

# Personal Excellence

The Magazine of Personal Leadership

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**Bruna Martinuzzi**  
Consultant

*February 2010*

**Valuing  
Love**

**Circuit  
Training**  
Build Confidence

**Degrees  
of Giving**  
Lead with Generosity



*"Personal Excellence is the only reading you'll need to do for continual self-improvement both personally and professionally!"*

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

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# Personal Excellence

February 2010

The Magazine of Life Leadership

INSPIRATIONAL • GENEROSITY

## Degrees of Giving

Lead your life with generosity.

by Bruna Martinuzzi

**L**OFTEN MEDITATE ON THE VIRTUE OF GENEROSITY as a leadership quality: observing leaders who have it, and those who lack it. As Nelson Henderson writes: *The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.*

When we think of *generosity*, we tend to think of gifts of money or charity. In the context of leadership, there are other gifts that don't have a monetary value, but whose value is beyond price. These include giving people a chance, the benefit of the doubt, a reason to want to work for you, latitude, permission to make mistakes, and the information that they need to do the job. It's giving them the authority that goes with the responsibility—and giving them due credit for their ideas. All of this translates to *generosity of spirit*—a quality we admire in leaders.

The word *generosity* once meant of *noble birth*, and used to be associated with aristocrats who, by virtue of their privileges, were expected to show generosity toward those in lesser standing. A leader too, by virtue of her position, and the power and privileges that she holds relative to those she leads, has the same expectations and obligations. A prime obligation is to lead with a generous heart and be guided by nobility of mind. Generosity has a positive effect; its absence has negative consequences.

People want to find meaning in their jobs—to feel that they are a part of something bigger and better, to know that what they do matters. A leader with a generous spirit understands this need, and connects the dots for people—to help them see how the work they

perform impacts the greater vision.

Recently I read Julie Salamon's inspirational book *Ramban's Ladder: A Meditation on Generosity and Why It is Necessary to Give*. It's based on the teachings of Ramban, a physician and philosopher who, more than 1,000 years ago, developed *Ramban's Ladder*, outlining forms of giving—from handing out money begrudgingly, as you might to a panhandler—to helping someone become self-reliant. Tom Peters tells of a house-



keeper who worked in a hospital that treats cancer. When asked what her job entailed, she said, "I help to cure cancer." The leader connected the dots for this person, and made her feel that she was an integral part of the hospital's mission. *Do you do that for your team?* Imagine how engaged people are when their leader makes them feel that they play a vital role—that everyone constitutes a binding thread, tightly interwoven into the fabric of the team—each equally doing its part to give the fabric strength.

Leaders with a *generous spirit* delegate worthwhile work that becomes a gift of growth. How we love those leaders! They make us want to get out of bed and go to work to give that person the best that we have to offer. They get our discretionary effort, every day.

And what about *gifts of information*? People want to be in on things; to satisfy this need, share information. We've all encountered leaders who are inclined to hoard crucial information as the currency of power. Leaders with a generous spirit give people a chance to be a part of the inner circle. Generously share your know-how, expertise, and ideas.

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Albert Camus said: "Real generosity toward the future consists in giving all to what is present." Often, as leaders, we are so focused on future achievements, on realizing the vision, that we neglect the people who are there. One leader confessed to me once that she woke up one day realizing how much she had disconnected emotionally from the people who did the work. Today, we tend to be too self-absorbed. We become self-involved and unintentionally exclude others; and we only notice it when they become disengaged. Self-absorption prevents generosity. So, ask yourself: "Am I giving enough to the people around me?"

In one African village, the greeting words for *good morning* or *hello* are: "I am here if you are here." Imagine the gift you give others when you are fully present with them—when you truly see them. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: "The only gift is the gift of thyself." Bill Clinton once exhorted leaders to "see more people," especially those who do the clean-up work behind the scenes. Do we give a thought to the people who are unnoticed, those who quietly work in the background?

While generosity in its pure sense is altruistic, you receive something back from it—surprise dividends in the form of a recycling of goodwill, a surplus of cooperation, and the satisfaction of seeing others benefit from your giving of yourself—your time, attention, knowledge, and the best that you have to offer those who cross your path. You'll never know what opportunities you miss in life by showing up tight-fisted. It is hard to receive anything if you never open your hands to give.

Giving people the gift of your appreciation for their work, and your genuine admiration for their talents, is generosity of spirit at its pinnacle. It's the difference between saying to someone: "Good job" versus "This was pure genius;" or "I appreciated your help" versus "I couldn't have done it without you." Give genuine praise resplendently. When you see good work, say it from the heart—let it fly in the form of generous words, and watch what you get back.

Here are nine practical tips to enhance your generosity of spirit:

- **Give people a sense of importance.** In Adele Lynn's book, *In Search of Honor*, we learn that 55 percent of workers value "giving people a sense of importance" as the number-one item for building trust. Consider what small actions you could take intentionally today to make people feel that the work they do is important, and that they are important to your team.

- **Give feedback, not criticism.** If giving frequent criticism is your style, ask yourself: Is your motivation genuine, or is it to gain

points? Are you picking the right moment? Are you reflecting how you might deliver the feedback while still honoring the person?

- **Give people visibility.** Giving people visibility helps them shine and grow. Give people more access to the boss. People like to know that their boss knows the great contributions they made to a project, or about their effort in work that does not bear their name. Knowing that your leader represents you well to upper management is a high-octane motivator, and engenders *fierce loyalty*.

- **Give anonymously.** Do something for someone without their knowledge. Think of a deserving person who you can help by planting a career-enhancing seed on their behalf—perhaps saying something positive about their work to the boss?

- **Know when to forgive.** Martin Luther King said, "The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everyone blind." Harboring vindictive thoughts is violence to yourself. Generous people lack resentment. Who do you need to forgive? What do you need to let go?

- **Give encouragement.** Encourage those who need it. Some people have never received encouragement—not from teachers, from bosses, not even from parents.

- **Give opportunity.** Give people a chance. Is there someone to whom you could give a second chance to prove herself? If so, what active steps can you take to create the right circumstances for her to succeed? What doors can you open for someone who is *well deserving*, but not *well positioned* to be noticed?

- **Share your knowledge and experience.** Become a philanthropist of know-how. What knowledge, expertise, or best practices can you share with others to enrich them? For inspiration, read about leaders who practice teaching for everyone's benefit. For example, ex-CEO of GE, Jack Welch, filled his calendar with hundreds of hours in teaching thousands of GE managers and executives at the company's training center; and the ex-CEO of Intel, Andy Grove, taught newly hired and senior managers how to lead in an industry where innovation goes stale quickly.

- **Give moral support.** Many people fear public speaking. So, when you attend a presentation given by apprehensive team members, give them moral support. Abstain from checking your Blackberry, give a nod in agreement, and look with *kind eyes*.

Take inspiration from Walt Whitman's words: "The habit of giving enhances the desire to give." Giving requires practice and persistence. Once it becomes habitual, you will emerge as a stronger leader. PE



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**ACTION:** Give more generously.

## Volume 15 Issue 2

*Personal Excellence* is published monthly by Executive Excellence Publishing, LLC (dba Leadership Excellence), 1806 North 1120 West, Provo, UT 84604.

**Editorial Purpose:** Our mission is to promote personal and professional development based on constructive values, sound ethics, and timeless principles.

**Basic Annual Rate:**  
US \$99 one year (12 issues)  
US \$169 two years (24 issues)  
Canada, add US \$30 per year. All other non-U.S. add US \$70 postage per year.

**Corporate Bulk Rates (same address)**  
US \$89 each per year for 5 to 25  
US \$79 each per year for 26 and up  
\*Ask about logo and custom editions and foreign bulk rates.

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Back Issues (print): US \$25  
Permission PDF: US \$50

**Submissions & Correspondence:**  
Please send any correspondence, articles, letters to the editor, and requests to reprint, publish, or excerpt articles to Editorial Department, Personal Excellence, 1806 North 1120 West, Provo, UT 84604, or email: [custserv@eep.com](mailto:custserv@eep.com)

**Customer Service/Circulation:**  
For customer service, or information on products and services, call 1-877-250-1983 or email: [custserv@eep.com](mailto:custserv@eep.com).

**Internet Address:** [www.LeaderExcel.com](http://www.LeaderExcel.com)

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

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# Experience Vuja De

Learn to see things in a whole new way.



by Simon T. Bailey

WE LIVE AT A TIME WHEN everything that can be changed will change. Financial markets are shifting, industries are forced to adapt to the new normal, management philosophies are being reexamined for relevancy, and you are being invited to reset, reignite, and shift.

We become conditioned to accept what life offers without questioning if there is a better way. How often do you wake up to go to work and go through the same routine? How often do you do something the same way, same time, and same place every day? We are living in an *Age of Sameness* that causes many people to be stuck in neutral, while the rest of the world is waving at them as they drive into the future.

The late comedian George Carlin coined a phrase *Vuja de*, the opposite of *déjà vu*. *Vuja de* is having a fresh set of eyes to see the same thing but *understand* it in a unique way.

*Déjà vu* means the illusion of having previously experienced something being encountered for the first time, a disagreeable familiarity or sameness—such as “the new television season has a sense of *déjà vu* about it—the same plots and characters with new names.” This reminds me of the movies *Gladiator*, *Braveheart*, *300* and *Troy*—a plot about the hero, war, and love (Hollywood).

Modern examples of *Vuja de* would be Apple’s creation of the iPhone. There are many cell phone makers, but Apple, in its brilliance, took a simple phone and turned it into a mobile office. When you meet people who have an iPhone, you ask, “How you do like your phone?” and then “What apps do you have?” Suddenly adults transform into kids.

Cirque du Soleil (French for *Circus of the Sun*) is the Circus on Steroids. They took their fresh eyes to see the Circus, transforming it in a profound way. Many realize that paying \$20 to experience a Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Bros. Circus is no comparison to a \$150 transformational Cirque du Soleil experience. How many times do you leave a circus and talk about it? Rarely. Why? There was no *Vuja de*.

Amazon.com, with the launch of Kindle, has introduced a new way for

lovers of the written word to experience books. This profound shift is similar to Apple iPods and iTunes that have transformed the way people purchase music.

TaTa, a multi-billion dollar company has introduced to the consumer market of 1 billion people in India the first \$2,500 car, called the TaTa Nano with a 2-cylinder gas engine. Do you think this was a shot heard around the world, especially for those in the auto industry? Maybe. Once again, if you understand how to read the tea leaves of change, you realize that something is afoot in the world. *Business as usual* is out, and *business as change* is in.

