but now you're going to start seeing them very clearly in your mind's eye. You're going to see each goal just as if it were being realized this very minute, and you're going to write down a detailed description of exactly what you see.

Do you intend to open a handmade-furniture store in three years? What will the store look like from the street? Will there be gold leaf lettering on the windows, or will there be a sign hanging over the door instead? How many square feet will the store contain? Will there be a showroom area for the furniture in front and a work space in back, or will the furniture be built at a different location? Do you intend to have any employees, or will you run the business entirely by yourself?

Think of all the questions that need to be answered in order to see your goal with absolute clarity, and then write the information down. That written record will become one of your most important personal possessions.

But that's not all. Any goal is a powerful motivator only if there's a powerful reason behind it. Why do you want to achieve your goals? Why do you want to own a handmade furniture store, or a private airplane, or a newspaper in a small town in Vermont? Why do you want to compete in a triathlon, or visit the Australian outback, or be the first woman in your family to earn a Ph.D.? Write down your reasons for wanting each goal in the same degree of detail that you used to write your descriptions. If you can't find a clear and convincing reason for each of your sixteen goals, do some serious reevaluating. You may have more whims or pipe dreams than real goals, and now is the right time to make that discovery.

Keep working on your list until you have sixteen clearly envisioned, strongly motivating long-term goals. At regular intervals, review what you've written, and keep careful track of your progress toward these objectives. Above all, persevere! Goal setting is a very important first step, but goal achievement is a

continuous, lifelong process. That's what makes it so challenging. That's also why it's so extremely rewarding to finally attain your long-term goals.

***Imagine your completed goals and write down a detailed description of what***

***you see. If you would like to open a handmade-furniture store, picture what it might look like from the street.***

# Becoming a Millionaire

*L***et me give** you a scenario for setting your goals. When I started making my first list, Mr. Shoaff said, “Mr. Rohn, it looks like we’re going to be together for a while. I’ve got a suggestion for you. You are a twenty-five-year-old American male. Sure, you’ve made some mistakes, but now you’re on the road to better things. You’ve got the motivation to make a difference. This is America. The possibilities are endless. Why don’t you set a goal of becoming a millionaire? *Millionaire*… it’s got a nice ring to it.”

As he was about to explain why becoming a millionaire is a worthy goal, I thought, the man doesn’t need to teach me why. It would be great to have a million dollars! But he had a reason that was infinitely more compelling than mine. It is one of the greatest lessons I have ever learned, and I’m about to share it with you.

Here’s what Mr. Shoaff said: “Set a goal of becoming a millionaire for what it will make of you to achieve it. Set a goal that will make you reach for the stars.” What a great reason for setting goals! And here’s why: the greatest value in life is not what you obtain; the greatest value in life is what you become along the way.

The major question to ask on the job is not, “What am I getting here?” A much more powerful question is “What am I becoming here?” It’s not what you get that makes you valuable; it’s what you become along the way that makes you valuable.

Then Mr. Shoaff explained, “When you finally have become a millionaire, what’s important is not the money. You can just give the money away.” I did better than that. I lost it all! I was rich by the age of thirty-one—a millionaire!—and I was broke by the age of thirty-three. I didn’t have to give it all away, because I lost it all. I made many foolish mistakes.

You see, as a farm boy from Idaho, that early money drove me bonkers. If I saw something I liked, I would ask, “How many colors does it come in? I’ll buy them all!” I just went crazy.

What an experience that was. I learned that Mr. Shoaff was right. When I found myself broke at age thirty-three, I discovered for myself that the money did not mean that much. It represented only a fraction of all my assets. And when I began concentrating on these other assets—my skills, my discipline, my family—the money came back into my life.

Let me give you the key phrase of setting goals: set the kind of goals that will make you a better person when you achieve them… or when you are in the process of achieving them. Always ask yourself, “What will this goal make of me? If I set this goal and go forward, how will this change me in the process?” What a wonderful new concept in the setting of goals!

# Two Rules for Goal Setting

*I* **have two important** rules for setting goals. By following these rules, you will achieve a great deal and become more than you ever could have imagined.

Here's the first rule: don't set your goals too low. In leadership training, we teach a similar guideline: don't join an "easy" crowd. You won't grow. Go where the expectations are high. Go where the demands are high. Go where the pressure is to perform, to grow, to change, to read, to study, to develop new skills.

I belong to a small group of people that conducts business around the world. You would not believe what we expect of each other in terms of excellence. Why? So that we can each grow. So that we can contribute something unprecedented to the benefit of the group.

It's called "living at the summit." Go where the demands are high. Go where the expectations are so strong that they motivate you, push you, urgently insist that you not remain in the same place. That way, you will grow and change. So don't set your goals too low. What about the guy who says, "Well, I don't need much"? He is guaranteed not to become much.

Here's rule number two for setting goals: don't compromise. Don't sell out. There were some things back in the early years for which I paid too big a price. If I had known how much it was going to cost me, I never would have paid that price, but I didn't know it at the time. So don't sell out, and, as the old saying goes, "Count the costs."

Remember, in that ancient story, Judas got the money. That sounds like a success story. And it is true that thirty pieces of silver in those days was a sizeable fortune. But having a name that is synonymous with traitor is not what I would call a success story.

Interestingly enough, when Judas got the money after becoming a traitor, he was unhappy. He wasn't unhappy with the money. He was unhappy with himself. You see, the greatest source of unhappiness doesn't come from the outside world. The greatest source of unhappiness comes from within.

To alleviate his unhappiness, Judas tried to return the money. But no one would take it back. So he decided to just throw the money away. Why would he throw his fortune away? Because he was so unhappy with himself.

Of course, that wasn't the end of the scenario. Throwing his fortune away did not change what Judas had become: a traitor. In total frustration, he hung himself.

Why did Judas have such a tragic end? Because he was so unhappy with himself. He sold out. He paid too big a price. Don't compromise your values. Don't compromise your virtue. Don't compromise your philosophy.

There are two words from ancient scripture you need to keep in mind. The first is beware. This is the negative word. Be aware of what you become in pursuit of what you want. Don't sell out. Indeed, if Judas were to advise us today, he would tell us to beware.

The second word, behold, is the positive one. Behold the possibilities and the opportunity. Behold the drama, behold the awesomeness, behold the uniqueness. Behold the majesty. What a positive word, behold.

Set the kind of goals that will transform your life, that will make you far better than you are, far stronger than you currently are. And you will behold.

# Putting It Down on Paper

***I'*****ve been encouraging** you to set lofty, noble goals. But it's important to have a little fun in the process, too.

On my first list of goals, I had a little revenge. My target was a man from Budget Finance who used to harass me. I got two or three payments behind, and one guy called incessantly, saying, "We're going to come get your car and tow it up and down the street in front of your neighbors." Whoa! He really tried to put me down. When I got my life straightened out, one of the first priorities on my list was Budget Finance. And when I finally had enough money for my back payments, I needed a little drama. I got the money in small bills and put it in a big briefcase. I walked into the Budget Finance office in Los Angeles and found the guy who harassed me so much. I went up to his desk and stood right in front of him.

He said, "Well, what are you doing here?" And I didn't say a word. I just opened up the briefcase and dumped a pile of money all over his desk, saying, "Count it. It's all there. I'll never be back." Then I turned around, walked out, and slammed the door.

That might not be noble, but you've got to try it at least one time. Pay off your debts with a little drama. I got to check them off my list.

What you have on your list is up to you. I keep my original list in my journal so I can go back five years and see where my priorities were. Often, I'm a little embarrassed when I go back to look at what I wrote and see what I thought was so important. Things like how my philosophy has changed from ten years ago, five years ago, even three years ago. I compare my old list with my new list.

But what's most important is what's valuable to me now, what I want my life to be now, where I want to go and what I want to do now.

Keep all of your lists of goals because they illustrate your ability to grow. They show your ability to change. And they show how your philosophy grows and expands. That’s valuable information.

# The Self-Knowledge Acid Test

**One thing you** may not be thinking about now is preparing for the day you reach your goals: being ready, being worthy, becoming the person you need to be in pursuit of what you want. What good is an opportunity if you're not prepared to take advantage of it? It's no good. It won't do a thing for you. Be prepared.

To help you with this preparation, here's what's called the "Self-Knowledge Acid Test." Quickly, without thinking too much about it, list your three most important long-term, work-related goals. Is there a client you've been trying to sign for several months? Is there a major sale you've been trying to make? Are you hoping for a promotion or a partnership in the firm? These are objectives that you want to achieve, that will take a while to get. Write them down.

Again, without thinking too much about it, quickly list your three most important personal and spiritual goals. These are the things that will make a difference in your personal life. Do you want to go to church more often than just on holidays, grasping all you can from the Sunday sermon? Do you want to spend more quality time with your kids? Do you want to turn the TV off during the dinner hour and actually talk about the important things in life with your family? Do you want to make more dates with your spouse? Do you want to plan a much-needed family vacation? What do you want?

What are your most important health-related goals? Do you want to make a conscious effort to exercise more? To eat better? To lose some weight? To get in shape? What are the three most important personal and spiritual goals that you have? Write them down. It doesn't matter what they are. Just make a note of them.

Take some time to really visualize what the achievement of these goals would mean to you. What does your future hold for you if you land that big client? What does your future look like if you get that promotion, if you spend more time with your family, if you plan more outings with your spouse? Really spend

some time on this. It’s important. What does it all look like?

Ask yourself, “Is this really my goal? Is this what I truly want? Is it a positive goal? Is it important enough to me to become what it takes to reach this goal? Is it worth it?”

If your three goals on the career side and three goals on the personal side don’t stand up to this scrutiny, you need to take some time to carefully redefine a few things. Redefine your list. Figure out the origin of these goals, what actually is important to you, and how hard you’ll really work to achieve them.

When your goals are truly important and meaningful to you, you will not only eventually achieve them, you will also deserve all of the rewards that you reap in the process of doing so.

# Progress Through Self-Preparation

**Self-preparation is a** discipline that has two benefits. The first is that it moves you towards your goal. You've already got it in your mind. You know where you want to go. You're getting ready for it. You're doing all the things you're supposed to do. By getting ready to achieve your goals, you're moving closer to them.

The second major benefit to self-preparation is that is refuels your mission. The things that you are doing today are getting you ready for tomorrow. It's exciting. You know that you're getting closer every day. Your ambition must be kept alive. It must continue to move forward—otherwise, you're just daydreaming. You must keep active and keep moving forward so your ambition can fuel you and motivate you to reach where you want to be.

This method of self-preparation involves three steps. Step one: carefully consider where the next opportunity for reaching your goal will originate. Where will it come from? Will it come from networking with your colleagues? Will it come from reading the last book that you bought—the book that's still sitting on your shelf waiting to give you some answers? Carefully consider the next opportunity that will push you forward toward your goal.

If you don't know where the next opportunity will originate, here's what you have to do. For each of your major goals, take out a separate piece of paper. Write down your goal at the top, and start listing all reasonable resources. Write down every possible place where you could find the opportunity to achieve this goal. Then classify each resource. Ask yourself, "Is this resource a sure thing? A good bet? Or is it unlikely? A long shot?" Ask yourself these questions, and classify all of the resources you have written down. That's the first step.

The second step in this method of self-preparation is to make sure you know what you need to do to be prepared for your opportunities. Take your "sure things" first. Figure out what you need to do to be prepared when they happen.

Break down your preparation into concrete steps. Make sure that you know exactly what you have to do to take advantage of the opportunity when it comes your way.

Let's say that one of the top priorities on your career list of goals is to get a particular new client. Let's take it one step further and say that on your resource list for this goal, you'd like to have a lunch meeting with a friend who just happens to be the mentor of the client you're going after. Is this friend of yours a "sure bet" on your resource list? Suppose he is. You know this guy is a tremendous consulting source for the client you want, and the client you want really listens to the opinions and advice of your friend.

So you're getting ready to have lunch with your friend. What do you do? You've got to make sure that you're well-informed about all the information and industry statistics that will impress your friend. You want to make him realize that he knows someone who could benefit from your knowledge, vitality, spirit, and experience. Impress him so much that he goes back to his friend, the client you're after, and tells this prospective client of yours that he needs to do business with you.

In order to make this particular scenario a reality, go through your entire list of goals and resources and classify them. Break each resource into concrete steps of preparation. Start by working on the "sure bets" first, and then move down the line. The "long shots" will come through every so often. But start with the resources that will serve you best now. Get ready for the opportunities before they come your way.

Step three in the self-preparation method is to do all you can to make each opportunity more likely to happen. After you've determined what you have to do to get ready, see what you can do to expedite the process. What can you do to increase the likelihood of this opportunity taking place?

Go over your notes again and again. Continually use these three methods as you assess where you are now and where you need to go next to keep moving toward the achievements that are most important to you.

By the way, this method of self-preparation works wherever you are in your journey. Whether you're close to your goals or you're just starting your journey, this method works.

Have a base of knowledge to draw from. Build a reservoir of thoughts, ideas, philosophies, and experiences that are your own. Get ready to grow and change. And be prepared for a life worth living.

# Tracking Your Progress

*I***f you want** to drive from your home to a store on the other side of town, you'll need an automobile with gas in the tank and the keys to start the car. But you'll also need to know how to drive. You'll need judgment based on life experiences to tell you when to step on the brakes if a traffic light changes to red. You'll need a desire to reach your destination so you don't keep stopping for coffee and a piece of pie every ten minutes. You'll need to know how much time to allot for the trip so you can get home in time for whatever else you have to do. And you'll need enough maturity to call and say you're going to be late if you get stuck in a traffic jam. You can't measure these requirements with a yardstick, but they're as important to reaching your destination as the car, the gas, or the keys to start the engine.

Let's continue this metaphor for another moment or two. There are all sorts of ways to keep track of the condition of a motor vehicle. You can look at the tires to see whether they've worn out their tread, you can look at the odometer to see how long it's been since you changed the oil, and you can turn on a switch and then walk around the car to see if the headlights and taillights are working properly. These are objective indicators of the condition of your car.

Similarly, there are ways of objectively evaluating your achievements. Most people don't take advantage of them as often as they should, but they're available nonetheless. For example, you can put together a financial statement in order to determine your net worth. You can hire an appraiser to learn the market value of your house. You can compare where you were ten years ago to where you are now to determine the level of progress you've made in your life.

Achievement depends on effective goal setting and monitoring in the same way that a successful drive to the grocery store depends on knowing when to apply the brakes and when to step on the gas. But how can you track your progress and determine if you will be able to get where you want to go? In other words, are there ways of discovering whether you are doing what you need to do without

having an accident?

I believe there are ways of evaluating your goals just as there are ways of measuring depth of tread on a tire or the amount of gasoline in the tank of an automobile. To utilize these techniques, all you need is a commitment to be truly honest with yourself. At first this kind of brutal honesty may be painful, but you must realize that true achievement is unlikely unless you pay the necessary price.

Just as the gas gauge of a car indicates “Full” and “Empty” with several demarcations in between, you can learn whether you have enough fuel to get to your life’s destinations. But while a car has only one gas gauge, your progress can be evaluated by four different imaginary gauges.

Here’s the first one. On the right-hand side of the gauge—corresponding to the letter F, for “Full”—I want you to imagine a letter R, which stands for “Refusal.” And on the left side of that gauge, I want you to imagine a letter C, which stands for “Complacency.”

If your goals are good and strong, there are certain things that you simply refuse to accept in yourself or in other people. In your work, you refuse to accept anything less than your best effort. That doesn’t mean that things will always work out exactly as you had hoped and intended, but that’s not the point. There will always be variables you can’t control, but regardless, your level of effort should always be the maximum possible. With your family, your commitment should be just as strong. You should simply refuse to compromise in any area where your family’s needs and welfare are concerned. And with yourself, you should similarly refuse to accept pettiness, dishonesty, or unethical behavior in any form.

On the left-hand side of the first character-evaluation gauge is the letter C, which stands for “Complacency.” But it could also be the letters LIS, standing for “Let It Slide,”or even WTDA, for “What’s the Difference, Anyway?” Ask yourself where you stand on that scale. Do you have enough character to accept only your best effort? If not, it’s time to make a pit stop right now.

The second character-rating gauge has the letter D on the right, and on the left is the letter M. The D stands for “Decision,” and the M stands for “Maybe.”

Ask yourself: are you a person who comes to a fork in the road and turns either right or left? Or do you stop the car, scratch your chin, and say, “Well, maybe I’ll go this way, and then again maybe I’ll go that way,” and in the end you go nowhere? Think about the big goals you have set in your life. It could be that you want to leave your job and start a business of your own. It could be that you want to get married. In any case, are you the kind of person who makes the necessary decisions and takes the necessary action to achieve those goals, or are you someone who says, “Well, maybe this just isn’t meant to be.”

Now imagine a gauge with a big W on one side and an A on the other side. The W should be in bright red or orange, while the A should probably be a dingy green or pale yellow. That’s because the W stands for “Want,” as in “I want it now!” or “I want it real bad,” or “I want it so much I’ll do whatever it takes to get it!” The W means you’ll go to law school for five years at night while working full-time during the day because you want to be a lawyer. The W means you’ll get up at four o’clock in the morning every day to work on your novel because you want to be a writer. It means you’ll travel from one end of the country to the other many times to find a doctor who can make your child well. I know people who have done all those things because they really wanted something, and eventually they got it.

The A stands for “Apathy.” That’s where you don’t really care what happens. And if you don’t really care what happens, it’s just as well, because the outcome will not be positive.

Now we come to the last of our imaginary character gauges. On the right-hand side is the letter P, and that stands for “Promise,” and on the left-hand side is the letter F, and that stands for “Fear.” If you are a person of strong character, you will promise yourself that you will achieve your goals or…

Or what?

It doesn’t matter, because you never consider that possibility. You have made a promise and you are going to keep it. When you set out to drive to the grocery store, you don’t stop at the doorway and think, “What will I do if I don’t make it?” You have no time for fear. You simply intend to get to the grocery store. You know you are going to get there. And you will get there… it’s simply guaranteed.

# Visual Chain Thinking

*W***ouldn't you prefer** a life of productivity rather than a life of endless tasks with little accomplishment? Of course! When you carefully set your goals and keep them at the forefront of your mind, you can work smarter instead of working longer. You'll know that a life worth living comes from a life of balance.

In order to maintain that balance, here's a key technique that you can use in your life to help keep you on the right track. This technique is called "visual chain thinking."

Ambitious people know that each step toward their goals is not a singular step. Each discipline is not a singular discipline. Each project is not a singular project. Each sale is not a singular sale. They see everything they do—and every discipline they adhere to—as a link in the chain of events and actions that will lead them to their final destination. Every action and every discipline achieved today is a link in the chain. Every action and every discipline achieved tomorrow is a link. And every action and every discipline achieved in the more distant future is also a link.

Your direction, activities, and disciplines all make up crucial links in your chain of success. When you can see that one thing affects everything else, when you come to realize that every discipline affects every discipline, when you look at your future as a chain that needs strong links all along the way… then you'll build a reservoir of strength and courage that will serve you well during the down times.

When you can see that every link in the chain will eventually lead you to the things you want most out of life and to the person you want to become, then you won't grow discouraged, fearful, or impatient with today. When you can see where you're going through visual chain thinking, even on the toughest days, you'll keep moving toward your goals because you know where you're going.

Building your visual chain of thought begins when you have well-defined plans for your career, your family activities, your investments, and your health. Your plans and goals are your visual chain. You know where you're going before you get there.

It's ironic how we all understand the importance of mapping out a strategy for a football game or a basketball game. Not one professional team in the world begins a game without a game plan. But few of us take the time to map out such a strategy for our lives.

But it's important to make this sort of plan. Here's the first rule for your game plan of life: don't begin the activities of your day until you know exactly what you plan to accomplish. Don't start your day until you have it planned. And do this every day. I know all this writing takes time and a disciplined effort. Remember, however, that reaching your goals is the fruitful result of discipline, not merely hope.

Once you've mastered the art of planning your day, you're ready for the next level. Don't begin the activities of your week until you know exactly what you plan to accomplish. Don't start your week until you have it planned.

Just imagine what life would be like if you took time out every Sunday to plan your week. Come Friday, you wouldn't be saying, "Boy, did this week fly by. Where did it go? What did I do?" No, if you plan your week before you start it, you'll know exactly what you want to do, what you want to accomplish, and what you need to work on. If you learn to plan your days as part of your overall game plan for the week, the parts will fit much better. Your days will be better. You will be more effective. You'll be working smarter, not harder.

And when you've learned to plan your week, guess what! You've got to plan your month! Don't start your month until you've mapped out your game plan.

By developing and following your game plan, your days, weeks, and months all become part of a larger plan, a bigger design you develop, a long-term view of

your life, a visual chain. You'll start gaining a greater perspective of it all… because you are planning.

If visually seeing your future is new to you, if you've never developed a game plan before, let me offer a few tips. There are two things you need to understand before you create a game plan.

Number one: a game plan, a visual chain of your future, is like a spread sheet. Instead of listing numbers, you list activities. It's like a "to do" list. And number two: The technique of developing a game plan can be used for a single day, a single project, or a variety of projects that are happening simultaneously.

Here's how you do it. First of all, you need to buy a pad of graph paper. Game plans work best on graph paper. Take a sheet of graph paper and make vertical columns corresponding to the number of days this plan is to cover. Then on the left-hand side of the paper, write the heading "activities." Under this heading, list all the activities to be accomplished within your time frame.

Let's say, for example, that you've got one week to finalize a marketing plan. It's an overwhelming amount of work to complete, but it's got to be done. So break it down piece by piece. The best way to start is by listing all of the individual components on the left-hand side of the page. Some of these things will need to be completed before others can be started. You need to obtain your market-research results before you can determine your target market. You need to know your target market before you can develop your marketing strategy. You need to have your marketing strategy before you can create a budget for collateral materials, and so on.

When you break down the project piece by piece and deadline by deadline, you can be more effective in putting together the appropriate parts of the puzzle—and in doing your own work while delegating the rest.

The final result of developing your game plan is a clear visual presentation of the tasks before you. This method is used quite often in business to coordinate and

develop projects of any length. It’s the only way to see the entire project on paper and manage its progress.

Admittedly, game plans are frustrating to create. They’re frustrating because it’s difficult to completely prioritize your life and all your projects. You may go through several sheets of graph paper before you produce the perfect format. But as soon as you develop your first one, you’ll see the value in this discipline.

Keep your game plan in plain sight. Put it up in your office where you can easily look at it. Have a copy of it at home and tape it to the refrigerator. Keep a copy in your journal for quick reference. Your game plan will serve as a constant reminder of all you need to do to get to where you want to go.

If you’re doing all you’re scheduled to do, game plans are very rewarding. Day by day… week by week… month by month, you’ll see the magic of your dreams and plans turning into reality. You will have an incredible feeling of being in charge of your life, your surroundings, and your future. It’s like creating a work of art on the biggest canvas imaginable. It’s creative. It’s beautiful.

This is powerful stuff. To dream a dream, plan for the dream, and then to watch your dream turn into reality. Here’s what’s really powerful about creating game plans: you can see your future right before your eyes. So on those days when your energy isn’t up to par, your enthusiasm is a little low, your ambition isn’t pushing you forward, and your attitude isn’t on the positive side, use your game plan to see how far you’ve come. Take the time to visualize exactly where you’re headed. On those days, it’s your discipline and visual chain of the future that will push you ahead. People and circumstances may try to set you back, but your visual chain will propel you toward your goals.

# Reasons to Persevere

**The Irish poet** William Butler Yeats once wrote a poem describing some of the unfortunate characteristics of the modern world. One of the things Yeats noticed was that malevolent people seem to have the most energy, while good people become discouraged and doubtful of their own abilities.

"The best lack all conviction, while the worst are filled with a passionate intensity"—those are the words Yeats used.

It's true that we can look around and see all sorts of things happening that we might wish were not happening and people doing things that we might not admire. When we see that taking place, it's easy to start thinking, "What's the use? What hope do I really have? Why don't I give up on all the things I've been trying to accomplish and just start taking it easy?"

Even goal-directed people feel that way sometimes. All of us have moments like that. That's when perseverance gets really, really tough.

What's the answer? Well, it begins with this question: Who are you working for besides yourself? Who is depending on you? Who will benefit if you persevere and succeed? Who will suffer if you give up and stop trying? Who can you reach out to and help once you've achieved your goals?

For many people, the answers to these questions will appear quite readily. If you have a family, your spouse and your children are depending on you. Perhaps even your parents are depending on you now if they're elderly and require some care. But even if you're a single person or just starting out in your career, you can think of reasons to persevere and succeed that go beyond your personal needs. Maybe you would like to share some of your financial success with the schools that educated you, with the religious institutions that gave you spiritual guidance, or with a hospital that helped to heal you on some occasion.

This sharing doesn’t have to be limited to money, either. If your work has given you certain skills, you can share your time and your abilities. You can, and you should.

But even this isn’t putting it strongly enough. It isn’t just that you’ll do better if you feel you’re working for others in addition to yourself. You absolutely MUST find reasons outside of yourself to persevere if you want to keep going when the going gets tough.

Hemingway wrote, “A man alone hasn’t got a chance.” This means that you need people to help you in life. It also means that you need people to help. You need people who can become the real reasons for perseverance beyond material possessions or your financial success. “What’s in it for me?” can take you only so far. “What’s in it for somebody besides me?” can take you as far as you need to go.

In the last days of World War II, the American cruiser Indianapolis was sunk by an enemy submarine. This was one of the most tragic incidents of the war for the American forces, and hundreds of men lost their lives. Many who made it through the initial attack had to spend days and nights in the water before rescuers arrived.

The experience of trying to stay alive in the water was so overwhelming that many people simply gave up. In fact, the survivors later reported that virtually everyone wanted to give up at one time or another. But whenever someone wanted to quit trying, the others would talk to that person about the people back home who needed him and who were depending on him to survive. And if there was no one who was depending on him right then, they would talk about people in the future who would someday be needing him, people he hadn’t yet met, people who hadn’t even been born. They conjured up all sorts of reasons above and beyond simply surviving. This motivation beyond merely thinking of the self was often the only motivation that made these men persevere.

And what was true for those men in wartime is also true in all of our lives, no matter what we’re trying to accomplish. We need to look outward for reasons to

persevere. Is there a better reason to go on than helping others on the road to your own success? I don’t think so.

# Chapter Four
# *The Power of Ideas*

*"The best money spent is the money spent to cultivate the genius of your own mind and spirit."*

*"Hear or read something challenging, something instructional, at least thirty minutes a day, every day. You can get along without some meals, but you can't get along without some ideas, examples, and inspiration."*

*"Most people are just trying to get through the day. I want you to learn how to get from the day."*

*"Every day is a piece of the mosaic of your life. You need to capture the experience, the knowledge, the sights, the sounds, the panorama, the color, and the emotion so they will serve you for the future."*

# Searching for Information

**If you want** your life to change, here's the source of it all: ideas plus inspiration. The good news is, ideas are not that far away. I've got an excellent phrase for you to consider, one that will serve you well for the rest of your life: everything you need is within reach. The ideas you need for life change or business change are within "listening reach." They are within "reading reach."

In fact, there's probably a library not too far from you. The problem is, most people pass by libraries; very few walk in. Andrew Carnegie set up all these libraries across the country thinking everybody would stop in. But no, almost everybody drives right on by. Do you know how many people own a library card in the United States? Three percent. And guess how much they cost? Nothing.

The ideas are within reach. But here's the key question: who is going to reach? There's a simple Biblical phrase that says, "If you seek, you will find." But it's very important to know that finding is reserved for the seekers. We don't find what we need; we find what we search for.

If you will search, if you'll try, if you'll go, if you'll listen, ideas are within reach. And ideas are life changing. There's nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come. A business idea, a social idea, an investment idea, a good health idea—all you need is a specific idea to make an impact on your life. Ideas can help you gather treasure, gather equity, and gather wealth.

Ten years from now, you can be right where you are now, or you can be in a new place. The difference between now and then could be significant in terms of money, lifestyle, treasure, and equity. In ten years, you can enjoy an incredible life if right here and now you make a small change in your thinking to start you on the journey. The key is to start right now gathering the ideas and making the changes that will take you further along this new road.

# Finding the Right Combination

**Ideas can change** your life. And sometimes all you need is just one more good idea in a series of good ideas. It's like dialing the numbers of a combination lock. After you've dialed five or six numbers, the lock may not come open. But you probably don't need five or six more numbers. Maybe you need just one more number, one more idea. Maybe a seminar or a sermon can provide it. The lyrics from a song could do it. The dialogue from a movie could do it. Conversation with a friend might do it. If you keep your eyes and ears open, you'll find that one last idea you need.

Once you find that idea, the lock comes open, and there's the door for you to walk through. Just one more idea, no matter where you get it, may be all you need to open that door of opportunity.

If, however, the lock still doesn't open, you may be lacking in inspiration. Who knows why some people are inspired and some are not? Some people find a great idea and turn it down. Some people say that it costs too much. Some people say that it's going to take too much time. Some people are too busy.

There are a lot of different reasons why some people are inspired to take advantage of a good idea while others pass it up. I call it "mysteries of the mind." And I just leave it at that. There are some things I don't try to figure out.

Some people buy and some don't. Some go for it and some don't. Some change and some don't. And if you've been around for a while, you can usually spot those who don't take advantage of a good idea.

A man asks me, "How come all this stuff goes wrong for me?" I say, "I don't know. Beats me! The most I've been able to figure out is that those kinds of things always happen to people like you." I'll bet he's one of the ones who don't take advantage of good ideas. If he continues on that path, he'll probably never

find the right combination. That honor will always fall on the ones who do… like you.

# A Constant Search for Knowledge

**The consistent, disciplined,** purposeful, constant search for knowledge: it's where the life-changing ideas are. Pursue knowledge with high expectations. Spend the money, time, and effort. They are all investments, but the payoff is so great it's hard to compare the cost to the reward.

First is the money. I have a great suggestion. Set up an educational fund for the programs, the books, the lectures, the seminars, and the videos you need for a constant flow of ideas and inspiration. Take a portion of your income each month and set it aside to invest in the search for knowledge. Remember, the best money spent is the money spent to cultivate the genius of your own mind and spirit. Make sure you don't spend more for frivolous comforts and conveniences than you do for education. The money is a small price. The promise is unlimited potential.

The next investment is time, which is an extremely valuable expenditure. It's one thing to ask someone for their money, but to ask them for their time is a much more significant request.

Knowledge takes time, precious time. The time you spend is irreplaceable. You can get more money, but you can't get more time. However, life has a unique way of rewarding high investment with high return. The major investment of time you're making now could be that small fine-tuning you need for major accomplishment.

Last is the investment of effort. There is a great deal of difference between casual learning and serious learning. Learning that opens up the whole mental and spiritual process is truly an investment in effort. And this effort is the investment that opens the floodgates of ideas that can work their magic for you in the marketplace.

So I don’t hesitate to ask you to spend—in a deliberate and consistent fashion—the money, time, and effort required to reach your goals. These are the investments that turn on the lights, sharpen the focus, and start turning your wishes of wealth and happiness into reality.

# Accessing the Information You Need

**Let me share** with you two of the best sources of information available. First, there are your own experiences. Become a good student of your own life. It's the information you are most familiar with and feel the strongest about, so make your own life one of your most important studies.

In studying your own life, be sure to study the negative as well as the positive, your failures as well as your successes. Our so-called failures serve us well when they teach us valuable information. They're frequently better teachers than our successes.

One of the ways we learn how to do something right is simply by doing it wrong. Doing it wrong is a great school for learning, but I would suggest that you not take too long doing this. If you've done something wrong for ten years, I wouldn't suggest taking another ten. But what a close-at-hand and excellent way to learn: from your own experiences!

When I met Mr. Shoaff, I had been working for six years. I started when I was nineteen, and when I met him, I was twenty-five. He said to me, "Mr. Rohn, you have been working now for six years. How are you doing?" I said, "Not very well." He said, "Then I suggest you not do that anymore. Six years is long enough to operate with the wrong plan."

Next, he asked, "How much money have you saved in the last six years?" I said, "Not any." He said, "Who sold you on that plan six years ago?" What a fantastic question! Where did I get my current plan that wasn't working well? Everyone has bought *someone's* plan. The question is *whose?* Whose plan have you bought?

Those initial confrontations may be a little painful at first, especially if you have made as many errors as I have. But think of the progress you can make when

you finally confront those errors by becoming a better student of your own life.

The second way to learn is from other people's experiences. Remember, you can learn from other people whether they have done things right or wrong. You can learn from the negative as well as the positive. The Bible is such a great book because it is a collection of human stories representing both sides of the ledger. Some human stories are called examples: do what these people did. Other human stories are called warnings: *don't* do what these people did. What a wealth of information: knowing what to do and what not to do. If your story ever gets in somebody's book, make sure they use it as an example, not a warning.

There are three ways to learn from other people. The first is to listen to the programs and read the books by and about people who have accomplished great things. All the successful people around the world I know and work with are good readers. They just read, read, read. They are driven to read because they just have to know. It is one of the things they all have in common. Here is an excellent phrase: all leaders are readers.

Successful people also listen to audio programs, especially while they're in the car or during other times when they can't read. Programs can help all of us easily pick up new ideas and skills. Did you know there are programs and books on how to be stronger, more decisive, a better speaker, a more effective leader, have a better effect on other people, become more loving , develop a more winning personality, get rich, develop persuasive influence, become sophisticated… and people don't utilize these resources? How would you explain that?

Did you know that hundreds of successful people have written their stories in books and told the world how they became successful, and most people don't want to read or listen to them? How would you explain that? They're busy, I guess. They say, "If you worked where I work, you'd know that by the time I struggle home, it's late. I've got to have a bite to eat, watch a little TV, and go to bed. I can't stay up half the night and read."

Imagine someone who is behind on his bills. He's a good worker and very sincere. Unfortunately, you can be sincere and work hard all your life and wind

up broke, confused, and embarrassed. You've got to be better than a good worker. You've got to be a good reader and a good listener. You don't have to read or listen to educational programs half the night—although, if you're broke, it's a good place to start. All you need are just thirty minutes a day. That's all. Stretch it to an hour if you can, but set aside at least thirty minutes.

Hear or read something challenging, something instructional, at least thirty minutes a day, every day. Miss a meal, but not your thirty minutes. You can get along without some meals, but you can't get along without some ideas, examples, and inspiration.

There's a Biblical phrase that says, "Man cannot live on bread alone." The most important thing aside from bread is words. Words nourish the mind, words nourish the soul. Humans have to have food and words to be healthy and prosperous. Make sure you have a good diet of words every day. And remember that to properly feed the mind, you must maintain good balance. Don't just read or listen to the easy material. You can't live on mental candy.

With good books and programs, you can "tap into the treasure of ideas." And if somebody has a good excuse for not tapping into the treasure of ideas for at least thirty minutes every day, I'd like to hear it. You wouldn't believe some excuses I've heard.

I say, "John, I've got this gold mine. I've got so much gold I don't know what to do with it all. Come on over and dig." John says, "I don't have a shovel." I say, "Well, John, let's get you one." He says, "Don't you know what they want for shovels these days?"

John has the wrong perspective. Don't make the same mistake. Invest the money, get the programs and books. The best money you can spend is money invested in your self-education. Don't shortchange yourself when it comes to investing in your own better future.

# Building Your Library

*W***e all need** a good library. Mr. Shoaff got me started on mine. Here's one of the books he recommended: *Think and Grow Rich*, by Napoleon Hill. Shoaff asked me, "Doesn't that title intrigue you?" *Think and Grow Rich.* Who wouldn't need that book? I found it in a used book store and paid less than fifty cents for it… and I've still got it. It's one of my most valued treasures.

You can start this process of developing a library like I did. Here's a mind-set to guide you as you begin: your library needs to show that you're a serious student of life, health, spirituality, culture, uniqueness, sophistication, economics, prosperity, productivity, sales, management, skills, and values of all kinds. Let your library show you're a serious student.

Your library will become your mental food—your food for thought. It is so important to nourish the mind, not just the body. You've got to be educated.

A good book to start with is *How to Read a Book*, by Mortimer Adler. Adler was the chief editor of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, which is also a good set of books to have in your library.

In *How to Read a Book*, Adler gives you some good suggestions on how to not just read a book, but actually get the most information out of it. He also provides a list of the best books ever written, and I've used it as a centerpiece for my library.

I'm just telling you what worked for me. If it suits you, fine. If it doesn't suit you, keep looking until you find something that does suit you. Just be sure to keep your library well balanced.

Let me give you some examples. Number one, we've all got to have a sense of

history. We need to know about American history, international history, family history, and political history. This sort of knowledge will illustrate for you that, the state of one's life rarely changes for the better of its own accord.

Once you realize that, the next logical step is to realize that *you* have to do the changing.

History helps us to understand what there is to work with: seed, soil, sunshine, rain. It also tells us what human beings have done with those resources in the past to change their lot in life. You'll find that many of them transformed from non-productive citizens to productive ones. That's what history is for: to learn the lessons of our ancestors. Be a good student of history.

The next crucial topic is philosophy. You might find it a little bit difficult to comprehend some aspects of philosophy, but you can't just read and study the easy stuff. Try to tackle the more difficult-to-comprehend stuff. That's how you grow as a person.

Next, novels. Many times, an intriguing story is interwoven with the philosophy that the author is trying to get across. Ayn Rand was probably better at this than anybody else. *Atlas Shrugged* was a towering novel. It kept us intrigued as Rand was feeding us her philosophy. And you don't need to agree with an author's perspective to benefit from a novel.

Here's a little personal advice: skip the trash. Sometimes you can find something valuable in a trashy novel, but I wouldn't take the time to read something trashy just to find it. You can find a crust of bread in the garbage can, but I wouldn't dig through it. There's simply not enough time to read the truly brilliant stuff.

Next are biographies and autobiographies. You can read the dramatic stories of both good people and terrible people. You need to understand the balance between good and evil. Get a book on Gandhi and a book on Hitler. One will illustrate the heights of good a human being can accomplish, and the other will illustrate how low and despicable a human being can become. You need to

comprehend both sides of the coin.

Next, accounting. You've got to have at least a primary understanding of accounting. Kids have got to start learning the difference between a debit and a credit.

And next is law. You don't have to be a lawyer, but you've got to know contracts, what to sign, what not to sign, and how to be safe rather than sorry. All of us need a little law, especially in these complicated times.

I learned this the hard way. Some time ago, a company I was affiliated with in Canada wanted to borrow money. They needed a quarter of a million dollars. The bank said, "Yes, we will loan the company the money if Mr. Rohn will sign personally." I wanted to play the hero, and I knew the company could pay it back, so I signed. Sure enough, within less than a year, they had paid the loan back in full. I was indeed seen as the hero.

About a year later, this company got in financial trouble. They went back to the bank and borrowed a quarter of a million dollars again. I said to myself, I hope my phone doesn't ring, because I won't sign the note this time. I knew they were in trouble. I knew they were probably going to go bankrupt. My phone never rang. I was off the hook.

Sure enough, within less than a year the company went bankrupt. They couldn't pay, and I get a letter from the bank saying, "Dear Mr. Rohn, since the company cannot perform its obligation and pay this quarter of a million dollars, and since we have here your personal guarantee, would you please send us your check for a quarter of a million dollars?"

I thought there must be some mistake. I signed that first note, and they paid it all back. I *didn't* sign the second note. What I didn't know was that I had originally signed a continuing guarantee. So now I know what the word *continuing* means.

I’m asking you to study a little law, know what to sign, know how to defend yourself. Don’t sign too quickly. Be a student. Don’t be a lazy learner.

You’ve got to build a library that shows you’re a serious student of personal development in all areas. So begin with a few books. Soon, you’ll open up a whole new world of fresh ideas.

# Absorbing and Responding

**You encounter a** plethora of ideas every day, but most of them probably go by unnoticed. That's why you need to develop the ability to absorb. Be like a sponge. Don't miss anything. Don't miss the words. Don't miss the atmosphere. Don't miss the color. Don't miss the scenario. Don't miss what's going on.

Most people are just trying to get *through* the day. Here's what I want you to be committed to doing: learn to get *from* the day. Learn from it. Let the day teach you. Attend the University of Life. What a difference that will make in your future. Commit yourself to learning. Commit yourself to absorbing.

I've got a personal friend who is gifted in this area. I think he soaks up and remembers virtually everything that has ever happened to him. He can tell you vivid stories from his teenage years: where he was, what he did, what he said, what she said, how they felt, the color of the sky, and what was going on that day. And the reason is because he absorbs everything that happens to him. I'm telling you, it's more exciting to have him go to Acapulco and tell you about it than it is to go yourself. He has an extraordinary gift. Wherever he is, he doesn't miss anything.

Here's a good phrase for you to jot down: wherever you are, *be* there! Be there to absorb it. Take a picture if you can. Take pictures in your mind; let your soul and heart take pictures. Get it, capture it, absorb it. And don't be causal in getting it. Casualness leads to casualties.

Next, learn to respond. Responding means letting life touch you. Don't let it kill you, but let it touch you. Let sad things make you sad. Let happy things make you happy. Give in to the emotion. Let the feelings strike you.

Our emotions need to be as acknowledged as our intellect. It's important to know how to feel. It's important to know how to respond. It's important to let life in, to

let it touch you.

I’m the greatest guy in the world to take to the movies. I really get into a good movie. I want it to make me laugh, make me cry, scare me to death, teach me something, take me high, take me low. I just don’t want the movie to leave me as I was when I came in.

That’s what we all need: to have life touch us. And that’s exactly what will happen to you when you develop the ability to absorb and respond to all life has to offer.

# Keeping a Journal

**If you're serious** about becoming a wealthy, powerful, sophisticated, healthy, influential, cultured, and unique individual, keep a journal. Don't trust your memory. When you listen to something valuable, write it down. When you come across something important, write it down.

I used to take notes on pieces of paper and torn-off corners and backs of old envelopes. I wrote ideas on restaurant placemats and long sheets and narrow sheets and little sheets and pieces of paper thrown in a drawer. Then I found out that the best way to organize those ideas is to keep a journal. I've been keeping these journals since the age of twenty-five. The discipline makes up a valuable part of my own learning, and the journals are a valuable part of my library.

I am a buyer of blank books. Kids find it interesting that I would buy an blank book. They say, "Twenty-six dollars for a blank book! Why would you pay that?" The reason I pay twenty-six dollars is to challenge myself to find something worth twenty-six dollars to put in there. All my journals are private, but if you ever got a hold of one of them, you wouldn't have to look very far to discover that it is worth more than twenty-six dollars.

I must admit, if you got a glimpse of my journals, you'd have to say that I am a serious student. I'm not just committed to my craft, I'm committed to life, committed to learning new concepts and skills. I want to see what I can do with seeds and soil and sunshine and rain to turn them into the building blocks of a productive life.

