

Unlock Your Potential  
with Healthy  
Habits

# HABITS

The DNA of Success



DR DAVID MOLAPO  
& ALVIN FREDERICKS

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## DEDICATION

*This book is dedicated to all those men and women who are committed to making a difference; to those who go beyond the norm and are the true history makers – we salute you.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A project's success relies heavily on teamwork. Sincere appreciation to:

From Dr David Molapo

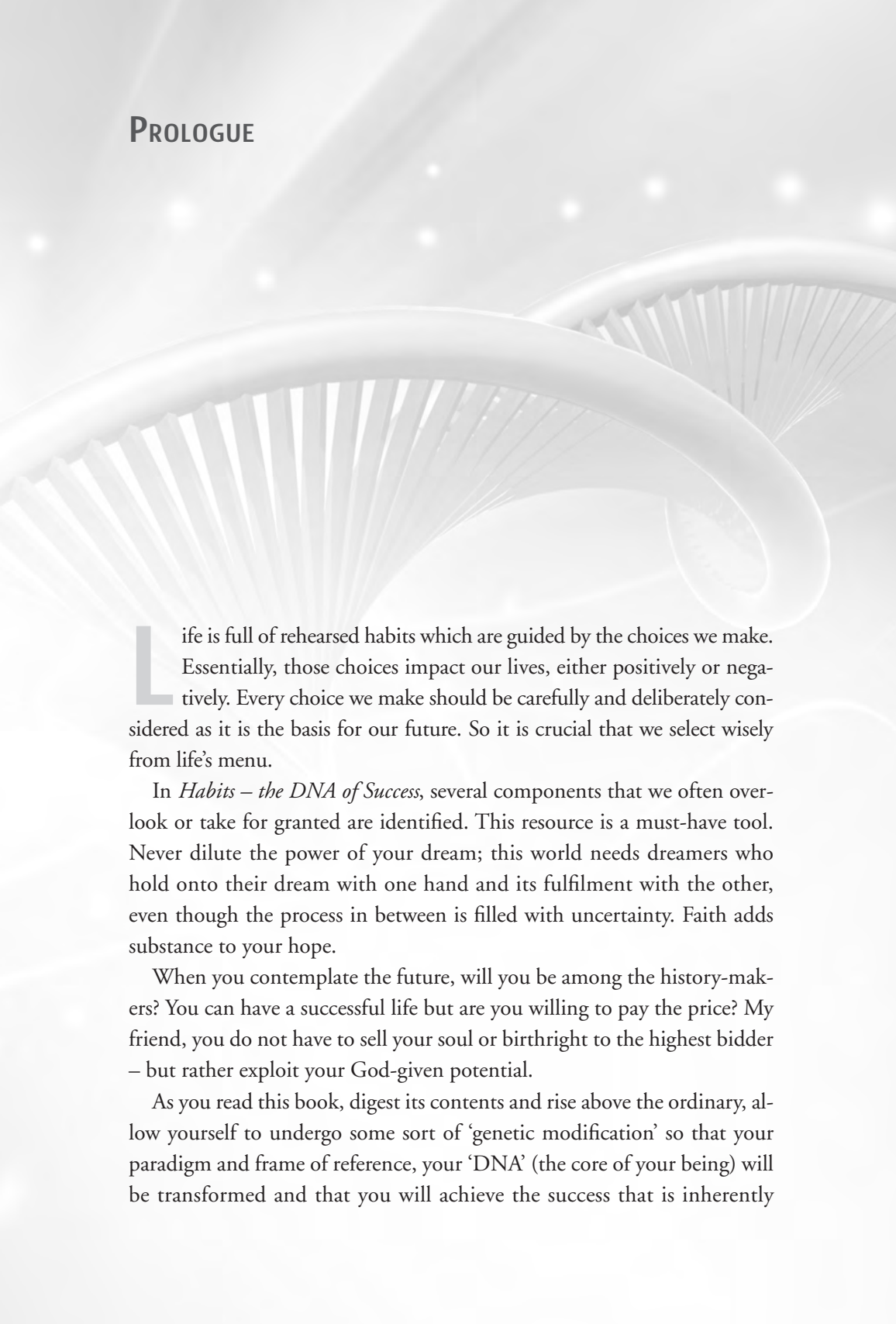
Mosa and Mpho for your on-going support.

From Alvin Fredericks

To my wife, Judy and children, Andrew, Stacey and Nicole for allowing me the time to be me. I love you dearly.

Most importantly, we want to thank our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who affirms us daily and reminds us that we can do all things through Him.

## PROLOGUE



Life is full of rehearsed habits which are guided by the choices we make. Essentially, those choices impact our lives, either positively or negatively. Every choice we make should be carefully and deliberately considered as it is the basis for our future. So it is crucial that we select wisely from life's menu.

In *Habits – the DNA of Success*, several components that we often overlook or take for granted are identified. This resource is a must-have tool. Never dilute the power of your dream; this world needs dreamers who hold onto their dream with one hand and its fulfilment with the other, even though the process in between is filled with uncertainty. Faith adds substance to your hope.

When you contemplate the future, will you be among the history-makers? You can have a successful life but are you willing to pay the price? My friend, you do not have to sell your soul or birthright to the highest bidder – but rather exploit your God-given potential.

As you read this book, digest its contents and rise above the ordinary, allow yourself to undergo some sort of 'genetic modification' so that your paradigm and frame of reference, your 'DNA' (the core of your being) will be transformed and that you will achieve the success that is inherently

yours. However, true success is ultimately linked to leaving a legacy; we are blessed to be a blessing.

To your success and beyond – remember, you can.



## INTRODUCTION



I remember my biology teacher vividly. She was passionate about her subject as if it was the only one we did. She became animated when she taught us about genetics and chromosomes and DNA.

What is DNA? DNA is short for Deoxyribonucleic Acid. It holds the genetic instructions for all living things. The main purpose of DNA is to hold long-term information called 'genes'. Some sequences of DNA have structural purposes.

DNA consists of two units called 'nucleotides' which are made up of sugars and phosphate groups. These two strands run in opposite directions to each other. Attached to each sugar is one of four molecules called bases. It is the sequence of these four bases that encode information; we call this the genetic code.

DNA is organised into structures called chromosomes which are duplicated before cells divide. DNA copies itself through a process called DNA replication.

When preparing this manuscript, I realised that man is a complex being and that unless we have a clearly defined plan of action for our lives and display consistent behaviour, we will live unfulfilled and incomplete lives.

It soon became evident that repeated patterns of behaviour – habits – were

the driving force behind our success or failure. Habits seemed to be the ‘DNA’ of success; success (or failure) was encoded in these repeated behaviour patterns. So what frames your world? What specific behaviours direct your journey? Or do you perceive success as the destiny of a select few?

In order to fully comprehend the importance of developing the appropriate behaviour for success, it is important to understand the underlying principles, one of which is the judicious use of time.

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*Light was the fanfare that announced TIME*

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The creation story says that God first created light. In so doing He set the wheels of order into motion when He called into being systems and structures from the chaos that existed. Light was the fanfare that announced TIME and everything it represents. God’s intention was not only to delegate his authority over to man but to transfer a fully functional system to man as well. It is not surprising that time therefore dictates our every activity. When you understand it in this way, you will see that our solar system is actually a clock, a meticulous system having structure and purpose.

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*Time is a subset of eternity but is never static.*

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The Oxford Dictionary defines time as ‘the indefinite continued progress of existence, events, etc. in past, present and future regarded as a whole.’

Invariably, nothing happens without ‘TIME’. Time is a subset of eternity and is never static. Every moment during which the earth rotates, time also moves. There is no way to ever buy back time! The only way to redeem time is to use the time you have been given wisely. This system ticks with precision and your life is bound to it whether you like it or not. So how you utilise this commodity is totally your responsibility. We need to number our days and apply our hearts to wisdom. For example, a day is a year in seed form; therefore, the true measure of a year is lodged in a day. Those who do

not value time will not be able to create anything meaningful in life.

A poem that describes the importance of this God-ordained resource:

*The Clock of Life*

*The clock of life is wound but once, and no man has the power  
To tell just when the hands will stop at late or early hour.  
To lose one's wealth is sad indeed. To lose one's health is more.  
To lose one's soul is such a loss that no man can restore.  
Today, only, is our own. So live, love and toil with a will.  
Place no faith in tomorrow. For the clock may soon be still.*

– Robert H Smith

How important is time to you? To measure the value of life, you must measure the value of time. Time and life are like the two strands of the DNA linked by one's output. If your time is not important to you, then your life is also unimportant to you. Allocate time for every single activity.

True success can therefore be fully exploited only in the context of time and all that time represents. It is not the result of waving a magic wand; it does not magically fall into one's lap. Success is not mystical or an illusion but does demand much preparation and determination. The process is never easy, but the rewards and sense of fulfilment are worth it.

We need to run this race with endurance, focus and patience. In order for us to endure we have to put habits, disciplines and systems in place that enable us to run without tiring.

*Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no  
path and leave a trail.*

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

It is our sincere desire that this book will be a catalyst for change in your life and that you become all that you were meant to be. Are you ready to embark on this journey and consciously and systematically create your own success because you were born for such a time as this? Mediocrity is not an option; explore the potential within you – explore this gift called life.

– David Molapo and Alvin Fredericks



## CHAPTER 1

*Success is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.*  
– Seneca (mid-first century Roman philosopher)

**T**ruer words have never been spoken! While some subscribe to the philosophy of ‘*Que sera sera*’ – ‘Whatever will be, will be’ – so that they don’t bother to make any effort to improve themselves, others live with the belief that they will some day, somehow ‘stumble upon success’. Yet others, like some well-meaning religious people, believe that success will just descend on them – that it will fall right into their laps. For far too long, many have been erroneously led astray by this approach. Success is within your grasp, but you have to extend your reach; you have to go beyond the norm and beyond your comfort zone.

We are all aware that this universe is governed by specific laws, structures and systems, like the law of gravity. Similarly, success is also governed by principles and is an output of one’s actions. Constant introspection, reflection and setting goals are companions on the path to success.

You may have heard the saying, ‘easy come – easy go’. We see this in the lives of some who, for example, inherited wealth but were not prepared to handle it wisely. Premature success or ‘counterfeit’ success can be detrimental. Preparation not only brings you into the path of success, it also develops your ability to handle the demands that accompany the success. Consequently, success is the result of habits (behaviours) that are developed over a period of time. Habits are more than mere routine repetitions; they are

grounded in systems, structures and discipline. They can manifest as either negative or positive; what you sow you reap. Habits are the result of one's input and discipline.

How does one form the habits that guarantee a life of success? It starts with forming and reinforcing positive behaviours and attributes; practise doing the same thing repeatedly in a systematic way. By practising this schedule, you create the structure or habit for success in your life. This holds true for all aspects of your life.

However, this approach places the onus on you to take meaningful action towards creating your success through conscious choices. Success therefore is elusive only to the undisciplined and unmotivated.

## STRUCTURE AND CONSISTENCY ARE THE ESSENCE OF SUCCESS

The word 'habits' suggests doing things naturally without any prompting. We need to create habits in our lives that will allow us to be successful. Success is not measured only by what we acquire. True success is based on a balanced lifestyle and impacts every area of our lives. Cultivating good habits is one of the primary milestones on the road to success.

*Don't aim for success if you want it; just do what you love and believe, and it will come naturally.*

– David Frost

One of the reasons why people do not see the results they desire is because they have not developed the habits that will lead to their success. Your core values are inextricably linked to what you manifest. You can't sell a product that you don't believe in! If you have not internalised the habits that will lead to your success, you will put on a façade externally. It's like planting landmines on your road to success – they will surely blow up and leave you crippled and hopeless!

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*Your core values are inextricably linked to what you manifest.*

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Success is built on the framework of a good foundation, structure and discipline, like the Statue of Liberty or the Eiffel Tower. The external beauty and magnificence of these world-famous structures can be appreciated only because of their internal structure. Any short-cuts or flaws in the internal design will result in these magnificent structures cracking, deteriorating and eventually crumbling.

Has it occurred to you that you may actually be sabotaging your chances of success? You can only produce who you really are deep within you; you can only bring forth what you have become. Renewing your mind is an on-going process. The time between the promise and its manifestation is the process. This period is often very uncomfortable but necessary and can vary from a few hours to several years.

*What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.*

– Oliver Wendell Holmes

Who are you really? Have you ever answered this question honestly? Life gives you what you choose and not necessarily what you wish for. If life was a series of wishes then we would all be wealthy and healthy and living in the lap of luxury and comfort. But the reality is that we still see the devastation of poverty and disease around us.

We have been given the power of choice but sometimes it is easier to blame our circumstances than to make any attempt to rise above them.

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*Life gives you what you choose and not necessarily what you wish for.*

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I've seen many beggars on street corners who deliberately act 'cripple'. After a while, the muscles and ligaments in the limb atrophy (waste away) through disuse. What confines you will ultimately define you. We need to make a conscious decision to cultivate the right habits in order to benefit from life's offerings. Make a deliberate attempt to actively engage

and develop your mental capacity. This should be an on-going process.

Beethoven's music teacher said about him, 'As a composer he is hopeless.' What if young Ludwig had believed this and made excuses for not accomplishing anything worthwhile?

When FW Woolworth was 21, he got a job in a store, but was not allowed to wait on customers because he 'didn't have enough sense'. Today Woolworth's is a respected and desirable brand.

When the sculptor Auguste Rodin was young he had difficulty learning to read and write. Today, we may say he had a learning disability, but his father said of him, 'I have an idiot for a son.' His uncle agreed. 'He's ineducable,' he said. What if Rodin had doubted his ability? Parents need to believe in the latent talent of their children.

A newspaper editor once fired Walt Disney because he was thought to have no 'good ideas'. Caruso was told by a music teacher, 'You can't sing. You have no voice at all.' And an editor told Louisa May Alcott that she was incapable of writing anything that would have popular appeal.

What if these people had listened and become discouraged? Where would our world have been without the music of Beethoven, the art of Rodin or the ideas of Albert Einstein and inventions of Thomas Edison?

Choices then, not circumstances, are the key that opens the door to your success or failure. I'm not suggesting that you should overlook your circumstances, nor do I mean to undermine their seriousness, but I am encouraging you to look beyond them to the wealth of possibilities. Replace fear and despair with hope, and if you cannot do it on your own, then find someone who is willing to assist you.

While on the one hand some are proactive, others are passive and become complacent. We should grow beyond the sense of entitlement and excuses. Defining the process, planning with purpose and having a plan of action are all components of success.

Furthermore, success is not abstract or mystical but a tangible process that is achieved one step at a time. You have been equipped for success, but 'terms and conditions' do apply. Success then is in your hands – ultimately you create your own success. So you can't blame God or anyone else for lost opportunities.

*At the crossroads of life, it is often easier to choose the path of least resistance, the road called complacency. The alternate route, the road called effort, is far less travelled – but the rewards to those who choose this path are substantial.*

There is nothing wrong in hoping, there is nothing wrong with praying and neither is there anything wrong in believing for success, but if that's all we do then it is faith without the necessary corresponding action. Success is the output of a plan in action – in other words, 'If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail.' You are equipped to achieve success, but it requires a detailed plan of action. The opposite is also true – little or no effort will surely result in failure.

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*Success is the output of a plan in action.*

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When something is guaranteed, then you don't have to rely on 'luck' – in fact, you ought to be surprised if it doesn't happen. Setting these laws into motion is a catalyst for achieving success. Applying these laws is the foundation upon which we can develop appropriate habits. Our duty is to cultivate these behaviours until they become a lifestyle.

There are many who start their day with no plan for the day. Instead of taking charge of the day, the day and certain people impose their demands on them. The day may be filled with activities but unless these are effective and have direction, they are meaningless. It has been said that if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.

To many, possessions are the epitome of success when in fact this is only one of the components. True success is all-encompassing; hence success is a state of being, before it can be a state of having. I have learned (and am still learning) that it is more challenging to 'be' than to 'have'. To 'be' requires holistic transformation, while to 'have' requires external effort with minimal internal change.

True success is therefore a process that recognizes the need to first 'be', then uses this new-found balanced character as a strength to pursue what

is desired (to ‘have’). Anyone who pursues to ‘have’, and undermines the need to first ‘be’, will not achieve long-lasting results. This achievement is at best described as transient – you get results but lack the capacity to sustain them. Sustainable results and a balanced lifestyle therefore serve as tracks upon which you operate your life’s locomotive.

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*Sustainable results and a balanced lifestyle therefore serve as tracks upon which you operate your life’s locomotive.*

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## PEAS IN A POD – CHARACTERISTICS OF TRULY SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE

Successful people are *proponents* for change; they are individuals who allow *purpose* to *precede* need in their lives. These are individuals who refuse to be needs-driven but strive to be purpose-driven. Purpose-driven people seek to be equipped before pursuing outward expressions of success. Ancient wisdom encapsulates this philosophy; ‘Where there is no vision the people will perish’. We need to equip ourselves and exploit our full *potential*.

Being equipped and having the capacity suggests ‘the ability to integrate who you are with what you must do, in order to get the desired results’. Thereby the twin forces of character and talent work together to produce true success. While talent alone will produce success that is transient, character will add value to your success and is more sustainable. Success is not about the frills but about the thrill of first ‘being’.

The following attributes serve as a ‘pacemaker’ to the heartbeat of successful individuals:

### Determination

Truly successful individuals are highly determined individuals; when they set out to do something, nothing will discourage or distract them. The power of determination sets a desire in motion long before it even manifests; it turns

a desire into an activity of purpose. Determination sidesteps discouragement (without undermining its potential harm) and forges ahead, thereby transforming a dream into reality.

I once read that some people dream of success while others get up and make it happen. When all the odds are stacked against you, reach within yourself and call upon your inner resource of determination, and confront those challenging situations.

## **Focused efforts**

You are probably aware of the mechanics behind the laser beam. Simply put, light is processed and is very directional. A laser light has a very tight beam and is therefore strong and concentrated. You are then able to use this concentrated energy to perform the most delicate surgery or even cut through extremely thick steel. A torch, on the other hand, releases light in many directions, and the light is very weak through being diffused.

The ability to focus and optimise their efforts is a remarkable attribute of successful people. They do not try every available formula for success. Consequently, they are able to channel their energy to one task at a time without attempting to achieve too many things simultaneously; they dedicate their time to one project at a time until they see results. Focus your efforts to achieve the optimal results.

## **Self-awareness**

Successful people fine-tune their abilities and awareness; they are aware of their strengths and limitations but do not dwell on any identified gaps. Such individuals are not insecure, and readily ask for help when necessary. They do not have a fragile 'ego' because they have developed a sense of self-worth and inner strength without being arrogant about their abilities. Self-awareness helps to set the tone for self-development. It is impossible to know which area should be developed if you are not aware of your limitations.

Furthermore, self-awareness defuses the power of pride and arrogance and recognizes the need for the input of others in your life. It is therefore important to develop a teachable attitude and embrace correction with grace and ease. Interdependence is an important trait that will enhance your outputs.



