



## **Praise for Enduring Success**

A glimpse through the pages of the book offers great insight into several secrets and rules that must be seen as imperatives for people whose delight is to make success a life-style. This is a highly positive and commendable contribution to our intellectual commonwealth, and I am very pleased that it is a product of an Akwa Ibom State indigene. I believe that this highly illuminating book will serve as a veritable source of information and knowledge to everyone who is fortunate to lay hands on it.

Moses F. Ekpo, MFR  
The Deputy Governor  
Akwa Ibom State  
Nigeria.

Udeme Atchibong draws humanity from its narcissist quest to accumulate wealth, for wealth sake, and redirects our focus back to living a life that impacts destinies even long after we have left planet Earth. She asks, "What are you investinng in? At the end your sojourn on Earth, what legacies would you leave behind?" She helps to discover and understand what should matter most to us as we glide through life. Her message is simple: be a blessing to humanity through self-less services-be a go-giver.

Mideno Bayagbon, Publisher  
The NewsGuru.com.  
Ex Chief Editor, Vanguard Newspaper.

There is the tendency for books with a motivational theme to fall into the one-size-fits all dilemma, where success or human triumph becomes reducible simply to individuals' adherence to some formulaic principles. Whereas the prescriptions may culminate in resounding success, they ofen dull the individual creativity. What you find instead in this book are inspiring tales that challenge the reader to take the leap that carries with it the

potential to transform the world – and, ultimately, make the average person view it from an altruistic lens. In this aspect the books draws its greatest reminding us that even the smallest hands can help uplift and bringing back those questions we would rather avoid.

Laurence Ani, Senior Assistant,  
Communications and Research  
Government House, Enugu State, Nigeria.  
Former Editor of ThisDay, The Saturday  
Newspaper.

I am thrilled with this book – it is so rich. I believe it will be a blessing to humanity; lives will be touched and transformed. I am proud of you, Udeme. You're a bundle of talent!

Asamine Anueyiagu  
Regional Service Manager (South-South)  
MTN Nigeria Communications, Ltd.

It is fascinating that these deep truths are expressed by a young person. The wealth of insight contained in this book is life transforming. It is a must-read for anyone seeking advancement in life.

Professor Emeh U. Joseph  
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Guidance and Counseling  
University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria.  
Coordinator, Family Minders .

## ENDURING SUCCESS

Udeme Archibong is a prolific writer, an astute communicator, and a model of excellence.

Her writings have made a profound impact on thousands of lives around the world and her blog: [www.successrecipeblog.com](http://www.successrecipeblog.com) has followers in over 90 countries in continents of the world. She is a Self-Development Expert, who passionately works towards helping people maximize their destinies. A former columnist with *Pioneer Newspaper* (Akwa Ibom State Newspaper) in Nigeria. At some point, she was a motivational columnist, writing *Success Recipe* and *Destiny Catalyst*, for two Nigerian national newspapers, *Vanguard* and *ThisDay*, respectively. She had also been a radio presenter hosting the Success Recipe program. She is the author of several books and hails from Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, Africa.



## **ENDURING SUCCESS**

***Transforming Your Destiny By Impacting Other Lives***

**Udeme Archibong**

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By Udeme Archibong

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## Dedication

To my dearest mother, my heart is filled with gratitude as I communicate through this medium to you. Being in a reflective state of mind, I deem it fit to take a few moments to let you know that I value you. You are a priceless treasure and a gift to me and all those who are connected to you.

Travelling through memory lane, I can remember your warm encouragement in moments of despair; your love and care at times when I felt that I least deserved it; your acceptance when I faced rejection; your friendship in moments of loneliness; your direction in times of weakness; your words of wisdom and counsel in situations of foolishness; your defense in circumstances of crisis. I could go and on.

Mother, you are the best. If I would be given another opportunity to be born, I would choose you as my mom. I will never be able to repay you because your unconditional love towards me has been priceless. But I just want you to know that I appreciate you; who I am and who I will be, I owe to you.

You have built in me the right values to live by, so that I can achieve enduring success. and you are always praying ceaselessly for me, that my life may abound with blessings. I borrow the words of Abraham Lincoln when I say, "All that I am or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

Therefore, I dedicate this work to you, my dearest mother—Mrs. Faith Benedicta Archibong.

Always keep in mind that you mean the world to me.

Your daughter,  
Udeme Archibong



## **Acknowledgments**

I'd like to say a special thank you to:

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My Mum, Mrs. Faith Archibong for being my number one fan and siblings for their encouragement.

## Foreword

When God created Adam and Eve He not only blessed them, He also bestowed on them a powerful and personal potential as they communed with Him and pursued their destiny. Unfortunately with the Fall came separation from God and consequently the incapacity to fully tap into this great potential. But unfortunately, Christ's work of redemption on the Cross restores our lost fellowship with God and gives us the power to unlock our potential so as to work out God's perfect plan in our lives.

In this book, Udeme Archibong shares valuable insights that help all believers shoulder their responsibility as they cooperate actively and promptly with God to change their way of thinking while striving to impact the world positively for and with Christ. We live in a world where people tend to push godly principles and rules and yet expect to attain joy and fulfillment. But as believers we should always know that what we sow is more important than what we reap.

I commend Udeme's passion and her effort to make a difference by reaching out to all people with the love of God with the message of His grace and mercy.

I pray that you will be blessed by reading this work and move on to the next phase of your calling.

Pietro Evangelista, Publisher  
Evangelista Media, Italy

## Preface

At times you may not realize the depth of the treasures embedded in your mind until the challenges of life overwhelm you. During these challenges of life, God comes along and unveils your hidden potential, and somehow gives you victory over the problems. This reflects my very own personal experience.

During my fourth year attending the university, I had been experiencing severe financial and accommodation problems, and my mother's health had deteriorated to the extent that it was humanly impossible for her to regain wholeness. Thankfully, the mercies of God kept her alive. So compounded were these challenges that I became extremely conscious of my sorry state. Yet I was determined with God's help to do what was right and not take the easy way out.

One day, I came back from school around 8.00 pm and decided to rest on a bed in a room off campus, where I was staying with someone. I was tired and confused, and I dozed off to sleep.

Around 4.00 pm, I suddenly awoke with a thought that kept recurring in my mind. That thought was, *until you press after the Word of God, you can't be free from the pressures of life*. Somehow I ignored it and went back to sleep again. When I woke up again at 6.00 am, I sat on the bed. Like the uncontrollable current of a cyclone, this thought jerked me into reality, and it suddenly occurred to me that I should write down the thought. In fact, this urge took over the better part of me. Thus began the free flow of thoughts and nuggets, like water flowing from the crevices of a dam.

This event birthed the process of an unending flow of inspirational thoughts and wisdom, cascading through my mind. And I believe that the content of this work will make a remarkable difference in your destiny as we work together to transform our lives and our world into an epitome of glory and goodness.

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## Introduction

*I have concluded that the accumulation of wealth, even if I could achieve it, is an insufficient reason for living. When I reach the end of my days I must look back on something more meaningful than the pursuit of homes, lands, and machines, stocks or bonds. Nor fame of any lasting benefit; I will consider my earthly existence to have been wasted unless I can recall a loving family, a consistent investment in the lives of people and an earnest attempt to serve God who made me. Nothing else makes sense.<sup>1</sup>*

- James C. Dobson

From birth to epitaph, from the cradle to the grave, from heights untold to depths unfathomed, there lies an indispensable truth, a viable reckoning of the validity of our destinies. The longings of our souls and the intents of our hearts are wrapped up in the pursuit of a life of significance.

This significance is birthed out of our investment in the lives of people. But there is an error imprinted on the minds of most people. You may call it a weakness of some sort, but it is actually a distorted value system, the muddling up of our perceptive ability and the incapacitation of morally grounded character.

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### THE MOST VIABLE INVESTMENT

This book could also be termed a book about investment. However, it is not the investment in the tangible things of life that can depreciate and slip out of our grip and consequently cause us to become poor overnight. It is the investment in the intangibles that emanates from our developed nature into the destinies of others, which time cannot erase.

Investment in people is the most viable and rewarding kind of investment anyone can ever engage in. Its profits are rooted in both the tangibles and most especially in the intangibles which are enduring, so that even long after you've left the surface of the earth, you continue to accrue its dividends. In other words, you may die, but your name still lives on as long as humanity exists. You've left the realm of significance to the realm of relevance. That's legacy.

### GIVING IS LIVING

Giving is living; loving is living. A lifestyle of contribution makes for a life-time of relevance and a life-time of relevance makes for a timeless legacy for generations to reckon with; benefit from and be inspired by.

## THE REVEALING STORY OF THE FIRST BILLIONAIRE IN THE WORLD

John D. Rockefeller's life on earth eclipses the principle of rising in the world and sustaining destiny in its ever heightening peak.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The richest man in the world.
- The first billionaire in the world
- Controlled one of the largest oil refineries in the United States of America at age 25.
- The world's largest refiners at age 31.
- Commanded 90% of the oil refined in the United States at age 38.
- The richest man in the United States and retired at age 58.
- The richest man in the world at the time of his death at age 98.<sup>2</sup>

### HUMBLE BEGINNING AND APPLIED PRINCIPLES

When John D. Rockefeller was earning a meager income of \$3.75 per week as a clerk, he began saving 20 percent of his paycheck. He gave 50 percent of his salary to his church for charity and lived on the remaining 30 percent.

### THE PRINCIPLE:

*Success in life is not an accidental occurrence but rather it is aligning your thoughts, words and actions with Success Principles which is no respecter of persons, race, gender, status or background.*

In time, Rockefeller established Standard Oil, the largest oil company in America, while he continued to exhibit a giving spirit. Moreover, when the markets inflated the price of oil in order to make an exorbitant profit, Rockefeller would pump increased fuel into the market in order to force the fuel prices to lower once again.

#### THE PRINCIPLE:

*When you have a mutually beneficial agenda in your business dealings, your business blooms; when you have a self-serving agenda in your business dealings, your business is doomed.*

But eventually, and unfortunately, he did not continue to heed to the principle that had once put him on top. He stopped giving out alms; and when he did so, he fell sick and the hairs on his head began to fall out. Worry, greed, and fear wrecked his health. Even though he could buy any food he wanted or desired to eat in the world, he could digest only milk and crackers. An associate revealed, “He could not sleep, would not smile and nothing in life meant anything to him.”<sup>3</sup> And soon, the doctors gave him just a few months to live.

However, on his sick bed, he started to change the pattern of his thoughts and began to think of the various ways he could use his money to elevate humanity rather than of how much money he could accumulate for himself. He began signing those checks again in order to help the poor, and miraculously, his health was restored. He then established the Rockefeller Foundation, which was targeted to fight disease and ignorance all over the world. He channeled his wealth to hospitals, research and mission work.

At age 53, he had been a “walking corpse”; but he lived to age 98. His life story proves that investing in people can have a profound influence upon one’s destiny. A giving spirit brought Rockefeller to the top, and this giving spirit also sustained him at the top.

#### THE PRINCIPLE:

*Selfishness leads to the dungeon of existence but the spirit of gratitude, love and generosity is health to the body gives joy and peace of mind and prolongs a life worth living and a life worth giving away.*



*"I was early taught to work as well as play. My life has been one long, happy holiday, full of work and full of play – I dropped worry on the way. And God was good to me every day."*<sup>4</sup>

- JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

There's something fascinating about this investment—whether you are rich or poor, a king or a peasant, you can possess the "capital" needed for this investment.

#### GIVING RATHER THAN TAKING

One of the greatest plagues of the human race is selfishness. Society has imbibed us with the notion to ask, "What's in it for me? I'll help you, but what will I get in return?" We've been taught by our human nature to manipulate and use others for our selfish desires. But as long as we remain self-centered, our world will be shallow and blighted.

Our families are torn apart, relationships are marred, marriages split, businesses crumble, careers are stunted, vision is abolished, and happiness is lost because of the ideology of being a taker rather than a giver. We've lost sight of what's really important in our lives, and much more, we've become wrapped up in a cocoon of self-conceited "success" that is fleeting.

In the abundance of freedom, we live in bondage; in the abundance of harmony, we live in despair. We grope about in darkness, not seeing the light because we have closed our minds to the destinies of others. We become a miniature of what we were destined to be, and then we ask God, "Why?"

Life will echo emptiness when you are trying to figure out what everybody can do for you instead of trying to figure out what you can do for somebody else. On the other hand, when you get your mind off your problems and needs and focus on being a blessing to others, you'll be amazed that your problems will be dissolved and your needs will be met with accompanying peace and joy in your heart.

*It's our strength of character that determines the strength of our destinies. It's the humane and compassionate heart that makes a difference in the world. It's our selfless service to humanity that makes our destinies outstanding in the world. It's our personal development that overrides our exponential financial growth. It's our sincerity of purpose that gives us a license to be influential in the world.*

A lifestyle of giving reproduces a destiny of impact. John Wooden reveals, "You can't live a perfect day without doing something for someone who will never be able to repay you."<sup>5</sup>

#### EACH GIVES WHAT EACH HAS TO GIVE

I read a story that when Berlin was divided into East Berlin and West Berlin, a group of East Berliners dumped a whole truckload of garbage on the West side. The West Berliners thought of revenging, but then later changed their minds. Instead, they filled a dump truck with canned goods and other nonperishable food items, went over to the East side, stacked it neatly, and put a sign beside it. The sign read, "Each gives what each has to give."<sup>6</sup> You can give to the world only what you have. We should show kindness to people even when they don't deserve it. Pure and undiluted love should be our very nature.

#### A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIFE

At the peak of the battle of Fredericksburg during the Civil War in the United States, the field was covered with the dead and wounded from both sides. Hearing the pitiable cries of the wounded for water, a young confederate soldier was moved with unexpected compassion. Determined to defy the risk and quench the thirst of these men, he filled a bucket to overflowing with fresh water. He then dodged fierce enemy fire and boisterous shelling, and bravely ran across the open field to administer drink to the wounded soldiers of each side.

The soldiers of both armies were so moved by the confederate's act of kindness and bravery, that they ceased firing at each other for over an hour. During this interval, the young man

covered the field quenching the thirst of the wounded, soothing their pains, and comforting the dying of both sides.<sup>7</sup>

Can you be relied upon to quench the thirst of both your friends and foes, and help rescue a dying world? During your existence, there are two pathways: the path to life and the path to death; the path to blessing and the path to cursing.

*I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.*

**-MOSES** (Deuteronomy 30:19 –The Bible).

In our contemporary world, human value has almost become extinct. Hatred rules over the hearts of many; racism is exalted over equality; war and unrest within and among nations have soared. People cleave to power as if it is their inheritance, pursuing it at the expense of peace. Tension between politics and religion has become the norm of the day; global peace and harmony is in dearth. It seems the pathway to death and cursing is becoming broader by the day.

But...there is hope in this world of despair. The trend can be reversed; this is possible only if you and I will adopt another way of life.

Living to love is a different way of life—a life that is founded upon credibility and unconditional love. This is a value-based life centered on correct, universal, timeless, and self-evident principles imbibed into our very nature. This is the path that will lead the world to life and to blessing. This way of life breeds peace and harmony, and makes us to be at one with God.

*In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For*

*this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.*

*-SAINT. JOHN (1 John 3:10-11 – The Bible).*

Building destinies is the greatest investment one can ever make; it insures one against wretchedness of character, miseries which money cannot erase, blindness of worthwhile living, and poverty of the mind due to negative and shallow thinking. With time, all the gold and silver of the world will be cankered, and wealth will be swept away or passed into other hands. But investment in the lives of people through a commitment in building destinies will stand the test of time and echo through eternity while giving you a crown of glory which cannot be taken away.

#### WHAT TO EXPECT

In this thrilling book, you will discover and understand what really matters most in life. You will possess the awareness of the secret and the essence of your life. Ways of adding value to the destinies of people on a daily and consistent basis will be exposed, thereby making your life count.

Remember, it's who we are (character) and what we have done (benevolence) embedded in our life's purpose that will secure us a legacy which time cannot erase. Your destiny will become richer and most rewarding as you maximize the wisdom embedded in this book. And you will begin to live and not merely exist.

Ponder on the words of Anthony Robbins, "Only those who have learned the power of sincere and selfless contribution experience life's deepest joy: true fulfillment."<sup>8</sup>

Enlarge your capacity to make a difference in your world!

## Chapter One

### The Misconceptions of Success: Uncovering the Facade

*“Success is defined in different ways. Some see it in money, power, and fame. But it’s also the concept of “reaching down”, of being able to help your fellow man. Material things you can buy and sell, but things like hope and courage and faith and knowledge are gifts you give your fellow man to pull him up. Whatever you give out to others will come back. It may take a while, but it will come back.”<sup>1</sup>*

**-RICHARD CHAVEZ**

Success definition is founded on the priceless; inestimable, intangible heart qualities that create value and bestow benefits to lives and not in the mere accumulation of material things.

Success is probably the most sought-after in the world, yet only a few people tend to find it because the majority of the people do not understand it.

**Success is not a coveted privilege rather it is a common heritage that binds us all.** Invariably, success is for everyone. In fact, we were engineered to succeed from conception.

#### THE MARVEL OF YOUR BEGINNING...

Let’s unravel the marvel of your beginning. It was indeed a formidable battle as more than 400 million sperm cells were involved in the race for your being, yet only one of them emerged the winner-the one that made you. The rest of them died. Each of the sperm was so tiny that in order to be visible to the human eye, it would have to be magnified thousands of times.

This race of all time was to reach a precious egg containing a tiny nucleus smaller in size than a point of a needle. The head of the sperm, as well as the tiny nucleus of the egg, contained 23 chromosomes. Each chromosome was composed of jelly beads strung together. Each bead contained hundreds of genes that scientists attribute all the factors of hereditary, from the size of your brain to the color of your eyes, to your mannerisms.

Specifically, the chromosome in the sperm consists of all the hereditary materials and tendencies contributed by your father and his ancestors, while those in the egg nucleus are made up of the inheritable traits from your mother and her ancestors.

When this one particular sperm, the fastest and the healthiest swarmed and united with the egg, it formed one tiny living cell - You.<sup>2</sup> You were the only one who survived that inconceivable ordeal. You were born for victory.

## THE UNIQUE YOU

*From the inception of time to the infinity of time, no one has ever been or will ever be like you. You are in a class of your own, one of a kind. You are irreplaceable and unrepeatable. You were born to be rich in good works and become an expression of excellence. You were born blessed with unlimited potential and to be a blessing to others. **You are an indispensable gift to the world.***

Malthie Babcock reveals, "One of the common mistakes and one of the costliest is thinking that success is due to some genius, some magic, something or other which we do not possess." <sup>3</sup>

Everything we will ever need to succeed is all wrapped up within us, and the treasures wrapped up within attract the help we need without. And to access these treasures within, belief is the key. **The start-up of success is believing-believing in your originality. Your originality is the key to authenticity.** Believing is the prelude to receiving all the treasures that life has to offer.

The end-up of success is self-doubt. Self-doubt is the key to self-depreciation. Doubt and fear are excellent couple that produce an offspring called failure.

## SUCCESS IS NOT A FEELING

You don't need to feel successful to be successful. **Success is not a feeling, rather it is the truth revealed of your essence.**

*You don't need to feel confident to be confident rather you act confidently and your feelings will soon be in alignment. In the same vein, success is acting on the laws governing success from the state of your being rather than from a state of feeling.*

That means you don't need to consult your feelings to confirm if you are a success you instead, seek the laws governing success and act on them irrespective of how you feel.

## SUCCESS IS NOT AN EVENT

Success is not an event; it's a person, a life-long journey. A failure is an event; it's not a person, it's a learning process. Success and failure both share opposing root. Both are incidental rather than accidental. You don't stumble into success. You can't find yourself on the peak of Mount Everest while strolling in the park.

Success is governed by laws. Success is a process - it's a series of incidental occurrences. Failure is not accidental; it is the outcome of violation the laws of success. It is a process; it's a series of incidental occurrences. Therefore, success is attracted to those who plan, prepare, and are persistent in their pursuit.

### WHAT'S YOUR MAP OF SUCCESS?

Every one of us has a map of success, a mental representation or conception of what success is. However, the vital question is: Is your map of success a representation of a success territory? Or is it a representation of a superficial, conceited success territory?

Everybody wants to be successful: the king and the peasant; the poor and the rich; the noble and the ignoble; irrespective of race, skin color, ethnicity, and status. This wild pursuit of success without grasping what it really entails to be successful has left many disillusioned.

Living in a society that gives priority to the superficial things of life, it is no surprise that our human minds and behaviors seem to follow the trend. There is a need to change our ideology of what success is, and what success is not.

In this crazy search for success, where can we find success, which can stands the test of time? Let's explore the various misconceptions about success:

### SUCCESS BEGINS WITH WHO YOU ARE AND WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

Many people have a vague picture of what success is all about. Some people have the notion that if they could be like some other person in terms of their talents, abilities, wealth, fame, physical appearance, and intelligence they could be termed successful.

**But the truth is that success begins with who you are.** Remember, when you are yourself, you are an original - the best the world has ever known. But when you become like another, your value depreciates. You become an imitation which leads to limitation.

### SUCCESS IS NOT EQUATED WITH ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH

It is a common belief among people that success could be equated with wealth. In fact, they have the mindset that if they could only stumble on wealth, they will automatically become successful. So they strive at all costs and by all means to get wealth.

Wealth and possessions are fleeting but enduring success is designed to outlive you. Possessions are a temporal fix that does not fit into the reality of enduring success.

Success is not found in the possession of things, rather it is found in the possession of a heart filled with love. **Money craves more money and it creates inner emptiness. Enduring success craves greater impact and it creates inner fulfillment.** The love of money brings contention.

King Solomon as recorded in the Bible reveals, "Whoever loves money never has money enough, whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income".

We were designed to love people and use our money and our wealth to be a blessing to people rather than loving money and using people to get things.

**When we become blinded by the gold, we forsake the good in a bid to getting more and more gold.** *As we are in pursuit of our dreams and goals, we must periodically pause; reflect and self-examine and ask, "What am I becoming?"*

*"After you reach a certain point, money becomes unimportant. What matter is success"*

- Greek Millionaire, Aristotle Onassis.

Ponder on the words of John Hagee, "Money can buy you a palace of breathtaking splendor, but money cannot buy you a home filled with love and respect from the people who live there. Money can buy the finest physicians in an hour of sickness, but money cannot buy the God-given gift of health. Money can buy you a bed of solid gold, but money cannot buy you one minute of rest or inner peace. Money will attract legions of people to you, but money cannot buy you the treasure of one true friend. Money can buy your books, but money cannot buy your brains. Money will buy you food, but money cannot buy a healthy appetite. Money can buy a crucifix around your neck, but money cannot buy a savior in your heart."<sup>4</sup>

Yes! Money answers all things, but money is not everything. Money is only the medium of mutual exchange.

Success is synonymous with service, and money is the reward obtained after delivering a service that solves a specific problem. When you set out to meet a need or to be of service, money becomes the reward.

**Money is not a status symbol but a reward for solving a problem or providing service.** The more people you serve, the more money you get. In other words, the more problems you solve for people, meeting their needs, the more money flows to you. Therefore, amassing wealth and possession is not evidence that one is successful.



## SUCCESS DOES NOT EQUATE POWER

In many societies there is an insatiable lust for power, because people equate power with success. Such a mentality has proven to be destructive. Being in position or corridor of power does not qualify you for success.

People like Charles Taylor, Adolph Hitler, and Saddam Hussein were all men who were in positions of power but were miles apart from being successful.

The position of power is an opportunity bestowed on a person to be an influence for the good. I love the words of Myles Munroe, “when you are free from the need for power, you are qualified for it.”<sup>5</sup>

**The need for power reflects desperation to make up for the deficiencies within.** Therefore, the character of an individual could be tested through the power bestowed on him or her and is never a sign of success.

## SUCCESS IS NOT EASY

Many believe that life should be an easy drive to success. However, the reverse is usually the case. Life’s highway is full of detours that make the journey difficult but not impossible. The success journey is not an easy drive rather it can be daunting, and only those with backbone can sail through without backing off of the success journey.

Success is not easy yet it is simple because the principles of success are simple but profound. Success is for those who are “hungry” enough for the materialization of their dreams and the maximization of their potentials. The intensity of your “hunger” will determine your resilience in keeping on the pursuit of your dreams until victory is achieved. When you have no other option but to succeed, success will become inevitable.

## SUCCESS IS NOT REACHING A GOAL...

A common misleading perspective of viewing success is thinking that if one accomplishes a goal or has a relationship with the right person one could be regarded as successful. But this view of success could be very frustrating as it does not guarantee success.

Success is not just reaching a goal or achieving a feat. When you have nothing to reach for, you will have nothing to live for. Consequently, death sets in. The greater your goals, the greater will be your guts. Your goal should not be to retire but to get re-fired.

Goals are not terminal destinations, but rather they are territorial destinations. And as long as you live, there will be more territories to reach for, to conquer. It is worth noting that progressively reaching only positive goals that benefit self and others sums up success. However, reaching negative goals that are inherently selfish and gotten at the expense of others equates to failure.

Achievement does not equate to success. It is who you become in the process of achieving that spells the difference between success and failure in life. Unless private victories precede public victories, we gain victories that are empty.

The remarkable quality of worthwhile achievement is the conception of an idea(s) conceived in love; for service, for creating, building, and elevating humanity.

This kind of achievement results in a value for all. Any achievement which inflates the ego, founded on selfishness or self-centeredness is a mirage. In the success domain what counts is a disposition rather than position.

It is not about knowing the right person but becoming the right person. It is not about accomplishing your goals but rather it is the kind of person you become in the process of accomplishing your goals. Personal growth and development should be the by-product of accomplishing your goals.

#### SUCCESS IS NOT DETERMINED BY CIRCUMSTANCE

Circumstances do not make success or failure out of people but rather people make success or failure out of themselves through the circumstances or conditions of life.

Circumstances do not define who you are and what you do or what you cannot do but rather circumstances can reveal who you are and what you can do or what you cannot do.