Keeping a journal is so important. In fact, I call it one of the three treasures to leave behind for the next generation.

The first treasure is your pictures. Take a lot of pictures. Don't be lazy in capturing the event. How long does it take to capture the event? A fraction of a

second. How long does it take to miss the event? A fraction of a second. So don’t miss the pictures. When you’re gone, they’ll keep the memories alive.

The second treasure is your library. This is the library that taught you, that instructed you, that helped you defend your ideals. It helped you develop a philosophy. It helped you become wealthy, powerful, healthy, sophisticated, and unique. It may have helped you conquer some disease. It may have helped you conquer poverty. It may have caused you to walk away from the ghetto. Your library—the books that instructed you, fed your mind and fed your soul—is one of the greatest gifts you can leave behind. Every book is a stepping stone out of the darkness into the light.

The third treasure is your journals: the ideas that you picked up, the information that you meticulously gathered. Journal writing is one of the greatest indications that you’re a serious student. Taking pictures, that’s pretty easy. Buying a book at a book store, that’s pretty easy. It is a little more challenging to be a student of your own life, your own future, and your own destiny. Take the time to keep notes and keep a journal. You’ll be so glad you did. What a treasure to leave behind when you go. And what a treasure to enjoy today.

# Reflection: An Investment in the Future

**One of the** keys to making the most of ideas is developing the ability to reflect. *Reflect* means to go back over; to study again. Go back over your notes. Go back over your thoughts. And go back over your day.

There are some particularly good times to reflect. One is at the end of the day. Take a few minutes to go back over the day. Whom did you see? What did they say? What happened? How did you feel? What went on? By answering those questions, you capture the day. Every day represents a piece of the mosaic of your life. You need to capture the experience, the knowledge, the sights, the sounds, the panorama, the color, and the emotion so it will serve you well for the future. Don't miss a day.

Then take a few hours at the end of the week to reflect. Go back over your calendar; go back over your appointment book. Ask yourself the same questions. Where did you go? Whom did you see? How did it feel? What went on? Capture that week. A week is a fairly substantial chunk of time.

Next, take half a day at the end of the month to reflect. Follow the same process. Go back over what you read. Go back over what you heard. Go back over what you saw. Go back over your feelings and capture them so that they serve you.

Finally, take a weekend at the end of the year to establish the year firmly in your consciousness so that it never disappears.

The Old Testament describes a unique scenario that unfolded according to the law. At that time, people worked for nine years, and the tenth year was a sabbatical. That tenth year was probably used for relaxing, replenishing, getting in shape physically. We would call it a "change of pace" in modern society. But that was not the only objective for the tenth year. I'm sure that, in ancient days, sabbaticals were used to go over the previous nine years, to see what went right

and what went wrong, what worked well and what didn't work well. People would ask themselves, "How did I grow? What did I learn? How did I change? What do I have now after nine years that I didn't have at the beginning?" That time for reflection is what makes a sabbatical so effective and meaningful.

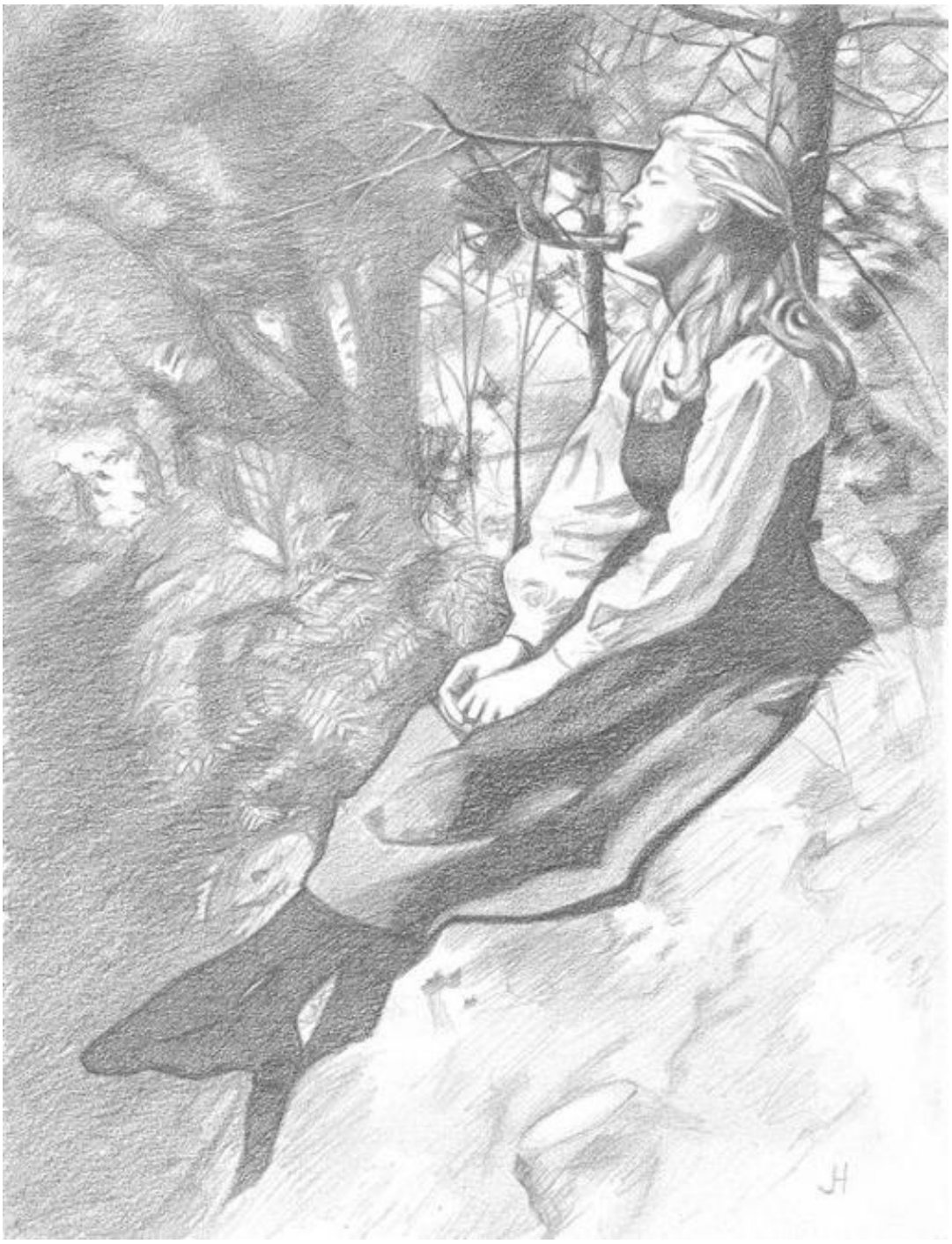
At times, you'll want to reflect with somebody else. A husband and wife can reflect on the past year together. Parents can reflect with their children. Colleagues can reflect with each other.

But you've also got to learn to reflect by yourself. Solitude is a powerful force. We all need to find some occasions to shut out the rest of the world for a while.

I've got a motor home and a motorcycle. That's how I find solitude. I head for the mountains and ride the trails where there are very few human beings. Or I go out into the desert somewhere. It's my time to get away. When you live a very public life, you treasure solitude. When I have a chance to reflect alone, I go back over my life, go back over my skills, go back over my experiences. There are some things you need to do alone, such as ponder, think, wonder, read, study, and absorb new ideas. Decide how you can become better this year than you were last year. Enjoy your solitude.

Life is full of experiences—touching and seeing and looking and doing and acting—but you're going to lose the lessons of those experiences if you don't take the time to reflect.

We can all learn to gather up the past and invest in the future. Gather up today and invest it in tomorrow. Gather up this week and invest it in the next week. Gather up this year and invest it in the next year. Many people simply hang on one more year. They are just hanging in there, seeing what's going to happen. I am asking you to choose a different path, to learn, study, and reflect. This is a major part of personal development: the quest to become better than you are now.



***Take some time to shut out the rest of the world and reflect in solitude.***

# Generating Creative Ideas

**Sometimes, the best** ideas can be found in the creative depths of your own mind. These ideas are often reluctant to make an appearance on their own. So how do you bring them out? You need to develop the ability to brainstorm. What is brainstorming? It's just what it sounds like. You let your mind wander. You free yourself from all inhibitions, objections, and negative thoughts. You just put an idea into your brain and let it take off. You engage in free associating. Instead of planning a train of thought, you think freely.

If you're planning a brainstorming session with your colleagues, let me give you a little hint. Effective brainstorming can only happen if you disassociate from your ego. You can't be worried about saying something stupid, or silly, or totally off-the-wall. Your silly thought may trigger someone else's brain to take it one step further. Brainstorming in a group is an experience of collective thought. It's an experience of developing one idea, or several ideas, through a variety of thought processes.

Here's another hint on brainstorming. It can't be effective unless everyone involved is comfortable with each other. If you don't feel comfortable within the group, you may withhold the very thought that provides the solution to the problem. You may withhold it because you don't want to appear stupid.

How do you think all the advertisements you see on TV and in the magazines are created? How do you think some of those crazy campaigns are born? The process happens through hours and hours of creative brainstorming. Every member of the team jots down notes, and one idea builds on another idea, and another and another. Pretty soon, a strategy is born out of the collective thoughts of the group.

I don't believe that the best decisions are made by committee, but great ideas are often created by committee. Whether you're letting your brain go by itself, or whether you're part of a group, brainstorming can often lead you to solutions—

ones you would never have thought of if you had imposed parameters on your thought processes.

If you are brainstorming on your own, envision outlandish solutions. Get your brain out of its rut by considering ideas without considering their practicality.

If you allow yourself to think without confinement, you may come across a solution that seems totally inappropriate, but this approach will allow you to open up the process, which will eventually lead to appropriate solutions.

Another creative technique for generating ideas is through doodling. Doodling may be something you got in trouble for in grade school, but it’s actually quite stimulating to the brain. The way you think while doodling is quite different than the way you think while creating a flow chart or writing a formula.

Your doodles may end up looking like a symbol that triggers your brain to think of an alternative solution. Drawing creative doodles wakes up a different part of your brain. And once you awaken that creative part of you—whether it’s through group brainstorming, individual brainstorming, or doodling—you’ll be amazed at the ideas you’ll trigger from the recesses of your mind. Those ideas were always there, but you may never have known how to access them. Once you understand your own potential, this unlimited source is yours for the asking.

# Chapter Five
# *The Driving Force of Motivation*

*"Once the lights went on for me, they have never gone out. I've had a few disappointments, but I've never lost that drive to do something unique with my life."*

*"Creating the perfect personal life takes just as much attention as creating the perfect professional life."*

*"Life is a bit of both up and down, but with true friends—friends who care regardless of your circumstances—the ups are more meaningful and the downs are less devastating."*

*"Happiness is the joy that comes from designing a life that practices the fine art of living well."*

# Reinforcing the Habits of Success

**When you are** doing all that you can possibly do, and you are successful at reaching your expectations, keep doing it. Success is one of the best forms of motivation. Psychologists call this *positive reinforcement.*

We all know about positive reinforcement. That's how we train our dogs. That's how we teach our kids. That's how the trainers at Sea World can get a killer whale to do tricks, follow commands, and work side-by-side with humans.

When you bring home a new puppy and try to teach him not to mess in the house, what do you do? You reward him for going outside or for scratching at the door. When you're trying to get your toddler out of the diaper stage, what do you do? You reward him with special presents. You make him feel special for learning something new. When you're trying to get your older kids to crack the books and study, what do you do? You reward them when they get good grades. You teach them that the skills they are developing now will have positive effects on their lives later. And you do that by rewarding them now.

This is positive reinforcement: learning that there are rewards for doing something good, something worthwhile, something of value. The greater the value, the greater the reward. The better you do, the better your reward. A bigger paycheck, a better house, financial freedom—it's all a reward system.

There are two major benefits of positive reinforcement. Number one: positive reinforcement builds good habits. If the habits you're practicing are increasing your success, keep doing them. Your success is reaffirming that these habits are good. Your success tells you that you need to keep doing what you are doing. By reviewing the habits that lead you to success, you reinforce them. You give them staying power.

Here's the other side. By reviewing your habits, you may find out that some of

them are inhibiting your success. You may find out that what you're doing every day is bad for you. Or you may realize that you've stopped practicing some very good habits. Somebody says, "Well, I've just gotten out of the habit of taking my daily walk around the block." Well, I guess you'll just have to get in the habit of being sick later on. Somebody says, "Well, I used to read the books all the time, I've just gotten out of the habit." Then change it. Get back into your disciplines. If you've "just gotten out of the habit," just get back into the habit. It's called discipline.

The second benefit of positive reinforcement is that is creates the energy to fuel additional achievement. It gives you the drive to do more, to not only keep on doing what's right, but to do more of what's right. The knowledge that what you're doing is paying off creates more energy to keep going.

How easy is it to get up in the morning when you know you're not doing all that it takes? It's not very easy at all! You can just lay there, awake, thinking, "Oh, what's a few more minutes in bed. It won't matter much anyway." Wrong! It does matter. It will matter. How easy is it to get up in the morning when you're anxious to make progress toward your dreams? It's a whole different story.

When you're resting to renew your reserves, it's much different than resting to avoid your day. When you're psyched up and excited about life, when you're excited about what you've planned to accomplish for the day, it's amazing how you'll wake up long before the alarm clock tries to startle you awake!

Your successes fuel your ambition. Your successes give you extra energy. Your successes pave the way for more successes. It's the snowball effect. When you achieve one success, you're excited to meet another… and another… and another. Pretty soon, the disciplines that were so difficult in the beginning—the disciplines that got you going—are now part of your philosophy. And they keep you going.

***It's easy to get up in the morning when you awaken anxious to make progress toward your dreams. When you're excited about life, you'll wake up long before your alarm clock goes off.***

# Analyzing Your Progress

*H***ow can you** identify the habits that are working for you and those that aren't? How can you make sure that you are reinforcing your positive disciplines? If it isn't apparent—if what you're doing is happening in such small increments that you're not sure if you're on the right track—then you need to be writing it down. You need to keep a written record. You need to write down everything that may be relevant from each day: what you did, who you saw, what you feel, how it may or may not affect you now and in the future.

The best way to track your activities of the day is to write them down. The best way to track your activities of the week is to write them down. The best way to analyze your progress through the year is to have written it down. Why? So you can look back at your notes. Because by keeping a written record of your life, you will be more accountable. By putting into writing the steps that you have planned, you will easily see what works and what doesn't.

There's something magical in identifying a problem. As soon as you start writing it out, you start figuring out ways to make it work. Perhaps the magic is that when you write it down, you can now be objective. You can start to objectively see where you fit into the picture. You can start to see if you are being responsible and self-reliant. You are pondering all the relevant facts. You are trying to figure it all out. The fact that it is now on paper actually creates a space between you and the problem. And in this space that you have created, new solutions have room to grow. You see, writing about events that occur helps you to understand exactly what is happening. When you describe life to yourself only in your mind, your imagination tends to feed back false information about how things really are. You may be working with distorted information.

If you keep the information just in your mind, your creativity can create scenarios that really don't exist at all. But by writing it all down, you now can become more factual, more accurate, more realistic, more logical. Then as you reread what you have written, you create new pictures in your mind. Once you

see things as they are, rather than how you think they are, you can see how to make them better.

It’s all part of being responsible. It’s all part of seeing things objectively to fully understand the steps that you must take to make things better, to better prepare yourself for the opportunities that lie ahead.

# Four Factors of Motivation

*W***e need all** the motivational help we can get. But of course, different people are motivated by different things.

I've read a number of studies on motivation, and the ones that I've found most convincing have isolated four main factors as the most powerful human motivators. I'll go through them one by one, and I urge you to read them carefully. Think about how you can put them to use to help you accomplish your goals. If you're in a managerial or leadership position, think also about how you can use them to help motivate the people you're supervising. These are the real factors that make people get off their behinds and do things. These are the things that work when "wanting to" just isn't enough. These are the true reasons for believing something is worth doing and then actually doing it.

The first great motivator is recognition from peers. When soldiers in wartime give up their lives during combat, why do they do it? Is it because of patriotism, a belief in the cause they're fighting for, or a fear of court-martial if they do otherwise? Perhaps all those things play a part, but extensive research has shown that what really motivates a soldier to fight well in combat is the desire for the respect of the person who's fighting right beside him. This is much more important than medals or other forms of public recognition, which in the confusion of wartime are often given to the wrong people, anyway. What motivates soldiers in combat is analogous to what motivates salesmen on the floor of a car dealership, students in a classroom, or a team of lawyers trying to win a case.

I don't know if this is still done, but for many years the players in the National Football League used to select their own All-Star team at the end of each season. I was always interested and rather amused by the differences between the players' selections and the All-Star teams picked by fans or sportswriters.

I'm also certain that the honor of being selected by one's fellow players meant a

lot more than any sort of recognition from someone sitting up in the grandstand with a hot dog in his mouth. Quite simply, recognition from peers is a truly powerful motivating force in any human activity.

The second important motivator is recognition from respected experts or authorities. I can tell you that, in my own life, this has been an extremely important factor. Mr. Shoaff was someone whom I respected from the first moment we met, and he was also someone whose respect I desperately wanted to earn.

Has there ever been someone like that in your life? It's important to realize that a respected expert doesn't have to be a person who's known far and wide throughout the world. You are the one who establishes the qualifications, though very often people whom you find impressive will be equally impressive to others.

Once you've met such a person, or even if you've just seen him from a distance or perhaps read an article about him in the paper, don't hesitate to politely approach him and introduce yourself. Unless you happen to catch them at a particularly difficult moment, most successful people are eager to help others and to pass on what they've learned. Sure, I was apprehensive about meeting Mr. Shoaff, but I shudder to think what my life would be like if I hadn't introduced myself.

From a motivational point of view, the great thing about establishing a relationship with a mentor is that you eventually become so close to that person that you can almost hear him advising you even when he's not really there. Earl Shoaff passed on years ago, but I still feel like he's talking to me every day. I also feel that I still want to earn his approval and respect. It will probably always be that way.

Family is the third great motivator, and in many ways it's the most powerful. Although the approval of peers and experts may be most important in your career, in your life as a whole, nothing can compare with the influence of your family.

An experience I had a number of years ago is a good illustration of that principle. I had just finished giving a talk before a group of entrepreneurs up in Minneapolis when a young man approached me and asked for some advice about achieving financial success. As I always do when asked for that sort of advice, I began with a couple of standard, straightforward questions. The first one was, “How much money would you like to make annually?”

When I ask this question, I want to see whether the person has given enough thought to his goals that he can come up with a specific figure. That’s a much better sign than someone who just says, “I want to make a whole lot.” But this fellow was even more specific and focused than I could possibly have expected.

“I need to make at least a quarter of a million dollars a year for the next ten years,” he said without a second’s hesitation.

“And why do you want to make that amount?” I now inquired. This was another standard question of mine, and once again he answered immediately.

“Mr. Rohn,” he said, “ten years from now, when my kids are old enough to enjoy it, I want to take my family on a trip around the world that they’ll remember all their lives. The trip will last for twelve full months, with no expenses spared, and in order to save enough money to make it happen, I will need an annual income of a quarter million dollars for the next decade.”

There were literally tears in his eyes as he said this, and although I haven’t heard from him since then, I have no doubt that he will achieve his goal. In my mind’s eye I could picture him over the coming years, working long hours, meeting deadlines, overcoming obstacles, doing everything it takes to be successful—and doing it gladly! After all, he was motivated by something more than the simple desire for financial success and the material rewards that come with it. This man was working hard because he desired to give his wife and children a lifetime’s worth of priceless memories, and if that isn’t a reason to believe, I don’t know what is. A person who can feel that level of emotion for other human beings is truly blessed, and a family who can have that sort of man for a father is truly blessed as well.

The fourth and last achievement-motivating factor I want to mention is closely related to the desire to do something for your family. In fact, you could say it's the desire to help the whole family of man. Let's call it the impulse toward benevolence, toward sharing your wealth and wisdom with the world.

I'm fond of a story about Andrew Carnegie, the Scottish immigrant who founded the United States Steel Company in the early nineteen hundreds. When Carnegie died, a yellowed sheet of paper was found in his desk on which he'd written a note to himself when he was still in his twenties. This note set forth the main purpose of his life. It read: "I am going to spend the first half of my life accumulating money, and I am going to spend the last half of my life giving it all away."

Did this impulse toward benevolence prove to be a strong motivator for success? Well, during his lifetime, Carnegie's fortune was estimated at four hundred fifty million dollars—the equivalent of four-and-a-half *billion* dollars today. And he did have the joy of giving it away. In addition to building Carnegie Hall in New York City, he founded libraries in hundreds of small towns all across America and participated in dozens of other philanthropic activities as well.

When we look at these four important motivators, what do we really see? The thing that I immediately notice is that they all involve other people, whether they are peers, mentors, family members, or simply fellow members of the human race. It's ironic, isn't it? To be successful, you need this very internal, very personal, very unique thing called motivation. And to acquire that innermost quality and set it to work, you need to recognize other people as reasons to believe.

# Creating Your List of Reasons

**There's a list** of reasons for doing well called "the nitty-gritty"—those little reasons that can really affect your life. Sometimes it doesn't take much of a goal to start you in a brand-new life direction.

I now carry a few hundred dollars in my money clip at all times. It's only a few hundred dollars, but the story behind why I do it reveals one of those situations that greatly affected me.

Just before I met Mr. Shoaff, I heard a knock at my door one day. When I opened it, there was a little girl selling Girl Scout cookies. She gave me one of the finest sales presentations I've ever heard. A special deal… many varieties to choose from… and only two dollars. With a big smile, she very politely asked me to buy. And I wanted to. But there was one big problem: I didn't have two dollars. And to this day, I can still clearly remember the pain and the embarrassment. I was a father, I had been to college, I was working, and I didn't have two dollars.

Since I didn't want to tell her that, I did what I thought was the next best thing. I lied to her. I said, "I've already bought lots of Girl Scout cookies. I've still got plenty stacked in the house." It wasn't true, but it seemed to get me off the hook for the moment. She said, "That's wonderful, sir. Thank you very much," and she went away.

That was the day I said, "I don't want to live like this anymore. I've had it with being broke, and I've had it with lying. I've had it with being embarrassed over not having any money in my pocket." I promised myself that day that this would never happen again.

I now carry plenty of money with me, and I do it for two reasons. First, I like the special feeling of security and abundance it gives me. Second, that little Girl Scout may be all grown up now, but I never again want to miss the chance to

help another young entrepreneur.

In fact, some years after making this resolution, I happened upon two little girls selling candy right outside of a bank. They were raising money for a girls' organization. The first little girl walked up to me and said, "Mister, would you like to buy some candy?" I said, "I probably would. What kind is it?" She said, "It's Almond Roca." I said, "That's my favorite. How much is it?" She said, "It's only two dollars." How appropriate!

So I said, "How many boxes of that candy do you have?" She said, "I've got five." And to the other little girl standing there, I asked, "How many boxes do you have?" She said, "I've got four." I said, "That's nine. I'll take them all." They said, "Really?" I replied, "Yes. I've got some friends, so I'll pass them around."

They were so excited. As they put all this candy together, I reached into my pocket and gave them eighteen dollars. Then the first little girl looked up and said, "Mister, you are really something!" How about that! Can you imagine only spending eighteen dollars and having someone look you in the face and say something like that? Now you know why I carry a lot of money! I'm not going to miss those chances anymore. It was a small goal, just a few hundred dollars, but it had a powerfully motivating effect on my life.

# Balancing the Personal and Professional

**Balancing your personal** life with your professional life is key to sustaining your motivation. Your home life and work life must balance perfectly. Make sure that what you're going for in your career complements your home life. Make sure that what goes on at home complements your career. One won't work well if the other doesn't.

For example, a woman gets into work early in the morning and is the last one to leave every night. This goes on week after week, month after month. It doesn't seem like she gets that much more accomplished than anyone else. As a matter of fact, it seems like she's using the office to escape from home. Something's wrong there. Something needs to be fixed. Chances are, whatever is bothering her at home is affecting her work, too.

Or think about this. A man is always late for work. He always takes off during the middle of the day to go home. There always seems to be some sort of emergency to tend to at home. He takes long breaks. He leaves work early. He's not getting his work done in record time. In fact, he's not getting anything done at all. Chances are, he's using the emergencies at home as excuses to stay away from his job.

If something is wrong at work, fix it if you can, or look for your solution elsewhere. If something's wrong at home, fix it. If what's going on at home is the result of neglect, admit it, then fix it. Pay greater attention. If you need to go to counseling, go to counseling. Talk with your minister. Talk with a trusted friend. But remember that whatever the problem is at home, it probably didn't happen overnight. So make sure to give your problem time to heal. Be patient.

There must be a balance between work time and home time, professional time and personal time. They both have to be working well in order to maximize your motivation. Problems at home affect work. Problems at work affect your home life.

Even when things are going well in both areas, special circumstances may, at times, call for work to take away from home time. If that's the case, make sure everybody at home knows when to expect the light at the end of the tunnel. If that extra project is really taking away time for the family, make sure your family knows that their time will be paid back with interest.

Psychologists have found two major things that we, as human beings, get the most happiness and satisfaction from. Number one is our work—our contribution to society, our continued progress toward reaching our goals, our area of influence and power.

Number two is love, the love we receive from our spouse, our children, our parents, our families, and our friends. Knowing that one person, or several people, care about us and want to spend time with us is an important factor.

The professional goals that you've outlined for yourself take a lot of work. They require constant learning to improve yourself and develop your skills. Don't expect that your achievements will come to you on a silver platter. Don't work on the wish-hope-and-prayer philosophy. You know that your goals require constant attention and discipline every day. Otherwise, they'll never come to you at all!

You can't just expect to come home at night after a long day and expect your family life to be improving all by itself. You can't just expect that your personal life will grow and flourish without attention, without your taking the time to feed and water and weed out the negativity that happens while you're away. Creating the perfect personal life takes just as much attention as creating the perfect professional life. It takes love, nurturing, kindness, sincerity, and caring.

And that's one of the biggest mistakes that occur today. People spend all their time, focus all their energy, and give everything they've got to the job. It can't work that way. Your family requires more than that.

The investment you initially made to your personal relationships is the

investment you must continue to make. The more you give, the more you get. If you stop giving, guess what—you'll probably stop receiving, too.

So keep your investment in relationships and family active. That's part of the good life. What good is a mansion on the hill if you've got no one to share it with? What good is an investment portfolio worth millions if you've got no one to share it with? What good is working so hard day after day, month after month, year after year… working, working, working until you accumulate everything you want… and in the meantime, your family leaves you? It all loses its value.

Work hard. Play hard. Life has to be balanced, or your motivation will suffer along with your lifestyle.

Life without balance can cost you your relationships. Life without balance can cost you your health. Life without balance can cost you your spirituality. Life without balance can cost you your wealth and your happiness. So find things to motivate you from all areas of life. Your success depends on it.

# Living Your Life in Style

A **life lived in** style is also a balanced life. Make sure you pay attention to all the values and dimensions of your life. One is family. If you have someone you care about, there is nothing to match that. One person caring for another is life at its best. Protect that relationship with a vengeance. If a chair gets in the way, I suggest you destroy the chair.

It was wisely said long ago, but is still true today: “There are many treasures, but the greatest of these is love.” It is better to have a love affair while living in a tent on the beach than to live in a mansion by yourself. Ask me, I know. Family must be cultivated like an enterprise, like a garden. Time, effort, imagination, creativity, and genius must be summoned constantly to keep your family relationships flourishing and growing.

The next dimension of life is friendship. A priceless value, friendship. Friends are those incredible people who know all about you and still like you. Friends are those people who stay by your side when everyone else is leaving. As someone once suggested, “Be sure to make the kind of friends on your way up who will take you in on your way down.” Life is a bit of both up and down, but with true friends—friends who care regardless of your circumstances—the ups are even more fantastic and the downs are less devastating.

Traveling around the world, I have made some unique friends. And I do have one particularly special friend. If I were stuck in a Mexican jail and unduly accused, I would call this friend. Why? He would come and get me. Now that is a friend: someone who would come and get you.

How much would he would spend to get me? As much as it would take. How long would he would try to get me out? As long as it would take. That is a friend.

I also have some casual friends who would probably say, “Call me when you get back.” I guess we all have some of those friends.

But friendship is so vitally important to those in search of the good life. Make sure your friendships get the attention and the effort they deserve. Properly nourished, they will give back to you that priceless treasure of both pleasure and satisfaction called “the good life.”

Remember, the good life is not measured by material wealth or possessions. The good life is an attitude, an act, an idea, a discovery, a search. The good life comes from a lifestyle that is so fully developed—regardless of your bank account—that it provides you with a constant sense of joy in living. It fuels the fires of motivation to adopt a lifestyle that makes living worthwhile. What is wealth without character, industry without art, quantity without quality, enterprise without satisfaction, possession without joy?

Become a person of culture. Become that person of unusual substance who brings an added measure of genius to life so our children will be the beneficiaries.

# It’s Not the Amount that Counts

**Some people have** plenty of beautiful possessions and activities filling their days, but they get little happiness from them. Some people have money, but they have trouble finding joy in their lives. Imagine a father who wads up a five-dollar bill and throws it at his son saying, “Here, if you need the darn stuff that badly, take it.” He may have money, but he has no style.

It’s not the amount that counts, it’s the style that counts. Mr. Shoaff taught me about lifestyle in those early days, starting with small doses. He said, “Imagine that you are getting your shoes shined, and the shoeshine boy has done a fabulous job. You have one of the world’s all-time great shines, so you pay him for the shine. Now, you consider from the change in your hand what kind of tip to give him, and the question pops into your mind, ‘Shall I give him one quarter or two quarters for my neat shine?’ If two different amounts for a tip ever come to your mind, always go for the higher amount. Become a two-quarter person.”

I said, “What difference would that make, one quarter or two quarters?” He said, “All the difference in the world. If you say, ‘Well, I’ll just give him one quarter,’ that will affect you for the rest of the day. You will start feeling bad. Sure enough, in the middle of the day, you will look down at your great shoeshine and say, ‘I’ve got to be cheap. One lousy quarter!’ That will affect you profoundly.

“However, if you go for two quarters, you won’t believe the feeling you can buy for another quarter.” That’s motivation—becoming a two-quarter person and learning to get joy from the greater person you are becoming.

# The Universal Quest

**George Leonard, in** his book *Mastery*, talks about "enjoying the plateau." This is an important point. So often, we find ourselves racing to get ahead, thinking so much about our next achievement that we can't appreciate the time in between. We find ourselves losing our motivation.

Happiness is not in the getting. Happiness is in the becoming. Happiness is a universal quest. Happiness is a joy that comes as a result of positive activity. It has a wide variety of meanings, a wide variety of interpretations. Happiness is both the joy of discovery and the joy of knowing. It's the result of an awareness of the full range of life. It's opening yourself to experiences, sounds, harmonies, dreams, and goals. It's the joy that comes from designing a life that practices the fine art of living well.

Happiness is being able to explore all that life offers. Happiness is quite often found in having options—options of doing what you want to, instead of doing what you have to. The option of living where you *want* to, instead of living where you *have* to. The option of looking like you *want* to, instead of settling for what you *have* to look like.

Happiness is receiving and sharing, reaping and bestowing. Happiness is found in taking the time to enjoy what you've accomplished: enjoying the plateau, giving yourself credit when credit is due, patting yourself on the back for a job well done. Happiness is the here and now. Happiness isn't the end result. Happiness is part of the journey.

There's an old saying that goes, "The road to heaven, is heaven." The happiness that you're searching for in the future must be found today. The success you're after in the future will only be found by working on it today. Motivation is generated when there is a balance between the need for active achievement and the satisfaction in taking the time to acknowledge what you've already achieved.

Take the time to reflect while you're enjoying your plateau. And while you're reflecting back on your past accomplishments, think about something else. Think about the potential within you that's still untapped. Consider the following two questions during your time of reflection.

Number one: what could I have achieved in the past, had I been more diligent? Could I have been more disciplined? Worked smarter instead of harder? Said "no" more often to social functions and community commitments? What could I have achieved in the past, had I tried things a little differently?

Only you can answer this question. It's very personal. While you're reflecting and enjoying your plateau, all I'm asking is that you dig a little deeper and see if you can't be just a bit more effective next time. Work a little smarter instead of a little harder.

Here's number two: how can I achieve more in the future? If you take some time to thoughtfully answer question number one, you'll probably have a clue as to what's needed in the future.

Do you need to work more diligently? Do you need to be more disciplined? Do you need to work smarter instead of harder? Do you need to say "no" more often? Do you need to manage your time better?

That's one of the keys to reflection. You can put down on paper what worked for you in the past and figure out ways to translate this information into action. You can design your future better if you can learn from your past. You can face your future with more excitement, more anticipation, and more motivation when you design a future worth getting excited about. You can see your future and have it pull you forward. Just don't forget to pat yourself on the back for what you have done so far.

***Often we are in such a hurry to get ahead that we don't take the time to appreciate what we've already accomplished. Remember to sit back every day for a few minutes of "enjoying the plateau."***

# Chapter Six
# *The Qualities of Skillful Leadership*

*"Humility is a grasp of the distance between us and the stars, yet having the feeling that we're part of the stars."*

*"Part of the task of leadership is learning to spend eighty percent of your time with the twenty percent of the people who are doing eighty percent of the work."*

*"We can't win everyone's dedication and belief at once. What we can do is work on ourselves, refine our philosophies, and trust that the believers will be there."*

*"If you share a good idea often enough, it will fall on good people."*

# The Great Challenge of Life

*I***f you want** to be a leader who attracts quality people, the key is to become a person of quality yourself. Leadership is the ability to attract someone to the gifts, skills, and opportunities you offer as an owner, as a manger, as a parent. I call leadership the great challenge of life.

What's important in leadership is refining your skills. All great leaders keep working on themselves until they become effective. Here are some specifics:

Learn to be strong but not impolite. It is an extra step you must take to become a powerful, capable leader with a wide range of reach. Some people mistake rudeness for strength. It's not even a good substitute.

Next, learn to be kind but not weak. We must not mistake weakness for kindness. Kindness isn't weak. Kindness is a certain type of strength. We must be kind enough to tell somebody the truth. We must be kind enough and considerate enough to lay it on the line. We must be kind enough to tell it like it is and not deal in delusion.

Next, learn to be bold but not a bully. It takes boldness to win the day. To build your influence, you've got to walk in front of your group. You've got to be willing to take the first arrow, tackle the first problem, discover the first sign of trouble. I think we'd all agree that farming is not an easy job. Farmers must face the weeds and the rains and the bugs straight on. Likewise, if you want any rewards at harvest time, you've got to be bold. You've got to seize the moment.

Here's the next step. You've got to learn to be humble, but not timid. You can't get to the high life by being timid. Some people mistake timidity for humility. But humility is a virtue; timidity is a disease. It's an affliction. It can be cured, but it is a problem.

*Humility* is almost a God-like word. A sense of awe. A sense of wonder. An awareness of the human soul and spirit. An understanding that there is something unique about the human drama versus the rest of life. Humility is a grasp of the distance between us and the stars, yet having the feeling that we're *part of* the stars.

Here's a good tip: learn to be proud but not arrogant. It takes pride to win the day. It takes pride to build your ambition. It takes pride in community. It takes pride in cause, in accomplishment. But the key to becoming a good leader is being proud without being arrogant.

Do you know the worst kind of arrogance? Arrogance from ignorance. It's intolerable. And it can be expensive. A young newlywed couple gets some money from their parents to buy a new set of patio furniture. The young couple goes to the store and picks out the perfect set. When they go to though the checkout counter, the clerk scans the UPC code. The couple says, "Hey, there are four chairs in this container. You're only charging us for one."

"I know my job!" the clerk responds arrogantly. "I scanned the container. Don't you think I know what I'm doing?"

Well, the young couple tries to explain that she is wrong. The clerk won't listen. So the young couple gets four beautiful patio chairs for the price of one. Do you think the store clerk will change her arrogant attitude when it's time to close out her cash drawer? Probably so.

Ignorant arrogance is the worst kind. If someone is smart and arrogant, we can tolerate that. But if someone is ignorant and arrogant, that's just too much to take.

The next step is learning to develop humor without folly. That's important for a leader. In leadership, we learn that it's okay to be witty, but not silly; fun, but not foolish.

Next, deal in realities. Deal in truth. Save yourself the agony. Just accept life like it is. Life is unique. Some people call it tragic, but I'd like to think it's unique. The whole drama of life is unique. It's fascinating.

Life is unique. Leadership is unique. The skills that work well for one leader may not work at all for another. But the fundamental skills of leadership can be adapted to work well for just about everyone: at work, in the community, and at home.

***Farming is not an easy job. If they want any rewards at harvest time, farmers must face the weeds and insects and bad weather straight on. They must be bold.***

# Building a Successful Team

*O***nce you've set** a goal for yourself as a leader—whether it is to create your own enterprise, energize your organization, build a church, or excel in sports—the challenge is to find good people to help you accomplish that goal. Gathering a successful team of people is not only helpful, it's necessary.

So to guide you in this daunting task of picking the right people, I'm going to share with you a four-part checklist. Number one: check each candidate's history. Seek out available information regarding the individual's qualifications to do the job. That's the most obvious step.

Number two: check the person's interest level. If he is interested, he's probably a good prospect. Sometimes people can fake their interest, but if you've been a leader for a while, you will be a capable judge of whether somebody is merely pretending. Arrange face-to-face conversation, and try to gauge his or her sincerity to the best of your ability. You won't hit the bull's-eye every time, but you can get pretty good at spotting what I call true interest.

Number three: check the prospect's responses. A response tells you a lot about someone's integrity, character, and skills. Listen for responses like these: "You want me to get there *that* early?" "You want me to stay *that* late?" "The break is only *ten minutes?*" "I'll have to work two evenings a week *and* Saturdays?" You can't ignore these clues.

A person's responses is a good indication of his or her character and of how hard he or she will work. Our attitudes reflect our inner selves, so even if we can fool others for a while, eventually, our true selves will emerge.

And number four: check results. The name of the game is results. How else can we effectively judge an individual's performance? The final judge must be results.

There are two types of results to look for. The first is activity results. Specific results are a reflection of an individual's productivity. Sometimes we don't ask for this type of result right away, but it's pretty easy to check activity. If you work for a sales organization and you've asked your new salesman, John, to make ten calls in the first week, it's simple to check his results on Friday. You say, "John, how many calls did you make?" John says, "Well…" and starts telling a story, making an excuse. You respond, "John, I just need a number from one to ten."

If his results that first week are not good, it is a definite sign. You might try another week, but if that lack of precise activity continues, you'll soon realize that John isn't capable of becoming a member of your team.

The second area you need to monitor is productivity. The ultimate test of a quality team is measurable progress in a reasonable amount of time. And here's one of the skills of leadership: be up front with your team as to what you expect them to produce. Don't let the surprises come later.

When you're following this four-part checklist, your instincts obviously play a major role. And your instincts will improve every time you go through the process. Remember, building a good team will be one of your most challenging tasks as a leader. It will reap you multiple rewards for a long time to come.

# Following the 80/20 Rule

**Leadership is quite** often an exercise in facing reality. I used to say, “Liars shouldn’t lie.” What I’ve since learned, and what you need to know, is that pronouncements like that are a waste of energy. Liars are supposed to lie. That’s why we call them *liars.* You wouldn’t expect them to do anything else. If you did, we’d call you naive. And you would be especially naive if you let it upset you.

Somebody cuts you off on the freeway, so you go chasing after him shaking your fist. You don’t think he should have cut you off on the freeway? That’s what he’s supposed to do. He is known as a “cutter-offer” on the freeway. And if you say, “Those people shouldn’t cut me off,” we’d call you naive. Come on!

Here’s a perspective that saved me a lot of agony and a lot of anguish. I can now avoid those sleepless nights I used to experience pulling my hair and wondering why there were liars and people who cut me off on the road. I gave up on all that when I finally understood the 80/20 Rule. Let me give you some of my insights on the 80/20 Rule, and explain how it applies to you as a leader and manager. Here is the first tip: learn to spend eighty percent of your time as a leader with the twenty percent who deserve it.

There are plenty of examples to show how this 80/20 Rule applies across the board. Ask the minister of the church, “Who donates the most money here?” He’ll answer, “Probably twenty percent of the people donate eighty percent of the money.”

So what do you do with the other eighty percent of the people? You learn to deal with the situation and not try to solve it. It’s like trying to figure out the laws of nature. You don’t figure out the source of those laws, you learn to work with them. They’re all set, just like this 80/20 Rule is all set. The key is to learn to work with things the way they are.

Part of the task of leadership is learning to spend eighty percent of your time with the twenty percent who are doing eighty percent of the work. We would call that good leadership sense. If you wondering how you can possibly do that, here's one answer: spend individual time with the twenty percent and group time with the eighty percent. This is an important aspect of skillful leadership.

However, guess who wants your individual time! The wrong group—the eighty percent. But that's what life's all about. So now you've got to be strategic; and you've got to be diplomatic. *Diplomacy* and *strategy* are two key words for the effective leader to understand.

Here's the diplomacy: Mary comes and says, "I've got a question." You say, "Mary, bring your question to me Saturday morning. I'm going to meet with everybody and cover it then." It might not always be that easy, but you need to follow the strategy of dealing with the eighty percent in groups and talking to the twenty percent individually. That might be difficult because the pull is in the opposite direction, and it always has been. Just as gravity is a downward pull, life is a struggle in the opposite direction.

Even if you've built a terrific team, this 80/20 Rule will apply. It's inevitable. But if you learn to work with it, your bottom eighty percent can raise their competence level dramatically. And that will push your top twenty percent even higher. They will be simply exceptional. You will have a true high-performance team.

# Mysteries of the Mind

**An interesting story** says that the day the Christian church was formed, a magnificent sermon was preached. It was a great presentation. In fact, it was one of the classic presentations of all time.

According to the story, this presentation was given to a multitude of people. When the sermon was finished, there were a variety of reactions from those onlookers. I find that fascinating since they were all listening to the same sermon.

Some who heard this presentation were perplexed. I read the presentation, and it sounded pretty straightforward to me. Why would somebody be perplexed with a good, sincere, straightforward presentation? The best answer I've got is that they are chronically perplexed people. It doesn't matter who's preaching, these people are going to be perplexed.

Some who heard this presentation mocked and laughed. They made fun of the presentation. The presentation seemed pretty sincere to me. If you give a sincere, honest presentation, why would somebody mock and laugh? There's an easy explanation: they are the mockers and the laughers. What else would you expect them to do?

Some that heard this magnificent presentation didn't know what was going on. Those are the people who usually don't know what's going on.