Very often, many find themselves in a particular vocation prematurely. Self-awareness demands that you count the costs and possible risks before attempting to publicise your expertise. This will spare you untold misery associated with unpreparedness and the risk of rejection. You need to check your state of readiness before embarking on a project or announcing your expertise to society. Self-awareness demands honesty, which is the very breath of true success.

When you are truly aware of your state of being, you can be genuine and transparent. Once you are real with yourself, it becomes easier to be real with those around you. Real people are easy to work with, because you know what to expect from them; there are fewer surprises.

‘A loving person lives in a loving world. A hostile person lives in a hostile world. Everyone you meet is your mirror.’ – Ken Keys

Mirrors have a very particular function. They reflect the image in front of them. Just as a physical mirror serves as the vehicle to reflection, so do all of the people in our lives. They were designed to give us a view of how we look and an opportunity to make adjustments where necessary. This exercise of introspection and reflection is an on-going process. The same goes for self-improvement.

Self-awareness is a mental state that affords you capacity to engage the services of others in improving your life and your performance. When you are aware of your strengths and limitations, you are then able to attend to areas that need improvement in order of their urgency. This process helps you to develop balance in your life. Self-awareness also helps you choose the right relationships.

Furthermore, self-awareness will expose your ill-patterned habits – those that work against the realisation of your dreams and aspirations. It is an on-going process that interrogates your personality and character and exposes your admirable side and your less attractive side, and allows you to make necessary adjustments.

## **Right attitude**

Attitudes can be magnetic or repellent. They can draw people to you, or build a wall between you and those whose help you need to fulfil your dreams. The right attitude is a force that will earn you the space you need

to pursue your dream. When you have the right attitude, you have a healthy perception of yourself and those around you. The right attitude helps you to acknowledge the existence of possibilities over impossibilities; you will not write off your pursuit of success because of opposition.

## Continuous self-improvement

The desire to be the best will set you apart when you provide superior service. The moment you improve yourself (no matter in which area) the quality of your service will improve, as will the rewards thereof. Your compensation is linked to the quality of service you provide. Superior service will result in appropriate compensation.

Ancient wisdom encourages us to 'Study to show yourself approved'. The only way to improve your expertise is to improve yourself. This is not a once-off process. Development is an on-going process. People who are tired of an average status should re-evaluate their outputs and develop the necessary skills and expertise in order to operate at a higher level. Remember, your reputation goes before you and will either open or close doors to you.

## Right thinking

Your thought patterns ultimately determine your life's performance and hover over your pursuit of excellence. When you think negative thoughts, you impose a ceiling over your journey to success. On the other hand, clear, concise and right thinking minimizes the chances of discouragement and raises energy levels for maximum performance. Right thinking creates an environment to achieve the optimal results. This in turn sets you up for great opportunities.

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*Success is an outcome of a defined pattern.*

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To think wholesome thoughts requires a determined effort. Once again this is the power of choice in action. People who think right make this a part of their daily discipline; they gradually eliminate negative thoughts, and make a conscious effort to improve their mental state daily. Success is

an outcome of a defined pattern. So think positively and translate your thoughts into activities that will yield positive results and, in turn, influence your success.

## **Manageable lifestyle**

Success should be a goal-orientated lifestyle. You know where you are, where you are heading to and what you need to do to get you there. This is a process that requires proper personal management skills. You cannot manage your time without managing yourself properly. You need to prioritize your activities. Have a weekly programme and itemize your activities. This approach will help you to eliminate activities that do not add value. To be truly successful you must have a strong sense of personal management (discipline). A well-managed lifestyle speaks of your ability to lead yourself effectively before attempting to lead others. People follow those who know where they are going!

*Faced with crisis, the man of character falls back on himself. He imposes his own stamp of action, takes responsibility for it, makes it his own.*

– Charles de Gaulle

**SUCCESS IS A RESULT  
OF P-U-S-H**



## CHAPTER 2

*No one can ever succeed unless they develop a P-U-S-H attitude:*

*P – Persevere*

*U – Until*

*S – Something*

*H – Happens*

I once read a story of a poor man who inherited a hut. In the midst of the hut was a huge rock. Everyone laughed at him and his so-called inheritance. He asked a wise old man for advice on how to get rid of this rock, since he could not even bring his family into the hut. The old man told him to lean against the rock and to push it until it moved. He tried to do this but to no avail. The rock would not budge. The old man told him to persevere but still the rock did not move. After several weeks he went to the old man and complained that he had given him wrong advice. The wise old man smiled and said, 'In the time that you were pushing against the rock, have you noticed how you developed physical strength and inner discipline?' A right attitude to resistance will always yield positive results.

*When nothing seems to help, I go and look at a stonecutter hammering away at his rock perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet, at the hundred and first blow it will split in two, and I know it was not that blow that did it but all that had gone before.*

*– Jacob Riis*

The nucleus of perseverance is patience. Although it is important to persevere with great zeal and determination, it is also important to push in the right direction.

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*The nucleus of perseverance is patience.*

---

Don't be distracted by the surrounding circumstances or what might appear to be the lack of meaningful results. Perseverance means being robust in your daily activities, leaving nothing to chance. When you push, you are being results-driven and conscious of time. You don't engage in activities that are not in line with your journey towards success. These 'pushers' check where they are against where they are heading. They always take stock of their performance and accept responsibility for poor delivery.

Life is not 'kind' to those who are lenient to themselves. If you fail to manage yourself properly, you won't be able to manage anything worthwhile to its successful completion. A 'push' attitude speaks of self-discipline, self-management and continuous self-improvement. It does not succumb to difficult circumstances but responds with a solution.

Success makes you honourable, because by the time you achieve it, the process that brought you success would have also refined your character. To 'push' means doing things with great caution, but with extreme passion; cautious but still active. However, the twin sibling of 'push' is 'risk'. There is always an element of risk in every venture.

## **WHAT PROMOTES SUCCESS?**

### **Success is made possible through role-modelling**

Who do you look up to in life? The person you esteem highly can influence your performance easily. When you have a role model or mentor or life-coach, you will make every endeavour to live your dreams. A part of being successful is to be accountable.

A role model is a symbol of hope that the envisaged outcome is possible. It is one thing to dream, and another thing to have a dreamer in your life; especially those whose dreams have materialized. A person whose dream has become a success story will help you stick to your dream and help you to realise that challenges and failure are not fatal, but just levels of development and growth on your journey to success.

Studying the success patterns of other people will teach you that your own process is a pattern that others could also learn from. When you have a role model, you derive strength, direction and encouragement when you reflect on your own journey.

It is therefore important to look to people whose life stories have clear lines and pages, from which you are able to learn value-adding lessons. Avoid complex people or those whose story of success is clouded by secrecy or ambiguity. The quality of your success will always have traces of the influence of those around you. Success is a process with implementable outputs.

---

*The quality of your success will always have traces  
of the influence of those around you.*

---

## **It takes personal drive to be successful**

In as much as we do need the help of others to be successful, personal drive is necessary and very important for one to attain real success. It requires effort and the will to succeed to reach your goal of true success. However, before we can expect to be inspired and motivated by others, we should be in the position to motivate ourselves first. If we don't have personal drive, we will be trapped in unrewarding activities. Have you seen a dog chasing its own tail – it is engaged in an activity which yields no results; it is busy, but its actions are ineffective and inefficient.

When we resort to complaining, we fail to complete our tasks or meet our goals and objectives. Truly successful people choose to be self-inspired and do believe in their potential to attain their set targets. Personal drive will help you to rise above the fear of the unknown, and push towards the



set target. A sense of self-sufficiency does not necessarily imply arrogance or pride, but rather that the individual operates by the philosophy, ‘I can do all things because of my God-given potential.’

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*Look beyond the immediate and be  
inspired to pursue the ultimate.*

---

Personal drive is an inward force called purpose that pushes you in the direction of your dream. This inward force does not allow you to give up, but it constantly reminds you of the end result, which is the success that you are hoping for. Personal drive makes you aware of the possibilities of success and causes you to look beyond the immediate and be inspired to pursue the ultimate. It is the very reason why you would try again after having failed your first attempt. When you are self-motivated you don't shift the blame, but you admit failure and learn from it. Self-motivated people are problem-solvers and are quick to recognise and seize an opportunity. Personal drive is an attitude of enthusiasm even in the face of hardships.

## ENEMIES OF SUCCESS

It is important to identify those activities or behaviour patterns that actually trip us up on the road to success, in order to manage them appropriately. We've listed some of them below – you may identify others.

### Unrealistic expectations

Every time we set expectations, the chances of setting ourselves up for disappointment are high. In most instances people set expectations for themselves that are far beyond their potential and capacity. This approach puts unnecessary pressure on them from family, colleagues and partners. If they fail once, their zeal to go on is dampened, and that could cause them to quit prematurely. To be successful requires an honest self-assessment. Check your readiness and resourcefulness before engaging in any desired task and pursuit.

## Poor planning

Planning puts your activities into a manageable order. When you plan you put yourself ahead of unforeseen challenges. The opposite is also true; if you don't plan you could experience challenges that you might be unprepared for. Failure to plan makes you a questionable operator, and leads to unproductive ventures or immature outputs. Some rely on luck in the absence of proper and careful planning. The outcome of 'luck' cannot be traced to a process and a pattern. Consequently you will not be able to repeat the same order and process and produce the same results consistently. Successful people display consistent characteristics. Planning therefore minimizes the impact of unforeseen challenges and gives you the capacity to bounce back and re-engage on your journey for success.

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*Failure to plan undermines the quality  
and potential of your dream.*

---

Failure to plan undermines the quality and potential of your dream. Only when we realise that dreams don't stop with us but that our success is translated into the success of others, will we be able to venture beyond our dreams.

## Negative self-perception

A negative self-perception will affect your whole outlook towards life. How you think of yourself will determine how you present yourself. It is virtually impossible for others to perceive you differently because we are constantly handing out cues. A person with a low self-esteem will have difficulty getting anyone to buy into an idea or even support any of their ventures.

Success is possible through networking and healthy relationships. You have to know how to build strategic and healthy relationships if you are to attract the right support for your venture. This will materialize only if you have a sense of self-worth; how you see yourself will determine whether you attract or repel people. My friend, you have been created for a superior purpose. As long as you need others to affirm or validate you, you will abort your potential.

## Lack of a sense of urgency

Success requires an ‘alert’ kind of approach and a ready-to-go attitude. Successful individuals are not caught off-guard by their situations. They have developed an ever-ready mindset and act with a sense of urgency. Let me point out that a sense-of-urgency does not imply paranoia or that one is a control freak. This does not mean that such individuals live in a constant state of tension but that they are able to take the appropriate action when required to do so because of proper time-management and preparation. In addition, such individuals are also flexible enough to adapt to the immediate demands. You cannot be haphazard or laid-back in your approach to life and still expect excellent results. When you look at a relay team in a race, you will notice that they work together like a well-choreographed dance routine.

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*Success responds to efficient action.*

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The runner who starts is as important as the three remaining runners. They do not merely stand there and wait for the baton but rather actively prepare themselves to receive the baton.

History is made when preparation and opportunity intersect. People fail to realize their goals because they lack a sense of urgency, which ultimately leads to a state of inaction or complacency. Success responds to efficient action.

## Undervaluing yourself

In our pursuit to be accepted and affirmed by others, we tend to undervalue ourselves. We do things in an attempt to appear, sound and even act in a socially acceptable manner. This process causes negative growth in our self-worth; it limits our personal worth in the perception of those from whom we are seeking approval and acceptance. The problem is that we think that this approach, or even a pseudo-humility, will give us access to the things we need without making those who have them feel uncomfortable.

Unfortunately some of those you look up to actually frown on your actions and look down on you with contempt. Although they may not initially

display this emotion, the relationship could become toxic over time rather than being a value-adding one.

Did it occur to you that when you devalue yourself, you are actually doing more harm than good to your self-image? Once you begin to undervalue yourself, you are quietly, but surely, pushing away opportunities that could accelerate your success.

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*Fear of failure or rejection can paralyse  
one into inaction and stagnation.*

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The fear of being rejected is another reason that causes people to undervalue and underrate themselves. Fear of failure or rejection can paralyse one into inaction and stagnation. When a river stops flowing and the fish and plants die as a result, the stench caused by the decomposition can be overwhelming. The same decay can result in our lives through stagnation.

In some cases we are our own worst enemy. Many often compromise their values and standards to minimize the chances of being rejected. This whole approach to life undermines our sense of purpose, and works against the realization of our dreams. If we are to aspire to be truly successful, then we need to begin to believe in ourselves and our God-given potential.

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*When you develop a healthy self-image, you won't allow what you  
don't have to delay the process of who you are meant to be.*

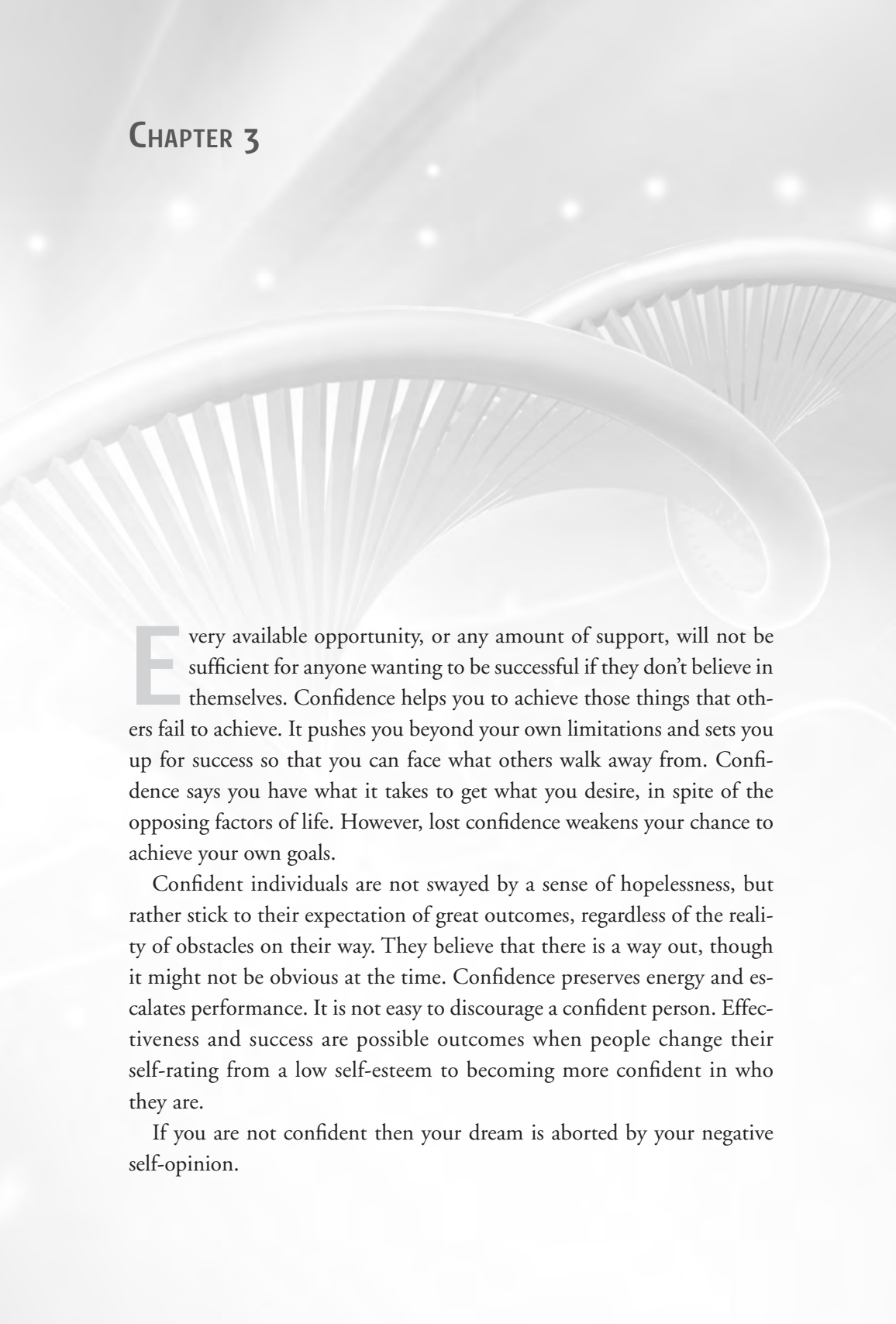
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When you develop a healthy self-image, you won't allow what you don't have to delay the process of who you are meant to be. Refuse any help that makes you feel unworthy of recognition and respect. Nothing and nobody should devalue who you really are.

# CONFIDENCE – A SUCCESS BOOSTER



## CHAPTER 3



**E**very available opportunity, or any amount of support, will not be sufficient for anyone wanting to be successful if they don't believe in themselves. Confidence helps you to achieve those things that others fail to achieve. It pushes you beyond your own limitations and sets you up for success so that you can face what others walk away from. Confidence says you have what it takes to get what you desire, in spite of the opposing factors of life. However, lost confidence weakens your chance to achieve your own goals.

Confident individuals are not swayed by a sense of hopelessness, but rather stick to their expectation of great outcomes, regardless of the reality of obstacles on their way. They believe that there is a way out, though it might not be obvious at the time. Confidence preserves energy and escalates performance. It is not easy to discourage a confident person. Effectiveness and success are possible outcomes when people change their self-rating from a low self-esteem to becoming more confident in who they are.

If you are not confident then your dream is aborted by your negative self-opinion.

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*Confidence preserves energy and escalates performance.*

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Confidence creates an environment of possibilities and an atmosphere of success around you. It provokes hunger for self-improvement and self-development.

Confident individuals are continually looking for ways to improve their performance. The most toxic element against success is self-condemnation. Failure to believe in yourself makes you an easy target for exploitation because you develop a victim mentality. You will attract failure and disappointment. It is therefore important to believe in yourself.

## Benefits of Confidence

- Confidence will allow you to attempt new ways of doing things – you will become creative even in the face of possible risks. This will promote a cycle of success.
- It will help you to rise from failure with a better opinion of yourself. A sense of self-worth far outweighs the outward trimmings of success.
- It will help you confront your fears.
- It will earn you the attention of influential people. Confidence promotes inter-dependence because the one who is confident does not allow his/her insecurities to interfere with their purpose.
- It will attract the right people with the right solutions to your situation.
- It will improve your general performance and outputs.
- It will distinguish you from the crowd. We are called to stand out and not simply blend in with the crowd.

## How do you develop confidence?

- Acknowledge your need for confidence and that your lack of it could adversely affect your performance.
- Believe that it is possible for you to develop confidence. It is not reserved for a select few.
- Change how you think and talk about yourself. Do not devalue yourself, especially to those who could exploit this to their advantage. You are not a doormat, and displaying pseudo-humility is actually pride in reverse.