**Your circumstances don't define you. It can refine you when you maximize it.** Success is not found in your circumstances but rather success is found in what you make out of the circumstance and the kind of person you evolve into. Therefore, success is not determined by circumstance.

#### SUCCESS IS NOT HAVING IT ALL

Success is not having it all. You cannot become everything; you cannot do everything, and you cannot have everything. However, you can become the person you were created to be, you can

do everything that you have been assigned or wired to do, and you can have everything needed to fulfill your purpose on earth. If you try having it all, you will lose it all.

Success is not maintaining the status quo. Success cannot be inflicted with the “destination disease” that is rooted in the “I have arrived” mentality. When you maintain the status quo, you retain mediocrity.

Success entails constant and never-ending improvement. **Unless you improve in an area of your life, you become impoverished in that area.**

### SUCCESS IS NOT AVOIDING CRITICISM

Success is not avoiding criticism. In fact, if you really want to avoid criticism, then be nothing, say nothing, do nothing, and have nothing. And you know this will eliminate your existence.

When you launch out of your comfort zone to make a mark in the world, you will attract erasers. However, there are two kinds of criticisms: constructive and destructive; justified and unjustified.

Whenever any criticism is being meted out to you, examine it. Ask yourself with sincerity: does this criticism contain an element of truth? If yes, be humble enough to make positive changes. If it does not contain an element of truth, discard it and forget it.

Success is sustained by those who have developed a tough skin that can absorb destructive criticism without being bitter, angry, defensive, and distracted from their purpose.

Keep your mind focused on the things that are important and valuable and not on your critics. Remember, in the game of life, critics never win. Only those who make the most out of life lay hold on to the prize.

The conception of the true definition of success births enduring success, which makes you live above the misconceptions of success.

### SUCCESS IS NOT A PRODUCT OF LUCK

The false belief that success is just a matter of being in the right place at the right time, hinges on the luck factor. The truth is, you need to be the RIGHT PERSON in the right place at the right time. This implies that opportunity for advancement resides in the individual and it takes an individual that has attained self-discovery; self-development; self-improvement; necessary skill-

set; positive mindset and an enlarged vision to maximize the right place at the right time to produce the desired result. Actually, if the right person is placed in the “wrong place” at the “wrong time” the individual will transform the environment to the right place at the right time by creating successful outcome through creative ideas, thereby maximizing the place and time. In contrast, if the wrong person is placed in the right place at the right time, the individual will abuse or mismanage the place and time and the “could have been” success walks silently through the slippery downward road of failure.

#### SUCCESS DOESN'T COME FROM CONNECTIONS

Another illusion connected with success is, “it’s not what you know, it’s who you know” that matters. However, such a notion promotes mediocrity. One can get a job, position or even finances by human connection but it is the character and the acquisition of relevant knowledge and the right application of relevant knowledge that sustains whatever one gets from human connections. Otherwise, someone can be pulled up by another person but when once the person lets go of the helping hand, a crash is inevitable because the sustaining factor was absent.

Therefore, lasting success comes through what you know and what you do with what you know because, you become too relevant to be ignored. The world will always make room for you.

#### SUCCESS IS NOT A PRODUCT OF A QUICK-FIX TECHNIQUE

We are living in an age where many think that they can mouse click and download whatever they want, instant fame, instant riches, instant promotions, and instant marriage, without going through the process and yet want to enjoy longevity in what they’ve acquired.

We are living in an age where many do not want to take responsibilities for anything, but yet want to enjoy the benefit of everything.

We are living in an age where many do not want to do the right thing because it's hard but are quick to do the wrong thing because it is easy, and yet want to enjoy a lifetime of consistent success.

We are living in an age where many think they can outsmart the fundamentals and the process and yet be smart enough to keep on progressing – how ridiculous!

We are living in an age where we have more in quantity but our lives lack quality or substance.

We are living in an age of trends but yet inner satisfaction is drained.

We are living in an age of illusions and delusions that make life shallow.

We are living in an age where many desperately want their circumstances to improve, yet lack the sincerity and discipline to improve themselves – what an illusion!

When the low-life reigns, the higher life becomes extinct. We must transition from this superficial age to become the real deal – the real deal of true success and greatness.

Overnight success is a myth. Private victories must precede public victories. Enduring Success is always a product of a process – the process of preparation before the public victory. Success is the culmination of little steps that ultimately sums up to quantum leap.

## Chapter Two

### Redefining Success: Unraveling Sustainable Success

*“Success is purpose revealed, the outflow of love to others and the pursuit of growth in every area of life”*

- **UDEME ARCHIBONG**

**Until success is rooted in love, nurtured by purpose, and nourished by growth it becomes an illusion that leaves life in misery.**

Enduring success originates from inside–out. When life is lived from the outside in, it becomes an arena of struggle and defeat. Your capacity to do is determined by your capability to become. Next-level thinking precedes next-level living.

*Whatever you get on the outside without growing to reach it on the inside, you will lose. You can't attain on the outside what you have not yet attained on the inside. Success is the reserve of those who become before setting out to do.*

Success is a state of being before cascading to the state of doing which produces the state of having. **Your capacity for success is rooted in your capability to grow to become.**

#### TO GET, BECOME...

Never strive to get rather strive to become and you will thrive at getting.

To get rich, become rich

To get healthy, become sound

To get friends, become friendly

To get a prize, become a winner

To get promotions, become indispensable

To get results, become productive

To get interesting, become interested

To get better, become better

To get success, become successful.

The state of your mind creates the state of your life. To alter the state of your life, you must alter the state of your mind. **To re-set the course of your life, you must change your mind set.**

Trying to prove who you are makes you lose the essence of who you are. **Success is not derived from your performance rather success is derived from your essence.** You may lose your performance but you can never lose your essence. Therefore, success is who you are.

I'm in love with the way John Maxwell and Anthony Robbins define success and I will state them respectively: "Success is knowing your purpose, growing to reach your maximum potential and sowing seeds that benefit others"<sup>1</sup>; "Success is the ongoing process of striving to become more, it is the opportunity to continually grow emotionally, socially, spiritually, physiologically, intellectually and financially while contributing in some positive way to others".<sup>2</sup>

## SUCCESS KEY WORDS

Let's examine the key words in both definitions of success:

1. Purpose
2. Growth
3. Others.

### 1. PURPOSE

Until you discover and pursue the purpose of your life, life will be meaningless, irrespective of who you know, what you know, and what you own. The journey of life can only be completed successfully by those who are living out their purpose.

Can there be meaning to life? Why were we put on earth? Are we just biological creatures to make a number in the world? How significant are our lives? Or are we caught in an activity-driven trap? How valuable are we to the world? If we had never existed will the world fare better or will it get worse?

We are not mere biological creatures. We are creatures of destiny. Consequently, quit comparing yourself with others and refuse to conform to the expectations of others.

## UNIQUELY DESIGNED FOR A PECULIAR PURPOSE

Your abilities, personality and experiences have been designed to fit your peculiar purpose. Your timing and seasons in life are also different from those of anyone else, and because you are distinct from anyone else, your purpose and blueprint for accomplishing your purpose are also distinct.

Therefore, living your life based on the script handed to you by your parents, friends or society only dampens the manifestation of the real you. Hence, a fulfilled life remains elusive.

## PURPOSE – SOLVES A SPECIFIC PROBLEM

The purpose is to solve the specific problem you were created to solve on the earth. Purpose entails maximizing your gifts and potential for the benefit of yourself and others. The purpose is to become a gift to the world. At the core of purpose is a heart full of love.

## THE FOCAL POINTS OF PURPOSE

Purpose has two focal points which are:

- Character Development – investing in you
- Contribution To Life – investing in others.

## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

You can't make the most out of life until you have made the most out of yourself. And you can't give others what you don't have. Therefore, character development is the foundation of a meaningful life.

If you want to have a great marriage, great career, great relationships with people, and a great life then pursue character development above personality involvement. It is critical to note that character development and contribution to life should be a lifestyle and not an event.

The surest way to develop character is to grow daily in unconditional love for yourself and people. Improve yourself daily.

- Take some time and enumerate your assets; talents, also strengths and go to work on yourself; consistently refine your gifts and talents and develop your skill-set.



- Identify your character weaknesses and work to replace them with corresponding virtues.
- Examine yourself weekly and consistently work to improve yourself on a daily basis.

## CONTRIBUTION TO LIFE

Everybody has a gold mine within but only a few people discover, explore and maximize the wealth within. Everyone in the world was born with some degree of ability, gifts and talents which we can call intelligence.

There is a need to identify, develop and maximize our potential or intelligence for the highest good of humanity by taking an introspective view of our strengths, passion, or what we love to do because therein reflects what we have been wired or born to do, which can enhance our contribution to life. And when we become fully engaged in what we have been wired to do, it produces inner fulfillment.

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH THE LIFE YOU HAVE LEFT?

If you had only six months to live what will you do with your life? How will you spend your time and with whom will you spend it? What character qualities will you develop and manifest? How will you spend your finances? What will be important to you? What dreams or goals will you pursue? The answers to these questions reveal your essence.

Remember, every passing moment is a count-down to your departure on earth; maximize the moment.

Therefore, focus on your purpose, build your life around it and pour your life into it.

## 2. GROWTH

*Until growth is in place, purpose cannot be maximized. Growing to release our potential equates to growing our success. The quality of your life depends on the level of growth you attain emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and financially. Growth is a vital necessity for wholesome success.*

Growth is a vital necessity for progress in life. Personal growth and development require continuous improvement in every aspect of life. Remember, when growth stops, decadence and death set in. Until you grow and maximize your potential you will never know your true value and this will result in poverty.

## PAY A WORTHWHILE PRICE TO OBTAIN A WORTHY PRIZE

We have all heard it said, “You need to pay the price to succeed.” Yes, I absolutely agree, we need to pay the price to obtain the prize.

However, we must thoughtfully consider the price that we are willing to pay in order to obtain the prize. If we neglect our relationship with God, our health, and family as part of the price to pay to obtain the prize, then we may ultimately obtain the prize at the expense of our relationship with God; our health or family. Thus, the prize becomes empty and futile at its best, leaving us miserable.

**To succeed, there are things you must give up and there are things you must never give up. You must give up excuses, the blame game, procrastination and a complaining attitude, and all forms of negativity, in order to succeed because success flows through positive energy.**

## GROWTH: A WAY OF LIFE...

For success to become a way of life, personal growth and change must become a lifestyle. To succeed you must never cease growing spiritually, mentally, emotionally, financially, and in your relationships. What you get depreciates and perishes in the use; what you are will outlive you.

**Never strive to get. Rather strive to become because what you get is determined by what you become.** The key to having more is to becoming more.

Jim Rohn reveals, “To have more than you’ve got, become more than you are”<sup>3</sup>.

The key to having more is by becoming more. Financial income is regulated by self-development and self-concept determines the level of self-development.

*What you get by deceit destroys you. What you get by greed enslaves you. What you get by luck you will lose. However, what you get by personal growth and development is sustained.*

**The key to succeeding is: creating more value with limited time. There is more, but you must become more to get more. Life gets better when you become better.**

Mr. Shoaff states, “Don’t wish it were easier, wish you were better. Don’t wish for fewer problems, wish for more skills. Don’t wish for less of a challenge, wish for more wisdom.”<sup>4</sup>

Success is established when you grow yourself and keep on growing above the circumstances of life.

**Thrive on your uniqueness and you will not get lost in the crowd.** Personal growth and development increase the value you create and determine the value you attract back to you.

**The level of your productivity corresponds to the level of your personal growth and development.** The driving wheel of personal growth and development is taking absolute responsibility for your life and the engine that keeps it moving is self-discipline.

Activate daily doses of self-discipline in a little measure and grow daily in it until you can take on large chunks of self-discipline in your personal growth journey.

**Don't let limitations hold you back rather drive through and strike out the limitations and you will break through and break out into the success domain.**

To journey forward and upward in the success domain require consistent self-examination in order to remove self-imposed limitations that stop us.

### 3. OTHERS

“Others” is a very powerful word whenever success is mentioned. Until you help others succeed, your own success will be a mirage. **You are not really ahead in the game of life until you help someone else get ahead.**

A self-centered life is a self-defeating life, which strangulates destiny. Is your life a disaster looking for a place to happen? Or is your life a blessing looking for opportunities to bless?

Success is a team business; we need people to help us succeed and we must also help people to succeed. **No one can succeed alone; there must be an exchange of added value in all our dealings with others to keep the flow of the success cycle ever-increasing and expanding.**

Therefore, success is NOW. Take it on and live it out!

## Chapter Three

### Build Your Destiny to Last

*"A state (business, marriage, family, relationships etc.) to prosper must be built on foundations of moral character, and this character is the principal element of its strength, and the only guarantee of its permanence and prosperity."<sup>1</sup> (Paraphrase).*

*-Jabez L. M. Curry.*

As emperors' rise and fall, kings are enthroned and dethroned, nations progress and retrogress, the only valid substance which makes a difference in sustenance is the foundation. In every evolving society, the only platform on which civilization accelerates and progresses is the platform of a formidable and viable foundation.

Every building needs a strong foundation, which determines the durability, capacity, and the height of the building. The kind of building to be erected determines the type of foundation needed. A skyscraper will have a different foundation than a bungalow. Attempting to build a skyscraper on the depth and strength of the foundation meant for a bungalow is foolhardy because the building will collapse as surely as the sun rises in the morning. And great will be the fall of the building because the sustaining factor is absent. So it applies to human lives.

*The sidelines of life are filled with story lines of the narratives of peoples' lives on the timeline of life who possessed great talents and gained an offshoot to the limelight only to experience a crashing down in a matter of time because they did not take the time to build a solid foundation that could sustain the height of success.*

**They gained the celebrity status but failed to build the dedicated servicing of their inner lives. They possessed the secondary greatness of recognized talent but ignored or neglected the primary greatness of sound moral character, they end up forfeiting greatness altogether and settling for the low life.**

*A high soaring destiny necessitates a quality foundation that will stand the test of time. There are certain principles or virtues that should constitute the core of our personality if we want to rise in the world. The deeper these principles are ingrained in our nature, the higher and greater our lives become. And our influence will become much more powerful than we could imagine.*

If you want to build a shack, you do not need a quality foundation; you may as well ignore or neglect these principles. But be warned, neglecting these principles while at the same time desiring to have a high-soaring destiny will lead to destiny wreckage. We can never reap what we've not sown; this is a law that cannot be trampled upon.

Enduring success is not a “hand me down” thing of which you can manipulate some of the techniques in order to lay hold of it but rather it is the product of principles consistently applied as a way of life as you journey on the high-way of success.

#### THE FOUNDATION OF TIMELESS PRINCIPLES

*“Nothing is more important in life than believability. When you lose that, you have lost the essence of favor, love and success.”<sup>2</sup>*

*-MIKE MURDOCK.*

Success in life is built on certain fundamental or timeless principles which form the basis of its sustenance. Each time you choose what is right and act in harmony with moral conscience you build and strengthen the foundation of success, which is your character.

**The more you choose what is right over what is wrong, the easier it gets to live in harmony with what is right by habitually choosing right.** *Each time you choose what is wrong and neglect or ignore your convictions or moral conscience, there is a crack in the foundation of success – character; your character becomes weakened.*

**The more you choose what is wrong over what is right, the harder it gets in choosing what is right over what is wrong.** *Consistently, choosing what is wrong over what is right in a matter of time destroys the foundation of success – character, because choosing what is wrong becomes a lifestyle or way of life.*

#### CHARACTER DEFINED

**Character is thoughts concealed and revealed through action at an opportune moment or time; character is what you do when no one watches you or will never know what you did; it is who you are in private; it is what you say about those who are absent.**

#### THE TEST OF CHARACTER

As the saying goes, “life does not give you what you want but life gives you what you are.”

**Life’s promotions and demotions come through the test of character. Every triumph in the test of character leads you ahead on the course of good success. Every failing in the test of character retrogress your life and deteriorates the quality of your inner life.**

*To sum up: All of life is a test – the test of character. When you begin to live in the awareness of this truth, you begin to take seriously the development of character in preparation to win, whenever your character is tested, knowing that therein lies destiny promotions.*

**Your real character is revealed under life's pressure and under the pleasure of power and money. Your choices reflect your priorities and your values. You can't keep rising in life when you always stoop low in falling into temptation.**

***The values you uphold determine the value you create and attract in life.***

## HOW TO DEVELOP SOUND CHARACTER

*"Character is the pedestal that determines how much weight a person can sustain. If your character is the size of a toothpick, you can only sustain a postage stamp. If your character is as thick as a column, you can sustain a roof."*<sup>3</sup>

- DAVID MCLENDON.

Once upon a time, there lived the Medicis who were the wealthiest and most powerful family in Italy at the time. The Medicis commissioned Michelangelo to create a statue for the main square in Florence and immediately Michelangelo set his mind to accomplish his assignment.

After two years of intense search, Michelangelo discovered a huge slab of marble on a side street of Florence covered with dirt, overgrown with weeds. Amazingly, he had treaded this street several times and had never discovered the marble, but on that particular day he looked more closely and beyond the apparent into the potential embedded in it. Michelangelo began to envision the statue of David in its entirety in the block of marble.

The sculptor uncovered the dirt from the marble and hauled it to his studio; he began to work on the marble. He engaged in the arduous task of hammering and chiseling and it took two years of work to create the rough outline of the statue. He spent another two years polishing and sanding before the statue was completed. Finally, the work was done and the once ordinary marble became a marvel to behold. Thousands of people from all over Italy gathered in the main square to behold this masterpiece.

When it was unveiled, people cheered. Women fainted. The sight was awesome and people were gripped in wonder at the breath-taking masterpiece. Immediately, Michelangelo was recognized as the greatest sculptor of his age.

**Michelangelo was asked how he was able to create such a masterpiece, he replied by saying that he saw the David complete and perfect in the marble. All he had to do was to remove everything that was not the David.** After several hundreds of years, the statue of David is perceived as the most beautiful piece of sculptor in the world.

## YOU ARE A MASTERPIECE

The story above could be applied to human lives. Each of us was created a masterpiece with “breathtaking” greatness within us. However, due to past conditioning, our association with contaminating and corrupting influences, the greatness within us may have been covered with dirt and overgrown with weeds and our destinies may just seem common and ordinary. Just as Michelangelo discovered the huge slab of marble, we must discover our greatness in order to reinvent our lives.

## ENVISION THE IDEAL YOU

*Michelangelo had the perfect picture of the statue of David in his mind before he began working on the Marble; even so you must have a perfect picture of the kind of person you want to become in your mind (self-ideal) before you get to work on self. And this working on self is a lifestyle and lifetime process of developing character, pressing onto perfection. The perfect role model in the absolute sense is Jesus – with absolute perfect character and mind-blowing success that has transcended time.*

Herein lies the key in developing a sound moral character - Mentally envision yourself as possessing the same qualities that Jesus possessed, then come back to the present and daily work on everything that does not represent Jesus in your way of life by focusing on developing the virtues that Jesus possessed. In every defining moment, remember to ask yourself, “What would Jesus do?” then act accordingly.

## CLARIFY WHAT YOU STAND FOR

You must lead a life of clarity; you must have complete clarity about what you stand for. You should not vacillate but rather you should be resolute. Life becomes animalistic when there are no values and virtues to live by.

*Strive to develop your character to command a high level of trust; a high trust character commands respect from people; a high trust character makes for succeeding in long term relationships with people; a high trust character attracts opportunities for growth and advancement; a high trust character builds strong and flourishing businesses; a high trust character is a sought-after personality trait that prizes you above others.*

**Your gift makes room for you but your character keeps you there and makes you advance to greater rooms and secure a place in destiny.**

*"If you want to do something that will make an impact beyond your own life, then treat people better than they treat you, walk the extra mile, help people who cannot help you, do right when it's natural to do wrong, and keep your promises even when it hurts."*<sup>4</sup>

-JOHN MAXWELL

## THE PREVENTIVE MEDICINE FOR DESTINY MALADIES

Sound moral character is the preventive medicine for destiny maladies. Talents can make one appear to be a raving success on the surface but when actually the individual is a rattling failure on the inside due to the failings of character. And what is within eventually surfaces and topples talent. Strength of character is needed to build strong destinies and secure talents and leadership.

**Until character counts, your success will not count. It is character that protects talents and makes it relevant. When character is lost talent loses its potency and relevance is lost.**

## CHARACTER EVOLVEMENT

### 1. CORE VALUES

*"It is always easy to do right when you know ahead of time what you stand for".*<sup>5</sup>

- **DON MEYER**

Values reveal what we believe. Values are the reflection of how we live. **Values represent what we stand for and consequently, what we live for and to the heroic souls, what we can die for.** When core values are known, decision making becomes easy and fast. When core values are known and upheld in every situation you don't really need to think twice in most cases before making decisions, you just need to act on your values in relation to any given situation.

*When core values are upheld, your inner life becomes rock solid to resist temptation and withstand the vagaries of life.*

## VALUE CHARACTER OVER REPUTATION

Character is what you are in the dark; reputation is what people see you to be in the light. Therefore, let your reputation in the light harmonize with your character in the dark. Character is what we do in the privacy of our daily lives. Reputation is what we do in the sight of others.



**Reputation gives a short-term impression in people's evaluation of you. Character leaves a life-time impression on the minds of others.** A person of character does not need to role-play before others in order to appear to them what he or she is not.

**A person of character does not seek to impress people but seeks to express his or her authenticity and value.** A person of character is predictable and stable because being two or multiple-faced is not an option. A person of character does not hide under a mask but comes out in the light to be seen by everyone for what he or she is. When your private life and your public life are integrated, you become a beckon of an inspiring example of character strength.

#### VALUE PEOPLE OVER THINGS

Every human being deserves to be valued because of their intrinsic worth. **Character evolves when you value people and treat them accordingly because people matter. Value your family above money-making; spend quality time with your family because relationships matter. Value your health above money making and fast living because your life matter.** When you perceive people as important, you will make them feel valuable. When you perceive people as unimportant, you will make them feel worthless.

*Value begins with perception, which determines behavior. A change in behavior originates from a change in perception. When you change your perception about people, your behavior towards them also changes. Therefore, people must be treated with respect, dignity and honor irrespective of their status in life.*

**People must be valued above possessions; positions and every material gain you can think of because people matter.**

#### VALUE CHARACTER OVER TALENTS

**Talents ride on the wings of character.** The stronger the wings of character, the higher it flies; the higher will be the impact and effectiveness of the talent. **When character loses its wings talents consequently crashes.** Character preserves and sustains talents and gifts. Consequently, you can only go as far in your talent maximization to the extent that your character can carry.

*There are no limits to the erection of towering heights of character. Competence or talents can never compensate for lack of sound character, rather when competence is built on a rock solid character, it produces maximum impact.*

## VALUE CHARACTER OVER PLEASURE

*In the face of pressure and pleasure do we maintain our moral guard and stand? Or do we give into the subtleties of temptation? Are we prone to choosing the easy way out? Or are we determined to tread the right path even if the path is rugged? Do we fall prey to inordinate passion and sensual pleasures? Or do we rise above it on the wings of moral purity?*

It is disheartening to observe royalties dining with pigs and kings living as peasants in the domain of life by giving in to the seduction of pleasure and the lure of pressure. **Character is a choice we make rather than a gift we receive.** Building up reserves of character should be our topmost priority in life and should never be sacrificed on the altar of sensual pleasures and pressures of conformity.

## VALUE HUMILITY OVER ARROGANCE AND PRIDE

Self-conceit is the weirdest of all the mental disease. Self-conceit manifests itself in pride and arrogance.

**Pride is a reflection of an ignorant mental state that plunges one deeper in self-deception that leads to a humiliating fall - emotional fall; relationship falls; financial fall; career fall; marital fall and leadership fall.**

Humility is the correct or modest estimation of one's self and ability. Humility is upholding self-value and people-value. *A life of humility is centered on truth and love. A humble person is not weak but gentle; is not timid but has power under control; is not aggressive but bold; is not overbearing but understanding; is not critical but an example; is not judgmental but a light.*

*Humility is not putting yourself down rather it is putting yourself aside to meet the needs of others. Humility is not thinking less of yourself, rather it is thinking of yourself less in order to be able to think of how you can help others succeed.*

## VALUE COURAGE OVER FEAR

*Courage is not the absence of fear but the conquest of fear. Courage is feeling the fear of opposition or rejection; fear of being misunderstood but yet doing what you know or convicted to be the right thing. Courage is facing the truth and standing for the truth even when it means standing alone while everyone else does the contrary.*

Courage is moral stamina at its best. **Courage is facing the pressure of moral compromise but refusing to bow down and fickle away under the pressure.** An individual with courage understands that compromise cannot be substituted for conviction. Courage is the strength of

will to live above board. **Courage is the power to choose momentary loss for doing what is right in order to secure a permanent win of living with a clear conscience.**

Courage is absolute faith in the truth or eternal principles that empowers one to live according to the truth or eternal principles. Courage is the backbone of character that prevents moral breakdown while elevating the conduct to the highest standard, setting the individual apart as an inspiration to others.

## 2. IDENTITY

*"People are set up to fail if they envision what they want to do before they figure out what kind of person they should be."*<sup>6</sup>

-RUTH BARTON

*How you define yourself determine if your character is refined or defiled. A distorted view of self makes for a distorted value system and a deteriorating character. **When you fail to recognize your intrinsic value but define your personal worth based on your extrinsic value or material things, you devalue yourself and act in debased ways.***

**Until you recognize the distinction between self-worth and net-worth you become entangled in the sting of insecurity that breeds stinking thinking, which makes destiny stink.** *Until you recognize your inestimable intrinsic value or self-worth, life becomes void of emotional security which drives right and wise actions and makes for the development of moral character that builds up success.*

### WHAT IS IDENTITY?

*Identity is your belief about who you are. Identity is the definition you've given to your life out of which everything else flows. Identity is the framework of your beliefs about who you are and who you are not. Identity is the mold that shapes what you can do and what you cannot do. Identity is the crucible that shapes behavior.*

### THE BATTLE OF IDENTITY

The battle of life is the battle for identity. Every attack on your destiny is targeted at your identity. When identity is lost essence is lost. When identity is lost, true bearing is lost. When identity is lost significance is lost. The loss of identity is the most tragic loss in life. **When you lose the battle for your identity, you lose a handle on life. Identity shapes the quality of your life. Identity is the birthplace of character.**

*When you don't know who you are, you stoop low to do anything demeaning. **When you lose the consciousness of who you really are, you lose out to temptation.** When you are trying to be who you already are, then you've lost the consciousness of your identity.*

***Every test in life is a motive test and how you define yourself is reflective of how your motive is defined. Ignorance of your true identity will cost you your destiny.** Your identity determines your choices through life. When you try to prove who you are, you lose the essence of who you are.*

*People who truly know who they are never perform to impress people but rather they perform in response to a need. People who know their true identity are not ruled or governed by their appetites. They cannot be slaves to their appetites because they live in oneness with Divinity and hence, they become masters of their destinies.*

**People who know their true identity are not driven by self-glory but the love of God translating into their love for people. Selfishness is at the root of insecurity.** People living with the consciousness of their true identity; never seek out who they are in a bid to survive.