Finally, some that heard the presentation chose to believe, and I think that's who the speaker was looking for, the believers. Those believers numbered about three thousand. That is a pretty good first day! I've had some good first days, but I've never had a response like that.

With anything in life, some will believe, some will mock, some will laugh, some will be perplexed, and some won't know what's going on. And you just have to leave it at that. In this particular story, as far as we know, there weren't classes after the presentation to try to de-perplex the perplexed. As far as we know, they left them perplexed. They left the mockers mocking. They left the laughers laughing. All they needed to build a church were the believers, and they knew that with each presentation, more believers would emerge from the masses.

That's the perspective we all need to cultivate. We can't win everyone's dedication and belief at once. The Law of Averages tells us that. What we can do is work on ourselves, refine our philosophy, and trust that the believers will be there. We just need to find them.

# Nurturing Your Crops

*O***ur next subject** in the study of leadership skills involves a simple story from the Bible. Being an amateur on the Bible, I'm going to tell this story in my own way. Though my parents made sure that by the time I was nineteen I was a pretty good scholar, I'm still not an expert on all subjects. So here is my interpretation of the parable of the sower.

The sower in ancient days was the person who planted the crops. Very simply, he got the ground ready, and with a bag of seed he would walk across the ground and sow the seed. This is how he got the crops going. And it's a very fascinating story that has a lot to say about the qualities of a true leader.

Here's the first leadership quality demonstrated by the sower: he was a wise man. That's a great advantage, isn't it? You don't want to send a stupid man out to plant. If you do, we'd all starve.

Second, he was very ambitious. Ambition is an admirable quality, but it is one that has to be tempered. One writer said, "I've learned to be both ambitious and content." That's a unique combination of characteristics, being both ambitious and content.

Third, the sower was a hard worker. It takes productivity to bring forth new life. An idea without action is stillborn. It never becomes tangible. It never becomes real. You've got to motivate yourself to take action.

Fourth, the sower had the best of seed. Boy, it's exciting when you feel that you're involved with the best, whether it's the best product, the best service, the best idea, or the best enterprise. We all need something to feel proud of.

With all of these qualities, the sower begins to learn about the Law of Averages.

Here’s what happens.

The first part of the seed that he sows falls by the wayside, and the birds get it. This is a very common scenario. And it’s very important for leaders to begin to understand and teach this concept. Leaders must understand birds. Why? Because birds are going to get part of the seed. It’s inevitable, and if you don’t understand this, your team will get very upset. They won’t know what to expect. We must all be prepared for the inevitable, including the fact that the birds are going to get some of the seed.

Let’s say you’re building an organization. You’re out recruiting. You’re talking to Joe, and you say, “Joe, I’ve got an important story for you to listen to. It could represent a big change in your life. You could earn a lot more money. Come and take a look.” And he says, “I think I’m ready for something like that. I’ll see you Thursday night.”

Thursday night arrives, and Joe isn’t there. The birds have gotten to him. Who knows what form they come in? Maybe his brother-in-law said, “Sales! You’re not going to get mixed up in sales, are you? What makes you think you can be a salesman?”

There are many influences that pull people away from a good idea. That’s always going to be the case—the birds will always get some of the seed. When that happens, you may feel the need to chase the birds. But here’s the problem with this course of action: if you go chasing birds to straighten things out, you have now left the field. The Law of Averages isn’t going to work for you until you get back into the field.

It is so important to know what is a good use of your time and what is a waste of time. Focusing on the negative is a waste of time. In fact, it is often a massive error in judgment. The best thing to do is to spend your energy and time on the things that count and understand the law of averages. Don’t chase the birds; it’s much more important to stay in the field.

Here’s what the wise sower does. He ignores the birds, and he keeps on sowing. Why? Being so bright, he understands the Law of Averages.

As he keeps on sowing the seed, the seed falls on the rocky ground where the soil is shallow. Again, this is inevitable. As a leader, you can help people grow by understanding this law of nature. Even if the seed takes root and a plant starts to grow, the soil is so shallow that on the first hot day, the little plant will wither and die. It’s disappointing, but it’s a fact of life.

Inevitably, some of your team members will quit on the first hot day. You’re going to be disappointed, especially if it’s somebody you were really counting on, but here’s what you must learn to do as a leader: limit your disappointment. This is part of the challenge of life. It’s part of the Law of Averages.

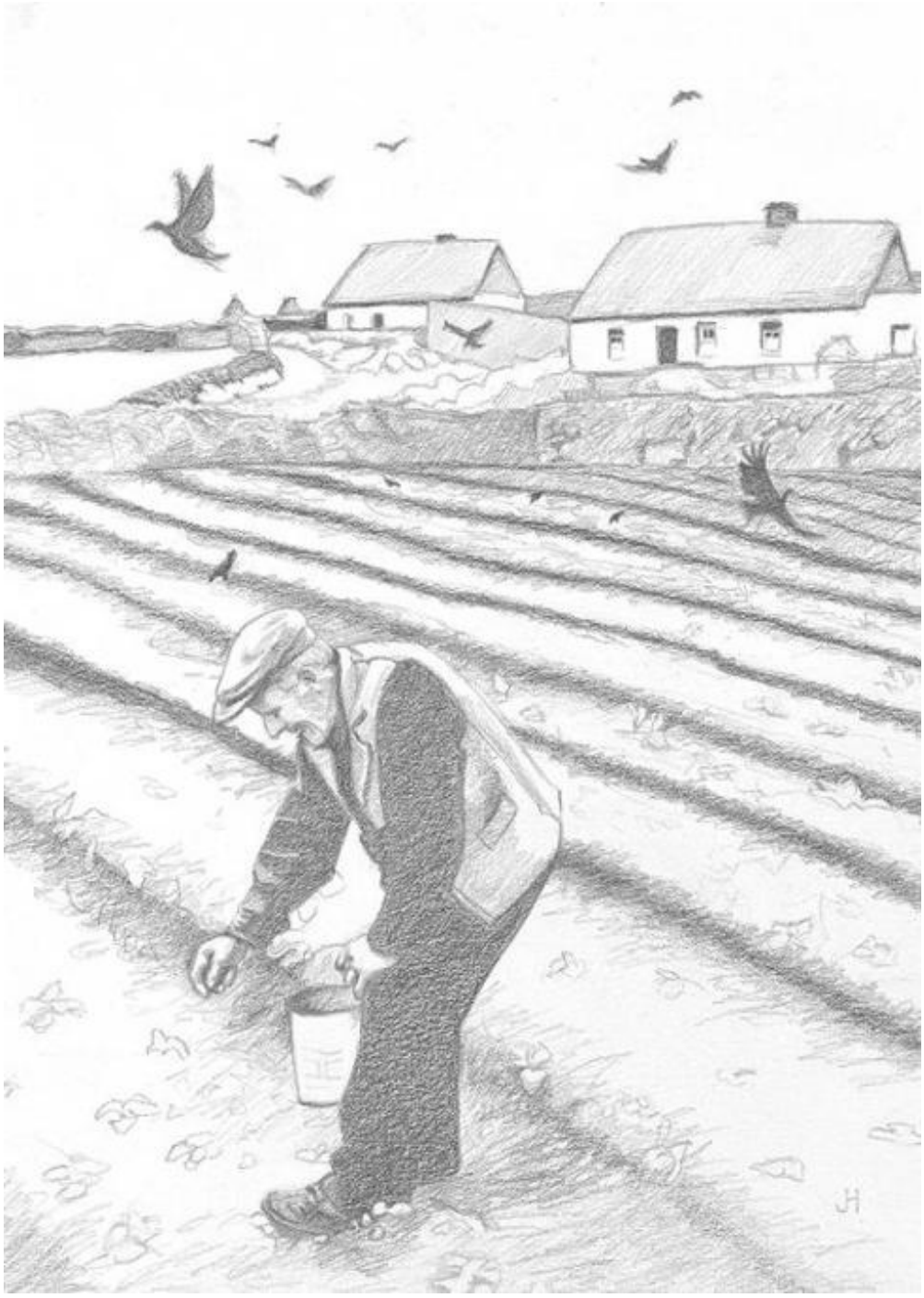
Here’s what the wise sower does next: he keeps on sowing. How brilliant! He is so well-schooled in the Law of Averages that he keeps on sowing. This time, the seed falls on thorny ground. The little plant starts to grow, but the thorns choke it to death. Once again, this is inevitable. What shape do these thorns take in our lives? They are the excuses some people use for not pushing on and getting the job done. Some people are going to try so little. They’re going to let other things limit their opportunities, and I don’t know why. They key is to take the inevitable and study the obvious. If you don’t let it unduly disturb you, you can learn to manage the obvious and get on with the more important things of life.

So the sower keeps on sowing. He is so bright; evidently, he’s been well-schooled in these numbers regarding how many seeds the birds are going get, how many the hot weather will destroy, and how many are going to get caught in the thorns. He must have gone through the school of hard knocks because he understands the process. He just keeps on sowing.

Finally, the seed falls on good ground. And let me give you a promise as a leader: it always will. Always remember that if you share a good idea often enough, it will fall on good people. Why? Because of the Law of Averages.

Of course, even the good ground has a range of productivity. Part of the good ground will yield thirty percent of what is sown, another part will yield sixty percent, and the last part will yield a hundred percent. It's the Law of Averages. That's the way it is.

As a leader, can you find some "hundred percenters?" Of course! But first you've got to go through the birds, the hot weather, and the thorns. You've got to find some way to use the "thirty percenters" and the "sixty percenters." That is how you become a skillful leader. When you learn how to deal with all this, you'll have some hundred percenters to work with. It's the Law of Averages.



***When you sow, the birds are always going to get some of the seed. It's inevitable. You may feel the urge to chase them away, but don't give into it. Concentrate on your task. Stay in the field.***

# The Frog and the Scorpion

**All good leaders** must understand the story of the frog and the scorpion. It's one of the most important stories for a leader to keep in mind.

According to this story, the frog and the scorpion appear on the bank of a river at about the same time. The frog is about to jump in the river and swim to the other side. When the scorpion sees what's about to happen, he engages the frog in conversation. He says to him, "Mr. Frog, I see that you're about to jump into the river and swim to the other side." The frog responds, "That is correct."

So the scorpion asks for a favor. "Well, you know, I would also like to get to the other side. Unfortunately, I'm a scorpion, and I can't swim. Would you be so kind as to let me hop on your back as you swim across the river? If you could deposit me on the other side, I would be grateful."

The frog looks at the scorpion and says, "No. You're a scorpion and scorpions sting frogs and kill them. I'd get out there halfway with you on my back, and you'd sting me and I'd die. Do you think I'm crazy? Absolutely not."

The scorpion says, "Wait a minute, you're not thinking. If I were to sting you halfway out there, surely you'd die, but so would I. Since I'm a scorpion, I can't swim. I'd drown. That would be kind of foolish. I'm not about to do that. I just want to get to the other side."

The frog thinks about that reasoning and says, "That makes sense. Hop on."

So the scorpion hops on the frog's back and they start to swim across the river. Sure enough, halfway across the river, the scorpion stings the frog. They are now both about to sink down into the water. The frog cannot believe what has happened, and he says to the scorpion, "Why did you do that? I'm about to die,

but so are you. Why would you do that?”

And the scorpion replies, “Because I am a scorpion.”

# Raising a Solid Family

**The skills of** leadership are required at work, yes. But they're also required at home, with our families, in the community, in education. I call leadership the challenge to be something more than mediocre—a step up to a new challenge, a new opportunity.

What are some of the skills involved in raising a good, solid family? Communication is number one. Every member of the family has to know that he or she has a voice and that his or her voice is respected. Every person in the family has to know that his or her opinion counts, that the family is a democracy. If there's an issue, they can put it on the table. And that's what's so important about the dinner table. It's not just a place for the evening meal, it's a place to bring forth all the issues, to talk about the day, to share experiences, to ask questions and hope for answers. You can accomplish all that and more around the dinner table.

In today's society, there are a lot of broken homes—divorced parents who share custody of the kids. How do you raise good, solid kids when they're split between two households? Make sure the child-rearing philosophies in both households are compatible. Obviously, each parent's values are different. That's why the home is split. But parents who are facing this kind of challenge need to put away their personal differences and develop one set of philosophies by which to raise the kids. Why? Because if they don't, the kids will be a mess, with one set of rules for one house, and another set of rules for another house. The kids will grow up confused as to what's right and what's wrong.

Regardless of how your household is set up, make sure that communication plays a vital role. Everybody needs a voice. Everybody has to be heard. And everybody has to acknowledge that everyone else's voice counts. That's number one: communication.

Here's number two in raising a solid family: activity. There was a study done a

while back that surveyed a large group of happy families. And here's what they all had in common. First, they made a regular habit of eating dinner together as often as possible. Second, they were all involved in one physical activity or another together—walks, tennis, swimming, basketball. They planned family physical fitness activities. Third, they made a regular habit of spending Sunday mornings in church. And the fourth common denominator among successful families? The parents scheduled quality, personal time together. Alone.

Why would the parents' personal time affect the entire family so dramatically? Because when the parents are happy with each other, and invest in each other, they present a unified front to the kids. Personal time together is important.

Outside activity is also important. Activities such as planned outings, bike rides in the summer, ski trips in the winter, boating, fishing, trips to the zoo, frisbee in the yard, baseball, basketball… whatever outside interests your family has, make sure to schedule them on a regular basis.

And schedule *inside* activities as well. Regularly do things together at home. If you have a young family that is used to plopping down in front of the TV during every spare moment, start weaning them off this activity one day a week. Plan an evening each week without the TV. During this time, read together, work on household projects together, go through the family picture albums and videos together, plan vacations together.

Start a family journal. Write in it once a week. Record what you did, where you went, who you saw, how you felt. Family journals are a wonderful way of tracking the growth of your family and the growth of your kids. When you look back on these family journals, you'll find they're among the greatest treasures you have.

There's another fun way to log the history of your family. A friend of mine tells me that when she was a kid, one of three children in a family full of sibling rivalry, her parents used to hide a tape recorder under the dining room table every so often. They would tape the family dinner conversation.

Those kids get together now and have a great time with the tapes. They're grown now, but when they go back and listen to scenes from their upbringing, it has a way of rekindling the family bond.

Here's the third most important key to raising a strong, healthy family with bonds that will last a lifetime: a spiritual connection. Your beliefs are your own, and whether or not you call God the power behind our existence is entirely up to you. But whatever your faith, whatever your beliefs, share them with your family. Share them with your children. Make time, frequently, to discuss the spiritual aspects of your life. Give your kids the opportunity of choice by giving them a basis of knowledge.

There are all sorts of wonderful programs at churches these days. Aside from the Sunday sermon that's so valuable, there's Sunday School for kids, Vacation Bible School, camping trips, family outings, weekly Bible studies, picnics, plays, musicals, and concerts. If you're searching for a new church, visit several churches to find out which one is right for you.

There are many things you can do with your family to build strong bonds and healthy relationships. The tips I gave you are just a few. You may have other ideas, and that's great. Just remember that the more energy you expend on your family, the more time and attention you give to your family, the more love and attention you'll receive in return. Your children will love you unconditionally when they're young. Just make sure that when they grow up and know better, you will have given them a reason to continue their unconditional love.

# Embracing the Responsibility of Leadership

*T***here is undoubtedly** a strong relationship between responsibility and leadership. Bear Bryant once said something about this issue. He was the coach of many great football teams at the University of Alabama, and until his record was broken recently, he had the greatest number of victories of any coach in the history of the game.

Bryant said that it was impossible for any of his players to make a mistake during a football game. Any and all mistakes were his, because as coach, he was solely and completely responsible for preparing his athletes to play error-free football.

By saying this, Bryant was truly accepting a leadership role, and he was embracing the special kind of responsibility that comes with it. As a leader, you've got to be responsible for preparing your subordinates for the challenges they'll face—and if the result is not positive, you've got to accept responsibility for not having prepared them adequately. Maybe this seems like a harsh standard to live up to, but that's just the way it is. If you can't handle responsibility and leadership, at least admit it to yourself, and don't let other people start depending on you. Choose the standard by which you want to live, and follow through on it.

During the time of the Roman Empire, there was a unique perspective toward this kind of decision making. The world was brutal in those days to say the least; anything could happen, from plagues to revolutions to Barbarian invasions. Even for the upper classes, it was a challenge just to survive. Yet certain people attempted to do more than merely survive. There was a tradition whereby people attempted to create themselves and their characters exactly in the way that an artist would create a painting or a sculpture. And like a work of art, these people looked upon their minds and their characters as things of beauty that would live on after their deaths in the memories of their friends and families.

People who chose to live their lives this way were not monks or ascetics or in

any way removed from life in the everyday world. They were just very serious about building strong character.

In fact, the Roman emperor Marcus Aurilius was a well-known example of this type of person, and his journal is a powerful example of everything that's involved in building character and leadership. Much of it was written in military camps while the Emperor was leading the Roman armies against Barbarian tribes in what is now Germany.

The writings of this ancient emperor and of other people from the same period reflect a conscious choice to live according to certain standards of responsibility and character. This kind of clear decision about how to improve your inner self is something that we rarely witness today.

Most people want to be good, they want to be ethical and moral and successful in every way. They want to fulfill their potential, but they think it's something that will just happen by itself. They don't see that there should be a conscious decision to take responsibility for one's life, for what one does and becomes.

There's an old saying that goes, "I slept and dreamed that life was beauty; I woke and saw that life was duty." If you want to really be in control of your life, and if you want other people to be able to depend on you and look to you for leadership, you must wake up from the dream that somebody else will handle the responsibility. You must accept the responsibility of leading both yourself and others. No one else can do it for you. And if you develop the skills of a highly effective leader, no one else can do it as well as you, either.

# Developing Your Craft

*E***ffective leadership is** a skill that must be consistently developed and nurtured. It is a craft requiring constant study. And there are five areas of this discipline in particular that deserve special attention.

Number one is the area of possibility. It's so important for leaders to play the "what-if" game. What if we had enough people? What if we had people with special talents? What if we had leaders? What if we had a good team? What if we accomplished our goal—what could we achieve? The what-if game is crucial, because possibilities are all around us. We must all be students of possibility. Dr. Robert Schuller calls it "possibility thinking." This is the first area of focus for leaders.

Number two is the study of opportunity. Leaders must always be conscious and aware of the expanded potential for opportunity. And sometimes opportunity is closer than you might think.

Number three is the study of ability. Leaders must be good students of ability—their own ability as well as those of the people in their charge. Sometimes it's easy to have somebody working right next to you without ever discovering all of their talent and potential.

Many years ago, I discovered a young man in Canada named Harold Dyke. He'd worked for the railroad for ten years and was making about three hundred dollars a month. He became a good friend of mine. I recruited him, and he joined my company.

The second year he was with me, Harold made forty-five thousand dollars, and his income has continued to increase dramatically. He's gifted and skillful, and he's financially independent. He's a leader in the community, and he's a unique gentleman. The railroad had him for ten years, and they didn't know what kind

of person they had. They didn’t take this in-depth survey to bring to light some unusual gifts and capacities that nobody had yet discovered.

Leaders must be able to perceive ability. You’ve just got to find a way to uncover all the talent that may lay dormant right under your nose.

Number four is the area of inevitability. We should all be students of inevitability. Ask yourself, “In all honesty, if I keep up my current daily practices, where will they lead me in ten years?” You don’t want to just cross your fingers and continue down what may be the wrong road. And you don’t want to influence others to move in the wrong direction, either.

Imagine being two hundred feet from Niagara Falls in a little boat with no motor and no oars. What a tragic place to find yourself! If somebody would have painted you this scenario when you were still further upstream, you might not have drifted this far into what we now call the inevitable. As a leader, you have to help people by telling them about the danger of the Falls long before they get within two hundred feet of them in a little boat with no motor and no oars.

Some people around you may be drifting, and it’s your responsibility to perceive which ones are drifting toward danger. You’ve got to tell them the truth, thereby giving them alternate choices while there still are options available. It’s the gift of leadership to help people make changes in their personal lives and career. You must help people change their thinking, change their attitudes. You must help them face the inevitable. It’s simply a part of leadership.

Finally, area number five is the study of rationality. Being rational allows you to come to the right conclusion based on the information at hand. You understand that what you do is the product of your own common sense. You take advice but not orders. You let everybody around you offer advice, but you then put it through your own mental computer and draw your own conclusion based on all the input. This is a true sense of leadership—to make rational decisions based on all the input.

These tasks are not easy, but they're possible when you develop excellent leadership skills. Whatever price you pay at the outset will lead to greater riches—spiritually, intellectually, and financially—down the road.

# Chapter Seven
# *The Road to Financial Independence*

*"Wealth is the possession of great financial resources that improve the quality of your life and give you added dignity and an expanded lifestyle."*

*"What you do with what you have is more important than what you have."*

*"It's hard to get rich fast. It's easy to get rich slowly."*

*"Disciplines are those ingenious keys that unlock the door to the kind of person we really want to become. And in becoming that person, we attract all those treasures and values that most people would call 'the good life.' "*

# A Life Abundant

***Wealth* is a** word that conjures a wide variety of mental images, and that is part of my purpose in this book—to provoke that wide variety of mental images. For that is where the dreams are, where inspiration comes from, where true incentive is born.

To one person, wealth means having enough financial substance to be able to do whatever you wish with your life. To another, it may mean freedom from debt, freedom from the constant claim of obligation. To yet another, it means opportunity. And to many, wealth means a million dollars. *Millionaire* is a unique word. It rings of success, freedom, power, influence, pleasure, possibility, benevolence, and excitement. Not a bad mental image.

We could talk about the wealth of experience, the wealth of friends, the wealth of love, the wealth of family, the wealth of culture—wealth of many kinds. But I'm going to focus on wealth in the sense of financial freedom. Wealth that comes from tremendous effort and enterprise and gets translated into currency and equity.

For each of us, the amount of money required to be wealthy will differ, but the dream for all of us, I'm sure, is the same: freedom from financial pressure, more freedom of choice, freedom to enjoy our lives, and the opportunity to create and to share our wealth. Above all, wealth represents the possession of great financial resources that improve the quality of your life and give you added dignity and an expanded lifestyle.

So decide for yourself what wealth means to you. Latch on to your own mental image of wealth and see if the ideas I'm about to tell you about will make sense. I can only hope that they will provide you with the inspiration to put your plan into high gear. Once you do, will you soon enjoy a growing sense of freedom, dignity, self-worth, substance, and lifestyle.

# Your Wealth Philosophy

**Your economic future** is not going to be determined by the economy, but rather your own philosophy. I had one woman chastise me severely. She said, “Mr. Rohn, you can’t promise young people they can become wealthy and financially independent. It’s just not in the cards these days. It takes everything a person makes just to keep his or her head above water and the wolf away from the door.”

I said, “No, that’s not true.” She said, “It is true. You can’t offer hope to all the people who listen to you, telling them they can become financially independent… especially children. They’ll be sadly disillusioned. It’s not in the cards these days.” I said, “Gosh, I wish I could persuade you otherwise.”

So I decided to use this illustration. I asked her, “Can you think of a couple right now who makes five thousand dollars a month?” She said, “Yes, if I think really hard, I could come up with a couple who makes five thousand dollars a month.”

I said, “What would they tell you it takes just to keep their head above water and the wolf away from the door?” She replied, “They would probably say, ‘All of it. It takes five thousand a month.’”

I said, “Could you think of a couple that makes five hundred dollars more than that a month?” She said, “Yes, if I thought for a while, I could probably come up with a couple that makes that much money.” I said, “What would they tell you it takes just to keep their nose above water and the wolf away from the door?” She replied, “They’d say, ‘All of it.’”

I said, “Now if if it takes all of it, how do you account for this extra five hundred dollars?”

Here’s what happens. There are errors in judgment when it comes to economic philosophy. Many people think it’s the economy, but it’s the *philosophy.* And if the second couple saved their extra five hundred dollars and lived like the first couple on five thousand, that five hundred dollars a month—invested over the next fifteen years—would make them financially independent. The difference is not your paycheck. The difference is your philosophy.

# Leaving a Profit

**The whole world** benefits if we all *leave* more profit, touch something and leave it better than you found it.

I talked to a man who rents a lot of apartments. He said, “Mr. Rohn, you wouldn’t believe it. When most people leave the apartment, it’s trashed.” What a reputation to leave, that everything you touch gets dirty. You’ve got to turn that around. Train yourself to leave a profit instead.

A friend of mine has made money on every car he’s bought. Why? Because when he sells them, they’re in better condition than when he acquires them.

The key for parents is to touch a life and leave it better than you found it. The key for leaders is to touch a business and leave it better than you found it. The key for employees is to touch a job and leave it better than you found it. Leave a profit.

What a world this would be if everybody tried to leave it in better condition than they found it!

# The Three Attitudes of Wealth

**Years ago, when** I made the decision to turn my economic life around, I had to develop a new attitude as well as new concepts. Here's what I used to say: "I hate to pay my taxes." Mr. Shoaff said, "Well, that's one way to live." I countered, "Doesn't *everybody* hate to pay their taxes?" He said, "No! No! A few of us have gotten way past that once we understood what taxes are. Here's the purpose of taxes in our democratic society. Taxes are how you care for and feed the goose that lays the golden eggs. Wouldn't you want to feed the goose that lays the golden eggs?"

How do you feel about feeding the goose? You may think the goose eats too much. That's probably true! But better a fat goose than no goose at all. And the truth is, we *all* eat too much. Don't let one appetite accuse another. Of course the government needs to go on a diet. So do most of us. But you still have to care for and feed the goose that lays the golden eggs.

The right attitude is so important. Here's what I used to say: "I hate to pay my bills. I bring in the mail, and there's nothing but these window envelopes. Bills, bills, bills!" Mr. Shoaff said, "Well, that's one way to live." I said, "Doesn't everybody hate to pay their bills?" He said, "No, some of us are way beyond that." I said, "Is it possible to love to pay your bills?" He said, "Yes! Reduce your liability, and increase your assets. Wouldn't you love to do that?"

You can start by adopting a whole new attitude. The next time you pay a hundred dollars on an account, put a little note in there that says, "With great delight, I send you this hundred dollars." Billing agencies don't get many letters like that. What a great scenario—reduce your liabilities and increase your assets. Your financial picture is improving. You can learn to love to pay your bills. Think of it as keeping the money in circulation. Think of paying your taxes as feeding the goose that lays the golden eggs. It's all a matter of attitude.

Here's the last attitude you need to adopt regarding wealth: everybody must pay.

Of course, life is opportunity, but life is also price. We all must pay; we all must share.

One of the classic Biblical stories of all time describes a fascinating scenario. Here's my interpretation of that story. One day, Jesus and his disciples were standing by the synagogue treasury watching people as they came by with their offerings. Some people came by and put in big amounts. Others came by and put in modest amounts. Then a little lady comes by and puts two pennies in the treasury. Jesus said to his disciples, "Look at that!" His disciples responded, "Two pennies? What's the big deal?"

Jesus said, "No, you don't understand. She gave more than everybody else." They said, "Two pennies is more than everybody else?" He said, "Yes! Because I'm certain that her two pennies represent most of what she has. And if you give most of what you have, then you've given the most." What a lesson to learn. It's not the amount, it's what it represents that counts.

There's a wisdom conveyed by what does *not* happen in this story also. Jesus did not reach into the treasury for this little lady's two pennies. He did not run after her and say, "Excuse me. My disciples and I decided that you're so pitiful and poor that we're giving you back your two pennies." I'm telling you, that did not happen!

If that had occurred, it would have been highly insulting. She would have rightfully said, "I know my two pennies aren't much, but they represent most of what I have. And you insult me by not letting me contribute what I want to contribute, even if it's only two pennies."

She knew, just as Jesus knew, that everybody has to pay, even if it's only pennies. And whether you start with pennies or dollars or nothing at all, remember the three attitudes of wealth.

Once you begin thinking this way, you're free to create a splendid economic philosophy that will get you up early and keep you up late. It will get you

thinking about ways to use your resources to realize your dreams for the future. That’s what the road to financial independence is all about.

# A Worthy and Legitimate Ambition

**At some point** in life, everybody has to wrestle with their own financial ambition, whether we call it financial independence or becoming wealthy.

I know some people are a little uncomfortable with those kinds of phrases, and I can understand that. We've all heard the saying, "Money is the root of all evil." Well, I believe that the *love* of money is certainly evil, but money itself is not evil.

There is an evil way to acquire money: greed. And there is a difference between greed and ambition. Contrary to the movie *Wall Street*, greed is not good. Greed is associated with getting something for nothing. Greed means hoping for more than your share. Greed leads to getting something at the expense of others. We call that evil. Greed is not good.

Here's what is good: ambition… *legitimate* ambition. Legitimate ambition says, "I only want something at the service of others. Not the *expense* of others, but at the *service* of others."

Jesus gave us the greatest scenario for success when he explained that if you wish to be the greatest, you must find a way to serve the most. To many, service is the path that leads to greatness.

Of course, many people forget this aspect of service in their quest for greatness. The greed for absolute power drove Joseph Stalin to kill thirty million of his own countrymen. And absolute power corrupts absolutely. Stalin is one of the best examples of the pursuit of power at the expense of others, not at the service of others.

To be the greatest is a worthy ambition only if it's pursued with the goal of

serving many. Serving many leads to great wealth. Serving many leads to great recognition. Serving many leads to great satisfaction.

Zig Ziglar probably said it as well as anybody: “If you help enough people get what they want, you can have everything you want.” That’s not greed. It’s legitimate ambition at the service of others.

But even in this context, some people feel ambivalent about their ambition toward wealth. They are a little disturbed by the self-serving nature of seeking their fortune. So I try to refer to this endeavor as a quest for financial independence.

Here’s my definition of *financial independence:* it’s the ability to live solely from the income of your own personal resources. It’s a worthy and legitimate ambition to render good service, to develop good skills in the marketplace, to become so valuable that you can live independently off of the income of your own personal resources. You’re not placing the burden on others to support you. And you have the ability and desire to support others because you know you could never have made it alone. That’s why I think financial independence is such a worthy ambition.

# What You Do with What You Have

**Let me recommend** a book for you to read: *The Richest Man in Babylon*, by George Clason. Perhaps you've already read it. Read it again. It's just a small book—you can read it in one evening. I call it the appetizer for the full discourse on the subject of financial independence. The major theme of this book is that what you *do* with what you have is more important than what you have. What you do with what you get is more important than what you get.

What we do with what we have says so much about us. It reveals our philosophy of life, our attitude, what we know and what we think, and the make-up of our character. It is a reflection of our thoughts and our value systems.

It also reveals our abilities to weigh and perceive. The outer is always a reflection of the inner. Remember, everything is symptomatic of something. It is a wise policy to pay attention to symptoms, for they can be the early signs of a poor choice of philosophy or a signal that something important is being misread, misunderstood, miscalculated.

Let me give you some of the details of a good financial plan as suggested by Clason's book. First, you need to learn to live on seventy percent of your net income—*net* meaning the money you have left over after paying your taxes. The reason it's seventy percent is because you're going to be doing some very special things with the remaining thirty percent. So let's talk about how you allocate that thirty percent.

I remember one day saying to Mr. Shoaff, "If I had more money, I would have a better plan." He said to me, "Mr. Rohn, I would suggest that if you had a better plan, you would have more money." It's not the amount that counts, it's the plan. It's not what you allocate, it's *how* you allocate.

Here's the first part of the allocation process. Of the thirty percent you're not

spending, ten percent should go to charity. You should give part of what you have to help those who cannot help themselves. I think ten percent is a good figure, but of course you can pick your own percentage. It's your life and your plan.

Giving your money to a church or an institution is a good idea, because, more often than not, they can find the people who are in need. But whether you administer the distribution yourself or leave that up to an institution, ten percent should be given to charity.

And by the way, the best time to teach this allocation process to your kids is when they earn their first dollar. Take your children on a visual tour. Take them to a place where some very unfortunate people live. Kids have big hearts. If they see the problem, they won't have any trouble giving a dime out of every dollar. The time to start this is when the amounts are small. It's pretty easy to give a dime out of a dollar. It's a little more difficult to give away a hundred thousand dollars out of a million. You may say, "Oh, if I had a million dollars, I'd give away a hundred thousand." I'm not so sure. That's a lot of money. Best to start early, so you will learn the habit before the big money comes your way.

Here's what to do with the next ten percent: set it aside to manage as risk or venture capital. Do some buying and selling yourself. Buy something, fix it, and sell it. Engage in commerce, even if it's only a part-time venture. Your home is a major capital project.

We should all engage in capitalism in this country. In the United States, we believe capital belongs in the hands of the people. Communism teaches that capital belongs in the hands of the state. That is a great difference in ideology. Communism seems to be based on the idea that humans are too stupid to know what to do with capital, so it should all be given to the state to manage.

In our country, we believe the knowledge of what to do with capital resides in the populace. The people have the genius to come up with ideas for goods and services for the marketplace. This philosophy has built a dynamic enterprise known as *capitalism* and has created an abundance of opportunities.

The third ten cents from every dollar should go into a savings account. I prefer to call it an investment account because—and kids will love this—institutions pay you for the use of your money. You can get back the money you loaned plus a profit from what you are paid for the use of your money.

If kids start this program beginning with whatever they earn from employment or enterprise, by the time they are forty they will be wealthy enough to be able to do what they *want* to do with the rest of their lives instead of what they *have* to do.

A ten-year-old takes a dollar and searches around the community. He finds a broken, abandoned wagon and pays a dollar for it. He brings it home, cleans it up, sands off the rust, paints it until it's shiny and new, straightens out the wheels, and sells the like-new wagon for eleven dollars. Does a ten-year-old deserve a ten-dollar profit? Of course! Society now has a mended wagon. That's what it's all about. Find something and leave it better than you found it. Create a value. Build an equity. That's how we should live in this most dynamic society called America.

And everyone can contribute, everyone can bring some value to the marketplace. We can all be students of capital, profit, equity, and value. We can all engage in free enterprise. We can all adopt behavior that brings wealth of lifestyle and treasure. Along with our children, we can build the most powerful and attractive society ever. We have the knowledge, the tools, the schools, the market, the resources, the will. Let each of us begin. The riches are there for the taking.

# Planning Your Financial Future

*A* **man I know** has an MBA from Harvard and an engineering degree from MIT. He's a smart guy. He's semi-retired now and doing what he likes best: teaching college courses in economics and business planning. But when he teaches economics, he also teaches personal economics. This is the philosophy that he starts his classes with: "Decide how you want to live now, versus how long you want to work."

This means that if you spend everything you make now, you'll have no choice but to work longer and harder. But if you start investing in your financial future now, you'll have many choices. You can retire early, travel more, continue your career, or start a new career later in life. Once again, it all comes down to choices. Think tomorrow today… and live better tomorrow.

Here's the next thing to think of when you're planning your economic future: be careful with your credit cards. Selling money is big business. You probably get invitations in the mail to sign up for a new credit card a couple of times a month! Having some credit cards is important. Especially if you travel. They're safer and easier to track than cash.

But be careful. I know that's hard. When you buy something with a little piece of plastic, you don't feel the effect until you get the bill. So make sure that, whatever you buy, you're still happy with your purchase after you get the bill.

Credit is the easiest way to get into debt. Go into debt strategically, not habitually. If your business is high risk, if you're an entrepreneur whose career requires a great deal of risk and a great deal of strategic debt, keep the debt in your business and out of your personal life. I know this one's hard, too, because for most entrepreneurs looking for capital, the lender requires that you guarantee the loan personally. So plan your debt, just as you plan your fortune.

Here's another point to remember in becoming financially independent: it's hard to get rich quickly. It's easy to get rich slowly. It doesn't happen overnight. With conservative investments, it takes a while. It takes discipline to keep adding value to your future, a little every month. It takes time to build your fortune and create your financial independence.

There's a saying about investing: "Time, not timing." It takes time. If playing the stock market is what you do, then you know that timing is a whole different ball game. But for the average person, it's time.

A study was done a while back that analyzed stock market investments. The study took two scenarios into consideration. In the first scenario, stocks were bought at the very worst possible time and sold at the very worst possible time. Bought high and sold low. And after forty years, the average return was around ten percent. Scenario one dealt with *time*.

In the second scenario, stocks were analyzed over a ten-year period. Stocks were purchased at the best possible time and sold at the best possible time. After ten years, the average return was… around ten percent. The second scenario dealt with *timing.* So timing may not be all it's cracked up to be.

Be patient in building your financial independence. It will come small steps at a time. It's hard to be patient sometimes, but it's just like achieving your goals: it happens one step at a time.

What about those situations when patience has nothing to do with building financial independence? What about those trust-fund babies who are handed their financial independence on a silver platter? They never have to work a day in their lives, if that's what they choose. Their first car is a Porsche. Their first house is a mansion. Their first job is at Daddy's company. What about those people born rich?

Some guy says, "It isn't fair that I'm working like crazy all day, all week, all month, all my life… it just isn't fair! I'll never have that kind of money." Well,

some things aren’t fair. Inheriting money may not seem to be fair. But what does that have to do with you? Really?

If your dream is to have greater financial independence than some people you know, then you’d better start working harder and smarter on your own goals, your own visions, and stop pondering what’s fair and what isn’t. Start examining what’s keeping you back instead of what’s keeping them ahead. Start looking at what you’re doing. There are plenty of stories and examples and experiences of people who began their careers destitute and had enough resolve to do it until they had more than they ever dreamed of. Study the experiences of others who built their way to the top instead of those born there. And you’ll not only reach the top, you’ll truly deserve it.

# Reaching Your Objective

***I*'ve come up** with what I think is the major role of grandparents in our country. The major role of grandparents in this country should be to teach their grandchildren how to be wealthy, cultured, and happy. Grandparents should not have to say, "I've worked all my life, now I need help." They should be able to say, "I've worked all my life, now I *can* help."

If you are not financially independent by the age of fifty, it doesn't mean you live in the wrong country. It doesn't mean you live in the wrong community. It doesn't mean you live at the wrong time. It doesn't mean you are the wrong person. It simply means you have the wrong plan. I've discovered that you can be a nice person with the wrong plan. You can be a sincere person with a poor plan.

And remember, it's not uncommon. Everything tends to get off course over time. When astronauts make a moon shot, they don't stay on course throughout the whole trip. They have what are known as mid-course corrections—those fine-tuned changes that set you on a straighter course. And on the way to a destination as far as the moon, these slight changes are so important. If there's one target you don't want to miss, it's the moon.

If you will make wealth and financial freedom that important a need, you will have the best opportunity to arrive. And here is the first step you need to take: put together a financial statement.

When I talked about financial independence with Mr. Shoaff, he asked me if I had a current financial statement. I said, "What is a financial statement?" That's when I got my primary education in making a financial plan. Mr. Shoaff explained that it is very important to know exactly where you are, without kidding yourself, so you can then come up with a good plan for going from where you are to where you want to be.

It turned out to be fairly easy to put one together. You merely list the value of your assets on one side of a piece of paper and the total of what you owe—your liabilities—on the other side of the paper. Then by subtracting one from the other, you come up with your current net worth. It doesn't tell you what you are worth as a person, but rather what you are worth financially.

I said to Mr. Shoaff, "My financial statement isn't going to look that good." He said, "It is not important how good it looks. What is important is that you do it."

So I put that first financial statement together. I had plenty of liabilities—money I owed my parents, loan payments to institutions, and all kinds of other debts. On the asset side, I really had to scrape the bottom of the barrel. I even put my shoes on the asset side. They were worth something. How embarrassing that after six years of working, I had to list my shoes as equity!

Of course, you don't have to put the results on a public bulletin board, but it is vitally important that *you* know how you're doing.

Here are some other points. First, keep excellent books, not only for tax purposes, but for yourself, your financial future, and for your own sense of self-worth. Have you ever heard the expression, "I don't know where it all goes?" Well, from now on, make a new commitment to financial independence and to the value that comes from knowing where it all goes and where it all comes from. It is just one of those important disciplines that can help you prove to yourself that you are on a new road, walking in a new direction, becoming a new person, and arriving at a new destination.

Without that effort, you will keep falling back. I found out that you can make five thousand dollars a month and still go broke. You say, "How could you go broke making five thousand dollars a month?" It's easy—spend six thousand! And when you make five thousand dollars, spending six thousand is not that difficult. Someone once said, "If your 'outgo' exceeds your income, your upkeep becomes your downfall."

So be the master over whatever you have and whatever you are. That's where the seeds of greatness are sown—great wealth, great health, great results, great influence, and a great lifestyle. Take interest and even delight in doing all the small things well. It makes you a sophisticated person to know where the source of wealth and happiness is.

Surely life is reluctant to hand a fortune to someone who constantly misuses his paycheck. It's not the amount that counts. It's the plan and the faithful application of that plan that counts. It's those ingenious keys that unlock the door to the kind of person we really want to become. And in becoming that person, you attract all those treasures and values that most people would call "the good life." An abundant life, a productive life, an enterprising life, an influential life, a stylish life… that's the good life.

# Enriching Your Life

**An enriching lifestyle** is a matter of awareness, values, education, and disciplined taste. It is an art that brings joy as it is practiced; it's not just a subject to be studied. It is the deliberate decision to savor and enjoy all the experiences and possibilities of life. Having an enriching lifestyle means expanding your knowledge and experience with books, people, films, and new adventures. So appreciate everything and everyone with whom you come in contact. You can begin expanding your lifestyle today.

Think of something you can do today to make yourself feel richer and better about your life. Make a phone call, reserve tickets to a concert, send flowers, write a thank-you note, plan a trip of new discovery, or begin to read a classic. I'd bet that within fifty miles of where you are right now there are some places you have never seen, some foods you have never tasted, some experiences you have never had.

I grew up in Idaho, and I've never been to Yellowstone Park. And part of it is in Idaho! Thousands of people from all over the world have traveled to Yellowstone—doesn't everyone know about Old Faithful? I've been to Africa, but not to Yellowstone. Isn't it easy to miss something? Isn't it often easier not to do something, see something, or experience something?

Let's all set a new goal not to miss anything, especially the things within our reach. Remember, all good things take effort, a conscious act from a unique thought. The act serves as a bridge between dreams and reality. So improve your lifestyle—your style of seeing, giving, sharing, enjoying—bit by bit. It's not the amount that counts, but the experience of choosing to live with style.

I remember once saying to Mr. Shoaff, "If I had more money, I would be happy." And he gave me some of the best words of wisdom when he said to me, "Mr. Rohn, the key to happiness is not *more*. Happiness is an art to be studied and practiced. More money will only make you more of what you already are and

send you more quickly to your destination.”

He continued, “If you are inclined to be unhappy, you will be absolutely miserable if you get a lot of money. If you are inclined to be mean, you will be a terror if you get a lot of money. If you are inclined to drink a little too much, you will be a drunk when you get a lot of money. More money will only make you *more*. But the good news is that more money will amplify your happiness if you are inclined to be happy.”