- Affirm yourself daily by stating, ‘I have what it takes to be successful.’ Keep on saying it, until you become successful.
- Change the way you dress, improve your dress sense and style. You don’t have to be flamboyant. Carry yourself well even in the midst of difficult times. This will pick up your spirit.
- Change what you watch and read; develop an interest in following the lives of other confident and successful people. Apply those principles to your lifestyle.
- Review your daily performance and be honest with yourself. Accept or make adjustments where necessary.
- Set personal growth targets and time frames; in which areas do you need to improve and by when do you want to achieve that specific goal?
- Keep on trying until you become. Do not listen to voices of discouragement.
- Change your posture, the way you sit at your desk. This will change how you feel. Assume a powerful, self-assured position, and you’ll instantly feel more energetic.
- Your mind follows your body. Sit erect, look up and breathe deeply. You’ll feel more dynamic immediately!

*I often tell the following story to encourage people:*

*One day, a bunch of frogs decided to have a race to see which one of them could get to the top of a tall tree. As the race started, some of the people in the crowd began to comment, ‘Oh, they’ll never make it.’*

*‘That tree is just too tall for a frog to climb.’ ‘They don’t have a chance.’*

*Many of the frogs fell back to the ground, but a small group continued the race. The crowd still did not believe they would be able to make it and you could hear them saying, ‘They are all going to get hurt.’*

*‘They are all way too high.’ ‘This is really dangerous.’*

*And, sure enough, the remaining frogs all fell from the tree – all but one, that is. He made it all the way to the top and, when they asked him how he had managed to climb that tall tree, it turned out ... that he was deaf!*

Very often, others will have negative opinions about what you are attempting to do, especially if you are trying to accomplish something challenging. Perhaps, one of life's greatest lessons is to learn not to take heed of other people's negative attitudes.

Remember that everyone will have an opinion, whether or not they are qualified to give it. If you want an opinion on something, find an expert. Don't listen to the myriad opinions of the unqualified crowd. Be like that deaf frog and just keep going!

## **TO BE SUCCESSFUL YOU NEED TO THINK OUT OF THE BOX**

Thinking out of the box has become a cliché to many and a cop-out to others. Some offer this advice when they do not have a reasonable solution.

Success is experienced at different levels. Our system easily adapts to working patterns. Once a pattern produces results, we tend to hold on to it and apply it as the only method that can produce results for every level of success. Different situations demand different approaches. This could vary from a simple solution to a complex one. One size does not always fit all. This approach limits us to the same results, and blinds us to other possibilities. If we don't use wisdom, we will apply the same approach, even in situations where it is impractical, to our detriment.

To escape this trap of 'fixation', we need to think out of the box; we need to try new methods, learn new systems and improve on past performance. We often fail because we are not flexible enough; we become too rigid and conventional at the expense of being creative. Confidence promotes creativity.

In an experiment to show that behaviour can be learnt, rats were placed in a maze with a piece of cheese at the other end of the maze. The rats were able to find the cheese after several attempts, and once they did, they would stick to that routine each and every time even if they were moved to a different maze. Someone once said that the only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth. Do not allow yourself to get into the rut of inflexibility. When you develop confidence, you will be willing to assess and attempt new things more readily.

Even within the parameters of preferred habits and structure, allow room for creativity. This will add to your sense of fulfilment and boost your confidence. Success is possible for those who are innovative, creative and willing to take a risk. After all, life in itself is one big risk. Between one's birth and death is the process of living. During this time we are exposed to all sorts of possibilities and risks.

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*Between one's birth and death is the process of living.*

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What keeps us on the same level is the false comfort that 'experience' affords us. We feel at ease knowing exactly how things are done and what outcomes to expect. This kind of approach gives us the false notion of being in charge. Consequently, we get stuck in the same way of doing things. The challenge with this scenario is that it erects a ceiling over our potential and possibilities. To break this self-imposed ceiling we need to open up to new ideas, and to new ways of doing things. Let the sky with its endless possibilities be your ceiling.

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*Unwrap life's possibilities – develop a confident disposition.*

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Traditions can limit our capacity to achieve excellent results and enjoy fruitful living. Break away from old patterns and rituals and embrace new challenges. Develop a sense of adventure even within the structure. Unwrap life's possibilities – develop a confident disposition.

## SUCCESS AND BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS

Positive behaviour patterns are the lifeline of our success. Behaviour is the seal of our attempt to succeed in life. Our behaviour preserves us from or exposes us to failure. Behaviour tags value; it places a price on our life.

Good ideas and good intentions will yield the results that behaviour will sustain. True success is success only when it is sustainable.

How we conduct our lives on a daily basis establishes a structure that will govern our daily performance. This in turn will determine our outcome. Behaviour is set by our minute to hour, hour to day, day to week, week to month, and month to year life-routine. Our achieved success reflects our behaviour patterns. The inverse is also true – negative or destructive behaviour is a platform for recurring patterns of failure. You cannot achieve results in life which are not linked to your behaviour patterns.

*The secret of getting ahead is getting started.*

– Mark Twain

Success responds to a life of maintained order and discipline. Lack of discipline and consistency leads to poor results. Choices and decisions that prioritize smart and hard work always yield outstanding life-results. It is impossible to achieve success when you lead a disorganised and ill-managed lifestyle. Success therefore is public proof of a private disciplined lifestyle. How you run your life privately will be displayed by the results you show. Success and your behaviour patterns are inseparable forces.

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*Success is public proof of a private disciplined lifestyle.*

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## THE EFFECTS OF GROWTH

Growth always causes a shift in relationships. As you grow and develop, you often outgrow certain mind-sets and attitudes and, as a result, you might have to sacrifice certain non-productive relationships. Some friendships are seasonal. Don't lose heart when this happens. The indifference that you might experience is evidence of a relational shift. This is because you have moved away from the known relational line and expectations of others. It is

an indication that the relationship has become a limiting factor in your growing convictions and perceptions. Since life does not allow vacancies to remain unfilled, it will fill these 'vacancies' with new friendships that will complement the demands of your new level of growth. Although this might not happen overnight, like-minded people will eventually migrate towards each other.

Growth helps you to appreciate past lessons learnt in life which you might have previously treated as less important. Growth develops an appreciative and teachable character in us. It also develops capacity to learn from others and the boldness to implement personal changes. The evidence of growth is the ability to appreciate the input of others, and recognise that different opinions are important for personal development.

As you develop and become more confident, you will become more selective in your relationships and activities. Confidence and being assertive is different from being arrogant and confrontational. Confidence does not destroy those in its path; on the contrary, when you develop confidence you are mindful of those around you, particularly those who are emotionally immature. When you're confident you will include others on your road to success. On the other hand, being confrontational is destructive and leaves hurt in its path.

*You are the heartbeat of tomorrow, so clear out those 'cholesterol-forming' activities – those activities that will block your success – and pace yourself, for tomorrow belongs to you.*

*– Alvin Fredericks*

# STRUCTURE UNDERPINS HEALTHY HABITS



## CHAPTER 4

*What every man/woman needs, regardless of his/her job or the kind of work he is doing, is a VISION of what his place is and may be. He needs an objective and a PURPOSE. He needs a feeling and a BELIEF that he has some worthwhile thing to do. What this is, no one can tell him. It must be his own creation. Its success will be measured by the nature of his vision, what he has done to equip himself, and how well he has PERFORMED along the line of its development.*  
– Joseph M Dodge

**G**ood project management requires not only proper planning and execution, but also evaluation and analysis. If you treat life as a project then you will ensure that you live your life to the full and with purpose. Intentional living is structured and yields success. I must reiterate that structure and discipline do not imply inflexibility or having a regimental approach to life. Between structure and discipline is creativity and a life waiting to be fulfilled!

Many fail because they have no structure or direction for their life, and depend on their emotions or the seasons or on others. This reactive approach guarantees stagnation and, ultimately, failure. Changing one's paradigm and developing a proactive attitude accompanied by the appropriate habits is the formula for success.

### WHY ARE HABITS IMPORTANT?

Habits define your behaviour; they drive passion. When you develop the right habits, the outcome will follow naturally. The right behaviour (habits) coupled with passion produces fulfilment. The nucleus of habits is consistency.

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*The nucleus of habits is consistency.*

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Structure is stronger than passion and reinforces healthy habits. Structure is the framework upon which your life is sculptured. Many have not developed habits of success and are surprised when their lives are ineffective. One of the greatest responsibilities we have is to cultivate healthy habits in order to experience success in our lives. Habits are developed by repeating a process at a particular time in a structured way. This is how you can take control of your day. Time is one of life's most precious commodities, yet we are frivolous with it.

We need to download the blueprint for our lives as this will provide much needed direction. Habits don't develop overnight; in fact, developing healthy habits is often an uncomfortable journey, but once it becomes a lifestyle, you will reap the rich rewards of success and growth.

Without life-centred habits we have nothing to stand up for.

## TIME MANAGEMENT

As mentioned right at the outset, if you do not allocate time to your activities, then others will fill your timetable for you. Time is life, yet we neglect to use it wisely. How have you invested the past ten years of your life? The past five years? The past year? How many of us are in arrears when it comes to accounting for those annual New Year resolutions we make so religiously? Resolutions should be ongoing and a part of one's main goals and objectives. The truth is, if you don't value your time you won't fully understand the heartbeat of success.

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*When you plan your day, you encode  
your day for purpose and success.*

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There is a time and season for everything. Take control of your time and consciously apply yourself to it. This is the first step in creating your success. Stop believing in chance, or having a 'what-will-be-will-be' attitude. When you plan your day, you encode your day for purpose and success. It is thus our responsibility to optimise the time we've been given on this earth.

Failure to observe time is failure to capture lessons embodied within the process. Time is the power that sustains process and function. It is important to consciously appreciate every minute available and utilise it purposefully. Wasting time translates into wasted opportunities to learn something new packaged within that particular time frame. Observing and honouring time helps you to grow holistically. Growth is an outcome of process and process is the result of time. When you take care of your time, you become resourceful and productive.

Time affords you the opportunity to plan, prepare and execute your dream. Don't undermine its role in the realisation of your dream. How you use the available time to you, will give you access to the power that time yields. Planning and time-frames serve as a performance management tool; you can evaluate your performance from the beginning of a task through to its completion.

There are millions of people who go to bed without measuring the success (or failure) of the day. They don't measure their productivity and consequently do not plan for the new day. We need to apply our hearts to wisdom by numbering the day and calculating and fixing times. Productivity is its own reward.

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*Productivity is its own reward.*

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## What is productivity?

- Productivity is the action that produces the desired outcome or results. We become productive when we deny distractions that impede the process for our progress.
- Productivity becomes a reality when we stick to predetermined priorities.

- It is the ability to identify areas of weakness and work on them without neglecting the areas of strength.
- Productivity is the ability plus the willingness to go the extra mile in order to achieve the desired results. Wishing for a promotion and not doing anything about it will keep you right where you are. This is a self-defeating attitude and is counter-productive.
- Self-improvement aligns you with the path of productivity.
- Having a plan of action and executing it efficiently facilitates productivity.
- Learning from others and applying what you have learnt sets you up for effectiveness
- being teachable promotes productivity.

Do you remember the time when you had a dream? As a youngster, you may have worked hard toward achieving that dream and often spoken about it to your friends and family members whenever you had the opportunity. But slowly you drifted away from your heart's desire. What happened?

The answer is easy: You got distracted or confused or both. Your friends enticed you into joining their parade. You were no longer in tune with who you are.

The Law of Momentum in physics says that a body in motion tends to remain in motion until an outside force acts upon it. In this instance, 'distractions' acted upon you by overtly discouraging you, or by encouraging you to follow a more 'sensible' path. So you stopped practising, stopped studying, stopped working toward your highest ambition. All those distractions and 'sensible' decisions competed for your attention. Your grand dream gradually became just a footnote in the history of your life.

Have you ever heard the saying that says 'used-to bees make no honey'? Do you know people who are always talking about what they used to do? They usually say, 'Someday I will pick it up again.' But that's a weak excuse for avoiding the risk of living your dream.

The time is now! When you have a worthy goal – something that is worth going after – you have to apply the law of critical success to your life. This law says that you should always be doing something that moves you closer to your goal. Question: What are you doing today that is drawing you a little bit closer to accomplishing your dream?

Shakespeare wrote, ‘This above all, to thine own self be true.’ Being true to yourself means that you do what matters most to you, regardless of what else is competing for your time. Our deeds and achievements are the only yardsticks we can use to measure our integrity, and the only evidence we can use to judge whether we have been true to ourselves.

It is said that motion creates emotion. When you take action towards that which you most desire, your self-confidence will soar. Distractions shift you off-course or slow you down; actions accelerate you forward along your chosen course. Every action strengthens you to take another.

Life is like a bicycle. The moment we stop pedalling, we start losing momentum. If we coast for too long, we fall. Resolve to press on in spite of all your distractions.

Here is what you can do to get whatever you want in life: Identify your distractions and move away from them. By doing so, you will become effective rather than merely efficient. Being effective means doing the right things, while being efficient means doing things right. It’s nice to be efficient, but it doesn’t do you any good if you’re not doing the things that will move you toward your dream. Focus first on being effective; let efficiency come as it may. Do something daily that will bring you closer to your goal.

Live your finest ambition. Do it because you must. You probably won’t find any help when you begin. You will, however, get all the help you want when you are already there. So be true to yourself. Honesty is the iron string that vibrates within every heart. Let results be the measure of your integrity. Work hard at it. Do more than is expected, more than is common. Keep the momentum going!

Let’s consider the characteristics integral to the word ‘momentum’:

**M – Motion:** maintain the appropriate motion, pace yourself

**O – Opportunity:** seize the opportunity when it presents itself

**M – Meaningful:** actions should be deliberate and have meaningful results

**E – Effective:** measure the effectiveness of your actions

**N – Navigate:** ensure that your actions have purpose and direction

**T – Tension:** by maintaining momentum you have to be in a state of readiness

**U – Urgency:** avoid complacency but treat each action with a sense of urgency

**M – Masterpiece:** create a masterpiece by taking the right actions

Either you are practising to succeed or you are practising to fail. I would rather practise to succeed than to fail. For example, those who just lie around doing nothing in the evenings eventually become ‘good at it’, and it does not bother them because they have formed a habit. How many of us are programmed to eat at a particular time; so even if we aren’t hungry we eat because we’ve conditioned ourselves to eat at that specific time. Regularity entrenches behaviour which becomes habits. It’s been said that even if we fail we should fail forward.

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*Regularity entrenches behaviour which becomes habits.*

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So many live their lives without purpose, focus or direction; there is no defined goal and the days just slip into each other. Life is not meant to be meaningless. Vision and conscious, methodical preparation is a choice, and yes, there is a price to pay – but that is the recipe for living; that’s how you create success. Success is not a willing companion; you have to lure her with life-giving habits.

Each new day presents you with a blank canvas and the potential for painting a masterpiece. What will you fill that canvas with? What will you select from life’s palette? Will the canvas show strokes of genius and inspiration or will it remain rolled up simply waiting for ‘the right opportunity’? The secret is in your daily routine.

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*Success is not a willing companion;  
you have to lure her with life-giving habits.*

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We need to transform our souls by renewing our minds. Within our soul is our will, and our will is linked to our habits. Do not be deceived and do not have any illusions about yourself; really study yourself to find out how strong your will is. What is your own ability right now? Self-control and determination is the ability to make decisions, irrespective of what’s going on around you.

*The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, nor a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.*

— Vince Lombardi

**SUCCESS DEMANDS  
A PROACTIVE  
ATTITUDE**



## CHAPTER 5

It's been said if you want something done, ask someone who is busy. Highly successful people do not merely keep themselves busy, but carefully select their activities. They use their time and resources effectively and efficiently. These individuals are highly motivated and constantly pursue excellence. They are quick to shed non-productive activities, particularly those that do not promote or complement their purpose and destiny. Driven by purpose and not distracted by emotions, their motto is to 'strive for the mark of perfection'.

Highly successful people are PROACTIVE – because they are visionaries. Let us explore the characteristics of a highly successful person; of a person who will not settle for being second best in the word 'Proactive'.

### P – Productive versus Procrastination

*Procrastination is the thief of time,  
'Tomorrow' is its motto.  
When tomorrow comes I'll roll the dice  
No time for the things I've got to.*

– Alvin Fredericks

As we explore the need for discipline, we realise that time is a valuable and irreplaceable resource. It is essential that we utilise this precious commodity wisely. Our activities should be deliberate and produce results. Meaningless activities rob us; being busy may not necessarily produce results. We must make use of our time efficiently.

Being proactive enhances productivity – as is said, the early bird catches the worm. Being fruitful is only the result of successfully completing the defined processes.

## **R – Responsible and Rational**

To be proactive demands a responsible attitude. When you accept responsibility and are accountable for your actions, you will be in a position to make rational decisions and not decisions based on your emotions or being under pressure. Being responsible demands regular introspection, evaluation and measured outputs. These activities should be clearly defined and not approached haphazardly.

## **O – Obvious and Optimistic**

Successful individuals are optimistic in the face of negativity and criticism. They look beyond the obvious and uncover a wealth of opportunities. Don't get me wrong, all of us experience adverse circumstances, but to the visionary, this is just another opportunity to draw on one's inherent fortitude.

## **A – Ambitious**

The proactive individual is creative with the ability to successfully sell his product, whatever form that may take. His ambition is tempered only by the compelling desire to equip those around him. Although he (she) is ambitious, it is not at the expense of walking all over others to get to the top. They are quick to respond to a hurting soul.

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*Fulfilment is the gracious host that's there to  
welcome you at the end of the journey.*

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This separates the truly successful person from a person whose only agenda is driven by selfishness and accumulating wealth. Ambition requires focus and preparation and can sometimes be a lonely and difficult journey, but fulfilment is the gracious host that's there to welcome you at the end of the journey. True fulfilment embraces others and is never insular.

## **C – Courageous**

Being courageous is par for the course of the proactive individual. It does not necessarily mean the absence of fear, but this individual quantifies the risk and then proceeds. Risk is an inevitable part on this journey. Courage says 'stand' when everything else around you is screaming for you to sit or hide behind your circumstances. Faith and purpose are daily companions urging and encouraging, provocative yet reassuring. Victory lies just beyond the next blind curve – unseen but assured.

## **T – Tenacious**

Proactive individuals have an ability to recognize opportunities. Consequently, they will always finish what they start, no matter what it takes. They display a tenacious attitude and live by the motto, 'It's not how you start but how you finish.' Success to them is but a by-product of the journey; a milestone, never the destination.

## **I – Inquiring and Invaluable**

Successful individuals have an inquiring mind. The status quo is not an option because they always consider alternatives so that they can have a better quality of life and influence those around them positively. Their input is always invaluable because they have discipline, structure and insight. Nothing is left to chance, so this individual is a good ally. They readily share their wealth of knowledge with those who are willing to learn, and they are good mentors.