Zappos.com is an online shoe company that has grossed \$1 billion in its tenth year in business. All employees receive four weeks of training and are



then offered \$2,000 to quit. The CEO Tony Hsieh says “paying them to quit saves the company money by weeding out people who would jump ship anyway and allows those who remain to make a public statement of commitment to their new employer.” Turnover costs U.S. employers more than \$140 billion a year. Zappos has branched out into an outsourcing program to handle selling, customer service and shipping for other companies. Perhaps that is why Amazon purchased them for \$847 million dollars. *Vuja de* is in their DNA.

**Commonality chokes creativity.** *Best practices* must move over and give way to *best ideas*. If you practice the way everyone else practices that doesn’t mean that you’ll get their results. You deny yourself and your business from discovering how to *fail forward*.

NASA designed an experiment to test the physiological impact of spatial disorientation—the kind that astronauts might experience during extended time in a weightless environment. They out-

fitted a team of astronaut candidates with convex goggles that flipped everything in their field of vision 180 degrees, so that the world they saw was upside down. The astronauts wore these glasses 24 hours a day. Then the scientists sat back to observe what happened.

At first, extreme stress and anxiety were obvious, as reflected in the astronaut’s blood pressure and other vital signs. The astronauts gradually adapted to this new level of stress, but it didn’t disappear. After all, their world was upside down! After 26 days, something amazing happened to one astronaut: His world turned right-side up again. The goggles hadn’t changed and he was still wearing them continuously, but now he could see everything around him as normal. Within the next several days, all the other astronauts followed suit.

After 30 days of this stream of strange new input, the men’s brains had created enough new neural connections to completely rewire their brains, so that their visual and spatial perception worked at 180 degrees opposite from the way the brain normally works!

Here are five ways to apply *Vuja de*:

- **Front-line is the bottom line.** The answers you need are not at the top of the food chain; they are at the bottom of the food chain. They exist in the heads, hearts, and hands of men and women who are closest to your customers.
- **Synergy is green energy**—Yes, the sum total is greater than its parts. Who possesses a level of expertise that you do not have? Barter with them or strike an alliance. What do you have that they need? Partner and go after the green.
- **Take control of your inner steering wheel** and don’t allow the passengers of fear and complacency to direct you from the backseat. Don’t be the passenger of television, setbacks, disappointments, and doomsayers.
- **Embrace positive psychology** as a way of life instead of a passing fad. Positive thinking is the key to the door of unlimited creativity and innovation.
- **Be a flipologist**—a person who practices *Vuja de* and can see what everyone else sees but understand it differently. For example, Luggage Forward picks up your luggage, golf clubs, or skis and delivers it to your destination before you arrive. Take your job and flip it! Who does your job benefit? Who really pays your salary and what do you need? You rarely get promoted until you become overqualified for your current position. PE

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**ACTION:** Flip your perspective.

## Are You Too Critical?

Focus on what is done well.



by Laura Lopez

NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF work you do, you need to rely on other people. In fact, even if you don't work, you need to rely on others. This became clear to me just the other day as I was visiting with a new mother and her baby.

During our visit, she complained incessantly about how tired she was because she couldn't get her husband to help as much as she would like. Shortly after hearing all of her woes, I experienced first-hand the root of her problem.

She was criticizing her husband too harshly and as a result, he was demoralized and didn't engage very much with their child. My guess is that after hearing all of her criticisms, he wasn't feeling very competent.

To my ears, her criticism sounded something like this:

- "Don't pick her up that way; you are going to hurt her."
- "Please don't feed her that way, she needs to be more upright."
- "Keep your voice lower, you are going to over-stimulate her."

Poor guy! Whatever he did, it wasn't right or good enough for his wife.

I know this mother loves her husband and wants him to be involved with their child and she also is doing her best at being the best mother she can be. She is well-intentioned in every way.

### Consider Your Ways

I tell this story not to fault this woman, but rather to highlight that even when you have the best intentions to do the right thing, you can often unintentionally demoralize and cause others to disengage when you are looking for the exact opposite behavior.

Work situations are no exception.

Leaders who successfully get others to deliver results for them know how to manage criticism. Criticism is important for course correction, but understanding how to manage it for optimal impact is essential, especially during these difficult times.

At the foundation of behavior modification is ensuring the person has a positive belief in their abilities.

This mother will have the greatest ability to impact her husband's behavior if she is able to validate and rein-

force his ability to parent his child as opposed to crushing it, which is what her harsh criticism is doing.

We often focus on what isn't right and want to fix it, as opposed to focusing on what's right and how to build on it.

When your kids come home with a report card with all As and one C, don't ask, "Why did you get the C?" but "How can you achieve an A?"

**Leaders always focus on what has been done well.** Focusing on strengths is one of the best ways to manage criticism. In all of the interactions this father has with his child, there must be several things he does exceedingly well. His wife needs to focus first on these areas.

From that foundation, behavior in the "weaker" areas may improve. The best way to influence behavior is through positive affirmations, not negative ones.

## PROFESSIONAL • CHANGES

### Keep Resolutions

Make some positive changes.



by Peter Handal

THIS NEW YEAR AND DECADE I decide to make some positive changes. Here are five resolution suggestions:

**1. Keep a positive outlook.** Dale Carnegie said, "Gain strength from the positive, and don't be sapped by the negative." While he was speaking of staying positive when in your job and professional career path, this is great advice for the everyday. It is easy to get sucked into the negatives surrounding you (all you have to do is turn on the nightly news for a crushing blow to your positive outlook on life), but this year, make a daily effort to remain positive. Good often times attracts good, so you'll find that positive developments fall in to place naturally as a result!

**2. Be your own boss.** Give yourself a goal and a deadline and hold yourself accountable for following through on that deadline. These deadlines can range from the small ("I'll work out three times a week") to the large ("I'll ask for a promotion this month") and will get you used to implementing and following action steps in both your personal and professional life.

**3. Exercise your mind with books.** At the core of Dale Carnegie Training's proven leadership and interpersonal principles lies a simple truth: applying

Next time you find yourself surrounded by a bunch of "under performers," ask yourself a few questions:

- Am I criticizing them too harshly?
- Do I focus only on what's done wrong?
- Have I validated and reinforced the things this person is doing right?
- Can I help these people build a positive belief that they are competent in some aspect of their work?

Now is a good time to see the right things others are doing. You will be a better leader when you take time to build on the "right" things as opposed to criticizing the "wrong" things. After all, you tend to get the very results you are looking for.

PE

Laura Lopez is a consultant, life coach, and award-winning author of *The Connected and Committed Leader*. Visit [www.laura-lopez.com](http://www.laura-lopez.com).

**ACTION:** Find and praise what's good and right.

appropriate assertiveness to all interactions is the most effective approach to building a successful career. Our book and audio book, *The 5 Essential People Skills: How to Assert Yourself, Listen to Others, and Resolve Conflicts* offers a proven plan for implementing assertiveness without aggressiveness to deliver a clear message, build loyalty, and achieve recognition and respect!

**4. Jump-start motivation.** We work with managers and leaders to find positive ways to motivate and empower people without making them feel criticized or pressured. This year, look at both your professional life and personal life with a renewed perspective, and

a great way to start things off fresh is to re-energize your daily routine with a motivating, pleasurable activity or hobby.

**5. Be a people person.** While *soft* or *people skills* are often viewed as less important within the framework of workplace instruction, I believe that a strong background and understanding of these concepts is an absolutely pivotal part of your growth. The five skills we target in our courses are rapport building, curiosity, communication, ambition, and conflict resolution. By becoming a better listener and taking a genuine interest in friends and loved ones, you can become a person that people not only want to be around, but want to help and see succeed in life.

PE

Peter Handal is CEO of Dale Carnegie Training and author of *The 5 Essential People Skills: How to Assert Yourself, Listen to Others, and Resolve Conflicts* (Fireside/Simon & Schuster). [www.dalecarnegie.com](http://www.dalecarnegie.com)

**ACTION:** Make and keep some resolutions.



# Eating Habits

*You are what you eat.*



by Christina Schmidt

**I**N THIS NEW DECADE, FOCUS your fresh start on something that really matters:

your eating habits—and those of your family. With rising rates of obesity and diabetes, you and yours need to eat a balanced, healthy mix of foods.

So, resolve to introduce and stick to a healthy menu of foods. You know how your diet decisions affect your kids, but sometimes you make poor food choices out of desperation. There *are* ways to persuade your children to eat healthy foods. And eating healthy is a decision that you should also make for yourself.

You can learn to eat healthier. You and your picky children *can* come to an understanding, and you *can* help them overcome their food hang-ups and learn to love (or at least *tolerate*) the nutritious fare that help them grow strong and healthy. Once you decide to make that change in eating habits and stick to that decision, your children will also make that change.

**Yes, it's personal.** Consider your child's personality as you present food. For example, independent children may prefer to have their own toddler-sized eating area while your short-attention-spanned child might be prone to grazing. If *no* is your child's favorite word, offer limited choices so he has fewer things to say "no" to. Remain calm as your child is testing your limits. Try to understand his point of view. A new world of discovery surrounds him daily. He needs to feel in control of some part of it. Work with your child's personality to help him ease into trying new foods. Stay consistent and soon his nutritional outlook will change.

**Don't confuse palate preferences with an absent appetite.** Your child's growth rate slows after the first year, so the insatiable hunger of infancy fades into a more casual interest in food. It's not that your child no longer enjoys eating those foods. He's probably just not as hungry. Due to fluctuating appetites, skipping a meal or two is normal. Allow them to listen to their own internal hunger cues.

Healthy toddlers self-regulate their food intake. Be aware of *appetite busters* such as grazing, teething, colds, ear infections, fatigue, stress, inactivity, filling up on soda, milk or juice before a meal, or short attention spans. If any of these might be causing meal-skipping, make adjustments. And, don't be alarmed if your child wolfs down food during a growth spurt. Pay attention to the cues.

**If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!** You may need to offer a food 10 times before your child will eat. If you give up after three tries, you miss a golden chance to add something new to your child's diet. One day your child will realize that he actually does like broccoli and carrots! Children behave in ways that get them attention. If they are labeled as *picky*, they'll act that way and exacerbate the problem. Try not to react dramatically if your child turns his nose up to a food. He'll pick up on your reaction and repeat his behavior. Remain nonchalant and offer it again later.