Style is not *more*. Style is an art, a genius, a design. Lifestyle is reserved for those who are willing to study and practice the higher arts of life.

Lifestyle is culture, music, dance, art, sculpture, literature, plays, and concerts. Lifestyle is a taste of the fine, the better, the best. The philosopher Mortimer Adler once said that if we don’t go for the finer tastes, we will settle for the mediocre ones. So develop an appreciation for the finer things in life. That is a worthy purpose—developing an appetite for the unique things in life. Remember, it’s not the amount, it’s the quality.

***Let's all set a goal not to miss experiencing something that's within our reach. If you live near Yellowstone National Park and you haven't seen Old Faithful, make it a point to go.***

# Chapter Eight
# *The Keys to Powerful Communication*

*"The best communication occurs when both people are sincere—one sincerely wishing to learn or listen, and the other sincerely wishing to share."*

*"You need to have well-chosen words available in your bank of mental resources, along with enough emotion from your heart and soul, to make your communication work."*

*"A diet of words can feed the mind and inspire us to faith, vision, and articulation. That's how miracles can happen."*

*"Success is like an ocean—it's not in short supply. The problem is, some people go to the ocean with a teaspoon."*

# Getting Your Message Across

**To be able** to get along well with others, to be able to work well with others, to be able to live well with others, to enhance your rapport with others, you must be a good communicator.

Let me give you some tips on good communication. The first is to have something worth saying. This comes from cultivating your interests, sensitivity, and knowledge. And second, now that you've got something worth saying, say it well.

When expressing yourself, keep a few important concepts in mind. Number one is sincerity. The best communication occurs when both people are sincere: one person sincerely wishing to learn or listen, and the other person sincerely wishing to share his thoughts.

The second tip for communication is practice. Part of what I teach in sales training emphasizes practice. Start with something simple. And when you don't know much about what you're doing, practice is even more important.

Let's say you're in sales and your presentation is not that good. You wander around saying, "You wouldn't want to buy this, would you?" Maybe if you say that often enough during the day, somebody might say, "Well, maybe I would. What are you selling?" You can't respond, "Mind your own business." No, once you open the door, you've got to go through it.

Here's what happens if you practice your sales techniques: you're bound to make sales. Somebody will say, "What are you selling?", and you will tell them. Maybe they'll want to buy what you're selling.

If you practice, you'll get better. You'll get better at your sales presentation.

You'll get better at listening to your prospect. You'll get better at closing the sale. You'll get better at earning a living. Practice is just as valuable as the sale, because here's what is valuable in sales: the skills you cultivate. The sale will make you a living. The skills will make you a fortune.

Practice your presentation and your ability to communicate what you know. The people out there who say, "No, I wouldn't care for any," are just as valuable. Why? Because they took the time to let you practice your presentation. When you're just getting started, you might even want to pay them to listen to you practice while you stumble around. So be thankful for the "no's."

Practice helps you develop skills. Skills make your labor more valuable. If you just sell, you can make a living. If you sell skillfully, you can make a fortune. If you just talk, you can hold a family together. If you talk skillfully, you can build dreams and the future. The difference is the degree of skill you possess.

You can cut a tree down with a hammer, but it takes about thirty days. If you trade the hammer for an ax, you can cut the tree down in about thirty minutes. The difference between the thirty minutes and thirty days is the tool. And your best communication tool is your skill, so practice effective communication.

The next concept to consider is brevity. Sometimes you don't need too much. All you need is just enough.

Here's what I found out: the more you know, the briefer you can be. You can learn to make words more effective. Jesus was brief when he was putting his team together. He just wandered around the countryside, and every once in a while he would see somebody he wanted on his team and say, "You. Follow me." That's short! That's brief!

Why could Jesus be so brief yet be so effective? Here's what I think. He was effective because of all that he didn't have to say. When you become bigger, when you become wiser, when you become stronger, you become a person of better reputation. When you arrive, your reputation has preceded you. You don't

have to say much. You don’t have to launch into a two-hour harangue if your reputation has preceded you. Your reputation will get a lot of the job done before you even arrive.

If you become personally secure, and your reputation precedes you, sometimes you don’t need that many words. And if you pay attention to those you’re talking with, understand their personalities, watch their body language, you may realize that you need to be brief… or you’ll lose them in the first minute.

If you’re talking to a prospective client, and you know he’s a bottom-line kind of guy, be brief. Stick to the point. If he’s in the mood to be overly conversant, then take that cue. If not, stick to the facts.

I know a woman who lives in a suburban area. There are lots of kids selling stuff door-to-door. You should give kids a chance to practice their presentation. After all, this is probably their first experience in sales. So some of the time, this woman will listen to the kids. But other times, she butts right in with, “What’re you selling, who’s it for, and how much do you want?” She ends up buying whatever the kid is selling; she just doesn’t have time for the pitch.

After years of this woman’s daughter hearing this, the little girl is out selling Girl Scout cookies for the first time. Her second day out, the girl comes home and her mom asks, “How did you do?” The girl says, “I sold two hundred fifty-six boxes so far.” Mom says, “That’s great! How’d you do it?” The girl says, “Well I figured most of the moms are like you, and I knew I had about two seconds to say my stuff or they’d shut the door on me. So I just smiled, told them my name, said I was selling Girl Scout cookies, and asked them how many boxes they’d like.”

That bottom-line approach can really work. But it may not always be the right one to use. That’s why you’ve got to size up the situation. Read your audience—and read them well—to know the best way to approach them.

Body language tells a lot about which approach to take. Look at how the people

you're talking to are sitting. What are they doing with their hands? Their eyes? If a man has his arms crossed, legs crossed, chin tucked down, and he is frowning, he's not going to be easy to reach.

If a woman is standing up from behind her desk, you've got to hurry. She's not going to listen to much more. Pick up the pace and get down to it.

Finally, you've got to learn to pick up emotional signals. Women just seem to have this part built in. Men can learn it. So learn to read body language and emotions. Learn to read what others are feeling so you can change the way you communicate and get your message across. That's the way to communicate well.

The next part of expressing yourself well is doing so with style. Be a student of a variety of styles, but make sure you develop your own. You can let someone else influence you, but don't become them. Develop your own style.

Here's another tip on expressing yourself: develop your vocabulary. You've just got to have a good vocabulary to speak well. If you're lacking in vocabulary, then you're lacking in the tools to articulate some problem or idea. Words… you can't communicate without them. And you can't communicate well without an extensive vocabulary.

Every time you come across a word that's new to you, look it up! Every time you're in a conversation and the other person uses a word that's new to you, look it up! Of course, most of the time you can figure out the meaning of a new word by how it's used. But if you can't, make sure you find out the definition before you use it.

Several years ago, some of my friends took a survey among prisoners as part of a rehabilitation program. They weren't looking for this information, but here's what they found: there's definitely a relationship between vocabulary and behavior. The more limited the vocabulary, the more the tendency to exhibit poor behavior.

When you stop and think about it for a moment, it makes sense. Vocabulary is a way of seeing. It gives us insight. You can't use tools you don't have to create understanding, awareness, comprehension, perception, or a vision for yourself. You can only have as much vision as your present vocabulary will give you. And if you're limited in vocabulary, you can't see very well. It's like seeing the world through a tiny little hole.

Vocabulary is also a tool to express what's going on in your heart, what's going on in your head. It allows you to say what you see and perceive. If you have a limited way of translating and expressing what's going on in your mind, you will fall way behind.

You would have twin problems without a good vocabulary. Number one, you wouldn't be able to see. Number two, you wouldn't be able to express your thoughts. Your world would keep getting smaller and smaller and smaller without the vision this tool provides. Finally, you wouldn't need a place much bigger than a jail cell to live. Why? That's about as big as some people think. That's all they've got, this little narrow world. But with every new word you learn, your world expands. You enhance your ability to perceive and express ideas, and your mind will know no limits.

# Intensifying Your Words

*W***hat is it** that makes language powerful? I can give you a simple answer: words filled with emotion. Words themselves are powerful, but not nearly as powerful as those loaded with human emotion. Hate, love, anger, contempt, caring, and compassion are all part of the full spectrum of human emotion available to all of us. Emotion is what makes language powerful enough to accomplish the task, move somebody to action, correct a problem, or find a solution.

We need the full range of emotion. In fact, things can get a little complicated, because at times you've got to put love and hate in the same sentence. When you feel it, it's important to say it. Think about how often you have to say to your children, "I love you, but I hate what's going on." It's crucial for kids to know what you love and what you hate. I love you, but I hate where you're going. I love you, but I hate who you're around. It can be extremely difficult to explain both your love and your hate, but you've got to learn to do it. You've got to express it; you can't just ignore it.

Here's where intensity plays its part: it changes the power of the word. Picture a word as a little straight pin. If I had a little straight pin, and I threw it at you and hit you on the hand, you'd feel it. I've touched you with my words. But what if I took that little straight pin and wired it to end of an iron bar? I could drive that pin through your heart. The pin is the word, and the iron bar is the emotion. Words backed up with emotions are so much more powerful. The emotion changes the effectiveness of the word.

Keep in mind, however, that emotions must be well-measured. That's what makes a good play, a good performance in a movie. When your emotions are well-balanced, you don't overdo it when expressing a small point. That would look silly. All leaders have to be taught this. You don't need an atomic explosion to get a small point across. In leadership, we teach you not to shoot a cannon at a rabbit. It's too much fire power. It's effective, but you'll have no more rabbit.

You also don’t want to err on the side of expressing too little. If it’s a major point and you don’t have much emotion, your words will lose effectiveness. You won’t look very good. It is a skill we can all learn and develop: knowing how much fire power to put into our words. Well-chosen words mixed with measured emotions are the most effective. You need to have well-chosen words available in your bank of mental resources, along with enough emotion from your heart and soul to make your communication work.

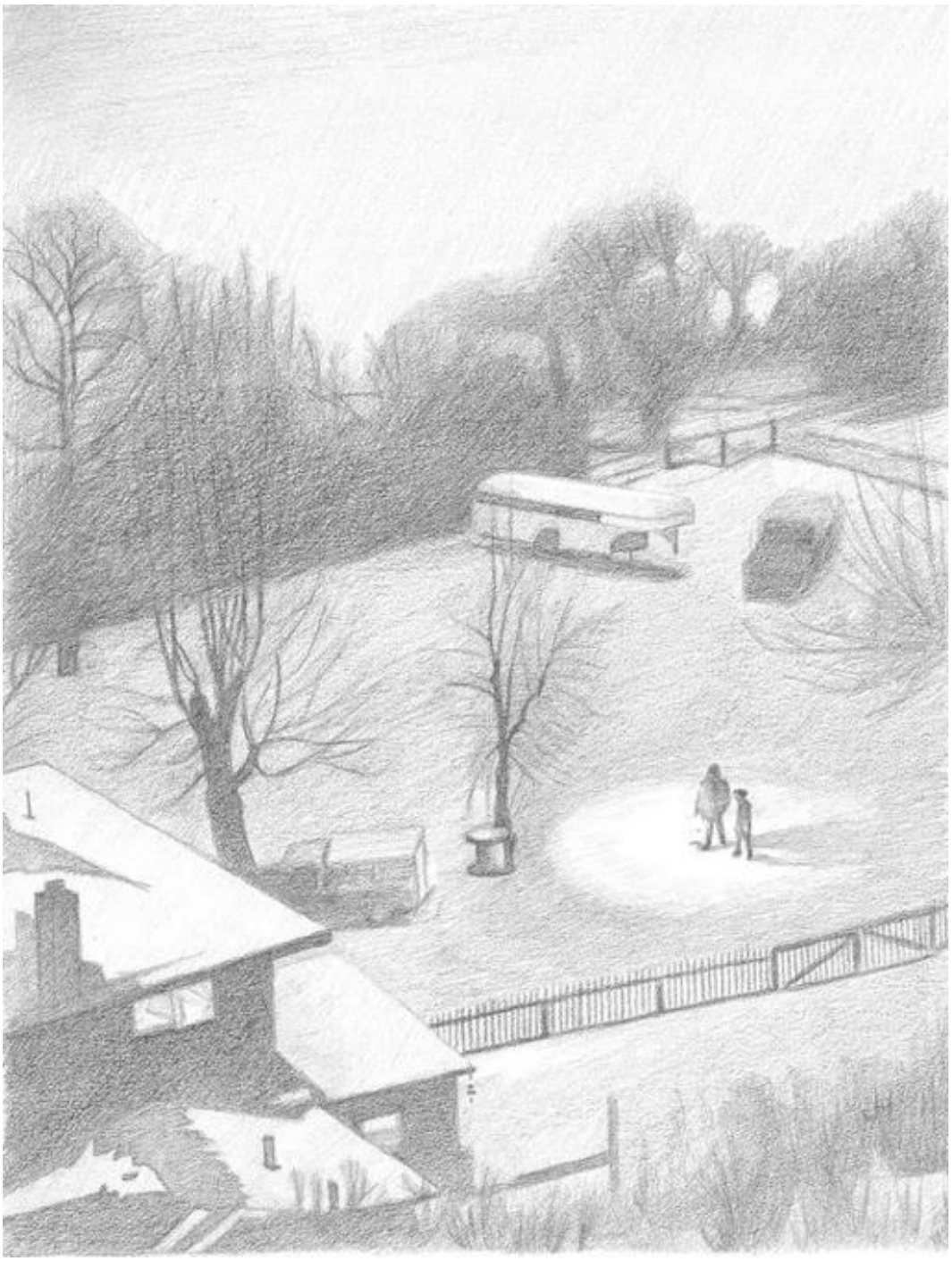
Where does intensity come from? It comes from the blend of all of our experiences. Where you’ve been, what you’ve seen, what you’ve heard, how you felt, what you went through, what you got into, what you got out of, your successes and failures—*that* is your emotional intensity. You must have it available near the surface. For the presentation, for the play, for the conversation, this emotional stuff has got to be near the surface. Not too deep, not too far away, but available, ready to be mixed in with the language. That’s what makes an effective communicator.

# Expanding Your Perception

*W***ords are almost** God-like. If somebody can't see how he can possibly be successful, and you come along and tell him your story, choosing the best words you can, you have done him an immense favor. When you finish, he says, "Before you got here, I was blind. Now I can see." Are words that powerful? Yes, words are that powerful.

You've probably heard or used phrases like these at some point: "Before you got here, I was in the dark." "While you were talking, some things dawned on me." "Once you explained that, the sun started coming up." Are words that powerful? Yes. A diet of motivational words can feed the mind and inspire us to faith, vision, and articulation. With words, we have perception. With words, we have the ability to contemplate ideas, think of solutions and create dynamic situations in our own head. Although this power is almost beyond comprehension, I know it is there.

An ancient prophet once said that words are like a lamp for your feet. They provide a light for your pathway and help you see where you're headed. Words enable the mind to peer off into the future and see things others can't see. Nourish your mind with words. They are "bread for the head." You need a slice of toast in the morning for your body, but do you remember to feed your mind? Words become food for thought. And when words are mixed with faith and inspiration, miracles can happen. That's how nations are formed. That's how companies are founded. That's how hospitals and schools are built. That's how humankind has developed a dynamic, civilized society. It all comes down to words.



***The right combinations of words can produce almost God-like results. If you are in the dark, they can illuminate your path clearly. If you are blind, they can help you to see.***

# Communicating Appropriately

**Appropriate communication is** a major key to success in the marketplace. When you meet a new group of people, you must watch and listen and be alert before you decide on the appropriate communication style. You might greet old friends with a slap on the back and a tasteless joke, but you certainly wouldn't greet a multimillion-dollar business opportunity that way.

You must take a few moments to study the temperament of your audience. Listen to how they communicate with each other. Watch how they react to situations and comments. Study your audience, lest you engage in some behavior that will prove inappropriate and costly.

Some people could make a hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year, but they have to be satisfied with fifty thousand dollars because their behavior is costing them the additional income. They've got the skills, but their behavior is costing them too much. It keeps setting them back.

Let's consider some of those things in the marketplace that might cost you more than you want to pay. Here's one: bad language. You've got to be careful with language in the marketplace. Some language is more appropriate for a smoky bar. So what should you do? Leave it in the bar. Otherwise, you'll have to pay the consequences.

We must all be students of consequences. We need to be aware of things that cost us. And bad language in the marketplace is one of the most important ones to consider.

If you cuss and tell dirty stories in the marketplace, who would find that amusing? Other people in the marketplace who cuss and tell dirty stories. You'll have no problem with these people. As a matter of fact, they'll probably enjoy having you around! But if you cuss and tell dirty stories to those who might be

offended, they certainly won’t want to have you around. It will cost you a lot.

You’ve also got to be careful about using inside jargon in the outside world. Your industry’s buzzwords are unique to your industry. Be careful not to use this terminology on the outside. For instance, people who speak computer language must learn to shift gears when they go out into the marketplace. We all need to watch our jargon and remember to shift gears from the inside lingo to the outside world.

Here’s another costly communication error: expressing your emotion inappropriately. We must learn to deliver criticism and express our anger in a safe way.

During the course of working with others, it’s inevitable that you’ll come across some situation that will result in anger. Or you’ll find that criticism needs to be expressed. When you delegate responsibility, if there is either a lack of good communication or a lack of good listening on the other end, it’s inevitable that the situation will get you all hot and bothered.

What do you do with your anger? You can’t lash out at your children, your friends, or your colleagues. But here’s what you *can* and *must* do: lash out at the problem or the situation.

“Honey,” you say to your teenager. “You know I love you, but what you did was wrong. I hate it that you took the car without asking first. And I especially hate it that you got a speeding ticket. What were you thinking?” Whatever the punishment might be, make sure you’re addressing the bad deed, not the person.

Let’s say your assistant has sent the contract to the seller instead of the buyer. Make sure your assistant knows that you appreciate him, but you don’t appreciate the wrongdoing.

Whatever criticism you hand down, whatever anger you’re expressing, make

sure that the one receiving it knows full well that you care about him but hate what he did. If you're too steamed up to be this rational about it, make sure you keep your mouth closed until you've cooled off a bit.

In his book *The Leader in You*, Dale Carnegie describes the attributes of kind criticism using the three-for-one rule. He explains, "If you don't like something about the way someone works, write down the problem. But before you confront that person with criticism, discover three good things about the person. Noticing three good things gives you the right to criticize one bad thing." That's an interesting approach: criticism after appreciation.

With well-chosen and well-delivered words, you can admonish the doing without admonishing the doer. This is important. You love the person. You hate the act. Make sure he or she knows the difference. You don't have to couch the words. You don't have to hide your anger or disappointment, but you do have to make sure that your communication is effective so the wrongdoing will never be done again.

The more you care, the stronger you can be. It's simply a matter of communicating appropriately.

# An Exercise in Sensitivity Training

**To really communicate** well and touch a wide range of people, you must be able to relate to a wide range of experiences. They've got to be part of you. Being touched by a wide range of human experience is an exercise in sensitivity training.

To really be able to reach people and teach them with words and ideas and emotion, we've got to enter this area of sensitivity. Sensitivity involves being touched, being affected by the things that happen in our own lives as well as those of other people. This is part of the heavyweight stuff that has a strong impact on our language and communication.

I've always lived a rather sheltered life, so I've had to really work on this. What do I know about tragedy? I've never had any tragedy.

But part of life is tragic—and if you don't at least try to understand this extremely sorrowful side, your life is left a bit shallow. When you live such a sheltered life, you just have to try to go outside of your own small world and allow yourself to be touched by someone else's experience. You can't really know what anyone else's life is like until you live it, but at least you can try to understand. And if you do your homework in this area of sensitivity, you'll gain the kind of depth that enhances your conversation and your communication.

When I lived in northern California, I used to go to San Francisco two or three times a year and spend a day in the Tenderloin. For a farm boy from Idaho, that Tenderloin was quite an experience. I got to see what I call "the other side." I walked the streets where the lonely people walk and ate where they ate. After listening to some of their stories, I came away with a whole new sense of the great distance between failure and success, goodness and evil, despair and joy.

I also came away with a greater sense of value, because the true blessings of life

are illuminated by the contrasts. It's hard to genuinely appreciate winning until you've done some losing. It's hard to appreciate succeeding until you've done some failing. And once you've done some failing, success takes on even more worth and value.

During one of my visits to the Tenderloin, I met a bartender named Frank. Frank sees more tragedy in a week than most people see in a lifetime. One day, Frank and I were talking, and he pointed out a lady sitting on a barstool. He asked me, "How old do you think she is?" I answered, "She's forty-five."

Frank shook his head. "No, she's *twenty*-five. Her name is Cookie. She used to be a dancer back in the go-go days, but then she developed some kind of bone disease in her legs and her hips. She's had all kinds of operations with bolts and pins trying to hold her together. Now she's crippled, and she can hardly walk, so her go-go days are over." Sure enough, Cookie seemed very crippled.

Frank continued, "Cookie also has a little boy who's five years old and dying of leukemia. So she comes here several times a week, sits on that bar stool, and plays a little music to try to cheer herself up. She usually drinks far too much. I have to call a taxi to come and take her home."

Cookie's story made me think. Why did her life work out like that while my life worked out like it has? Why do I get to travel around the world while Cookie finds it hard to even get home? That kind of exposure, that kind of sensitivity, that kind of study can really open your eyes.

Try to let those experiences touch you. Let them affect you, let them educate you, let them give you a broader range of emotional wealth and worth. Those extra observations will start showing up in the way you express yourself verbally, and you'll be able to touch people that you couldn't touch before. You'll be able to reach people you couldn't reach before. Your words will have more drawing power than ever before once you witness some of these experiences.

Ask yourself, “What could I do and what experiences could I engage in that would give me a broader understanding of human suffering as well as human joy? How can I become more sensitive to the problems in life as well as the triumphs, the sorrows as well as the joys, the failures as well as the successes?” By answering those questions and then following through on the answers, you will greatly enhance your ability to touch somebody else.

# Developing Your Networking Skills

*N***ow that we've** discussed the basics of communication skills, let's move on to see how you can use these skills to create more business. The key is networking, working within a group of people that you know or want to know. I highly recommend six techniques for effective networking.

Number one: when developing relationships through networking, remember that they must be mutually beneficial. The favor you do for someone else is expected to be returned someday. For each contact you give someone else, you expect one in return. For each tip you give out, you expect one back. But remember the Law of Sowing and Reaping: what you sow will come back to you multiplied. In a good networking relationship, you will receive more than one contact and more than one tip for each one you give out. If you find that you are giving out much more than you are receiving, it may be time to look for a new network.

Number two: keep the relationship active. Schedule quarterly lunches. Plan to meet at Chamber of Commerce networking events. If you see a story about your contact in the newspaper, clip it out and send it to her with a note of congratulations. Send articles that may be relevant to his career. Keep in touch. Don't just call when you need something; keep in regular contact.

Number three: express your gratitude and appreciation. Make it clear that you're appreciative of the contact or tip that was sent your way. Send a finder's fee if your latest deal was the result of your contact. Send a special gift if a tip panned out.

A man I know got a stock tip, in passing, from an acquaintance of his. The stock made this man thousands of dollars richer. What did he do? He sent a bottle of Dom Perignon and two very expensive, gold-rimmed, crystal glasses and a thank-you note. He didn't have to do that, but the recipient will never forget this guy! Don't forget to express your gratitude and appreciation.

Number four: keep your professional relationships professional. If it looks like jealousy is rearing its ugly head, firmly but politely cut it off. When the relationship no longer serves you, is no longer mutually beneficial, step away from it. If the relationship you're building through networking appears to be harmful, take a sword to it.

Number five: remember the other person's need for achievement. This is an important tip to keep in mind, especially when you're dealing with someone who's not as advanced in their career as you are. By respecting this need, by providing guidance and leadership, by sharing some of your personal experiences with others, they'll end up bringing opportunities to you. Why? They value your insight. They value your experience. And most of all, they value the time and the knowledge you've shared with them. Acknowledge those who are on their way up. You may just find out one day that it was your extra effort that gave them the boost they needed.

Number six: remember that competition is good. Competition is healthy. Competition, when used positively, can be a benchmark by which you measure your productivity. And competition to reach a goal is far more noble than competition to beat out an associate.

With good networking skills, a friendly competition between two associates can build character. Take, for instance, the two opposing attorneys in a courtroom. If you've only seen their courtroom antics, you would think they were fierce competitors. But step outside the courtroom and you'll probably find that they're discussing their next tennis match together.

With your communication skills in place, you'll increase your ability to work well with others. Listen. Talk. Share. Sympathize. Empathize. By extending your reach to work well with people that you know, you'll be able to extend your reach to work well with those you don't know. You'll be able to develop networking skills. And once you do, you'll find that networking is an incredible way to increase your opportunities… tip by tip, contact by contact.

# Strengthening Your Mental Muscle

*D***ebate is a** highly refined form of communication. One of the best reasons to engage in debate is to exercise the mind. Through debate, you can not only refine your ideas, but you can also develop your mental muscle. If there is ever a time we need mental muscle, it's now, as we move into the new millennium. Ideologies are going to be coming at us from all directions. Some of them will work in concert to help build a good world, and some are going to be in conflict. But whether ideas are in concert or in conflict, you've got to have the necessary mental muscle to be able to understand different ideologies, sort them out, and state your opinion clearly.

We could get into the great debate of whether there would be positive without negative. Here's my best answer: it doesn't seem like it. Would there be good without evil? I don't think so. Would there be life without death? Probably not. It seems to require both to make a scenario. Would there be health without illness? It doesn't seem like it. Would there be light without darkness? No, I don't think so. Would there be winning without losing? How could there be? It wouldn't make sense. You couldn't win if nobody lost.

Somebody asked me once about my definition of life. I said that life is the struggle to keep death at a respectable distance. Death seems to want to move in prematurely, and you've got to push it back to live as long as you possibly can. Why? Because illness is out to push your health into a small corner. You've got to make sure that your health regimens are out to push your illnesses into a small corner. Somebody's going to push somebody. Here's the best way I can describe the human experience: there are opposites in conflict, and we're caught in the middle. In the midst of those opposites vying for territory is the glorious possibility of human experience. That is what makes the scenario.

We must learn to embrace both the positive and the negative through the art of debate. We've got to drink from both cups. You don't know what you're missing if you're acknowledging less than the full range of human experience, the whole

drama with all of its clashes and conflicts.

What if you were listening to a symphony orchestra, and it only played little happy high notes all evening. How much of that could you take? No one would stay. Don't you also want to hear the startling crash of the cymbals, the somber music that drags you down into the tragedy of life? Of course! Play me the whole orchestra. Don't leave any of it out. Most of the music of the world is written in the minor key—the key of pathos, sadness, mystery, and wonder. You can't shrug that off. You've got to experience it. Otherwise, there is no scenario; there is no life.

We need the negative to alarm us. Imagine you're driving down a country road. Up ahead, the bridge is out, but there are no signs to warn you. Somebody who's already been down the road has had a colossal wreck. He is limping back up the road as you're speeding along. He flags you down, and he advises you not to go down this road any further because the bridge is out. Would it be wise to say, "I'm not into that negative stuff. Mind your own business!" and head on down the road? No! Once you've taken a look at this guy, and it appears that he's been in a wreck, the wise response would be, "Hey, I'd better take it easy. I'd better not go down this road. Somebody's been down this road, and he had a disaster. I'm going to take his advice and change my direction."

That's what I'm asking you to do: evaluate. We need the full menu of ideas on the negative side as well as on the positive side. We need to learn about both good and evil. We need to understand the heights as well as the depths. That way, we will not be tempted to follow the evil road, although it may taste good in the beginning. Power sometimes does taste good in the beginning, but the ancient prophet said that sometimes what tastes good in the mouth turns bitter in the belly. We need to seek a well-balanced input of both the negative and the positive.

If your mind is searching through the full range of ideas, trying to come up with what you think is right, everyone will benefit. You've got to be healthy-minded, and debate is one of the ways to get there.

# Asking and Receiving

*L***et me give** you a Biblical philosophy that teaches you how to get whatever you want: "ask." Of all the important skills to learn in life, be sure to include the skill of asking.

You may be a good worker, a sincere, hard worker, but you've got to do better than work hard and be sincere all your life. You will wind up broke and embarrassed. You've also got to be a good *asker.*

Let me give you some key points regarding the power of asking. First, asking starts the receiving process. In fact, the complete formula for asking is staggering. It says, "Ask and you will receive." Asking is like pushing a button to start your mental and emotional machinery. I don't know how it works, but I do know it does work. Asking is the beginning of receiving.

Second, receiving is not the problem. You don't have to work on receiving. It's automatic. If receiving is not the problem, then what is? It's failing to ask. The man says, "I see it now. I got up every day this year and worked hard, but nowhere in my house is there a list of what I want from my life." Can't you see? He is a good worker, but a poor asker.

Third, receiving is like the ocean—there's plenty to go around, especially in this country. It's like an ocean here. Success is not in short supply. The problem is, some people go to the ocean with a teaspoon. What I suggest you do, in view of the size of the ocean, is trade your teaspoon for at least a bucket. You will look better when you approach the ocean with a bucket. Kids won't make fun of you.

Here's something else to remember about asking: there are two ways to ask. One is to ask with intelligence. Don't mumble. You won't get anything by mumbling. Be clear, be specific. Intelligent asking answers questions like this: "How high? How long? How much? When? What size? What model? What color?" Describe

what you want. Define it. Remember, well-defined goals are like magnets. The better you define them, the stronger they pull.

You need to know the answers of two very important questions. “What do I want?” That’s the object. “What for?” That’s your purpose. Purpose is stronger than object. What you want is powerful, but what you want it *for* is more powerful.

Finally, ask with faith. When it comes to asking with faith, children are the masters. They firmly believe that they can get what they want simply by asking. That’s what you need to do. By becoming childlike, you can get everything you want and more. That’s the power of skillful asking.

# Chapter Nine
# *The Dynamics of Growth and Change*

*"The only way life gets better for you is when you get better. Better is not something you wish for; better is something you become."*

*"Here's your choice in life: to become part of what you could be, enough to get by, or to become all that you can be. My best advice for you is to choose the 'all.' "*

*When the record book on you is finished, let it show your wins and losses. But don't let it show you didn't try."*

*"No matter how much we prepare for one turn of fate, something will sneak up when we're least expecting it. When that time comes, the people who triumph over the unanticipated are the people who are ready to adapt."*

# Your Hope for the Future

*A* **wise and resilient** old gentleman who used to dine every month in his club downtown—sitting at a long table covered with a white linen tablecloth and sporting silver candlesticks, and served by tuxedoed waiters—loved to regale companions with the fruits of his many years of experience. After dessert and coffee were served, he would push back from the table and light an enormous imported cigar. “This cigar is the only indulgence of an old man,” he would say with a chuckle as he struck the wooden match against his thumbnail—and then he’d launch into one of his stories.

They usually began with a question, such as, “Did I ever tell you about the time when I was setting up factories for the Giant XYZ Corporation in the backwoods of Georgia and was compelled to teach them a little lesson in business and good manners?”

Although the stories always started out the same, no two stories were ever alike, and there would always be a wealth of wisdom through example, a veritable mother lode of remarkable instruction. And this man who was so old, so wise, and so flexible has one ironclad rule for dealing with other people. This rule involved learning and growing from every experience, so the negative ones need never happen again.

He said, “If a man fools me once, I think ‘That’s not nice,’ and I remember it. If the same man fools me a second time, I think ‘Shame on you.’ If the same fellow tricks me a third time, well, I have been warned and should have changed my ways and didn’t, so I think ‘Shame on me.’ ”

If you’re not changing your responses to the situations and circumstances that make up your life, you’re not being flexible, and you’re throwing away your greatest asset as an individual human being. None of us can completely control external events, but we can always control and adapt our responses. None of us can know which cards fate is going to deal out, but we can always control how

we play them.

# Beginning the Process of Change

**Not long ago,** I did a seminar for a group of oil company executives during their convention in Honolulu. While we were sitting around the conference table, one of them asked, “Mr. Rohn, you know some important people around the world. What do you think the next ten years are going to be like?” I said, “Gentlemen, I do know the right people. I can tell you.” So, they all listened very carefully. I said, “Gentlemen, based on the people I know and from the best of my own experience, I’ve concluded that in the coming ten years, things are going to be about like they’ve always been.”

I said that to make a point, but also because it’s accurate. Things are going to be about like they’ve always been. The tide comes in, and then what? It goes out. That’s been the case for six thousand years of recorded history, and probably long before that, so it’s not likely to change.

It gets light and then what? It turns dark. For six thousand years. We are not to be startled by that now. If the sun goes down and someone says, “What’s happened?” he must have just gotten here, I guess. It always goes down about this time of day.

In rotation, the next season after fall is winter. And pray tell, how often does winter follow fall? Every time, without fail, for six thousand years that we know of. Of course, some winters are long and some are short, some are difficult and some are easy, but they always come right after fall. That isn’t going to change.

Sometimes you can figure it out, sometimes there’s no way to figure it out. Sometimes it goes well, sometimes it gets in a knot. Sometimes it sails along, sometimes it goes in reverse. That’s not going to change. The last six thousand years read like this: opportunity mixed with difficulty. It isn’t going to change.

Someone says, “Well, then, how will my life change?” And the answer is: when

*you* change. Whether I'm talking to high school kids or business executives, my message is always the same. The only way it gets better for you is when you get better. Better is not something you wish for; better is something you become.

# A New Life

*I* **did a seminar** one time in St. Louis, Missouri. When I finished, a man walked up and said, “Mr. Rohn, you’ve really gotten to me. I’m going to change my philosophy. I’m going to change my attitude. I’m going to change my life. I’m going to change everything. You’ve touched me today, and you’re going to hear about me. You’ll hear my story some day.”

Well, a lot of people have said the same thing to me, but I’m always encouraged when I hear someone express the desire to grow. So I wished him luck and said I hoped to see him again someday.

Sure enough, a few months later, I was back in St. Louis to do another seminar. When I had finished, I saw this man come walking up. He said, “I’m sure you’ll remember me as the man who said that I’m going to make some change, that you touched me.” And of course, I did remember him.

He said, “I’m telling you, things are already happening for me. I cannot believe the improvements I’ve made in just a matter of months. One of the things I decided to change was my relationship with my family. My wife and I have two lovely teenage daughters. Parents couldn’t ask for any more beautiful, lovely daughters. And I’m the only one who’s giving them trouble. These daughters of ours have never given us any trouble. I’ve usually been the one all these years giving all the trouble and all the static.”

He continued, “My daughters love to go to the rock concerts, and I’m always giving them trouble. They have to beg me for the money. I tell them, ‘I don’t want you to go. You stay out too late. The music is too loud. You’re going to ruin your hearing. You won’t be able to hear the rest of your life.’ I just get on their case. But they keep begging, begging, begging. Finally, when they beg long enough, I say, ‘All right, here’s the money. If you have to go that bad, just go.’ But that’s how I’ve been up until now.

“After I left your seminar, I decided to change all that. You won’t believe it. Not long ago, I picked up the newspaper and saw in an advertisement that one of my daughters’ favorite performers was coming to town. Guess what I did… I went down and bought the tickets myself and brought them home and put them in an envelope. When I saw my daughters later that day, I handed them this envelope and I said to them, ‘You may not believe this, but inside this envelope are two tickets for the upcoming concert. And you’ll be happy to know, begging days are over.’ They couldn’t believe it.

“I asked them not to open the envelope until they got to the concert. They agreed. So, come concert time, they open up the envelope and hand the tickets to the usher. He says, ‘Follow me,’ and he heads down toward the front. The girls say, ‘Hey, hold it, hold it. Something must be wrong.’ He takes another look and says, ‘No, nothing’s wrong. Follow me—you’re sitting 10th row center.’ Now they really cannot believe it! The only tickets they were able ever to beg for were in the third balcony, where they couldn’t see.

“I stayed up a little later that night. Sure enough, just after midnight, my two daughters come bursting through he front door. One of them lands in my lap, the other one’s got her arms around my neck. They’re both saying, ‘You’ve got to be one of the world’s all-time great fathers.’

He concluded, “Mr. Rohn, you were right. I can’t believe that with the same money, I can be such a different father. What a difference it’s making in my life.”

That is a true story. And it’s something you can do with your lifestyle, your sales career, your management career. You can do it with any part of your life.

If you’re looking for equities unmatched, do not curse the only things you have: seed and soil, sunshine and rain, miracles and seasons. Instead, start changing and processing and evaluating things in a new way, and this process of change will take off for you. You will not believe what can happen in a short period of time.

# Counting on Yourself

*H***ere is one** powerful way to change and grow: cultivate your self-reliance. Take responsibility for your own life. Take responsibility for whatever happens to you. Know that you have consciously made the decisions that are now affecting you. Know that what is happening now, today, is the direct result of what you did yesterday.

Being self-reliant doesn't mean that you can't work with or trust others. In fact, it can make you a much more valuable teammate, partner, friend. Self-reliance means counting on yourself. Trusting yourself. Being responsible to yourself. Trusting your own instincts. Trusting the conclusions that you have developed from your study of experiences and philosophies. Taking the credit that is due you. Learning from the mistakes that you have made, and then passing that value on to others.

Gestalt psychologists give an example of being self-reliant. They say that you're responsible for getting caught in the rain. They say that by deciding not to carry an umbrella every day, you have made the decision to endure an occasional drenching. Translation? By not being prepared, you make the choice of getting caught in some of life's unpleasant circumstances, be they rain, failures, economic losses, relationship losses, professional losses, or personal losses. By not being prepared, by not thinking ahead, you have made your choice.

Here's the other side of it. By being prepared, you increase your chances of success. You increase the likelihood of seizing opportunities when they come your way, of being ready within yourself to take advantage of once-in-a-lifetime situations.

Some people tend to blame others for their mistakes and failures. They will say, "It's not my fault the report isn't done, so-and-so didn't do their part." Of course it's your fault. It's your report, too. It's your responsibility to see that everyone you delegated work to does their part.

You can’t control what others around you do, but it’s in your own enlightened self-interest that you stay on top of things. Especially if those things are going to affect your future.

Do you think your boss cares that John didn’t do his part? Do you think he sees John as the bad guy? Of course not. All he sees is the bottom line: the report isn’t done. Be responsible for the things that affect you.

You can make sure you’re more responsible by checking in with those people who are working with you, the people who make up your team. You can be more responsible by saying, “Hey, John, how are you doing with your part? Do you need some help? Can we put somebody else in here to help you finish?” If John consistently doesn’t handle his part, you’ve got to replace him. If he isn’t doing his share, you’ve got to find somebody who will. Or what? It will negatively affect you! You can’t wake up the morning the project is due hoping and wishing that John has done his part. No, you’ve got to be responsible, because it’s going to affect your career, too.

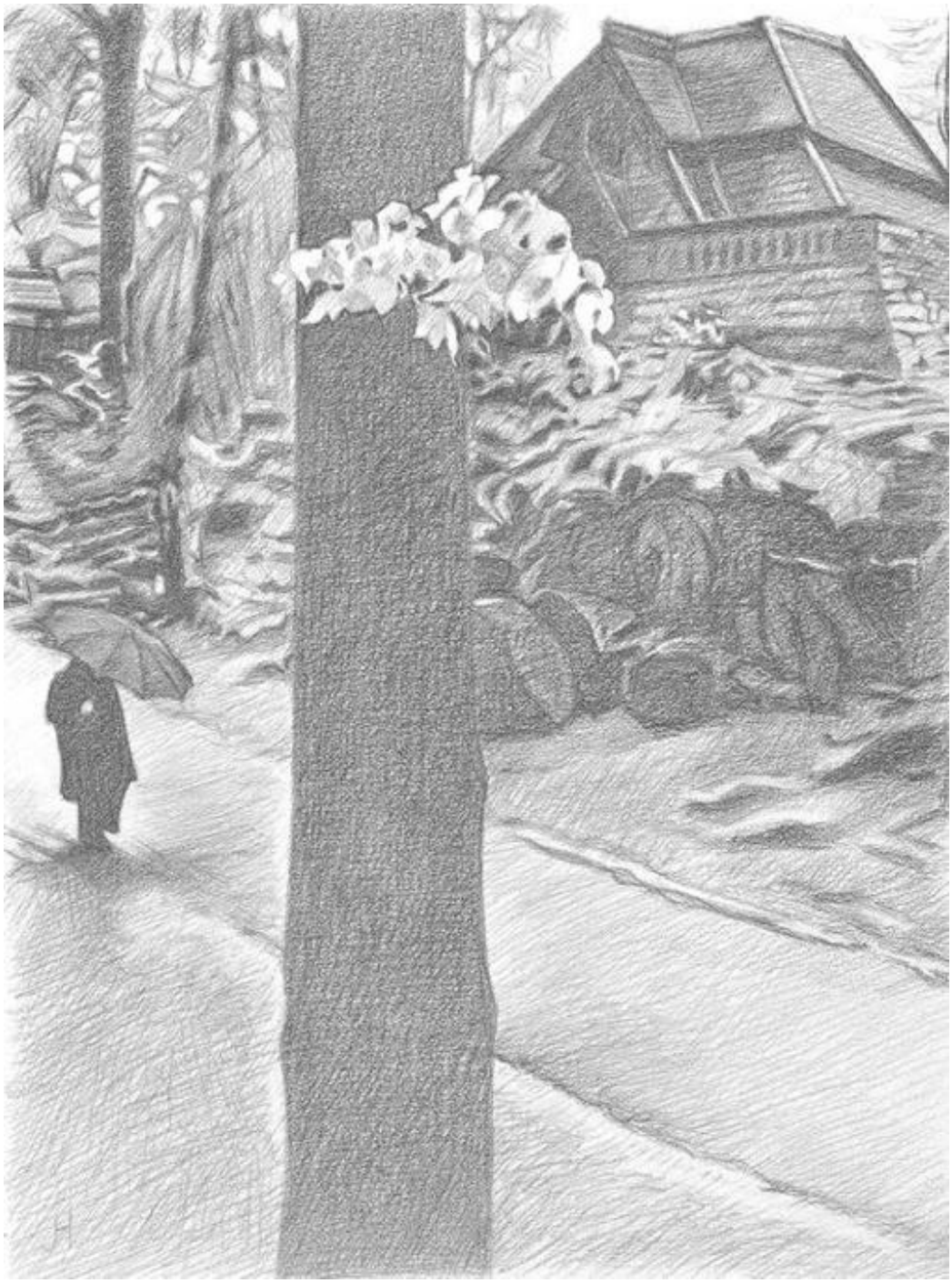
My approach for a better future very early on in my career was to just go through the day with my fingers crossed. I used to say something like, “I sure hope things will change for the better.” Then I found something out: they’re not going to change unless *I* change.

It’s the same for you. You can’t put it on someone else. You can’t hope that someone else will change it for you. You need to take responsibility.