When your identity is intact, you won't bow down to reverence wealth, possession, fame and the superficial things of life; trying to acquire these by all means and at all cost; self-destroying destiny in the process.

**When you are secure in whom you are; you know that money is your servant - a tool to be used and you are the master - the one who rules over money. Consequently, your life has inestimable value rather than a price.** *When you are secured in who you are, you never bow down to conform to the world, rather, you rise up and take your place in destiny and rule your world.*

***When you recognize and realize that the fullness of Divinity resides in you, you will live as a king or queen in your thoughts, words and deeds; dominating your world with your influence.***

### 3. INTEGRITY

*"Integrity is not an outdated idea rather it is an updated version of living without regret"*  
**-UDEME ARCHIBONG**

The bedrock of character is integrity. The very essence of character is being integrated; without it, character falls short and falls out and life goes off course heading towards a destiny crash. **Integrity is the harmonic rhythm of destiny that maintains balance and sustains the notes of the symphonies of success.**

*"My life is an indivisible whole, and all my activities run into one another...My life is my message"*<sup>7</sup>.

**-MAHATMA GANDHI**

Once upon a time, Mahatma Gandhi was invited to speak before the House of Commons in England. He appeared small and weak, he held no political office and had no great wealth in tangible terms but he possessed moral power deeply rooted in integrity with an all engulfing vision.

Gandhi stood up and spoke for two hours without the help of notes and caused the hostile audience to a rousing standing ovation, which lasted for minutes. These were people who enacted laws to suppress and subdue his people; these were people who imprisoned him. At the end of his speech, a transformation had taken place in the minds of the British Statesmen; some of them even jumped up on their chairs and started stamping their feet.

After his speech, reporters interviewed his secretary, Mahadev Desai, and expressed their amazement at how Gandhi astonished his audience for such a length of time without the aid of notes and caused the officials to embrace Gandhi in so much that there was no space for the reporters to interview him. Desai gave a revelatory lesson in integrity by his response:

*"You don't understand. You don't understand Gandhi. You see, what he thinks is what he feels. What he feels is what he says. And what he says is what he does. What Gandhi thinks, what he feels, what he says, and what he does are all the same. He does not need notes. You and I think things, which sometimes may be different than what we feel. What we say depends on who's listening. What we do depends on who's watching. It is not so with him. He needs no notes"*<sup>8</sup>.

*The above statement exemplifies the true meaning of integrity - to be integrated; congruent, whole and seamless, void of duplicity. When your values, thoughts, words and actions are all on the same page you have the Ultimate Influence. **When you have the Ultimate Influence you become a powerful force for good – That is True Power and this True Power changes people.***

*You don't need to threaten, manipulate or try to control people to change. In fact, the only person you should strive to control and change is yourself because when you can control and change yourself you can inspire people to change willingly on their own accord. **The more integrated you become, the more powerful you become to influence people for positive change and situations for good.***

*Jesus Christ did not just have the Ultimate Influence; He is the Ultimate Influence – absolutely integrated with absolute Power for good.*

*Being disintegrated makes you powerless to effectively influence people and situations. When what you think, what you feel, what you say, what you do, your beliefs and values are on different pages - you become powerless irrespective of the position you attain, your financial statement or status in the society. **The Ultimate Influence which breeds True Power causes***

***people to willingly change positively from the inside-out and situations to change for good. That is Power!***

*"The man who has no inner life is the slave of his surroundings."*<sup>9</sup>

**-HENRI FREDERIC AMIEL**

Integrity is the ability to preserve self-respect by possessing the virtues of morality and sincerity. It is conformity with the highest standard of character based on certain values, rooted in principles that are fundamental to enduring success.

Integrity is a tested proof of your trustworthiness; you are entrusted with life's vault of valuables. It is the soil where the seeds of success grow and thrive. It is complete openness and transparency in our dealings with others. **The game of life is played and won based on the honor system that is rooted in integrity.** Integrity is a virtue that cannot be overlooked, for it is highly prized and in great demand everywhere in the world.

People of integrity are those whose values are worth far more than silver and gold. Indeed, their intrinsic value is priceless, for they cannot be bribed or bought with money. They can be likened to stars shining in a grossly perverted and corrupted society, where their memories will not be wiped out forever.

Your ability to be trustworthy preserves success. Integrity is the path where noble men tread.

#### 4. SELF-DISCIPLINE

*"What we do on some great occasion will probably depend on what we already are; and what we are will be the result of previous years of self-discipline."*<sup>10</sup>

**-HENRY PARRY LIDDON.**

**Self-discipline is what it takes to develop character into maturity and keep it growing.** Without self-discipline character development becomes impossible. To do what is right and necessary whether we feel like it or not is the drive of self-discipline towards character development. Self-mastery is the height of a mature character that strengthens destiny.

**The wins of success are the battles for self-discipline that are won.** *Although character lies beneath our personality, but it is usually seen through the eventual outcome of our actions and destiny.*

#### STRONG CHARACTER INDICATORS

*“The only thing that walks back from the tomb with the mourners and refuses to be buried is the character of a man. This is true. What a man is, survives him. It can never be buried.”<sup>11</sup>*

*-J. R. MILLER.*

**We choose our character and our character determines our fate or destiny.** *Character and Competence are the Trust Factors. While character alone cannot make us relevant in life however, character secures and protects our relevance gained through competence in delivering excellent results in our contribution to life.*

- **CONSISTENCY**

Consistency in character reveals strength of character. Yes! Change is inevitable and we should initiate changes in our lives and anticipate change, but when it comes to our character, which lies at our core, it should be unchangeable. In other words, the moral principles which form the bedrock of our character should not change, irrespective of the changes around us; despite the trials we may face and even in position of power, wealth and fame our character grounded in moral principles should be unchangeable – consistent.

Our character should always be consistent irrespective of the actions of others towards us.  
**Consistency of character reflects the strength of destiny.**

- **PREDICTABLE**

A consistent character at varied levels of life leads to predictability. You become trustworthy; people can count on you because you are reliable. You command believability rather than doubt because you function from an unchangeable core of moral principles with integrity of heart that produces an integrated life.

- **TRUSTWORTHY**

People will not trust you or will find it hard to trust you if you have no track record of a consistent good character. Trustworthiness produces dependability.

*People can't count on you if you do not make your words and actions count. To be trusted by people you must be worthy of trust and it is a worthy character consistently proven with time that makes you trustworthy. Consequently, trust must be earned rather than yearned for.*

- JUST

*To be just is to stand for equity, fairness and justice, and to stand for these begins with treating people impartially, irrespective of how they treat you and their status.* It is important to note that character has nothing to do with the actions of others, but everything to do with you. In fact, the actions of others toward you and circumstances reveal your character.

**Therefore, deal with everyone – friend or foe impartially. Be known to be just; the kind of person who is no respecter of persons, but of principles.**

- LOVING

To develop character is to grow in unconditional love. **A developed practice of unconditional love makes for a developed and mature character.** *The more loving you become, the more mature you become. The more selfish you become, the more immature you are, and the more character flaws or weaknesses grow.*

*Therefore, to grow daily in the practice of unconditional love is to grow into maturity of character which heightens your influence and secure a great destiny.*

*"It simply makes no difference how good the rhetoric is or even how good the intentions are, if there is little or no trust, there is no foundation for permanent success."<sup>12</sup>*

- STEPHEN COVEY.

*The greatest achievement in life is attaining character maturity - the developing of strength of character. Until you are becoming a better person daily, the seemingly outward achievements will worsen the quality of your inner life, which will eventually manifest in the different areas of your life. When the character becomes weak every other aspect of life weakens.*

Position, wealth or recognition cannot convey genuine respect and permanent influence but character does. Genuine respect and permanent influence cannot be bought, rather it is earned over time. Respect and influence are built up and sustained through trustworthy character.



## CHARACTER HIGHLIGHTS

- Focus on developing a strong inner life and less on the outward. Never seek to look better on the outside and neglecting to be better on the inside. **Never keep up appearances, instead keep up with the reality of developing character. Never neglect your heart, mind and soul, lest you negate your destiny.**
- Character is not a gift we receive but a choice we make every day
- Let the Golden Rule become your rule of engagement in the affairs of life.

*“Here is a simple rule-of-thumb guide for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you, then grab the initiative and do it for them.”*

- **Practice what you teach and never teach what you are not practicing. Teach only what you believe in.** Individuals with character are persons of principles and passion emerging from their convictions.
- Humility elevates character and is produced by your willingness to serve others.
- Gratitude multiplies the virtues of character.
- Character protects and preserves the quality of your inner life, which defines, refines and secures the quality of your outer life.
- Character breeds longevity in leadership and makes you a powerful force for good.
- Character prevents the perpetuation of hurt. People who lack moral character do not only hurt themselves or their destinies, but also hurt the people in the circle of their influence.
- Character preserves and secures your life’s cause and legacy – people buy into you before they buy into your cause, which creates your legacy. And when character is flawed, people’s loyalty to a cause is sold out and legacy becomes floored.
- Continuous character growth and development empower you to finish strong and finish well – staying faithful until your life’s course is completed.

## *Chapter Four*

### **The Influence of Credibility**

There are no moral short-cuts in the game of business—or life. There are basically three kinds of people: the unsuccessful, the temporarily successful, and those who become and remain successful. The difference is character.<sup>1</sup>

-John Huntsman, Chairman, Huntsman Chemical

A few years ago, while my wife, Nancy, and I were on a business trip to Europe, we celebrated her birthday in London. As her gift, I decided to take her to the Escada boutique to buy her an outfit or two.

She tried on a number of things and liked all of them. And while she was in the dressing room trying to decide which one to pick, I told the salesperson to wrap up the whole lot of it. Nancy tried to protest; she was embarrassed to buy so many things at one time, but I insisted. We both knew she'd get good use out of the clothes. Besides, she looked fabulous in everything.

A couple of days later, we took the long flight out of Heathrow Airport in London to San Francisco International Airport. After we landed, we got in line for the inevitable customs check. When they asked what we had to declare, we told them about the clothes Nancy had bought and the amount we had spent.

"What?" the agent said. "You're declaring clothes?" He read the figure that we'd written and said, "You've got to be kidding!" It's true that we had spent a little bit of money on them, but we didn't think it was that big a deal. "What are the clothes made of?" he asked.

That seemed like an odd question. “A bunch of different things,” answered Nancy. “Wool, cotton, silk. Everything’s different. There are dresses, coats, blouses, shoes, belts, accessories. Why?”

“Each kind of fabric has a different duty,” he said. “I’ll have to get my supervisor. I don’t even know what all the different rates are. Nobody declares clothes.” He looked frustrated. “Go ahead and pull everything out and sort it according to what it’s made of.” As we opened up our bags, he walked away and we could hear him saying to a coworker, “Bobby, you’ll never believe this...”

It must have taken us a good forty-five minutes to sort everything out and tally up how much we’d spent on each type of item. The duty turned out to be quite a bit—about two thousand dollars. As we were putting everything back into our suitcase, the agent said, “You know what? I think I know you. Aren’t you Jim Dornan?”

“Yes,” I answered. “I’m sorry, have we met before?” I didn’t recognize him.

“No” he said. “But I’ve got a friend who’s in your organization. Network 21, right?”

“That’s right,” I said.

“I’ve seen your picture before. You know,” the agent said, “my friend has been telling me that I’d really benefit from hooking up with your organization. But I haven’t really listened. Now I’m thinking I should reconsider. He might be right after all. See, most people I see every day try to get all kinds of things through customs without paying duty, even stuff they should know better about. But you guys, you’re declaring stuff you could have gotten through with no problem. That’s sure a lot of money you could have saved!”

“That may be true,” answered Nancy, “but I can spare the money for customs a lot more than I can spare not having a clear conscience.”

As we stood in line that day, it didn’t even occur to Nancy or me that anyone there might know us. If our intention had been to cheat our way through, we never would have suspected that we’d be recognized. We thought we were anonymous. And I think that is what a lot of people think as they cut corners in life. “Who will ever know?” they say to themselves. But the truth is that other people know. Your spouse, children, friends, and even business associates all know. And more importantly, even if you cover your tracks really well, and they don’t know what you are up to, you do! And you don’t want to give away or sell your integrity for any price.<sup>2</sup>

-Jim Dornan

**Influence can be as fast as the speed of light where credibility abounds.** Nothing penetrates the heart and stabilizes the mind with an aura of confidence like credibility. Credibility is a major concern in today’s world. No period in history has there been a greater lack of credibility lurking in the fabric of society.

Every day, credibility issues arise—marriages disintegrate, families split; relationships turn sour; children become rebellious; leadership loses relevance; businesses crumble; organizations become dwarfed; love is betrayed; the economy dwindles; character becomes maimed with duplicity; manipulation and deceit cripple the greatest friendships.

Credibility cuts across every dimension of life. If developed and maximized, credibility can transform the quality of every relationship; upgrade every work; create effective communication and dependability; causes business ventures to thrive; and change the present and alter the future into a masterpiece. Credibility is the foundation of a great life and the cornerstone of a destiny full of impact.

## CREDIBILITY DEFINED

Being credible is possessing distinctive qualities that make you trustworthy. Credibility can also be termed as believability. To be credible is to be proven and trusted. For certain, you cannot impact a single life for good if trust is lacking.

Before people can impose their confidence in you and allow themselves to be guided, nurtured, and influenced by you, they must know that you have their best interests at heart; that you are trustworthy; that you have the talents, skills, knowledge, and attitude to help them in the fulfillment of their destinies; and that you have a proven track record of producing results.

Life becomes so complicated, miserable, and frustrating where credibility cannot be found. Credibility is what makes life simple and enables us to overcome the pitfalls that are strewn along life's pathway. Frankly, at the core of building destinies, credibility is king.

## CULTIVATING THE GARDEN OF CREDIBILITY

Enduring success which is founded on credibility can be likened to cultivating a garden. First and foremost, you must clear the soil from all weeds and useless things. Then you deliberately choose the type of fruit or crop to plant.

Next, you till the soil and plant the seed of the desired fruit. Then, you allow time for growth and maturity before harvest. Between the time the seed is sown and time for the harvest, the seed or plant is nourished with adequate nutrients and moisture supplied for proper growth. Also, the weeds are constantly removed so that they do not impede the growth process of the plant.

Likewise, enduring success needs adequate preparation and deliberate involvement every step of the way. First, you must understand that the seed and root determines the fruit. Our thoughts are the seed; character is the root, while our behavior or actions, which culminate in

results, is the fruit. Marital bliss is a fruit, just as depression is a fruit, wealth is a fruit, illness is a fruit, health is a fruit, happiness is a fruit, mediocrity is a fruit, excellence is a fruit, love is a fruit, and greed is a fruit.

In life, the invisible creates the visible; the seed determines the fruit, and the root determines the quality of the fruit. In other words, our inner world determines our outer world. Our inner world is made up of our mental, emotional, and spiritual worlds. Our inner world has its base in our thoughts. And our outer world is our physical world—the experiential evidence displayed in every aspect of our lives, which includes the results showcased in our relationships, finances, health, and the quality of our personal life. Our internal world is invisible, but our outer world is visible for all to see.

“What determines what comes out of you is simply what is already in you. Your life is a manifestation of what is in you. Your marriage is a manifestation of what is in you concerning marriage. Your children are a manifestation of what is in you concerning children. Your finances are a manifestation of what is in you concerning finances. Your business or job is a manifestation of what is in you concerning work”.<sup>3</sup>

-Casey Treat

As the seed sprouts and grows, you need to be watchful and uproot every “weed” that may want to destroy the root of these principles embedded in you. If the root of these principles is destroyed due to external negative influences which you allow, it will cause your downfall. But this can be prevented if you tend the seed and the root of these principles. The root is what sustains the plant. Consequently, the root of these principles is what will sustain your success and make it stand the test of time.

## CREDIBILITY FACTORS

### *The Trust Factor*

You can't have success without trust. The word trust embodies almost everything you can strive for that will help you to succeed. You tell me any human relationship that works without trust, whether it is marriage or a friendship or a social interaction; in the long run, the same thing is true about business, especially businesses that deal with the public.<sup>4</sup>

-Jim Burke (Former Chairman and CEO, Johnson & Johnson)

Trust is what breeds self-respect; and self-respect enhances your self-esteem or worth. What many people lack is not talent or the opportunity to succeed, but rather a life laced with trust, built on the foundation of integrity, and integrity is what gives you true value before men. You can respect only what you value.

This principle applies to every aspect of our lives. If we betray the trust others have in us, our personality depreciates which becomes a gateway to failure. But fortunately, trust can be regained by building our lives on core values and principles that promote integrity. Integrity is the booster of self-worth.

### *Your Word—Your Bond*

Abraham Lincoln once worked as a general storekeeper. This venture eventually went bankrupt, and he ended up owing \$1,100. He promised to pay the debt, which was an enormous amount in those days. Though it took him 15 years to clear the debt, he kept his word.<sup>5</sup>

A person of integrity says what he means, and he means what he says. His word is his bond. In another story, as Lincoln practiced law, he sent refunds to those clients who overpaid him. People who knew him nicknamed him "Honest Abe."<sup>6</sup> When he ascended to the presidency of the United States, he made a significant statement that should be engraved in every heart:

I desire so to conduct the affairs of this Administration that if at the end... I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside of me.<sup>7</sup>

That friend down inside of him was a tender conscience. Abraham Lincoln left his thumbprint on the document of destiny because he aligned his values with timeless and self-evident principles which shaped his behavior and lifestyle.

One of the ways to enhance integrity is by keeping commitment. But before you can keep commitment to others, you must first of all be able to keep commitment to yourself. And it takes discipline to follow through commitment to yourself and with others. Never promise what you cannot deliver. Think through and count the cost before you make any commitment. Keeping commitment proves your dependability and inspires confidence.

*Does the End Justify the Means?*

One hundred years from now, it will not matter what kind of car I drove, what kind of house I lived in, how much money I had in my bank account, nor what my clothes looked like. But the world may be a little better because I was important in the life of someone.<sup>8</sup>

-Anonymous

The universe is governed by two kinds of law: physical law and moral law. These laws are universal, timeless, and self-evident; no one can dispute or contend with them. For instance, the law of gravity is a physical law. You can't jump from a ten story building just for the fun of it. If you do, you will suffer grave consequences. This holds true irrespective if you believe in the law of gravity or not; even if you are ignorant of this law, intuitively you know you can't jump from such a height just for the fun of it. In order to ensure that the law of gravity works for you,



you need to align yourself to it, but if you choose to disobey its principle, it will work against you; and you will not be able to determine the consequence.

In like manner, there also exist moral laws or principles that govern the consequences of our actions. These laws are embedded in the principle of cause and effect—sowing and reaping. Aligning yourself to these moral principles guarantees a life of happiness, fulfillment, and enduring success. And the pathway to embracing these principles comes by choosing values that conform to these principles. Your conscience is the compass that guards your actions to stay on course.

Your character has its offshoot from your core values in life. It's the values you possess that shape your character. In your daily living and in every circumstance, you rely on your value system to determine your response or choices to every event of your life. This means that your values rule your behavior and determine the direction of your life.

We are living in a society full of moral decadence—a distorted value system. Is it a little wonder that enduring success, inner peace, true happiness, and fulfillment is far-fetched in the lives of many despite the outward show of so-called “success”?

We've come to define what's right and what's wrong in terms of group consensus; we've come to rationalize it—“Everybody is doing it”—so it must be right. We do not have sufficient moral stamina and courage to stand up for what is right even when everybody is treading on the wrong path or when we know that we'll never get caught.

Most of the ills and evil experienced in the world today has its roots in man's own soul. Most of the crisis and chaos experienced in our lives can be traced to the wrong value system which has guided our behavior and action, conflicting with moral laws. Hence, in our defining moments, we make decisions that are easy, cheap, and popular, rather than choosing what's right.

Subsequently, when moral law takes its toll on us, we begin to blame people and circumstance and even fate for our misfortune.

Integrity triumphs when values are clarified, when one can distinctively decipher between right and wrong, and when one is courageous enough to choose to do what is right even in the face of opposition. **When core values are absent, credibility vanishes like a vapor.**

It's the values that we uphold that in turn upholds our destiny. Integrity blossoms when there is harmony between the inner state of mind and the outer state of behavior. People of integrity are value-driven rather than crowd-driven; they act in accordance to their beliefs rather than the opinions of people; they respond to the voice of conscience rather than the expediency of the moment; they listen to and seek the approval of their conscience rather than the approval of men.

In the highway of life, winning is not the ultimate. The ultimate is winning in the right way. Invariably, the end never justifies the means, but rather the means justify the end. The means is what empowers the end to produce enduring results. The means is a process, the end is an event; the process outlives the event and gives credibility to the event. The event may fade, but the process sticks. It's the means (process) that give value to the end (event). The means and the end are wrapped up in each other; they are inseparable.

Unfortunately, many people crave for the end (event), and despise the quality of the means (process). They want to grasp at the fruit (end) without giving attention to the roots (means). Little do they know that the root determine the quality of the fruit. If we accomplish a worthy end through an unworthy means, we trigger off an effect that will lead to destiny wreckage.

Hate and selfishness are among two of the world's greatest evils that have held humans captive with their demoralizing power. Shackled by this corruption, we seek wealth without work; we indulge in pleasure without conscience; we pursue knowledge without character; we desire to

thrive in business without morality; we make a quantum leap in science without a heart for humanity; we pay God lip service in worship without paying Him life service in sacrifice and obedience; we practice politics without principle. And in the long term, we discover that what we had termed as “success” was just an illusion—a superficial glamour that has led to a frustrating experience.

You can transform your destiny, however, by imbibing value-based principles into your basic character. Principles such as integrity, humility, fidelity, simplicity, courage, patience, industry, temperance, modesty, and the Golden Rule will elevate your life from mediocrity to greatness.

“A humble person is more concerned about what is right than about being right, about acting on good ideas than defending outdated position, about building the team than exalting self, about recognizing contribution than being recognized for making it.

Being humble does not mean being weak, reticent, or self-effacing. It means recognizing principle and putting it ahead of self. It means standing firmly for principle, even in the face of opposition. The opposite of humility is arrogance and pride. It’s putting ego first—above principles, above others”.<sup>9</sup>

-Stephen M.R. Covey

Resolve to live by a higher standard irrespective of your feelings and external pressures. At the start of the day, review and reflect on your values. At the end of every day, examine your actions in the light of your values. Remember, consistency is the key. Live your values on the highway of accomplishing results.

When you earnestly pursue what is right, your destiny will be announced.

“Try not to become men of success. Rather, become men of value”.<sup>10</sup>

-Albert Einstein

### *The Motive Factor*

Motive is the reason behind every action or behavior. Motive is the motivation underneath the platform of every life. It is what initiates action or behavior which emanates from the fundamental core of one's being.

Herbert Harris defines *motive* as "the intelligence identified with the deepest feelings associated with your thoughts. It is the subconscious aspect of each conscious thought."<sup>11</sup>

Motive is such an important aspect in leading a great life of impact that I have dedicated an entire chapter to it. But at this point, I'll first discuss some vital truths about motive.

Several years ago, there were some financial institutions that sprang up in Nigeria. (Governmental policies had eradicated and stopped its emergence and from springing up again). These financial institutions usually accrued an enormous interest rate on the money being deposited in their accounts by the public.

In fact, they offered a much higher interest rate than the banks did. Therefore, many people withdrew their money from the banks to deposit it in the institutions. The transactions between these financial institutions and the public went well for some time; but little did people know of the hidden agenda.

The people who conducted business with these institutions thought that they were acting in their best interests. However, on one fateful day, the doors of the financial institutions closed to their customers, and the owners of the institutions carted away with the monies of the people. Only then was the intent of these financial institutions unveiled. Many people had thought that these businesses really cared for their customers, but in actuality, they cared only about themselves at the expense of others. People thought that their intent was good and mutually beneficial, but in actuality, they had a hidden agenda masked by duplicity and deceit.

Here we realize that the sustaining factor to being credible is possessing motives that are based on genuine care for other people.

The ability to look beyond your own needs and concerns in order to reach out to people and be of help in enhancing their well-being will breed trust and inspire confidence.

### *The Two Natures of Man*

Whosoever conquers self has nothing else to conquer.

- Udeme Archibong

From the inception of time, man has been his own worst enemy. He has chained his destiny down by allowing his lower nature to overrule his higher nature. Obviously, there are two natures in man: the human nature and the divine nature; the lower nature and the higher nature.

These two natures are constantly in conflict with each other. The divine nature is God within us and speaks to us through our conscience. The human nature is evil and speaks to us through our ego. These two natures are in conflict with each other.

Some people have subdued the human nature, allowing the divine nature to dominate their lives by listening to and obeying the still small voice of conscience and eternal principles. While others ignore or neglect their conscience and silence the divine nature, choosing to obey and be dominated by the human nature that thrives on ego and pride. Our nature forms our character, which motives emanate.

Human nature is self-centered and manipulative and will do anything to cater for its own needs and concerns without thinking outside the box of its own self-conceited world. In dealing with people, human nature is concerned only with getting what it wants at any cost—even at the

expense of others. It seeks after its own best interest and neglects or ignores the interests of other people.