**Put your child on kitchen duty.** Your experience in the kitchen directly reflects your comfort level with experimenting when it comes to new food tastes and combinations. Let children participate in age-appropriate tasks in the kitchen, such as stirring and measuring ingredients, to give them a sense of participating in meal preparation. I've made many healthy recipes with my kitchen helpers. Children love to help with kitchen tasks. It can also be a time to teach nutrition lessons as you have an experience with selecting and preparing meals.

**French fries are not a healthy vegetable choice!** By the time children are 18 months old, the number one vegetable they consume is the french fry. Over half of all two- to three-year-olds don't get enough daily fruits and veggies. People who eat fast food regularly have higher intakes of fat, salt, cholesterol, and calories in addition to lower intakes of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. So, don't make fast food a habit. Sure, it's okay on occasion—in moderation. When doing the drive-thru, steer clear of battered, creamy, saucy, salty, and giant-sized selections.

**Avoid obesity culprits.** Fast food isn't the only offender in the obesity epidemic. Also avoid feeding your kids fried foods, processed meats, candy, desserts and sweetened drinks such as sodas and juices. Most fried foods add saturated fat and sugar or salt to the



diet. In addition, the high temperatures used during frying cause a *carcinogenic chemical* called *acrylamide* to form! Avoid processed meats like bologna, bacon, hot dogs, and sausages. These are all high in sodium, carcinogenic nitrites, and saturated fat. Candy and desserts are high in sugar and saturated fat, and some even contain synthetic trans fats. These poor food choices increase your risk of diabetes and obesity.

**Think outside the (pizza) box.** Most kid-favorite comfort foods, such as mac 'n cheese, grilled cheese sandwiches, hot dogs, french fries and pizza can be adapted into healthier versions. Choose whole wheat or whole grain pasta for macaroni and cheese and use a cheese that is low in sodium and contains no artificial flavors or colors. Grilled cheese sandwiches can be baked with whole grain bread and healthy cheeses that contain no artificial additives. Know where to find or make healthy alternatives to your children's favorite treats. If your kids crave pizza, invite them to get in on the action. They'll enjoy placing toppings and rolling out the dough. Choose your healthy toppings, bake and serve! Avoid the pepperoni, sausage, extra cheese, deep dish and white crust.

**The apple of your eye will notice that apple on your plate.** Your children learn from you, and pick up on your habits, whether you realize it or not. They look to your behaviors and habits to know how to act; so, set a healthy example. Eat healthy foods in front of your children; and when you're at a restaurant or buffet, make good choices and help them to eat a balanced meal. If your kids notice that you're eating your fruits and veggies, they'll want in on the action! Children mimic your behavior, so start eating healthy now. Be a role model for healthy eating and manners.

**Sugar, salt, and spice are not always so nice.** In the U.S., the average intake of sugar is 20.5 teaspoons a day! With diabetes and obesity so pervasive, you need to cut back on sugar. Salt, too, can be a big problem. Think about the salt content of the food before adding more; taste the food to see if it needs a sprinkle. Use *half* of the salt called for in recipes and choose food brands that offer low salt and sodium varieties. Also, introduce spices slowly to your children.

Remember, you *are* what you eat! So, eat healthier foods and encourage your child to make better choices and develop healthy habits that last a lifetime. **PE**

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**ACTION:** *Modify your eating habits.*

# Fitness Protection

Show your heart you care.



by Carole Carson

**Y**OUR HEART—THAT QUIET, understated partner—beats 100,000 times every 24 hours; and unless you listen and take notes, you won't hear its message.

Why listen? Because heart disease is the number one killer of both men and women. Our growing girth has wiped out efforts to reduce heart disease.

If your heart could speak, it would tell you to take good care of your health not only during February, American Heart Month, but throughout the year. Fitness is basic to heart health, so place your heart in a *fitness protection program* by following 10 tips:

**1. Be honest with yourself about the state of your fitness.** Tell yourself the truth about your current level of conditioning. Weigh yourself. Surplus weight is hard on your heart. Facing the truth frees you to take appropriate action.

**2. Develop a realistic view of your body.** A 60-year-old body will perform differently than a 20-year-old body. Recognize that the idealized model for fitness is not achievable for most people. Instead, define your own standards for fitness and health.

**3. Be your body's boss—make health a priority.** Make room in your life for heart health. When planning your daily schedule, allocate time to work on your fitness goals. Trim, fit bodies are the reward for time invested in exercising and eating nutritious meals. Incorporate movement into your daily routine. Consider the 60 minutes you spend exercising daily as a *happy hour* for the heart. Keep studying and learning so you can be responsive to your body's needs.

**4. Monitor your fitness program.** Keep a food journal, measure progress, and celebrate small successes. Anticipate obstacles and plan recoveries. The quest for fitness is not a smooth journey—ups and downs are inevitable. Indulgences need to be offset by strategic adherence to limitations. Reassure yourself that setbacks are part of the process. Turn time into an ally by striving for persistence rather than perfection.

**5. Have fun with your fitness program.** Find foods you enjoy eating that don't pack on pounds, and explore ways of exercising until you find ones that make you feel young again. It's all about

what works for you. And laugh often. A *positive perspective* is good for your heart.

**6. Make room for rest, recovery, recreation, and reflection.** A sound night's sleep is a vital part of your fitness program. Find pleasure in sources beyond eating, such as listening to music or enjoying the outdoors. Spend time reflecting on your life and fitness goals.

**7. Make the most of your unique body.** Accept that some aspects of your body can't be altered (you didn't choose your parents). Some bodies are predisposed to fat accumulation; others are naturally thin. *Accepting what is versus bemoaning the injustices of your biological inheritance* saves energy for constructive pursuits.

**8. Appreciate your body.** It represents the gift of life. Say "thank you" to your body for performing its life-sustaining functions, the ones that you are con-

scious of and ones that your body does automatically, without your awareness.

**9. Respect your body's needs; don't take your health for granted.** If you neglect your body, you may trigger medical problems that will trim your pocketbook and lower your spirits. A healthy heart in a healthy body is priceless.

**10. Team with others who are committed to maintaining their well-being.** Surrounding yourself with like-minded teammates reinforces your own faithfulness to healthful routines.

Every day you practice these 10 tips, you'll feel better *in* your body and better *about* your body. You'll feel more alive in body, mind and spirit—a healthy body makes everything better. **PE**

Carole Carson is a fitness advocate and the author of *From Fat to Fit*. Visit [www.fromfat2fit.com](http://www.fromfat2fit.com).

**ACTION:** Achieve your fitness goals.

## PHYSICAL • BALANCE

# Bring It On!

Boost your energy.



by Doug Davin and Diana Morris

**I**T'S TOUGH TO FEEL EXCITED AND ENERGIZED about your future when you're tired or run down. So boost your *bring it on!* with strategies for staying healthy and strong. First, check with your doctor to be sure any diet or exercise plans are safe and appropriate for you.

From strength, stamina, and flexibility to stress reduction and disease prevention, exercise improves your health and outlook and your sleep. We call our formula for a balanced exercise regimen *Sweat, Strength, and Stretch*:

- **Sweat** requires 30 minutes of aerobic activity. Fitness walking is a good choice. For the cost of walking shoes, you can get a great cardiovascular workout, especially if you pump your arms, with minimal stress on your joints. Other aerobic options include swimming, cycling, jogging, and aerobic classes or DVDs.

- **Strength** work (lifting weights, doing pushups, sit-ups, or muscle-strengthening exercise) is a vital part of any exercise regimen. This resistance training strengthens your muscles and builds bone density. Strong muscles protect your joints, reshape your body, and burn calories, even when you're still!



- **Stretching** keeps you toned and limber, prevents injuries, and enables you to move freely and more quickly. Flexibility work through stretches, yoga, or Pilates exercise protects you from muscle tears and aches—including disabling back pains—and enables you to move more comfortably and fluidly.

**You can exercise until cows fly, but a steady diet devoid of vitamins and fiber will drag you down.** Start making better choices. Eat a breakfast with some whole grain (oats, shredded wheat, or 12-grain bread), and a protein like an egg or cup of yogurt. For lunch, have a salad with tuna or chicken, seeds or nuts, or chunks of low-fat cheese. Skip the high-fat dressing and have a slice of whole-grain bread. For dinner, reduce your portion of meat, chicken, or fish; have a cup of brown rice or a small sweet potato or yam for fiber; and add a salad and a serving of steamed vegetables (or try a vegetarian meal). Between meals, drink plenty of water and opt for fruit instead of junk.

Satisfy your sweet tooth with a low-fat granola bar, a banana dipped in raisins, or a baked apple with cinnamon.

**Also, get the rest and balance you need.** Turn off the TV, put the book down, leave the clothes in the basket until tomorrow. Sleep is more important. Don't eat or drink caffeine after dinner so you can sleep comfortably.

Beyond work, make time for family, friendships, and spiritual well being. **PE**

Doug Davin and Diana Morris are co-authors of *Bring It On!* Visit [www.breakthroughskills.com](http://www.breakthroughskills.com).

**ACTION:** Boost your energy.

# Inside Time

Start keeping a journal.



by David Allen

**E**XPLORING WHO YOU REALLY are while expressing what you're really about is the promise of a journal. But along the way, those same creative urges may get you involved in many things to do, distracting you from your energy source. You create relationships, career, family, home—each bringing an endless stream of *woulds, coulds, and shoulds*.

Your visions created your life, but now your life is blinding your vision. Is there a way to play this game, to keep it all in balance, to stay connected to the source of your creativity, continue to expand its expression, and not let the results trip up the process?

Yes. But it's not free, and you don't get there by denying the world and your engagement with it. You must capture and manage the attachments and agreements with yourself that create dissonance, and offload and objectify what has your attention. You can do things to assist in detaching yourself from the details of life, so you can get to the more rewarding experience of your journal. And also the act of journaling provides a key to that freedom.

**Your business is not your busyness.** Are you too busy to get to your journal? Careful, because *being busy* is not the same thing as *tending to business*. Many people use their attachment to nervous activity as a way to avoid what they need to be about. And often that more important work is best accessed and managed from the perspectives and shifts in consciousness that the journaling process fosters.