## **V – Vision, Viable, Vigilant versus Vacillate**

In being proactive, this individual carefully considers all options before making a decision or recommendation. Not only does this person have vision, but first will ensure that something is viable and then only will he

distribute and utilize the available resources efficiently. Such people are vigilant and do not vacillate unnecessarily. Time and timing is crucial to being successful and effective.

## **E – Extraordinary**

What separates the ordinary person from the extraordinary one? What sets them apart? Is it the ability to lead with vision or see a project through to the end? Maybe the individual attains the status of being ‘extraordinary’ through having overcome his or her adverse circumstances. Not everyone is granted this noble recognition; only a select few.

History stands like a lighthouse; a monument that points the way. If we pay careful attention, we will be able to avoid certain pitfalls and learn from those remarkable men and women who have left us a legacy and those who continue to inspire us today.

Many movies have been made depicting the lives of ordinary men and women who achieved extraordinary things; those who have risen beyond society’s expectations or prejudice. They all had one thing in common – an unwavering tenacity. Perseverance was their constant companion, even when they were ridiculed, mocked, imprisoned or disabled. They fought back, determined to win, and were awarded the status of being extraordinary.

Tomorrow’s accomplishments are the products of today’s plans.

# A RENEWED MIND



## CHAPTER 6

**Y**ou may have heard the proverb, ‘As a man thinks, so is he’. Although it might appear to be simplistic, it is profound in its simplicity. All action (or work) is a direct result of one’s thoughts. The outcome and quality of the work reflects the depth of one’s thoughts. Thinking hard encompasses reassessing, reflecting and redesigning, repackaging, reaffirming and where necessary, reinventing one’s self.

*The body is the servant of the mind. It obeys the operations of the mind, whether they be deliberately chosen or automatically expressed. At the bidding of unlawful thoughts the body sinks rapidly into disease and decay; at the command of glad and beautiful thoughts it becomes clothed with youthfulness and beauty.*

— James Allen

Setting goals is important because it gives one a plan of action, because with goals we create and shape our lives, and ultimately our destiny. Achieving anything always starts in the mind – it is first conceived; the seed is sown and once sown into a fertile process, it will yield an outcome. True success is sustainable – a good seed will continue to produce after its own kind.

*Everything you see around you was first created in someone's imagination.*

*Whatever we imagine and focus on, we move towards.*

*Creation is the manifestation of one's thoughts.*

*Without a picture of a future greater than where you are today, there's no incentive or need to grow.*

– Mike Litman

In order to become successful, you have to develop a successful mind-set, redefine your life and maximise your abilities. Every successful achievement was conceived in someone's mind. What you have achieved so far does not actually define your ability, but rather defines the way you think about your ability. We have different abilities that are complementary; just as the universe is interdependent, so too are we. If you do things exactly the same way you always have, then your life will remain exactly as it is now. Stagnation will ultimately lead to decay.

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*Success is not something you pursue but something you create within you initially.*

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As ironic as it may seem, actively pursuing success is a guarantee that you will never find it. Success is not something you pursue but something you create within you initially. We are all destined for greatness but few achieve it, simply because of a lack of direction or being overwhelmed by one's circumstances.

Uncovering your potential and harnessing your A-B-I-L-I-T-Y needs introspection as shown below.

## **A – Aptitude**

This refers to one's ability or predisposition to understand and carry out a specific task. If you have an interest in a certain area, then it is incumbent on you to develop the necessary skills in that particular area. It is not good enough to have an inherent talent but make no effort to sharpen your skills and ability.

## B – Ballast

This suggests ‘balance’ and stability. Developing one’s ability is a life-time process.

One never ‘knows it all’; it is important to balance the different areas of involvement. Ability is only as effective as one’s ‘st-ability’ (stability). Ability in itself is insufficient. It must be tempered by maturity in its implementation.

## I – Influence

Using your God-given ability wisely will ultimately benefit others. Your ability to influence those around you in a positive manner is the beginning of leaving a legacy; fruitfulness is the manifestation of ability. In the same vein it is important that you are cautious about who influences you or your frame of reference.

## L – Links to your network

Steven Covey, noted author and motivational speaker, says we can only be as effective as our network, because we are interdependent upon each other. Networking, particularly upwards, is an invaluable asset in developing one’s ability. In South Africa, there is a term called uBuntu. Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu explains uBuntu as follows:

*‘Ubuntu is the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can’t exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can’t be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – uBuntu – you are known for your generosity.*

*‘We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.’*

## I – Insight

Maturity gives insight – as you develop and utilise your abilities you will gain much-needed insight that will guide your decisions. Insight and introspection mould your integrity when called upon to showcase your ability.

## **T – Thrust**

Fulfilling your destiny doesn't happen automatically. A well-honed ability will thrust you along the path to your destiny. Success isn't accidental but rather the outcome of discipline and effort. When we 'put our hands to the plough', we should maintain a course that will assure its completion. Thrust suggests effective meaningful motion with focus and direction. Habits fuel your ability towards your success.

## **Y – Yearn**

Those who want something badly enough will make every endeavour to attain the prize; they will yearn to grow, to develop specialised skills and add value; excuses are not a part of their arsenal. The desire to develop their ability will drive them to explore opportunities and optimise their skills.

## **WHAT DIFFERENTIATES SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE WHO USE THEIR ABILITY EFFECTIVELY?**

They are:

- Confident in their strengths (yet do not underestimate their weakness)
- Strategic thinkers
- Willing to learn
- Willing to make adjustments/changes whenever necessary
- Able to re-evaluate and reinvent themselves if required to do so
- Unique and stand out in a crowd (they do not blend in and settle for mediocrity)
- Risk-takers
- Motivated and focused
- Able to take decisive action

All of us have certain areas of expertise. A weakness is not a failure. It however can become debilitating if we erect a monument to it. Do not allow yourself the 'pleasure' of entertaining your weakness. Instead, focus on using your known strengths and abilities.

You can't stay the way you are, and miss out on the opportunity of

becoming successful. Although they may not always be the most talented, successful people are always more prepared.

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*We are the extension of our thoughts.*

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You can accomplish anything you set your mind to, but if you constantly tell yourself that you are unable to do something, you never will. I'm reminded of the quote by Henry Ford, 'Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right.' This reinforces the fact that we are the extension of our thoughts.

Do everything to improve your weakness, but focus on your strength. Use your unique strength to solve unique problems. This will lead to your success and position you as an expert. There is something unique about you; don't apologize for it and try to be like anyone else.

*Life is a creation, not a discovery. You do not live each day to discover what it holds for you, but to create it. You are creating your reality every minute, probably without knowing it. Thought is the first level of creation. Words are thoughts expressed; the second level of creation. Next comes action. Actions are words moving.*

– Author unknown

In this information-hungry age we use technology to make our lives a little more comfortable. You're probably familiar with the internet and the vast array of products and services offered. We surf the web to gather valuable information, conduct business, do research, etc. Behind the 'visible' web pages is encoded language. We don't see the encoded language or the hidden links. We only see what is called the 'front-end'. The encoded language that drives the front-page and gives us access to all the data we want is crucial to successfully downloading the information. Initially this code only existed in the mind of the webmaster, the creator of the webpage. We don't give much attention to the encoded language – only the end result. The code, however, is the success behind the website we're attempting to access.



The website is hosted on a server which allows us access to the website.

Similarly, our thought processes may not be fully understood by those who view our ‘creations’, but they accept it on the basis of trust, credibility and, often, one’s relationships. Our actions are merely an extension of our thoughts and our brain is the server that facilitates the access. It is therefore important that we input accurate information because we will manifest whatever we have uploaded into our recall system. Wholesome information will yield wholesome results. The choices we make today impact our tomorrows and those around us

*Although words frame our creation, that which we see in the physical realm is an ‘enactment’ of the script we have written mentally.*

– Alvin Fredericks

Las Vegas is the gambling capital of the world. It seduces the unsuspecting with promises of overnight wealth and status. On the other hand, there is also the risk of losing everything – and yet people are seduced by its promises. An occasional win merely reinforces the probability of winning the ultimate jackpot. It may be possible to recover some of your losses. The law of probability governs the gambling world. But what if your life was at stake instead of a dollar? Would you still be prepared to gamble? Yet we gamble with our lives and the possibilities that we may not recognise immediately. We resist the need to have structure and discipline. Do you want to play roulette with your life and base your future on the roll of the dice? Are you assured of tomorrow? If not, then shouldn’t you live today with purpose? Shouldn’t you transform your thinking so that the output is consistent with your God-given destiny?

*The Universe is just a big Xerox. It simply produces multiple copies of your thoughts.*

– Author unknown

Part of working hard is thinking hard. In fact thinking hard is a precursor to working hard, for that is when strategy is formulated and the foundation is laid. The whole plan is constructed, dissected, repackaged and eventually

executed. Only when the creator is reasonably sure of the end result, will he present his creation. Creation can never be perceived as being useless or wasteful. If the result is unsuccessful, then the creator goes ‘back to the drawing board’ to evaluate the process and ascertain what went wrong. The resolute spirit of the creator will eventually yield the desired results. Focused thinking results in greater productivity.

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*Focused thinking results in greater productivity.*

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Quality Management practitioners are urged to ‘get it right the first time’. Although this isn’t always practical in real-life situations, this concept holds true for most aspects of our lives. If our thinking process is fine-tuned, then we will optimise the use of our resources and streamline our actions, assuring efficiency. All successful individuals spend time contemplating outcomes, particularly when they benefit others.

A photograph normally draws your attention to the main subject. The background in the photograph is secondary. Concise and uncluttered thinking brings your destiny into sharp focus. Thinking defines our paradigms and consequently, our actions. This then will influence others, either positively or negatively. We are also influenced by others’ frames of reference.

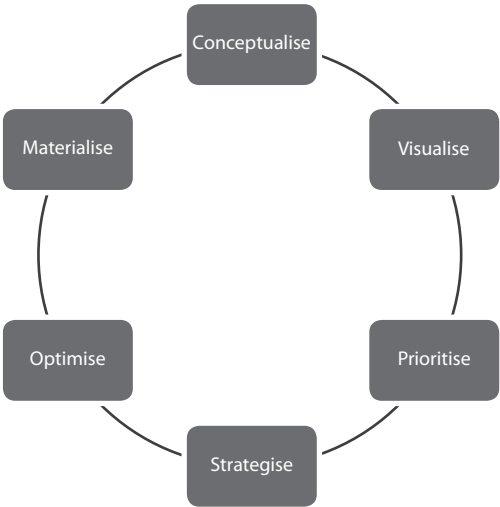
Because of this, it is important to have defined structures in place to guide your actions. If your structures are not clearly defined or you’re prone to be undisciplined, then there is a strong probability of being distracted from fulfilling your purpose and destiny and being influenced by others. We are called to stand out and not to fit in; we should cause peer pressure. Our thoughts and eventual outputs (actions) should be superior.

We are not products of our circumstances even though many prefer to cling to their circumstances as a crutch. The alternative, which is most often the unknown, is too risky. Too many of us rely on people and are in danger of being hurt or rejected if that person does not deliver on his or her promises.

There is a proverb that says, ‘The hands of the diligent ones shall rule, but laziness ends in slave labour.’ When you look at the world around you,

you will realize that productivity is driven by strategic thinking and careful and deliberate planning. Although the work is ultimately carried out by skilled labour, it was birthed in the mind of the creator. Every successful product was conceived in the mind of the creator, from the prototype through to the product’s marketing and implementation.

*Whatever failures I have known, whatever errors I have committed, whatever follies I have witnessed in private and public life have been the consequence of action without thought.*  
– Bernard M Baruch



*Concept process cycle*

Conception starts with a seed and is nurtured in the womb of process. In order for your concept to materialize, you need to set clear goals. Shortcuts in the process could be costly. Everything that is visible goes through the following process (cycle):

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*Conception starts with a seed and is nurtured in the womb of process.*

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**Conceptualize** – the end-result is conceived in the mind;

**Visualize** – the blurred lines of the mental image becomes clearer and precise;

**Prioritize** – select the necessary and urgent activities and do those first;

**Strategize** – a plan of action is developed to translate the concept into something tangible;

**Optimize** – efficient and effective use of the available resources is evaluated;

**Materialize** – presentation and implementation of the creation; set it in motion. Any improvements will have to go through the process again.

*The greatest tragedy in life is not death, but life ... life that fails to fulfil its purpose and potential.*

– Myles Munroe

If your performance doesn't consistently show creativity, originality, quality and results, then check your pulse. Good is always at the mercy of better, because best is the enemy of good.

# ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY



## CHAPTER 7

*Aim for success, not perfection. Never give up your right to be wrong, because then you will lose the ability to learn new things and move forward with your life.*

*– David M Burns*

Isn't it ironical that when we achieve success, we almost never give others any credit – but when we face a crisis or fail in an area, we immediately look for someone to blame. I'm sure many of you will recognise the following scenario:

*'Adam, where are you?' 'I'm hiding from you.' 'Why?'*

*'Because I'm naked – but you knew that and yet you allowed me to parade around the garden without any warning.'*

*'How did you know you were naked?'*

*'Well, you know the woman you gave me, she made me eat of that fruit that you told us not to partake of and when I did I saw that we were naked. I was so embarrassed.'*

*'Eve!' 'Now, don't look at me like that, let me explain. I was taking a stroll and talking to the animals, when the serpent joined in the conversation, and he persuaded me to try that fruit – he even told me that you didn't want my eyes opened to the truth. So I tasted it, I only took a little bite. As for that man you gave me, well I had to share the fruit with him (he looked like he needed some nourishment). I thought he would have stopped me*

*but he also ate of the fruit. I realised that I could ask him for anything if I rolled my eyes at him.'*

This set the tone for the generations to follow. Pointing fingers and passing the buck has become man's *modus operandi*; it's almost become a natural outflow of his persona.

Is it true? Are we quick to criticise and point fingers of blame? Has our society become a community of hypocrites; I don't mean to generalise but wish to highlight this problem. We tend to overlook it because if it's uprooted then we will be forced to accept responsibility for our actions. When we pass blame, we limit our potential for growth.

It's hard to criticize ourselves and admit failure or accept responsibility.

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*When we pass blame, we limit our potential for growth.*

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Like a heavy mist, this attitude pervades society, clouding our thinking. Blaming others has a domino effect – eventually no one is left standing and the issue at hand is left unresolved and has far-reaching implications. But because ego and pride prevent us from asking for forgiveness and accepting responsibility, we perpetuate the problem by passing blame.

Responsibility is the ability to respond to any situation appropriately, thereby causing a favourable outcome. By blaming something outside of ourselves, we relinquish the power of control and accountability. I came across this poem by Charles Osgood that sums up the issue of responsibility:

*There was a most important job that needed to be done,  
And no reason not to do it, there was absolutely none.  
But in vital matters such as this, the thing you have to ask  
Is who exactly will it be who'll carry out the task?  
Anybody could have told you that everybody knew  
That this was something somebody would surely have to do.  
Nobody was unwilling; anybody had the ability.  
But nobody believed it was their responsibility.*

*It seemed to be a job that anybody could have done,  
If anybody thought he was supposed to be the one.  
But since everybody recognised that anybody could,  
Everybody took for granted that somebody would.  
But nobody told anybody that we are aware of,  
That he would be in charge of seeing it was taken care of.  
And nobody took it on himself to follow through,  
And do what everybody thought that somebody would do.  
When what everybody needed so did not get done at all,  
Everybody was complaining that somebody dropped the ball.  
Anybody then could see it was an awful crying shame,  
And everybody looked around for somebody to blame.  
Somebody should have done the job.  
And Everybody should have,  
But in the end Nobody did  
What Anybody could have.*

– Charles Osgood

Yes, we may be interdependent but as soon as we find ourselves in a tight spot, we look for a scapegoat. This even happens when a contract is in place; people look for an escape clause. Integrity, it seems, is sacrificed on the altar of compromise and blame.

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*Integrity, it seems, is sacrificed on the  
altar of compromise and blame.*

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Children learn this behaviour at a young age, so lies and pointing fingers become the order of the day. Responsibility and accountability are aligned to a sense of empowerment and personal control. When someone accepts responsibility, that person takes ownership of his/her actions. When we teach our children to be accountable, we empower them and promote a sense of self-worth.

Now I am not suggesting for a moment that we have to be martyrs and



allow others to walk all over us like a doormat. We need to speak the truth in love and not be judgemental. Many see themselves as being assertive when in fact they are confrontational. Every aspect of our lives should be conducted in a manner of excellence and transparency. We need to display this R-A-R-E characteristic:

**R** – Responsibility

**A** – Accountability

**R** – Repentance

**E** – Empowered to be excellent

*Accept everything about yourself—I mean everything. You are you  
and that is the beginning and the end – no apologies, no regrets.*

*– Clark Moustakas*

Isn't it so typical of many today who are quick to expose others just so that the spotlight does not fall on them? Blame shifting has evolved into a fine art. Some people are so adept at this that they can sometimes convince you that it was your fault in the first place. They can manipulate the truth and retain sufficient facts just so that you do not readily identify their motives. We are called to shift our paradigm and not the blame.

Let's explore the basis and results of the escape route called BLAME.

## **B – Blemish**

When you blame someone you blemish that person's character. I'm reminded of the story of a man who was guilty of spreading gossip. He went to his priest to confess. The priest asked him to hammer some nails into a wooden post. After that he was asked to remove the nails and repaint the post. Although the post looked much better after the coat of paint, the holes still remained. The blemishes caused by blame leave a scar. Once scarred, the individual's credibility is always questionable. Live by the philosophy, 'If I don't have anything good to say about someone – then I should be silent.'

## **L – Lies**

Passing blame is often rooted in lies (there is no such thing as half a truth!). Lies can be damning. Lives have been destroyed through mere speculation and assumptions. I heard someone say that assumptions are the termites of relationships. They eat away at the very core of the relationship until the only thing that is left is the veneer, a façade of something that once was. Lies kill dreams and erode relationships and potential.

## **A – Aftermath**

The aftermath of blaming is hurt and devastation. Let us consider the recent earthquakes and tsunamis and the resultant devastation. Now you may consider this to be an exaggeration, but the aftermath of blaming (gossiping can be included here) is similar to the hurt, devastation and isolation caused by these disasters. Just as it takes many years to rehabilitate the affected areas, so it will take much effort to undo the hurt caused by blaming others, especially if it is unfounded.

## **M – Manipulate**

Blaming is normally the result of manipulating information; trying to make the other person look bad while at the same time promoting oneself. Some have developed this into such a fine art that they don't recognise it for what it really is – a shadow – having some form but no substance.

## **E –Excuses**

Excuses taint the evidence and colour the truth. When we make excuses, we undermine the other person's integrity and intelligence.

Playing the blame game is a sign of insecurity. It is hard to accept responsibility which could bruise your ego. But it is crucial that we are able to do this in order to start experiencing true success in our lives. Accepting responsibility is the first step towards changing our paradigm. It is the hallmark of a successful person. Blaming can deny you your birth-right and destiny.