Human nature believes in pulling people down in order to rise; it believes that it can profit from the failure of others. Hence, it becomes envious or jealous if other people are afforded resources, credit, or opportunities.

Human nature is limited by the scarcity mentality, which is continuously in competition with others and comparing itself against others. On the other hand, our divine nature, while realizing that a person at the bottom can pull other people down, prides itself in helping other people succeed, and thinks mutually beneficial thoughts rather than selfish thoughts.

The divine nature lives and operates in the realm of abundance in which scarcity does not exist. Thus, an individual dominated by the divine nature is not envious, jealous, nor competitive against others because he is aware that there is an abundance of resources and opportunities for everyone; no star in the sky can block any other star from shining in its glory. The divine nature operates on the principle of unconditional love and abundance mentality.

The human nature needs to be upgraded to the realm of the divine nature in order for motives to be right and pure. Accordingly, an introspective view should be conducted to become aware and improve on our motives. We should humble ourselves and respond to the voice of conscience in everything—in our thoughts, words, and deeds. More importantly, we should give heed to the statement below:

*“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shall meditate therein day and night, that thou may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success”.*

-(Joshua 1:8-The Bible).

When we align our thoughts to meditate on God's Word, we position ourselves to live and operate in the higher way, and the divine nature begins to dominate our human nature fashioning our destinies into an epitome of love and goodness. Consequently, people can trust us, and we can have the opportunity to impact their lives for good.

### The Relevance Factor

Relevance cannot be found without; it can be found only within—by discovering, improving, and maximizing your talents while upgrading your knowledge and skill in all aspects of human life in order to function effectively in the domain of life.

In every aspect of life—marriage, relationships, finances, emotions, career, spirituality, and education—there are certain knowledge and skills one must possess to make a mark in each area. Possessing integrity (although with good intent) without being relevant can be likened to constructing a solid foundation that could accommodate a skyscraper but instead supports a lowly shack.

Being relevant is being useful; it is being indispensable to your world. Constant improvement and upgrading of oneself is the key to relevance. Leaving a mark in every aspect of our lives should be our utmost desire.

I believe enduring success deals with the whole person; if one is relevant in his career or field but loses relevance in his family or relationship with others, and then he or she is not really relevant in the truest sense of the word.

Life is not one-sided; rather, life must be balanced to retain its flavor. The important areas of our lives are worthy of our attention, especially in the areas of relationship. No one can succeed or make an impact in life if one is not knowledgeable or skillful in building solid relationships that inspires trust and confidence. Consistent learning and growth in all the important areas of our lives is the platform of becoming relevant and is also the sustaining factor.

One of the major ways in staying relevant is identifying your strengths and utilizing them effectively in order to obtain the results you want. Focusing on your strengths enables you to become the kind of person you want to be and also produces the result you desire; while focusing on your weaknesses disables you and prevents you from producing results.

Although one should sincerely and consistently strive to improve in his areas of weakness, greater attention should be given to maximize the areas of strengths. We all can become relevant to God, to our spouse, to our children, in our relationship with others, in our chosen career, to our nation, to the world, and ultimately to our generation if we make self-growth and improvement a habit—by learning, unlearning, relearning, and being committed to producing results rather than making excuses.

Being effective and not just busy is the hallmark of relevance. Results, rather than activity, are what inspires trust and confidence and keeps you relevant.

#### WHERE IT ALL BEGINS

*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23).*

The mind is the control center of life. It is just like a computer embedded with various programs that control and determine our response and actions (attitude and behavior) in every area of our life.

The mind can be divided into three parts: the conscious mind, the subconscious mind, and the universal mind. The conscious mind is where thinking and reasoning take place. In your conscious mind, thoughts can be accepted or rejected, which means that the mind operates selectively and judgmentally. It is also a place where thoughts can be created and developed.



All thoughts that are accepted in the conscious mind are being transmitted or penetrated into the subconscious mind. The subconscious mind is the seat of memory and habits, and where your daily conduct or behavior springs from. In the subconscious mind, thoughts cannot be rejected; rather they are accepted the way they are. You don't have direct control of your subconscious mind as this is the part of your mind that has already been programmed.

Any effort to change the content of the subconscious mind necessitates a reprogramming procedure through the conscious mind for onward transmission to the subconscious mind.

The Universal mind is the Source of all wisdom and power. It is the God-mind. Our minds are one with the Universal mind, likened to a river that receives its water from the ocean, having the same chemical properties but a difference in volume.

We can tap into the flow of the Universal mind, and become one with the Universal mind full of wisdom and power; the only difference is the volume of wisdom and power we possess.

The theory of the tabula rasa, or blank slate, states that each person comes into the world with no thoughts or ideas at all, and everything that a person thinks and feels is learned from infancy onward.

The programming of the subconscious mind starts at birth. As the infant grows through childhood, he or she stores and files input from parents or the people who the child spends most of his time with.

The attitude and lifestyle of the parents, or whoever is involved, are stored in the memory bank of the child—in his subconscious mind. As the child starts attending school and church, and making friends, input that shapes the child's beliefs and attitudes is fed into his subconscious mind.

The personal experiences, thoughts, feelings, and teachings that the child is exposed to are also filed in his subconscious mind. As the child grows into adulthood, his close friends and peer group and the environment he has grown to accept, influences the input fed into his mind. And every single belief, attitude, and conduct is drawn from these filed data and is a controlling factor in decision making, character, marriage, and financial, emotional, social and spiritual destinies.

If the information stored in the subconscious mind is all positive, then it will shape positive decisions, beliefs, attitudes, and lifestyles that make for a great destiny—which also means that you will make huge deposits in your account with others, drawing from the inner treasure within.

But if the data received into the subconscious mind is negative, then negative beliefs, decisions, attitudes, and lifestyles will be the result, which will adversely affect every area of life, mobilizing you to make massive withdrawals from your account with others. If this is the case, there is a need to begin to reprogram your subconscious mind.

***Therefore, guarding your mind by carefully choosing your close friends, TV programs, movies, the books you read, the music you listen to, and the information you accept are all crucial. A deliberate action must be made to feed the mind with clean, good, and uplifting thoughts by reading the right books, associating with the right people, and situating yourself in the right environment. And you must take control of your mind by rejecting negative thoughts and replacing them with positive thoughts.***

Your mind holds the key to your life. Your life can never change until your mind changes. Straining and laboring hard to change outward circumstances or conditions of your life will end up in personal frustration. **Your character, circumstances, and your destiny changes only when you change the thoughts that have kept you where you are.**

Let me expose to you a revealing truth: your marriage, finances, relationships, emotional life, and spiritual life are all a mirror of what's in you. You are who you are, what you are, and where you are by the law of your being. And you can change who you are, what you are, and where you are by changing the thoughts embedded in your mind.

**Where you set your mind will set the course of your destiny.** At the root of every radical change in destiny lies your ability to change and take control of your mind. If you can control your mind, you can control your life and shape your destiny.

#### YOUR LIFE'S BANK ACCOUNT

In life we have a bank account with everyone we know or come in contact with. We are constantly making a deposit or withdrawal each time we are given the opportunity to relate with someone. We have an account with our spouse, children, family, friends, colleagues, acquaintances, and everyone we meet along life's pathway.

It is the quality of the account that we have with others that will determine the quality of our relationship with others, and the contribution or impact we will make in the lives of others. This in turn will determine the level of success we accomplish in life.

The quality of the account we have with others enables people to feel safe or unsafe with us; it makes us dependable or not dependable; it enhances trust and confidence, or it breeds suspicion and fear, causing people to watch their backs whenever they are with us. It also encourages people to be open towards us, or it will cause them to be secretive and conservative around us.

What is the root of our deposit or withdrawal? Where does it emanate from?

## DEPOSITS AND WITHDRAWALS

“You can’t talk yourself out of a problem you’ve behaved yourself into”.<sup>12</sup>

-Stephen Covey

“No, but you can *behave* yourself out of a problem you’ve behaved yourself into...and often faster than you think!”<sup>13</sup>

-Stephen M.R. Covey

The life we are living is one that must be accounted for. I believe we have a life bank account with God and with every level of human relationship here on earth. Every waking moment of our lives we are either making a deposit or a withdrawal from that account. And our success and influence in the lives of others is dependent on the status of the account.

Whenever we live in the domain of integrity, there is a huge deposit in our life’s account with others. Significant deposits are made when we live by the truth by being honest and straightforward in our dealings with others, and by making and keeping commitment with others.

Conversely, whenever we tell lies, live a pretentious or hypocritical life, double talk, conceal matters, or keep secrets when wisdom demands openness and transparency, there will be a massive withdrawal from our account with others.

The way you treat others, especially those people with whom you can gain nothing from, also determines a deposit or withdrawal in your life’s account. The little courtesies, like saying, “please” and “thank you” reflect respect.

When we offend others or make a mistake, are we humble enough to apologize, or do we make excuses for our behavior and become defensive? Do we truly treat our spouse, children, friends, subordinates, colleagues, acquaintances, waitresses, janitors, gatemen, and housekeepers—everyone—with deep-seated respect, honor, and care? Or are we ever rude,

critical, brutal, and abusive, and treat other people with disdain and without genuine care? Human nature has taught us to love things and use people, which make for a massive withdrawal in our life's account. On the other hand, divine nature places on us the command to love people and use things, which makes the deposits in our account surge.

### THE MIRACLE OF A "LITTLE COURTESY"

Many years ago, I called on customers for Johnson and Johnson in the Massachusetts area. One account was a drug store in Hingham. Whenever I went into this store I would always talk to the soda clerk and sales clerk for a few minutes before talking to the owner to obtain his order. One day I went up to the owner of the store, and he told me to leave as he was not interested in buying J&J products anymore because he felt they were concentrating their activities on food and discount stores to the detriment of the small drugstore. I left with my tail between my legs and drove around the town for several hours. Finally, I decided to go back and try at least to explain our position to the owner of the store.

When I returned I walked in and as usual said hello to the soda clerk and sales clerk. When I walked up to the owner, he smiled at me and welcomed me back. He then gave me double the usual; I looked at him with surprise and asked him what had happened since my visit only a few hours earlier. He pointed to the young man at the soda fountain and said that after I had left, the boy had come over and said that I was one of the few sales people that called on them that even bothered to say hello to him and to the others at the store. He told the owner that if any sales person deserved his business, it was I. I never forgot that to be genuinely interested in other people is a most important quality for a sales person to possess—for any person, for that matter.<sup>14</sup>

-Edward M. Sykes, Jr.

*How to Win Friends & Influence People* by Dale Carnegie

Being courteous, polite, and helpful can perform miracles in your life and distinguish you from the herd. Most importantly, it makes other people feel valued and significant; and that's a deposit.

When I was attending the university, there was a colleague of mine who wanted to become friends with me. In the bid to win my friendship, she told me a lot about herself and also went on to tell me things that one of our other colleagues confided to her. In doing so, she betrayed a trust, a confidence. Of course, I wasn't comfortable around her because I knew she couldn't keep a secret; and I didn't want to become close with her because I knew that she would sweet-talk people to their faces yet bad-mouth them behind their backs. (Either way, I didn't want to become a culprit or a victim of such gossip). My colleague lacked loyalty, which is a betrayal of trust. Her gossip and backbiting constituted a withdrawal to both the victim and the hearer.

Rationalizing and justifying one's self when a mistake is made rather than admitting, apologizing, and possibly repairing the mistake is a withdrawal of tremendous value. Whereas, being responsible and accountable increases the deposit in your account and earns trust speedily.

Credibility is the foundation of an impactful life, but as we will see in the next chapter, it comes at the cost of sanitizing your motive.

## *Chapter Five*

### **Sanitizing Your Motives**

Men of character are not only the conscience of society, but in every well governed state they are the best motive power; for it is moral qualities which, in the main, rule the world.<sup>1</sup>

-Samuel Smiles

The world is not only governed by physical laws, but by moral laws which are also universal and timeless in nature; and on these moral foundations or principles is built enduring success. The more we adhere to these principles and create a habitation for them in the inner core of our being, the surer are our chances of securing an indomitable niche in destiny.

The law of integrity states, "A great life is characterized by honesty, truthfulness, and straight dealing with other people, in all circumstances." Integrity is conformity with moral and ethical standards in relationship with self and with others. This should constitute our inner core, the very root by which our character is formed.

Motive is the reason behind our words and actions. Human behavior and actions are not mechanical; rather they are triggered by motive. Furthermore, motive and character are inseparable, motive being the offspring of character. If your motives are not sanitized and your character upgraded to meet the standard of trustworthiness, you will not make a quality investment in the life of even one person.

Because motive is the bedrock of character and the cornerstone of successful living, it has an encompassing influence that subjugates the human senses, behavior, and attitude. However, when motives are perverted, the quality of life depreciates into a shallow experience.

Despite the outward show of success portrayed by many individuals, there exists a “chronic pain” which cannot be eliminated by using quick-fix schemes. In our fast-paced world that is filled with minute-to-minute challenges, the chronic pain that lies behind the lives of many people has its offshoot from their character and motives.

Coveting what glitters often increases the severity of the pain if our inner core is in conflict with correct principles. This means that if we do not treasure character development above public image, recognized talent, and affluence all of these outward displays of success will become futile and will lead to an inner emptiness.

**Character development should precede personality involvement; otherwise, we are simply pursuing after shadows, and the so-called success we claim to have achieved is just an illusion.**

The change we need in many areas of our lives must begin with us; otherwise, our destinies will go round in circles. We must first recognize that the chronic pain that pierces our hearts in our daily living will not be eliminated using quick-fix procedures or methods, but can be removed only by a deliberate cross-examination of our perception, motive, and basic character which has caused or supported the pain or despair.

**If you want your life to be great, you must begin by pursuing greatness of character.** It is the root that will determine the quality of the fruit. Until you understand that “being” precedes “having,” then mediocrity will remain your lifestyle and unresolved challenges will be your domain.

Stephen Covey has stated it so beautifully:

“If you want to have a happy marriage, be the kind of person who generates positive energy and sidesteps negative energy rather than empowering it. If you want to have a



more pleasant, cooperative teenager be a more understanding, empathic, consistent, loving parent. If you want to have freedom, more latitude in your job, be a more responsible, a more helpful, a more contributing employee. If you want to be trusted, be trustworthy. If you want the secondary greatness of recognized talent, focus first on primary greatness of character".<sup>2</sup>

And I hasten to add, if you want to lead a life of relevance and maintain an enduring legacy, be immersed in a lifestyle of contribution, born out of sound character and a motive of an unconditional love for humanity.

In our motives, we deal with all types of relationships. Relationship with God, relationship with self, relationship with people, and relationship with things are instrumental to enduring success.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Our relationship with God is the most vital and transforming of all relationships, if we permit it. It is on the platform of this relationship that our motives are shaped to conform to the values based in the Scriptures. This relationship enables us to choose to adopt value-based motives, which is the bedrock of the giving spirit and the pivot of living a life of selfless contribution.

But if there is duplicity in our motive regarding our relationship with God, it will impede the relationship; moreover, the duplicity will spill over to other levels of relationship. God sees beyond our actions into the motive that initiated the action; and He judges and rewards us based on our motive and not necessarily by our actions.

Many people appear religious in church, but their motive is corrupted by a defiled character. They've not imbibed the principles behind the Christian faith into their basic nature, but rather their heart is wrapped up in a self-seeking scheme while hypocritically and outwardly displaying

holiness. A real Christian is not one who just regularly attends church, but one who lives out the principles embedded in Scriptures and who sanitizes their motives in accordance with the values inspired by the Scripture.

*Christianity is not a form of religion, but a relationship with your Maker backed up by a lifestyle that brings Him glory. It is divinity living in and through us.*

God is love. Therefore, God is the greatest “go-giver.” When we are connected with Him, He awakens the love nature that has been dormant within us, and infuses us with the ability to give unconditionally. And although you can give without loving, there is no way you can love without giving.

When we are miracle-seekers rather than God seekers, position or title seekers rather than service seekers, men-pleasers and eye-service conscious rather than God-pleasers and Word-(Scripture) conscious, we forfeit the transforming power of God that changes and inspires us in making a difference in our world.

“The Lord works from the inside out.

The world works from the outside in.

The world takes people out of the slums.

Christ takes the slums out of people, and then they take themselves out of the slums.

The world would mould men by changing their environment.

Christ changes men, who then change their environment.

The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature”.<sup>3</sup>

-Ezra Taft Benson.

Relationship with God is the fundamental key in shaping our character and in defining our motives in order to make our life count.

Stephen Covey made a wonderful discovery:

“I find renewal in daily prayerful meditation on the scriptures because they represent my value system. As I read and meditate, I feel renewed, strengthened, centered and recommitted to serve”.<sup>4</sup>

Meditating on the Scriptures is the vital force needed to transform your character and motive into a masterpiece of astounding goodness and radiance of love.

#### RELATIONSHIP WITH SELF

“Love requires self-esteem and independence. It is based on your ability to share yourself with others out of choice and not out of dependent necessity. A harmonic relationship between two individuals is one in which both have the ability to sustain themselves separately”.<sup>5</sup>

-Herbert Harris

**Your capacity to give and receive love hinges on your capacity to love yourself.** True love is an embodiment of value and respect, anchored upon a positive self-esteem. The way you treat others emanates from the way you see others, and the way you see others is birthed out of the way you see yourself. If you feel miserable about your life, you will extend the same misery to others.

**Until you value and respect yourself, you will remain unable to value and respect others.** Jesus said, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” This is one of the first commandments that you must comply with in order to unlock the success package. This presupposes that you cannot love your neighbor without first of all loving yourself. **Until love is internalized, it can never be externalized.**

Unconditional love proceeds from your experience of the love of God and is lubricated by the depth of value and respect you have of your own life. This abundance of internalized love then overflows and extends to make a difference in the lives of others.

**But until your self-esteem is determined by your intrinsic worth, you will be handicapped of the security that equips you with the capacity to give unconditional love to others.**

Furthermore, your intrinsic worth is not based on your background, abilities, opinion of people, or other external factors, but on your value as a person God has made in His image to fulfill a unique purpose on earth. A positive self-esteem upholds self-value.

In human life what upholds the diverse strings that connect success in every aspect of our lives is self-worth. Self-worth is the root that propagates the central theme of our destinies in which our character and motives are shaped.

An extrinsically source of self-esteem makes life ineffective and jeopardizes the very elements that cement the fabric of success. The source of your self-esteem creates an inner core from which the basic tenet of your life emanates from. Your source of self-worth is one of the lens through which you see the world.

### *Self-Worth Based on Materialism*

When self-worth is dependent upon money, destiny is caged into a sentimental illusion. Such individuals sacrifice their relationships and family for temporal gains. Money becomes the lens through which the world is seen. Any help they may render to someone is motivated by a reward.

Identifying only with the financially wealthy and despising the poor becomes the norm to live by. Consequently, these individuals seek relationship with only those people from whom they stand a chance of making a financial gain.

They are fair-weather friends who rally around people when the economic conditions of their lives are booming. But when there is a temporal hitch and the economic condition declines, they withdraw and leave the relationship. The divorced courts are filled with men and women who married their partner primarily for their affluence. They dashed into the relationship with the motive to get, rather than to give, resulting in a sour experience and an emotional breakdown, leaving their children without the love, care, attention, and affection of both parents, and damaging their balanced growth.

The money-centered individuals who remain married often neglect to invest their time and attention into the lives of their children and other people around them who need them most, because they value making money more than making a life. In many cases, their children, deprived in love and affection, grow up deficient in training and morally shaped character. These children become adults who also feel unable to give unconditional love to others.

If a person's self-esteem is money driven, they face a world of unending vulnerability that can be triggered by any financial crisis. And if a crisis does occur, this individual's life results in shambles and utter despondency because he has built his foundation on a money-driven existence.

Living in a society where things are valued more than people, there is an insatiable desire for the accumulation of possessions both in the tangible and intangibles. Fashionable and extravagant clothes, homes, cars, jewelry, fame, and glory are the central pursuit of life. In many cases, in order to acquire these things and social prominence, possession-driven individuals may mortgage other peoples' lives, success, freedom, or happiness to gain their own lustful desires.

In order to acquire fame and glory, they may pull somebody down in order to get to the top. Their translation of life is that of competition, and an unhealthy one at that. Their hearts are

closed to the needs of other people because their lives are wrapped up in a self-conceited success, although one which will wane and fade. They are slaves to the “complex” problem— inferiority complex and superiority complex; and their sense of security sways and dwindles, tossed to and fro like a boisterous wave of the ocean. Their minds are obsessed with possessions rather than contributions, and recognition rather than distribution. And rather than their lives outliving them, their lives go down in the sea of oblivion.

### *Self-Worth Based on Family Reputation*

Some people’s source of self-esteem is based on their family reputation, traditions, and culture. They reward or respond to each child based on performance—performance that upholds the family reputation, societal recognition, and acceptance. They love their children conditionally. These parents often compare their children’s performance with other people’s children. This may lead to a fractured self-esteem; every resentment becomes the child’s addictive mindset. Highly destructive criticism meted out to the child for misbehavior or lack of credible performance leads the child to grow up with hate and a rebellious attitude.

In the desire to make up for their own shortcomings, these parents, in desperation, attempt to live their own lives through their children. Thus, they try to choose the course of destiny for their children, often imposing a “societal esteemed” career for their children, one which will further boost their own sense of security. Imposing certain family traditions and cultures, despite the fact that this can be detrimental to the ultimate welfare of their children, is common. In the midst of such circumstances, their children feel pressured against their own choice to become what their own parents want them to become.

It’s a common saying that “charity begins at home.” Parents should first give unconditional love to their own children, but if these parents are unable to do so, they will likewise be unable to give unconditional love to other people. If they are unable to grant their children freedom to

choose what they want to become, then they will more likely feel threatened and stand against the freedom of other people to maximize their potential.

### *Self-Worth Based on Work*

Some people's self-esteem hinges on their work. They prioritize their career above their spiritual life, their health, and their relationships. Nothing else matters to them except the position or title that provides a sense of security. They become too busy and insensitive to know, understand, or respond to the needs of their family and other people around them.

### *Self-Worth Based on Church*

It's amazing to realize that some people's self-esteem is based on the church. This category of people value their church position or title assigned to them more than the development of their character based on the principles in God's Word. They may look "holy" in church, but are often wolves in sheep's clothing. They pay lip-service to God but not life-service. They are activity-driven with regard to church activities and responsibilities, and this addictive involvement is the primary motive for giving to the church and is activated by their desire for recognition. Yet they are insensitive to the needs of people around them. They do not realize that the church itself cannot uphold their self-esteem, only a God-centered life can.

### *Self-Worth Based on Peers*

Popular among the younger generation, but not exclusive to them, is acquiring their self-esteem from the approval of their friends and peer groups. In the bid for acceptance and a sense of security, people choose to identify and conform to the attitudes and practices of a particular group, even though such attitudes are detrimental to their destiny.

They value the opinion others have of them above the opinion they have of themselves. Consequently, they indulge in destructive habits and lifestyles just to “belong.” For as long as these people derive their sense of security from the approval of their friends and peers, they are dependent and controlled by the weaknesses of their friends and peers.

They do not experience a sense of freedom and independence to inculcate good character and healthy habits. And since they do not love themselves or adequately accept and approve of their own lives, they feel unable to accept and love others unconditionally.

Their first action should be to love and influence themselves so that they can be better equipped to influence and give love to others.

Many people in our society are trapped in the cocoon of self and fleeting pleasure. These individuals are wrapped up in themselves and in what gives them pleasure. Their self-esteem is derived from their ego and how to gratify their own desires. Nobody else exists in their world except them.

They are the king in their own miniature world, but actually slaves in the gigantic world of abundance. Selfishness is the core of their personality, greed is the driving force of life, and lust is the ruling factor in their decision making— leading to dire consequences of a strangled destiny full of emptiness and misery.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH PEOPLE

Strength of character will determine the quality of relationships with people. Self-mastery and self-discipline are the prerequisites for enduring relationships. In addition, self-knowledge is the gateway to self-acceptance, and self-acceptance is the doorway to a relationship that is based on respect, value, and unconditional love. And integrity governs all succeeding relationships.



**It's what we are rather than what we do and say that breeds trust in our relationship with people; and trust is the candle that lightens the pathway to fulfilling relationships.** If people can feel confident in what we are, then what we do and say, which a function of what we are will be respected and valued.

### *The Echoes of Life*

There once lived a little boy who had a misunderstanding with his mom. Upset and fearful of the punishment that was most likely to come, he ran out of the house to the hillside. Upon reaching his destination, he shouted into the valley, "I hate you, I hate you, I hate you!" And back from the valley came the echo, "I hate you, I hate you, I hate you!"

Amazed, the little boy hurriedly ran back into the house and told his mom that there was a mean little boy in the valley saying he hated him. His mom then went along with him back to the hillside and told him to shout, "I love you, I love you, I love you!" The little boy obeyed, and to his utter astonishment, he discovered there was a nice little boy in the valley who declared, "I love you, I love you, I love you!"

**Life will always echo to us who we are.** We get out of life exactly what we put into it. If our thoughts and deeds have been helpful, generous, kind, and good, life will echo happiness, blessings, and fulfillment into our destinies. But if our thoughts and deeds have been evil, unkind, and lowly, then life will sound the echoes of misery, despair, and failure into our destinies.

**We can put into our relationship with others only what exists in us.** As was discussed in the previous section, how we see and treat people is a reflection of how we see and treat ourselves. **The quality of our relationship with people is determined by the quality of the relationship we have with self. The greater the quality of our relationship with people, the greater the chances of our success in life.**

To bring out the best in other people and situations, you need to look beyond what is apparent and look to what the person or situation can be. Invariably, you must be a good finder. **In addition, we get from our relationships, what we sow into them.** The law of seedtime and harvest, like all other natural laws cannot be broken; we can break only ourselves against it.

### *The Wooden Bowl*

There is a story I once heard about a frail old man who went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year-old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered.

The family ate together every night at the table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing eyesight made eating difficult, insomuch that peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor, and when he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth.