Your *work* exists at multiple levels. From lowest to the loftiest, you have your day-to-day actions, the projects you're trying to complete with them, the areas of responsibility you try to maintain at your standards, outcomes you want to achieve in the future, the lifestyle expression you want to achieve, and your purpose in life.

Each can rightly be called your *work*. But the volume, speed, and intensity at the lower levels can easily grab your focus and cause you to lose the perspective required to keep you sane. It is easy to sacrifice the higher orders of business for the lower. You have so

many things to do today. So you don't keep an overview of all your projects, you ignore some of the areas of your life you should focus on, you avoid drafting blueprints of positive futures, and you forget to connect back to the *source* of the game to begin with—you.

**Your world can't be ignored, nor can it be completed.** How do you unhook from the pulls and pressures of your world? It would be nice if you could just shut your door, or go into the garden, and the niggling things to do and deal with just went away. Or, if you could just get it all done, so there was nothing left to contend with. Neither is likely to happen. Your freedom will not come from trying to ignore all the stuff or by trying to complete everything—it requires truly detaching from it. How? By getting it out of your head and reflecting on it appropriately.

**Emptying psychic RAM.** Much stress is the result of all implicit agreements kept in the mind and not captured, clarified, and organized. So, first do a "core



dump" of *everything* you have attention on—personal, professional, little, or big—on paper (this may take three hours!) Decide what you intend to do about each of them—the actions required—and park the resulting inventory of concrete things to do in appropriate categories in some personal management system you can trust to remind you of all that at the right times. You'll come away with an incredible rush of released energy and inspiration. Why? You renegotiated all your agreements with yourself, so you can feel okay about what you're not doing! You stop the infinite loops in your psyche caused by situations you've told yourself need to be different but which lack the decision about what you need to do about it.

Incomplete commitments like those kept only in the mind reside in *psychic RAM*—a memory space that has no sense of past or future. It all feels like it should be happening *now*, which creates stress, because you can only do one thing at a time, not all of them. RAM must be emptied to facilitate the

release of stored creative energy.

**The journal as a spiritual in-basket.** Just making a free-form list of all the things you have attention on is a form of journaling and is momentarily liberating. On the most mundane level, it is capturing all the "oh, yeah, I need to . . ." stuff—phone calls to make, things to get at the store, things to talk to your boss about. It isn't an exciting experience—just a necessary one to clear the deck. Instead of cluttering your nice leather-bound notebook with "Call Ana Maria re: her day camp suggestions," keep a notepad at hand to collect such details.

I often use my journal for *core-dumping* the subtler things rattling around in my psyche. It's like doing a current-reality inventory of the things that have my attention—the big blips on my internal radar. These can be either negative or positive, like relationship issues, career decisions, or unexpected events that create disturbances or opportunities. Sometimes this is the best way to start when nothing else is flowing—just list "what is" on your internal landscape. Something healing and positive happens when you express outwardly and reflect inwardly on that expression.

Spiritual disciplines teach that neutral observation is the first gate to real inner awareness and enlightenment. And when I just observe—what I feel, what I think, what I'm doing—it shifts me more into the one who is not my emotions, my thoughts, or my body. There is no better tool than my journal to move me into that perspective. The things that distract me lose their grip.

**Explore the inner world.** There's more gold to mine in those worlds wherein the meaning is found for everything you do. This is the bigger game, your real job. A conversation with your higher Self is wanting to be had. Inner awareness is waiting to be disclosed. Intelligent creativity is in store.

Again, when you feel *overwhelmed*, do a "core dump" by listing everything you have attention on in your life and work. Go through all the items, decide what actions you'll take on them, and park the results in a trusted system to keep it out of your head. Keep a note pad with you to capture new ideas.

Once psychic RAM is clear, ask what deeper conversation wants to happen, to be expressed, and to be resolved. Give it a voice and notice where it goes, and when it's complete. Balance going with the flow and letting go and listening. **PE**

David Allen is CEO of David Allen & Company. Visit [www.DavidAllenGTD.com](http://www.DavidAllenGTD.com).

**ACTION:** Keep a daily journal.



# 85% Solution

## Owning your success.



by Linda Galindo

**H**OW MUCH OF YOUR SUCCESS is up to you—your choices, your actions, your behaviors—versus outside conditions?

If you think that you're at least 85 percent responsible for your success—and that 15 percent depends on the way the wind blows—you can get the results you desire. If not, you likely blame your problems and failures—big or small, personal or professional—on other people, circumstances, or bad luck.

Accountability is not only a mindset—it is also a *skill-set* that you can learn by taking three steps:

**1. Responsibility.** This is not something you *do*—it's a way of *thinking* and *being*. You believe that success or failure is up to you, even if you work in a team or are blindsided by unforeseen circumstances. You own your commitment to a result before you even take action.

- *Be responsible "either way."* Be responsible when things go well, and when they don't. When you take on a project, be 100 percent responsible for the outcome. Own it 100 percent—good or bad—with no wiggle room.

- *Recognize your power.* You have the power to be 100 percent responsible, but you may not realize—or admit—that you have the power to manage your life and career. Sure, you can give that power away, but that is a choice—it doesn't happen without your permission.

- *Deal with what is.* It doesn't matter what *should* have happened—it matters what *is*. That saves you the trouble of figuring out who's to blame. *How do you want to react to the situation that is?*

**2. Self-empowerment.** By empowering yourself, you take the actions—and the risks—to achieve a result and get what you want. Rather than waiting for someone to declare you empowered or give you that one lucky break, you step outside your comfort zone, make things happen, and answer for the outcomes.

- *Manage expectations.* Be clear about expectations—what you expect and also what's expected of you. Ask questions, make agreements, and clarify things in writing—or else you miss expectations.

- *Take back your time.* "No" is an empowering word. Say *no* to the unimportant. Also, get rid of your to-do list (track projects and deadlines on a calendar);

resist over-scheduling (you can't cram 12 hours of work into eight hours, so stop trying); and estimate realistically (everything takes longer than you think).

- *Sing your own praises.* No one may ever notice how much you contribute and give you the recognition you deserve. Take stock of your personal talents and triumphs and let the higher-ups know who you are and what you contribute.

**3. Personal accountability.** This means answering for outcomes of your choices, actions, and behaviors. You stop assigning blame and making excuses. You take the fall when your choices cause problems.

- *Tell the truth.* Everybody messes up sometimes. Lying about it or trying to cover it up always make it worse—no exceptions. Save yourself some time: Don't tell untruths. Nobody believes them anyway—not even you.

- *Police yourself.* Are you accountable for your actions, even if nobody holds you accountable—or catches you? Yes! So police yourself. On the road of life, choose accountability at every turn.

- *Look to yourself—first.* When trouble arises, ask four questions: "What is the problem?" "What am I doing—or not doing—to contribute to the problem?" "What will I do differently to help solve the problem?" and "How will I be accountable for the result?"

Personal accountability is sorely lacking—and urgently needed—in our society. Wait no longer—do it now. Choose accountability and own your success at work and in life. **PE**

*Linda Galindo is a consultant specializing in individual and leadership accountability and the author of The 85% Solution. Visit [www.lindagalindo.com](http://www.lindagalindo.com).*

**ACTION:** Take these three steps.

# Achieve Your Goals

## Avoid the 10 causes of failure.



by Michael Angier

**I**F YOU'RE NOT ACHIEVING your goals or reaching them as easily or quickly as you wish, use this checklist to see where you might be missing out.

**1. Not knowing what you want.** Know what you want to achieve. If you only know what you don't want, that's where your focus and energy go. Clearly define your objectives—your goals need to be written, specific, easy to understand, and measurable.

**2. Lack of focus.** If you lack focus, take on too much, have too many or conflicting goals, fill your life with busy things or operate inconsistently, you will likely fail. You can achieve anything you want—*with the right focus*.

**3. Not enough reasons.** Reasons come first, answers second. With strong reasons, you can accomplish anything you desire. Success demands passion. When your *why* is strong, the *how* will come. And your desire will sustain you through challenges and obstacles.

**4. Distractions.** Often you get distracted by other things, by *bright shiny objects*. You begin one goal, then start chasing another. Your *next big idea* can derail your current project. Work on no more than three goals—and take daily action toward them with discipline.

**5. Lack of belief—in yourself or in**

**your goal.** Believe in yourself. Expect to win. Low belief causes you to give up, never begin, or take shortcuts that sabotage your success. To feel worthy of success, read great books and hang out with people who help you be your best.

**6. Deficient knowledge.** A worthy goal requires learning new things. Find out what you need to learn to get where you want to go. Don't let lack of knowledge keep you from starting. If you wait until you know it all, you'll never begin. Start where you are and build the bridge as you walk on it.

**7. Insufficient skills.** Identify skills you need and start gaining proficiency in them. Enhancing skills pays big dividends. You might find a team member who has the skills you lack—enabling you to focus on what you excel in.

**8. Not enough money.** The main reason you miss a goal is rarely money—it's usually an idea problem. With good ideas and a tenacious spirit, you can get the funding.

**9. Low energy.** To have the energy and stamina to win, you need to take care of your body. Get adequate rest, eat the right foods, and refrain from careless and unsafe behavior.

**10. Inadequate or no support.** Ask for help and know where to turn to get it. Bring in talent and resources from others and make it a win-win situation.

The space between *where you are now* and *where you want to be* is the Gap. Identify your gap and close it by working with passion and consistency. **PE**

*Michael Angier is CIO (Chief Inspiration Officer) of SuccessNet, helping people and businesses prosper. Visit [www.SuccessNetDiamonds.com](http://www.SuccessNetDiamonds.com).*

**ACTION:** Avoid these common causes of failure.

# Circuit Training

Boost your confidence.



by Tim Ursiny

WHEN YOU DO CIRCUIT training at the gym, you move from station to station to work out different muscle groups. This gives you a well-rounded work out and a well-chiseled physique. If you just work out your biceps and never work out any other part of your body, your arms may look great, but your legs and stomach might look ridiculous in comparison. It is better to work out various muscles in various ways.

## Take Five Paths

The same principles apply when it comes to building your confidence. To develop unbreakable confidence, you need to take five different paths:

**Path 1: Mental techniques (thinking your way to confidence).** Cognitive theories of psychology address the destructive and irrational things you can say to yourself that hurt your performance and happiness. Your perceptions (self-talk) impact confidence, emotions, and behavior. Negative thoughts can create insecurity while powerful rational thoughts focused on action can create wonderful results.