Accepting responsibility should become part of a successful person's repertoire and cornerstone, but is not necessarily easy to accomplish. Not only do successful people take credit for their successes, they also take responsibility

for their failures. By accepting responsibility when things go wrong, you are then in a position to change them.

*And as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.*

– Nelson Mandela

True liberty comes when we rise above self-preservation and embrace truth and honesty. Self-help author, Michael Jeffreys, interviewed fifteen motivational experts in 1997, including Brian Tracy, Les Brown, Wayne Dyer, Mike Ferry, Patricia Fripp, Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen. He took notes and distilled the following eight secrets, which he then published in his book, *Secrets of the Motivational Superstars*.

Each of the experts was convinced that the following eight tips constitute what you need to do in order to be really successful:

1. Take 100% Responsibility for Your Life
2. Live Your Life On Purpose
3. Be Willing to Pay the Price
4. Stay Focused
5. Become an Expert in Your Field
6. Write out a Plan for Achieving Your Goals
7. Never Give Up
8. Don't Delay

Picture the person you want to become and work more toward becoming that kind of person. If you see yourself as someone with purpose and direction in life, then that is the kind of person you are becoming.

## **Twenty-one things to remember**

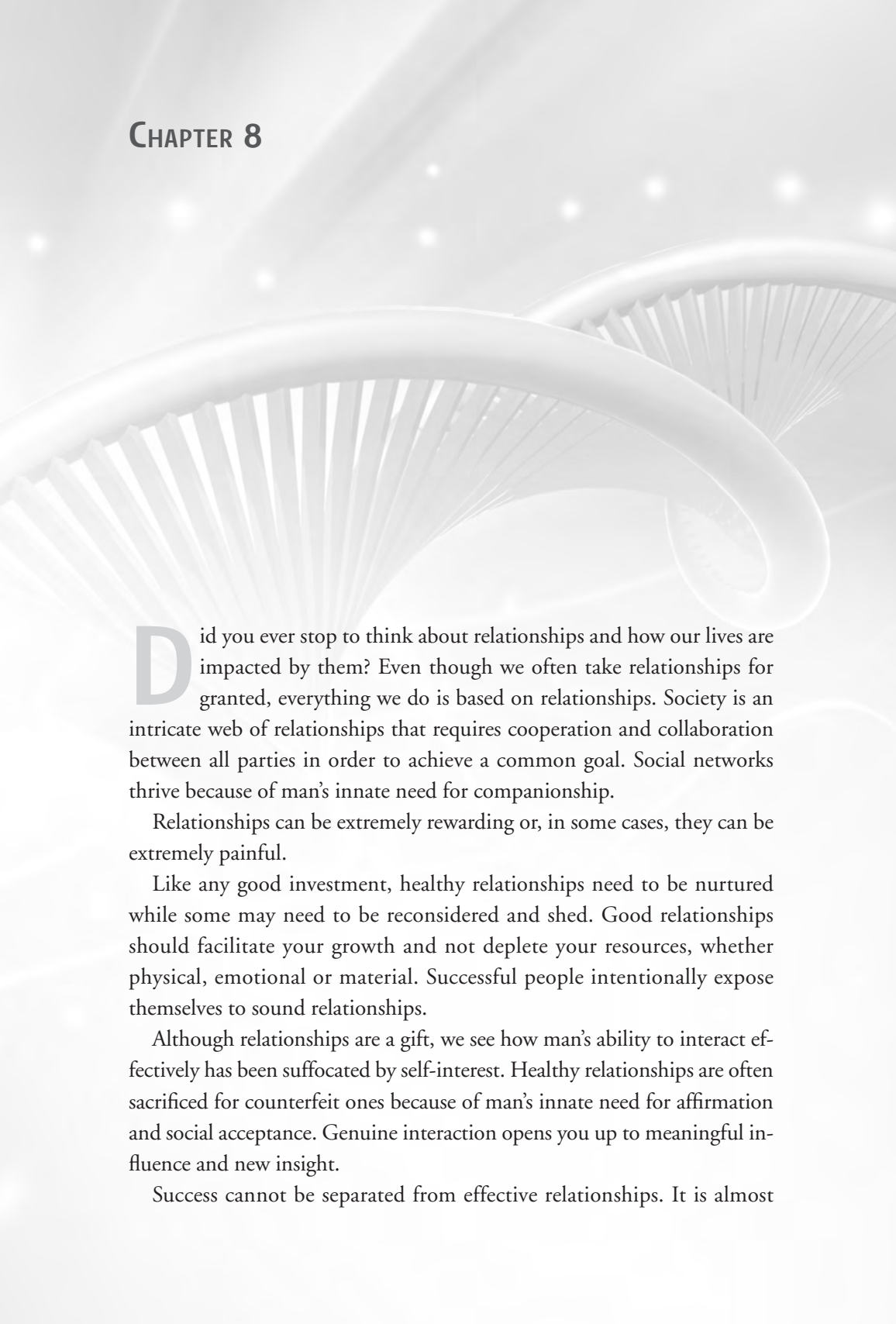
1. No one can ruin your day without YOUR permission.
2. Most people will be about as happy as they decide to be.
3. Others can stop you temporarily, but only you can do it permanently.
4. Whatever you are willing to put up with, is exactly what you will have.

5. Success stops when you do.
6. When your ship comes in ... make sure you are willing to unload it.
7. You will never 'have it all together'.
8. Life is a journey ... not a destination. Enjoy the trip!
9. The biggest lie on the planet: 'When I get what I want, I will be happy.'
10. The best way to escape your problem is to solve it.
11. I've learned that ultimately, 'takers' lose and 'givers' win.
12. Life's precious moments don't have value, unless they are shared.
13. If you don't start, it's certain you won't arrive.
14. We often fear the thing we want the most.
15. He or she who laughs ... lasts.
16. Yesterday was the deadline for all complaints.
17. Look for opportunities ... not guarantees.
18. Life is what's coming ... not what was.
19. Success is getting up one more time.
20. Now is the most interesting time of all.
21. When things go wrong ... don't go with the flow.

# RELATIONSHIPS



## CHAPTER 8



**D**id you ever stop to think about relationships and how our lives are impacted by them? Even though we often take relationships for granted, everything we do is based on relationships. Society is an intricate web of relationships that requires cooperation and collaboration between all parties in order to achieve a common goal. Social networks thrive because of man's innate need for companionship.

Relationships can be extremely rewarding or, in some cases, they can be extremely painful.

Like any good investment, healthy relationships need to be nurtured while some may need to be reconsidered and shed. Good relationships should facilitate your growth and not deplete your resources, whether physical, emotional or material. Successful people intentionally expose themselves to sound relationships.

Although relationships are a gift, we see how man's ability to interact effectively has been suffocated by self-interest. Healthy relationships are often sacrificed for counterfeit ones because of man's innate need for affirmation and social acceptance. Genuine interaction opens you up to meaningful influence and new insight.

Success cannot be separated from effective relationships. It is almost

impossible to reach your dreams without involving people in one way or another. Some dreams require certain skills and talents that the dreamer might not have. The only way to access these is to build meaningful relationships with someone who has them. Such relationships are critical if your dream is to succeed. There are personal attributes that you should have, and always display, if you are to win certain people over.

## **Respect for others**

This is one of the most critical ingredients to win people. No one is willing to offer their time, space, talent and input to someone who does not respect them. Disrespect acts as a repellent – it pushes people away. To respect people earns you their attention, and attracts their input. Respect must be showed to all people, regardless of status, race or gender.

## **Consideration**

If you are inconsiderate, you become judgmental, and unduly critical of another's point of view. A lack of consideration makes you unapproachable. When all that matters is *your* opinion, you will gradually drive others away from you without you even realising it.

Considerate people always listen to others and express their opinion in a modest and friendly manner. Even though they differ with your opinion, it is important to be sincere and sensitive, yet not patronising.

## **Keep your word**

One area that destroys your chance to win people is mistrust. If people cannot trust you, they will be reluctant to stand by you or even volunteer their services to you. We find ourselves in this predicament when we fail to keep our word. Don't make promises you cannot keep. Once we fail to keep our word, we lose a chance to win people over to us. Since we are human, we are bound to make mistakes, but it is integrity that demands that we go to a person in good time and apologise if there is a likelihood of failing to keep to our commitment. People will respect you for your transparency.

Your understanding of the importance of people on your journey to success will help you to mature in the way you relate to people. The role of others in the realization of your dream cannot be over-estimated. Anyone

who lacks in the area of relationships and their importance in their lives limits their opportunities for success.

Mutual respect is the basis of all great relationships, but too many are caught up in promoting their own agenda and disregard how others feel. Sincere appreciation of how each person feels in a situation will promote respect. This can be achieved by actively listening to the other party and by genuinely trying to understand how they function.

Relationships of any kind can be extremely delicate, because we are all different and are guided by different signals. In order to develop healthy relationships, we need to invest in and nurture those relationships that matter. Certain relationships can be extremely satisfying and provide a sense of belonging. On the other hand, some relationships can be quite demanding and become a strain over a period of time, thereby leaving the individuals involved quite drained. Avoid relationships that are demanding and have the potential to become toxic.

I was intrigued by the recent campaign in which the word ‘HEITA’ was used. There was much hype and speculation around its use before it was introduced as a product of one of the local telecommunications suppliers focussing on the mass consumer market.

According to the dictionary of South African terms, the word ‘heita’ was ‘arguably modified from the Setswana phrase “Ee, thata”, meaning “yes thoroughly”, in response to the greeting “A lotsogile”, meaning “are you well?” – it is a form of greeting that expresses happiness at encountering friends or acquaintances’.

Let us consider some of the characteristics of a relationship – ‘suggested’ by the greeting – HEITA.

## **H –Honesty**

Honesty is the basis of all relationships. If a relationship is to develop, individuals need to be honest with each other. This isn’t always easy as it actually could affect relationships adversely. One can be brutally honest without being brutal. Intentions and attitude should guide you. Honesty promotes openness and acceptance and must be done with pure intentions that will benefit the other party.



## **E – Empowerment**

Healthy relationships seek to empower the parties concerned without fear of a sense of obligation. There is nothing worse than being in a relationship that makes you feel obligated to someone for his/her assistance. On the other hand, any form of assistance should not be taken for granted because of a particular friendship/relationship. Empowering another individual to fulfil his/her destiny in turn empowers you to be all that you can be.

## **I – Investment-Injection**

As mentioned earlier, one needs to invest in relationships in order for them to be sustainable. Relationships that are built on the foundation of self-gain will erode and eventually fizzle out over a period of time if they are one-sided. Any relationship that's worth having is worth investing in.

## **T –Transparency and Trust**

Relationships are built on trust. When the storms challenge the foundation of your relationship, will it stand? How easily do you trust? Can you be trusted? Are you transparent in your interactions? Don't misunderstand me, I'm not suggesting that you divulge all your personal information but rather that you be cautious and not suspicious of everyone. Transparency and trust anchor any worthwhile relationship. Trust is also enhanced by effective listening and by not prejudging. This is important if individuals are to understand each other. Informal discussions are conducive as they bring out issues and concerns comfortably.

## **A – Affirmation**

Healthy relationships foster affirmation of each other without being false or patronising. The easiest way to develop this is to make an attempt to appreciate what is important to the other person. Affirmation is an emotional building tool but should not be used as a crutch. So don't underestimate the potential of a greeting – great relationships have been forged on a simple introduction or greeting. It is important to develop an atmosphere where the other party can openly express their feelings when they need to. When parties fail to express whatever is on their mind or their feelings, it can get in the way of building a healthy relationship.

Some of the elements that affect relationships include:

- a history of stereotyping or mistrust
- blaming the other person for a strained relationship
- excluding the other party's feelings when focusing on a task
- not having clear or defined objectives, roles and expectations of each party in a relationship.

Relationships are important to anyone. Addressing issues and problems promptly are essential to further improve the relationship.

In his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey discusses an 'Emotional Bank Account'. According to this, each of us has an emotional bank account with everyone with whom we interact closely. We have one with our spouse, with our children, with friends and co-workers. They in turn have one with us. When we have a large balance in our emotional bank account with others, relationships are strong and trust is high. When the balance is low or our account is overdrawn, relationships and trust suffer.

Every activity has some sort of interaction; this can be at a simple or complex level. Effective relationships within an organization are a necessity as the well-being of the group or organization is reliant upon inter-personal skills – this includes all levels in the organisation. Although organisational structure is important, the hierarchy does not imply social class and status but rather defines one's role in the organisation.

Even though background and culture play a part, these become a problem only if they are highlighted or used as an excuse. Too many hide behind the travesty of their past, or justify their behaviour because of it. In a work environment, acceptance (not tolerance) is the key to a healthy work environment.

*Winning is not an automatic process. If you win, you do it on purpose. And more importantly, you do it as a team.*

*– Dr John Maxwell*

Noted author and inspirational speaker, Dr John Maxwell highlights attributes of a successful team as follows:

- Commitment
- Contribution
- Competence
- Communication
- Co-operation

Another key factor in a relationship is respect. Differences between people can be quite interesting and need to be tackled directly. These differences may lead to the formation of different perspectives when considering information pertinent to the relationship.

While many organisations encourage team building programmes, these programmes are only as successful as the individuals who buy into them unconditionally; who commit to the programme with no bias or prejudice.

Longfellow once said, 'All your strength is in union. All your danger is in discord.' If I go to my team with a me-orientated attitude, I will never be successful. But if I go to them with an others-orientated attitude, it holds a whole different meaning.

## **FAMILIARITY, AN ENEMY OF EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

There is much truth in the saying, 'Familiarity breeds contempt.' Once you reach a level where others' input into your life becomes unimportant, then it is probable that you have become too familiar with them. You begin to treat their concern and input as non-valuable to you. This may cause you to become cynical or critical of their intentions. Caution though, suspicion may actually show up your own insecurities. Don't evaluate relationships from the perspective of familiarity only. Sometimes a strong relationship can thrive on intermittent silence. This is time to reflect. Try to be objective in any relationship and keep an open mind – not all people are out to 'get you'.

Healthy relationships should foster growth and take you to the next level of development. Do not allow pity to determine your relationships. The

true test of a relationship is your willingness to share your very best with someone who might not be able to do the same for you. What you are willing to sacrifice defines the depth of your commitment to a relationship.

New relationships do not only mean new faces, but new mind-sets and attitudes. The thought patterns of those you call friends will influence your approach to life. Your passion will effortlessly pull you towards people with the same interests. These people will turn on the fire of your passion and stir you to the level where your passion drives you to an enriching and rewarding life of purpose. Over time, this will become your lifestyle. Passionless efforts translate into poor service delivery and wasted time – the outcome will be bland.

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*Passionless efforts translate into poor  
service delivery and wasted time.*

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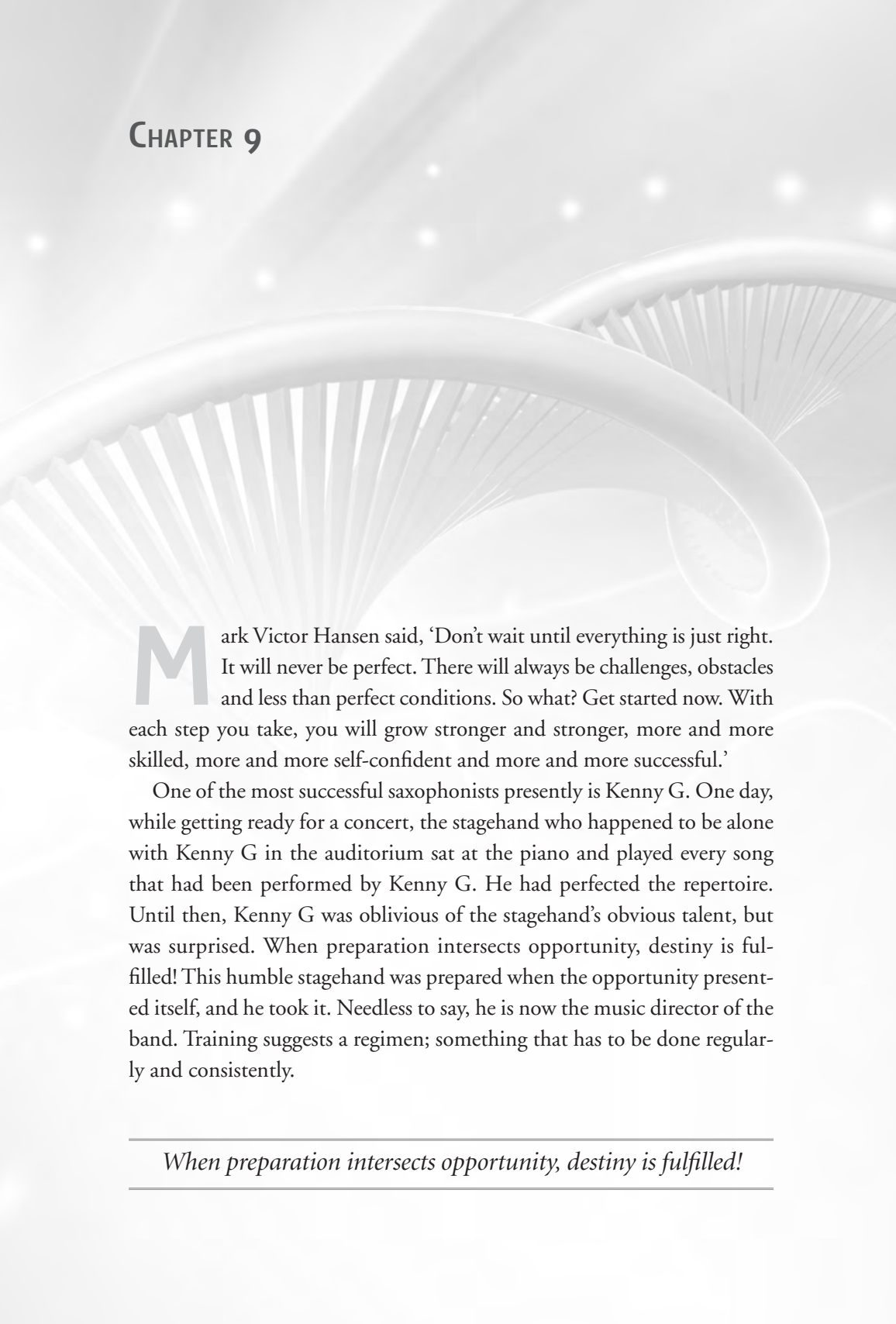
*Life is not about finding the right person, but creating the right relationship. It's not about how we care in the beginning, but how much we grow and nourish one another in a relationship. Some people always throw stones in your path. It depends on you what you do with them – build a wall or a bridge? Remember you are the architect of your life. Search for a beautiful heart, not a beautiful face, because beautiful things won't last forever, but a golden heart does and will prosper you and add value to yourself.*

– Author unknown

# RECOGNISING OPPORTUNITIES



## CHAPTER 9



**M**ark Victor Hansen said, ‘Don’t wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect. There will always be challenges, obstacles and less than perfect conditions. So what? Get started now. With each step you take, you will grow stronger and stronger, more and more skilled, more and more self-confident and more and more successful.’