You can’t change the circumstances or the seasons or the wind. But you can change your reading habits. You can change whether or not you go for the skills; burn the midnight oil; turn yourself around; multiply your value by two, three, five, or ten. That you have control of.

You don’t have control over the constellations, but you do have control over whether or not you go to night school, take adult classes, and learn some new skills. If you don’t do it, that’s your fault. You’ve got to take personal

responsibility. You've got to be self-reliant.



***By not being prepared, you make the choice of getting caught in some of life's unpleasant circumstances, such as a rainy day. Make the decision to***

***carry an umbrella.***

# Becoming All You Can Be

*H***ow do you** know when you're successful? Do you have to be a millionaire? No, all we ask of you is that you earn all you possibly can. If you earn ten thousand dollars a year and that's the best you can do, that's enough. God and everything else will see to it that you're okay. The key is to just do the best you can. If it's ten thousand dollars a year, wonderful! If it's a hundred thousand dollars a year, wonderful! If it's a million dollars a year, wonderful!

It doesn't matter whether you earn ten thousand dollars a year or a million dollars a year as long as you've done the best you possibly can. The essence of life is growth. It is doing the best you possibly can.

Here's what is interesting: humans are the only life form that will do less than they possibly can. Humans are the only life form that will settle for less. All other life forms except human beings strive to their maximum capacity. How tall will a tree grow? As tall as it possibly can. You've never heard of a tree growing half as high as it could. No. Trees don't grow half. Trees send their roots down as deep as possible. They stretch their limbs up as high as possible, and produce every leaf and every fruit possible.

As a matter of fact, you've never heard of a human growing halfway—physically, that is. We keep growing until we're done. It's genetically coded. That's a part of life that we can't control. It's the growing of our minds that we *can* control, but we tend to neglect this. It tends to get away from us. All life forms inherently strive toward their maximum potential except human beings.

Why wouldn't we strive to become all we can be, to fulfill our potentials? Because we have been given the dignity of choice. It makes us different than alligators and trees and birds. The dignity of choice makes us different than all other life forms.

And here's the choice: to become *part* of what we could be, enough to get by; or to become *all* that we can be. My best advice for you is to choose the "all." Earn all you can. Make all the friends you can. Read as many books as you can. Develop as many skills as you can. See and do as much as possible. Make as much fortune as possible. Give as much of it away as possible. Strive for the maximum. There's no life like it. I'm telling you, since I've gotten on track, I've never looked back. Pick up the challenge. Go for it. When you're focusing on growth, it's easy to do all you can. It's easy to succeed. It's easy to have financial freedom. The more you do, the more you get.

# A Challenge to Grow

*H***ere's what I** think would be a pitiful scenario: if your income grew and you didn't grow. When your income takes some jumps, it's vital that you quickly grow up to where your income is. Why? Because otherwise, your income will soon come back to where *you* are.

Somebody once said, "If someone hands you a million dollars, it's best you become a millionaire, so you get to keep the money." I'm telling you, success doesn't want to hang around an incompetent person.

The problem with winning the lottery is the lack of self-development the person has gone through to be able to master and keep the money. The fortune is bigger than the person, rather than the person being bigger than the fortune.

If you're a parent, use the challenge of parenting to personally grow. See what you can become. If you want to reach your children, you can't lack stories and illustrations. You can't lack wisdom and power. And the only way you can become the best kind of parent is by personal development, becoming better than you are, stronger than you are, wiser than you are. You are growing so that your investment grows. As your children grow, you grow. Your power grows. Your influence grows. Your wisdom grows. Your command of the language grows.

You see, that's what is challenging: to be involved in a situation that makes you grow. If that situation is success, keep growing to be bigger than your fortune. If that situation is failure, keep growing until you're bigger than the problem. Keep growing. Keep becoming.

# The Four ‘Ifs’

**There are four** *ifs* in the area of growth and change that make life worthwhile. First, life is worthwhile *if* you learn. There is nothing worse than being stupid. Learn from your personal experiences. Learn from other people’s experiences.

Second, life is worthwhile *if* you try. You’ve got to take what you’ve learned and see if you can try your hand at it. Somebody says, “You can’t *try*, you have to *do*.” No, you have to *try.*

I put the bar up two feet and ask the kids, “Who can jump two feet?” “I can,” some say. “I can’t,” some say. “I don’t know,” some say. How are they going to know? They’ve got to try. Just back off and run at it. What if they knock the bar down? Does that mean they can’t jump two feet? No, they have to try it again another way. Maybe they need to start lower and build up to that height. When the record book on you is finished, let it show your wins and your losses. But don’t let the record show that you didn’t try.

Third, life is worthwhile *if* you stay. You’ve got to learn to stay. You don’t have to stay forever, just until you see it through. A guy builds a foundation. Then he wanders off somewhere and builds another foundation. He’s got these foundations scattered all across the country… no walls, no roofs, just a bunch of foundations. That’s not a good reputation to develop for yourself. Stay until it’s over.

Fourth, life is worthwhile *if* you care. Caring is a unique human experience that is vital, powerful, all-encompassing, and far-reaching. If you care at all, you’ll get *some* results. If you care enough, you can get *magnificent* results.

To lead a life worth living, you’ve got to learn. You’ve got to try. You’ve got to stay. And you’ve got to care. Remember the four *ifs*, and you’ll be on your way to building a life worth living.

# Preparing for All Possibilities

*A* **strong individual is** not a rigid individual. In fact, exactly the opposite is true. Strength comes from flexibility. Although it's important to be firm when you know something is right and to maintain that right position even when the crowd is going against you and wants to put you down, it's also important to remember that no person is God. Nobody is infallible or invincible.

Sometimes when the tide has run against you for a long time, it may be that what you held as a certainty was, in fact, not true in the light of overwhelming circumstances. It's smart to be able to see more than one way to accomplish a task. It's wise to see more than one solution to any problem. It's a good skill to see things as someone else might see them. Because when the plan that's served you so well for so long doesn't work anymore, it's time to find another way. It's time to bend, to move on, to change, to compromise, or you risk snapping like a dead branch in a stiff breeze.

When it comes to lasting a long time, to standing tall, to being strong but knowing when to bend, the trees have a lot to teach us.

I don't know if you've ever had first-hand experience of the tremendous destructive power of tropical-force storms. I've experienced a hurricane and had a chance to personally witness what a combination of wind and water can do to everything that stands in its path. The rain fell so long and hard that it completely soaked the ground and loosened the roots of even the tallest trees. At the same time, the wind blew with such force that century-old trees, tall and hard and strong, were blown over like so many toy soldiers knocked down by a toddler at play.

The enormous willows—some standing tall as a house and covering what would be an entire lot in some parts of the city—lithe and flexible and bending and bowing gracefully to the slightest breeze or the mightiest gust, weathered the heavy blows of the storm. They were almost the only large objects left standing

after the air had cleared. Tall trees and telephone poles and sea walls were crushed by the storm. Houses built to stand up under normal circumstances collapsed, and their roofs were blown clear into the next county.

Everything that tried to oppose the storm's fury was damaged or destroyed. Everything that gave way, that was strong yet flexible, survived.

We may not face a hurricane more than once or twice in our lives, if at all. But our best-laid plans do often go astray. It's entirely possible and even likely that nothing will ever turn out as we expect, and so no matter how much we prepare for one turn of fate, something will sneak up from our blind side when we're least expecting to be interrupted at our accustomed rounds. When that time comes, as it will, the people who survive and even triumph over the unanticipated will be people who are ready to adapt. They will bend in the first gust, they will step out of the path of the charging bull, they will pirouette while holding their place in the scheme of things, they will step back and let someone or something else bear the brunt of impact.

I don't really think it's more important today to be open to change and flexible in adapting to it than it has been in the past. It's *always* been important to be flexible and farsighted—anticipating whenever we can, and when we can't anticipate, being prepared for all possibilities.

# Surviving and Thriving with Flexibility

**The oldest and** longest-lasting empire in the world was that of Chinese. That empire endured through the reigns of many emperors and many dynasties.

How was this possible? It wasn't because of military power or tremendous wealth, because over the course of thousands of years, those things came and went many times. The real reason the Chinese empire lasted so long was because of the work of two very different philosophers. The first, Confucius, provided ideas that became the solid foundation of the imperial government. He supplied the theories by which the imperial government was conducted.

Confucius taught a code of ethics that gave specific instruction on how the ruling classes could fulfill their duty to the nation and maintain law and order. He was essentially a law-giver, a thinker who supplied some fixed beacons for navigating the ship of state into the unknown future.

The second philosopher, whose name was Lao-Tse, had a very different perspective. Historians associate Lao-Tse's ideas with magic and mystical powers, but he also placed a very modern kind of emphasis on the need for intuition and the ability to react quickly to change. Lao-Tse pointed out that sometimes it is best to advance by retreating—that sometimes wars can be won by losing a few battles, and long-term goals can be achieved by accepting short-term reversals. Sometimes it is best to resist like the tall grasses bending in the wind, or like a river finding a new route around an obstacle. A powerful ocean wave smashing onto a beach may wash away a sand dune, but the individual grain of sand simply goes with the flow and is unharmed. By incorporating both these perspectives, the ancient Chinese dynasties developed a structure similar to that of modern buildings in Los Angeles or Tokyo, which are built to withstand earthquakes. Their foundations are strongly reinforced, but there's also room for sway and give.

Flexibility is simple in theory, but tremendously challenging in practice. It means

learning to distinguish between what we can control and what is beyond our control. Practicing flexibility requires great self-knowledge and iron self-control, like a master of martial arts.

To be flexible does not mean to be weak, to flounder about aimlessly and confusedly because we think there’s nothing to be done. No, it requires self-discipline. Flexibility requires a cool head, an appraising eye, poise, balance, and judgment. And it is the key to graceful change.

# The Ability to Adapt

*W***ith maturity comes** the ability to adapt. This is one difference between an adult and an infant—and there are some pretty old infants out there. In other ways, however, because they haven't formed opinions about a lot of things and lack the experience which can trick people into anticipating an outcome, kids can be far more adaptable than grown-ups. They can accept poverty, harsh living conditions, or sudden reverses in fortune, because for children, all things look equally inevitable. Children have softer bones and dispositions than older people, so they're more apt to receive new impressions instead of repelling or opposing them. This is, like all our traits and gifts, both a blessing and a curse.

Old people can get set in their ways, become mentally as well as physically brittle. They can tell themselves that they know it all already, have seen it all before, and instead of struggling against the hardening of the arteries and the ossification of ideas, they can become as stubborn and willful as children who don't know anything… often with the same harmful results.

When I think about an old person who managed to adapt to life's big and small changes, to stay ahead and keep in step, I think about that grand old vaudevillian and cigar-smoking joker and singer George Burns. George started out in show business before the days of talking pictures, touring the vaudeville stage circuit with his wife and comedy partner Gracie Allen. Together, they joked their way from the stage to the movies and to radio. Later, when television came along, "The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show" was one of the great ones, running every week for years and years.

Then one day, Gracie Allen died, leaving George Burns alone in the world with only his cigar, a trunk full of gag lines, a few million dollars in the bank, and a lot of great memories. Did Burns retire after his wife's death? Did he crawl off and play golf until the grim reaper came for him? No. Burns wrote himself a new act, a new set of monologues, made a new career in the movies, and basically reinvented himself. He continued to crack jokes and pursue lucrative movie and

television roles and personal appearances. He made a career out of being old! And he didn’t do that by being inflexible, you can bet!

# Chapter Ten
# *Fundamentals of Business Success*

*"Being self-enterprising means feeling good enough about yourself, having a great enough self-worth, to want to seek opportunities that will make a difference in the future."*

*"If we just get more from ourselves, we can make an hour as valuable as ten hours used to be."*

*"Wherever you are, be there. Don't be somewhere else. Give whatever you're doing the gift of attention."*

*"You can't believe how willing somebody will be to help you if they've gotten the idea that you are willing to help yourself."*

# Cultivating Your Enterprising Nature

*W***e're all aware** that many people feel that we must be careful when focusing on money or affluence or abundance… that in the pursuit of those things there is danger. And I do agree. If you make money your love and pursue affluence to the exclusion of other values in life, you have lost, not won.

However, let's consider this question: if you *could* do better financially, *should* you? That's not a bad question. In the time you've allotted to labor, economics, success, achievement, productivity, the creation of value, the development of skills and creativity, if you could do better, should you?

I think that one of the greatest satisfactions of living life to the fullest is doing the best you can with whatever you have. Doing less than your best has ways of eroding the psyche. We seem to be creatures of enterprise. Surely this is the reason for the seasons. The soil and the sun and the rain and the seed all seem to say, "What can you do with us? Do you have the genius to make something unique of us?" Life says, "Here is the raw material. What splendid things can you produce from all there is?" So go for high productivity, the full use of your genius, the full development of your potential in all areas of your life, including earning money. That is the essence of an enterprising life.

# The Ant Philosophy

***I*'ve decided that** enterprise is better than ease. If you rest too long, the weeds take over the garden in the summer. Life doesn't stand still, and random negativity will start overwhelming the positive arrangements of life if you just let things go. So we've all got to have a positive attitude about activity.

Let me give you one of the best examples I know. An ancient phrase states, "Whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might." That's a powerful philosophy. Many people are getting by with using half their might.

That may be their own personal philosophy of activity, but how much more could they achieve if they used *all* of their might? You've got to evaluate that question for yourself and apply it to your own life. Put it on your mental scale and come up with your own answers of how it applies to you. How should you live your life? Are you working to your full potential now?

I'm teaching children about the ant philosophy. I think everybody should study ants. They have an amazing four-part philosophy, and here is the first part: ants never quit. That's a good philosophy. If they're headed somewhere and you try to stop them, they'll look for another way. They'll climb over, they'll climb under, they'll climb around. They keep looking for another way. What a neat philosophy, to never quit looking for a way to get where you're supposed to go.

Second, ants think winter all summer. That's an important perspective. You can't be so naive as to think summer will last forever.

An ancient story says, "Don't build your house on the sand in the summer." Why do we need that advice? Because important to be realistic. In the summer, you've got to think storm. You've got to think rocks as you enjoy the sand and sun. Think ahead.

The third part of the ant philosophy is that ants think summer all winter. That is so important. During the winter, ants remind themselves, “This won’t last long; we’ll soon be out of here.” And the first warm day, the ants are out. If it turns cold again, they’ll dive back down, but then they come out the first warm day. They can’t wait to get out.

This philosophy applies to leadership skills. Average people look forward to getting off of work, while successful people look forward to getting on with it. Once you switch from wanting to quit to wanting to work harder, you start to transform your life into the activity.

Here’s the last part of the ant philosophy. How much will an ant gather during the summer to prepare for the winter? All that he possibly can. What an incredible philosophy, the “all-that-you-possibly-can” philosophy.

Ants can surely teach us a lot when it comes to working hard.

# Creating Opportunity

**An enterprising person** is one who comes across a pile of scrap metal and sees the making of a wonderful sculpture. An enterprising person is one who drives through an old, decrepit part of town and sees a new housing development. An enterprising person is one who sees opportunity in all areas of life.

To be enterprising is to keep your eyes open and your mind active. It's to be skilled enough, confident enough, creative enough, and disciplined enough to seize opportunities that present themselves… regardless of the economy.

An enterprising mortgage banker will develop creative financing strategies during slow markets. An enterprising lawyer will study new laws and market herself to people who may need help in those areas. An enterprising salesman will do extra research to find new prospects for his products or services. He will isolate a secondary market and develop another benefit for his customers.

A person with an enterprising attitude says, "Find out what you can before action is taken." Do your homework. Do the research. Be prepared. Be resourceful. Do all you can in preparation of what's to come.

Think of a few people you know who are enterprising. Think of people in the news, in your office, in your neighborhood. What do these people have in common? Well, they're probably always on the go, developing a plan, following a plan, reworking the plan until it fits. They're probably very resourceful, never letting anything get in their way. They probably don't understand the word *no* when it applies to their visions of the future. And when faced with a problem, they probably say, "Let's figure out a way to make it work" instead of, "It won't work."

Enterprising people always see the future in the present. Enterprising people will always find a way to take advantage of a situation, not be burdened by it. And

enterprising people aren't lazy. They don't wait for opportunities to come to them, they go after the opportunities. Enterprise means always finding a way to keep yourself actively working toward your ambition.

Enterprise requires two things. The first is creativity. You need creativity to see what's out there and to shape it to your advantage. You need creativity to look at the world a little differently. You need creativity to take a different approach, to be different.

What goes hand-in-hand with the creativity of enterprise is the second requirement: the courage to be creative. You need courage to see things differently, courage to go against the crowd, courage to take a different approach, courage to stand alone if you have to, courage to choose activity over inactivity.

How much activity you pursue generally relates to how you feel about yourself. How valuable are you? What could you do if you had all the skills, if you took the classes, read the books, and burned the midnight oil? What could you do? What true value could you develop?

This is a good exercise. Ask yourself: "What could I become? What could I really do in the marketplace, in enterprise, family, home, experience, love, friendship, marriage… how valuable could I become? Am I valuable enough to work on what's not working so I can reach my full capacity? If I'm operating at twenty percent, what could I possibly do with the other eighty percent?"

Once you start understanding how valuable you are, you will have many new experiences. That's why the understanding of self-worth plays a major role in our ability to be enterprising. Our self-worth makes the difference between being lazy and being active. If we don't feel good about ourselves, we won't feel good about our lives. And if we don't feel good about our lives, we won't be very interested in looking for opportunities.

So you see, being enterprising doesn't just relate to the ability to make money.

Being enterprising also means feeling good enough about yourself, having enough self-worth to want to seek advantages and opportunities that will make a difference in your future.

Enterprise is always better than ease. Every time we choose to do less than we possibly can, it affects our self-confidence. If we keep doing a little less every day, we are also *becoming* a little less every day. Can you imagine what you'd end up being after ten years of doing a little less every day? It's devastating! Think about it… doing less could ruin your life!

You can reverse this process by using your self-direction, your self-reliance, your self-discipline. You can alter your life by doing a little *more* each day. Pretty soon, you'll develop a new habit of doing rather than *not* doing. And what will days and weeks and months of doing a little more ultimately do for you? It will increase your confidence, your courage, your creativity, and your self-worth —your enterprising nature.

# The Best-Kept Secret of the Rich

**There's a connection** between appreciating yourself, and appreciating and respecting time. People who appreciate themselves understand and respect the use of time. Here's what I call the best-kept secret of the rich. It's an interesting discovery that I made one day. I couldn't believe it when I found out that rich people have about *twenty-four hours a day.* And poor people have about *twenty-four hours a day.* Imagine that!

The difference between them is in the management of the time. Practicing a few simple disciplines every day can change your whole life. Your future can change. Your income can change. But you must get a handle on the management of your time. As with everything worthwhile, discipline must be practiced. Discipline is a very important factor in how you manage your time, the twenty-four hours given to you every day.

I have four approaches that might help you get a handle on the management of time. Here's the first one: keep it in perspective. That's not a bad suggestion. Somebody says, "Well, I've been behind all my life. It doesn't look like that's going to change. Forget it." I like that approach. At least it's honest!

Nobody's ideas of success and time management are right unless you can apply them to your own life. Don't let somebody pressure you by saying, "Here's what you've got to do with your time." Resist all of that. You can take advice, but you don't want to take orders. Let somebody give you their opinions, and then accept the ones you want to accept. Don't accept the ones you don't want to accept. Resist all attempts of other people to pressure you into becoming the model of their definition of success. Do it on your own time and in the way that's right for you.

My second time-management approach is this: work longer, harder, and *smarter.* That can be an effective approach to managing time. However, there are certain limits to working longer and harder. One of those limits is your health.

When I first started with all this, I really poured it on. I got so excited about changing my life, revolutionizing my whole future, that I went bonkers. I could hardly sleep nights, especially that first ninety days. And that first year, I was on such an absolute, dead rush toward revolutionizing everything—my income, my bank account, my future, my relationship with my family… everything. And by the end of that first year, I was a walking shadow.

I've been pretty skinny all my life. In high school I turned sideways and they called me absent. And for that first year, I practically disappeared. I put in incredibly long hours. I worked six or seven days a week. If I couldn't do it in eight hours, I'd work ten. And if I couldn't do it in ten, I'd work twelve, fourteen, or sixteen hours. Toward the end of that year, it was affecting my health.

Then it suddenly dawned on me: what if I got rich and was too ill to spend it? Wouldn't that be silly? Then I started to say, "Hey, I've got to pull back to a normal workload."

If you're not doing much, I would suggest that you work a little longer and work a little harder. After a while, though, there comes a point where, physically, you've just got to pull back. Sometimes the answer is to work harder and longer, but at a certain point, working *smarter* is the key.

Let's say someone is working fourteen hours a day digging ditches. I could come along and say, "Well, if you just worked harder and longer, you'd make more money." He'd say, "Why don't *you* come down and try this? You'll see!" Obviously, the guy is maxed out; he's working as hard as he can. He can't work any harder, but he could work *smarter.* That's the trick.

Here's a third approach to time management: step down to an easier task, to something more manageable. Find something that doesn't require that much time, that much effort. That's an alternative.

Some people in sales are promoted to management, and they soon realize that

they aren’t up to the task. They say, “To heck with this management stuff. It takes fourteen hours a day. I’m tired of worrying about everybody. I prefer it out in the field. I’m getting my sales job back.” That’s a good alternative.

Somebody who works for a company may say, “Oh, I’d love to own one of these companies.” Then he finds out what it takes to own one of those companies. He experiences the extra pressure, the extra hours. He can’t play golf three days a week. Finally he says, “You know, I’ve had it up to here with all the headaches and trauma and dealing with all these people’s lives and running a company and being responsible for all of the stuff. I’m going to step down.”

That’s a good alternative. It really is. Don’t let yourself be pressured into taking on more than you can handle when stepping down might give you a better lifestyle.

There was a little girl who complained that her father never played with her. She said, “Daddy comes home with his briefcase full of papers, says hello to me, pats me on my head, and disappears. How come my daddy can’t play with me when he comes home?” Her mother explained it this way: “Your daddy works very hard. He loves you very much. But at the office, he’s got so much to do that he can’t get it all done, so he has to bring the rest of it home. That’s why your daddy can’t play with you.” And the little girl responded, “Why don’t they just put him in a slower group?”

Not a bad idea. And I offer this piece of advice to you: if you’re too busy to play with your kids, you need to join a slower group. You’ve got to have time for your family. I pursued some things that cost too much in those early days. If I’d known how much those things were going to cost, I never would have paid the price.

You’ve got to weigh the consequences. Can you make everything fit? Sometimes that extra money isn’t worth it if it pressures you into losing touch with somebody you really care about. Doing less can be more.

The fourth approach to time management is the one I like the best: getting more out of you. If we just get more from ourselves, we can make an hour as valuable as ten hours used to be. We can get as much done in a day as we used to get done in a week. It's a matter of increasing our efficiency, honing our skills, expanding our knowledge, broadening our awareness. Then we need to practice consistently and get better. All of that value can be brought to the marketplace and brought to the job. That's where the real time management comes in.

I found that a normal day is enough time, but only if you make the best use of that time.

There's a movement going on now in the workplace. People are setting up home offices. They're telecommuting to work through fax machines and computers and modems and delivery services. People are even starting to work in one state and live in another. They don't need to be at the office all the time. For some jobs, they don't need to be at the office at all.

What have some of these folks found out? That projects that used to take two days can now be completed in just a few hours. Why? Because they have no distractions. No people stopping by their office to chat. No unsolicited phone calls to take. No unexpected visitors to deal with. When they work, they work. When they play, they play.

Of course, not everybody has the luxury of having a job like this. But some of the same principles can be applied at the office. Create "do-not-disturb" times. Schedule your day so you're totally undisturbed during those hours in which you complete your best work. Set aside certain hours each day to take appointments and phone calls.

That's really where the magic of time management comes in. You know the value of your own rhythms in getting certain tasks done more efficiently in a shorter period of time. You are working smarter, not harder.

# Managing Your Time

*L***et me give** you some more thoughts on time management. Here is a list of things you should consider.

Number one: run the day, or it will run you. Part of the key to time management is just staying in charge. Here's what usually happens: we start something and we're in control, but as the day starts to unfold, we start losing it. It's like running a business. If you don't stay on top of things, the business will run you before long. You have to stop every once in a while and say, "Wait! Who's in charge here?"

Here's a good phrase to remember: "Some will master and some will serve." That's the nature of life, and you have to make sure *you* become the master. You have to run the day. You have to stay in charge.

What is the key to staying in charge? You must have your written set of goals with you at all times. Prioritize your goals and decide which are important. Constantly review your goals, then make them a part of a good written game plan.

With your game plan in hand, try to separate the majors from the minors, the really important things from the things that you just have to do. And prioritize. Is this a major day or a minor day? Adjust your time accordingly. Is this a major conversation or a minor conversation? A lot of people don't do well in this area, and here's why: they major in minor things. They spend too much time on things that don't count and too little time on things that should count.

You're about to pick up the phone and make a call. Before you do, you need to decide if this is a major call or a minor call. If it's a major call, it needs a little preparation. If it's a minor call, a few pleasantries will probably do. So a little thought will save you a lot of time.

Time-management step number two is this: don’t mistake movement for achievement. You probably know some people around you who are just plain busy being busy. You’ve got to be busy being productive.

Consider this: a man comes home at night and flops down in the easy chair. He says, “I’ve been going, going, going.” But the real question is, “Doing what?” Some people are going, going, going, but they’re doing figure eights. They’re not making much progress. Don’t mistake movement for achievement. Evaluate the hours in your days, and see if there’s not a lot of wasted time that you could manage better.

The third key to time management is good concentration. You’ve just got to zero in on the job at hand. Don’t start your business day until you get to the business. I used to start my business day in the shower. I’m trying to compose a letter in the shower. I’m not awake yet, and I’m trying to compose a letter. I found out that it doesn’t work that way. Wait to get to the office to start your work. Don’t start your business day at the breakfast table. It’s not good for the family, and it’s not very productive.

Concentration also means that on the way to work, you don’t think about work. It’s dangerous. There are a lot of cars out there on the highway. Can you imagine if everybody driving to work were thinking about work? It would be a mess! You would see accidents everywhere.

So here’s what you’ve got to do. On the way to work, concentrate on your driving. In the shower, concentrate on the shower. At the breakfast table, concentrate on the family. Wherever you are, be there. Don’t be somewhere else. Give whatever you’re doing the gift of attention. Give people the gift of attention. Concentrate on where you are.

The fourth time-management essential is learning to say no. Boy, it’s easy in a society like ours to just say yes too much, to over-obligate yourself. Then it takes all those phone calls and all that time to back out of it. Don’t say yes too quickly. It’s better to say, “I don’t know if I can make it, but I’ll give you a call.” It’s nicer to say that than to back out later.

One of my colleagues has a good saying: “Don’t let your mouth overload your back.” Being too eager to please can be dangerous. You need to appreciate yourself, your time, your limits. Know when your commitment to someone else will end up taking time away from yourself and your family. Appreciate your special time alone. And appreciate your time with those you love and those who love you.

This is especially important when it comes to charity work. A group of entrepreneurs I know have been very successful in their own business. They get a lot of press. And they’ve been swamped with requests to do *pro bono* work. They must get a couple of offers a month to sit on one charity board or another. Here’s how they handle it: they take all requests, weigh them for time commitments, and evaluate them for opportunities. Then they take a collective vote on which two they’ll accept during the next year.

You can’t immediately say yes to offers that sound prestigious. You can’t immediately say yes to social functions, even if they sound like a lot of fun. You’ve got to say maybe and take time to evaluate what’s truly important to you and what will just take time away from your ambitions and your family.

Be eager to please yourself and your family. Don’t be so eager to please everybody else. Appreciate your own limits. You don’t have to fill up every second of the day; take time to appreciate what you’ve accomplished. Take time to enjoy the fruits of your labor.

Your success should be a pleasure. Appreciating what you’ve acquired and what you’ve done and who you’ve become is important. It’s an important component in fueling your future achievements. Just knowing that you finished all you started out to do that day… that’s encouraging! It’s these little daily gains that continue to fuel your achievement.

Let’s say you’re figuring out tomorrow’s game plan tonight, and tomorrow looks pretty light. So all you write down for tomorrow is, “clean-up day.” Clean up all the little notes on your desk. Write all the thank-you notes you haven’t gotten around to writing all week. Take care of a few phone calls that keep getting

shuffled from one day to the next. It’s just minor stuff. Nonetheless, it’s the little stuff that keeps weighing you down until you get it done.

So you spend your day in clean-up mode. You file the notes, write the thank-you cards, make the phone calls. It’s not a major day. But at the end of the day, you feel you’ve accomplished so much. Why? Because you’ve taken care of so many little details. It’s the little details that can make a major difference. You feel like you’ve really achieved something during a day that started out to be so minor.

Little achievements are just as important as big achievements. Success is the constant process of working toward your goals, little achievement by little achievement. Little achievements produce big results. Anything is possible in those twenty-four hours we’re given each day.

# The Way to Focused Concentration

*F***ocused concentration is** a cornerstone for achievement in business and in all areas of life.

You've just got to zero in. You've got to identify your target and let nothing stand in your way. You've got to keep your eye on the target until you've released the arrow. Let nothing divert your attention, unless it's in the best interest of your ambition. Let not an obstacle come before you without getting around it. Whether you go over it or go under it, try a different path until you prevail.

Concentration in sports is crucial. The consummate professional on the field or on the court won't hear the jeering of the crowd. Their concentration keeps all noise and clutter at bay. They have one thing in mind: moving the ball.

To stay on track, you have to focus; you have to filter out all the noise and the clutter that gets in your way. That's how you get around negativity.

In a tennis match, how long does it take for your opponent to return the ball? Not very long. What if you lose your concentration? The game is over. One little slip of concentration, and your opponent puts the ball by your feet. There goes the tennis match.

In a major presentation, if you just lose your concentration for a second, you could lose it all. All the hard work, all the long hours, all the preparation… all the momentum building to that crucial presentation could be gone if you don't keep your concentration. If you don't watch your audience, if you don't keep your mind on what you're doing, if you don't keep focused on the task at hand… it could all slip right by you. Wherever you are, be there. Whatever you're supposed to be doing in each moment, do it.

You can’t be thinking of everything you have to do at one time. You have to concentrate on just one thing at a time—one project, one job. You have to take it one task at a time. Do what you’ve set out to do. Keep your mind only on that one task. Why? If you don’t, you won’t accomplish anything.

Concentration takes a lot of discipline. It takes a lot of discipline to demand privacy, to keep the “do-not-disturb” sign on your door while you’re in the middle of an important job. It takes a lot of discipline not to answer the phone every time it rings at home. Remember, they make voice mail and answering machines so you don’t have to answer the phone every time it rings.

When you concentrate on the work at hand, your family will appreciate an uninterrupted dinner hour. Your night work will get done a whole lot faster. So stay focused on the task at hand.

If you have a long list of things to get done within one day, do the toughest one while your concentration is at its peak. If you’re a morning person, get the job done in the morning. Don’t wait until the evening when your energy is all spent. Do the jobs that need the most concentration when your body is best able to handle them. If you’re a night person, save those tough jobs for the night. Take it easy in the morning when you’ve still got cobwebs in your brain. Learn your body’s rhythms, and do the jobs that require the most concentration when you’re best able to do them.

When you’re at work, be at work. When you’re in a conference, be in that conference. When you’re at your kids’ school play, soccer game, or dance recital… be there. Don’t let your mind wander. Stay focused. Stay focused on the task at hand or the company you’re with. Don’t let your mind wander during conversations—you never know what important points you’ll miss.

When you recognize the need to concentrate more and then discipline yourself to stay focused, that focus will come easier and easier. Focused concentration can become a habit. If you work on it a little every day, you’ll soon find yourself wasting less energy. You won’t need to struggle with your own mind.

The same principle applies in nature. As I like to say, a tree will grow as tall as it can. In the spring and summer, a tree's growth season, it absorbs nutrients from the soil and converts sunlight into sustenance, focusing all of the resulting energy into growing and thriving. But in fall and winter, the growth stops and the tree becomes dormant, biding its time until the new growing season, when it may again concentrate on its task of growing tall.

One of the greatest enemies of this sort of concentration is worry. Worrying about your future can prevent you from being where you are right now. We've all got to worry some. We all become alarmed at times. But we don't want our fears to overwhelm us.

Worry is useful, especially where the safety of your kids and your loved ones is concerned. But don't let worry conquer you. Don't worry about things over which you have no control, like the weather, the stock market, and the politics of other nations.

You just landed a huge contract, and you're worried. Why? Don't you think you can handle it? If you didn't have the ability and the power and the knowledge and the skill—if you weren't worthy of landing that contract—you wouldn't have landed it! Remind yourself of this. Instead of worrying, concentrate on doing the best job you've ever done in your life.

Don't worry about things you have no control over. Concentrate on changing what you can change and leave the worries to everybody else. By doing that, you can give your job the attention it deserves. You can give your family the attention they deserve. And you can give your colleagues the attention they deserve. Wherever you are, be there. Concentrate!

***Like successful people do, trees concentrate all of their energies on growing and thriving. But as there is a time for determination and growth, there is also a time for rest. Just as trees lie dormant in the winter, people should put their work aside at home.***

# Separating Work and Play

*M***any years ago,** I used to say, “I’ve got to get my family to the beach. I’ve been promising to take them to the beach. What are they going to think if I don’t take them?” Guess where I was while thinking about the beach—at the office.

I finally get my family to the beach, but at the beach I’m saying, “I should be at the office. Here I am at the beach when I have so much to do. I should cut all this short and get to the office.” I’ve messed up my beach time with the family by thinking about the office.

So I learned this lesson: make a playday a playday and a workday a workday. Don’t mix the two. Sure enough, if you say, “I’m going to take off at three o’clock and go play,” guess what you are thinking about all morning—taking off to go play! Don’t play at work, and don’t work at play. It’s a great rule to follow to ensure that your time is used more effectively. All of this has to be modified to fit your particular situation. No one rule will apply to all situations. But keep this main thought in mind, and separate work and play.

When I take a lecture tour to Spain or Australia, I make it a work trip. Every day is filled with lectures, speeches, and business conferences. Then I arrange a play trip, because when I play, I really want to play.

A builder friend of mine now has the luxury of working a week and taking a week off. That’s his system—work a week, play a week. And with weekends on either side of his play week, it’s really nine days. He works five and takes off nine. That is luxury, right? However, the five days he works, he *really* works. He enlists the help of his secretaries, accountants, architects, and superintendents. He works around the clock, into the night, for five heavy, full days. Then he’s off to play. When he works, he really works so that he can have a longer stretch of play time. Perhaps we can’t all do that, but we can learn to practice the skill of separating work and play.

# Setting Careful Priorities

*E***njoying true business** success requires you to set careful priorities. Sometimes priorities are determined by the season. For a farmer, the season dictates his most important activities. During the spring, a farmer must work around the clock, burn the midnight oil, and keep the equipment running because he only has this small window of time for the planting of his crops.

One of the difficulties of living in an industrialized society is the loss of the sense of seasons—when to pour it on, when to ease back, when to take advantage. It's easy to keep going from nine to five, year in and year out, and lose a natural sense of priorities and appropriate time. Don't let one year just blend into the next. Keep an eye on your own seasons lest you lose track of values and substance.

Part of setting priorities is learning to separate major activities from minor activities. This is a whole skill in itself, but once you have learned it, it will pay dividends you won't believe! So learn to put everything on your mental scales to be fully weighed before you spend time or money.

And here's a good question to ask yourself constantly: is this a major or minor activity? By asking that question, you will reduce the amazingly natural tendency to spend major time on minor things. In sales training, we are taught that major time is the time spent in the presence of the prospect, while minor time is the time spent on the way to the prospect. If you're not careful, you will spend more time "on the way to" than "in the presence of." So in sales, we teach, "Don't go across town until you've gone across the street." Wouldn't it be wise to ask yourself, "How much time am I spending 'in the presence of' and how much time 'on the way to?' " Majors and minors. What a great discipline to exercise.

You also don't want to spend minor time on major things. It's easy to get values mixed up. If a man spends three hours watching TV and only thirty minutes

playing with his kids, something is probably out of line there, right? Don’t spend major money on minor things. If you spend more on candy than on programs or books, wouldn’t that be foolish? So set careful priorities. Do it like your life depends on it… because it does.

# Conquering Mental Roadblocks

**You know the** importance of applying discipline and effort to overcoming any obstacles that stand in your way. But some problems call for more than steely determination—they require you to step back and apply some mental power. If you're faced with a roadblock like this, put it all down on paper. When you write a problem down on paper, you take the emotion out of it. With the emotion gone, you can look at the roadblock objectively. You can figure out what you did right. You can figure out what you did wrong. You can figure out how to change it.

Here's what you do: pick a problem out of your head and pull out a piece of paper. Draw a line down the middle of the paper. On the left-hand side, jot down the problem in detail.

We've got so much going on in our heads that it may be difficult to isolate this particular problem. Just state it the best you can.

On the other side of this paper, you're going to write some solutions. There are three questions to ask yourself to generate those solutions, to solve almost any problem.

The first question you need to consider is this: "What can I do?" You don't want to go any further than that if you can solve the problem yourself. Start jotting down any options that come to mind. Lay out the alternatives. Then begin analyzing them. "Let's see, number three… no, that one would take too long. I haven't got that much time. Okay. Number two? Not sure. Okay. Let's look at number one. Maybe the one I thought of first is my best one."

If that doesn't seem to work, here's the second problem-solving question: "What could I read?" Maybe there's a book on your problem. Somebody may have spent a lifetime trying to figure out this problem. You could receive the instant benefit of this person's advice if you take the time to look. Maybe it's concisely

written somewhere. You don’t need to reinvent the wheel. If you do your homework, you just may find the solution.

Start taking notes on what you’re reading. Book number one: this guy’s crazy. Book number two: this guy’s too shallow. Book number three: this guy’s got some interesting things to say about this problem.

If that still doesn’t work, then ask question number three: “Who could I ask?”

What should you have ready when you ask somebody to help you? You’ve got your notes to show them. You say, “You know, I’ve tried my best to figure it out myself, and it has left me short. Here are some of the books I’ve read. Here are my notes. I’ve researched this material, and I’m still confused. Could you possibly help me?”

You can’t believe how willing people will be to help you if they know that you’re willing to help yourself.

I promise you, if you try these ideas and ask these questions when you’ve got a problem, you’ll be able to solve just about anything that gets in your way.

# Chapter Eleven
# *Fundamentals of Personal Success*

*"Character isn't something you were born with and can't change, like your fingerprints. It's something you weren't born with and must take responsibility for forming."*

*"If you don't make plans of your own, you'll fit into someone else's plans. And what do you think they have planned for you? Not much."*

*"All the possibilities of greatness—great wealth, great reputation, great satisfaction—come if you turn your attention from yourself to others."*

*"A courageous person is not someone who never feels fear but who fears the right thing at the right time in the right way."*

# Forging Your Character

**Personal success is** built on the foundation of character, and character is the result of hundreds and hundreds of choices you may make that gradually turn who you are at any given moment into who you want to be. If that decision-making process is not present, you'll still be somebody—you'll still be alive—but you may have a *personality* rather than a *character,* and to me, that's something very different.

Character isn't something you were born with and can't change, like your fingerprints. It's something you weren't born with and that you must take responsibility for forming.

There used to be a joke about football teams that lost every game. The coach would say, "We built a lot of character this year, didn't we?" As if character is something that you settle for when you haven't achieved what you really wanted or automatically develops as a result of adversity.

I don't buy that. I don't think adversity by itself builds character, and I certainly don't think that success erodes it. You build character by how you respond to what happens in your life, whether it's winning every game or losing every game or getting rich or dealing with hard times.

You build character from certain qualities that you must create and diligently nurture within yourself, just like you would plant and water a seed or gather wood to build a campfire. You've got to look for those things in your heart and in your gut. You've got to chisel away in order to find them, just like chiseling away rock to create the sculpture that has previously existed only in the imagination.

But the really amazing thing about character is that, if you're sincerely committed to making yourself into the person you want to be, you'll not only

create those qualities, you'll strengthen them and re-create them in abundance, even as you're drawing on them every day of your life. That's why building your character is vital to becoming all that you can be.

# Character vs. Charisma

***Charisma* is a** word that is often confused with *character*, but charisma is really quite different. *Charisma* is derived from a Greek word meaning “an ability to elicit favor in other people.” It’s a magnetic quality of personality that people respond to as if it were magic. Charisma is almost like a magic wand that confers power over others.

*Character* has a very different origin. *Character* comes from a Greek word meaning “chisel,” or “the mark left by a chisel.” Of course, a chisel is a sharp steel tool used for making a sculpture out of a hard or difficult material, like granite or marble.

So in its origins, the word *character* isn’t related to *charisma*, which is described as a kind of magic wand. Character isn’t a magic wand; *character* comes from *chisel*, and I hope you’ll remember that. You’ve got to chisel your character out of the raw material of yourself just like a sculptor has to create a statue. The raw material is always there, and everything that happens to you, good or bad, is an opportunity for building your character.

Let me point out another important distinction between character and charisma. In both its definition and its derivation, *character* doesn’t refer to other people. It doesn’t refer to having power over other people, getting other people to follow you, or gaining favor with other people. Character is something that you have and something that you are. You could be marooned on a desert island and your character would still be important—in fact, it would likely be very important in that situation—but charisma wouldn’t do you any good at all. Charisma requires the presence of others, while character is all about you. Character is the person you are after you’ve chiseled and chiseled and have gotten past all the unnecessary material to what’s underneath.

But since we’re usually surrounded by other people, let me be a little more specific about how the differences between a charismatic person and a person

with character can play out in the real world, particularly in leadership situations. Here are four sets of circumstances that can easily occur:

First, a really charismatic person can make people believe there's pie in the sky or that the sky is going to fall tomorrow… one just as easily as the other. By creating these expectations, charismatic individuals can indeed energize and inspire others—or terrify and demotivate them—until the overblown scenarios are proven false, and the charisma runs out. But a person of character doesn't need to be anyone's Pied Piper and isn't comfortable in that role. Instead, he or she looks within for the true source of inspiration and energy.

Second, a charismatic person can inspire devoted or even fanatical loyalty, but this can all too easily turn into an unconscious sense of dependency. That can make matters difficult when the leader is no longer available. A charismatic coach is effective during the glory years, but when he leaves the organization, there's a sense of abandonment, and the team may never achieve anything like its prior success. Powerful personalities often resist delegating authority, but it's an attribute of character for a leader to refrain from making himself or herself the indispensable heart and soul of an organization.