Beliefs that hold you back from being your best are: There is nothing I can do. I need other's love to feel worthwhile. I am sure that bad things are going to happen. Failure is terrible. I can't deal with this.

These are not statements of fact, but chosen beliefs that you form out of your perceptions and keep you off-centered and performing at less than your potential. Examples of more helpful thoughts include: Most challenges bring opportunities, and it serves me better to look for those. This is a chance to help others during a difficult time. I am going to prepare for whatever the future holds. I can learn from every mistake I make. Through focus and tenacity, I can tackle challenges in my life.

With practice you can eliminate insecure thoughts and replace them with confidence. You can learn to change your self-talk and master your thoughts. Here is a sample process: Write the facts about the situation—don't record your interpretation of the facts, but just the truthful data. Write what you felt

from the event (sad, angry, frustrated, hurt). Taking responsibility for your emotions, record what you are saying to yourself to make you feel what you felt. Acknowledge that only you can upset you. No one and nothing else has that power (unless you allow it). Create a more truthful, realistic or helpful perception that builds your confidence and moves you to positive action. You'll likely need to repeat your new thought until you believe it and move to action.

**Path 2: Emotional techniques (feeling your way to confidence).** Emotional approaches center on confidence-building tactics that don't depend on words. These techniques are effective for many people. One example is to use music to



change your confidence and mood. Instead of listening to the blues when you are sad, listen to music that inspires you, gets you up dancing, and gets you focused. Music hits a primal part of you that words can't always reach. Build CDs or iPod playlists of songs that pump you up and use music to control and channel your emotions. Make a list of confidence-inducing music. The music you select really doesn't matter. What matters is that it hits that part of your brain and heart that may be hidden from thoughts and words.

**Path 3: Action techniques (behaving your way to confidence).** Procrastination can destroy confidence. Procrastinating difficult or fearful activities infuses messages of inadequacy and failure. When you face fears, you build confidence. Of course, there are many ways to face fears. You can dive right in or dip in slowly. If you are avoiding something that you know you need to face, either be a dipper or a diver. You can dip by building a list of gradual

actions that will help you slowly and methodically deal with the situation, or you can just dive in and keep facing it until you change the situation. Avoiders create helplessness in their lives; dipper and divers build confidence.

**Path 4: Relational techniques (relating your way to confidence).** The people you associate with impact your confidence. When you are surrounded by people with negative attitudes and energy, your confidence can be eroded over time. When you surround yourself with positive friends and family, you can bring out your best. To decide who you want in your life, ask yourself these questions: Who drains me and how can I limit my time with him or her? Who inspires me and builds my confidence? Who is a great problem-solver? Who pulls out the best in me? Who could hold me accountable to my toughest actions and goals?

Since energy is contagious, surrounding yourself with negative people will drain you! It is worthy to help struggling people, but do it as a mission and only help them to the level that they are willing to also help themselves. Also make sure you surround yourself with people who help and positively impact you.

**Path 5: Spiritual techniques (living your way to confidence).** Spiritual paths to confidence include religious approaches such as prayer or secular approaches such as focusing on your mission. When you are off of your mission, your confidence will suffer. When you're centered on your purpose, nothing can destroy your confidence. What is your noble calling? Why are you on earth? How consistent are your actions to this belief? In the first half of your life, you may focus on success. In the second half, you focus on purpose, mission, and significance. Only you have the ability to betray your mission. Take time weekly to reflect on the consistency between what you believe and what you do. Make sure they are in alignment and that you are living the life that you want to lead!

When you address mental, emotional, behavioral, relational and spiritual approaches to confidence, you'll have a well-rounded self-perception—and your actions will show it. Like a person with a well-toned body, you'll walk around proud of yourself for being in the best emotional shape of your life! PE

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**ACTION:** Take these five paths to confidence.

# Valuing Love

Do not take it for granted.



by Nathaniel Branden

**Y**OU MAY WONDER, *How can I bring more love into my life?* First, let's be clear on what we mean by *love*. Perhaps at no time in history has the word *love* been used so promiscuously as it is today.

We are told constantly that we must *love* everyone—including people we've never met. Just as a currency, in becoming more inflated, has less purchasing power, so words through inflation and indiscriminate use are progressively emptied of meaning.

You can feel *benevolence* and *goodwill* toward people you do not know or know well, but not *love*. By its nature, love entails selection, discrimination. Love is your response to what represents your highest values—a response to distinctive characteristics possessed by some people but not by all. If you were to ask your lover why he or she cares for you, consider your reaction if told, *Why not love you? It doesn't matter whom I love. It might as well be you.*" Not very inspiring!

I find the advocacy of *universal love* puzzling. Not everyone condemns sexual promiscuity, but I've never heard anyone hail it as a virtue. But spiritual promiscuity? Is that a virtue? Why? Is the spirit less important than the body?

My impression is that people who talk of *loving everyone* are expressing a wish or a plea that everyone love them. To take love seriously, to treat it with respect and distinguish it from general benevolence or goodwill, is to appreciate that it is a unique experience possible between some people but not all.

**Consider the case of romantic love.** When two adults with spiritual and psychological affinities encounter each other, and if they have evolved beyond struggling to make the relationship work—romantic love can become a pathway, not only to sexual and emotional happiness but also to higher growth. It can become a context for a continuing encounter with the self, through the interaction with another self. Two people, each dedicated to personal growth, can provide much stimulus to each other.

But such a possibility presupposes self-esteem. The first love affair you must consummate successfully is with yourself; only then are you ready for a relationship with another. A person

who feels unworthy and unlovable is not ready for romantic love.

What I feel for my grandchildren is a different kind of love. What it has in common with romantic love, however, is that I see in my grandchildren values and traits that touch my heart.

Apart from what I feel for my wife—who is the highest value in my life—writing is my paramount passion. I devote much of my time and energy to writing. This has to do with *living* my values, not simply *professing* them.

You ask, *"How do I bring more love into my life?"* Focus on who and what you care most about—on who and what you most respect and admire. Give time

and attention to these people and things.

**Give the greatest part of your time and energy to your highest priorities.** I frequently communicate to my wife my awareness of all the traits and characteristics in her that I so much love, respect, appreciate, and admire. We all want to be seen, understood, and appreciated. I strive to make my wife *feel visible* to me.

I also think about the things I love and enjoy. I do not take anything good in my life for granted. I know if I love someone, the time to express it is today. If I value something, the time to honor it is today. **PE**

Nathaniel Branden is the author of *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*. Visit [www.NathanielBranden.com](http://www.NathanielBranden.com).

**ACTION:** Express your love each day.

## SOCIAL • ASSERTIVENESS

# Assertiveness Power

How to stand up for yourself.



by Linnda Durré

**B**Y LEARNING TO BE MORE assertive, you can rid yourself of childhood restrictions, fear, hesitation, and social misinformation. Know the difference between being *aggressive*—bullying, yelling, screaming, intimidation—and being *assertive*—being diplomatic, strong, factual, clear, and firm in resolving interpersonal difficulties.

Stop being a martyr, victim, or doormat. Avoid blaming other people for your situation. Take responsibility and stand up for yourself to get what you need and want from others in a caring, direct way. Be positive, identify faulty behavior, and focus on a win/win solution.

Take these eight steps:

**1. State the problem.** Use the *Sandwich Technique*—start with a positive compliment about the person, then go directly to the problem and give feedback stating it clearly and giving examples of the toxic or faulty behavior and how you want it to change, and end on a positive note of what you'd like to have happen: "Jack, I've noticed lately that your work isn't in on time—that's not like you. What's wrong. Is there anything I can do to help you?"

**2. State your feelings.** Say how the person's behavior makes you feel. Use words like *frustrated*, *angry*, and *annoyed*. Be specific. Avoid accusations and blame: "When your work isn't done on time, it slows all of us. When you don't give me advance notice, I can't make other plans. When you don't tell me, I feel cut out of the loop, powerless, and frustrated."



**3. Offer solutions.** Give the person options for their behavior and tell how much better it would be when behavior changes: "Do you need an assistant or partner to share the workload? Are there problems that I can take care of?"

**4. Give an ultimatum.** If the situation doesn't improve, issue an ultimatum. State what you intend to do if compliance isn't achieved: "If your work continues to be late, you may be demoted or fired. I'll need to report it."

**5. Look and listen.** Hear the person's response. Listen to what he's saying and how he's saying it. Observe body language. Know what's said between the lines. Use active listening; paraphrase what you hear: "You thought you could correct the problem without coming to me."

**6. Dialogue.** Have an honest discussion, listen, don't interrupt, and comment on each thing the person says—and be prepared to hear him remark on what you say and respond: "I'm not here to blame you, but to remedy this—to find a win-win solution."

**7. Resolution.** Decide on an action plan and agree on it, in writing: "So, Jack, our agreement is that I'll arrange an assistant for you to help you get your reports in on time."

**8. Follow up.** Send a letter or email summarizing the discussion and decision and copy all who might be affected. You might hand-deliver it. Add: "If you have any questions or additions to this memo, please respond in writing." If you put it in writing, you're covered.

These steps empower you in dealing with toxic people and situations. **PE**

Linnda Durré, Ph.D., is a psychotherapist, consultant, trainer, speaker, columnist, and author of *Surviving the Toxic Workplace* (McGraw-Hill). Email [Linnda.Durre@gmail.com](mailto:Linnda.Durre@gmail.com) or call 407-739-8620.

**ACTION:** Start standing up for yourself.

# Be Debt-free in 2010

Get out of debt and start saving.



by Eric Tyson

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING forward to in 2010?

Buying your first home?

Sending your last kid off to college? Or obsessing over your personal debt? It may feel like “Resolution Impossible,” but if you follow my advice, you’ll remember 2010 as the year you finally took control of your financial future.

If you carry too much consumer debt—if you have credit card debt or auto loans—take some solace in the fact that you’re not alone and that many others have overcome these hurdles. Consumer debt is *not* okay. It can damage your personal relationships and mental well-being, not to mention the stability of your financial future.

To improve your financial health in 2010, observe these tips:

**Partake in a little self-reflection.** A misaligned mindset toward spending and shopping can severely affect your financial and personal well-being. If you have a compulsive spending problem, ask yourself: *Do I feel guilty about shopping? Is my shopping causing financial trouble? Is my shopping, spending, and accumulated debt leading to feelings of helplessness, anger, confusion, fear, or depression? Do the act of shopping and interactions with salespeople give me a feeling of worth, importance, and control?* You can’t get rid of your debt until you figure out what makes you compulsively spend.