One of the most successful saxophonists presently is Kenny G. One day, while getting ready for a concert, the stagehand who happened to be alone with Kenny G in the auditorium sat at the piano and played every song that had been performed by Kenny G. He had perfected the repertoire. Until then, Kenny G was oblivious of the stagehand’s obvious talent, but was surprised. When preparation intersects opportunity, destiny is fulfilled! This humble stagehand was prepared when the opportunity presented itself, and he took it. Needless to say, he is now the music director of the band. Training suggests a regimen; something that has to be done regularly and consistently.

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*When preparation intersects opportunity, destiny is fulfilled!*

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Opportunities abound everywhere, but it takes a special kind of insight to recognise them as such. Successful people train themselves to look beyond the ordinary and the obvious; for them the horizon is the norm. Only once they have surpassed the norm do they actually thrive. For them, mediocrity is not an option.

Dr John Maxwell said, ‘Some of us are visually acute but blind to opportunity.’ If we apply this maxim and wake up each day looking for opportunities, they are sure to present themselves. Even when it may seem that a crisis is looming, learn to look for the opportunity tucked away deep within the crisis.

Allow me to remind you of the story of Joseph in the Bible. In reality, his opportunity to become the ‘deliverer’ of Egypt and his people was birthed in the pit (when his brothers threw him in and left him for dead). He envisioned greatness even though he was ostracised for it. Very often those close to you will be the ones to ridicule you and undermine your dream and try to stifle your dream.

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*Joseph’s hunger for greatness was nurtured in the womb of his dreams and delivered by the midwife called opportunity.*

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Joseph’s hunger for greatness was nurtured in the womb of his dreams and delivered by the midwife called opportunity. Even when Joseph was imprisoned falsely, he maintained his dignity and integrity. He interpreted the dreams of one of the inmates, who was subsequently freed and worked in Pharaoh’s palace. When Pharaoh had a dream and needed an interpreter, the helper told him of Joseph’s ability to accurately interpret dreams. Joseph was subsequently freed and became the Prime Minister of Egypt and was answerable directly to Pharaoh.

*A problem is something you may find goes along with an opportunity long before you can find a way to exploit it.*

– Drew Byrne

When you sharpen your skills and use them effectively, your ‘ability’ will go before you and open doors for you. Practise your skills daily and use them for the benefit of others even if there isn’t any immediate reward. The time will come when people will say, ‘I know a man.’ Networking is one of the greatest tools we have, but it is important that we develop our skills. Luck is the combined result of preparation and opportunity.

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*Is your receiver tuned in to the station called ‘Opportunity’?*

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Will they call your name when they want something done in an excellent manner; does your name go before you because of your ability and willingness? Is your receiver tuned in to the station called ‘Opportunity’? What do you do when an opportunity presents itself? Do you recognise it for what it is and respond with enthusiasm?

*Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.*

– Mark Twain

Look for opportunities that are not obvious. Opportunities will normally align themselves with your specific skills. Joseph interpreted dreams; David was a shepherd who developed his skills as a warrior on the foothills of his hometown. Have you identified your skills and strengths? Do you practise them regularly?

Before we proceed, I would like to point out that there is a difference between recognising opportunities and being an opportunist. Opportunities benefit you and those around you whereas an opportunist exploits those around him and almost always has a personal agenda.

*People wait for opportunity to come along ... yet it is there every morning.*



Life presents us with opportunities daily, but we often miss them because we do not see them hidden ‘under the circumstances’. We have only this life to live, so we need to develop insight to avail ourselves of the opportunities when they present themselves. Sometimes we are distracted by the effort and give up prematurely. How is it possible to see problems as possibilities? How do you develop laser-cutting focus to train your mind to identify opportunities? The answer lies in the opportunity itself. Let us consider this often-overlooked word a little closer.

## O – Observant

Be observant. Look out for opportunities particularly when the odds are against you. Train yourself to look beyond the circumstances and to match your skills with whatever the situation demands. Opportunities require initiative, insight and impetus.

## P – Perception

Do not allow yourself to be influenced by others’ perception of you or your circumstances. Similarly, do not jump to conclusions based on premature perception and prejudice. Develop the necessary structures and discipline so that you will be prepared to make the most of the opportunity. A magnifying glass does not make an image bigger, it alters *your perception* of the image.

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*A magnifying glass does not make an image bigger,  
it alters your perception of the image.*

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## P – Package

It is important to package the requirements that are necessary to exploit the potential of the opportunity. Packaging requires careful planning, evaluating and equipping oneself. On the other hand, the opportunity itself could be packaged and labelled in such a way that we do not recognise it. There is always an element of risk in exploiting an opportunity.

## **O – Obvious**

Not all opportunities are obvious. Prepare yourself so that when an opportunity presents itself, you will not only be able to identify it, but also be adequately prepared to optimise its potential.

## **R – Risk/Reward**

There is always an element of risk involved in opportunities, but the rewards often justify the risks.

## **T – Timing**

Opportunities present themselves but have a limited life span, so timing is crucial. It is important to exploit the opportunity in the window of that opportunity. Never give up on your dreams. Be tenacious and hold to the promise that God has given you in an opportunity.

## **U – Umbilical**

Link your opportunity to your strengths and skills like an umbilical cord. Nurture it with preparation, perseverance and anticipation. Although the umbilical cord is severed at birth, once you give birth to your dreams, do not stop but always strive for excellence.

## **N – Network**

Develop a meaningful network through credibility. This will enhance your effectiveness and save time, duplication and effort. Synergy through collaboration will bring out the best in you and benefit all concerned.

## **I – Identify**

Be quick to identify opportunities and the relevant activities. Spend time in assessing the strengths, weaknesses and costs before getting into a situation that could overwhelm you. Identify opportunities and optimise your time on earth.

## **T – Temporary**

There is an old proverb that says, 'Strike while the iron is hot.' This also holds true for opportunities, which are not endless. The window period of

the opportunity is temporary and should be exploited within the life span of the opportunity. Do not be ambivalent or overly cautious. Yes, there is a probability of rejection or failure, but these do not have to be perceived as being fatal.

## **Y – Yardstick**

Use your previous successes as a yardstick to ascertain what's required to fulfil the demands of new opportunities.

*Some men see things as they are and ask, 'Why?' I dare to dream of things that never were and ask, 'Why not?'*

– George Bernard Shaw

You don't have to have a title to recognise opportunity and 'step up to the plate'. Successful people recognise opportunities. Opportunities demand that you take responsibility and get involved.

I'm sure you've seen a tombstone. The date of birth and the date of death are separated by a dash. Is that the sub-total of one's life – a mere dash? How would you live your last hours?

How often do people allow an opportunity to pass them by and live to regret it? There was a crippled man who waited at a particular pool that was considered to bring healing once a year. For thirty-eight years he sat there, waiting for someone else to put him into the pool. For thirty-eight long years he waited, yearned, hoped and watched each year as his opportunity passed him by. I sometimes wonder whether his crippled state was in fact his 'comfort zone'. For all this time he relied on hand-outs and pity.

I'm reminded of a young beggar who stood daily at a particular intersection in an affluent suburb. When offered a job, he simply smiled but turned down the offer. Although he was a pleasant character, he was content with his daily ritual of begging. When I asked him why he turned down the job, his reply astounded me, 'I make more money at this intersection than I would by doing odd-jobs.'

How badly do you wish to rise up from the dust of your circumstances? Can you taste your victory or do you rely on someone else to describe the taste to you?

As Albert Einstein once said, 'In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity.' How does a leader provide the steady course when the opportunity to take shortcuts can seem the easiest route?

The answer comes not by bracing for the downturn but by embracing the new, 21st century world in which we find ourselves. When we understand its conditions, we see opportunities to focus on at the very core of why we are in business in the first place. Further, by getting clear on that foundation, we are inspired by a long-term view of business and can avoid taking action that is counter to that. Finally, by enlisting others in that vision and inspiring them to act according to shared values, we have the power to not only survive but thrive and endure.

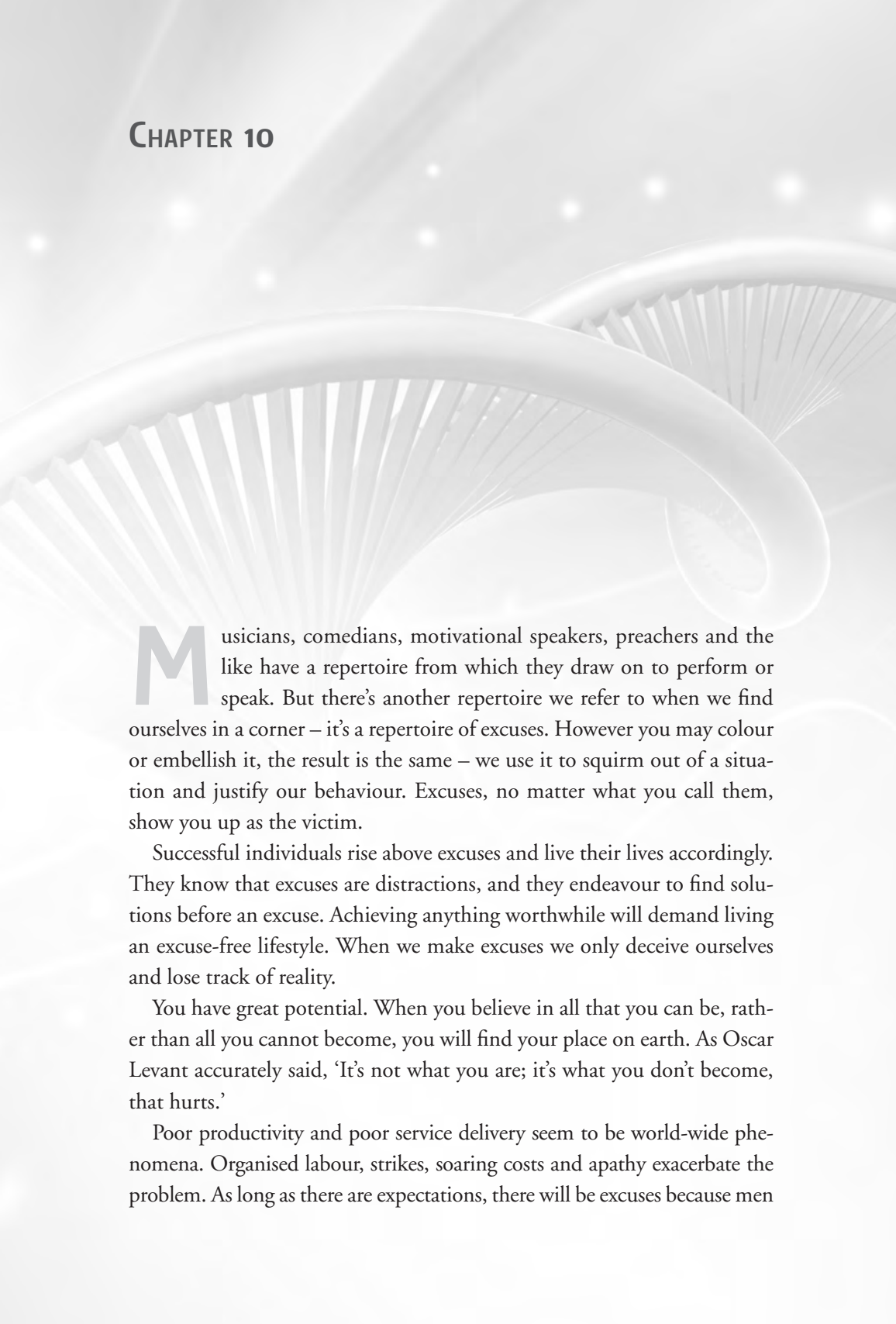
*Dawn, the mother of promise, draws back the curtain of the long night to allow the sun to shine through. She takes out her palette and delicately paints the morning sky with its alluring hues and it becomes a canvas of sheer brilliance; a breathless moment of passion and evolving poetry. With deft fingers she selects a golden ray and inscribes her message each day: 'Take hold of today and its promises – take hold of life. Carpe Diem – seize the opportunity.'*

– Alvin Fredericks

**LIVING A LIFE  
THAT IS FREE OF  
EXCUSES**



## CHAPTER 10



**M**usicians, comedians, motivational speakers, preachers and the like have a repertoire from which they draw on to perform or speak. But there's another repertoire we refer to when we find ourselves in a corner – it's a repertoire of excuses. However you may colour or embellish it, the result is the same – we use it to squirm out of a situation and justify our behaviour. Excuses, no matter what you call them, show you up as the victim.

Successful individuals rise above excuses and live their lives accordingly. They know that excuses are distractions, and they endeavour to find solutions before an excuse. Achieving anything worthwhile will demand living an excuse-free lifestyle. When we make excuses we only deceive ourselves and lose track of reality.

You have great potential. When you believe in all that you can be, rather than all you cannot become, you will find your place on earth. As Oscar Levant accurately said, 'It's not what you are; it's what you don't become, that hurts.'

Poor productivity and poor service delivery seem to be world-wide phenomena. Organised labour, strikes, soaring costs and apathy exacerbate the problem. As long as there are expectations, there will be excuses because men

and women avoid accepting responsibility for their actions. When we lower our expectations, we also lower acceptable standards and reinforce sub-standard behaviour. This eventually spirals downwards and out of control.

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*We don't have to apologise for excellence.*

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Living a life without excuses means maintaining standards or raising them whenever possible. We don't have to apologise for excellence.

Excuses for poor quality and non-delivery are often masked behind the cloak of religion, politics, one's background, the previous political regime, gender, etc. Do we respond to ever-lowering standards only when there are casualties or even worse, fatalities? When we do this, we move from the camp of excuses and adopt the self-righteous attitude of accusation and blame! When we accept low standards we promote mediocrity and complacency. There are many things that are out of our control, but there is no need for us to accept low standards in our *own* lives. Why does an exam have a pass mark that is much lower than the acceptable norm? We actually promote mediocrity and complacency by allowing the student to maintain a 'just as long as I passed' attitude.

Pat O'Bryan of Milagro World was impressed by the way the Beatles turned potential excuses for failure into opportunities. If the drumming was weak on a particular song, they would add in other percussion instruments to make the drum track more interesting. If the guitars were weak, they would bring in a great guitarist like Eric Clapton to play brilliant lead guitar. They could have blamed the drummer and guitarists for the weak sound and accepted a mediocre standard. Instead, they refused to make excuses and worked around their problems and achieved huge success.

Pat comments: 'Excuses are wonderful, aren't they? Once you've got a good one, you can hide behind it for years. Recognize excuses for what they are – mere window dressing – eradicate them, and turn your problems into opportunities. If you don't have money, a huge list, or a clue, team up with someone who does, and succeed anyway.'

*I've always felt it was not up to anyone else to make me give my best.*

*– Akeem Olajuwon*

So forget the excuses about being too old or too young or too unfit or too stupid. Find ways around these problems and press on to achieve your success goals.

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*Living your life without limits is to live a life without restrictions.*

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Living your life without limits is to live a life without restrictions. That means no restrictions whatsoever; on your mind, heart or soul. Give yourself permission to dream big, think big and always feel and believe that you will attain your heart's deepest desires. Open up your mind to an abundant and fulfilling life.

Many do not realize that they are living a life with self-imposed limits; they have imposed limitations on their potential, and they live a mediocre life. They don't believe that they can be successful; according to them, success is reserved for only a certain kind of individual.

Once the mind can dream it, it can believe it and achieve it. We need to take off the limits and draw on our deep-seated desire to soar. We need to set the pace for our success. An eagle can soar only once it releases its hold on the rock on which it is perched. The safety and security of the familiar has to be evaluated, especially in the face of a storm; to soar means to take a risk and believe in your God-given abilities.

There are no restrictions on living, and therefore there are no restrictions on your life except for the ones you yourself impose and those that were put there through the things you were taught as a child, including the things you learned from society, religion, education and the media.

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*There are no restrictions on living.*

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One of the biggest excuses I've heard as a reason for not living a fulfilled life is, 'I'm busy' or 'I have no money'. Each one of us gets the same amount of time in a day, week and year. We don't necessarily need money to begin living a life without limits. Money is external, while living a limitless life comes from within. Is there a hunger deep within you; do you yearn for a better future for you and your family?

What is an excuse? What power does this word have? Actually none – the hold it has on individuals is the power of bondage; its chains are unseen but no force can release its stranglehold on an individual. So, what are the secrets of an excuse?

**E – Enclose:** Excuses stifle the ability to 'think out of the box' and they kill dreams.

**X – 'X' marks the spot:** There will always be an element of fear and uncertainty, but excuses focus on this rather than on possibilities.

**C – Cancer:** Like cancer cells, excuses erode one's potential, ultimately destroying you.

**U – Ulterior:** Excuses are cloaked in ulterior motives and are normally a cover-up for passing blame and non-delivery.

**S – Stranglehold:** Excuses will suffocate you, causing you to merely exist instead of soaring and living a life of purpose.

**E – Encumber:** Excuses actually become a burden and will weigh you down because excuses give birth to more excuses. You can get caught up in this whirlwind and lose direction.

I have listed a few examples of individuals who managed to rise above their limitations and are listed among the history-makers of this world. They did not need an excuse to fulfil their desire to live out their lives and succeed when others thought that their previous defeat would be their end.

As a young man, Abraham Lincoln went to war a captain and returned a private. Afterwards, he was a failure as a businessman. As a lawyer in Springfield, he was too impractical and temperamental to be a success. He turned to politics and was defeated in his first try for the legislature, again defeated in his first attempt to be nominated for congress, defeated in his application to be commissioner of the General Land Office, defeated in

the senatorial election of 1854, defeated in his efforts for the vice-presidency in 1856, and defeated in the senatorial election of 1858. At about that time, he wrote in a letter to a friend, 'I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on the earth.' He went on to become one of the most successful American presidents.

Thomas Edison's teachers said he was 'too stupid to learn anything'. He was fired from his first two jobs for being 'non-productive'. As an inventor, Edison made 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light bulb. When a reporter asked, 'How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?' Edison replied, 'I didn't fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps.' The steps to your success have been ordained, so do not succumb to the seduction of failure or rejection.

One of the world's most renowned intellectuals, Albert Einstein, did not speak until he was four years old and did not read until he was seven. His parents thought he was 'sub-normal', and one of his teachers described him as 'mentally slow, unsociable and adrift forever in foolish dreams'.

Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team. Jordan once observed, 'I've failed over and over again in my life. That is why I succeed.'

You can't see motivation. Motivation is within you – you can't touch it, nor can you measure it. And therefore you can't manage it. Think about managing the things you can see and measure. Start concentrating on behaviour and performance.

How is your mental state? Knowing that you are deserving of a limitless life is not enough. You need to feel it from deep within you so that it becomes a part of who you are. When it becomes a part of you, everything you feel, say or do will convey your taking ownership of living a limitless life.