Here's a third difference between character and charisma that's particularly important in a leadership situation. Charismatic people have to keep pulling rabbits out of the hat. The magic of their presence has got to keep expressing itself, or people might start wondering where it went. Worse yet, they might start getting bored. During the Second World War, Dwight Eisenhower was picked to command the Allied Forces in Europe not because he was an exciting leader with a sense of high drama, but precisely because he wasn't. There were plenty of charismatic individuals around, such as Churchill, Montgomery, DeGaulle, and Patton. What was needed was somebody with toughness, stamina, and the ability to manage people. Just before the Normandy Invasion in 1944, Eisenhower met with a group of officers who would be going into battle. He stretched out a piece of string on a table and pulled it a few inches with his finger. "An army is like this piece of string," he said. "If you try to push it from behind, it just tangles and doubles back on itself. Soldiers have to be led from the front, not pushed from behind."

Eisenhower may not have been colorful, but he could definitely get his point across in a way anyone could understand. He had character in the true sense.

One of the biggest pitfalls for a charismatic leader comes from his or her ability to inspire love and devotion, and this is the last point I want to make. To bask in the warm glow of a leader's approval, people may become reluctant to voice disagreements. There are people who become isolated because subordinates are afraid of them, but the same isolation can occur as a result of misplaced affection. People of character are usually well-loved by everyone around them, but they make it clear that their own first love is for the truth, even if it hurts. And that's not a bad reputation to have.

# Positive Self-Direction

*W***hen you are** a person of character, you know who you are and where you want to go. You've already spent a great deal of time thinking about it. You've been working on the parts of your personality that will make you better—your attitude, your health, your time-management skills. You've been putting it all down on paper. And you've developed positive self-direction.

As you talk with yourself every day, how often do you ask, "Is what I am doing today getting me closer to where I want to be tomorrow?" Because here's what you don't want to ever do: kid yourself. Kid your neighbor and kid me and kid the marketplace if you want to, but don't kid yourself. You can't wait around with your fingers crossed hoping you'll arrive at a good destination when you're not even headed in the right direction. You say, "Well, maybe the wind will take me." There's a chance, of course, but it's about as likely as winning the lottery. You've got to take charge.

Ancient scripture says that hope, if it's delayed long enough, can make the heart sick. You've got to ask yourself, often, "Am I performing the disciplines that are taking me in the direction that I want to go?" I don't want to delude myself and think I'm on the way to financial success when there's not a prayer. I don't want to delude myself into thinking there's someone else who will take care of it. Nobody else is going to take care of it. Nobody else is going to take care of me.

What if all of your negative-thinking relatives turned positive? What would that do for your fortune and your future? Not much! If prices came down a little, what would that do for your sophistication and your culture? Not much! If the economy gets a little better, what would that do for you? Not much!

If you don't make plans of your own, you'll fit into someone else's plans. And what do you think they have planned for you? Not much. Most people wake up every morning counting on this "not-much" list. And that's all they have: not much. Not much hope. Not much promise. Not much progress. They're driving

what they don’t want to drive, living where they don’t want to live, doing what they don’t want to do.

Forget the thief waiting in the alley to snatch your purse. What about the thief in your mind? He is tempting you to become lazy, not stimulated by thoughts and questions. Don’t become a victim of yourself . Ask yourself these questions: “Is this the direction that I want for my life? Is it someone else’s direction? Is it a goal that has been ingrained in me since my childhood? Is it my parents’, my spouse’s, my boss’s, or my children’s? Is it mine?”

Ask yourself these questions. Get into the debate of your inner mind. “What am I doing that works? What am I doing that doesn’t work?” Debate it all. Work with your mind to figure out the best possible direction for you. This is your self-direction.

***Aim yourself toward your goals like an archer aims an arrow at a target. That's positive self-direction.***

# Finding Your Own Way

**There are two** parts to positive self-direction. Part one is self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge is knowing who you are and what you want to do with your life. It is knowing how you feel about yourself. Self-knowledge has a lot to do with your philosophy, and your philosophy has a lot to do with shaping your attitude. It helps determine how you feel about yourself, about life, about your direction, and about others around you.

You've got to gather up enough knowledge and information to know what's right for you. How do you gather up this information? Well, you can start with your own experiences. The best way to know if something works for you, to find the right way, is to do it the wrong way. You can't keep doing it the wrong way. You've got to be smart enough to say, "Hey, this isn't working," and change it. Start doing it the right way.

Then search for the knowledge and apply what's right for you to your life. Develop your own attitudes and philosophies around your own experiences and the experiences of others. Take all of the information you have gathered and compile it, consider it, debate it, tear it apart, turn it upside down. Look at it from your own perspective and refine it to suit you. Rearrange it. Throw some of it out. Keep what you think will work for you. And most importantly, make sure that what you end up doing is the product of your own conclusion. Make sure that the knowledge that you are building is your own self-knowledge.

The second component of positive self-direction is preparation: being ready for the opportunities when they show up in your life; being ready for the sales call that may make you a fortune; being ready for the meeting that may positively affect your career; being ready for it all, in expectation that it will come.

For those of you who are parents, when you found out that a new member of the

family was going to come along in nine months or so, what did you do? You started getting ready. You started reading the books on how to best handle a baby. You started buying everything you needed to care for the baby. You started asking advice from friends and relatives who've already had a baby or two. You asked questions, defined your parenting style, got ready for a major change in how you live, the hours you keep, and the financial obligations you have to live up to. You started getting ready.

Preparing for your own life is pretty much the same. With enough planning, dedication, and hard work, you'll meet your goals. You know that it will be tough for the first few years, but the sacrifice is well worth it. In the meantime, you've got to be ready for it.

If you wish to be ruler over many, you've got to be faithful with few. If you wish to have power and influence over many, be the leader of many, and get the return from many, be faithful and disciplined when there's just a few. And do it in your own enlightened self-interest because that gives you the best chance to have power, influence, and a place or honor among the many. Be faithful when there's just a few.

Someone says, "If I had a big organization, I'd really be on top of things. But I've just got a few employees, and I don't know where they are." Come on! When you've just got a few employees, you should know where *all* of them are. Let's say we were interviewing the parents of a fairly large family whose children have all grown up and gone. What if we said to them, "What happened to all of your children?" and they answered, "I don't know, they just all wandered off." We'd ask, "Well, where did they all go?" If they say, "Who knows? They're just all gone. We're just going to have some more," that's clearly not an acceptable attitude.

If you've got a few employees, if you've got a few distributors, if you've got a few people you deal with, that's the time to sharpen your communication skills —of being in touch, getting prepared, giving the most of your heart and soul. In your own enlightened self-interest, give it your all when there's a few. Be totally absorbed when there's just a few. Improve your reputation and skills so when a leadership position opens up, you'll be called.

The same thing goes with your money. Someone says, “Oh, if I had a fortune, I’d really take good care of it. But I’ve only got a small paycheck, and I don’t know where it goes.”

Nobody would ever respond to the person who says “I don’t know where it all goes,” with “Oh, we’d love to have you run our company.” Or, “You don’t know where it all goes… wow! You should be in charge of the world.” Come on!

Positive self-direction means paying very close attention to every dollar you have, really keeping track of where they come from and where they go. Create the discipline when the amount is small, and you’ll be on your way to handling your money when the amount is large. Be ready for tomorrow by doing all that you can today. That’s positive self-direction.

# Enlightened Self-Interest

*E***nlightened self-interest leads** to wealth. Selfish self-preservation leads to poverty. Somebody says, “ I can’t be concerned about other people, I can only be concerned about myself.” Well then, you’ll always have to be concerned about yourself. Somebody says, “I can’t be concerned about other people’s bills, I’ve got enough worries trying to pay my own.” Well then, you’ll have to worry about them for the rest of your life. The best way to get that monkey off your back is to turn your attention to other people.

Once I understood this perspective, it revolutionized my whole life. Self-interest is necessary, of course. But here’s what self-interest must be if you truly want to be happy: it must be enlightened. Don’t keep your attention only on yourself if you want your life to work out well. All the possibilities of greatness—great wealth, great reputation, great satisfaction—come only if you turn your attention from yourself to others.

In your own self-interest, be enlightened. Truly act in your own self-interest by making an investment in service to others.

If you wish to receive, you must give. Some people say, “If you give, it’s gone.” That’s not true if you’re educated. If you’re foolish, yes, it’s gone. But if you’re enlightened, chances are if you give, you’ve invested. What do we expect an investment to do? We expect it to return multiplied… bigger, greater, better.

When I was young, my father taught me an important lesson. He said, “Son, always do more than what you get paid for.” Some individuals might argue with that. They say, “No, you’re going to mess up the whole program.” I know they’re wrong. In my own self-interest, I did what my father taught me… I always did more than I got paid for. Why? To make an investment in my future. And it’s paid off for me.

If you're wanting that big promotion, you can't go up to your boss and say, "Just give it to me. I'll work harder if you just give me that promotion." It doesn't work that way. You've got to do more in your current position to get noticed. You need to stand out from everybody else. That way, your boss will say, "You know, we've got this position opening up, and I think we should give it to Nancy. She does so much more than we expect. Just imagine what she'll do if we give her this promotion!"

You've got to do more than you're paid for. It's an investment in your future.

It's one thing to make a sale. If you make a sale, you'll make a living. If you go beyond making the sale by providing exceptional service—keeping in touch, calling your clients before they call you, writing thank-you notes—sales will lead to multiple sales. You can make a fortune if you take good care of the customer. People who are well taken care of will open doors you can't get through by yourself.

All of us have found ways to make a living. What was interesting for me early on was to figure out ways to make a fortune. You may say, "Well, Mr. Rohn, how could I deserve to make a fortune?" It's easy. Render fortunes of service. People will do things you cannot believe for those who give them good service.

Here's one of the greatest gifts you can give anybody: the gift of attention. In return, they will do extraordinary things for your career. They will take you by the hand and lead you to more people than you could meet by yourself. Always do more than you get paid for.

You see, life responds to deserving, not need. Life was not designed to give us what we *need*. Life was designed to give us what we *deserve*. Once you understand that principle, your life will change.

The ancient law does not say this: "If you need you will reap." It doesn't work that way. A lot of people out there are hoping it works that way, but it doesn't. The ancient law says this: that if you sow, if you plant, you will reap. Somebody

says, “Well, I really need to reap.” Then you really need to plant. Your own self-interest needs to be educated in how to plant. You must know how to do it so everybody wins, because life just doesn’t respond to need.

You can’t go to the soil and say, “I need a crop.” The soil just smiles at you and says, “Don’t bring me your need, bring me some seed. Bring me some effort. Bring me some discipline. Bring me some interest. Bring me some service. Bring me these things, and I’ll return them to you multiplied.” You can’t come with need. You’ve got to come with seed. You’ve got to come with willingness. You’ve got to come with skills.

You’ve got to be willing to learn, to change, to grow, to make an effort. You must be willing to stand up to the bad weather, to pull out the weeds, to nurture. That’s the only way you serve others. And that’s the only way you get a return. Everybody wins with enlightened self-interest.

# Your Self-Appreciation Inventory

**In many ways,** you are already a tremendous success. And it's important to take the time to appreciate what you've accomplished on the path to becoming all you can be. So I'd like you to take a self-appreciation inventory. Ask yourself a few questions. Start with: "What have I achieved in the last four days, the last two weeks, the last six months, the last year, the last ten years? What have I achieved during these time periods?"

Write the answers down. Take a self-appreciation inventory of all you've done and all you've accomplished and all you've become. Take inventory of yourself, then compare this list to your goals. Have you accomplished all you set out to do in the last four days, two weeks, six months, one year, and ten years? Compare your lists.

Maybe you've been so busy trying to reach your goals that you haven't taken the time to sit back and reflect on what you've achieved already. Look back at your list and say, "Wow! I really have been through a lot. I really have learned a lot. Look what I've done! Look what I've become! I wasn't like this ten years ago or even one year ago. Look at me! I'm doing okay!"

Building personal success takes little steps. You need to focus on one step at a time, one day at a time, one week at a time. It's like taking your family to a reunion where people haven't seen your kids for a year. They say, "My, look how you've grown." You know your kids have grown, but when you see them every day, it's hard to notice.

So write down all your accomplishments and see where you've been and what you've done and who you've become. You'll say, "My, look how I've grown!"

Here's the next question in your self-appreciation inventory: "What could I have achieved that I didn't?" Be honest now. This is your own inventory. Nobody else

has to see it. What could you have achieved over the last week, the last month, the last quarter, the last year? What could you have achieved that you didn't?

Would a game plan have made a difference? Would a different direction have made a difference? Would greater preparation have made a difference? Would more discipline have made a difference? Would time management have made a difference? Ask yourself, "What could I have achieved that I didn't?"

Now take this one step further with the question: "What do I want to achieve in the next four days, the next two weeks, the next six months, the next year, the next ten years?" This all falls in line with your goals: what you *could* achieve has to fall in line with what you *want to* achieve. And through the proper disciplines, practiced every day, the "What could I do?" will naturally match up with "What do I want to do?"

Here's another question: "What can I do to achieve my goals that I'm not doing now?" What things do you need to work on that you're not working on now?

Remember, it's easy to do the little things, every day. It's also easy *not* to do them.

Are you appreciative of the progress you've made so far? It's important that you take time out to acknowledge yourself and your achievements. Consider where you've been and who you've become. Self-appreciation is a stage in personal evolution that demonstrates maturity and resolve. It comes from already being firmly set on the course of positive self-direction. You know you're on the right track, and you have a wonderful blend of humility and self-esteem. You know that you're accomplishing your goals. And you know yourself enough, and are confident enough, to avoid needless bragging.

Self-appreciation also says that you admit there's room for improvement. You know that you're on the right track, but you admit the need for continued growth. You seek out more books, more seminars, more skills, more disciplines, a greater awareness, and a bigger vision.

There’s always more room to grow. There’s always more knowledge to gain, more skills to perfect. We’re never done with the education process, because education is part of the path to wealth. Education is part of the path to health. Continued education can turn you around if you’re headed in the wrong direction. We must never stop learning, growing, and expanding.

And we must never forget to take the time to appreciate ourselves for what we have done in pursuit of what we want to become.

***It may be forgotten in your daily routine, but you are already a success in many ways. Take some time to appreciate your current success. Celebrate it. Treat your family and friends to a dinner in your honor. These small steps toward success are what make the entire journey worthwhile.***

# The True Nature of Courage

*D***oing what it** takes to achieve personal success is more than an exercise in discipline; it's also an exercise in courage. Just getting through the day—let alone reaching for the stars—requires courage. That's why true courage is a priceless commodity.

In examining the true nature of courage. I can't put it any better than the Greek philosopher Aristotle did more than two thousand years ago: "A truly courageous person is not someone who never feels fear, but who fears the right thing, at the right time, in the right way."

What does it mean to fear the right thing in the right way at the right time?

To find the answer, let's consider some specific sources of fear that many individuals are facing right now.

First, many people today are afraid of what might happen to them financially. And it's certainly true that great changes are taking place in the economy that will have a direct impact on the lives of millions of people. I've heard it said that a corporation that employs ten thousand men and women today may only need one-fifth that many within ten years. Over the last fifty years, whole sections of our society have learned to identify with the corporation that employed them. That corporation provided not only a salary, but also health benefits and the opportunity to create a pension fund that would make retirement possible at age sixty-five or even sooner. Now that relationship between the employer and the corporation is changing. Much of the work that used to be done by domestic workers can now be done more cheaply overseas, and companies are taking advantage of that… perhaps out of necessity, perhaps simply to fatten the bottom line. In any case, the fear of losing one's job has now reached a segment of the white collar work force that's never been faced with it in quite this way.

What else are we afraid of? Many people are concerned about their health. They're afraid that they'll get sick because they're not getting enough exercise or because they're eating the wrong things or because of chemicals in the environment. In fact, I think people today are even more frightened of these things than they were in the past, when epidemics of disease and poor sanitation were everywhere.

Also with regard to their health, people are afraid of the expenses that might result if they were to become sick or disabled, or of the expenses they might have to bear if this were to happen to a parent or family member.

So financial fears and health-related fears are two of our major concerns. But the third thing that I sense really scares people today is a little less easy to categorize. It's kind of a general feeling that things aren't as good as they used to be, that there's been a loss of control at some basic level of our society. There's a sense that one earthquake after another—some large and obvious, some smaller and almost imperceptible—have accumulated to shift the foundation of society, and it's going to keep on shifting toward a result that's anything but good.

Keeping in mind our idea that a courageous person is not someone who never feels fear, but who fears the right thing at the right time in the right way, let's ask ourselves if these fears really fit that definition.

I think if we look a little deeper, we'll see that what really scares people about these situations is the sense that they're going to be helpless—that all their trust was placed in somebody or something, and now they've been let down and they can't do anything about it.

But remember, you're never really helpless. And the sense that you are helpless, or that you might be if certain things were to happen, is what we really ought to be afraid of. We should refuse to accept it. You're never just a victim of circumstances. No matter what happens, you're never without options that can get you back on track. It takes courage to recognize that, because it means accepting responsibility for your own future. I would suggest that we should accept that responsibility. No one is really going to accept it for us, no matter

what we may have been led to believe.

Let me emphasize that underlying most fear is the fear of helplessness, of being victimized, of being blown around by the winds of fate like a leaf is blown off a tree. But is that really a legitimate way of looking at things? It sounds to me like being afraid of the dark, in which case the best thing to do is get yourself up out of bed and switch on the light. After all, the people who built this country didn't feel helpless when they faced obstacles that we can hardly even imagine today. I'm not saying we should all just gather around the campfire and tell stories about George Washington, but we should realize that every generation has faced insecurities, lived with them, and triumphed over them. It's only in the past fifty years or so that people have come to expect a life without real tough times and real difficulties. But adversity isn't something to fear, it's something to expect, something to prepare for, and something to overcome.

The truly courageous person is not immune to fear, but fear plays a different role in his or her life than it does for other people. If you're a courageous person, your fears aren't about what someone might do to you. Your fears aren't about something that might happen to you. Instead, your fears are about not living up to your ideals, about reacting instead of acting, about not taking advantage of the opportunities that are always within reach.

A truly courageous person is not afraid of what might or might not happen next week or next year. He isn't afraid to make the most of every moment today. A truly courageous person fears the impulse to dominate other people. She leads by helping others to be their best. A truly courageous person fears doing anything that he or his loved ones might be ashamed of

A truly courageous person fears making appearances more important than realities… making impressions more important than communication… making himself more important than those who are depending on him.

But there's one thing a courageous person fears most. Have you ever seen a deer caught in the headlights of a car? The way the deer just stands there as though paralyzed, with the car bearing down? The truly courageous person fears ever

getting caught like that. A constant part of his or her life is dedicated to making sure it never happens.

In other words, the truly courageous person, as someone once said, fears nothing except fear itself.

# Facing Your Fears

*H***ere are a** few techniques to help build your courage. Number one: put all remote possibilities out of your mind. Don't worry about things you have no control over. Don't spend your time thinking about all the bad things that might happen to you. Don't spend your time plotting and planning ways to make sure these things will never happen.

Courageous people don't worry about things that are out of their control or things that are unlikely to happen. They concentrate on what they can control.

Number two: face your fears before you start something. Imagine difficult situations before they occur. Make a list of the worst that could happen, and you'll probably see that the situation is not so bad after all.

A friend of mine lost everything a few years back—her home, cars, possessions, antiques, art, jewelry, and credit. She lost it all. Now, on her way back up, whenever she's faced with a tough decision, she asks herself, "What the worst that can happen?" And guess what, she's already been through the worst, and she survived. It's not an issue anymore.

You don't have to lose everything to lose that particular fear. But once you face your fear, you can move on. Once you've figured out the worst that could possibly happen, you'll see that you have the inner strength to deal with it if the worst scenario comes about. And here's the best part: if you've looked at the possibilities beforehand, you'll probably never be faced with the situation at all. Why? Because you've already thought it through. By contemplating what might happen, you've charted your course to make sure that it doesn't.

Technique number three in building your courage: imagine the alternative. Picture in your mind the final result of giving into your fears. Really *feel* the cost of being ruled by fear; then really *feel* the benefits of courageously following

your ambition. Carefully weigh the two, and see the difference.

If you've been invited to address your national sales convention and are scared to death of public speaking, what should you do? You could decline the invitation, knowing full well that your fears are holding you back. Or you could take some classes, read some books, practice in front of a video camera, and see yourself stepping into a whole new league. You'll be accepting the opportunity to gain more notoriety in your field. And you'll be increasing your opportunities for future success.

Once again, it's your choice. Be fueled by your fears, or face your fears. It all depends on how badly you want something. It all depends on how you choose to live your life: do you always want to be afraid of taking the next step, or do you want to build your courage and open the doors of opportunity? I know what my answer would be.

# The Source of Wisdom

**The Bible tells** us that King Solomon was the wisest man in the world, but he was also the richest man. Kings and queens came from all over the world to get Solomon's advice and to admire his riches. In fact, legend has it that Solomon had wives from every nation on earth, and there's no report of any marital disharmony. Not one divorce! Was this a wise man, or what?

The Bible also tells us that when Solomon was just a young man, living in the court of his father, King David, God told him he would grant him one wish. Do you know what he wished for? He didn't wish for a kingdom. He didn't wish for great power. He didn't wish for good looks, unlimited pleasure, long life, love, fame, or security. That young man asked God to grant him wisdom. And because he only asked for wisdom, God gave him everything else too.

The most important difference between you and me and Solomon isn't where or when we were born, or the privileges we have or we don't. The difference isn't in our names, our bank accounts, or our positions.

The difference is that Solomon got wisdom by asking God for it. The rest of us must look for wisdom in everything we read, everything we do, and everyone we meet—and most of all, we must look for it in *ourselves.* It is a quality that we must earn and learn on our own.

The wisest man in ancient Greece, the greatest philosopher the world has ever known, was a man named Socrates. In fact, Socrates made wisdom his profession—*philosopher* means "lover of wisdom" in ancient Greek. Because he didn't have another job, people were always asking Socrates, "So what do you do for a living?" He was definitely smart enough to figure out that he had to have an answer, so he made up his own job title: philosopher.

When people asked Socrates, "What is wisdom?" he always gave the same

answer: “I don’t know.”

In fact, Socrates never claimed to know much of anything except how to ask questions. And by asking questions, he would prove to other people that they didn’t know what they thought they knew.

Everybody in Greece agreed that Socrates was the wisest man around. But unlike King Solomon, the philosopher Socrates didn’t have great wealth. The wisest man in Greece was poor.

King Solomon managed to run a huge household with many wives and lots of children, and he accomplished this without any discord or unhappiness. But Socrates had no home life at all. The wisest man in Greece was married to a terrible nag, and they had no children.

Socrates, the wisest man in Greece, just went to the marketplace every day. He hung around, asked people questions, and hoped to get invited to a banquet so he wouldn’t have to go home and face his wife.

King Solomon was honored by all the great leaders of his time. But Socrates didn’t have any support among the powerful people in his own country. Their sons would go to Socrates and learn what they could from the philosopher, but the powerful families of Athens, the city where Socrates lived, got tired of his questions. They grew exasperated with his influence over the youth of Greece. He was teaching them that nothing is known for certain, so they accused the wisest man in Greece of corrupting their children.

Instead of honoring the greatest philosopher who ever lived, the Athenians sentenced Socrates to death… unless he would apologize and recant what he had taught.

But Socrates didn’t recant. He didn’t apologize. Socrates cheerfully drank down a cup of poison, and just sat there calmly saying good-bye to his few faithful

students, asking questions the whole time.

Solomon and Socrates: two very wise men, but two very different destinies. Great wisdom is no guarantee of anything, but to those who really care about it, wisdom is its own reward.

Socrates could have avoided prosecution as a criminal if he had just said he'd been wrong. You could make a case that agreeing to be executed when you could avoid it by just saying a few words is not very wise. And you'd be right, if it were you or me in that position. But it was the right thing to do for Socrates. Because Socrates really knew who he was, and he knew that what gave his life meaning and made it worth living was just the way he had asking of questions and trying to answer them honestly. After all, what would the rest of your life be like if you were to suddenly become dishonest with yourself? Socrates knew who he was and what his life meant, and he understood that even one bit of lip service in his last moments would undo all the good and meaningful questions he'd been asking for more than seventy years.

"Know thyself" was Socrates' motto. He knew himself well enough to realize that he had to drink that cup of poison. And his character was strong enough that he was actually able to do it. He achieved personal success in his own way. I wish for you the same satisfaction of achievement, and I know your story will have a much happier ending.

# Chapter Twelve
# *Refining Your Philosophy of Life*

*"What makes us different from all other life forms? It's the ability to think; it's the ability to form our own personal philosophy."*

*"You would be surprised how effective you can become in many areas if you will just make the arrangements to get help when you need it."*

*"A patient man is always richer than an impatient one, even if the patient man has less money. Why? The patient man can always afford to wait."*

*"Making the most of your life is unusual. That's why you need to develop some unusual habits to earn outstanding rewards."*

# Setting Your Sail

*F***orming and refining** your personal philosophy of life is a process that never ends. It started way back when you were a child. The schools you attended, your parents, your experiences—all of these factors have played a role in developing your philosophy. Your personal philosophy is the major factor of your destiny.

I used to think that circumstances ordered my life. If someone would have remarked to me when I was twenty-five, “Mr. Rohn, you’re not doing well—you’ve got pennies in your pocket, creditors calling, nothing in the bank. You are behind on your promises to your family. You live in America and have every reason to do well, yet things are going badly for you. What is wrong here?” It would not have occurred to me to blame my philosophy.

I found it much easier to blame the government, to blame the tax problem. I used to say taxes are too high. The top tax rate when I first started paying taxes was ninety-one percent. Back then, when your income reached a certain level, all the money you earned beyond that was taxed at ninety-one percent. Now the top rate is half that, and people are still saying that taxes are too high. But if they’ve decreased so substantially, how can they be too high? I threw all my old excuses away. It seems that some people have found them, though. And they’ve picked them up, dusted them off, and they’re using the excuses themselves.

I used to blame the traffic, the weather… all sorts of circumstances. I found it easier to blame the company than to blame myself. I used to say, “If this is all they pay, how do they expect me to do well?” I figured that my future was going to be tied to what was going on around me: the economy, interest rates, retail prices. I had a limitless supply of things to blame until Mr. Shoaff taught me where the problem really resided: in my own personal philosophy.

What makes us different than dogs and birds and cats and spiders and alligators? What makes us different than all other life forms? It’s the ability to think, the ability to use our mind, the ability to process ideas and not just operate by

instinct. It’s the ability to form our own personal philosophy.

In the winter, geese can only fly south. Human beings are not like geese. We can fly south if we want, but we can also turn around, go north, go east, go west—we can determine the entire process of our own life.

We do that by the way we think. We do that by exercising our mind. We do that by processing ideas and coming up with a better philosophy, a better strategy for our life. We can set goals for the future and formulate plans to achieve those goals. All this comes from developing our philosophy.

A philosophy helps us to process our options. Is it possible to take the raw material we’ve all been given and turn it into something spectacular and unique that no other person can do? The answer is yes.

But you cannot even see all these options, let alone know what to do with them, unless you start using your mind to come up with ideas to strengthen your philosophy. That is a major challenge of life.

Each person’s personal philosophy is like the set of a sail. If you want to trim a better sail, you don’t need a better economy. If you blame the economy and the marketplace, the schools and the teachers, the sermons and the preachers, the company and its policy, what else is there? When some people get through with their blame list, there’s nothing left to blame but themselves. It is a colossal mistake to blame the only things you’ve got to work with. You know you can’t change the seasons; you’ve got to take them as they come. What can you change to make your life work better? You must start with your philosophy.

Once I got rid of all my old excuses and started examining the real problem—my personal philosophy—my life exploded into change. My bank account changed immediately. My income changed immediately. My whole life instantly took on a new look. The early results from making these philosophical changes felt so good that I never stopped the process from that day forward.

Once you set a better sail by refining your philosophy, your whole life's direction can start to change from that day forward. You don't have to wait until tomorrow. You don't have to wait until next month. You don't have to wait until conditions are perfect. You can start this whole process immediately. I recommend it.

***Each person's personal philosophy is like the set of a sail. Once you set a better sail by modifying your philosophy, your whole life's direction will change.***

# Getting Help When You Need It

*O***ne of the** most crucial prerequisites for forming a life philosophy is knowing yourself, your weaknesses as well as your strengths. A real-world philosophy recognizes that in order to take full responsibility for yourself, you'll probably need some help from others.

You may know the areas where you can get by with little or no assistance, but what about those areas where help is truly needed? You can discover these areas by simply analyzing your habits.

If, for example, you're not good at keeping records, get someone to do it for you. If you have promised yourself that you are going to keep records or balance your checkbook, and you haven't done it for a few years, it looks like you aren't that kind of person… nor are you likely to become that kind of person. You may say, "No, I'm really going to do it this time," but I would suggest that a few years is long enough. Don't promise yourself any more. Just say, "Maybe the smart thing to do is to get someone to do this for me." You would be surprised at how effective you could become in many areas if you would just make the arrangements to get help when you need it.

Some years ago, my office came to the conclusion that I was a poor courier. It used to be that if I was going someplace, say to San Francisco, someone would ask me to deliver a check while I was there. I would say, "Sure. No problem," put the check in my pocket, and fly off to San Francisco. Guess when I would next hear about the check? When my dry cleaners found it! The next time, my office would say, "This document has to go to San José. Will you be sure to give it to them this time?" I'd say, "Of course. You can count on me this time. I'm not flaky." So I'd put the document in my briefcase and head off for San José. Guess what… it would still be in my briefcase when I got back to the office the following week. So there is a saying now in my office: "Don't give the chairman anything. He's good at some things, but he's a poor courier. Make other arrangements."

And that is my point. There is nothing wrong with admitting that you just aren’t going to do certain things as long as you are clever enough to make the arrangements to have them done. I would call that a real-world philosophy. It’s much better than continually promising that you will do something when the chances are good that you won’t.

# Enlisting the Power of Time

**Let's suppose that** you have been hard at work on developing a strong philosophy. You know exactly what you want to accomplish in life. You know that you want to get a good education, have a successful career, make some profitable investments, raise a family, and have your children turn out well. You may even know how you want to go about achieving these objectives. You may have it all planned out in great detail.

All that is very important. All that is very good. But is it enough? I'm afraid not.

Let's also suppose that there's a vast, hugely powerful force that nobody can withstand, and this immense force is always active and in furious motion. It never rests. It's like a slowly flowing river that can eventually carve the Grand Canyon out of solid rock. But that comparison doesn't really do it justice. The force I'm talking about is much more formidable than any river, ocean, glacier, or other natural phenomenon.

In trying to achieve your life's goals, would you prefer to fight against this great force that has the odds overwhelmingly in its favor, or would you rather enlist this great power for your cause and make the inevitable work for you instead of against you?

Take your time before answering. Think it over.

By the way, the great power I'm talking about is time. Time is the mightiest force in the world—even the universe!

Of course, the answer to the question I posed is very obvious. Why would you ever choose to fight time when you could have time on your side? Who wouldn't want to harness the great river of time that flows through all of life? Why

wouldn’t you want to use the power of time to generate power in every area of your existence, to turn the turbines of your hopes and dreams, to charge your every aspiration with lightning bolts of electricity?

There is only one way make time work for you, not against you: patience.

There’s a type of person who undertakes every activity out of the desire to achieve a goal. He prepares food to eat it, not just for the fun of being in the kitchen. He starts a business to make money. He exercises to get in shape. I’m sure that some of these people are very successful, and they are certainly highly organized. But a person with a truly refined philosophy sees success as an adventure, not as a point with an estimated time of arrival. The latter approach is impatient thinking.

Impatient thinking can lead a person into some very big mistakes. When you are always looking somewhere else—whether it’s down the road, up toward the top of the mountain, or off toward the left field fence where you’re hoping to hit that grand slam home run—you often miss what’s under your very own nose.

You never know when you’re going to come across a book or article that will provide a piece of information that can transform your life. One thing is certain, however: the book you don’t read isn’t going to help. And it’s the same with meeting people. You never know who is going to be able to teach you exactly what you need to know. Even if you don’t need to know it now, you might need to know it at some point in the future. That might not be for fifteen years… but it just might be in fifteen minutes, too.

# The Substance and Strength of Patience

A **patient man is** always richer than an impatient one, even if the patient man has less money.

What do I mean by that statement? Well, riches and wealth can take other forms besides dollars and cents. In what sense is the patient man richer?

The answer is actually very simple. A patient man is always richer than the impatient one because the *patient man can always afford to wait!* The patient man is never desperate. The patient man has time to spare, while the man in a hurry is always on the verge of bankruptcy as far as time is concerned.

In any situation you can think of, impatience is a source of weakness and fear, while patience represents substance and strength.

And here's another reason why patience gives the person who has it an incalculable advantage over those who don't have it: it gives him deeper insight into himself and others, which is a mark of philosophical refinement. If you can only see the short term, if you think only in terms of the here and now, then you are stuck in one place. You can't judge distances. You live in a world that's flat and two-dimensional. In other words, the impatient person lacks all sense of perspective.

Perspective lets you measure your current plans against things that have already occurred and against your desires and aspirations for the future. Then and now, here and there, near and far, need and know, watch and wait: these are the dual optics that allow the patient man to see in stereo. The nearsighted person sees only the present; the fantasizer sees only an imaginary future and, more likely than not, trips over his mistakes trying to get there.

Patience enables you to see the big picture. It helps you to make the most of today while building a better tomorrow. For that reason, it’s one of the most valuable equities of all, one that you should make every effort to acquire. The payoff will be worth it.

# The Key to Victory

**Although you won't** find this discussed in many history books, one of the most important events of World War II actually took place right here in the United States a few months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. At that time, the U.S. Army held a series of massive military exercises in Louisiana. These exercises were designed to assess the preparedness of the American forces for participation in the war. As it happened, those war games revealed some glaring deficiencies. It quickly became obvious to our military commanders that if America were drawn into the war, as many believed it would be, there would have to be a long period of rebuilding and modernization. This would have to take place while American forces were fighting all over the world with inferior and outdated equipment… and that's exactly what happened.

It took almost three years of patience and hard work and sacrifice before the U.S. war machine was brought up to modern standards. But President Franklin Roosevelt and generals such as Eisenhower and MacArthur knew that the wait would be well worthwhile and that, once the task was completed, victory would be assured.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the story was very much the same. Winston Churchill knew that England would have to endure months and years of bombing and threats of invasion, but he also knew that time was on his side. With great patience and courage, the British people waited out bombing raids by planes and rockets. At last, the tide began to turn. The world realized that patience and endurance would defeat the fearful aggressor.

The city of Leningrad was also under siege for more than a year, but the Russians knew the value of patience perhaps better than anyone. More than a century earlier, after all, they had let their bitter climate and the sheer size of their land defeat the French armies under Napoleon. The same natural forces eventually prevailed against the new invader.

It was the patient countries—the United States, England, and Russia—who won the Second World War against enemies who banked on surprise and the hope of a quick victory.

# The Power of Ratios

*I***f you want** to develop an informed philosophy of life, it is important to understand the power of ratios. This power can be explained in a simple sentence: if you do something often enough, you'll get a ratio of good results to bad results. The understanding of ratios is particularly essential in the leadership arena, because if you're leading others, you've got to have some means to evaluate their performance… as well as your own.

What do I mean by ratios? Let's say you're in sales, and you have just joined a new company as a representative of their products or services. You talk to ten prospects. Nine of them say, "No, I wouldn't care for any." One says, "Yes, I'll take some." This is your opening ratio: one out of ten.

Is this a good ratio? It all depends on what you're selling. Any ratio can be a good ratio, however, if you keep this in mind: once a ratio starts, it tends to continue. If you talk to ten more prospects, chances are excellent that you'll get another sale. If you talk to ten more beyond that, chances are excellent you'll get a third sale. It's uncanny. I don't even know how it works, but it's less important to know how it works than it is to know that you can count on it. Understanding the process will save you a lot of frustration.

Once you know that your ratio is pretty well established at one out of ten, you can start to compete. Testing your skill against someone else's skill is valuable. What someone else can do is a good benchmark for what you might do if you stretch yourself. In that sense, competition is a very healthy pursuit.

If you decide that you'd like to compete with the top salesman in your company, the one who has been there the longest, you may feel like you've taken on an impossible task. That doesn't have to be the case, however, if you use the power of ratios. Let's say that top salesman is Pete, and he is so good that he's built a ratio of nine sales out of ten calls. You have a thirty-day contest with Pete to see who can get the most prospects to buy.

Even though your ratio is only one out of ten, you can win. You may say, “Well, I’ve only been here a short time, I can’t get nine out of ten, so how could I possibly beat him?” It might not be easy, but it would be very simple. During the month, while Pete talks to ten prospects and gets nine sales, you will talk to one hundred and get ten sales. At the end of those thirty days, Pete will have nine and you will have ten. You beat him. Isn’t that clever?

You see, you can make up in numbers what you lack in skill. After thirty days, you may be fairly exhausted, but you’ve definitely accomplished a lot more than you thought you could. You’ve been a worthy competitor. The key is to be bright enough to understand ratios.

Here’s the second clue about ratios: they can be increased. You may talk to ten, get one; talk to ten, get one; talk to ten, get one; talk to ten, get *two.* What is it about that fourth time you talk to ten that enables you to get two instead of one? You’ve put in the time and effort, and you’re getting better. Anybody who tries to can get better. All you have to do is play the numbers. Your brain is as functional as anybody else’s. Your chances are as good. All you’ve got to do is use the power of ratios and put out the extra effort. That’s how you do ordinary things extraordinarily well.

# An Intellectual Feast

*W***here do you** go for your intellectual feast? Pity the man who has a favorite restaurant but not a favorite author. He's picked out a favorite place to feed his body, but he doesn't have a favorite place to feed his mind!

One way to feed your mind and educate your philosophy is through the writings of influential people. Maybe you can't meet the person, but you can read his or her books. Churchill is gone, but we still have his books. Aristotle is gone, but we still have his ideas. Search libraries for books and programs. Search magazines. Search documentaries. They are full of opportunities for intellectual feasting.

In addition to reading and listening, you also need a chance to do some talking and sharing. I have some people in my life who help me with important life questions, who assist me in refining my own philosophy, weighing my values, and pondering questions about success and lifestyle.

We all need association with people of substance to provide influence concerning major issues such as society, money, enterprise, family, government, love, friendship, culture, taste, opportunity, and community. Philosophy is mostly influenced by ideas, and ideas are mostly influenced by education, and education is mostly influenced by the people with whom we associate.

One of the great fortunes of my life was to be around Mr. Shoaff those five years. During that time he shared with me—at dinner, during airline flights, at business conferences, in private conversations, in groups—he gave me many ideas that enabled me to make small daily adjustments in my philosophy and activities. Those daily changes—some very slight but very important—soon added up to weighty sums.

A big part of the lesson was having Mr. Shoaff repeat the ideas over and over.

You just can’t hear the fundamentals of life philosophy too often. They are the greatest form of nutrition, the building blocks for a well-developed mind.

# The Pursuit of Mental Development

**It's easy, when** you finally find yourself in a good job, to stop pursuing mental development. Have you heard about the accelerated learning curve? From birth up until the time we are about eighteen, our learning curve is dramatic, and our capacity to learn during this period is just staggering. We learn a tremendous amount very fast. We learn language, culture, history, science, mathematics… everything!

For some people, the accelerated learning process will continue on. But for most, it levels off when they get their first job. If there are no more exams to take, if there's no demand to get out paper and pencil, why read any more books? Of course, you will learn some things by experience. Just getting out there—sometimes doing it wrong and sometimes doing it right—you will learn. But can you imagine what would happen if you kept up an accelerated learning curve all the rest of your life? Can you imagine what you could learn to do, the skills you could develop, the capacities you could have? So here's what I'm asking you to do: be that unusual person who keeps up his learning curve.

Making the most of your life is not usual. It's unusual. You need to develop some unusual habits to earn the outstanding rewards. A friend of mine said, "A standard education will get you standard results." You want a lot more than standard results; you need to become a lot more than a standard person.

Become a student of good ideas, wherever they can be found. Always be on the lookout for a good idea—a business idea, a product idea, a service idea, an idea for personal improvement. Every new idea will help to refine your philosophy. Your philosophy will guide your life, and your life will unfold with distinction and pleasure.

# Chapter Thirteen
# *Building Exceptional Relationships*

*"If you want to touch somebody, express sincerity from the heart. When you try to impress, you build a gulf. By expressing, you build a bridge."*

*"Positive influence can have an incredible effect on your life… but so can negative influence. Both will take you somewhere, but only one will take you in the direction you truly wish to go."*

*"If you're full of ideas, pour them out. As you do, I promise, more will be poured in."*

*"If you want something badly enough, you have to pay for it. Why? Because of the kind of person paying for it will make of you."*

# Working Well with Others

**Achieving genuine success** is not a solo effort. Take bosses, for instance. How many bosses do you know who would be totally lost without their secretaries? They're a team. One takes the spotlight, while the other is invaluable behind the scenes. One is a great idea person, the other a great detail person. They work together, or it wouldn't work at all.

That's the case in any endeavor. You simply can't be successful by yourself. With that in mind, I'd like to offer some tips that have been effective for me in building relationships. Most of these tips relate to building good working relationships with colleagues, vendors, prospects, future clients, present clients, and past clients. But remember, regardless of our professions, we are all people, and many of these tips work well for building other relationships, too.

Let's start with kindness. How kind should you be? As kind as you possibly can be. Who should you be kind to? To everyone you come in contact with. From taxi drivers, to hotel clerks, to waitresses, to store clerks, to people on the street, in your office, and at home… be kind to everyone.

A kind word goes a long way. Perhaps somebody is having a bad day, and you don't know it. He is really feeling down, and you offer a kind word. Maybe it's just a friendly, "Hello, how are you today?" Maybe its just taking a minute or two to listen to what somebody has to say. But your few moments of attention could turn somebody's day around. You might make them feel more worthwhile and important.

Be generous with your kindness. It will go a long way. People will remember, whether you know them or not. If you're in a crowded restaurant and you're especially nice to the waiter, he'll remember you next time you come in and give you even better service.

When you give kindness, it's not gone. It's invested. It will come back to you two, five, ten, a hundred times. Kindness is important in every aspect of your life, especially in building good relationships with others.

The next relationship-building essential is sensitivity. Allow yourself to be touched by the experiences of others. Understand the plight of others. Open up your heart, mind, and attention to address the needs of others. Whether they're people you work with or people you live with, you need to put yourself in other people's shoes. Try to find out, if you can, what's going on in their hearts.

If there's a problem, you've got to be sensitive enough to ask some questions. One question may do it. Sometimes, however, you won't even get through to the root of the problem until you've asked two or three questions.

People often won't reveal the problem on the first question. You say, "Mary, how are you today? How are things?" She answers, "Well, everything's okay." You can tell by the way she says this that everything is *not* okay. Most of us don't want to come right out and say what the real problem is, unless two criteria are met.