The son and daughter in-law soon became irritated with the mess. "We must do something about Father," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor."

So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner where Grandfather ate alone from a wooden bowl because he had broken a dish or two.

Sometimes Grandfather had a tear in his eye as he sat alone while the rest of the family enjoyed their dinner at the dining table. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he would drop a fork or spill some food. In the meantime, the four-year-old grandson watched it all in silence.

One evening before the meal, the father noticed his son playing with some wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" And just as sweetly, the boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little wooden bowl for you and Mama to eat your food from when I grow up." Smiling, the little boy continued to work.

The parents were speechless, and tears started to stream down their cheeks. No word was spoken, yet both knew what must be done.

That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For some reason, neither the husband nor the wife seemed to care if a fork was dropped, if the milk was spilled, or if the tablecloth was soiled. And for the remainder of Grandfather's days, they ate every meal together.

#### *How Do We Treat Others?*

Do we treat other people with love? Even when they least deserve it? Does our attitude and behavior towards others reflect consideration and respect for their thoughts and feelings? Or are we nonchalant about how they feel? When dealing with people, do we use our hearts, or do we use our heads?

Do we see and treat our spouse and children as royalty, or do we see and treat them as less than worthy? Do we respond with love and humility to the needs of others? Or do we close our heart to their needs and react with pride? Do we make our home a place of solace and heaven on earth? Or do we make our home a place of conflict and criticism, a competitive arena, where all hell is let loose?

Do we look down at people? Or do we give them something to live up to? Are our hands an extension of God's hands, touching their lives? Or are our hands an extension of greed, marring their lives? Are we constantly competing with others? Or do we compliment them? Do we see

their success as a threat to our own? Or do we see that the sky is wide enough where everyone can fly?

Are our emotional lives and destinies sabotaged by how people treat us? Or do our emotional lives soar above the opinions and treatment of others? Are we channels of blessings? Or are we reservoir of selfishness? Are we centered on making a living or making a life? Can God count on us to make a difference in human lives? Or can the devil count on us to wreck the difference in human lives.

The key to unlocking these answers is to live by the Golden Rule: do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Finally, consider the words of Zig Ziglar: "It's a sobering thought, because we hold the key to the future of others. We don't live alone. Our actions and deeds affect other people, many of whom we will never know."<sup>6</sup>

#### RELATIONSHIP WITH THINGS

In the north, south, east, and west, traversing through the nook and crannies of the earth, lay known and unknown, vast and abundant resources. Mankind has been vested with the authority to manage or rule the earth. Yet we must remember that mankind did not create the earth, nor is he the owner of the earth; rather the earth with its vast resources has only been entrusted to him. The resources of the earth were made to serve mankind in order to fulfill his needs and to enable him to materialize his purpose on earth.

Unfortunately, mankind has abused his awesome right as caretaker of the earth and has developed a wrong relationship with the resources of the earth. Instead of mankind acting as the master of money and material possession, he has chosen to become their servant. Rather than valuing his fellow human being above things, he has chosen to value things above people. Rather than seeing things as a means to an end, he has considered things as an end in themselves.

Because of the wrong relationship that mankind has established with money and material possessions, through greed and selfishness, man has now become a slave, even in the midst of freedom and opulence.

The desire and demand for instant pleasure and gratification irrespective of the negative consequences in the long term has wrecked many destinies. And destinies will remain barren if the resources of the earth are not used to uplift humanity and make the world a better place for us to live.

### WHAT'S YOUR TRADEMARK?

Values are the foundation of our character and our confidence.

A person who does not know what he stands for or what he should stand for will never enjoy true happiness and success.<sup>7</sup>

-Lionel Kendric

Every product that is created by a manufacturer has a trademark or brand that distinguishes it from all other products. The quality of the product determines the value of the trademark and ultimately the demand of the product. Just as the success of a product hinges on the quality, so does the success of a person relate to the law of quality service which states, "Your rewards in life will be in direct proportion to the value of service to others'."

You are a customized product of the greatest Manufacturer (God) the world has ever known. But you are a customized product with a difference because you have been vested with a will, conscience, and a mind. Having a mind, conscience, and an independent will, it becomes your responsibility through choice to determine the quality of your life by the value you create for yourself, represented by your trademark.

It's the values you uphold that defines your trademark. Your values are like a very small helm that gives direction to a ship despite the fierceness of the wind. In other words, your value is a compass that guides or governs your behavior and decisions through life, which shapes your destiny.

Whenever the names of Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi are mentioned, what suddenly comes to mind is their trademark of equity, justice, and fairness. These men were ruled by their values, which were built upon correct principles and bonded by a unique mission for their lives. Their values were upheld by their daily lives. Moreover, their actions and inactions conformed to their ultimate values, irrespective of any penalty they would suffer by their detractors. They valued principles. And since they valued principles, their actions endured, having legendary impact and pulsating legacies that have inspired millions.

During Nelson Mandela's trial for sabotage against the racist South African white in 1964, Mandela said, "During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But, if need be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."<sup>8</sup> This inspiring statement reflects strength of conviction and superiority of will, based on a deep sense of selfless contribution, flamed by an unconquerable spirit, and ignited by a purpose and a value driven life that was founded on correct principles.

Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody else expects of you.<sup>9</sup>

-Henry Ward Beecher

The perception you have of yourself is the trademark you've given to your life and built into your subconscious mind which shapes your values, goals, beliefs and behavior. It is the basis of every decision you will ever make.

*Who do you really want to be? What if you were to invent an identity card for yourself—what would you want written on it, and what would you want to be left out? What plan of action can you take today in order for your behavior or lifestyle to match what you have on your identity card? What kind of associations would you keep to enhance your commitment to your new identity?*

He that lies down with dogs shall rise up with fleas. ...Show me the man you honor, and I will know what kind of man you are, for it shows me what your ideal of manhood is, what kind of man you long to be.”<sup>10</sup>

-Thomas Carlyle

Finally, what kind of vocabulary would you use to speak to yourself that would reinforce your new identity? Remember in the journey of life, the pitfalls can be avoided and the right answers obtained if you will ask the right questions.

Our society is filled with distorted values that breed failure in destiny. Values that should be upheld are despised, while derogatory values are esteemed. There is a falsity of priorities that dampens the essence of life and triggers crisis in destinies.

If you are doubtful or ignorant of the law of gravity, and you jump from the height of a sky scraper, thinking you will float in the air, what do you think will happen to you? Obviously, you will die or be severely injured. Even if you are unaware of the law of gravity, you will still suffer the consequences. Likewise, it is foolhardy, or an illusion, to think that your behavior, actions, and decisions will not attract consequences, especially if your behavior or actions are habitual. Distorted values will breed negative behavior, whereby you live against correct principles, which attract negative consequences to your destiny.

But when your values, which shape your actions and behavior, are in line with correct principles, the rewards of positive consequences accrue to your destiny. It is your responsibility to seek out correct principles, such as principles of purpose, responsibility, love, integrity, and justice, and line up those values in accordance with the same.

Our values reflect what we feel is most important to us in our everyday lives and to our ultimate destiny. But until we hold ourselves up to a higher standard, we will be unable to imbibe and nurture values that are in consonance with principles that govern success and bring a maximum return to our destinies. Once we adopt and prioritize positive values and live by them every day, our lives will become a trademark of excellence which is worthy of emulation. And we will make wise decisions that will lead us to the pinnacle of success in all ramifications.



## *Chapter Six*

### **Maximizing Your Worth**

There is a gold mine hidden in every life. Nature never made a failure. Every man has success hidden away in his soul. No one else can find it but himself.<sup>1</sup>

-E.W. Kenyon

#### The Mind—Your Limitless Treasure

Who can unravel the limitless treasures embedded in the human mind? Who can fathom the magnificent potential of the human brain?

It's fascinating to know that scientists have postulated that if man were to attempt to create a human brain, it would cost billions of dollars. It would be larger than the Empire State Building and would require more electricity than a city of thousands. In fact, if the brain cells were to be lined up, they would reach all the way to the moon and back. For the brain to be constructed, it would take the most brilliant men in the world. And even if they could meet the size, cost, and power requirement of such an endeavor, it would still be an impossible ordeal for the man-made brain to originate an iota of thought.<sup>2</sup>

Nor can man construct a heart, like the one in our chests which beats 36,000,000 times each year, pumping more than 600,000 gallons of blood each year through more than 60,000 miles of veins and arteries.<sup>3</sup> Wow! I hasten to add, that all the money in the world cannot buy you. You are priceless. You are the most valued treasure in the world!

Let's continue to explore the power of the human brain and nervous system, so that you can understand clearly your inestimable worth.

The brain is superior beyond measure to even our greatest modern computer technology. It weighs three pounds and contains 13 billion nerve cells, which have the capacity of processing up to 30 billion bits of information per second, and it boasts the equivalent of 6,000 miles of wiring and cabling. The human nervous system contains about 28 billion neurons. It serves the purpose of interpreting the information we receive through our sense organs, conveys it to the brain, and also carries out instructions from the brain to other parts of the body.

Within the brain cells there are more than one thousand billion protein molecules capable of filing away every perception, every taste, every smell, every sound, and every action you have ever experienced from the day you were born. Each neuron is a tiny, self-contained computer capable of processing about one million bits of information. These neurons act independently, but they also communicate with other neurons through a network of 100,000 miles of nerve fibers.

The ability of your brain to process information is mind boggling considering that a reaction in one neuron can spread to hundreds of thousands of others in a span of less than 20 milliseconds. That's about 10 times less than it takes for your eye to blink, surpassing the ability of even the fastest computer, which can make connections only one at a time. A neuron takes a million times faster to send signal than a typical computer switch, yet the brain can recognize a familiar face in less than a second, beyond the speed of the most powerful computers.<sup>4</sup>

The brain achieves this speed because, unlike the step-by-step computer, its billions of neurons can attack a problem simultaneously. Wow! You are such a marvel to behold. You have such a remarkable power within you; why not utilize your brain effectively and watch how miraculous your life can become?

## SEE THE POSSIBILITIES

When John Maxwell was a kid, he would often walk with his grandfather around his grandfather's farm. During these times together, his grandfather would notice tremendous possibilities in things that looked worthless to the ordinary eye. In Maxwell's words, "He would see great potential in a rundown shed on a back lot; I would see kindling. He would show me a rusty, old tractor and see a machine with possibilities; I would see a piece of rust-covered junk."<sup>5</sup>

Off to the side of the pathways of life are people who have been crushed with the agony of failure; battered with shattered dreams and hopes; crippled with disgrace and shame; handicapped of their talent through misuse; deemed helpless by the seemingly adverse circumstances of life; bound with the chains of bad habits; tortured by unpalatable memories; entangled in the cobwebs of the past; languished in despair about the present; fearful about the future.

Despite how you may have been beaten down by life, you must understand that God never makes junk. The Creator made you for a purpose. He has invested untold treasures buried within you. And it is your responsibility to unearth those priceless treasures within and take your place as royalty in the domain of life.

So, get up, dust yourself off, stand tall, walk with confidence, hold your head up high, and maximize your life!

## CHANGING YOUR THOUGHTS CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

He experienced dire poverty and was frustrated by a lack of education. He saw his situation as hopeless, and a feeling of despair overwhelmed him. In that state of utter despondency, he planned to kill himself by jumping out of a hotel window. In his words, he confessed, "I tried to

drink enough courage from a whiskey bottle to jump out of the window. I drank so much that I forgot to jump.”<sup>6</sup>

After that event, he decided to take an introspective view of himself to determine the root cause of his problems. He said to himself: “Look here, stupid. Suppose you owned a factory that was intended to make ice cream and you found that it was not manufacturing ice cream, but carbolic acid—wouldn’t you do something about it? All right...you have a thought factory inside you. You own that factory. But are you managing it well? No, you are letting it run wild. Your thought factory is manufacturing junk—worry, fear, envy, self-pity, gloom, unhappiness, and poverty. Nobody wants junk like that.”<sup>7</sup>

He came to the realization that by changing his thoughts, he could change his life. After becoming aware of this truth, he still may not have won every battle but he eventually won the war. He produced the necessary changes in his life and was reputed to be one of the most successful insurance agents of his time and one of the highest paid salespeople in the world since the 1920’s. He also became the author of several best-selling books. His name was Vash Young.<sup>8</sup>

## WALK AWAY

Walk away from the shadows into the sunlight. Walk away from your past and embrace the future while maximizing the present. Walk away from defeat and fight to win. Walk away from failure and believe to succeed. Walk away from the poverty stricken mentality and grasp abundance. Walk away from gloom into bloom.

Walk away from bitterness into bliss. Walk away from hatred into love. Walk away from greed into generosity. Walk away from selfishness into selflessness. Walk away from mediocrity into excellence. Walk away from aimless living into purposeful living. Walk away from vice into virtue. Walk away from life’s dump pile into life’s heap of blessing.

## OVERCOMING LIMITATIONS

I came across a fascinating story about a man from the Netherlands who has the ability to withstand extreme cold. The amazing discovery is that he can warm his body temperature with only his thoughts. He was featured on television running a marathon wearing only a pair of shorts and in his bare feet in a temperature of 30 Celsius. After the race, the doctor recommended that his toes be amputated because they were frozen. Amazingly, the man simply willed his toes back to life with his mind.<sup>9</sup>

There are no limitations in the realm of the mind. The only limitations that exist in your mind are triggered by your self-limiting beliefs about life, about yourself, and about your world.

Men and women are not prisoners of fate, but prisoners of their own minds.<sup>10</sup>

-Franklin Roosevelt

Self-imposed limitations are based on self-limiting beliefs. Belief is being persuaded about something. It is the conviction you hold about yourself or your world. Self-limiting belief is a restricted view or perspective about who you are and what you are capable of doing; it confines not only your life but also your worldview into your “self-made “box.”

Beliefs set the boundaries of your life experience; thus, your life can never rise above the set of beliefs you choose to uphold. Self-limiting belief sets its premise on fear and self-doubt—two of the most dangerous and deadly enemies of success. Fear and doubt stab creativity; cripple the power of the imagination; incapacitate ability and potential and undermine your self-worth. Self-doubt places limits on your intelligence, capability, and confidence, while fear attracts the things you dread and handicaps your ability to take appropriate action and control your life.

However, within you lies unlimited capabilities yet to be explored, a mental prowess to be discovered, a self-awareness to be elevated, and desires to be heightened.

You can become the kind of person you want to become, accomplish amazing results, and lead an extraordinary life if you align your mind and thoughts to conform to universal laws and spiritual principles governing success.

These universal principles include: imagination; definiteness of purpose; self-confidence; the habit of saving; enthusiasm; self-control; the habit of going the extra mile; initiative and leadership; a pleasing personality; accurate thought; concentration; cooperation; tolerance; learning from defeat; and the Golden Rule.

These universal laws and principles are no respecter of background, age, race, gender, country of origin, or educational background. These principles will work for you if you put them to work in your life. The distinguishing factor between great men and mediocre men is in their choices and beliefs. You have an incredible wealth residing in your mind; you shouldn't be broke. Maximize your gifts and talents and be a blessing.

## THE CHOICE FACTOR

You are who you are, what you are, and where you are today because of the daily decisions you made yesterday. Moreover, the quality of your future hinges on the quality of your daily decisions you make today. Decision is the pivot of all actions and the cornerstone of all intentions.

From our waking moments to our night rest we make innumerable decisions. But although we are bombarded with choices every moment of our lives, there still remains a few decisions of which we have no control.

We cannot choose our background or who our parents are, but we can choose what we become in our lives. We cannot choose our physical attributes, but we can choose and shape

our personality. We cannot choose our nationality or race, but we can choose our sphere of influence. We have never been able to choose our temperament or our talents, but we can choose to develop them into a masterpiece. We cannot choose people's opinion of us, but we can choose the opinion we have of ourselves. Neither can we choose people's attitude towards us, but we can choose how we respond to them.

We could not choose our upbringing, but we can certainly choose our upshot. We cannot choose what the weather will be, but we can choose our feelings about the day. We may not be able to choose all our circumstances or conditions, but we can choose what we can do about them. We are able to choose our actions, but we are not free to choose the consequences of those actions. And all in all, our choices determine our chances in life.

Our life is the product of our choices. As already mentioned, our genetic composition or hereditary traits, our upbringing and childhood experiences, environmental influences, people and circumstances of life undoubtedly influence us; but these factors do not determine the outcome of our lives.

We are not a product of our condition or conditioning, but rather we are a product of our choices. Our life is determined by our choices. Within you lies the power to change your life. I believe that the greatest power our Creator has given to us is the power of choice. With the power of choice we can perform miracles in our lives and transform our lives into a habitation of glory and abundance.

Choose to love...rather than hate.

Choose to laugh...rather than cry.

Choose to create...rather than destroy.

Choose to persevere...rather than quit.

Choose to praise...rather than gossip.

Choose to heal...rather than wound.

Choose to give...rather than steal.

Choose to act...rather than procrastinate.

Choose to grow...rather than rot.

Choose to pray...rather than curse.

Choose to live...rather than die.<sup>11</sup>

-Og Mandino

Choices make or mar our destiny.

### VALUE DETERMINANT

Your value is not based on your net worth but is based on your intrinsic worth. You are valuable, not because people think highly of you, but because God thinks highly of you. You are valuable, not because you are loved by all, but because you are loved by God. Your value depreciates, not because people think lowly of you, but because you think lowly of yourself.

You are valuable, not because you are physically attractive, but because of your heart qualities. You are valuable, not because you are wealthy, but because you've helped others discover their own wealth. You are valuable, not because of your position in the ranks of life, but because of your disposition.

You are valuable, not because of your status, but because of your service to humanity. You are valuable, not because your name is in the Guinness Book of World Records, but because your name is engraved on the tablet of destiny. You are valuable, not because you can invent things but because you can reinvent your life and those of others.

Your value is not defined by your possessions but by what you contribute to life. You are valuable, not because of whom you know, but because of what you know. You are valuable, not because you are learned, but when you apply what you've learnt. You are valuable, not because



you are knowledgeable, but because you can dispense knowledge to others, relieving them of ignorance. You are valuable, not because you can conquer the world, but because you can conquer self. You are valuable, not because you are gifted, but by being a gift to others. You are valuable, not because you can build empires, but because you can build destinies. You are the greatest miracle God has ever made or will ever make!

Your value hinges on being valuable to others. Value is based on that which can stand the test of time; it is not fleeting but echoes through eternity. It never fades and never wanes. Your value can never be lost or taken away from you.

Kingdoms may rise and fall; kings may be enthroned and dethroned; circumstances of life may change for the better or worse; currencies may appreciate or depreciate; but your value will always remain intact, ever stable, and unchanged by outside forces. While ignorance can dampen the manifestation of your value, self-knowledge can maximize your value, enabling you to live beyond limits, influencing your world for good.

#### MAKING TODAY COUNT

“Terminal cancer,” the doctors said. My first reaction to this death sentence was disbelief. Such a thing could not happen to me, I told myself. The doctors had made a terrible mistake. But I knew they hadn’t. It was true; I was going to die before my time.

My next reaction was deep depression, a state that engulfed me for days. Thoughts of suicide even crossed my mind. And I dragged my wife and children down into a state of gloom with me. How could God have let this happen to me when everything was going well for me and my family? I was only 42 years old. I had a good job as a newspaper man and a bright future before me. We had a

nice home. All of us were active and busy, and we were good church going Christians. Why me?

I would still be plunged in this kind of despair if I had not finally seen the light, accepted the Lord's way and taken positive action not only to help myself but to also help others whose path is taking them into the valley of death before their time.

My inner reaction was fear. Living with cancer was a frightening experience, not only for me as a victim but for my family, relatives and friends. My wife, Wanda, and I had not discussed openly because I did not want to worry her, and she had remained silent out of fear that she would upset me. People stopped dropping in to see us because it was too depressing for them.

I began to understand that it was the prospect of death that frightened me, not the thought of having cancer. That is when depression took hold of my life. Wanda was under a physician's care for a severe case of nerves. The situation reached its low point as we were driving home one day from Iowa City after a session of chemotherapy. It was a beautiful fall day, but as I glanced toward my wife, I saw a look of complete dejection on her face. We drove silently across the prairie.

Finally, I decided something had to be done and fast, to help Wanda accept my fate. It was then I found myself looking again to God for guidance. I asked for His help. Then I turned to Wanda. "Let's talk about it," I said. I'm going to die from cancer unless something else kills me, but I'm not dead yet. So let's start enjoying life again." I told her that we should explain the situation to the children since they already knew something was wrong, and that we should face my

terminal illness as a family in a positive way. We went home and told the children. It wasn't easy, but I did tell them.

There are those who might wonder about this approach to death. I felt I had nothing to lose and everything to gain by trying the simple thought of making each day count. After all, none of us really know when we are going to die. We are all "terminal" in a sense.

Family life gradually returned to normal; not perfect but normal. All of us realized that things would never be completely all right again, but we learned that it is possible to live with cancer instead of just giving up. My new philosophy could be summed up simply: "Each day I will accept not as another day of my life. I accept each day as a gift from God to be appreciated, enjoyed and lived to its fullest."

This new attitude gave me a renewed interest in life, and I began writing again. I started by doing an article for our local newspaper in which I advocated the formation of an organization of terminally ill patients who could meet informally to help one another cope with their problems in a positive way.

The telephone began ringing as soon as the article appeared. People called to tell me that they had gone through the same emotional crisis I had faced. So many called that I invited them to what became the first meeting of the organization we called "Make Today Count." Eighteen attended, among them cancer victims, relatives of terminal patients, ministers, nurses and nursing students. I made it clear that no one was to cry on anyone's shoulder or try to gain sympathy for his suffering. We were there to seek positive ways to make the rest of our lives meaningful.

Nearly 50 attended our third meeting. Make Today Count was described in news-agency feature articles and on radio and television. This brought letters pouring in from people who wanted to start chapters in their home towns. Some who wrote were not physically ill, just depressed; they saw in Make Toady Count the possibility of improving their lives. Chapters have been established in many states and abroad.

Meetings are informal, unstructured, and there are no chapter officers. Just bringing people together to talk and share their problems over coffee can accomplish a great deal. Through our conversations we are learning to accept the idea that death is a part of life.

During the period when I was severely depressed, I was being treated efficiently and with kindness and sympathy by the physicians who had pronounced the death sentence. Ministers discussed life after death, but no one seemed to mention living for today.

I'll have to admit that though I may be helping others through Make Today Count, I am also helping myself. I have stopped measuring time in months and years. Seconds are the framework in which I operate. The traces of a smile on my wife's face the laughter on my children, a flash of sunlight. They are of the moment and of a lifetime.

Of course my wife and I dreamed of growing old together, but we have learned that life is fragile and unpredictable for everyone. Of course I didn't want to have cancer, but I didn't have any choice. So I say to myself, "what do I lose by trying to be happy?"

Some people have achieved immortality through their acts of heroism or nobility. Since I am neither especially talented nor heroic, facing death has been especially difficult. The fear and uncertainty that confronted me when I learned I had terminal cancer were worse than the idea of death itself.

Looking back to those first days of shock, I know now that my family and I grieved about a death that had not yet occurred. But by discussing death and being open about cancer and its problems, I have found myself more concerned with life than with death.

In other words, until we realize that death is a part of life, I don't think we can truly enjoy life. Because I feel that way when a man recently said to me, "We have something in common, we are both dying of cancer," I was able to reply, "No we have in common the fact that we are both still alive."

The other day a little girl at school remarked to my nine year old daughter, "I saw your daddy on TV and he is dying of cancer, isn't he?" "Yes," my daughter replied, "but he is not dead yet!" Not by a long shot. Today is where I am and today I am alive. I am not especially concerned about yesterday or tomorrow, I am concerned about today...right now! I am trying to make time count.

Looking back, I find it difficult to believe today that I am the same person who blamed God for my cancer and who doubted His existence. Perhaps, in my case, death made me aware of life.

One night when I found it difficult to sleep, I wrote a prayer. It goes like this:  
Our heavenly Father...

Give me the strength to face each night before the dawn.

Give me the courage to watch my children at play,  
And my wife at my side,  
Without a trace of sorrow in my smile;  
Let me count each passing moment,  
As I once marked the fleeting days and nights,  
And give me hope for each tomorrow.  
Let my dreams be dreams of the future.  
But when life on earth is over,  
Let there be no sadness,  
But only joy, for the golden days I've had.  
Amen.<sup>12</sup>

-Orville Kelly, *Creative Help for Daily Living*

We all can transform our misery into a mission. We can turn our mess into a message. You may be having a mountaintop experience, or you may be experiencing life's deepest lows; but always keep in mind that every passing day or moment is a countdown to your departure on earth.

What are you going to do with the life you have left? Yesterday is past and buried, tomorrow is still in the womb. What you've got is today. Therefore, get up, clean up, look up, move up, and maximize your inestimable worth. Make today count!

## *Chapter Seven*

### **Let It Go!**

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered; forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true friends; succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; do good anyway.

Give the world your best anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God; it was never between you and them anyway.<sup>1</sup>

-Mother Teresa

In the course of destiny, the great souls are the ones who discard the hurts and the pains of the past and present through forgiveness, and transform their misery into a sense of mission to soothe the souls of others.

By default, life may not always be fair. But we can take life on, and make out of life what we designed it to be. In the long term, we can look back on life and say, “Wow! Life’s mysterious hands were actually fair to me.”

Remember, life will hand over to you what you demand of it and not what you deserve. When life’s blow hits hard on you, the foremost thing you can wisely do is to forgive; let go of the resentment, hurt, and anger that wells up inwardly.

*John Maxwell says, “The two signs of greatness are giving and forgiving.”<sup>2</sup>*

*Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door to harmony in our lives and in our relationships; and giving is the master key to the world of abundance.*

He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself.<sup>3</sup>

-George Herbert

In life, people are our greatest asset when we nurture healthy and quality relationships. On the other hand, they can also be our greatest pain or liability if we permit them. If you’ve been a victim of one abusive relationship after another, or if people do not treat you with respect, you may need to look inward. Do you love and treat yourself with respect? Do you feel good about yourself? What opinions or thoughts do you hold about you?