*Don't wait until you feel like taking a positive action. Take the action and then you will feel like doing it.*

*– Zig Ziglar.*

**CHARACTER IS THE  
CORNERSTONE**



Reputation, on the other hand, is what we think people think about us. We are forever seeking affirmation. Joyce Meyer, noted author and speaker, refers to this as an approval-addiction. We run ourselves to the ground simply trying to gain recognition for our efforts in trying to please or impress people. This stems from a sense of insecurity. When we realise the extent to which our character defines us, we will make a conscious effort to ensure that our lives are fulfilled. Character development is not an event, but a process. Those who embark on this journey will always take the road less travelled. The fork in the road is not about making a choice, but making the right choice.

Rudy Giuliani, former mayor of New York City, said, ‘If you don’t know where you’re going, you can’t help anyone else get there.’ Perceptions can be misleading. As is often stated, ‘First impressions are lasting and important.’ Often many start out to impress others but cannot keep up the façade for long. Sooner or later, they are bound to drop their guard and reveal their true self.

You may have seen or even participated in role-playing. What starts out as a game or task, ends up revealing deep underlying issues. Psychologists use this to analyse behaviour patterns. Focusing on one’s reputation only is like role-playing; the real person (one’s character) is revealed once the mask is taken off. Character is governed by one’s conduct (personal behaviour). Is your conduct congruent with your character, because appearances are temporary?

In many cities, there are buildings that have been declared national heritage sites, and may thus not be demolished. Consequently such buildings are dwarfed between modern high-rise complexes. However, developers have reached a compromise with some local authorities. They may demolish the internal structure of the building, but they are not allowed to destroy the façade of the building. So they demolish the internal sections of the building and retain only the façade. Sometimes this is incorporated into a new building, or is left standing as a monument to a bygone era.

This scenario is played out in the lives of so many people today. At the expense of structure, discipline and integrity – the building blocks of character – people maintain their facades. They feel justified in ‘retaining their dignity’. We sometimes try to impress when it seems that our character is

‘dwarfed’ by the over-inflated reputations of those around us. We feel insignificant and intimidated by those who may be more popular than us. Character does not dine with the ego – you feed one or the other!

Structure and discipline should be so designed that they continue across the generations to follow. Godly character affects and is reflected in the succeeding generations.

We hear the terms ‘character’ and ‘reputation’ used interchangeably even though there are subtle differences that distinguish them. Although the list is not exhaustive, the following attributes exemplify good character:

- Integrity
- Trustworthy and dependable
- One who leads by example
- Consistent behaviour
- Loves the Lord
- Humble yet assertive without being pushy
- Conscious of structure (time, planning, discipline, etc.)
- Has a serving attitude

When all is said and done, do you leave an impression or depression?

We normally see the world from our frame of reference – we are influenced by the environment, by what we read, whatever teaching we’ve been exposed to, etc. How we see ourselves determines how we see and view others. Perceptions and prejudice tint the world around us. Although we want the world to acknowledge our good character, we are quick to pass judgement on those around us, and question their motives and tarnish their character.

Your identity affects your destiny. Reputation is like the blossom while character is the structure and root system.

We are expected to live fruitful lives and impact those around us. How can we inhabit the earth if our vision is confined to our success only? A person with good character uplifts others, encourages and affirms others, is transparent, is content, thrives and is productive.

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*Reputation is like the blossom while character  
is the structure and root system.*

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Reputation relies on constant validation, affirmation and recognition, promotes self and is ambitious, often at the expense of others. Remember, man looks on the outward appearances but it is the character that sustains us. You don't need a title to lead and be successful.

*It takes a character-based foundation to make good decisions  
which will impact us now and from now on.*

– Zig Ziglar

Who you really are is reflected in what you do daily, especially when you need to make a choice between two values. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, 'Guard your integrity as a sacred thing.' Many studies of integrity show that it is the most sought-after attribute. For example, customers will not buy from a salesperson if they sense a lack of honesty and good character.

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*You don't need a title to lead and be successful.*

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It has been proven that the most successful individuals and organisations are those with high integrity, which builds confidence and enables them to do more business than their competitors.

*If honesty did not exist, it would have to be invented, as it is the  
surest way of getting rich.*

– Earl Nightingale

Character precedes you and guides all your interactions with others. We can develop our character by studying the lives of successful men and women such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Florence Nightingale, Susan B Anthony and Margaret Thatcher. Their

strength of character was a catalyst in making a difference in their world.

In his book *The Master Key to Riches*, Napoleon Hill describes how he created an imaginary board of personal advisors which comprised several significant figures in history such as Napoleon Bonaparte, Abraham Lincoln, Jesus Christ and Alexander the Great. It is said that he would consult his 'board' whenever he had to make a decision. He would 'workshop' the situation at hand with his 'board' and try to think it through from their perspective. No, he did not hear voices; because he had studied their lives and way of thinking, he was able to analyse a situation thoroughly and then make an informed decision. He was able to draw from their legacy of consistency and unblemished character.

Dr John Maxwell recommends that every successful leader should build an inner circle that adds value to him or her. However, he cautions that you should choose well because those in the inner circle will become your closest confidantes and as advisers will either build up or act against you. You should select men and women of integrity, whose character is unquestionable. Your character will also attract you to others who will look to you for input and guidance.

You can try this approach: Select someone (or a few people) whose opinion you respect. Ask yourself, 'What would that person do in my situation?' The more you walk, talk and behave consistently with your highest values, the more you will like yourself and the better you will feel about yourself.

Integrity is the foundation of character, and character development is one of the most important activities you can engage in. Working on your character means disciplining yourself to do more and more of those things that a thoroughly honest person would do, under all circumstances.

Brian Tracy, CEO of Brian Tracy International, a human resources company, said, 'All of life is lived from the inside out. At the very core of your personality lie your values about yourself and life in general. Your values determine the kind of person you really are, what you believe has defined your character, and your personality. It is what you stand for, and what you won't stand for, that tells you and the world the kind of person you have become.'

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*Character is refined in the cauldron of time and fired by life's process.*

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We should endeavour to develop unwavering character. It starts on the inside and manifests itself in our behaviour. Character is refined in the cauldron of time and fired by life's process. Do you have an exaggerated view or perception of yourself? What does the mirror of God's word reveal to you?

*Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.*

– Abraham Lincoln



# REWARDS VERSUS ENTITLEMENT



## CHAPTER 12

**W**hen you're proactive and develop structures and systems, you can enjoy the fruit of your labour within the boundaries of discipline. Contentment and fulfilment are the by-products of effective labour. Successful people can derive joy from a 'job well done' without feeling guilty.

I once read that a truck had broken down on the highway. The driver was standing next to the truck from which a front wheel had been removed. Someone stopped to offer assistance but the driver said that he had already sent for help. The wheel bearing had burnt out. A mechanic was on his way with a replacement part. As the person drove away he couldn't help but smile as his eyes caught the lettering on the side of the truck – 'Standard Oil Company, Lubricants Division'. The truck had broken down because the bearing had not been properly lubricated. What a bad advert for the company!

Isn't this symptomatic of our society today? Many fail personally while trying to encourage others. You can only give of yourself if you have replenished yourself.

Insecure people try to keep busy and often burn the candles at both ends because they feel guilty to refuse a task or request. However, many are still not given the recognition they yearn or the affirmation they seek. Why

is this? Because those from whom they seek approval are preoccupied with themselves and don't have the time or the inclination to bother about others. They feel that they have to pay a premium for the relationship.

On the other hand, confident and secure individuals are driven by passion and vision. They see the end and then work towards seeing it materialize. They expend their energy in delivery – but not at the expense of their well-being. They realize that they would not be successful if they did not reward themselves from time to time.

### The following are some definitions of the word 'reward'

- Something given or received in recompense for worthy behaviour or in retribution for evil acts
- Money offered or given for some special service, such as the return of a lost article or the capture of a criminal
- A satisfying return or result; profit
- In psychology, the return for performance of a desired behaviour; positive reinforcement

A healthy self-confidence and self-esteem is essential if you are to deliver meaningful outputs. Only when you are comfortable with who you are and confident in what you can do, will other people believe in you and your abilities. This applies both to your personal as well as your professional life, and it results in a sense of fulfilment.

*To find the universal elements enough;  
to find the air and the water exhilarating;  
to be refreshed by a morning walk or an evening saunter;  
to be thrilled by the stars at night;  
to be elated over a bird's nest or a wildflower in spring –  
these are some of the rewards of the simple life.*

– John Burroughs

Accepting a reward, whether from yourself or someone else, should be done in a spirit of true humility. In order to qualify to receive his share of the crops, the farmer first has to 'work hard'. Hard work therefore

needs to be rewarded. This is not selfish; it is the law of survival. I'm sure that many of you have travelled on an aircraft. One of the safety drills that the cabin crew goes through deals with the probability of the loss of cabin pressure. The passengers are urged to pull down the mask over their own faces first and then help others. Why? You cannot be effective if you're panicking or helpless. Similarly, when you experience success in a specific area, celebrate that milestone. This will motivate you to persevere and tackle the next task with enthusiasm and anticipation. When we celebrate little victories, we are spurred on to the next level and are in a better position to help others.

Employers know that rewards are a great tool for motivating employees. An employee who receives a reward realises that it is his/her efforts which are being rewarded and is more likely to want to put in more effort in future.

The same principle applies when you are working for yourself or towards a specific goal. It is essential to reward your own hard work and achievements. It is important to reward yourself when you reach any goal because:

- It feels good
- It will motivate you further
- It shows you are making progress
- It is a reminder that working hard pays off
- It celebrates the achievement of a goal
- It helps you to measure your progress

Rewarding oneself isn't wrong. A reward acts as an incentive; you should reward your achievements, whether they are long-term or short-term goals. If you have a long-term goal you should break it down into smaller, more achievable short-term goals and reward yourself for achieving each of them. The reward does not necessarily have to be financial, as long as it is something that will make you feel good about your achievement.

Many feel as if they're adrift in the world. They work hard, but they don't seem to get anywhere worthwhile. A key reason why they feel this way is that they haven't spent enough time thinking about what they want from life, and haven't set themselves formal goals. After all, would you set out on a major journey with no real idea of your destination? Probably not!

Goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about your ideal future, and for motivating yourself to turn your vision of this future into reality.

The process of setting goals helps you choose where you want to go in life. By knowing precisely what you want to achieve, you know where you have to concentrate your efforts. You'll also quickly spot the distractions that can, so easily, lead you astray.

## **WHY SET GOALS?**

Goal setting is used by top-level athletes, successful business people and achievers in all fields. Setting goals gives you long-term vision and short-term motivation. It focuses your acquisition of knowledge, and helps you to organize your time and your resources so that you can make the very most of your life.

By setting sharp, clearly defined goals, you can measure and take pride in the achievement of those goals, and you'll see forward progress in what might previously have seemed a long pointless grind. You will also raise your self-confidence, as you recognize your own ability and competence in achieving the goals that you've set.

You need to put in place a reward system. Set SMART goals and objectives so that your rewards will be justified. Celebrate each milestone. REWARDS must be based on a SMART DIET.

Apply the SMART-goal principle to each milestone and reward yourself for each goal achieved. This will distinguish between meaningful and justifiable rewards versus self-indulgence. For example if you want to purchase a luxury item for the house, and if you're in debt, pay off the smaller debts first so that you can earn the reward of saving by paying cash for the item where possible. Let's explore the underlying principles of setting SMART goals. Goals should be:

### **S – Specific**

Be precise. As you develop structure and the appropriate habits, you fine-tune the ability to be specific. Have the end in mind. John Maxwell says, 'What you see is what you get.'

## M – Measurable

Why? Because we are accountable for wastage, especially of time and resources. Hence the importance of establishing milestones and ascertaining what is required for the journey. Celebrate each milestone reached. When you accomplish small victories, the bigger challenges will not intimidate you.

## A – Achievable/Attainable

The choices we make will determine the outcome and whether it is attainable or not. Develop a strategy to attain your goal.

## R – Realistic

If your goals are not realistic, you will experience frustration as you try to obtain the elusive prize. Set goals that optimise the use of your resources and natural abilities.

## T – Time-related

It is important that your goals and objectives are not left open-ended but have a definite plan of action and execution. We run to win. Even though we cannot compare our time frame in the context of eternity, time is a precious commodity that is lent to us. Time impacts decisions and, ultimately, eternity. We need to redeem the time. We are meant to occupy this world and live a life of purpose. Purpose is gift-wrapped in time.

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*Purpose is gift-wrapped in time.*

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When goals are SMART, you can truly enjoy the fruit of your labour and know true peace and fulfilment. Raise the banner on your reward.

The following broad guidelines will help you to set effective, achievable goals:

- State each goal as a positive statement. Express your goals positively – ‘Execute this technique well’ is a much better goal than ‘Don’t make that stupid mistake.’

- Be precise. Set precise goals, putting in dates, times and amounts so that you can measure achievement. If you do this, you'll know exactly when you have achieved the goal, and can take complete satisfaction from having achieved it.
- Set priorities. When you have several goals, give each a priority. This helps you to avoid feeling overwhelmed by having too many goals, and helps to direct your attention to the most important ones.
- Write goals down. This crystallizes them and gives them more force.
- Keep operational goals small. Keep the low-level goals that you're working towards small and achievable. If a goal is too large, it can seem that you are not making progress towards it. Keeping goals small and incremental gives more opportunities for reward.
- Set performance goals, not outcome goals. You should take care to set goals over which you have as much control as possible. It can be quite dispiriting to fail to achieve a personal goal for reasons beyond your control!

In business, these reasons beyond your control could be bad business environments or unexpected effects of government policy. In sport, they could include poor judging, bad weather, injury or just plain bad luck.

If you base your goals on personal performance, you can keep control over the achievement of your goals, and draw satisfaction from them.

Set realistic goals. It's important to set goals that you can achieve. All sorts of people (for example, employers, parents, media or society) can set unrealistic goals for you. They will often do this in ignorance of your own desires and ambitions.

It's also possible to set goals that are too difficult because you might not appreciate either the obstacles in the way, or understand quite how much skill you must develop to achieve a particular level of performance.

Once you have successfully embraced the SMART-goals principles, consider your DIET to function effectively. Structure is the DIET of successful champions:

**D** – Discipline is the heartbeat of structure, yet does not imply lack of creativity or inflexibility.

**I – Input.** It is important to supplement your diet with the proper input to sustain you and help you to grow to the next level.

**E – Effort.** Make an effort to overcome your circumstances and be prepared to develop and empower those around you. The sense of fulfilment is reward enough.

**T – Thrive.** In order to thrive, we need to feed on the Word of God and all that it stands for. When we meditate on the Word, we progress beyond mere foundational truths.

These principles are important and are practised by successful people. Their success can only be attributed to the strict regime that they ascribe to and to the foundational structures that they have established. All else is purely an add-on; we can often see the results of success but don't know the story behind the success.

The greatest reward is to take people where you've been.

The process of rewards is cyclic and follows the following sequence:

- Reward
- Replenish
- Re-energise
- Restore
- Re-strategize and regroup
- Refocus
- Results

Rewards can benefit us in many forms such as:

- Spiritual
- Physical
- Emotional/psychological
- Financial
- Relationships
- Mental



A word of caution though: Take a step back and question the validity of your reward; critically evaluate your intentions and motives. Yes, you may think you need to reward yourself, but is it based on your SMART DIET. Can it be misinterpreted as self-indulgence or a sense of entitlement?

## **What do success and REWARDS mean to you?**

Rewards should help you to:

**R** – Relax and release any tension;

**E** – Escape from the hustle and bustle of this world, reflect and make necessary adjustments;

**W** – Waltz – celebrate life and those who have impacted it;

**A** – Accept rewards with grace and humility;

**R** – Reflect and recharge;

**D** – Deposit into yourself and others and bring fulfilment.

We all want to achieve our goals. However, we sometimes need a push in the right direction. By rewarding yourself for each goal reached, you will stay motivated and increase your chances of success.

*We will receive not what we idly wish for but what we justly earn.*

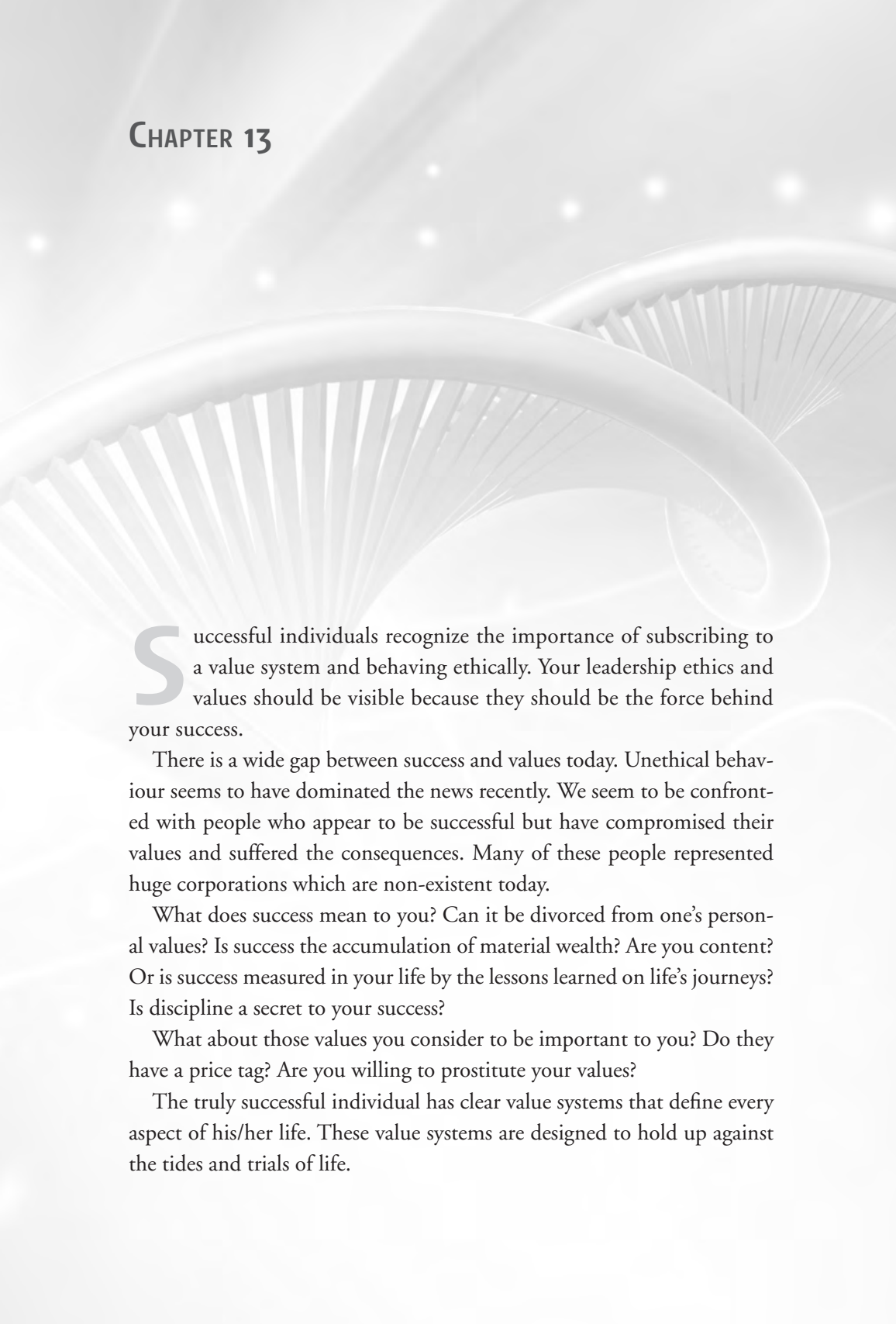
*Our rewards will always be in exact proportion to our service.*

*– Earl Nightingale*

# VALUES – THE ESSENCE OF SUCCESS



## CHAPTER 13



**S**uccessful individuals recognize the importance of subscribing to a value system and behaving ethically. Your leadership ethics and values should be visible because they should be the force behind your success.