First, we need to feel as though we're talking to someone we can trust. And second, we need to believe we're talking to someone who really cares. So it may just take a second, third, or fourth question before trust builds. Once the person finally understands that you do care, she'll be willing to tell you what's really going on. You'll hear what's really on her mind.

Asking questions up front can save so much time. Have you ever talked for an hour and then asked a question? You probably found out that you just wasted the previous hour. Learn to ask questions that will build the trust and communication between you and those you work with. Build trust and communication, and you'll also build loyalty.

If you don't know the other person very well, you will obviously need a longer questioning process. You need to take the time to find out what he's all about.

You must be sensitive to where he came from, what he's been through, and the tragedies in his life. If you really want to have an effect on people, start with where they are coming from. If they're hurting, try to understand their pain. If somebody's in trouble, you've got to start with the trouble.

Learn to express, not impress. If you want to touch somebody, express sincerity from the heart. When you try to impress, you build a gulf. By expressing, you build a bridge. People want to be able to relate their thoughts and philosophies and experiences to someone who will say, "Me, too. I know what you mean." They don't want your reaction to be, "So what?"

If you're meeting someone for the first time, and you're simply getting acquainted, here's where you start: find something you have in common. Find something you can both identify with.

When you are talking with somebody who's been stricken in the heart, and you've had the same experience, you can talk about being stricken in the heart. Your words will mean something. They will have substance. They will have depth. If you start there, building the bridge with kindness and sensitivity, you have identification. You have the basis for a strong and fruitful relationship. And everyone will benefit.

# Bridging the Gap

*H***ow do you** identify with another person? When that person is a child, identification can be especially tough. What if you need to connect with a twelve-year-old child? You have a long gap to cross, so you'll need to build a long bridge. Here are some ways to do that.

First, remember when you were twelve. Use your mental skills to go back in time. This is what an actor does. For each performance, he reaches back for the early hurts and emotions, the trauma and the drama, the sum total of his life. In dealing with a twelve-year-old, you've got to go back through all that and let it affect you one more time. Rekindle those emotions one more time.

It may be painful—I'm not denying that—but you've got to go through these pains in order to reach someone who is in pain. So begin by remembering when you were twelve.

Here's a second way to reach the kids: read all their books. Do your homework. You see, if a child has read this book, and I have read the same book, one of the great places we can meet is in the book. I say to the child, "Remember the story where…" and right away, he is impressed that I've done my homework. He says, "Did you read that book?" I say, "Yes, I read all those books." Then I use the content of the book to relay the message I want to get across.

The child can now see what I'm saying because we went back to the common ground of the book. If you read the book and do your homework, you'll have a tremendous opportunity to identify with the child.

Identifying with kids is only one of the many relationship challenges. Let's consider another: identifying with somebody who hasn't been as successful as you. First of all, you've got to talk about your struggle, not your success. If you have an hour to talk, and you spend fifty-nine minutes on your success story, you

are building a gulf, not a bridge.

You have to spend most of your time on your struggle. Talk about your fears, your apprehensions, the times you hesitated, the times you were about to give it all up. Once you've created that identification and built that bridge, you can then take people by the hand and then show them your success. It will have special meaning because it came from a struggle. It came from determination and heartbreak. You may even have come from the same place as the person you're talking to. That kind of identification makes you real. It makes your success seem possible to others. It provides inspiration.

Another part of identification is proper word choice. Jesus said to His disciples one day, "Today, I'm going to teach you how to fish." What an important choice of words, "to fish." Who was He talking to? Fishermen. He didn't say, "I'm going to teach you how to recruit." No, He didn't say that because these fishermen didn't know what it meant to recruit.

Then He said, "I now wish to teach you how to become fisher of men." They understood that language, and they could see how winning people over to your way of thinking is a lot like fishing.

You've got to learn how to shift gears and choose the appropriate words depending on your audience. When you have the gift of language, you have the opportunity to choose the right words and the right phrases depending on who you're talking to. You have sharp perception skills. You know how to choose the words that will make sense.

Here's the next component of identification: logic and reason. If you're trying to identify with a child, an audience, or a customer, you need some facts—but stick to the necessary facts. Don't overload on the facts, because logic and reason will get you only so far.

As you know, it's possible to talk somebody into buying something. If you keep on talking, though, you can also talk that person *out* of buying. You can talk a

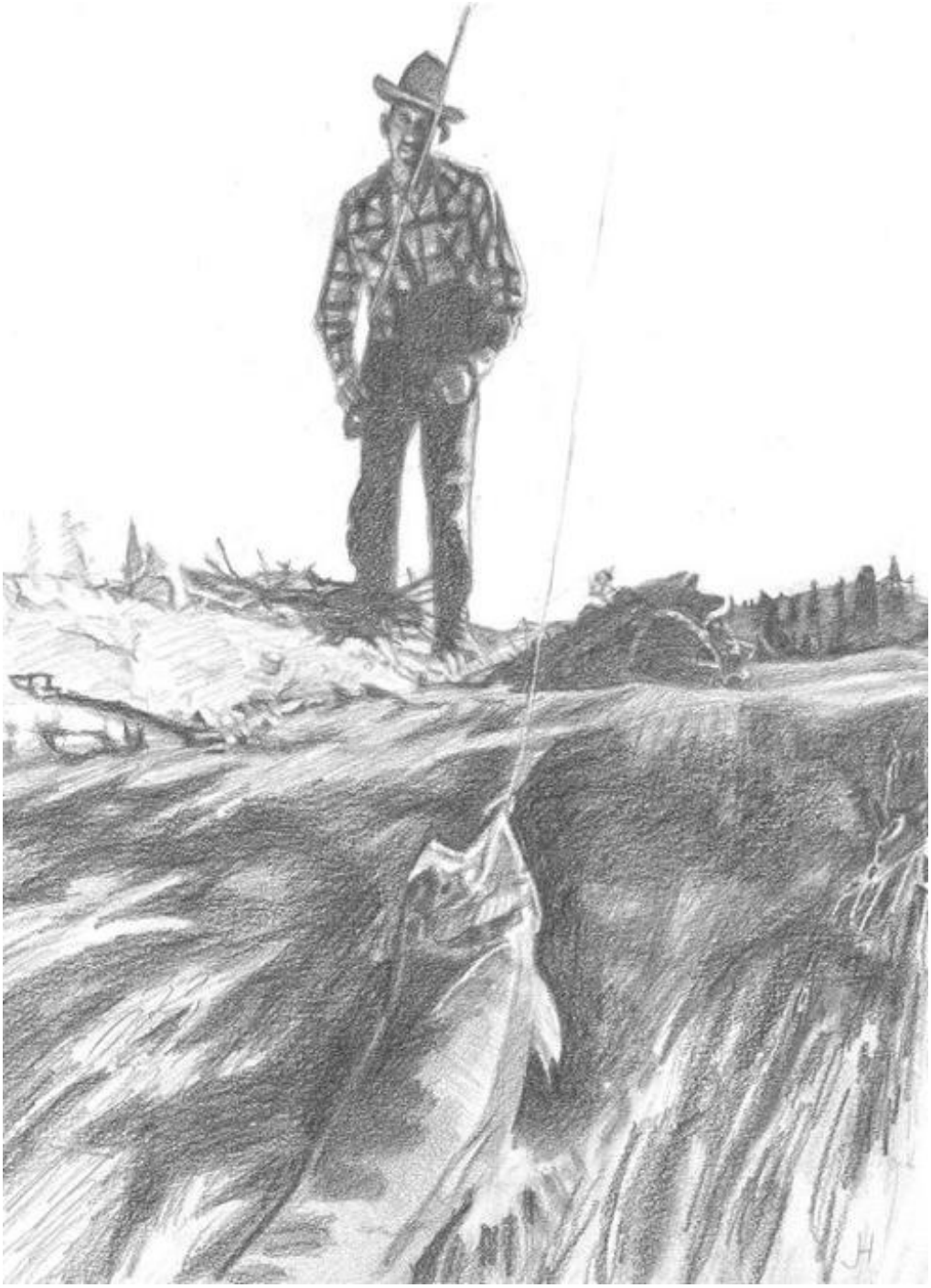
child into deciding, but if you keep on talking, he or she will *un*decide. We all have a tendency to use too much logic, too much reason. We need just enough logic and reason that what we're saying starts to make sense to others. They don't need to understand it all.

Let's say you walk into a new car showroom and express an interest in an automobile. A salesman comes along and says, "Let me tell you about this car. Follow me." He takes you out back into the shop, opens up the manual on the car, and says, "Let's start with the left front wheel. We've got a thousand facts here to go through."

Right away, you would say, "Hold it!" You don't need to see a thousand facts to decide whether to buy this automobile. How many facts do you need? About a half dozen. If somebody makes the mistake of going beyond the half dozen, he is guaranteed to lose his audience.

Here's another way to look at it. Imagine sitting down to a steak dinner. You are really hungry, so you eat it all. What if they cleared that plate away and brought you another full meal? Well, if you're still hungry, you go for the second one. What if they cleared that away and brought you a third? That third one wouldn't look very good anymore. In fact, if you started eating it, you could lose the whole dinner, right?

Too much is too much. That's why you need to exercise brevity when it comes to logic and reason. People identify with facts, but they aren't usually moved by facts. So reach back into your life, do your homework, share your struggles, use the proper words, and be sparing with the facts. That's how you identify with others and move them to action.



***When Jesus talked to fishermen, He spoke like a fisherman. He said, "Today, I'm going to teach you how to fish." They understood that. When trying to make a point, speak the other person's language.***

# Evaluating Your Associations

*I***f you were** to evaluate the major influences in your life that have shaped the kind of person you are, this has to be high on the list: the people and thoughts you choose to allow into your life. Mr. Shoaff gave me a very important warning in those early days that I would like to share with you. He said, “Never underestimate the power of influence.” Indeed, the influence of those around us is so powerful! Many times we don’t even realize we’re being strongly affected because that influence generally develops over an extended period of time.

Peer pressure is an especially powerful force because it is so subtle. If you’re around people who spend all they make, chances are excellent that you’ll spend all you make. If you are around people who go to more ball games than concerts, chances are excellent that you’ll do the same thing. If you’re around people who don’t read, chances are excellent that you won’t read. People can keep nudging us off course a little at a time until, finally, we find ourselves asking, “How did I get here?” Those subtle influences need to be studied carefully if we really want our lives to turn out the way we’ve planned.

With regard to this important point, let me give you three key questions to ask yourself. They may help you to make a better analysis of your current associations.

Here is the first question: “Who am I around?” Make a mental note of the people with whom you most often associate. You’ve got to evaluate everybody who is able to influence you in any way.

The second question is: “What are these associations doing to me?” That’s a major question to ask. What have they got me doing? What have they got me listening to? What have they got me reading? Where have they got me going? What have they got me thinking? How have they got me talking? How have they got me feeling? What have they got me saying? You’ve got to make a serious study of how others are influencing you, both negatively and positively.

Here's a final question: "Is that okay?" Maybe everyone you associate with has been a positive, energizing influence. Then again, maybe there are some bad apples in the bunch. All I'm suggesting here is that you take a close and objective look. Everything is worth a second look, especially the power of influence. Positive influence can have an incredible effect on your life… but so can negative influence. Both will take you somewhere, but only one will take you in the direction you truly wish to go.

It's so easy to just dismiss the things that influence our lives. One man says, "I live here, but I don't think it matters. I'm around these people, but I don't think it hurts." I would take another look at that. Remember, everything matters! Sure, some things matter more than others, but everything amounts to something. You've got to keep checking to find out whether your associations are tipping the scales toward the positive or toward the negative. Ignorance is never the best policy. Finding out is the best policy.

Perhaps you've heard the story of the little bird. He had his wing over his eye and he was crying. The owl said to the little bird, "You are crying." "Yes," said the little bird, and he pulled his wing away from his eye. "Oh, I see," said the owl. "You're crying because the big bird pecked out your eye." And the little bird said, "No, I'm not crying because the big bird pecked out my eye. I'm crying because I let him."

It's easy to let influences shape our lives, to let associations determine our direction, to let persuasions overwhelm us, to let tides take us, to let pressures make us. The big question is, are we letting ourselves become what we wish to become?

# Associating with the Right People

**Relationships are integral** in creating your own success and getting where you want to go. But if you're engaging in any relationships that are holding you back, it's time to make a decision. In those instances, you have some important options regarding your course of action.

The first option you have is disassociating. You may, after examining your associations, come to the conclusion that there are some people from whom you most need to break away. I'm not saying that's an easy step to take, and it's not to be taken lightly. However, I am saying it may be an essential task. You may just have to make the hard choice not to let certain negative influences affect you any more. It could be a choice that preserves the quality of your life.

The second action you may want to take is limiting your associations. It could well be that you are spending too much time with a certain group of people.

It's easy to put time and effort in the wrong place, like the man who spends three hours at the ballgame and thirty minutes listening to the sermon. In my opinion, he is out of balance. That won't amount to much in five or ten years when he takes a look at his values and his life.

If you're not careful, you can get trapped into spending heavyweight time with lightweight people. It's okay to have casual friends, as long as you give them casual time, not serious time. Spend major time with major influences and minor time with minor influences. It's easy to do just the opposite, but don't fall into that trap. Maybe all you need to do is merely limit some of your associations, not eliminate them. Say to yourself, "I have a good time with these people, but I'm not going to spend days and days with them anymore. I'm just going to cut that down and save some of that time for more and more major experiences."

Take a look at your priorities and your values. We have so little time at our

disposal. Wouldn't it make sense to invest it wisely? If you only have a hundred dollars in your pocket, it's okay to spend twenty at the race track and put eighty into the bank, but I wouldn't do it in reverse. Better to put the majority of your money where you know you will get a positive return rather than put it where the outcome isn't very encouraging.

You must be the judge. You must determine whether a particular relationship calls for disassociation or limited association. Whatever you decide, if a relationship isn't taking you where you want to be in the future, now is the time to fix it.

The third action is the one I most strongly suggest you begin with: expanding your associations. That is, spend more time with the right people. I'm not talking about right and wrong from a moral standpoint, but rather from a consequential standpoint.

Many years ago, Mr. Shoaff said to me, "Mr. Rohn, if you truly wish to be successful, you've got to associate with the right people." Then he said, "It looks like in your present circumstances, you're going to have to plot and scheme." And that was true! I had to plot and scheme to get around the right people.

During some of my early attempts, I would park my car a couple of blocks away from the place these people were gathering. I knew that if they saw my car, I'd never get in. On more than one occasion I was asked the question, "How did you get here?" I would respond, "Oh, someone dropped me off." I played every trick I could think of to get to the right people, but it was worth it.

Here's what I found: it is possible, for a modest investment, to be with major people. If you had a chance to sit down for an hour or two with a wealthy person, and all you had to do was pick up the lunch tab, wouldn't that be a bargain? That person might share an idea that could change your life… for the price of a meal!

So find some successful people to help you with your success plan. Find

somebody healthy to help with your health plan. Find somebody living a unique lifestyle to help with your lifestyle plan. This is association on purpose—getting around the right people by expanding your circle of influence. And when you do that, you will naturally limit the relationships that are holding you back.

# Sharing: A Win-Win Proposition

*A* **strong relationship is** a reciprocal relationship. That's why you need to develop the ability to share. When you pass something along to someone else, whether it's an idea, a feeling, or a resource, everybody wins. If you pick up a good idea today, pass it along. Say, "Hey, I found a book that really helped me." Maybe the book got you thinking. Maybe it changed your health. Maybe it inspired you. Whatever benefit you received can be passed along. And in the process of passing it along, you will benefit again and again. If you share what you've learned with ten different people, they get to hear it once, and you get to hear it ten times. It's probably going to do more for you than it is for them until *they* start the sharing process

For me, giving seminars, writing books, and recording programs are all joys in life. They are the best investment I can make of my words, spirit, heart, soul, time, and energy. Giving seminars, writing books, and recording programs are all hard work, and from a financial standpoint, I don't need to work so hard. But I gladly do it because I want the returns. I enjoy nothing more than to hear somebody say, "You got me started. You turned my lights on, turned my mind around, got me thinking, got me pondering… and I've been on track ever since." You will hear that kind of praise (and more!) when you share. Share with your children. Share with your colleagues. Share with everybody that comes within your grasp.

Sharing makes you bigger than you are. If I have a full glass of water, can the glass hold any more water? The answer is yes, but only if I pour out what's already in it. That's what I'm asking you to do. If you're full of ideas, if you're full of good things, I'm asking you to pour them out. As you do, I promise you, more will be poured in.

Unlike a glass, however, when you pour something out of yourself, you become bigger. Human beings have the ability to grow in consciousness and awareness and capacity. Even as kids, we don't lack the capacity. Ask yourself how many

languages a child can learn. Answer: as many as you'll take the time to teach them. They do not lack capacity. They only lack teachers.

The same thing is true for you. You don't lack capacity. Each time you share what you've got, you get bigger. Your consciousness grows. Your capacity increases. Why should you want your capacity to grow? You want it to grow so you can hold more of what is being shared with you.

You could pour happiness all over some people, and they still wouldn't be very happy. Why? They're not big enough. If you're small—small in comprehension, small in the ability to think and wonder, small in appreciation—you won't enjoy any benefit, no matter how much prosperity or happiness or wisdom is poured out. Don't be like that. Learn to share. It's a glorious experience.

# Connecting Through Integrity

**Integrity is adhering** to the moral principles of life. Integrity is doing things with honor. Integrity is honesty. And integrity is the glue that holds relationships together.

Integrity says, “I wish to pay fair price for all value. Getting something for nothing makes nothing of me. Getting it cheap makes me cheap.”

In your enlightened self-interest, this is one of the better affirmations you could make: “I wish to pay fair price for every value. I wish to give for everything I receive.” This is self-interest, and it’s also integrity. Why would you want to pay for every value and give for everything you receive? If you have to pay, it will make something of you. By giving, you have the integrity not to take advantage of others.

You hear of greedy people boasting about the great deal they just got, how they negotiated the price down to nothing, how they manipulated the other person out of making a profit. Good integrity won’t let you do that. We all shop for the greatest value at the best price, but not at the expense of others. Not when your great deal cheated someone out of their profit.

You’ve got to pay a fair price for someone else to do a job for you. Because if you don’t, they’ll never work for you again. They don’t want to work long, hard hours to make you look good and not get compensated for it. And your integrity won’t allow that to happen. Pay an honest price for an honest value. Give something in return for what you’ve received. Make it good for everybody involved. Don’t be cheap, be fair. It’s your integrity that’s on the line, not just a few bucks. If you want something badly enough, you have to pay for it. Why? Because of what paying for it will make of you.

Here’s a great story about integrity. When the Apostle Paul was about to die, he

spoke about the reputation he wanted to leave behind. He made three powerful statements, and here's the first: "I fought a good fight." Let that be your reputation. You fought a good fight. You kept away the ideology that could taint your children. You fought every enemy that ever threatened you. You protected the children and the home front.

Let that be your reputation. It doesn't matter whether or not you won. You fought for your integrity. You fought for honesty. You fought for success. You didn't leave any energy unspent.

Apostle Paul's second statement was, "I finished the task." I stayed until it was done. They gave me a task, and I finished it. I didn't leave it half done. I never walked off the court in the third quarter. I stayed.

Statement number three: "I kept the faith." Boy, that's important. Keep faith with your family. Keep faith with your church. Keep faith with your enterprise.

In the group I belong to, we pledge our unwavering confidence in each other. Each of us pledges that to all of us. I wish for you to be in a group that has so much integrity. You need to be involved with people who pledge and keep your confidences.

Develop the reputation of integrity, so no matter where you go, you will represent your family well or represent your company well. Your goal is success in the *service* of others, not at the *expense* of others. At the end of your road, you want to be able to say, "I fought a good fight, I finished the job, and I kept the faith."

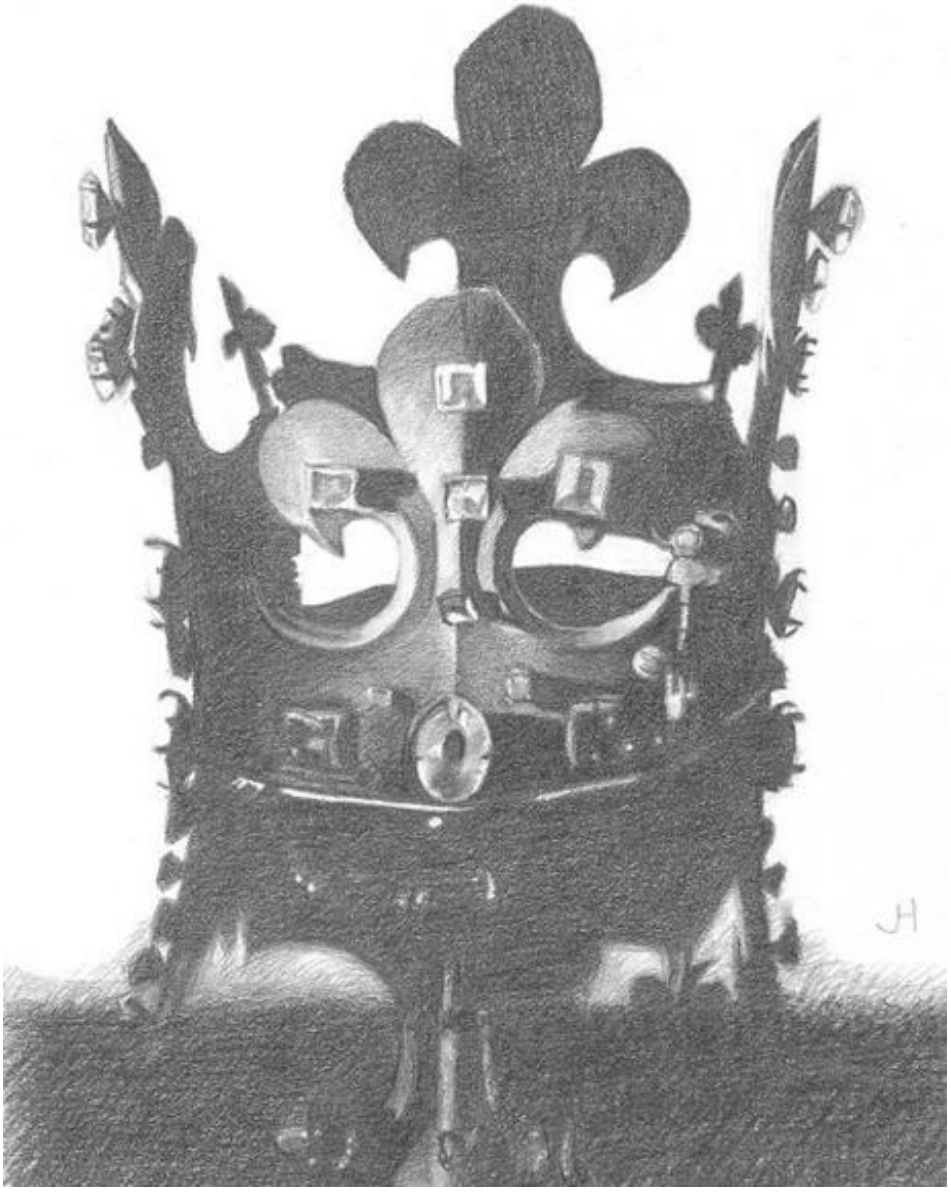
That last part, keeping the faith, is not that easy. The Lord's Prayer says, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Help us keep integrity in spite of the evil, in spite of going through the valley of the shadow of darkness. Deliver us from the fear that evil will dislodge us from our integrity.

Keep the faith of the office. Keep the faith of the company. Keep the faith of the family, of your spouse, and of your children. Keep the faith of the church. Keep the faith of the community.

Wherever you go, represent your family well. Wherever you go, represent your group well. Wherever you go, represent your colleagues well. Let part of the bond of friendship be that wherever each of you are, you will represent all of you well.

Apostle Paul finished his dying wish by saying, “I understand there’s a crown waiting for me… and I deserve it.” Wouldn’t it be great to say, “I hear they have a trophy for me. Guess what? I deserve it.” What a magnificent story to leave behind: I fought a good fight; I finished the job; I kept the faith; and I deserve the crown.

Others you associate with may not have the integrity to leave such a legacy behind, but you can’t make that your concern. Let other people lead small lives. You are destined for something better.



***Upon his death, the Apostle Paul knew that there was a crown waiting for him in the afterlife. He knew he would be rewarded for a life of integrity.***

# Teaching Integrity to Kids

*M***any people keep** pictures of their kids on their desks. Are those pictures supposed to be reminders of what the kids look like? Are they showing off their kids for whomever comes into the office? Perhaps, but there's an even more important reason why those pictures are there, or why they *should be* there. They're to remind us of what's at stake when we make the decisions that affect our integrity, and we make many of those decisions every day.

As a person of integrity yourself, you'll find it easy to teach integrity to your kids, and they in turn will find it easy to accept you as a teacher. This a great opportunity and also a supreme responsibility, because kids simply must be taught to tell the truth, to mean what they say and to say what they mean.

Native Americans of the Southwest had some interesting ideas about the skills they felt were important for their children to know. Hiding was one of them. In a desert environment, with seemingly nowhere at all to hide, the Native American children could literally disappear. And running was another very important ability. Beginning as young as six or seven years of age, children were taught to run long distances while holding a mouthful of water in order to develop breath control. Of course, both running and hiding were skills that could save the life of a Native American child, as well as preserve the security of the group.

Kids today must be taught skills that will save their lives. Integrity is one of those vitally important skills. Maybe it's hard to convince yourself of that. I heard a story of a man who flew propeller-driven anti-submarine planes for the Navy, piloting them on long flights over water. He told of an incident when a storm was coming up, and his crew was faced with a difficult navigational problem. Things became even more dire when the navigator revealed that he could not handle it. He had cheated his way through some parts of the training—but that training material didn't seem like it would ever be very useful. His attitude was not only harmful to his own integrity, it was potentially very harmful for those depending on him.

I can’t promise that it will ever save their lives, but nothing you will ever do is more important than teaching integrity to your children. There’s an old saying: “Those who can, do. And those who can’t, teach.” But you really can’t teach honesty unless you are honest yourself. You really can’t teach integrity unless you also live with integrity. It’s actually quite simple.

# The Gift of Honesty

*H***onesty is an** aspect of integrity that's often sorely neglected. There are many examples of how the lack of honesty is tolerated, and perhaps even encouraged, today. It used to be that you either had money or you didn't. When you bought something and the bill came, you had to pay it or there was an immediate problem. There were only two alternatives: you took care of your debts, or you were a thief. Some people would literally take their own lives if they couldn't honor their debts.

I'm sure we can all agree that's not exactly true any longer. Many people don't feel the same kind of personal responsibility about paying debts promptly. And today, of course, we can put off paying for our purchases as long as we can make the minimum payment on our credit cards.

We can avoid the pain that comes with having to shell out hard cash for something, the pain of maybe having to give something up in order to have this thing… we can put it off indefinitely as plastic debt. There's going to be a high rate of interest on that debt, and the balance due can quickly mount up, but most people don't even think about that. It's a price they're willing to pay in order to have exactly what they want right now.

There are many situations in which it's painful to tell the truth. It's painful in just the same way that paying a big, fat bill is painful. In fact, we even use the same words to talk about paying debts and telling the truth. We talk about somebody's word being "like money in the bank." We talk about being "held accountable," about "having to account for yourself," about being "called to account."

If you've done something that you're not really proud of, and you're called to account for it, what does that feel like? How do you handle it? What are your options when you've got to explain something that makes you uncomfortable? It's a bit like that moment of decision when the credit card bill comes every month. If you want to pay off the whole balance, there may be some pain and

sacrifice involved. You may have to grit your teeth. You know your life will be simpler in the long run, but it's going to hurt a little right now to pay off the new golf clubs, or the new computer, or the sixty-foot yacht. I don't actually know if you can put a yacht on a credit card, but I've certainly known people who would if they could.

Gritting your teeth and paying in full can hurt, so quite often it seems easier to delay the pain until next month. It's easier to float the truth of your finances off onto a little imaginary plastic flying carpet and sail it into the mailbox. Of course, it's more like a boomerang that's going to come around and hit you in the back of the head someday… but as Scarlett O'Hara once said, "I guess I'll think about that tomorrow. For the time being, it's gone with the wind."

Let me give you some good advice about avoiding a "bankrupt character." Pay your ethical debts. Keep your integrity in the black. Face ugly realities with the truth as soon as they appear. When you feel that temptation to hedge, resist it immediately. Don't treat it casually, treat it like a grease fire that you've got to put out before it burns your house down or fills the whole place up with so much smoke that you can't see where you're going anymore. Because that's exactly what will happen when your ethical capital runs out: you just won't be able to see where you're going, and no one will be able to find you.

Here's another way that being untruthful is like buying on credit: they're both addictive. At first, they are both so easy, they leave you wanting more. Any addictive behavior offers a simple, short-term escape from a problem, but that escape becomes more and more complicated as time goes on. Lying can get extremely complicated. You've got to have an outstanding memory to be a good liar. You always have to create more lies that are consistent with the one you told in the first place. I'm sure we have at some time been caught up in a little dilemma like that. Shakespeare had it right all along: "What a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive."

Maybe you think I'm being a little harsh here. Am I really saying that in every instance you've got to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? If somebody asks me, "How are you today?" I'm supposed to say, "Well, to be honest with you, I have a sore finger, last night I had a headache, and I've got to

admit that my foot hurts a little… ”?

No, that’s not what I mean. In fact, I think there are many times when some flexibility with the whole truth and nothing but the truth is called for, especially when it comes to tactfulness with others. Outright lying, however—planned lying, lying with an ulterior motive, lying for personal gain—is definitely something to be avoided.

So I want to make a clear distinction between what I call foolish lying, and lying that is downright evil and poisonous to the character.

Boasting, bombast, blarney, braggadocio—these are all the same thing. They’re always floating around in the atmosphere and they can affect you at any time, like catching a cold. They’re mostly harmless, unless you start building your relationships around them.

Some other guy scored the touchdown back in high school, but you’re watching the Super Bowl with your neighbor, and you say that you did it. That’s pretty harmless.

You don’t really know Joe, the president of XYZ corporation, you were just introduced to him one time, but the client you’re trying to impress has never even shaken hands with Joe, so here’s a chance to score some points. That’s pretty harmless, too.

You’re not really the creative director of your ad agency, you’re a copywriter, but the woman sitting beside you on the plane to Phoenix will never know the difference. It’s harmless—unless she walks into your office someday. It’s a small world, but you’ll chance it.

All of this is childish trash talk, and it’s usually spontaneous. It comes from succumbing to a moment of social pressure, and it probably won’t hurt with such casual acquaintances. But here’s a word of warning: don’t try to build long-term,

meaningful relationships with half-truths. They simply don’t provide a very good foundation.

In any case, this kind of bragging and blarney should be distinguished from what I consider real lying. Real lying isn’t like putting bills on the credit card; real lying is like theft. In my opinion, a key element in this kind of real lying is the presence of planning and premeditation.

If a supervisor in a corporation steals one of his subordinate’s ideas and submits that idea to the CEO as his own, that’s lying. And that kind of lying is theft. It’s not only theft of the subordinate’s idea, it’s stealing from the CEO, too—it’s stealing the CEO’s sense of reality. It’s creating an illusion. If someone falsifies an earnings report to inflate the price of a company’s stock, that’s deliberately creating a mirage in the minds of investors. In the real world, both these examples have taken place and, many times, lives and careers have been ruined.

It’s been my experience that those who engage in serious lying and unethical behavior get caught one way or the other. Usually, the people who are being deceived awaken from the illusions that have been foisted upon them. But even if this never happens, the criminal—and I don’t think that’s too strong a word—has to invest so much of himself into the illusion that his own sense of reality is eroded. By trying to delude other people, you end up losing your own sense of reality.

All of it—small-time lying and big-time deceit—comes from fear. Somebody is afraid the truth about themselves isn’t good enough, so they depart from the truth. Somebody fears they can’t really come up with ideas of their own, so they steal somebody else’s ideas. Or they fear their company isn’t really going to succeed, so they come up with a way to inflate the share prices. It’s really cowardice.

Honesty means fearing the temptation to misrepresent who you are or what you’ve done. It means fearing the loss of relationships that are so vital to your success. It means fearing the lack of trust you may elicit from others. So trust who you really are. Trust your ability to earn the respect of others. Pay whatever

price the truth costs. Pay that bill immediately, because in the long run, it’s a real bargain.

# Chapter Fourteen
## *Mastering the Negative*

*"Welcome all experiences. You'll never know which one is going to turn everything on. Don't put up walls. The walls that keep out disappointment also keep out happiness."*

*"Everyone has to get good at one of two things: planting in the spring or begging in the fall."*

*"There's no failure in pouring your heart and soul and energy into something that doesn't work. Rather, failure is not trying at all."*

*"Humans can turn nothing into something, pennies into fortune, disaster into success. The reason we can do such remarkable things is because we are remarkable."*

# Turning Your Life Around

**There wouldn't be** positive without negative. It's part of the life scenario. Ancient scripture says it best: "There's a time to laugh and a time to cry." You've got to become so sophisticated and well-educated that you don't laugh when it's time to cry. You've also got to learn to cry well. How are you going to identify with others if you don't cry with them? The negative side is very important, so don't ignore it. You need to let it be a part of the scenario.

In fact, you need to learn to master it. Negativity is not to be ignored, it's to be mastered. It makes us better than we are to wrestle with it. It makes us better than we are to acknowledge and fight tyranny that moves into vulnerable countries, ignorance that moves into your life, procrastination that robs you of your fortune, or poor health that's the legacy of neglecting your health disciplines. You've got to do battle with the enemies—those outside of you as well as those within. So learn how to handle the negative.

Negativity can actually be a powerful force for change. It plays a key role in the day that turns your life around. There are four stages to the day that turns your life around, and the first is disgust. Disgust is a negative emotion but it can have a very positive, motivating effect. Disgust says, "I've had it!" What an important day that could be.

I met a beautiful, accomplished, extraordinary woman in New York. She was the vice president of a company I did some work for. I got to know her, and I found out her story. She never went to high school or college. I said, "How did you get here?"

She said, "Well, when I was a young mother, I once asked my husband for ten dollars. And he said, 'What for?' Before that day was over, I decided I would never ask again. So I started looking for opportunities, taking classes, and putting myself through school. Now I'm a vice president, and I make a lot of money. I kept my promise, because I've never ever had to ask again." That was

her life-changing day, the day she said, “Enough is enough.”

The next stage in a life-changing day is decision. If you sat down today and made a list of changes you’ve decided to make, that list could furnish enough inspiration for the next five or ten years. What an inspiring day, the day you bring yourself to decide to change your life.

The third stage is desire, wanting that change badly enough. Sometimes desire waits for a trigger, waits for something to happen. It may be a movie, a seminar, a sermon, a book, a confrontation with an enemy, or a conversation with a friend who finally levels with you. Whatever the experience, it is so valuable.

Here’s my best advice: welcome all experiences. You’ll never know which one is going to turn your life around. Don’t put up walls. The walls that keep out disappointment also keep out happiness. Take down the walls. Go for the experience. Let it teach you.

The last stage of a life-changing day is resolve. Resolve says, “I will.” These are two of the most powerful words in the language.

The best definition of resolve I’ve ever heard came from a junior-high-school student in Foster City, California. I was addressing her class one day, and we were discussing some key words. I asked the kids, “Who can tell me what *resolve* means?” Some didn’t know the answer, and some tried to guess. The last answer I got was the best. This girl about two rows back says, “I think I know, Mr. Rohn. I think resolve means promising yourself you’ll never give up.” I said, “That’s the best definition I’ve ever heard.” She’s probably giving her own seminars somewhere today.

Promise yourself you’ll read the books until your skills change; you’ll go to seminars until you get a handle on what they’re teaching; you’ll practice until you develop the skills. Never give up until you’ve gotten what you want. Don’t miss the change to grow. Resolve that you’ll pay the price until you learn, change, grow, and become what you want to be. You’ll discover some of life’s

best treasures when you pay that price.

***There is a time to laugh and a time to cry. While laughter may be more desirable, it's important to learn to cry well, too. How can you identify with***

***people if you can't cry with them?***

# The Seasons of Life

**There are two** phrases I'd like you to ponder for a moment. The first is that life and business are like the changing seasons. That's one of the best ways to illustrate life: it's like the seasons that change. Here's the second phrase: you cannot change the seasons, but you can change yourself.

Now with those two key phrases in mind, let's turn to what I consider to be the four major lessons in life to learn.

The first lesson is this: learn how to handle the winters. They come regularly, right after autumn. Some are long, some are short, some are difficult, some are easy, but they always come right after autumn. That is never going to change.

There are all kinds of winters—the "winter" when you can't figure it out, the "winter" when everything seems to go haywire. One writer called it "the winter of discontent." There are economic winters, social winters, personal winters when your heart is smashed into a thousand pieces. Wintertime brings disappointment, and disappointment is common to all of us. So learn how to handle the winters.

You must learn how to handle the nights; they come right after days. You must learn how to handle difficulty; it always comes after opportunity. You must learn to handle recessions; they come right after expansions. That isn't going to change.

The big question is, what do you do about winters? You can't get rid of January simply by tearing it off the calendar. But here is what you can do: you can get stronger; you can get wiser; and you can get better. Make a note of that trio of words: *stronger, wiser, better.* The winters won't change, but *you* can.

Before I understood this, I used to wish it were summer when it was winter. When things were difficult, I used to wish they were easy. I didn't know any better. Then Mr. Shoaff gave me the answer from a part of his very unique philosophy when he said, "Don't wish it were easier, wish you were better. Don't wish for fewer problems, wish for more skills. Don't wish for less challenge, wish for more wisdom."

Here is the second major lesson in life: learn how to take advantage of the spring. Spring is opportunity. And spring always follows winter.

What a great place for spring—right after winter. If you were going to put it somewhere, that would be the place to put it. God is a genius.

Days follow nights. Opportunity follows difficulty. Expansion follows recession. And this all happens with regularity. You can count on it.

However, the mere arrival of spring is no sign that things are going to look good in the fall. You must do something with the spring. In fact, everyone has to get good at one of two things: planting in the spring or begging in the fall. So take advantage of the day, take advantage of the opportunity, and read every book you can get your hands on to learn how to take advantage of the spring.

Get busy quickly on your springs, your opportunities. There are just a handful of springs that have been handed to each of us. Life is brief, even at its longest. Whatever you are going to do with your life, get at it. Don't just let the seasons pass by.

The third major lesson in life is this: learn how to nourish and protect your crops all summer. Sure enough, as soon as you've planted, the busy bugs and noxious weeds are out to take things over. And here is the next bit of truth: they *will* take it, unless you prevent it.

There are two key phrases to consider with the third major lesson. The first is

“all good will be attacked.” Don’t press me for a reason. I was not in on some of the early decisions, so I don’t know why. I just know that it’s true. Let reality be your best beginning. Every garden will be invaded.

The second phrase is “all values must be defended.” Social values, political values, friendship values, business values—all must be defended. Every garden must be tended all summer. If you don’t develop this skill, you’ll never wind up with anything of value.

The fourth major lesson in life is this: learn how to reap in the fall without complaint. Take full responsibility for what happens to you. One of the highest forms of human maturity is accepting full responsibility.

Learn how to reap in the fall without apology if you have done well and without complaint if you have not. That’s being mature. I’m not saying it’s easy. I’m saying it’s the best way to be.

The seasons don’t work *for* you or *against* you. They just are what they are. They are guaranteed to come every year, bringing both the positive and the negative. So it’s up to you to remember the four major lessons in life, prepare for them, and make the most of everything they offer.

# What Is Failure?

**If success is** the steady progress toward your own personal goals, what is failure? Is failure working on a project that ends with poor results? No, of course not. Is failure launching a new product that fails miserably in the marketplace? No, of course not. Is failure doing the best you possibly can with your kids and then having them disappoint you in a very personal way? No, of course not.

There's no failure in pouring your heart, soul, and energy into something that doesn't work. Rather, failure is not trying at all. If success is the steady progress toward your own personal goals, then failure is no progress at all.

Success and failure are always linked together. Success is doing. Failure is not doing. It's that simple.

World-renowned author and management expert Tom Peters said, "There is only one way to be in serious trouble today and that is not to be trying, not to be failing, not to be stretching yourself."

Activity is a high priority in the life process. We need to try to get the maximum benefit out of what we have available—our resources, our skills, our knowledge, and our talents. Benjamin Disraeli, former Prime Minister of England, once said, "Nothing can resist a human will that will stake its very existence on its purpose." What a powerful set of words.

What is the formula for disaster? "Could, should, don't." Here's the formula for fortune: "Could, should, will."

A man says, "I will climb the mountain." People say, "It's too high. It's too difficult. It's too rocky. It's never been done before." The man says, "Hey, it's my mountain. I'll climb it. Pretty soon you'll see me either waving from the top

or dead on the side. I’m not coming back until I’ve done it.” That’s powerful.

There are several studies that show the greatest achievers aren’t those who fail the least. The greatest achievers are those least frightened of failure. They’re willing to take on the challenge without the guarantee of success. They have the desired end in sight, but they’re not sure when it will be or where it will be.

Although success and failure go hand-in-hand, many people have a problem with failure. They think it is a bad word, that it has a bad connotation. They don’t see it as a stepping stone. They see it as an end result. Quite often, success requires failure. Sometimes, it demands *many* failures. In every scientific discovery, there were dozens or hundreds of failures before one success. Without failure, opportunity cannot be created. Without failure, there can be no success.

# Bouncing Back with Self-Encouragement

*H***ere is a** familiar scenario for all of us: you have an exciting goal in mind, you've done your homework, you think you're amply prepared… and things just don't work out. You've probably had times when you thought you were doing what you were supposed to do, but you were misinformed. You thought you had it all laid out, and it just didn't work. You burned the midnight oil day after day, and it didn't help. You couldn't seem to change the end result.

These are the times when you have to be your own best cheerleader. And there are two ways to keep yourself encouraged.

Number one: take responsibility for the missed opportunity or the misrepresentation. Learn from the fact that, even though you made the best presentation possible, your client wanted it a different way. Be prepared for the letdowns that happen every so often. Know that this lost opportunity just sets you up to take advantage of the next one. Realize that you can make the necessary alterations next time. Make the changes that will make the difference. Study your mistakes, and learn from them. Instead of dwelling on your mistakes, simply acknowledge them. Remind yourself that you're smarter than your bank account leads you to believe.

Encouragement practice number two: remind yourself that you're bound to get better. Don't get down on yourself. Don't beat yourself up. It's the next opportunity that matters, not the last one. The last one matters only in that you must learn from it, but the next one gives you the opportunity to show that you *have* learned from your mistakes. You can do it better next time. You just have to practice. Keep trying until you've got it down pat.