**Make a plan and stick to it.** The reason why many of your resolutions fail is that you state the thing you want to improve but never create a plan for getting from point A to point B. Planning your financial future is like planning a vacation. You’re organizing your money and time so that you get to do all the things you want when you get there. Planning your finances doesn’t have to be a long, complicated, dreary chore—you can enjoy the process. Without goals, your finances will simply reflect the history and disorganization of your life. So, set some goals. Decide the best ways to make the most of your money and work on reaching those goals. By

reducing your spending, taxes, borrowing, and insurance costs and by boosting your rate of savings and investment returns, you can turn your life around.

**Get rid of your four-wheeled debt.**

Don’t define necessities by what others have. A new car is *not* a necessity. Yes, you may need a car to get to work, but there are far less expensive used cars that will make it to your office! If you take out a loan to buy a car that you can’t afford, you’ll have great difficulty saving money and meeting your goals. Moreover, you’ll feel stressed all the time—a poor trade-off for the (short-lived) “new car smell.” There are many perfectly good cars out there that are within your budget and that you can pay for with cash. And trading in your wallet-busting option for one of those will help you free up money that you can use to pay off other debts or invest in your future. Think what it would be like to save \$500 a month rather than pay off the loan on your expensive car.

Not having a car payment is liberating.

**Start making your purchases based on need, not emotion.** It’s easy to give in to all of those ads telling you how much you “need” that new car, expensive gym membership, or trendy outfit.

Marketers play on insecurities, fears, and guilt and suggest that you can feel

better about yourself by buying their products. You can’t overcome spending and consumer debt until you recognize these pressures and how they corrupt your buying decisions. The goal of consumer product marketing is to persuade and cajole you into buying what they’re selling. Planning what you can and can’t spend comes in handy when you want to buy something that isn’t a necessity. If a product is too expensive for your budget, you don’t *need* it—no matter how much you might *want* it.

**Research before you enter the stores.**

Before shopping for necessities that are not everyday purchases—say, a new refrigerator—do some research to identify brands and models that are good values. Check various retailers and compare prices. When you shop, stick



to your list. Don’t be tempted by all of the other products in a store, and don’t wander around. Get in, get what you need, and get out to ensure that you don’t pick up things that will throw your finances out of whack.

**Watch your food budget.** Dine out less and monitor the groceries you have. Learn to cook. Try to keep a healthy inventory of groceries at home. This will minimize trips to the store and the need to impulsively dine out because your cupboard is bare. Do most of your shopping through discount stores that offer low prices for buying in bulk, or grocery stores that offer bulk purchases. Saving on food will help you put more money toward paying off your debt and setting money aside for investments.

**Become more energy efficient.** Make your home energy efficient by adding insulation and weather-stripping, installing water-saving devices, and reducing use of electrical appliances. Many utility companies will do a free energy review of your home and suggest money-saving ideas. Thanks to tax law changes, you may also qualify for Residential Energy Credits. Energy improvements—such as adding insulation, installing energy-efficient windows and doors, installing solar panels—are eligible for a credit rate of up to 30 percent of the cost up to a limit of \$1,500 for qualifying improvements.

**Cut your insurance costs.** Don’t overspend on insurance by carrying coverage that’s unnecessary or that covers small potential losses. Coverage of small losses, such as \$100 or \$200, isn’t useful. Take high deductibles on your insurance policies—a much as you can afford in the event of a loss. Also, shop around. Rates vary greatly among insurers. Of course, an insurer’s quality of service and financial stability are important. Ask insurers and agents to provide financial ratings for the policies you’re considering.

It won’t be easy getting out of debt, and you can’t do it overnight. It takes constant dedication, but has a great payoff in the end. Whenever you feel like giving in, think about the benefits of being out of debt: the money you can invest will mushroom into substantial savings that enable you to get much more for your money. Best of all is the *peace of mind* you feel. Debt is emotionally crippling, a prison of your own making. Getting out of debt is *your ticket to true freedom*, and that’s a great gift to give yourself and your family. PE

*Eric Tyson is a best-selling personal finance book author with five national bestsellers including Personal Finance For Dummies (Wiley) and Investing For Dummies. Visit [www.eric Tyson.com](http://www.eric Tyson.com).*

**ACTION:** Get out of debt this year.

# Danger of Fame

Be content with your gifts.



by Patrick Lencioni

A FEW MONTHS AGO, AWASH in all the news about Michael Jackson's troubled life and drug-related death and the similarities between him and Elvis Presley, I started thinking about the *dangers of fame*. And when the travails of Jon and Kate (of the *Plus Eight* TV show) became known, I drafted an essay on that topic. But I got busy with other priorities and I set it aside. With the recent revelations about Tiger Woods, I decided to finish it.

Now, I have no desire to indulge in these real life tragedies, and I have no right to judge the people involved—we all have problems. But I can't help but think that their fame was related to, if not the biggest cause of, their problems. I get more convinced of this every time I go through the check-stand at the store and see how many famous actors, musicians, celebrities, and athletes experience more than their fair share of suffering. In fact, I've decided that *fame is actually a very good predictor of misery*.

This should not be a surprise. Fame is a lonely proposition, fraught with *benefits* that prove to be temporary and seem to crowd out the only thing that really matters—love. When people who achieve fame begin to feel the emptiness of their situation, they can't help but wonder what is wrong with them. Troubled by this, they usually seek to fill their emptiness with greater gusto, starting a spiral that leads them inevitably to misery.

In spite of all the evidence of this pattern, we see a growing obsession with becoming famous. Consider the proliferation of reality TV shows, celebrity gossip shows, talent shows, and 24-hour "news" channels, not to mention all the newsstand magazines. In spite of all the evidence of its harm, fame is as alluring as ever. This is so astoundingly, insanely illogical that it calls for an analogy.

Imagine that a trendy and expensive new car hits the market and that it is known to easily flip over and cause serious injury, even death, to its drivers. Now, imagine people *doing anything* they could—borrowing great sums of money, mortgaging their homes, cashing in their kids' college fund—to buy the car. And when they're asked why they would do something so self-destructive, they look at you like you're crazy and say "Do you know how many people wish they

could drive this car? Besides, that won't happen to me. I'm a better driver!"

That's what so many of us do when we see the undeniable pain experienced by people who achieve fame and still insist that its benefits are worth the cost. We ignore the compelling stories told by the handful of people who have lived through the *nightmares of fame* and warn against its dangers, and pay attention instead to those fame-addicted celebrities who keep getting up off the ground and coming back for more misery.

This poses a real problem, especially when young people start to believe that fame is itself a goal—an accomplishment worth almost any risk or sacrifice.

*So what are we to do?* We can exhort one another to avoid the temptation of fame and encourage each other to value those things that prove to be real sources

of lasting peace and joy. That may seem like a monumental task, but I have one idea about how to get things started.

I would like *People* magazine—and all other celebrity magazines—to start printing a big disclaimer on its cover: **Warning! The people featured in this magazine are not to be envied or emulated; in fact, they should be pitied and prayed for because their fame is really a terrible burden and greatly increases their chances of becoming miserable.**

We can all do our best to remember this whenever we are tempted to wish we were like the smiley and beautiful people we see and read about. Instead, maybe we will decide to thank God for the enduring gifts He gives us. PE

Pat Lencioni is CEO of The Table Group. Visit [www.tablegroup.com](http://www.tablegroup.com).

**ACTION:** Seek not for fame but for peace and joy.

## FINANCIAL • PILLARS

# Three Pillars

They support success.



by Eric Adler

A PILLAR IS A FIRM UPRIGHT support for a superstructure. To get ahead in life, you need to build a secure superstructure that has three support pillars:

### Pillar 1: Get out of your own way.

You tend to get into a comfortable rut. You know what you'll be doing each day, week, and year. Within certain guidelines, your life is predicable and stable;

however, these are not success factors. Risk-taking and instability are keys to going from mediocre to stellar. It's tough to move out of a comfortable situation into one of insecurity and unknown turns, but this is what you have to do to succeed—get out of your own way by taking small steps toward a larger goal. Four major areas make up your comfort zone: *geographical*—where you live, work, and play; *personal*—your friends, family, and co-workers; *recreational*—your entertainment and hobbies; and *mental*—what and how you think.

The trick to expanding your comfort zone is to not change all areas at once. Try one or two at a time, get used to that, and move on to others. Doing too much, too soon will send you back to your comfort rut. *Expanding* does not mean getting rid of what's there. You can make new friends and not abandon old ones. You can add a second hobby and still enjoy the first. This is an *addition* process.

**Pillar 2: Know where you want to go and how to get there.** It's not easy to set meaningful goals. If you lose sight of what there is to strive after, your list ends up looking like everyone else's resolutions: lose weight, exercise, and spend more time with the family. These half-hearted goals are made in January, forgotten by February. When you set goals, set your own goals: don't let others decide for you. If a goal isn't meaningful to you, you'll lack the *enthusiasm* needed to achieve it. Make your goals concrete and specific: Don't say you want to *make more money*. Set an exact amount and a firm time for making the goal. Know what effort is required: If you don't know what you need to do in order to reach a goal, it's a *wish* not a goal. Be clear about how much energy, time, and resources will be needed to succeed.

**Pillar 3: Stop talking and take action.** Now comes the time for action. But don't announce your goals—telling others only invites people who will tell you how hard it will be or why it can't be done. Keep your goals to yourself to avoid all the naysayers. Never move backwards: Don't let setbacks stop you. If things are temporarily going wrong, don't use this as an excuse to retreat. Analyze what went amiss and what is needed to get back on track. Reward yourself along the way: Break a *big goal* into many *mini-goals*. Once you achieve a mini-goal, reward yourself.

Establish these three pillars and you can achieve anything you desire. PE

**ACTION:** Apply these pillars to your finances.

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**ACTION:** Apply these pillars to your finances.

**ACTION:** Apply these pillars to your finances.

# Attractive Service

Improve your curb appeal.



by Carol Kinsey Goman

I'VE LEARNED A FEW THINGS about selling a house: much depends on timing (economic timing as well as the time of year you put the house on the market), location is still paramount, and a property needs curb appeal—it needs to make a special, positive, and instant impression when prospective buyers first see it.