You attract people, circumstances, and events that are on the same frequency with your thoughts and feelings. Positive thoughts and feelings will magnetize positive people, circumstances and events into your life.



Emotionally devastating experiences in life are due mostly to wrong relationships. You may have been betrayed; physically, emotionally, or sexually abused; cheated and undermined by others. Maybe someone has taken advantage of your kindness and rewarded you evil for the good you rendered to him or her. Even one or both of your parents may not have treated you fairly. You might have deep emotional scars that have bred hatred, bitterness, and resentment. This emotional cankerworm can destroy your future, if you continue to harbor these negative feelings in your mind. **Holding onto offenses is holding onto your history and forfeiting your destiny.**

Though your circumstances may not always be easy, vengeance is the most powerless thing to do. People who possess real power have the capacity to forgive irrespective of the hurt they may feel. The Chinese proverb reveals, “He who seeks revenge digs two graves.”<sup>4</sup> The desire to get even for a fancied wrong is a boomerang that inflicts more pain and catastrophe to the giver. Gandhi said, “The adage an eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind.”<sup>5</sup>

One day, Booker T. Washington was elbowed into the gutter by a passing pedestrian. Washington had a choice to either respond with forgiveness or with retaliation. He chose the pathway of love and forgiveness. A bewildered companion asked how he could tolerate such an insult. Booker Washington replied with wisdom, “I defy any man to make me hate.”<sup>6</sup>

**The thoughts and feelings we project toward others reflect back to us.** If our mind is filled with anger, resentment, and bitterness, these same feelings will produce fruits that will reflect back into our destinies.

Whenever anyone has offended me, I try to raise my soul so high that the offense cannot reach it.<sup>7</sup>

-Rene Descartes

Therefore, let go of hatred, bitterness, criticism, and every emotional baggage that will weigh you down and prevent you from completing a successful journey to your destiny.

Somebody must have religion enough and morality enough to cut hate off and inject within the very structure of the universe that strong and powerful element of love.<sup>8</sup>

The strong person is the person who can cut off the chain of hate, the chain of evil.<sup>9</sup>

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

#### FORGIVENESS IN ADVANCE

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.<sup>10</sup>

-Mahatma Gandhi

Nick Vujicic shared a story about a pastor he had met while in the Ukraine. This pastor had moved his family to Russia to start a church in an area plagued by violence. As word about the pastor's plans spread around town, gangsters issued threats toward him and his five sons, so the pastor prayed. "God told me that I would pay a steep cost for planting my church there, but that something amazing would result too," he said.

The pastor established the church in spite of the threats. Then, just a week after the pastor opened the doors, one of his sons was murdered on the street. The grieving pastor prayed again asking for God's direction. God told him to stay with his church.

Three months after his son's death, the pastor himself was stopped on the street by a scary-looking guy who said, "Would you like to meet the person who killed your son?" "No," said the pastor. "What if he asked your forgiveness?" "I've already forgiven him," the pastor replied. "I shot your son," the man said, breaking down. "And I want to join your church." In the weeks

that followed, there were so many other members of the Russian mob who joined the pastor's church that crime virtually disappeared in the area.

Until you let go, you cannot "let come" the blessing of a rewarding life.

#### THE CHILDHOOD DILEMMA

All children are born geniuses; 9,999 out of every 10,000 are swiftly, inadvertently degeniusized by grownups.<sup>11</sup>

-Buckminster Fuller

Life presents to us myriads of choices every passing day. And the life we experience today is largely the outcome of daily decisions we made in the past. However, at the beginning of our life, during our childhood years, we were shaped by other people's choices.

We as individuals did not get to choose our family, parents, gender, ethnicity, or nationality. Nor did we determine our upbringing, training, teachings, and the emotions and experiences that we were exposed to during infancy and our childhood years. But no doubt all of these attitudes and experiences have gone a long way to shape our beliefs, values, and character, either positively or negatively, depending on how we have interpreted and responded to events of the past.

Research has shown that 60 to 65 percent of a child's working vocabulary is acquired by the age of three; 80 percent of a child's character is formed by age five, and 90 percent of a child's personality is formed by age seven.<sup>12</sup>

But whether or not the teachings, thoughts, feelings, and emotions that we were exposed to in our childhood years were negative or positive, it remains our responsibility to transform these experiences into a masterpiece of an impacting mission, thereby creating a significant future.

## A “WORTHLESS” CHILD

Life is an unending story that overflows with wisdom for those people who desire to draw from its treasures. I present to you a story of one of the greatest heroes of faith that Africa has ever known who has also left his thumbprint on the document of destiny.

Every child conceived and birthed into the world is meant to bring happiness to both parents as they nurture and shower affection on the child. However, this wasn't the case of a baby who was delivered into a family in Benin, Nigeria, in 1938. Due to the baby's sickly and fainting nature, his stern, hard-hearted father told his mother to dump him on a garbage heap and leave him there to die.

The mother pleaded and wept to her husband for their son's life to be spared. But her pleading and tears infuriated him and hardened his heart all the more. Eventually, his wife, out of weariness and frustration, took the baby and literally dumped him on the garbage heap at night. Even so, the bowels of the woman yearned desperately for her son.

After about three hours, there was a downpour of rain, the mother could take it no longer and rushed out of her home to snatch up her child from the piles of garbage. When she arrived at the scene, she was very excited to find that her son was yet alive, although soaked with water and passionately wailing; and she returned quickly to her home.

In her word's, she proclaimed, “Oh, son, I'll never throw you away again, no matter what my husband tells me....My son, my son. I'm so glad you're alive! But what will I say to your father? He will be angry when he learns I didn't leave you on the rubbish heap to die. Perhaps he will send me away as he threatened. He hates you because you are not strong like the other children....”

She fed her child but shook with fright as she thought about her husband's reaction when he would arrive home. Later that day, upon seeing the child, there was the expected outburst of anger. "Just as I thought!" her husband shouted. "You've brought that worthless baby back from the rubbish heap—that's the crying I heard in the night!" With tears running down the wife's cheeks, she responded, "He is going to live! How can you throw away your own son?"

But her husband's mind was made up, and he said, "I am going away for a few days to visit my timber stations, and when I come back, I better not find this baby in the house."

The wife, sensing the note of finality in her husband's words, left with the child to go to her grandparents' home. She said to herself, "I know I'm doing the right thing, but it won't be easy to ask my family to take me and the child into their household; they have so many mouths to feed already. But I'll help with farming—I'll sell produce in the market—whatever I have to do to provide for my son. I don't know what it is, but this son seems special somehow—he is different from others."

The years went by, and the child grew stronger. The wife and her husband reconciled, but the father's hatred and rejection of his son remained. At the age of 11, the boy was sent by his father to live with an uncle in order to learn farming, while his siblings attended school. At his uncle's house, the boy was treated as a slave.

Even though the boy worked tirelessly, his efforts were never appreciated. His childhood and adolescence were filled with rejection, torture, and poverty. He did not wear his first pair of shoes until the age of eighteen when he bought them with his hard-earned money. But despite the ill treatment that engulfed him daily, he never became bitter, upset, or resentful. Instead, he grew up caring for his father and showering him with gifts.

This young man captured his future by taking full responsibility for his life. He never played the blame game. Instead, his statements and thoughts reflected a positive attitude. "If Uncle

Joseph won't let me go to school, I'll have to find some other way to learn. But I'm determined not to be a farmer for the rest of my days—there's got to be more to life than picking beans or harvesting yams." With grit and tenacity he designed his destiny.

The "worthless child," as pronounced by his biological father, grew to become a great asset to his generation. But this would never have happened if he hadn't let go of the memories of the hurtful past and approached the future with forgiveness and unconditional love.

The name of this man was Archbishop Benson Idahosa. Through his evangelistic ministry, he appeared before hundreds of thousands in the nations around the world. He was the first black African evangelist to shake Australia in a massive crusade that received national attention. In his lifetime, he virtually preached in all the continents of the world, with his television program "Idahosa World Outreach" impacting hundreds of thousands of lives. He also founded Christian Faith University and an international Bible school that attracted people from Maurice, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, England, Japan, Europe, the Middle East, and other nations of the world. In addition, he established Church of God Mission International. T.L. Osborn called him, "Africa's greatest ambassador of apostolic Christian faith to the world."<sup>13</sup>

Archbishop Benson Idahosa's life has been an amazing influence to millions of people; indeed, all his accomplishments cannot be cited in this book. But one thing is certain—he has left an enduring legacy and has helped to lighten the burdens of millions of people around the globe.

Unforgiveness is like going through life looking in the rearview mirror, dragging you backwards and impeding your growth and progress. **Offenses are inevitable part of life experience that visits all human relationships uninvited and you must resolve to choose to offer forgiveness even before offenses occurs.**

Dwelling on the memories of injustice or bad treatment and pain that you've suffered at the hands of others ensures that you continue to relive those experiences. This causes anger,

stress, unhappiness, anxiety, mental and physical illness, and guarantees a bleak future; whereas, forgiveness brings peace of mind, optimism, cheerfulness, and a high level of self-esteem and self-confidence, which leads you to maximize your potential and live out your dreams.

Some of the people in our lives that we must forgive are our parents. There are many people who have gone through bitter experiences, but instead of being proactive, they unfortunately became reactive. I believe our parents and our upbringing, which we did not choose, were necessary parts of our lives that were needed to shape who we were destined to be.

We are the product of our choices. We may not have chosen our past experiences, but we can choose our response to the events of the past and the present, and ultimately shape our future. We can choose who we are, what we are, and what we want to become. Above all, we can choose to love irrespective of other people's behavior towards us. By choosing to love, we choose how to really live and fulfill destiny.

#### WHAT ARE YOU ATTRACTING?

Whatever your thoughts and feelings, they will decide your life. **The content of your life will not change until the content of your mind changes.** When you love life and people, you attract all the good things in life to you. When you feel hate, envy, or negativity towards anyone or any circumstances, you attract negative people, events, and circumstances into your life.

When you feel excited about the success of others, you give out love and will attract success into your life. But if you feel envy, depressed, or bad feelings toward the success of others, you will attract negativity into the picture of your life. When you are judgmental or critical about others, you project negative feelings that will attract only negative experiences into your life.

A man who is master of himself can end a sorrow as he can invent a pleasure. I don't want to be at the mercy of my emotions. I want to use them, to enjoy them, and to dominate them.<sup>14</sup>

-Oscar Wilde

The key to manifesting an amazing life is to feel good about life and people and reject any bad feelings you may have about negative circumstances or qualities in people that are difficult to like. Gratitude opens the door to the world of love.

### THE POWER OF GRATITUDE

Treasures will be available to you if you are truly grateful and appreciate your life. Whenever you are thankful, you have turned to the frequency of love. And when you have found the frequency of love, good things will be attracted to you. You cannot be appreciative and exhibit bad feelings at the same time.

You need to keep a gratitude journal; be grateful for everything you have received in your life; be thankful for your current blessings no matter how small you may think they are; and be grateful for anticipated blessings in the future.

Are you feeling lonely, depressed, disappointed, discouraged, or rejected? No matter what messy situation you are in, you can change how you feel by concentrating on the many things to be grateful for. Get excited about being alive. Appreciate people, and you will be better for it. **On the platform of gratitude, miracles are wrought. On the bouquet of thankfulness, life multiplies its blessings.**

*Therefore, let go of the things in your background and childhood that you dislike or which still causes you pain. Let go of the things you hate about your life, and embrace the things you love.*



*Let go of the things that irritate you about people and circumstances; and focus on the things that are uplifting.*

Your past is in the tomb, your future is in the womb, and your present is here and now. Be grateful for today, and you will attract the tomorrow of your dreams.

#### THE KING IN YOUR KID

All that I am or hope to be,  
I owe to my angel mother.<sup>15</sup>  
-Abraham Lincoln

Diamonds are not attractive in their raw state. The brilliancy and beauty that is inherent remains dormant until there is friction caused by a stone grinding the diamond. It is then polished, and the hidden potential becomes glaring for all to see.

Kids are like diamonds in their raw state. At their infancy stage and through their childhood years, their greatness may not be apparent. Observers can see only the external framework of the child, such as their appearance and behavior. Observers cannot see beyond, to the inner core of the child's internal framework that embodies unopened birth gifts, potential, character, intelligence, and ability, which surpass physical beauty in all its ramifications.

Then there are people who are not just observers, but who are also investors. These people can see and appreciate the depths of ability, potential, intelligence, and goodness that are inherent in the child. They look beyond the performance of the child to the inner core from which the performance emanates. They understand that they must make an adequate investment in the child by applying friction (discipline and love) to the mind of the child and polish it with appreciation and encouragement so that its beauty can shine.

Investors will use love, wisdom, and skill to make the necessary investment for the child to develop and lead a worthwhile life that is superior in quality and superabundant in quantity. Whereas, people who are simply observers neglect to use competence, wisdom, and love to invest in the life of the child; consequently, they treat the child according to how they see them; and how they see and treat the child is what the child often becomes.

It's surprising to realize that some parents choose to be only an observer in the lives of their children rather than an investor. While they may desperately want their child to change for the better, their consistent words, actions, as well as inactions toward the child perpetuate and heighten the weaknesses of the child which they seek to change.

As Mahatma Gandhi rightly stated, "We must become the change we seek in the world."<sup>16</sup> Parents must begin to seek changes in themselves before they can influence their children to change. They must move from the backside of being an observer to the front line of becoming an investor in the lives of their children.

One of the major investments a parent can make to his or her child is through the use of right words, birthed from the right perception of the child, out of a good understanding and love, wrapped up in a sincere and pure motive, in order to enhance the value and dignity of the child to become what he or she was created to become.

The use of universals (an exaggerated series of statements), describing people, especially youngsters, can be devastating. Words like "all, every, never" are examples of universals. Universals are appropriate when they convey facts or are true in all cases, but when they are misused, their effects can be devastating. For instance, a child does something wrong and the parent says, "You will *never* amount to anything." This statement can slaughter the competence of the child and suffocate his drive for success in life. The statement itself is very untrue.

Even if a child has done something wrong, that doesn't mean that he can't be a better or worthwhile person. Other examples are: "You are *always* naughty; you *never* do anything right; *all* you know is to play; you are a *bad* child." The list is endless. Remember there is an immense difference between a "bad" person and someone who does something bad.

Napoleon Hill, the author of the famous best-seller, "Think and Grow Rich," narrated his childhood experience, which is most enlightening.

"When I was a youngster, I was considered to be a hellion. Whenever a cow was let loose from her pasture, or a dam broken or a tree cut down mysteriously, it was young Napoleon Hill that everyone suspected.

Furthermore, there was some justification for all of this suspicion. My own mother was dead, and my father and brothers thought that I was bad, so I really was pretty bad. If people considered me this way I was not going to disappoint them. Then one day, my father announced that he was going to remarry. All of us were worried about what kind of a new "mother" we were going to have, but I in particular was bound and determined that no new mother coming into our home would be able to find a place in my heart. The day finally came when this strange woman entered our home. My father stood back and let her handle the situation in her own way.

She went around the room and greeted each of us cheerfully—that is until she came to me. I stood straight as a ramrod, with my hands folded over my chest and glared at her without the least suggestion of welcome in my eyes. "And this is Napoleon," my father said, "the worst boy in the hills." And With that I'll never forget what my step mother did. She put both hands on my shoulders and looked me straight in the eye with a twinkle in her eyes that I shall hold dear forever. "The worst boy?" she said, "Not at all. He's just the brightest boy in

these hills, and all we have to do is to bring that out of him.” My step mother was always the one who encouraged me to strike out on my own with such bold schemes as later proved the backbone of my career. I will never forget the great lesson she taught me, in how to motivate others by giving them confidence in themselves. For my step mother was the making of me. Her deep love and unshakeable faith motivated me to try to become the kind of a boy she believed me to be.”<sup>17</sup>

Bishop T.D. Jakes defines parenting as “unraveling the king in the kid.”<sup>18</sup> But not everyone sees the gold mine in their kids as well as in other people. Napoleon Hill’s stepmother unraveled the “king” in him; and the once “bad” boy turned out to be a positive influence in the world, leaving his footprint on the sands of time.

#### THE ABSENCE OF ROLE MODELS

Son, your children more attention pay, to what you do than what you say, and if you set the example you will not have to set the rules.<sup>19</sup>

-Zig Ziglar’s Mother

The span of a child’s formative years is the most vulnerable and delicate stage of his or her life. Children largely inculcate the attitude and character displayed by their parents. If their parents have showered them with unconditional love, as they grow into adulthood, they will naturally be givers of unconditional love to others. But if they have been exposed to hatred, bitterness, disrespect, and abuse, they probably will be unable to give out unconditional love as adults. Furthermore, they will bring with them baggage into their marriage and other levels of relationship that will jeopardize their relationship with others.

There exist societal issues whereby the older generation often looks upon the younger generation with an accusation that they are immoral and irresponsible.

However, I want to pose a question: whose kids are they? Remember, the offspring is a replica of its roots. If irresponsible and immoral adults or parents produce irresponsible and immoral kids, why lay all the blame on the kids?

I once lived next to a neighbor who violently beat up his wife and literally stripped her naked in front of their kids. No one can fathom the negative impact the scene had on the children's subconscious minds as they grew into adulthood especially, if they kids did not reprogram their subconscious minds in order to live a better life.

Adults break the traffic laws yet expect their children not to break the laws of the land or the laws of life. Adults smoke, drink liquor, engage in illegalities, and are unfaithful to their spouses; but they expect their children not to be drug addicts, alcohol addicts, dubious, or promiscuous. Parents backbite in front of their children, they lie and harbor grudges; yet they expect their children to have great minds. This is an illusion. We cannot reap what we have not sown.

Drinking parlors, media that televises or publishes obscenities, and brothels—all of these types of establishments are owned by adults, not teenagers or youngsters. Many men who patronize prostitutes are husbands and fathers.

If we want to put a stop to youth restiveness, the older generation must be accountable for their actions and inactions, and lead an exemplary life of nobility. In doing so, the older generation will become a positive influence, shaping the lives and destinies of the younger generation.

## WHAT'S DRIVING YOUR LIFE?

Life is not worth living unless it is lived for others.<sup>20</sup>

-Mother Teresa

Life is a driving force that is constantly in motion. Two questions can be posed: Are you headed in the right direction? And what is driving your life?

When you are on a journey, three things can happen: you can be headed in the right direction to your destination; you can be going in the wrong direction but expecting to arrive at the right destination; or you can be on a journey to nowhere. And for the most part, the direction in which you are headed is determined by what is driving your life.

**What drives your life controls, guides, and directs your journey through destiny.**

*In our journey through life, wisdom is the vehicle that transports us to our destination (destiny). In order to travel the highway of success, the vehicle of wisdom is indispensable as long as we live. And what drives or controls your life will be the catalytic factor that determines the functionality of the vehicle of wisdom.*

Just as there are diverse people with distinctive individualities, so there are diverse factors that drive the life of each individual according to his or her life experiences and how they interpret and respond to these experiences.

Many people are driven by resentment, hatred, anger, guilt, criticism, materialism, and the like. These vices constitute a major force that impedes growth and progress in our individual lives, families, communities, nations, and the world at large. These vices wipe out happiness and fulfillment, and wreck the vehicle of wisdom needed to transport us through success. **For those who are driven by guilt, it is vital to forgive yourself of any hurt you have caused others.** You

may need to apologize to the person who you have hurt and make amends. You can't afford to live with the feeling of guilt; it's an unbearable burden to carry.

### THE TRAGEDY OF A HATER

A hater is someone who is jealous and envious and spends all their time trying to make you look small so they can look tall.

They are very negative people to say the least. Nothing is ever good enough!

When you make a mark, you always attract some haters...

That's why you have to be careful with whom you share your blessings and your dreams, because some folk can't handle seeing you blessed...

If God wanted you to be like somebody else, he would have given you what he gave them! Right?

You never know what people have gone through to get what they have...

The problem I have with haters is that they see my glory, but they don't know my story...

If the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence, you can be rest assured that the water bill is higher there too!

We've all got some haters among us!

Some people envy you because you can;

- (a) Have a relationship with God
- (b) Light up a room when you walk in
- (c) Start your own business
- (d) Tell a man/woman to hit the curb (if he/she isn't about the right thing)
- (e) Raise your children without both parents being in the home.

Haters will never want to see you succeed.

Most of our haters are people who are supposed to be on our side.

How do you handle your undercover haters?

You can handle these haters by:

- (1) Knowing who you are and who your friends are (very important).
- (2) Having a purpose for your life: purpose does not mean having a job. You can have a job and still be unfulfilled. A purpose is having a clear sense of what God has called you to be. Your purpose is not defined by what others think about you.
- (3) By remembering what you have is by divine prerogative and not human manipulation.

Fulfill your dreams! You only have one life to live...

When it's your time to leave this earth, you want to be able to say I've lived my life and fulfilled "my" dreams...

Now I'm ready to go HOME!

WHEN God gives you favor, you can tell your haters, "Don't look at me...look at who is in charge of me...."<sup>21</sup>

-Maya Angelou

Becoming a hater is the most base and vilest life to live. It cheapens the soul and drains happiness, fulfillment, and true success out of life.

We usually think of what hate does for the individual hated or the individuals hated. But it is even more tragic, it is even more ruinous and injurious to the individual who hates. You just begin hating somebody, and you will begin to do irrational things. You can't see straight when you hate. You can't walk straight when you hate. You can't stand upright. Your vision is distorted. There is nothing more tragic than to see an individual whose heart is filled with hate. He comes to the point that he becomes a pathological case. For the person who hates, you can stand up and see a person and that person can be beautiful, and you will call them ugly. For the person who hates, the beautiful becomes ugly and the ugly becomes beautiful. For the person who hates, the good becomes bad and the bad becomes good. For the person who hates, the true becomes false and the



false becomes true. That's what hate does. You can't see right. The symbol of objectivity is lost. Hate destroys the very structure of the personality of the hater. And this is why Jesus says hate (does damage to the self).... The way to be integrated with yourself is be sure that you meet every situation of life with an abounding love.<sup>22</sup>

-Martin Luther King Jr.

### THE FORTUNE OF A LOVER

Love should be the wheel behind our lives. It's the most effective force that rejuvenates the vehicle of wisdom to function at its peak as it transports us through success to our destinies. **Love is the realm where superior souls dwell.** Love is the most vital part of life; although it has received little attention.

*Life is a great university that includes diverse courses from which to learn. However, love is the major fundamental course that cuts across all other courses. Throughout our lives on earth, we will never be able to exhaust the syllabus of this most vital course—love in the University of Life.*

**Every experience, from the beginning of our days to the end of our lives, has a love lesson being communicated to us, if we open up our hearts to discern it.** Everyone that you have ever known or will ever know has something to teach you about growing in love. It doesn't matter if they have abused, mistreated, or taken undue advantage of you. In fact, the more you suffer from the unbearable attitudes of some people toward you, the more life unveils to you the mystery of love.

Throughout Mahatma Gandhi's life, he continued to learn how to grow in love. Even at the point of his assassination, the first words that came out of his mouth were "Oh my God," and then he immediately pronounced a blessing on his assassin. **We will never know the depth of love until we learn how to forgive endlessly.**

**The department of relationships is the most important of all in the great University of Life. And love within those relationships is the greatest virtue that you should earnestly covet. Building viable relationships should be our topmost priority in life, rather than pursuing after things at the expense of our relationships.**

*At the end of our days, our material wealth will be passed on to another, and we will soon be forgotten; but the love that we give out, will outlive us The more we understand the principle of letting go and give ourselves to the virtue of unconditional love, the greater our lives will be for eternity.*

## Chapter Eight

### The Golden Rule—A Pathway to Life

*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets (Matthew 7:12-The Bible).*

-Jesus Christ

The quality of life we experience and the quality of impact we make in the lives of others is fundamentally what we put into it; our life is a reflection of our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

With regard to our thoughts, feelings, and actions, there is one rule above all other rule that is the ultimate code of conduct for effective and impactful living—it is called The Golden Rule. It is the underlying principle behind every enduring and effective relationship. It is the ultimate alignment with truth and unconditional love; and the highest standard of ethical conduct unmasked by man. It's the crucible by which our destiny is shaped, and it determines our rewards in life or the penalty we incur. The Golden Rule is founded on the law of cause and effect—sowing and reaping.

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap (Galatians 6:17-The Bible).*

The Golden Rule is the platform on which you gain destiny mastery. **Your destiny can be predicted to the extent to which you imbibe this law or ignore it.** Moreover, The Golden Rule is universal and cuts across many religions and cultures:

Christianity: "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them".

Islam: "No one of you is a believer until he loves for his neighbor what he loves for himself."

Judaism: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man. This is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary."

Buddhism: "Hurt not others with that which pains yourself."

Hinduism: "This is the sum of duty; do naught unto others what you would not have them do unto you"

Zoroastrianism: "Whatever is disagreeable to yourself, do not do unto others."

Confucianism: "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do unto others."

Bahai: "And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbor that which thou choosest for thyself."

Jainism: "A man should wander about treating all creatures as he himself would be treated."<sup>1</sup>

#### A LITTLE HELP

On an extremely cold day in northern Virginia, there stood an old man on a river bank. He wanted to get across to the other side, but there was an obstacle—there were no bridges. So he would need help from a horse rider passing by. When he eventually saw a group of horsemen approaching, he refrained from asking help from the first five riders. Finally, when the sixth and last rider approached, the old man looked him in the eye and said, "Sir, would you give me a ride across the river?"

The rider immediately responded, "Why certainly, get aboard." When the old man highlighted, the rider said, "Sir, I could not help but notice that you permitted all the other riders to pass without asking for a ride. Then when I drew abreast, you immediately asked me for a ride. I'm curious as to why you didn't ask them and why you did ask me." The old man replied, "I looked into their eyes and could see no love and knew in my own heart it would be useless to ask for a ride. But when I looked into your eyes, I saw compassion, love, and the willingness to help. I knew you would be glad to give me the ride across the river."