If you figured out what went wrong last time, then you know how to make it right next time. If you figured out what it was in your presentation that didn't work, don't say those same words next time. If you figured out that the reason you didn't close the deal this time was because you didn't have all the facts and

figures in place, have all the facts and figures in place next time. Don’t beat yourself up for messing up. Pat yourself on the back for figuring it out.

You need to encourage yourself. You need to pump yourself up. You need to be your own cheerleader. Why? Because you can’t wait and hope that someone else will come along and cheer you up. You have to rely on yourself. You have to have faith in yourself and your ability to figure out what works and what doesn’t.

You have to encourage yourself with future successes. When you miss an opportunity, are unprepared for an opportunity, or suffer a setback while realizing your goals, you need to encourage yourself by immediately getting back into line.

There’s an old cowboy saying that goes, “Fall off a horse seven times, and you’re a real cowboy.” If you fall off a horse, get right back on. If you fall off track, get right back on. If you fall away from your disciplines, get right back to them. If you fall out of habit, get back into the habit.

It may be hard. It may be a bit frightening. But get back on the horse. Keep your resolve alive and active and well. Cheer yourself on to victory.

# Where the Miracle Begins

**Sometimes defeat is** the best beginning. Why? Well for one thing, if you're at the very bottom, there's only one way to go—up. But more importantly, if you're flat on your back, mentally and financially, you'll usually become sufficiently disgusted with yourself to reach inside and pull out miracles. If you're flat broke or flat miserable, you'll eventually become so disgusted that you'll pull out the basic essentials required to make everything better.

It's in the face of adversity that change begins. With enough disgust, desire, and determination to change your life, you'll start saying, "I've had it. Enough of this. No more. Never again!"

These words and these thoughts really rattle the power of time and fate and circumstance. And time, fate, and circumstance all get together and say, "Okay. Okay. We can see that we have no power here, we're facing some major resolve! This guy's not going to give up. He's had it. He's done with all this nonsense. We'd better step aside and let this guy get by!" Inspiration through disgust.

A lot of people don't change themselves. They wait for change. These poor unfortunate folks accept their defeats and wallow in their self-pity. Why? Because they refuse to take control of the situation. They refuse to take control of their life, their career, their health, their relationships, their finances. They refuse to take responsibility and get sufficiently disgusted to change it.

If you are disgusted, if you are in the need of some change, if this book finds you in the middle of a personal slump, then I have some words to offer. Your present failure is a temporary condition. You will rebound from failure just as surely as you gravitated into failure.

One time when I was in the midst of a bout of failure, somebody suggested that I tell myself, "This, too, shall pass." I firmly believe that you're only given as

much as you can handle—as much negativity, as much failure, as much disappointment. This, too, shall pass, if you grasp for a new beginning. You need to pull yourself up and move back into the world with a plan.

As foolish as it might sound, you should be thankful for your current limitations or failures. They are the building blocks from which to create greatness. You can go where you want to go. You can do what you want to do. You can become what you want to become. You can do it all, starting now, right where you are.

A father talks about his daughter. She's gone through some pretty tough times, and as he tells it, she's a pretty tough person. He has a unique way of describing his daughter's situation, though. While most parents would be frantic, even of their kids who are grown and gone, this man just smiles and says that his daughter is like a frog in a jar of cream.

She keeps kicking and kicking and kicking and pretty soon the cream will solidify into a lump of butter, and she'll be able to jump out. That's an interesting illustration of tenacity, because that's how it really works. You've got to keep trying and trying and trying. You've got to have enough resolve to do it until you succeed.

Some of the most inspiring success stories have started with failure. Longfellow started with failure. Michelangelo started with failure. Lincoln started with failure. Rod Serling wrote forty stories before he had one that was accepted. Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper that felt he had no talent. Richard Byrd crashed his plane on one of his first solo trips before he became one of the world's greatest explorers. And the success stories continue.

Be grateful for your adversity. At the same time, make sure that it's working for your future, not against you. Make your failures give birth to great opportunity, not prolonged agony. Make your disgust lead to inspiration, not depression. The world will willingly sit by and let you wallow in your sorrows… until you die broke and alone. The world will also step aside and let you by, once you decide that your present situation is only temporary. The doors will open once you decide to get back on your feet and make your mark.

The world doesn’t care whether you choose to stop here or to go on. So *you* have to care. In your own enlightened self-interest, give adventure a chance. Keep your eyes firmly set on achievement. Don’t settle for mere existence and self-pity. Make a commitment to excellence. And remember, it is your own personal challenge to use all your gifts, skills, talents, and knowledge to survive and succeed.

# Increasing Your Resiliency

**Resilience is the** ability an object has to return to its original form after being bent, stretched, or compressed. That's the dictionary's definition. In people, it's the ability to readily recover from illness, depression, or adversity.

In our lives, resilience specifically means being able to withstand setbacks, broken hearts and broken dreams, financial crisis, loss of loved ones, loss of enterprise, and loss of health. How would you ever handle it if you lost everything you had today? What would your next step be? How long would you be depressed and upset and angry? What would it take for you to pull yourself up and start all over again? How resilient are you? Could you handle it? Could you learn from all of your disappointments and start all over again? What would it take?

Number one, it would take a lot of self-discipline. It would take a lot of positive self-talk to muster up the energy to begin again. It would take a lot of concentration to block out the noise and the clutter of all the negative voices trying to get through—your negative voices as well as the negative voices of others around you. It would take a lot of discipline to balance the fear and anxiety with the knowledge that, if you did it once, you can do it all over again.

It would also take a lot of self-reliance. Whether or not your losses had anything to do with you, your future success has *everything* to do with you. It would take a lot of self-reliance to avoid the entanglements of blame. What's happened has happened. You would need to get on with your life and begin again.

It would take a lot of faith. It would take a lot of faith and trust in God to move ahead.

If you lost everything tomorrow, and you were gathering all the courage to try again, it would take a lot of self-appreciation. You need to know in your heart

and mind that you have the skills, the talent, and the strength to do it one more time.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity, no matter how large or how small. Say you lose one of your biggest clients. This client accounts for over twenty-five percent of your gross revenues. Losing this client is going to hurt, financially and emotionally. The first thing you need to do is figure out why you lost this business. What role did you play? In what way are you responsible? You can't just rant and rave, yelling and screaming at everyone in the office. Even if it was the wrongdoing of someone else, you can't behave like this because it's not professional. You'll lose the respect of your coworkers. And respect is hard to regain once you've lost it, whether it's the respect of trusted colleagues or your valuable support people. You have to approach the situation rationally and figure out how to bounce back from your loss.

You have to evaluate the situation and then begin a plan to recapture the lost business. Consider how you can increase your market share with other businesses. Maybe you can network with associates to bring in a similar client… or a larger one. You can't sit back and dwell on what's happened. You've got to get back into the marketplace and recapture what's been taken from you.

Perhaps your loss is a personal loss. Maybe you've recently been faced with the death of a loved one, a divorce, or the loss of a very special friendship. If your loss is a deeply personal one, you should approach the situation a little differently. You must be patient with yourself and give yourself time to grieve, mourn, and regroup.

The stages we go through in loss, be it death of a loved one, death of a relationship, or death of an enterprise, are beautifully defined in Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' book *On Death and Dying*. Whether the death is a literal one or a figurative one, the stages are the same: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. And only by going through these stages and reaching acceptance can we rebound and begin again.

It's said that children are more resilient than adults. Why? Maybe it's because

they don’t evaluate their current situation based on past experiences. They approach losses in a fresh, new way each time. In their minds, they deal with loss much better than adults.

Children who grow up in the unfortunate circumstances of poverty, abuse, or neglect and later become successful are known as *dandelion children.* If they can succeed and prosper amidst terrible conditions, they can grow anywhere. It’s important to be more like a dandelion child, to be able to grow and prosper and succeed despite our current conditions and losses… to be resilient.

Cultivating a resilient character turns what others would call failure into success. A resilient person won’t give up. A resilient person will, in spite of all obstacles and set-backs, keep doing it until everything is back on track.

In their book *The Resilient Self*, Steven and Sybil Wolin have studied resilience and have found seven key characteristics that comprise it.

Number one: resilience requires insight. You need to develop the ability to ask yourself tough questions and be honest with your answers. If you had something to do with your loss, be honest and accept responsibility for it.

Number two: resilience is independent. As a resilient person, you can count on yourself to bounce back into life.

Number three: although resilience is independent, it’s also tied to others. The more people you are responsible for, the greater your motivation to begin again.

Number four: resilience calls for initiative. You need to develop the ability to take charge of the situation or problem. You need to stand up and do whatever is necessary to recover.

Number five: resilience has an element of creativity. With resilience, you are able to look at a situation and creatively determine the best way out. You are

starting over with an enterprising approach.

Number six: a resilient person has humor. You may cry until you start laughing, but a sense of humor is important when turning your life around. You've got to take your goals seriously, and you've got to take yourself seriously, but you've also got to be able to laugh at yourself and your situation at times. Somebody may say, "You'll look back on this and laugh someday." Well, maybe today is the day to start.

Number seven: a resilient person has a strong sense of morality. Whatever you do to get back on your feet, whatever you do to bounce back into life, make sure it's moral. Make sure that your upcoming success is at the service of others, not at the expense of others. Success, if it is yours to keep, must be at the service of others.

The more obstacles you face and overcome, the more times you falter and get back on track, the more difficulties you struggle with and conquer… the more resiliency you will naturally develop. There is nothing that can hold you back if you are resilient.

# Facing the Enemies Within

**We're not born** with courage, but neither are we born with fear. Have you ever heard of a baby who's afraid of the dark? Of course not. She grew in the dark for nine months. She should be afraid of the light! Have you ever heard of a three- or four-year-old afraid of the dark? All the time. Where did she learn that fear? Who taught her that the dark outside is any different than the dark inside? It was probably her parents who decided she needed a night light. She probably thinks that she should be afraid of the dark if her parents insist that a light be kept on.

What about the other fears in life? Maybe some of your fears are brought on by your own experiences, by what someone has told you, by what you've read in the papers. Some fears are valid, like walking alone in a bad part of town at two o'clock in the morning. But once you learn to avoid that situation, you won't need to live in fear of it.

Fears, even the most basic ones, can totally destroy our ambitions. Fear can destroy fortunes. Fear can destroy relationships. Fear, if left unchecked, can destroy our lives. Fear is one of the many enemies lurking inside us.

Let me tell you about five of the other enemies we face from within. The first enemy that you've got to destroy before it destroys you is indifference. What a tragic disease this is. "Ho-hum, let it slide. I'll just drift along." Here's one problem with drifting: you can't drift your way to the top of the mountain.

The second enemy inside us all is indecision. Indecision is the thief of opportunity and enterprise. It will steal your chances for a better future. Take a sword to this enemy.

The third enemy inside is doubt. Sure, there's room for healthy skepticism. You can't believe everything. But you also can't let doubt take over. Many people doubt the past, doubt the future, doubt each other, doubt the government, doubt

the possibilities, and doubt the opportunities. Worst of all, they doubt themselves. I'm telling you, doubt will destroy your life and your chances of success. It will empty both your bank account and your heart. Doubt is an enemy. Go after it. Get rid of it.

The fourth enemy within is worry. We've all got to worry some. Just don't let it conquer you. Instead, let it alarm you.

Worry can be useful. If it's three o'clock in the morning, and your daughter is not home yet, you've got to worry. If you step off the curb and one of those zealot taxis is coming, you've got to worry.

But you can't let worry loose like a mad dog that drives you into a small corner. Here's what you've got to do with your worries: drive them into a small corner. Whatever is out to get you, you've got to get it. Whatever is pushing on you, you've got to push back.

The fifth interior enemy is over-caution. It is the timid approach to life. Timidity is not a virtue; it's an illness. If you let it go, it'll conquer you. Timid people don't get promoted. They don't advance and grow and become powerful in the marketplace. You've got to avoid over-caution.

Do battle with the enemy. Do battle with your fears. Build your courage to fight what's holding you back, what's keeping you from your goals and dreams. Be courageous in your life and in your pursuit of the things you want and the person you want to become.

# Ending Procrastination

*P***erseverance is about** as important to achievement as gasoline is to driving a car. Sure, there will be times when you feel like you're spinning your wheels, but you'll always get out of the rut with genuine perseverance. Without it, you won't even be able to start your engine.

The opposite of perseverance is procrastination. Perseverance means you never quit. Procrastination usually means you never get started, although the inability to finish something is also a form of procrastination.

Ask people why they procrastinate and you'll often hear something like this: "I'm a perfectionist. Everything has to be just right before I can get down to work. No distractions, not too much noise, no telephone calls interrupting me, and of course I have to be feeling well physically, too. I can't work when I have a headache."

The other end of procrastination—being unable to finish—also has a perfectionist explanation: "I'm just never satisfied. I'm my own harshest critic. If all the *i*'s aren't dotted and all the *t*'s aren't crossed, I just can't consider that I'm done. That's just the way I am, and I'll probably never change."

Do you see what's going on here? A fault is being turned into a virtue. The perfectionist is saying that his standards are just too high for this world. This fault-into-virtue syndrome is a common defense when people are called upon to discuss their weaknesses, but in the end it's just a very pious kind of excuse-making. It certainly doesn't have anything to do with what's really behind procrastination.

Remember, the basis of procrastination could be fear of failure. That's what perfectionism really is, once you take a hard look at it. What's the difference whether you're afraid of being less than perfect or afraid of anything else?

You’re still paralyzed by fear. What’s the difference whether you never start or never finish? You’re still stuck. You’re still going nowhere. You’re still overwhelmed by whatever task is before you. You’re still allowing yourself to be dominated by a negative vision of the future in which you see yourself being criticized, laughed at, punished, or ridden out of town on a rail. Of course, this negative vision of the future is really a mechanism that allows you to do nothing. It’s a very convenient mental tool.

I’m going to tell you how to overcome procrastination. I’m going to show you how to turn procrastination into perseverance, and if you do what I suggest, the process will be virtually painless. It involves using two very powerful principles that foster productivity and perseverance instead of passivity and procrastination.

The first principle is: break it down.

No matter what you’re trying to accomplish, whether it’s writing a book, climbing a mountain, or painting a house, the key to achievement is your ability to break down the task into manageable pieces and knock them off one at a time. Focus on accomplishing what’s right in front of you at this moment. Ignore what’s off in the distance someplace. Substitute real-time positive thinking for negative future visualization. That’s the first all-important technique for bringing an end to procrastination.

Suppose I were to ask you if you could write a four-hundred-page novel. If you’re like most people, that would sound like an impossible task. But suppose I ask you a different question. Suppose I ask if you can write a page and a quarter a day for one year. Do you think you could do it? Now the task is starting to seem more manageable. We’re breaking down the four-hundred-page book into bite-sized pieces. Even so, I suspect many people would still find the prospect intimidating. Do you know why? Writing a page and a quarter may not seem so bad, but you’re being asked to look ahead one whole year. When people start to do look that far ahead, many of them automatically go into a negative mode.

So let me formulate the idea of writing a book in yet another way. Let me break it down even more.

Suppose I were to ask you: can you fill up a page and a quarter with words—not for a year, not for a month, not even for a week, but just *today?* Don't look any further ahead than that. I believe most people would confidently declare that they could accomplish that. Of course, these would be the same people who feel totally incapable of writing a whole book.

If I said the same thing to those people tomorrow—if I told them, I don't want you to look back, and I don't want you to look ahead, I just want you to fill up a page and a quarter this very day—do you think they could do it?

One day at a time. We've all heard that phrase. That's what we're doing here. We're breaking down the time required for a major task into one-day segments, and we're breaking down the work involved in writing a four-hundred-page book into page-and-a-quarter increments.

Keep this up for one year, and you'll write the book. Discipline yourself to look neither forward nor backward, and you can accomplish things you never thought you could possibly do.

One beauty of this technique is the fact that you can really take it to extremes if you have to. If writing a page and a quarter during one day still seems too much for you, break it down even more. Try to write three sentences in the next hour. Don't look any further ahead than that. Come up with a way of looking at the task that seems manageable.

Then all you have to do is persevere. Procrastination won't be a problem, because the task is now so small that fear won't kick in.

And it all begins with those three words: *break it down.*

My second technique for defeating procrastination is also only three words long. The three words are: *write it down.* We know how important writing is to goal setting. The writing you'll do for beating procrastination is very similar. Instead

of focusing on the future, however, you're now going to be writing about the present just as you experience it every day. Instead of describing the things you want to do or the places you want to go, you're going to describe what you actually do with your time, and you're going to keep a written record of the places you actually go.

In other words, you're going to keep a diary of your activities. And you're going to be amazed by the distractions, detours, and downright wastes of time you engage in during the course of a day. All of these get in the way of achieving your goals. For many people, it's almost like they planned it that way, and maybe at some unconscious level they did. The great thing about keeping a time diary is that it brings all this out in the open. It forces you to see what you're actually doing… and what you're *not* doing.

The time diary doesn't have to be anything elaborate. Just buy a little spiral notebook that you can easily carry in your pocket. When you go to lunch, when you drive across town, when you go to the dry cleaners, when you spend some time shooting the breeze at the copying machine, make a quick note of the time you began the activity and the time it ends. Try to make this notation as soon as possible; if it's inconvenient to do it immediately, you can do it later. But you should make an entry in your time diary at least once every thirty minutes, and you should keep this up for at least a week.

What else do you have to do to gain the benefits of this extremely powerful productivity technique? Nothing. You don't have to do anything else at all. It's just a process for making yourself aware of how you actually spend your time. You will naturally and effortlessly begin to reorganize your life. Perhaps that seems like too much to believe, but it's true. When you're forced to write down the fact that you hung out at the coffee machine for fifteen minutes today, you'll think twice about doing that again tomorrow. When you've got to put in it writing that you worked on an important project for thirty minutes today and then took a break to read the newspaper, you'll persevere a little longer on the project tomorrow and forget about the newspaper. Just try keeping a time diary for one week. You'll see how it can revolutionize your ability to focus and achieve your goals.

Break it down. Write it down. These two techniques are very straightforward. But don’t let that fool you: these are powerful and effective productivity techniques. This is how you put an end to procrastination. This is how you get yourself started.

# Doing the Remarkable

**When it comes** to meeting and conquering the negativity in your life, here is a key question: what can you do, starting today, that will make a difference? That's a good question. What can you do during economic chaos? What can you do when everything has gone wrong? What can you do when you've run out of money, when you don't feel well and it's all gone sour? What can you do?

Let me give you the broad answer first. You can do the most remarkable things, no matter what happens. People can do incredible things, unbelievable things, despite the most impossible or disastrous circumstances.

Even kids can do remarkable things—that is, if they have remarkable things to do. I have also found that if they don't have remarkable things to do, there's no telling *what* they'll do.

Here is why humans can do remarkable things: because they *are* remarkable. Humans are different than any other creation. When a dog starts with weeds, he winds up with weeds. And the reason is because he's a dog. But that's not true with human beings. Humans can turn weeds into gardens.

Humans can turn nothing into something, pennies into fortune, disaster into success. And the reason they can do such remarkable things is because they are remarkable. Try reaching down inside of yourself; you'll come up with some more of those remarkable human gifts. They're there, waiting to be discovered and employed.

With those gifts, you can change anything for yourself that you wish to change. And I challenge you do that because you *can* change. If you don't like how something is going for you, change it. If something isn't enough, change it. If something doesn't suit you, change it. If something doesn't please you, change it. You don't ever have to be the same after today. If you don't like your present

address, change it—you're not a tree!

If there is one thing to get excited about, it's your ability to make yourself do the necessary things, to get a desired result, to build the negative into success. That's true excitement.

# Chapter Fifteen
# *Enjoying True Success*

*"When you start responding instead of reacting to life, life will start responding to you."*

*"What is the measure of success? Results. All life asks is that we make measurable progress in reasonable time."*

*"The things that are easy to do are also easy not to do. That's the difference between success and failure, between daydreams and ambitions."*

*"Dreams are a projection of the kind of life you want to lead. When you allow your dreams to pull you forward, they unleash a creative force that can overpower everything in your way."*

# A Practical Definition

*W***illiam James, one** of the most notable philosophers and psychologists in our history, is the founder of a philosophy called *pragmatism.* To be pragmatic is to be practical… to test the validity of a concept by its practical results, to actually question something and rate its usefulness by what it can do for you, to think a method of doing something and figure out if it's even worth your while.

One of the issues Mr. James dealt with in his lifetime was, "What does it mean to be a success, a significant person?" After years of pondering this question, he described success as a combination of two things. First, success is an inner ideal that is courageously and persistently followed. And second, success is outer achievement related to that ideal.

Let's consider the first one: success is an inner ideal that is courageously and persistently followed. I take that to mean defining a goal and having the resolve to complete it, no matter what.

William James's second part to attaining success dealt with the outer achievement related to the inner ideal.

You need both aspects to really be a success, but what Dr. James realized about his philosophy of success was that the first part is, indeed, more important that the second. As long as you are working toward your inner goal, success is possible. Once you give up on your inner vision, you can never become successful.

Maybe the person who has been working on a project for ten years can be successful in his own right—if he is honestly working toward it, doing everything to make himself worthy of reaching the dream, and really happy with where he is. Then maybe he is a success. It's a personal thing. What matters most is proceeding one step at a time for however long it takes.

What evidence of progress can be seen when you accomplish your goals one step at a time? You'll start to see things change around you. They won't be major things, just little, everyday things. These are things you may not even notice unless you are paying attention.

If you're one of those who'd rather stay up late and get up late—and your workplace doesn't fit this schedule—and you roll out of bed cursing the alarm clock every morning, maybe you could start with the little change of going to bed half an hour earlier than normal. You can't train your body overnight, but it won't be long before you find yourself jumping out of bed in a better mood. Your day will start better, you'll get more done, and you'll find out that the people around you who caused you problems aren't so hard to work with after all. It all starts by making one little change, and adding to it every day.

You see, you can't change what's going on around you without first changing what's going on within you. When you start changing how you think, how you act, how you treat others, how you treat yourself…when you start responding to life—instead of reacting to it—life will start responding to you. You'll soon enjoy the first aspect of success, taking action on an inner ideal. And the second aspect, outward achievement, won't be far behind.

# Developing Your Own Model

**Success is a** very personal thing. For some people it means money; for others, love; and still others, happiness. That's why you need to define *success* for yourself. Otherwise, how will you know whether or not you've achieved it?

Forming your own definition of success takes a combination of philosophies and ideologies. You need the mental food and exercises that others provide. You need to open your mind to different alternatives. You need to learn to appreciate the other side of the debate so you can strengthen and defend your own views.

You've got to listen to a variety of speakers and read a variety of books. No one speaker or one book has all the answers for you. You need a variety of influences. You need a variety of books in your library. You need a variety of voices.

And here's what else you need. You need a variety of perspectives. Personal points-of-view can be so valuable. Somebody says, "Have you seen it from this perspective?" And you haven't, so you step over there to where they are and look at things from their point-of-view. You can then say, "My gosh, I never thought about it from this perspective. It's so different. No wonder you think the way you do!"

Take advantage of all that's available in terms of mental food and mental exercise. Always be eager to learn. No matter how far along you are in your journey, no matter where you are in your success, keep that eagerness to learn. Gather up as much knowledge as you can. And then what? Debate it. Put it all on the table and look at it. Dissect it. Turn it around and stare at it. Ask questions. Make statements. Don't take it for granted that one person has all the answers you're looking for. Take that person's knowledge, but don't take it as the *only* knowledge.

Make sure that what you finally do is a product of your own conclusion. That's what's valuable. Don't just go do what someone says without debating it. Consider the source, and then do it your way.

Defining your success is a process unique to each and every one of us. Gather all the knowledge that you can. Then develop your approach based on your own conclusions. You can't fall for other people's philosophies, because they may not be right. As you collect knowledge, you must sort through it and find out what's valuable. Then you can develop your own philosophy of success. And your own philosophy will become the most valuable of your guidance systems: your guiding light.

# Results: The Measure of Success

**What is the** measure of success? How do you know if you're successful… *really* successful? What if your success is vastly different from someone else's success?

Here's your measure: results. You need to be making measurable progress in reasonable time. All life asks is that we make measurable progress in reasonable time. As parents, managers, and coworkers, we've got to be reasonable with time.

You can't ask somebody every five minutes, "How are you doing now?" He will say, "I haven't left the building yet. Give me a break." Five minutes is too soon to ask. Five years is too late to ask. So what is a reasonable time to ask for results? Here's the first time: at the end of the day. You can't let more than a day go by without getting some things done, writing some letters, having a conversation with your son or daughter. You can't postpone the important things more than a day.

When you're on the job, there are some things you've got to get done within a day. You've got to make some calls within a day. In your personal life, you've got to get your health disciplines done within a day. You can't carry them over. You can't say, "Well, I'll eat nine apples ten days from now." No, it's an apple a day. If it is five minutes to midnight and you haven't gotten your apple in yet, munch away. Get it done.

Here's the next time to ask for results: at the end of the week. Some things must be done within a week. A week is a good chunk of time. You can't let more than a week go by without checking to see how you're doing.

Here's one of the better phrases to live by: success is a numbers game. You've got to check the numbers.

There are three important questions to ask yourself in this area. Here's number one: "How much money have I saved and invested during my career?"

Question number two: "In the last ninety days, how many books have I read?" You need books to invest in the miracle of your mind, to give you ideas to ponder, to fashion your future with meticulous care. How many books have you read in the last ninety days?

Question number three: "In the last six months, how many classes have I taken to improve my skills?" What effort have you made to develop new skills for your future and your family? You've got to make progress in a reasonable amount of time. You've got to take a look at the numbers and see how you're doing. It's the name of the game.

The big gambling houses In Las Vegas put together a financial statement several times a day to see where they are. Why? So much is happening. If you don't learn when to shut down some of those tables, you'll be out of business by midnight. You can't wait until midnight. You can't wait until tomorrow. Tomorrow is too late.

What is your cholesterol count? You don't know and you don't care? You've just got your fingers crossed for the future? You'd better start writing your will now.

Be responsible for the set of your own sail. Leave it to no one else but yourself. And learn to refine these numbers for yourself. How many pounds overweight should you be at age fifty? John says, "Well, I've got big bones." We'll give you ten pounds for big bones, but, hey, twenty-five or thirty pounds and we've got to turn on the caution light.

I'm asking you to take charge of your own life. Be responsible for your own life. Be responsible for your own retirement. Be responsible for your own health. Don't just drift along with those others who don't care to be responsible about their numbers.

Some of these numbers have got to be coming down, like your cholesterol. Some of these numbers have got to be going up, like the number of books in your library. Don’t be satisfied until you’ve looked at all your own numbers. And, be responsible. Don’t wait for somebody to come along. What if nobody comes along? You’ve got to be responsible yourself.

Results are the name of the game. Check the numbers. Don’t be satisfied with anything less than the best of numbers.

Here’s an interesting story. Jesus walked along one day and saw a fig tree. And as Jesus looked suspiciously at this fig tree, He said to His disciples, “Does that fig tree have any figs?” Do you think that’s an important question? For a fig tree, it’s an all-important question. Does it have any figs?

His disciples said, “No, sir. Of all the trees you were to pick, this particular fig tree does not have any figs.” The story says that Jesus then lost His cool. This is one of the few times He ever became angry. He did it, I think, to make a point. A fig tree without figs is simply unacceptable. Jesus said, “If that fig tree doesn’t have any figs, I suggest you promptly take it out!” Then He added, “Why let it take up the ground?”

You’ve got to take a good look at yourself every once in a while and say, “Today, I’m counting the figs!” Why? It’s the name of the game. You need results to be a success.

# Why Success Can Be Easy

**Don't wish for** a better wind. The key is to wish for the wisdom to set a better sail. Utilize whatever wind that blows to take you where you want to go. That is the philosophy of success I picked up at the age of twenty-five, and it revolutionized my whole life. Here's what I found: I found it was easy. I was a millionaire at the age of thirty-one, and I found it wasn't difficult at all.

Now, here's my definition of *easy:* something I could do. I figure, if it's something you can do, it's easy. But here's a little qualification: I worked hard at it. I made sure my disciplines were in line. I made sure my habits were good. I made sure I did all that I could. I found something that I could do, but I worked hard at it. I got up early and stayed up late and worked hard from age twenty-five to thirty-one. But what I did was easy, meaning it was something I could do.

"Well, Mr. Rohn," you say, "if it was so easy, why during those six years didn't those other people around you get rich?" Here's why. It's also easy *not* to do. How else would you describe it? It's easy to keep doing the things that don't work. It's easy to keep the bad habits. It's easy not to develop the disciplines. It's easy not to. So why did I get rich and they didn't?

It all comes down to a philosophical phrase: the things that are easy to do are also easy *not* to do. That's the difference between success and failure, between daydreams and ambitions.

Here's the key formula for success: a few disciplines practiced every day. Those disciplines have to be well-thought out. What should you spend your time doing? You don't want to waste your time on things that aren't going to matter. But a few simple disciplines can change your whole economic future. A few simple disciplines can change your future with your family, your business, your enterprise, your career. Success is a few simple habits—good habits—repeated every day.

Here’s the formula for failure: errors in judgment repeated every day. All you’ve got to do is have a few errors in your judgment and repeat them every day, and I’m telling you, they’ll spin out of control in ten years. You’ll end up driving what you don’t want to drive. You’ll be wearing what you don’t want to wear. You’ll be living where you don’t want to live. You’ll be earning what you don’t want to earn. A few errors every day, a few bad habits, can be disastrous.

It’s easy to repeat an error in judgment because failure doesn’t fall at the end of the first day. Bad habits don’t show their horrible results at the end of the first day, or the first week, or even the first month. It’s easy to get fooled. If disaster occurred at the end of the first week, we’d change our philosophy right away. But the slide downward is subtle. You get you a little off course, and you keep drifting until all of a sudden, you’re caught *way* off course.

You’ve got the choice right now of one of two “easies.” Easy to do, or easy *not* to do. I can tell you in one sentence how I got rich by the time I was thirty-one: I did not neglect to do the easy things I *could* do for six years. That’s the key. I found something easy I could do that led to fortune, and I did not neglect to do it.

The major reason for not having more of what you want in America—more health, more money, more power, more influence, more everything—the major reason is simple neglect. If you don’t take care of neglect, it becomes an infection. And then it becomes a disease.

So if you’re in the habit of “not doing it,” get in the habit of “doing it.” Do all it takes, and before you know it, success will be yours for the having.

# From Wishes to Desires

**To a lot** of people, ambition is kind of a mystery. The dictionary says it is "an eager desire for distinction, power or fame." But what does that really mean? Let's start with the word *eager.* All by itself, *eager* is kind of exciting. Kids are eager for their birthday parties. They expect to be the center of attention, to get lots of presents, to eat too much For that matter, I guess grown-ups are eager for birthdays, too… unless, of course, they're embarrassed that the candles on the cake outnumber their achievements! We can be eager to see a ball game, eager to see our kids in a dance recital, eager to see an old friend, eager to shop for a new car. *Eager* sounds like a lot of fun!

But do you ever hear people say they are "*eager* to live a better life," "*eager* to have a better family," "*eager* to make a lot of money?" Probably not. And that's a problem, because as I see it, living a better life, having a better family, and making a lot of money takes an eager desire.

We have the remarkable ability to get exactly what we must have. But there is a difference between *wishes* and *desires.* We've all heard people say, "Oh, I wish I could just drop five pounds. I want to be a little lighter." We've probably said it ourselves. Even though we may *wish* we could breathe a little easier in our clothing, we have to have the *desire* to exercise a little more and eat a little less. The "I wish I could lose weight" has to become "I have the eager desire to lose weight."

I'm also sure you've heard people talk about wishing they had more money to pay the bills, or take a vacation, or just take a little pressure out of their lives. But before their lifestyle can change, their wishes need to become desires. If they really desired change, they wouldn't spend their evenings just watching TV and wishing they were doing something more.

The backbone of an eager desire to change is discipline. True ambition is disciplined, eager desire. It's that little part within us that says "If I want to be

ready for that meeting tomorrow, I need to finish preparing for it today." "If I want to make sure I can pay for my kids' college education, I need to start saving today." "If I want a better life tomorrow, I need to start working on it today."

Ambition is a minute-by-minute, day-by-day mentality. To have the ambition to work toward a better family life, a newer car, a bigger house, a financially secure future… you have to live it every moment.

# Fortifying Your Ambition

**Ambition is an** eager desire to succeed. Unfortunately, this formula doesn't always work in reverse. Desire does not always translate into ambition. *Desire* is what you want for yourself: a bigger house, a better car, a fatter bank account, a better life. *Ambition* is how you get them.

Desire is sometimes healthy and sometimes unhealthy. Desire might lead you to want the tallest building in town. The destructive side of desire might urge you to tear down all of the other buildings. I guess that's one way to do it. You might get away with tearing down the first one, and maybe the second. But in your desire to tear them all down, sooner or later you'll run into some guy standing in front of his building saying, "I'm on to you… get out of here." And pretty soon, you're no longer known as a builder. You're known as a destroyer.

The second way to have the tallest building in town is to go through all of the steps to get there—you see it, dream it, plan it, put your team on it, and work on it. My advice is to do it right. Have the ambition to be the owner of the tallest building in town, and go through all of the right steps to get there. If you really want it, if you have the skills to do it and the patience to weather all of the storms, your ambition will lead you there.

Having the ambition to do what it takes to get you where you want to go is good. Ambition is creative and constructive. Ambition is an expression. It's something inside of you that you want to express in a positive way.

I'm sure you have dreams of accomplishing great things. Are you ambitious enough to realize these dreams? Are your dreams strong enough to pull you toward your future? Are they vivid enough to enable you to see the end result? Are they worthy of doing what you need to do until you get there? What are your reasons for creating these dreams?

Reasons vary from person to person. I'll bet that if you did a little soul-searching, you could come up with a fairly strong list of reasons. Why is it so important to achieve these dreams? What are you trying to express? These reasons for accomplishing great things are different for everybody.

There are some uniquely personal reasons. Some people do well because of the recognition. Some do well because of the way it makes them feel. They love the feeling of being a winner. And that is one of the best reasons.

I have some millionaire friends who keep working ten to twelve hours a day making more millions. They don't do it because they need the money. They do it because of the joy, the pleasure, the satisfaction that comes to them from being a constant winner. To them, money is not their main drive. Rather, it's the journey. It's what they are becoming. They are always striving to become more.

Once in while, I hear someone say, "If I had a million dollars, I'd never work another day in my life." Hey, that's probably why the good Lord sees to it that he doesn't get his million. Because he would just quit.

Family is another source of motivation for doing well. Some people do extremely well because of other people. And that's a powerful reason. Sometimes we will do something for someone else that we would not do for ourselves.

I know a woman who was getting back on track from financial disaster. Even though she didn't have much of anything left, her primary motivator was to keep her daughter in private school. It was an expensive school, one of the best in the country. Although her goal was to financially surpass where she was before her economic fall, her main reason to work all of those extra hours was to give her little girl the best possible education. As you can well imagine, wanting to do something for someone else led her to all sorts of other accomplishments, too.

What are your reasons for doing well? What's at the core of your quest? What is the power behind your ambition? Think about it. Jot it down. Do some soul-

searching. Define your reasons so they will work better for you.

# A Foundation of Confidence

**Confidence is such** an important component of success. It's really a form of optimism, a certainty that things are going to turn out the way you want and that you have the power to make it happen.

The root of the word *confidence* is *confide. Confide* is a compound word derived from the Latin language, meaning "with" (*con*) and "trust" or "faith" (*fide*). When someone is sincere in a business deal, when an offer is made and real money stands behind it, when someone makes a promise and means to keep it, we call it a *"bona fide* offer," a good faith offer. Music played on a top-of-the-line audio system is said to be "high fidelity," meaning faithful to the sounds made by the live performer and instruments at the time and place of the recording. At Christmas time, one of the most popular carols is *"Adeste Fideles,"* which celebrates the confidence and good faith of the season.

Confidence has to do with inspiring trust, which you can only do by having faith in other people. Confidence enables you to walk into a room full of strangers and talk with anyone without fear. Confidence gives you poise and bearing. It makes the strangers in that room think, "Here is someone I not only *can* talk to, here's someone I *want* to talk to."

An ill-at-ease person makes everyone around him feel ill at ease. Feeling comfortable makes others feel at ease, and they share your confidence. It's confidence that makes people want to believe what you say to them, to accept you as you present yourself.

There are three steps you need to take in order to build your confidence to this level. First, you must uncover your own confidence in who you are and how you were raised. Second, you must derive confidence from the formal education and training you've received from teachers and mentors. And third, you must draw confidence from the challenges and experiences you've had in all areas of your life, as well as the success you've had in dealing with them.

Let’s consider each of these areas one by one.

First, to grow up at all means that you have the vital equipment necessary to survive in this tough, technical, highly developed world of ours. Your parents taught you basic skills: how to walk, how to eat, what to eat, and perhaps good manners. You naturally have a certain amount of physical strength and mental capacity.

Maybe you aren’t a rocket scientist, but you know how to fix a lawn mower (something many rocket scientists cannot do). Maybe you don’t have a degree in accounting, but you can tell a joke so well that a whole room will roar with laughter. What are your strong points? They have to be there or you wouldn’t have made it this far.

Chances are you not only have a personal strength, gift, or talent, but it’s something you take so much for granted that you don’t realize what it’s worth. This strength isn’t something that’s difficult for you; rather, it’s something that comes easy. And just because it’s easy for you to cut true with a crosscut saw doesn’t mean that it’s easy for everybody. Your talent is what you take for granted. It’s likely that you don’t value it enough. That’s because talent isn’t hard work, it’s a snap!

The second step that builds your confidence is to consider all the education and training you’ve received. If you grew up in this country, you more than likely have a high-school education. Here’s another case of, “Almost everybody’s got it, and I’ve got it, so why should I derive confidence from my diploma?” Well, first of all, *not* everybody’s got that diploma. Second of all, this is one of the few countries in the world where most everyone can read and write and do math. In the backwoods of nowhere, that would probably qualify you to be the president, the king, or the big boss. So, boss, don’t sell that sheepskin short. You wouldn’t think of it as nothing if you didn’t have one.

Think about the teachers and mentors you’re had over the years. They must have seen something special in you or you wouldn’t be here. And what they saw was likely reflected back to you in their words, their comments, their praise. If you

can pinpoint what that something is, you will see yourself through their eyes. If they didn’t see that you were capable of running that machine, taking that order, landing that account, or making that sale, then they would not have bothered to teach you in the first place. They had confidence in abilities that you may not have known you had. And they shared that confidence with you.

The third and last step that builds your confidence is to draw upon the rich bank of your own experience. You may have traveled around the world, met many people, and learned many languages. Or you may have experienced life in the same place among people you’ve always known. You know them in a way that someone constantly on the move, forever dealing with new faces and new friends, can never know another person. That’s your big bankroll, and that’s where you can learn and gain confidence.

You have made it this far in life, and the world is a better place because of you. I’m confident of that. And I have confidence in you. You have the power to make all your dreams come true.

# Achieving Your Dreams

*W***hile most people** spend most of their lives struggling to earn a living, a much smaller number seem to have everything going their way. Instead of just earning a living, the smaller group is busily working at building and enjoying a fortune. Everything just seems to work out for them. And here sits the much larger group, wondering how life can be so unfair, so complicated and unjust. What's the major difference between the little group with so much and the larger group with so little?

Despite all of the factors that affect our lives—like the kind of parents we have, the schools we attended, the part of the country we grew up in—none has as much potential power for affecting our futures as our ability to dream.

Dreams are a projection of the kind of life you want to lead. Dreams can drive you. Dreams can make you skip over obstacles. When you allow your dreams to pull you, they unleash a creative force that can overpower any obstacle in your path. To unleash this power, though, your dreams must be well-defined. A fuzzy future has little pulling power. Well-defined dreams are not fuzzy. Wishes are fuzzy. To really achieve your dreams, to really have your future plans pull you forward, your dreams must be vivid.

If you've ever hiked a fourteen thousand-foot peak in the Rocky Mountains, one thought has surely come to mind: "How did the settlers of this country do it?" How did they get from the East Coast to the West Coast? Carrying one day's supply of food and water is hard enough. Can you imagine hauling all of your worldly goods with you… mile after mile, day after day, month after month? These people had big dreams. They had ambition. They didn't focus on the hardship of getting up the mountain.

In their minds, they were already on the other side—their bodies just hadn't gotten them there yet! Despite all of their pains and struggles, all of the births and deaths along the way, those who made it to the other side had a single

vision: to reach the land of continuous sunshine and extraordinary wealth. To start over where anything and everything was possible. Their dreams were stronger than the obstacles in their way.

You’ve got to be a dreamer. You’ve got to envision the future. You’ve got to see California while you’re climbing fourteen-thousand-foot peaks. You’ve got to see the finish line while you’re running the race. You’ve got to hear the cheers when you’re in the middle of a monster project. And you’ve got to be willing to put yourself through the paces of doing the uncomfortable until it becomes comfortable. Because that’s how you realize your dreams.

Our great country was founded on dreams. They’ve always been important. Dreams are what caused thousands of people to leave their homes and families and start over in a land where anything was possible. To this day, dreams continue to bring people to our land of opportunity, a country where you can start with little and end up with a lot.

Don’t you sometimes wonder why so many immigrants who come to America can build a new life and even a fortune while many of the people who were born here are barely surviving? They have a dream. And so should you. Your success depends on it.

***If you've ever hiked a fourteen thousand-foot peak in the Rocky Mountains, one thought has surely come to mind: "How did the settlers of this country do it?"***

# *About the Author*

For more than 45 years, **Jim Rohn** honed his craft like a skilled artist, helping people the world over sculpt life strategies that expanded their imagination of what is possible. Those who had the privilege of hearing him speak can attest to the elegance and common sense of his material. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential thinkers of our time. Jim authored countless books and audio and video programs, and helped motivate and shape an entire generation of personal-development trainers and hundreds of executives from America's top corporations. In 2004, he was awarded the Masters of Influence Award from the National Speakers Association. You are invited to join a community of Jim Rohn fans on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/OfficialJimRohn

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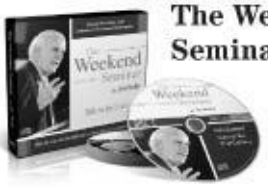

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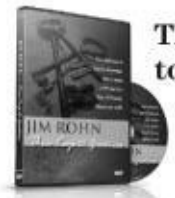

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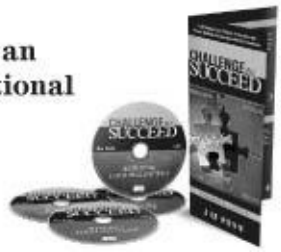

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