In *The Political Brain*, author Drew Westen discusses the role of emotion in politics and the importance of personal curb appeal in political campaigns: "One of the main determinants of electoral success is simply a candidate's curb appeal. Curb appeal is the feeling voters get when they 'drive by' a candidate a few times on television and form an emotional impression."

Personal curb appeal can be assessed quickly. Psychologists Nalini Ambady and Bob Rosenthal conducted experiments involving "thin slices of behavior." In one study, subjects watched a 30-second clip of college teachers at the start of a term and rated them on such characteristics as *accepting*, *active*, *competent*, and *confident*. The results were startling: raters accurately predicted how students would evaluate those same teachers at the end of the course.

Personal curb appeal is also primarily a nonverbal process. When Ambady and Rosenthal turned off the audio portion of the teachers' video clip, so that subjects had to rely only on body language cues, the accuracy of their 30-second predictions remained just as high.

How's *your* personal curb appeal? When your co-workers, clients, and partners "drive by" you, how do you come across? If you'd like to improve, apply these five tips:

**1. Dress for success.** Joyce is a successful educator and entrepreneur. One of the secrets of her success is the way she dresses. Even when traveling for a vacation, Joyce is in a business suit and heels. Her motto: "Wear great clothes. You never know whom you'll meet!"

When it comes to curb appeal, the way you dress matters. A lot. Clothing has an effect on both the observer and the wearer. It has been proven that people are more likely to give money (charitable donations, tips) or informa-

tion to someone if that person is well dressed. And, if you'd ever watched actors at their first dress rehearsal, you'd be convinced of the power of the right costume to powerfully impact what the wearer feels.

Dressing for success doesn't necessarily mean that you have to wear a suit to work. Many organizations have a more casual dress code. But it does mean that whatever you wear should help you make the statement that you are a competent professional.

**2. Maintain positive eye contact.** Eye contact is most effective when both parties feel its intensity is appropriate for the situation. This may differ with introverts/extroverts, men/women, or between different cultures. But, in gen-



eral, greater eye contact—especially in intervals lasting four to five seconds—almost always leads to greater liking.

Looking at someone's eyes transmits energy and indicates interest. As long as you are looking at me, I believe that I have your full attention. In my book, *The Nonverbal Advantage*, I offer a simple way to improve your likeability: Whenever you greet a colleague, remember to look into her eyes long enough to notice what color they are.

**3. Speak the body language of inclusion.** Back-to-back doesn't do it. But belly-to-belly—facing people directly when talking with them—does. Even a quarter turn away signals a lack of interest and makes the speaker shut down.

Remove barriers between you and the other person. Take away things that block your view. Move the phone or stacks of paper on your desk. Better still, come out from behind your desk and sit next to the person.

Use palm-up hand gestures when speaking. Keeping your movements relaxed, using open arm gestures, and

showing the palms of your hands—all are silent signals of credibility and candor. Individuals with open gestures are perceived more positively and are more persuasive than those with closed gestures (arms crossed, hands hidden or held close to the body, etc.).

Synchronize your body language to mirror your partner's. Subtly match his stance, arm positions and facial expressions. You do this naturally with people you genuinely like or agree with. It's a way of nonverbally signaling that you are connected and engaged.

**4. Use your head.** The next time you are trying to encourage the other person to speak more, nod your head using clusters of three nods at regular intervals. People will talk three to four times more than usual when the listener nods in this manner. You'll be amazed at how this nonverbal signal can trigger such a positive response.

Head tilting is another signal that you are interested and involved. As such, head tilts can be very positive cues when you want to send messages of empathy and understanding. But a tilted head is also subconsciously processed as a submission signal. (Dogs will tilt to show their necks in deference to a more dominant animal.) And in business negotiations with men, women—who tend to head-tilt the most—should keep their heads straight up in a more neutral position.

**5. Activate your smile power.** A smile is an invitation, a sign of welcome. It says, "I'm friendly and approachable." The brain prefers happy faces, recognizing them more quickly than those with negative expressions. In fact, a smile is such an important signal to social interaction that it can be recognized from 300 feet—a football field away!

Smiling directly influences how other people respond to you. When you smile at someone, they usually smile in return. And, because facial expressions trigger corresponding feelings, the smile you get back actually changes that person's emotional state in a positive way. This one simple act will instantly and powerfully increase your curb appeal.

We all want to do business with and work for people who come across as friendly, trustworthy, competent, confident, and empathetic.

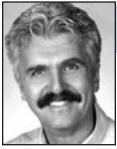
I can guarantee that if you improve your curb appeal, you'll be more successful in your service and career. **PE**

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**ACTION: Improve your appearance to be of service.**

## Service in 2010

Reflect on your values.



by Alex Pattakos

AS YOU START THIS YEAR, I invite you to reflect upon the *meaning* of your life and work, and focus on the things and people who matter the most to you. You may want to put last year behind you with a *good riddance* sigh of relief. It was a difficult year. The economic climate proved to be more of a perfect storm; and, like a tsunami, it generated monstrous, destructive waves, causing much turbulence, fear, and insecurity.

No matter how bad 2009 may have been, you can view it through a meaning-centered lens, engage in soul-searching, seek guidance in advancing your growth and development, and build a platform for planning a positive future. Reflecting on what matters—re-discovering and authentically re-committing to the meaningful values and goals that drive and sustain you—is a *healthy* process that helps to define and differentiate your humanness. What better a time for such self-reflection and meaning analysis, than when you experience the start of a new decade?

Look back on your life and see where you were, what has changed, and what appears to have stayed the same. For example, some 15 years ago, I wrote an article “Reflections of a (re)volutionary” about my own life:

*Time and experience tend to influence what seems worth having and doing. In my case, however, these influences have been tempered by the fact that I've maintained a set of core values or principles to guide my thoughts and actions. They comprise the foundation of my character and emanate from the essence of my being—my soul. It is as if my growth and learning have spiraled higher and higher over time. With the experience of viewing myself from a distance, I can now see more clearly the contours of my life's journey, with all of its zigs and zags, in some orderly fashion.*

*My worth ethic has always centered on the notion of service. More than 20 years ago, I committed to causes greater than myself. To be of service to others to those less fortunate than I, became a calling, and the opportunity to challenge the status quo, no matter how much conflict was involved, became a quest worth doing. In my “war on poverty,” my notion of worthiness revolved more around the doing or experiencing of*

*something of value than it did the having. Since, for me, self-fulfillment is always more important than material success, I find myself submerged in what Professor Peter Vaill terms the “permanent whitewater” of change. I eventually learned that you can change without growing but you can't grow without changing.*

Since writing this, I see that the whitewater of change has been ever-present. When my book, *Prisoners of Our Thoughts*, was published, it started what has become for me a worldwide meaning ministry—one *meaningful experience* and opportunity at a time. My book is based on the wisdom of my mentor, Dr. Viktor Frankl, renown psychiatrist, Holocaust survivor, and author of *Man's Search for*

*Meaning*. My authentic commitment to *meaningful values and goals (will to meaning)* has enabled me to navigate, and discover the seeds of meaning within the permanent whitewater of change.

In the midst of *permanent whitewater*, your *will to meaning*—your *core values or principles*—lights the way.

Ask *yourself*: As you travel through the whitewater of *life*, what *core values or principles* guide your thoughts and actions? You must extend *beyond* yourself to fulfill *more* of yourself. PE

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**ACTION:** Clarify your core values.

## SERVICE • TRAITS

## Servant-Leaders

They share 10 traits.



by Larry Spears

SERVANT-LEADERS SHARE 10 characteristics that you too can develop:

- **Listening.** Reinforce your verbal skills by learning to listen intently to others—listen receptively to what is being said and unsaid, seek to clarify the message and intent, hear your own inner voice, and reflect on the meaning.

- **Empathy.** Strive to understand and empathize with others, accepting and recognizing them for their special and unique spirits. Assume the good intentions of others and do not reject them as people, even when you may not accept certain behaviors or performance standards.

Become a skilled empathetic listener.

- **Healing.** The ability to heal relationships is a powerful force for transformation and integration. Learn to excel at healing yourself and your relationships with others. Recognize that many people have broken spirits and suffer from emotional pain. *Help make whole* those with whom you come in contact.

- **Awareness.** Self-awareness helps you to understand issues involving ethics, power, and values and to view most situations from a more integrated position. As Robert Greenleaf said, “Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They're not seekers after solace. They have *inner serenity*.”

- **Persuasion.** Servant-leaders rely on persuasion, rather than on coercion or

positional authority, in making decisions. They seek to convince others, rather than coerce compliance.

- **Conceptualization.** Nurture your ability to *dream great dreams* and *think beyond day-to-day realities*. This requires discipline and practice. Don't be consumed by the need to achieve short-term operational goals—stretch to provide the vision, and seek to balance *conceptual thinking* with *daily operations*.

- **Foresight.** The ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation is easy to identify. You know foresight when you experience it. Foresight enables you to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences of a decision for

the future. It is deeply rooted within the intuitive mind.

- **Stewardship.** Peter Block defines *stewardship* as “holding something in trust for another” for the greater good of society. Servant-leadership assumes first a commitment to serving the needs of others. It emphasizes the use of *openness* and *persuasion*, rather than *control*.

sizes the use of *openness* and *persuasion*, rather than *control*.

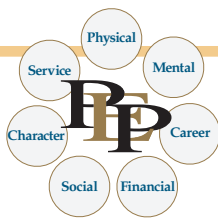
- **Growing people.** Believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers and do everything in your power to nurture their growth. Assist people to find positions where they can best contribute.

- **Building community.** Much has been lost in recent history in the shift from local communities to large institutions as the primary shapers of human lives. Identify some means for building community among those you work with.

I encourage you to cultivate these 10 characteristics for yourself. PE

*Larry C. Spears is President and CEO at The Spears Center for Servant-Leadership. [www.spearscenter.org](http://www.spearscenter.org)*

**ACTION:** Cultivate these 10 traits.



## GOAL GETTERS



**Personal transformation can happen quickly, even overnight,** if you believe it can and have the right

motivation. The new Jim Carrey movie, based on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, has rekindled interest in the lessons we can learn from Ebenezer Scrooge, the miserable miser who comes face-to-face with the effects of his negative habits and attitudes when ghosts show him his past, present, and potential future. After Scrooge encounters disturbing scenes in the past and present, the ghost of the future transports him to his gravestone. Spurred by this shocking rendezvous with his mortality, Scrooge exclaims: "I am not the man I was!" Indeed, he is transformed overnight. He awakens the next morning a changed man!