There is a wide gap between success and values today. Unethical behaviour seems to have dominated the news recently. We seem to be confronted with people who appear to be successful but have compromised their values and suffered the consequences. Many of these people represented huge corporations which are non-existent today.

What does success mean to you? Can it be divorced from one's personal values? Is success the accumulation of material wealth? Are you content? Or is success measured in your life by the lessons learned on life's journeys? Is discipline a secret to your success?

What about those values you consider to be important to you? Do they have a price tag? Are you willing to prostitute your values?

The truly successful individual has clear value systems that define every aspect of his/her life. These value systems are designed to hold up against the tides and trials of life.

*I dream my painting and then paint my dream.*

– Vincent Van Gogh

Values are like art – some see art and appreciate it while others squint at it and see nothing but lines and whirls of colour; unless someone points out the artist's interpretation and intention, the piece of art will remain a mystery to them. Your values may not be fully understood by others, but do not compromise them simply to be accepted by the 'in crowd'. We are called to stand out and not simply fit in.

'I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past,' said Thomas Jefferson. I agree. After all, the future, not the past, is where the rest of your life will be lived.

You have probably heard the phrase, 'The future is now' – this often conjures up images of uncertainty and mystery. When you conceive the future and begin to make the necessary preparations for it, you will be able to reach out and touch the future even though it may still only be a virtual image. The anticipated uncertainty will gradually diminish as you become more confident about it. Your future is a story of possibilities, but only you can unravel its mystery. God has set you up for greatness, but you are required to put in place the necessary structures and disciplines to ensure that you fulfil your destiny.

Values are not only about our own intrinsic doctrines – we also need to add value to those around us. An excellent attitude demands a teachable spirit and a desire to be all that we can be. There are no short cuts in the process. Clear value systems are developed over a period of time. Once you understand and recognise the need for these systems in your life, make every effort to develop them and align your actions with them. Value systems raise you above mediocrity and position you for greatness. When done systematically and in a disciplined manner, your value system will define every aspect of your life, but more than that, it will set you on the road to success. You will be like a beacon on a hill – you have been set apart and will attract others to you. A life guided by principle and values will not easily be distracted from its original plan and purpose.

Although not all of us will become great artists like Van Gogh, there is much we can learn from the masters. None of the famous artists achieved

greatness and success without preparation and commitment. Following a dream that is an outflow of your passion leaves you fulfilled, but this should be guided by your values.

Talents are not sufficient on their own. When talent is sculptured by effort, perseverance and time, the finished work is success that is sustainable and goes beyond one's self. However, the ability to handle success is determined by what is within you – your core values which guide you like a navigation system.

*Every decision you make – every decision – is not a decision about what to do. It's a decision about who you are. When you see this, when you understand it, everything changes. You begin to see life in a new way. All events, occurrences and situations turn into opportunities to do what you came here to do.*

– Neale Donald Walsch

It isn't easy to measure our core values, but they resonate in the lives around us and the manner in which we conduct ourselves daily. Although they are abstract, values are transferable – they are the greatest legacy we can leave our children and the world.

Many confuse the outward trimmings of success with being successful. Success is best measured by the choices we make on the journey of life. It is not only the attainment of material items, but also the process of attaining those items. It is how we treated ourselves and others on that path.

Let us consider some of the core values which ultimately refine and define us and are components that solidify our foundation.

- Honesty
- Transparency
- Compassion
- Fairness
- Uprightness
- Integrity
- Consistency
- Insight

- Humility
- Teachability

I recall a line from a movie called *Grown-ups* in which life was compared with a game – ‘Play life like you would play a game and when the final buzzer goes off make sure you’ve played the game well.’

*There are two big forces at work, external and internal. We have very little control over external forces ... (such as tornados, earthquakes, floods, disasters, illness and pain). What really matters is the internal force. How do I respond to those disasters? Over that I have complete control.*

– Leo Buscaglia

An ancient proverb states, ‘Choose a good reputation over great riches; being held in high esteem is better than silver or gold.’

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you were tempted to compromise your integrity and honesty for success? What foundation are you building on? Can your foundation withstand the storms of life and any temptations that come your way? When your values are mature, you will not need the affirmation of man; you will rely on God to validate you. Values are at the core of your character and establish your steps.

*Vision is the art of seeing the invisible.*

– Jonathan Swift

Every choice has a consequence even though you might not see it immediately. Just because the consequence doesn’t materialize immediately doesn’t mean there are no consequences, as there are consequences for everything that we do. Material wealth can be taken away from you, but not your core values.

*Dream of a world where we measure character by how much we share and care, not by how much we take and consume.*

–Jesse Jackson

**TAKE THE ROAD  
LESS TRAVELLED**



## CHAPTER 14

**D**ick Barnett was a player who emphatically demonstrated the virtues of discipline and taking the road less travelled. He played basketball every day of his last three years of high school: 1,095 straight days. Sometimes he played from nine in the morning until midnight. He played basketball while his friends went to the senior prom. But he got to dance in the NBA (excerpted from *Values of the Game*, by Bill Bradley).

Successful people understand that to build things that last, they have to take the road less travelled. Building anything that lasts, whether it be relationships, marriages, successful businesses and the like, needs effort. Effective structures cannot be built by taking short cuts or compromising standards. Preparation and a solid foundation are essential to successfully completing the structure. This normally takes the greatest amount of effort and time. The height of a building is dependent on the foundation.

The road less travelled is filled with uncertainty. Those who do not contemplate the route carefully and make the necessary preparations will give up. Success is often a lonely road, with the only companion being one's values. There is a scripture in the Bible that says, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.' Our frame of reference will determine the choice we make on the road to success.



The following poem by Robert Frost is a challenge to all of us who have a desire to make a difference as part of our success story.

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry, I could not travel both  
And be one traveller. Long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth.*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same.*

*And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –  
I took the one less travelled by.*

*And that has made all the difference.*

– Robert Frost

Although it is possible to interpret the poem in different ways, the most popular interpretation is that it encourages non-conformity. It epitomises the value of taking a direction that others may not have journeyed.

What do you do when you come to a fork in the road? What determines the direction you take when at the crossroads of life? Do you only rely on your gut-feel or a combination of several factors?

Complacency, fear and a lack of discipline will block out your view or give a distorted image. On the other hand, immediate gratification is not an option. See it for what it really is – a disguised tantrum ('I want what I want and I want it now!')

It's been said that if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there. Have you ever followed a road that runs parallel to the highway that you need to be on, but which ultimately led elsewhere? Until you made your way back to the main highway, your efforts would have been in vain and you would have wasted valuable resources such as time. Similarly, effort on its own without purpose and direction will be a waste of resources. Time is an expensive commodity, but we are careless with it. No matter how close you are, walking parallel to the path of your destiny that God ordained will still take you to the wrong destination. How mature is your building programme? The Master Designer has made His blueprint available to you and has empowered you to 'occupy till He returns'. Are you walking in the authority that He has delegated to you?

*One of the most courageous things you can do is identify yourself,  
know who you are, what you believe in, and where you want to go.*

*– Sheila Murray Bethel*

The road less travelled is not a well-developed pathway, even though you may recognise the footprints of those who have gone ahead of you. The only route map (or in today's terms 'GPS co-ordinates') is their life's work and the legacy that has been left to us. Did you ever stop to think that every one of the great achievers did not set out with the intention of being successful or acquiring wealth? They embarked on their respective journeys to fulfil their dreams and had a desire to help others in the process. Success was a by-product of their journeys.

On the road less travelled you will see the landmarks of those pioneers who dared to challenge history and the clamour of their critics.

*I can accept failure, but I can't accept not trying.*

*– Michael Jordan*

Failure is not an option when you have a clear goal. Have you embarked on a journey only to be discouraged by the so-called voices of experience? Now, I'm all for learning from other's experiences, especially if their track record is consistent with their successful lifestyles. However, I am cautious of the so-called experts, particularly if their lives do not reflect it. What do you do when others say, 'You can't, I've tried it before?'

*Always Be Your Best!*

*When you think it doesn't matter if you fail or pass the test,  
Keep in mind the reason why you should always be your best.  
While the whole world may not notice if you tried to give your all,  
There is a person in you to whom it matters if you fall.  
That little voice inside you which directs your thoughts each day  
Will make the final judgement if you won or lost each day.  
Never can you fail yourself if you give it all you've got;  
The world extends a hand to you when you give life your best shot,  
For all that really matters when you're finished with your test,  
Is not the final score at all – but did you do your very best?*

– Tom Krause Copyright 2004 [www.coachkrause.com](http://www.coachkrause.com)

TOUCHING HEARTS – TEACHING GREATNESS

You will be tempted to give up, but rest assured that God has programmed you for greatness. He has placed within you His ability to achieve it. When you focus on the journey and its demands, and how it will benefit others, you will also find success in the process and discover your untapped potential for greatness. Greatness is etched into your DNA; how you interpret and utilise the information is up to you. It isn't important how you start, but how you finish.

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*Greatness is etched into your DNA.*

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There is a path called 'elsewhere' which is easier and popular. Is that where you really want to be? Are you content with being on a parallel path on some mystical journey with no purpose or defined intention? Some things are not even worth contemplating. There are certain things in our lives which are not negotiable. Principles, values, time management, loyalty and integrity are some of life's essentials and are signposts on the road less travelled. However, these signposts are not progressive but accumulative; you do not progress from one to the other, but build on each of them – they are complementary and not exclusive.

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*These signposts are not progressive but accumulative.*

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We are often convinced that we are on the right road, but ancient wisdom tells us otherwise – 'There is a way that seems right but the end thereof leads to destruction'. A parallel path may seem right and even be a little more comfortable, but the destination will still be wrong. Can you imagine buying a piece of land with the intention of building your dream home on it because of its location, but the construction company builds it on the wrong site; close enough to the original site, but on the wrong site. Will this bring you the satisfaction you anticipated? Will you experience the same sense of fulfilment? Will your family be happy to reside there? The decisions we make impact our future and those around us. Specific goals require focus and deliberate actions.

Those who choose the road less travelled select their battles and carefully plan a counter-attack. They formulate strategy and clear their minds of any clutter such as mediocrity and ineffective activities and relationships. They consider their resources and supplement them where necessary. If their resources are insufficient, they make the necessary adjustments and continue. Detours on this road do occur but are only a temporary set-back.

The pilgrim on the road less travelled is prepared to die in his quest, and realises that being fruitful is his ultimate objective. His CV lists his unique strengths but this individual marches to the beat of a different drum; he/she always has a unique approach and is like the conductor of an orchestra, who

is prepared to turn his (her) back on the crowd and need for approval.

We are called to stand out and not to merely fit in; in many instances we try to fit into an ill-fitting garment, and the outcome is totally ridiculous.

The individual who chooses the road less travelled displays the following characteristics (and more) and goes beyond the call of duty. The norm is not an option; the horizon is just another milestone on the journey. This individual:

- stands out from the crowd and does not try to fit in
- is not afraid of criticism because he/she is secure in who they are
- is driven by focussing on the end result
- embraces solitude, and loneliness if necessary, through separation
- is quick to adapt
- is a risk taker
- practises a ‘palace mentality’ in the midst of their imprisonment
- is not distracted by distortions/temptations which are detours on their journey
- has a submissive and serving attitude
- displays wisdom
- is a strategist and is resourceful
- is known to persevere and is patient

Zig Ziglar said, ‘The measure of a man is not the number of servants he has but the number of people he serves.’

The road less travelled is a lonely road, but the advantage is that there is no clutter or distractions. It gives you the opportunity to reflect, strategise, focus and prepare. We survive this road through God’s grace. If you can’t separate yourself from everything that you have and focus on fulfilling God’s plan for you, then this road may not be for you. Have you perhaps succumbed to the ‘herd mentality’ – however you perceive it. Your purpose is unique though complementary.

As human beings, our psychological make-up doesn’t allow for change very much so we naturally tend to follow what the masses are doing. Most people get up every morning, go to work, get paid when the work week is over, pay bills and do it all over again week after week.

*Creating an artwork of your life often means having the courage to say goodbye to the crowd of popularity.*

—Jack Vandermere

Best-selling author Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great*, examined what it was that turned good companies into great companies. A basic tenet of his book was ‘first who ... then what’. For these companies, one of the first steps in changing from good to great was to take the road less travelled. This applies equally to an individual.

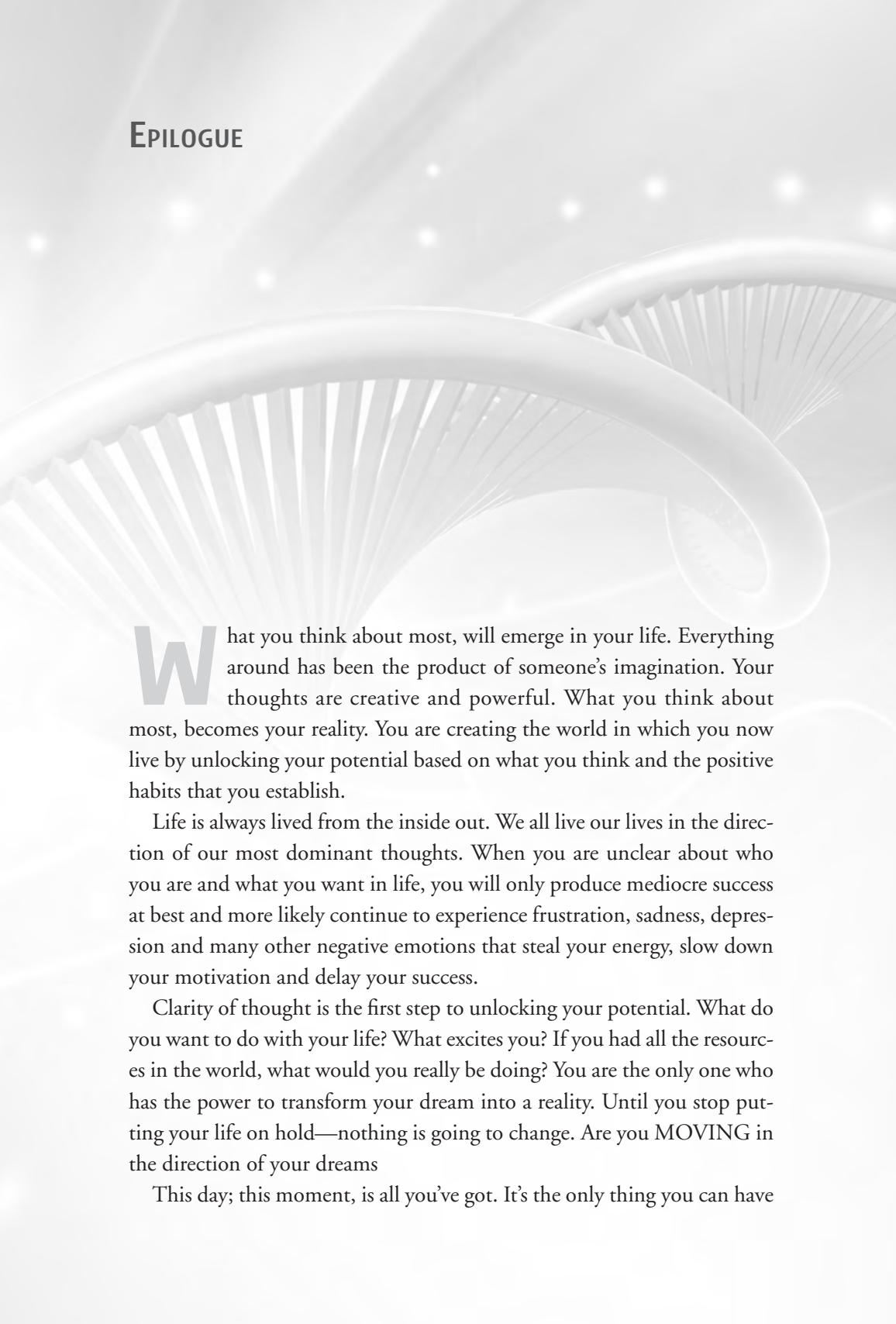
I challenge you to take the road less travelled. It is uncommon knowledge that gives rise to uncommon success and leadership. When last was it that you did something for the first time? Are you indifferent to the word ‘Wow’? What is one thing you can do or experience this month that is uncommon?

Remember, you can!

*We will all suffer from one of two pains in life, the pains of discipline or the pain of regret.*

— Jim Rohn

## EPILOGUE



**W**hat you think about most, will emerge in your life. Everything around has been the product of someone's imagination. Your thoughts are creative and powerful. What you think about most, becomes your reality. You are creating the world in which you now live by unlocking your potential based on what you think and the positive habits that you establish.

Life is always lived from the inside out. We all live our lives in the direction of our most dominant thoughts. When you are unclear about who you are and what you want in life, you will only produce mediocre success at best and more likely continue to experience frustration, sadness, depression and many other negative emotions that steal your energy, slow down your motivation and delay your success.

Clarity of thought is the first step to unlocking your potential. What do you want to do with your life? What excites you? If you had all the resources in the world, what would you really be doing? You are the only one who has the power to transform your dream into a reality. Until you stop putting your life on hold—nothing is going to change. Are you MOVING in the direction of your dreams

This day; this moment, is all you've got. It's the only thing you can have

control over. Yesterday with all its mistakes, disappointments and sorrows is gone forever. Even its happy moments and triumphs have disappeared. Yes, the pain and the elation live on in your memory, but, there is absolutely nothing you can do to alter any of it. Tomorrow is yet to come. It is very important to hold a dream in your heart and work towards it with all your mind and soul.

Remember – you were born for such a time as this; you have been separated for greatness. Once you identify what you are passionate about, develop the discipline and structure to live a fulfilled and purpose-driven life. Form the necessary discipline, which should become the core of your being; and establish healthy habits, the DNA of true success.



## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.