The rider quietly said, “You know, I’m very grateful for what you are saying. I appreciate it very much.” After the old man dismounted, the rider turned and rode on to the White House. His name was Thomas Jefferson.

Are you quick to give a helping hand? Do you put yourself in the position of others when dealing with people? Do you treat others the way you want to be treated? Is your heart filled with compassion and consideration for others, or is your heart filled with ego and selfishness?

As has been mentioned, our lives are a result of our thoughts and deeds; and if our thoughts and behavior towards other people are lowly and evil, what is lowly and evil will be replicated in our lives. Conversely, anyone who understands and walks in The Golden Rule philosophy will gain freedom from the slavery and lowliness of dishonesty, selfishness, greed, envy, hatred, and malice.

What you feel about another person, what you think or say about another person, what you do to another person—you do to you. Give judgment and criticism and you give it to yourself. Give love and appreciation to another person or anything, and you give it to yourself.<sup>2</sup>

-Rhonda Byrne

#### THE GOLDEN RULE APPLIED

The Golden Rule implies that you should be quick to forgive others, irrespective of whether they deserve it or not. This purifies your heart from your own errors and polishes your own character.

Being honest with people, even in minute matters, will build in you a solid character that is void of deceit.

Embracing the principle of justice, generosity, and fairness consistently in your dealings with others will place you in the domain of kings, bringing out the nobility in you.

You should talk ill of no one but rather good about everyone. And if you have nothing good to say about someone, it is better to keep quiet. Instead of finding faults in others, you should examine yourself and correct your own faults. This personal inspection strengthens your character and your relationship with others.

Your thought pattern should always be positive, pure, and constructive towards other people; you should understand that you attract to your destiny the nature and tenor of your most dominating thoughts.

Your ability to conquer hatred, envy, selfishness, jealousy, malice, pessimism, doubt, and fear will create for you a peaceful and triumphant life.

Make it a habit to spread sunshine and flowers wherever you go; lift up and help people, being gracious even at the slightest opportunity.

*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things (Philippians 4:8-The Bible).*

**The Golden Rule is an upgraded version of maximized living. By following its standard, you value people for who they are and not for what they can do; you appreciate, respect, and understand people, even as you want to be appreciated, respected, and understood.**

I believe that if just this one rule—The Golden Rule—was to be practiced in our organizations, institutions, homes, and businesses—in the society at large, we would become more effective in our lives and most, if not all the troubles in our society would be removed.

## Chapter Nine

### Activating Your Influence

In an ever-growing and technology-saturated society, driven by an astounding assimilation and dissemination speed, the world is encompassed with challenges that grow more complicated by the day. But while the world itself may be a complex one, the difficult challenges can be solved with a simplistic (although in-depth) approach.

Likewise, in our individual lives we are bombarded with any number of issues that emanate from our discrepancies within and without our lives. These human challenges require a simple but heightened understanding of their nature and our role as the captain of our destinies and a sense of our unique purpose.

Most of our human challenges arise out of our beliefs, values, philosophies, ideologies, and perceptions that have been distorted or weakened by an inordinate desire that is self-driven rather than purpose-driven. And the underlying result is a shallow existence that is wrapped up in an inward and outward upheaval that extracts the joy of life, leaving it depleted. To change this direction and move towards finding your purpose, you first must *forget yourself*.

#### FORGET YOURSELF

If you are wise, you will forget yourself into greatness. Forget your rights, but remember your responsibilities.

Forget your inconveniences, but remember your blessings.

Forget your own accomplishments, but remember your debt to others.

Forget your privileges, but remember your obligations.

Follow the examples of Florence Nightingale, Abraham Lincoln and forget yourself into greatness.



If you are wise, you will empty yourself into adventure.

Remember the words of General Douglas MacArthur: There is no security on this earth. There is only opportunity.

Empty your days of search for security; fill them with a passion for service.

Empty your hours of the ambition for recognition, fill them with the aspiration for achievement.

Empty your moments of need for entertainment; fill them with the quest for creativity.

If you are wise, you will lose yourself into immortality.

Lose your cynicism, lose your doubts.

Lose your fears. Lose anxiety. Lose your unbelief.

Remember these truths: A son must soon forget himself to be long remembered.

He must empty himself in order to discover a fuller self.

He must lose himself to find himself.

Forget yourself into greatness.

Empty yourself into adventure.

Lose yourself into immortality.<sup>1</sup>

-William Arthur Word

## EVERYONE HAS A PURPOSE

At the fundamental base of all human challenges lies the mind-boggling, age-long question, asking, "Why am I here?" Every human being has an inward and compulsive desire to live a life of significance. The rich and poor alike, the king and the peasant both are part of this grappling search. Moreover, wealth, position, power, and fame are desperately pursued by man in his search for a sense of importance on earth, even though many times, this search infringes on the welfare of others.

Throughout the pages of history, man's existence has remained a puzzle to many and a mystery which is matched with the corresponding challenges that confront humans every day, as civilization faces an upward toll. This heart-searching craving for significance is buried in purpose and the reason for man's existence.

Everything in life was created for a purpose. From the sun, moon, stars, and the rain to all the living creatures that exist, everything in and on planet Earth has been created for a special purpose to solve a specific problem.

Before a manufacturer begins the actual process of making a product, he conceives the purpose or the "why" of the product in his mind. For instance, before the Wright brothers began the production of the airplane, they had to decide the purpose of the product which was intended to solve a transportation problem.

Subsequently, the Wright brothers assembled the materials or the parts of the product that would be necessary to fulfill its intended purpose. They built into the product, the design, ability, and capability needed for it to fly. When they were finished, they were convinced that the product would fly; or in other words, they placed a demand on the product to fly, because they knew how much they had invested in the product in order for it to achieve its intended purpose.

Similarly, we are the customized product of the greatest Manufacturer (God) the world has ever known. Before we were conceived in our mother's womb, God had already conceived us in His mind. Before He formed you in your mother's womb, God had already earmarked the details and purpose of your life.

Since your conception, He had built into you the design, ability, gifts, and personality needed for you to fulfill your predestined purpose. When you were birthed into the world, God placed

on you the demand to accomplish His intended purpose for your life. Each of us was designed by God to solve a specific human problem on the earth, each of us utilizing our unique purpose to serve each other.

We are not mere biological creatures, but we are the creatures of destiny, designed to serve each other with the gift of our purpose. And in order to actualize our purpose and maximize our potential, we must be in a relationship with God. He alone possesses the blueprint of our lives. We, as the product, do not decide our purpose, but rather discover it. The Manufacturer is the only One who possesses the sole knowledge and understanding of the potential and purpose of us, the product.

The success of a product depends or is determined by the fulfillment of the purpose for which it was made. And when the product fulfills its purpose, the product, in turn, also experiences fulfillment. Fulfillment in life comes from living out your purpose.

Who am I? Why am I here? Where did I come from? What was I born to do? What can I do? Where do I fit? Why am I different? Where am I going? These questions are age-old questions that humans desperately seek to answer. The answers are buried in the discovery of purpose.

## DEFINING PURPOSE

Purpose is becoming who you were born to be; doing what you were created to do; having what you were created to have within a specific timeframe—that if well understood and harnessed could influence your generation and the generations yet unborn. Purpose is discovering the specific problem that you were created to solve on the earth. Purpose is maximizing your time, energy, finances, and attention (focus) to impact positively on the lives of the people who have been assigned to you.

You must realize that somebody desperately needs you. You are the answer or solution to somebody's problem.

## THE DISSECTION OF PURPOSE

You are not successful if everyone says you are. You are not successful if you have done what others expected you to do. You are not successful if you receive commendation and recognition from your peers or the accolades of the masses. You are truly successful only if you have done what you were purposed to do.<sup>2</sup>

-Myles Munroe

In the anatomy of human nature, the soul's greatest craving is living a meaningful life. A meaningful life is wrapped up in a life of purpose.

*Life is defined by purpose. Without purpose, life remains a horror that cannot be evaded. Without purpose life remains a mystery that cannot be unraveled. Without purpose life remains a puzzle that cannot be solved. It is purpose that gives life direction and precision. A life that is in tune with purpose knows ease. Purpose defines the use of your life, time, energy, and finances. It determines your association and shapes your perception and beliefs.*

**The discovery and pursuit of your life's purpose is the hallmark of enduring success, and the pivot of accomplishment. In the pursuit of purpose, your provision lies and your legacy is birthed.**

Each of us has been equipped with a unique purpose, just as each of us has a unique fingerprint and DNA. From the inception of time, there has never been anyone else exactly like you. And in all the infinity of time to come, there will never be another like you. Your destiny is different

from everyone else. So quit comparing yourself with others and do not conform your life to the expectations of others.

Your abilities, personality, and experiences have been designed to fit into your peculiar purpose. Your timing and seasons in life are also different from those of anyone else. And because you are distinct from every other person, your purpose, as well as the blueprint of accomplishing that purpose, is distinct. Therefore, living your life based on the script handed over to you by your parents, friends, or society only dampens the manifestation of the real you, and consequently, a fulfilled life remains elusive.

What was I born to be? What was I created to do? And what was I created to have? These are the questions that are continuously asked in the pursuit of purpose. Remember, the right answers can be obtained only from asking the right questions.

Each dissection of purpose is intertwined with another, and each cannot be addressed without the other. Let's explore these dissections.

### WHAT WAS I BORN TO BE?

Without a purpose, life is motion without meaning, activity without direction, and events without reason. Without a purpose, life is trivial, petty and pointless.<sup>3</sup>

-Rick Warren

In the school of success, "being" precedes and is fundamental to "doing" and "having." It's what you are that shapes what you do and what you have. And in the school of impact, it is what we are that will outlast and outlive us, and not necessarily what we do or have.

"Being" takes root in our thought life. What you are (character) is the summation of all your thoughts, which defines your nature.

All of our life's experiences, since the time of our childhood, are not accidental, but help us fulfill our destiny. Every challenge or circumstance we have encountered through each phase of life defines and molds our character, either positively or negatively. I've heard it said that a crisis does not develop character, it reveals it.

**How we interpret and respond to the events of our lives shapes what we are and determines if we will fulfill our life purpose or not. It is what we are that gives what we do and what we have an inestimable value.**

Our background, environment, and experiences in life do not directly shape what we are. Rather, it is the way we perceive, interpret, and respond to these that shape what we are and whether we fulfill our life's purpose or not.

*What we are is the fundamental core in activating our influence. The primary benefit of the pursuit of purpose is developing a highly prized character. Your primary assignment on earth is developing an intimate relationship with God, producing an impeccable lifestyle that empowers you to become a solution to your world.*

Let's consider Bamidele George who has dedicated her life to abandoned children and the poor. Bamidele George is an accountant by profession and a businesswoman who felt unloved during her childhood because her parents were obsessed with having a boy child. In addition, being raised in a polygamous home with its attendant issues, she faced feelings of insecurity that fostered low self-esteem. "I had feelings of rejection while growing up. It was so serious that there was a time I tried to hurt myself," she confessed.<sup>4</sup>

Her turning point came when she gave her life to Jesus Christ. Her life was touched and enveloped by the love of God, and her purpose was birthed. She discovered that she was

created to help the underprivileged in society. Her passion to love, accept and help others feel loved soared as she shared the love of God that abounded in her heart.

Consequently, Little Saints Orphanage was established in Lagos, Nigeria, which is an extension of Strong Tower Mission. The objectives of Strong Tower Mission are: 1) To care for the underprivileged in society who are poor, destitute, widows, orphans, and abandoned children; and 2) To engage in charity work of all description and generally demonstrate the love of God to all, irrespective of race, color, or creed.<sup>5</sup>

Little Saints Orphanage is a home for abandoned, abused, and orphaned children, where Bamidele helps to remove the children's feelings of insecurity and helplessness by sharing God's love with them. Bamidele George has transformed her misery experiences to an impactful mission on earth.

**The significance of life is the learning and growth process that shapes what we are. And our greatest pursuit in life should be personal growth and character development.** Life presents to us myriads of experience, both ours and that of others. And it is our responsibility to grow through those experiences in order to become what we were created to be.

Each and every day of our life should be a learning experience that will further strengthen our character. Moreover, we should seek for ways and opportunities to consistently improve our character by learning from the experiences of others—what to do and what not to do. Ralph Waldo Emerson noted, “Every man I meet is in some way my superior, and I can learn of him.”<sup>6</sup>

Life's lessons can be taught through failure, lack of money, pain or sorrow, disappointment, your family, church, relationships, and even through your enemies, until you are clothed with perfection, the hallmark of purpose.

Along the way to becoming who you were born to be, it is inevitable that you will make mistakes and sometimes suffer the consequences. In response to this experience, Oprah Winfrey has counseled, “Turn your wounds into wisdom. Everyone makes mistakes. They are just God’s way of telling you you’re moving in the wrong direction.” <sup>7</sup>

### WHAT WAS I BORN TO DO?

A man of success achieves his goals, while a man of significance changes his world.<sup>8</sup>

-Anonymous

Every human was created to serve others using the gift of his or her individual purpose, which fits within the major purpose established by God for the human race. **The essence of life is in the contribution you make to life. Somebody is meant to succeed because of you.** You were created to solve or meet a specific need. You were designed to add value to somebody’s life. **You’ve been earmarked to make a difference with your life on earth, although your contribution to life may not necessarily attract fame, popularity, or societal acclaim.** In fact, no one may even recognize it.

**Life is made up of “little” sacrifices of unconditional love that sums up to greatness.** Les Brown, an accomplished motivational speaker and author whose natural mother abandoned him three weeks after his birth, pondered about his adoptive mother on her deathbed. “Even though I loved her and felt very close to her, in many ways she was a mystery. Who was she really? Why did she take in strangers that she did not know and love them and take care of them? She took in people, children and animals and never wanted anything in return. She never said, ‘You owe me.’ ”<sup>9</sup>



*It is not really the contribution to life that counts, but it is the motive behind the contribution that makes the difference. That's the reason "being" precedes "doing." It is the kindness, goodness, and unconditional love strewn along life's pathway that counts. You were created to be a blessing. Seeking every opportunity to be a blessing to someone each day can cause a rippling effect in the lives of posterity.*

#### THE BACK STORY OF THE MAKING OF HELEN KELLER

Some decades ago, a small mentally handicapped girl known as Anne was admitted into a mental institution. Because of her extreme condition, she was locked in a dungeon. Actually, Anne behaved like an animal and would sometimes violently attack those who came near her. At other times she would just ignore them.

Unknown to anyone, an elderly nurse, who was the epitome of kindness, began to visit Anne on a regular basis, during which times Anne usually ignored her. One day, the elderly nurse brought some brownies and left them outside the cage within Anne's reach. When the nurse visited the next day, the brownies was gone, so the nurse continued to bring some brownies for Anne during regular visits.

Amazingly, Anne's extreme mental condition began to improve without any medical effort. After a period of time, this "hopeless case" gained mental soundness. However, Anne refused to go home, preferring to stay in the institution to help other patients, just like the elderly nurse had positively impacted her.<sup>10</sup>

The elderly nurse was the solution to Anne's problem. And it was this Anne—Anne Sullivan—who was the solution to Helen Keller. Indeed, she was the making of Helen Keller, the great blind and deaf woman who history will always celebrate. Helen Keller, in turn, was to become a blessing to millions insomuch that to date, she is still the most celebrated handicapped person who has ever lived. On her 80th birthday, Helen Keller declared her irrevocable commitment, "I will always—as long as I have breath, work for the handicapped."<sup>11</sup>

Queen Victoria of England asked Helen Keller, “How do you account for your remarkable accomplishments in life? How do you explain the fact that even though you are both blind and deaf, you are able to accomplish so much?” Helen Keller spontaneously replied, “Had it not been for Anne Sullivan, the name of Helen Keller would have remained unknown.”<sup>12</sup>

You may never know the far-reaching effects of your good works motivated by a genuine heart to add value to another. The elderly nurse triggered the course of history by her “little” kindness to Anne Sullivan, which transcended to Helen Keller, and then to millions. Impact produces and reproduces impact. It is a chain of reaction.

One day, Abraham Lincoln witnessed a black woman being sold into slavery, separated from her husband and son. On the verge of fury, Lincoln dug his fingernails into his hands until they bled, and said to himself, “That’s wrong. And if I ever get the chance, I’ll stop slavery.”<sup>13</sup> That defiant resolve set the course of his political dream—to become the president of the United States of America. Suffering through defeat after defeat, he refused to give up or give in, because a righteous anger was burning inside him, an all-engulfing passion to put a stop to slavery in America. Though Lincoln encountered at least six political losses on the way to becoming president, he was not wavered.<sup>14</sup> He persevered and eventually became one of the most outstanding presidents the world has ever known and that history will ever reckon with.

When Nelson Mandela said, “I am the freedom, and the freedom is me,” that irrevocable declaration set ablaze the pangs of apartheid. When Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “I have a dream,” those immortal words pierced through the horrors of segregation. When Mahatma Gandhi refused to pay the bail money and said, “I haven’t committed any offence and therefore I can’t pay any money to bail myself,” that burning determination stirred up the offshoot of India’s independence.

What makes you angry? What you hate reveals what you were created to change.

It never ceases to amaze me when I think of the “immortalized” legend, mother Teresa. She was the embodiment of a fulfilled purpose and a replica of successful living.

“I again experienced a call to renounce everything and to follow Christ into the slums... I understood that God wanted something from me...the message was quite clear. I was to leave the convent and help the poor whilst living among them. It was an order. I knew where I belonged. I felt intensely that Jesus wanted me to serve him among the poorest of the poor, the uncared for, the slum dwellers, the abandoned, the homeless,” said mother Teresa.<sup>15</sup> She discovered the purpose behind her life, and she lived it with a profound passion.

Mother Teresa may never have had a special talent or gift, but God placed in her an awesome ability—she was a replica of compassion and love. She was greatly touched by the plight of the poor and could not ignore their suffering. She loved the unloved; she cared for the despised and the forsaken; she fed the hungry and honored the poor even at their death. “If you don’t have the zeal to help the poor, to take good care of the lepers,” Mother Teresa would say to prospective sisters, “then [you] should pack up and go home... no need to stay.”<sup>16</sup>

Mother Teresa’s inclination to help the poor was so great that in 1948 she started as a single warrior against poverty, having no money or societal influence, yet became recognized internationally by the early 1960s.

**Just as all these everyday people recognized a problem and decided to become a “little” yet heroic part of the solution, you too were born to change your world.** What grieves you is an indicator of what you are destined to heal.

## WHAT WAS I CREATED TO HAVE?

You've been shaped with various talents, skills, and wisdom, which designate your place in life.

When Soichiro Honda was a youngster, he was fascinated the first time he saw a car, insomuch that he ran after the car for miles. Unable to keep up with the speed of the car, he eventually knelt down to smell the oil, and thus his automobile manufacturing dream was birthed. He started exploring the mechanical parts and processes until he manufactured his own brand of automobile the Honda.<sup>17</sup>

When you mention Complete Sports and *Success Digest*, the name Sunny Obazu Ojeagbase rings a bell. Ojeagbase, blessed with an entrepreneurial skill, began his empire with ₦ 6,500, equivalent to about \$41, with limited education and experience. He founded an NGO, SADC: Success Attitude Development Centre, which has reproduced diverse vision that furthers, enhances or impacts entrepreneurs and the populace.<sup>18</sup>

With his talents and passion for sports broadcasting, he has stemmed the tide and pioneered the first African sports radio station. His name is Larry Izamoje.<sup>19</sup>

With the death of his father at age four and no benefit of a formal education, the odds was stacked against him. But even among the perilous circumstances that surrounded him, he made use of his assets—entrepreneurial skill and wisdom. With only 400 dollars as an investment, he initiated and built the Coscharis conglomerate, now having an international reputation. Multi-billionaire Dr. Cosmas Maduka is also a man who recognizes and understands what he possesses within and has found his placement in life.<sup>20</sup>

Likewise, your abilities, gifts, talents, and the wisdom you possess all point to the inestimable assets you possess, that if well developed and harnessed, could generate untold wealth that

can be given back to society and enhance the lives of humanity. What you love doing is a clue to what you have been destined to do.

The place where God calls you is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.<sup>21</sup>

- Frederick Buechner

Andrew Carnegie, the great steel maker and the richest man in the world during his time, distributed 90 percent of his wealth before his death. His act of giving was born out of a compassionate heart to meet the needs of humanity. His contribution to life was unique and heartfelt; consequently, his legacy cannot be erased from the calendar of history. **You likewise have just as much opportunity and the responsibility of becoming, doing, and having everything that was destined for you.** You can fulfill your unique assignment on the earth and God's purpose for the human race.

## *Chapter Ten*

### **Building an Investment Portfolio**

You'll always have everything you want in life if you'll help enough other people get what they want.<sup>1</sup>

-Zig Ziglar

#### THE AMAZING CHINESE BAMBOO PLANT

The Chinese Bamboo plant starts from a tiny seed. You plant the seed in the dirt, and you water the seed. Very little seems to happen the first year. Despite your efforts, only a tiny shoot pokes out of the ground.

So...the second year you water and fertilize and protect the seed...nothing happens.

So...the third year you water and fertilize and protect the seed...nothing happens.

So...the fourth year you water and fertilize and protect the seed...nothing happens.

So...the fifth year you water and fertilize and protect the seed...finally, during the fifth year, the Chinese Bamboo plant begins to grow. In fact, it grows 90 feet tall in just six weeks!

The question is, did it grow 90 feet in six weeks or in five years? The answer, of course, is that it grew 90 feet in five years. It took five years to grow the root system that would one day support a 90-foot plant.

People are often like the Chinese Bamboo plant.

We invest hours and hours trying to develop ourselves or others, and nothing happens.

We spend years disciplining our children to follow the Lord, but...nothing happens. We hold countless meetings with our staff members to coach them in the development of their strengths and developmental areas, but...nothing happens.

We redouble our efforts to help a friend make better decisions, but...nothing happens. If you're like most people, you will be tempted to give up. Don't do it! If you give up, the seeds you planted will die. But if you continue to care for the seeds, one day (when you least expect it) the result of your labor will seem to magically appear overnight!

If the Chinese Bamboo plant immediately shot up 90 feet in the first year, one strong wind would blow it down. By growing deep before it grows tall, it gains the strength it needs to withstand the force of heavy winds. Similarly, lasting growth starts on the inside of people.

It's difficult to see that change is taking place, but this is a necessary process. The growing they do on the inside creates strength of character and conviction.

Don't give up hope! Your efforts will be rewarded! Once the root system is established, your growth or the growth of those you are coaching will spring up seemingly overnight!<sup>2</sup>

-Anonymous

## THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LIFE

The universe is governed with balance. Without a practical sense of balance, the universe would become chaotic, leading to the crisis of all living things that inhabit it. From the rotation of the earth, to the seasons of the earth, and extending through to the ecosystem, the universe is saturated with balance as well as an underlying core of principles that govern the universe.

Human life is wrapped up in balance in order to function effectively. The four dimensions of human life include the body (physical), the mind (mental), emotions (feelings), and the spiritual (conscience); each thrives on balance and functions interdependently.

### *The Body*

The body is a container that houses your mind, emotions, and your spirit. Your body is the visible “you” that is expressive in the natural world. **It's the content within the body that gives impetus to the expressions of the body. Our body is what instigates our appetites and passion.**

It is made up of five physical senses: sight, touch, smell, hearing, and taste. If our appetites and passions, which are triggered or stimulated by the five senses, are not disciplined or made subject to the spirit (conscience), we begin to indulge in excesses of inordinate pleasures and desires that envelop us in a selfish and destructive lifestyle. **But if our five senses (the body)**



**are subordinated to the spirit and reason, we can harness this gift of the senses to accomplish our vision and enhance our value as we impact our world.**

### *The Mind*

The mind is the connecting link between the spirit and the body. It is the seat of envisioning, believing, deciding, and reasoning. The mind is also the home of our creative abilities resident in the imagination, which is the designer of ideas and concepts. All of our life's experiences are filed and stored in the memory bank of the mind. Information is gathered, created, and stored in the mind.

The mind is divided into the conscious and the subconscious. The conscious mind is where reasoning and thought processes are carried out. It is analytical in nature. It discriminates between right and wrong, wise and foolish. It is often called the feeling mind; it governs the five physical senses. It is the gatekeeper of the entire mind—the place where thoughts and suggestions are accepted or rejected. Thoughts accepted by the conscious mind permeate or pass into the subconscious mind.

The subconscious mind is the seat of programmed thoughts that has its fundamental root in past and present experiences, conditioning, and your most dominant thoughts, especially those thoughts that are emotionalized. That's why your mind controls your life, because it determines your choices, beliefs, behavior, and attitude.

The subconscious mind is in charge of the involuntary actions of the body; it automatically repairs and operates the body systems or functions. It is also your intuitive mind; it perceives what the five senses cannot fathom. It discerns. It is the seat of execution where ideas and thoughts are translated into their logical conclusion. The subconscious mind is the connecting link between our Creator and us—between universal mind and our conscious mind.

The universal mind, which can also be referred to as the God mind has infinite power and unlimited wisdom. *Behind every wonder of creation is the manifestation of universal mind at work. The universal mind releases ideas and suggestions to the subconscious mind that is rightly positioned and receptive to it. The universal mind empowers the subconscious mind to be invincible, powerful, and limitless.*

The human mind can be likened to a tank that is filled with water. We all know that if the water inside the tank is kept for a long time, it becomes stale and stinks. Therefore, for the water to be refreshed, the tank must be emptied and washed periodically.

In a similar way, our subconscious mind must be emptied of all beliefs, prejudices, conditioning, and programmed thoughts that are rooted in negativity, which causes us to settle for less and jeopardizes our destiny in the process. Emptying our minds of negativity means identifying and becoming sensitive to those negative thoughts, so that when they arise, you are able to push them out immediately from your mind before they turn into an action or a mindset, and then replace those negative thoughts with positive thoughts.