**You can project yourself into the future** and imagine what people are likely to say about you through the power of your imagination. One way to maximize the positive impact of this imaginary excursion is to write your own eulogy. This enlightening exercise will help you jump-start and sustain positive change by establishing a clear blueprint for the life you want to lead: what you want to accomplish, what kind of person you aspire to be, and how you want to be remembered. This eulogy exercise helps to focus the mind on long-term goals and on big questions about your life's purpose. The sooner you write your eulogy, the better. Do it now!

**Your written eulogy serves as a powerful mission statement for your life.** But the eulogy you write today isn't etched in stone—you can always edit it, add new goals, or remove things that no longer apply. Just get something on paper that reflects your long-term goals, heartfelt values, and deepest principles. Those things don't change much over time.

It's never too late to change, and change can happen overnight. There's no time like the present to put the past into perspective and project yourself into the future by writing your eulogy. So, clarify

what's important to you and set your life's course in the direction you want it to take—before it's too late.

—*Matthew Cossolotto, www.Ovations.com*



**February is Valentine's month, a time when we celebrate love.** While the holiday focuses on *romantic* love, there is so much more to love than romance. What we call *romantic love* often gives way to pain, while *true love* gives way only to healing and freedom.

You have to dig deep into your heart to discover your truth, live it, and end up with what you want. *A Course in Miracles* tells us: "A happy outcome to all things is sure." That may seem hard to believe if you fear that if you do not control every detail of your life, and perhaps the lives of others, things will fall apart. But when you trust the process, things usually fall together.

**At some point, you must decide which is more powerful: love or fear.** If you do not agree with the dire belief that *things are bad and getting worse*, you do not inherit its results. You have the power to live in a love-based universe, even while others pander to fear.

Gandhi said, "The pure love of one soul can offset the hatred of millions." I saw this principle demonstrated when I watched a video of Mother Teresa, who, during a war in Beirut, decided to go into the ravaged city and rescue a group of children from a hospital. When she told the media that she was entering the city, the warring factions declared a cease-fire. Once the children were outside the city, the soldiers began shooting again. Behold the power of one pure act of love to silence a war.

When you have a choice between fear and love, step back and ask, "What would love do here?" You'll likely see fresh options. It takes two people in fear to keep a conflict going. When one decides to give love rather than attack, everything changes. It takes two people to fight, but only one to end the fight.

Chose to deny the ranting of fear and act instead on the quieter but more powerful voice of true love.

—*Alan Cohen, www.alancohen.com*

## PersonalCOACH



**Resolutions You Can Keep Steps to a more rewarding year.**  
by Mike Hawkins

**WHY IS IT SO HARD TO CHANGE BEHAVIOR?** Whether it's stopping a bad habit, starting a new diet or exercise program, learning a new skill, improving relationships, or communicating better at work, change requires the right mindset. Having the right mindset and a readiness for change are the best indicators to achieving success.

Even minor changes don't come easy; improving yourself is not just a matter of *wanting* something bad enough or *trying* harder—you must be prepared to face the challenges.

To accomplish your resolutions and reap the rewards, follow this eight-step plan:

**1. Awareness.** Uncover what prevents you from achieving your objectives. Move past your self-deceptions, biases, and blind-spots by seeking feedback from others and building your self-awareness. Become aware of what you need to do to reach your goal.

**2. Motivation.** Build an unyielding internal motivation to change. Convert your broad desires or external incentives into specific benefits that have real, near-term meaning to you.

**3. Belief.** Remove any doubt that you can achieve your goal. Study former attempts and visualize yourself succeeding. Plan around anticipated obstacles by having contingency plans in place that can be easily deployed.

**4. Incremental steps.** Analyze the legitimate ways to reach your goal and select the best approach. Devise a plan of action using small steps that circumvent your resistance to change. Embed elements of fun to make the actions more appealing. Create realistic milestones for measuring progress.

**5. Time and energy.** Determine how much time and energy your plan will require and how you will free up that time and energy to eliminate the top excuses to change: "I don't have the time" and "I'm just too tired."

**6. Initiation.** Ensure the circumstances are optimal when starting your self-improvement goal. Don't start a diet just before a vacation.

**7. Others.** Solicit the help of others. Build your support group. Find people who offer you wise counsel, hold you accountable, and celebrate milestone achievements with you.

**8. Normalcy.** Follow your plan. Stay focused. Take it a day at a time. Apply the new behavior daily. Don't let a trip or circumstance prevent you from following your plan. Apply yourself until the new behavior becomes a habit. PE

*Mike Hawkins is author of Activating Your Ambition and president of Alpine Link Corporation, a consulting firm. Visit [www.activatingyourambition.com](http://www.activatingyourambition.com) and [www.alpinelink.com](http://www.alpinelink.com).*

**ACTION: Try following these eight steps.**



# Dream Wings

*Fly fearlessly in life.*



by Derek Clark

**E**ARLY IN MY LIFE, CHILD abuse, loneliness, and dark nights of despair rattled the very bones of my body, drained my spirit, shattered my mind, and left me plodding through life as an empty shell, a lost and helpless soul. I have breathed the air of the unloved, and suffered deep psychological and spiritual wounds due to abandonment at an early age by my mother and father. I blamed myself. My trust in people was displaced with hostility and anger.

Yet, *my spirit would not be broken*. I fought for survival in the name of love, powered by a dogged will telling me to *Never Give Up!* My adversities did not stop me from achieving great success in life personally and financially. I turned my disadvantages into an amazing advantage. Dreams are possible if you do not let the weakness in you destroy the greatness in you. You have exceptional abilities to bring victory into your life.

*Do you believe that the impossible is possible?* Do you believe that what you can think yourself to be, you can become—that dreams are meant to become reality? I invite you to *believe beyond your dreams*. I live my life thinking, *I don't want to die before I die. I want to live life to the fullest*. My creativity comes from my imagination. Whatever your mind can dream and create, it can do so much more. Believe beyond your dreams!

*Overcoming limiting thoughts starts with a dream.* As a child, you had dreams. And as an adult, you dream. It may be a dream of getting out of an impoverished area, getting a better job, or being rich. Everything is attainable if you focus on what you want and take action toward the goal. If you are not moving forward, you are going backward. Focus on the sky and the stars—not the sewage.

Do not mentally starve yourself by using your power solely to help others to achieve their dreams. You then lack the energy and drive to self-achieve. As a result, you are not living for you—you are living only for others. The one person you should take care of most is you. You have to live with *you* your entire life, so make it a great journey.

Emulate the child you once were, and this child will set your mind free. You can then dream again and take flight.

It all starts with energy. Energy creates motion, motion creates action, action creates results, results create achievement and confidence, and self-confidence creates the mindset that allows you to help others fashion their destiny.

You might also try doing the opposite of what you would normally do. Open your mind to new things. This can produce unbelievable ideas. If you don't play sports, shoot some hoop. If you hate to write poems, try writing one. If you like rock music, listen to classical music. If you watch TV, try going for a hike. Do something outside the walls of a boxed-in life. Don't limit yourself to things that make you comfortable. Live part of every day being uncomfortable. Get out of your routine and blaze your path to growth and greatness.

## INSPIRATION • FORGIVENESS

# Forgive Others

*Let go of your grievances.*



by Dave Anderson

**W**HAT'S THE BEST THING you can do for your life and work? You may say: "Get a hefty raise." That *would* be nice, of course. But there's an even better one—you can forgive others their trespasses against you.

No matter what you've been through in the past year, you are likely holding on to some grudges. Maybe you're angry with a spouse who criticized you, a friend who betrayed you, a client who stiffed you, or a coworker who stole your idea and presented it as her own, or a boss who "downsized" you after you announced the imminent arrival of a new baby. Forgiving or at least reconciling with that person now can mean a happier and more productive year.

Maybe you have some vague idea that by failing to forgive another person, you are getting even with him or hurting him in some way. Of course, that couldn't be further from the truth. Grudges hurt only the grudge-bearer.

If a poisonous snake bites you, what should you do first? Kill the snake or remove the venom? Many people chase the proverbial snake to kill it, failing to realize that their actions only cause the venom to spread faster, causing death.

The same holds true for those who fail to forgive. Rather than remove the

*Dreams are for young and old alike.*

What matters is not your age but the youthfulness of heart and mind. What is not real can become real. Look around you—everything you see has been created. At some point, somebody had a dream, followed through, and persisted through disappointments and setbacks.

*You have the rest of your life to make your dreams happen.* Live life from the seat of your imagination—from the idea of what you most want to be. Go for it while you still can. One small change in the way you live your life may extend your life. Do not *believe what you see, see what you believe*. **PE**

Derek Clark is a motivational speaker, singer, and author of *I Will Never Give Up* and *I Will Never Give Up On God Again*. Visit [www.IWillNeverGiveUp.com](http://www.IWillNeverGiveUp.com).

**ACTION:** Fly fearlessly on your dream wings.

venom and exercise forgiveness, they hold onto the poison and "chase the snake." This is a race they can't win.

Besides, harboring resentment impacts your productivity and effectiveness at work (or, in the case of the job seeker, in your search process). People can sense all that buried bitterness and, even if they're not sure why, will hesitate to interact with you. Obviously, that's bad for business!

To move along the path to reconciliation, keep in mind these tips:

**1. Bring closure to past offenses.** Identify anyone you must make amends with and do it quickly. Don't worry about whose "fault" it is. It's up to the most mature person in the relationship to make the first move.

**2. Don't miss the moment.** Often

there's a *perfect moment* to let bygones be bygones and resolve a strained relationship. You'll know it when it happens. If you let it pass by without acting on it, you will regret it. There's not always another chance.

**3. Be prepared to turn the other cheek.** Just because you forgive someone, it doesn't mean that they'll forgive you, too. They may even continue to offend or hurt you. Continue to forgive and set the good example. You'll get peace of mind out of the deal.

Today, reconcile the grudges you're nursing. *Forgiving* is a 365-day-a-year discipline. It's not easy, but it's worth it. When you release negative feelings, peace and prosperity flow your way. **PE**

Dave Anderson is president of *Learn to Lead* and author of *How to Run Your Business By THE BOOK: A Biblical Blueprint to Bless Your Business*; and the *TKO business series*. Visit [www.learn-to-lead.com](http://www.learn-to-lead.com).

**ACTION:** Let go and forgive.



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