*But if you do not clean up your mind by letting go of negative thoughts and practicing a new positive way of thinking that will enhance your value and make you a blessing, your mind and invariably your life will become stale and will stink. Hence, you become a problem to the world rather than becoming a solution for the world. And instead of leaving the world better than when you met, you leave the world in a worse condition.*

## *The Emotions*

Know yourself, control yourself, give yourself.<sup>3</sup>

-Greek philosophy

Feelings are embedded in emotions. Emotional growth and development is a vital asset in human relationships and also in actualizing our dreams. The greater your emotional maturity, the greater your chances of succeeding in human relationships.

Emotional growth and development entails understanding the feelings and needs of others, their perspective, and content of their communication. With these understandings in place, you are able to give yourself accordingly in consideration of their standpoint as well as your own.

**Accordingly, highly developed emotions are a prized asset that can be effectively utilized to relate and communicate successfully with others.** Emotions aid to the creative ability of the mind and are the originator of enthusiasm. On the other hand, emotions can be very undependable, tricky, and dangerous if not ruled by reason and conscience. **Your emotional awareness ability hinges on self-knowledge, empathy, and your communicative abilities. To be free, one must exercise control over the emotions.**

Emotions can be categorized into positive emotions and negative emotions. According to Andrew Carnegie, there are seven major positive emotions and seven negative emotions. These positive emotions are:

- The emotion of love
- The emotion of faith
- The emotion of hope
- The emotion of desire
- The emotion of optimism

- The emotion of loyalty
- The emotion of sex

I hasten to add, the emotion of sex is only positive within the context of the marriage institution. Outside of marriage, the emotion of sex is a negative emotion that is disempowering and destructive in nature.

The most powerful emotion is love, which governs the universe. Without love, life goes extinct and the universe becomes chaotic.

**The law of love has shaped who you are and will shape who you will be in relation to how you apply yourself to it or against it. Love harmonizes life; it purifies the heart; it emancipates destinies; it heals the present; and it creates the future. Behind everything good and positive lies the indispensable virtue called love.**

The positive force of love can create anything good, increase the good things, and change anything negative in your life.<sup>4</sup>

-Rhonda Byrne

The seven negative emotions are:

- The emotion of fear
- The emotion of jealousy
- The emotion of hatred and envy
- The emotion of revenge and malice
- The emotion of greed
- The emotion of superstition and distrust
- The emotion of anger

These negative emotions should be avoided like a plague.

Emotions were designed by the Creator for humans to build and develop their higher nature in relation with themselves and others. But mankind has surrendered the control of the faculty of emotion to instinctive impulses, passions, and moods. Instead of ruling over his emotions like a king, man often becomes a slave to his emotions and takes up the animalistic tendency of gratifying the senses, yielding to the pleasure, passion, and mood of the moment. He becomes powerless to resist instinctive impulses and yields to temptation.

*The truth is that you cannot gain enduring success without self-mastery. And without self-discipline you will live in a blighted world of unbridled passion and impulses that thrive on the selfish and deceptive human nature. Whereas, he who has a heart that reigns over his emotions, empowers his higher nature to blossom and his giving spirit to thrive and impact lives positively.*

John Maxwell advises us to become character driven instead of emotion driven, as he highlights in the chart below:

<b>CHARACTER-DRIVEN PEOPLE</b>	<b>EMOTION-DRIVEN PEOPLE</b>
Do right, then feel good	Feel good, then do right
Are commitment driven	Are convenient driven
Make principle based decisions	Make popular based decisions
Actions controls attitude	Attitude controls action
Believe it, and then see it	See it, then believe it
Create momentum	Wait for momentum
Ask: "What are my responsibilities"	Ask: "What are my rights?"
Continue when problems arise	Quit when problems arise
Are steady	Are moody
Are leaders	Are followers

### *The Spirit*

Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, and takes off your relish for spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of the body over the mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may seem in itself.<sup>5</sup>

-Susana Wesley (John's Wesley's mother)

The spirit is our vital connection with our Creator. Man is basically a spirit, possessing a soul while functioning in the body, which houses both the spirit and soul. The soul comprises your mind, emotions, and your will. Man cannot live without the spirit. In the absence of your spirit, you cease to live. Therefore, what sustains you is the spirit; the body is only the "house" you live in. Your vital connection with God awakens your conscience which is your compass for living.

Conscience is the inner light that illumines our thoughts and actions, and brings them into scrutiny to determine whether or not they conform to moral laws or God's laws and principles. An enlightened conscience guides and directs our motives and actions.

Andrew Carnegie, who was the wealthiest man in his generation, distributing 90 percent of his wealth during his lifetime, was interviewed by a reporter about the secret of his success. Carnegie stated, "I owe it all to my flashes....I woke up early in the morning and always these came into my mind with the waking a flash telling me what to do that day and if I followed those flashes, I always succeeded." The reporter further questioned, "You mean that you have heavenly visions, and like the man in the scriptures you were not disobedient to your vision?" With a smile Carnegie responded, "Call it that if you like... it was the following of those silent admonitions and directions which brought me the success you say I have achieved."<sup>6</sup>

The still, small voice within—if nurtured, educated, respected, and followed—gives your life precision and guidance while shaping your destiny into a masterpiece. Following the still small voice within (conscience) guarantees inner peace, happiness, and well developed character. But until you allow your conscience to rule over your body, mind, and emotions, your life will be full of crises and will eventually end up in tragedy.

It's your conscience that awakens your consciousness to a life of meaning and contribution. You no longer live to get, but rather to give. *When you respect and follow your conscience, your perspective in life changes; you exalt service over power; value people over things; live a principled life rather than a life of convenience; strive to consistently improve character rather than personal gain; and maintain a long-term perspective in your decision making rather than a short-term focus.*

### THE THREE DIETS OF LIFE

The investment you make in your own life will, in turn, determine the kind and quality of investment you can make in the lives of others. **You—yourself—must be whole and complete before you can help mend the broken lives of others. Until you are inspired, you cannot inspire others. Until you possess the light to see your way through the dark tunnel of life, you will be unequipped to help lighten the pathway of others. Until you can shape your destiny, you cannot motivate others to shape their destinies.**

To put it simply, you cannot give out what you don't have in yourself. Input determines output. And so, I introduce you to a plan of balanced diets that will nourish and give you an internal uplift, empowering you to lift up others.

### *The Physical Diet*

Ill health of body or of mind  
Is defeat...Health alone is victory.  
Let all men, if they can manage  
It, contrive to be healthy.<sup>7</sup>

-Thomas Carlyle

Every living creature has been designed with a desire to feed. In fact, its existence is dependent on its ability to feed itself. Without food, any creature shrinks into a weakling and dies.

Humans, unlike other living creatures, have been vested with the power of choice to determine eating and drinking habits. Though appetite for food comes naturally, care must be taken to choose the appropriate diet to nurture and ensure good health.

Without a healthy body, there cannot be a healthy mind; consequently, our ability and capacity to lead a life of contribution is handicapped. The body influences the mind, and the mind influences the body. Without food and proper rest and relaxation, you become mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally drained.

Many of the diseases that plague many people can be traced to poor eating and drinking habits alongside a destructive lifestyle. If we feed our bodies with junk food and drinks, and fill our lungs with smoke, we expose our body's systems to health risks and diseases.

As important as food is to life, we must be aware that we should eat to live rather than live to eat. Overeating is just as harmful as eating junk food; it overworks the heart, liver, kidneys, and the sewer system. Self-discipline is the key in regulating our food intake. In addition, fruits and



vegetables are highly recommended because they contain the 16 major mineral elements required to build healthy bodies.

It is wise to gather information from health/diet books, receive counsel from nutritional experts, and gain adequate education regarding the kinds and combinations of food to eat with regard to their different nutritional levels.

Moreover, it has been proven that any form of worry, fear, anger, jealousy, or hatred harbored in the mind while eating, causes the food to ferment in the stomach without assimilating. Hatred itself upsets digestion. Therefore, a positive mental attitude is vital in maintaining healthy bodies. With an adequate and balanced diet intake, our bodies are revitalized with energy that enables us to function adequately in our mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical destinies

In addition, we must embrace exercise and personal hygiene.

Clean bodies are fundamental prerequisites for a healthy and successful life. Just as a machine needs maintenance and repair after it has been overworked, our bodies need proper rest and recuperation to ease the tension, relax the tissues, and carry out its internal maintenance after a day's work. You must maintain your strength and stamina in order to be a giver in life; but without good health and sufficient energy, you will lose your empowerment to contribute effectively to the lives of people.

### *The Mental Diet*

Presently, there is a great lack in the quality and balance of a mental diet. Never a time in history has there been such an increased intake of junk food for the mind as there is in the present day. **As important as physical diet is to man, so much more vital is the mental diet, because it is your mental diet that determines your worth in life.**

Many minds are clothed with ignorance, prejudice, and negativity. From the moment we wake up in the morning to the time we rest at night, the world presents us with an abundance of junk food for the mind that is compelling and difficult to resist.

**Most people, besides getting an education in the academia, never seek to nourish or develop their mind further. They may become intellectual giants, but their mentality becomes dwarfed by neglecting a wholesome education in every aspect of life that guarantees enduring success.** Unlike our physical body system that naturally stimulates our appetite for food, the mind seldom stimulates our appetite to learn and grow, except through conscious choice.

Also consider the example of a house that is not cleaned for a period of time and consequently becomes filled with slop and dirt. Likewise, a mind left to itself breeds mental cobwebs and all forms of negativity. The mind, just like a house, must be kept clean and tidy every day in order to function maximally and maximize your potential. **The quality of your life is determined by the quality of your mind, and the quality of your mind hinges on the quality of your mental diet. A quality mental diet enhances your earning capacity, social or relational capacity, self-knowledge capacity, talent development, and enlargement capacity.**

Unfortunately, though, we grasp with gusto and “eat” gluttonously the poisoned and deadly information presented to us by the media, books, and people around us. Wisdom entails that we carefully select and filter the programs we watch and the materials we read, embracing information that adds positively to our lives and discarding that which distorts our value system and leaves our minds tainted.

*Unknown to many people, mental poisoning has wrecked more havoc to humans than physical poisoning. Mental poison, unlike physical poison, is so subtle and gradual that its disastrous effect remains unnoticed until it has already left our destiny blighted and wrecked. Mental*

*poisons include such toxins as harboring thoughts of jealousy, lust, selfishness, revenge, hatred, and unkind and uncharitable thoughts towards others. These mental poisons impede peace and progress in our lives, as well as torment and stifle worthwhile living.*

The vital way of developing a sound disciplined mind is to feed your mind daily with positive, good, clean information. Reading wholesome, positive books, journals, and other informative materials constitutes a palatable mental diet that welcomes us to the gigantic world of meaningful existence. Reading broadly and deeply within and outside our area of specialty opens us up to the world of solutions and thereby enhance our earning power.

Observation is another important part of our mental diet that will awaken mental alertness in us. When we are observant through life, we learn and grow through our experiences and the experiences of others. Observation also stimulates our discerning abilities.

Asking positive questions is also necessary in maintaining a healthy mental diet. Our ability to probe effectively brings us to a world of discovery and illumination, helping us to unravel the success package.

Meditation, which is a time of solitude, is another essential ingredient in a good mental diet, one that we must not ignore or neglect in the development of our destinies. All the positive information assimilated and fed into our minds, must be pondered upon—taking time to consider what we have read, listened to, watched, observed, and questioned. It is a time of engaging in deep thought in order to internalize the positive information we have fed into our minds.

Because our dominating thoughts in our conscious minds are eroded as a deposit to our subconscious minds, and most of our choices or decisions in life are programmed choices rather than conscious choices, it is extremely important to continuously think on good, pure, and valuable thoughts. This means that when we permit love thoughts, generous thoughts, kind

thoughts, positive and pure thoughts to dominate our minds, these thoughts will become fixated in our subconscious minds and will showcase effortlessly in our attitudes and behaviors. No matter what attitude or treatment is exhibited toward us, we can instinctively exhibit love, generosity, and kindness in return because of the quality of our dominating thoughts. Consequently, we establish relationships and causes that elevate humanity.

### *The Spiritual Diet*

**The spiritual diet is the key which sustains every aspect of your life. It is a life-giving and generating force that rejuvenates and inspires worthwhile living.** It purifies, refreshes, and strengthens the mind, emotions, and the will.

The spiritual diet awakens in us the consciousness to live a life of dedication and service that is founded on our unique purpose on earth. It is the source of true peace and an unending joy. It is the armor that shields us from the arrows that life throws at us in times of turbulence. **The private victory that births public victory is anchored on the quality and the adequacy of our spiritual diet.**

I believe that the recipe for a balanced spiritual diet is daily prayerful meditation on the Scriptures. Personally, this is what awakens and keeps my conscience active; it forms the basis and represents my value system; and it gives my life an unerring direction to my ultimate destiny.

Maintaining a balanced spiritual diet includes four important parts: meditation, prayer, listening to God, and examination of our motives. All these activities must be done in solitude, in the period of aloneness, preferably early in the morning and at the end of the day.

Meditation is a vital avenue towards an upward and consistent shift in our spirituality. Meditation simply means to think on, ponder, and mutter to oneself or picture in the mind.

What you meditate on daily will dominate your mind and give expression to reality, which shapes your destiny. If we meditate on anger, frustration, anxiety, bitterness, discord, and negativity, our lives will become an expression of these. But if we take the time to meditate on God's words and other inspirational literature or music, we draw for ourselves an aura of serenity and peace, despite the pressures of life.

Second, prayers are an important part of a spiritual diet of which Martin Luther King, Jr. made a revealing statement, "I have so much to do today. I'll need to spend another hour on my knees."<sup>8</sup> Prayer is simply a heartfelt communication with God, with faith in the omnipotence of God. It is not a lip service but a life service. It is not a religious routine but a life routine. An effective prayer must flow from our innermost hearts, replete with trust, and full of gratitude and appreciation to God.

Thirdly, listening to the still small voice is a vital follow-up to meditation and prayers. Prayer is incomplete without listening to God. God will always speak to us whether we are conscious of it or not.

A quality and appropriate time should be allocated to the period of listening, when all the inward and outward distractions are locked out. *It is in that place of listening where ideas, concepts, and insights that can change the course of history are born. In the place of listening, dreams and visions are conceived along with a detail plan of how to run with them. In the place of listening, wisdom is released into the mind to unravel the mysteries of life and tackle the challenges of life effectively. Listening gives our lives direction and inspires us to a life of service. In the place of listening, our consciences are empowered, and we become in tune with the God-mind.*

Fourthly, periodical self-examination is a necessity to our spiritual growth. Our lives must be subject to checks and balances in order for us to stay on course. Examining our motives is a vital necessity in the world of influence and relevance.

I once read that our spirituality is determined by the purity of our fellowship with God. I concur to that statement. And I add, the purity of your fellowship with God has its offshoot from the purity of your motives toward God, people, and things.

**Our motives must be pure and spotless for our contribution or vision to count. Our giving becomes unprofitable when our motives are corrupted. It is very easy to slip into the subtleties of recognition, wealth, fame, and success. Therefore, we must always be on our guard.**

Arthur Gordon says it well: "I saw that if one's motives are wrong, nothing can be right. It makes no difference whether you are a mailman, a hairdresser, an insurance sales man, or a house wife—whatever. As long as you feel you are serving others, you do the job well. When you are concerned only with helping yourself, you do it less well a law as inexorable as the law of gravity."<sup>9</sup>

Pure and right motive is the spring board of enduring accomplishment and a contribution-laden life.

#### THE FOUR NEEDS OF HUMAN NATURE

Man himself is the crowning wonder of creation, the study of his nature the noblest study the world affords.<sup>10</sup>

- William Ewart Gladstone

Human beings are much more of an emotional creature than a logical creature, and their needs traverse beyond the physical needs to the psychological and emotional needs. Most of us are aware of the three basic physical needs of human life: food, clothing, and shelter. While these needs can be easily met, most people still remain starved and are desperately searching for the

means to meet their psychological and emotional needs. Even in the pursuit of most of the physical needs, the underlying motive is in a bid to meet psychological and emotional needs. Stephen Covey reveals, “Next to physical survival, the greatest need of a human being is psychological survival.”<sup>11</sup>

Living in an interdependent society, we constantly deal with people. Within our marriage, family, friends, career, and in pursuit of our vision, we constantly and consistently deal with people. To positively impact their lives and appropriately meet their needs, we must understand the cravings of human nature. The greater our understanding of the needs of human nature, the greater will be our capacity to invest effectively in the destinies of others. The more successful our relationship is with others, the more successful we will become.

So, let’s discuss the four needs of human nature:

- The need to be understood.
- The need to be great.
- The need to be loved.
- The need to be believed in.

#### *The Need to Be Understood*

The fact that we have two ears and only one mouth, of itself might suggest that we should listen more and talk less.<sup>12</sup>

-Sydney Newton Bremer

Malaria is a sickness prevalent in the tropics and is caused by female mosquitoes that breed in filthy, bushy, and water-logged environments. If someone suffering from the symptoms of malaria decides to go to the hospital and consult a doctor, the doctor can deal with the patient in a couple of different ways.

The doctor can choose to listen with empathy to the patient's complaints and consider the situation from the patient's standpoint. He can listen with his ears, eyes, and heart, asking questions based on the patient's frame of reference. During this communication, the doctor then becomes aware of and understands the root of the problem. The patient, sensing the doctor's genuine concern and interest in her welfare, continues to reveal even more information, telling him that she is living in an inhospitable environment.

After listening closely to what the patient has to say, the doctor realizes that her environment is one where mosquitoes most likely abound, and he is able to give a prescription based on a deeper understanding of the problem. He tells the patient that she must clean every nook and cranny of her environment in addition to taking the prescribed medication.

In another scenario, the doctor chooses to simply listen to the patient by focusing only on the patient's words without listening for feeling or meaning. Without much ado, he prescribes the medication based on the symptoms that the patient tells him she is experiencing. In this example, after taking the prescribed medication, the patient is free from the symptoms of malaria. But if the patient does not do anything about the condition of her environment where the mosquitoes breed, then the patient will be continuously afflicted by malaria despite the medication. We learn from these examples that in order to solve a challenge, one must get to the root cause and deal with it before one can be free from it. Dealing with mere symptoms will have no significant effect in eliminating the challenge.

An investor in people will be someone who positively influences people, and as an influencer becomes a problem solver as well. We can invariably say that an investor in people is a problem solver.

At the center of every successful relationship, whether in a marriage, company, or organization, lies the core of understanding. I believe everyone needs and wants to be understood. Likewise,



no one wants to be misunderstood. Stephen Covey's words, "Seek first to understand then to be understood" are a wise counsel to live by.<sup>13</sup>

As an investor in people, you must put others before yourself. A person who is preoccupied with himself creates problems rather than solves them. But investor in people lives by a win/win philosophy that is mutually beneficial to self as well as for others.

As a problem solver and an investor in people, you must first understand the root, nature, and the depth of the problem before you can effectively proffer solutions or influence the situation. To invest in people, you must understand them in order for them to accept you. That acceptance then paves the way for love, and love will provide the way for your influence. **Understanding and acceptance do not necessarily mean agreeing and conforming to what another person says. Rather understanding and acceptance indicate that you respect and consider the opinions and feelings of others.**

Empathy is the ability to imagine and share another person's feelings and experiences, and empathic listening is the core that releases understanding. Empathic listening is more a virtue of the heart than a skill or technique. Empathic listening is rooted in a genuine concern and interest in people; it mentally perceives another person's world view. It is mentally putting yourself in another person's place, so that you can really understand how one thinks, what one feels, the behavior of one in a particular situation, and one's frame of reference. Empathic listening is listening with the intent to understand rather than reply. Understanding is based on character. People must trust you and your motives before they can expose their opinions, experiences, or tender feelings to you.

When you listen with empathy to people, it shows that you genuinely respect and value them. People desperately hunger to be respected and valued by others. Furthermore, empathic listening fosters even more communication, which builds strong relationships with people. Hence, your listening ability is the most vital asset in effective communication.

Ralph Waldo Emerson's statement bears repeating again: "Every man I meet is in some way my superior, and I can learn of him."<sup>14</sup> Empathic listening opens you up to a world of knowledge. It forewarns you of what not to do, and it guides you on what to do. It helps you to appreciate differences in people, and it equips you with the knowledge of how to connect effectively with people.

I am convinced that one of the vilest of evils is that of talking too much and listening too little. By tactfully drawing people into conversation, which is by no means a difficult task in most cases, you can find out what is in the mind of another. By keeping your own mouth shut and your ears open you surround yourself with a tremendous advantage over the fellow who talks with unguarded enthusiasm. It is a poor compliment to a man to have it said of him that anyone who will stand and listen may know all that he knows, yet this might be truthfully said of 95 percent of us.<sup>15</sup>

-Napoleon Hill

Listening with the intent to understand, demands that you rid your mind of every preconceived notion, judgment, and prejudice. It entails listening with respect and an open mind.

I greatly appreciate Eric Allen Baugh's guidelines for effective listening:

- Listen with a head-heart connection.
- Listen with the intent of understanding.
- Listen for the message and the message behind the message.
- Listen for both content and feelings.
- Listen with your eyes—your hearing will be improved.
- Listen for other's interest, not just their position.
- Listen with empathy and acceptance.

- Listen for the areas where they are afraid and hurt.
- Listen for what they are saying and not saying.
- Listen as you would like to be listened to.<sup>16</sup>

One of the major stumbling blocks to understanding others is filtering people's experiences, opinions, and behavior through our own experiences, circumstances, behavior, and motives. **You cannot reach out to help another until you are influenced by their uniqueness or individuality.** Therefore, you need to look beyond your own life and thoughtfully consider the other person's perspective so that you can explore ways to effectively help them.

If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as from your own.<sup>17</sup>

-Henry Ford

Bob Conklin has exposed an illuminating truth that should be imprinted in our hearts so that we can foster harmony and maximize our interpersonal relationships: "People NEED you because of their weakness, not because of their strengths"<sup>18</sup> In other words, personal empathy should rule our hearts when dealing with people, rather than relating to them with a critical and judgmental mindset. Napoleon Hill has wisely said:

If a man is truly great he will love all mankind. He will love the good and bad among all humanity. The good he will love with pride and admiration and joy. The bad he will love with pity and sorrow, for he will know, if he be truly great, that both good and bad qualities in man often are the results of circumstances over which they have, because of ignorant, little control.

If a man be truly great he will be compassionate, sympathetic and tolerant. When he is compelled to pass judgment upon other he will temper justice with tender mercy, throwing himself always on the side of the weak, the uninformed and the poverty-stricken. Thus he will not only go the extra mile in a true spirit of

fellowship, but he will go willingly and graciously. And if the second mile be not enough he will go the third and the fourth, and as many additional miles as maybe necessary.

*The Need to Be Great*

The greatest good we can do for anyone is not to share our wealth with them, but rather to reveal their own wealth to them.<sup>19</sup>

-Zig Ziglar

He had less than three months of formal education when he was labeled “stupid” by his teacher and schoolmasters. This feeling was so intense that the teacher additionally described the boy to the inspector as “addled,” and stated that it wouldn’t be expedient to keep him in school any longer.

When the youngster reported this information to his mother, his mom made haste to the school, full of righteous indignation. She declared with a clear and definite tone that her son had more brains than the teacher or the inspector.

This youngster would eventually grow up to become an outstanding personality on earth and would define his mother as the most enthusiastic champion a boy ever had. He said, “She cast over me an influence which has lasted all my life. My mother was always kind, always sympathetic, and she never misunderstood or misjudged me.” The man in the above scenario was Thomas Alva Edison, one of the greatest inventors who has ever drawn a breath of air.<sup>20</sup>

Thomas Edison’s mother saw greatness in her son and treated him accordingly despite his performance. Whereas, the teacher saw the boy’s performance and treated him in a way that magnified his weaknesses. The major distinction between the teacher and Edison’s mother was

how each perceived Thomas. How you perceive others determines your behavior and attitude towards them, and this to a large extent, shapes who they become.

*Helping People to Feel Important*

Take my money and I shall be temporarily inconvenienced. Take away my importance and you crush me.<sup>21</sup>

-Samuel Johnson

One of the most remarkable ways you can make people feel important is by giving them sincere appreciation. Appreciating people works wonders in bringing out the best in them.

Everyone, no matter how humble he or she may be, craves to be important. In fact, many people are starving for appreciation and recognition, and will do almost anything to get it. Whether they secretly or desperately seek attention or recognition, everybody wants to matter. And so, it is very important to shower people with bouquets of genuine praise, giving their self-esteem an upward boost, and being very cautious with the use of criticism. Criticism can be one of the most tragic weapons of influence, one that attacks the personality rather than the performance. It can stifle competence, puncture self-esteem, and set in motion the blame game.

It's not difficult to extend appreciation and recognition to others, and should be practiced on a daily basis. Find ways to look for the good in others, to give them praise in an amiable way, to convey respect, and to grant genuine courtesy—thereby transforming their lives for the better. Yet we often forget or neglect to do so.

You can't make the other fellow feel important in your presence if you secretly feel that he is a nobody.<sup>22</sup>

-Les Giblin

Simple courtesies should be demonstrated in your behavior toward others. We must treat everyone we meet as if we are hosting a great guest. Even the smallest of acts, such as remembering people's names, birthdays, and seemingly insignificant details about them, can captivate and raise their self-esteem.

We must become interested in others and seek out ways to help them feel good about themselves.

I have learned to imagine an invisible sign around each person's neck that says "make me feel important." I never cease to be amazed at how positively people react when they're made to feel important.<sup>23</sup>

-Mary Kay

### *Unveiling the Wealth Within People*

God didn't have time to create a nobody—just a somebody. I believe that each of us has God-given talents within us waiting to be brought into fruition. Each person is unique and special.<sup>24</sup>

-Mary Kay Ash

What does it take for someone to experience a fundamental shift, from a life of mediocrity to a life of outstanding success? Could it be the acquisition of more skill or knowledge? Could it be by becoming adroit in human and public relations? Not necessarily. The following story of Zig Ziglar unravels the answer.

One day, after a training session, P.C. Merrell, who was conducting the training, called a student aside and said, "You know, Zig, I've been watching you for two and one-half years, and I have

never seen such a waste.” He continued, “You have a lot of ability. You could be a great one and maybe even become a national champion.” Zig asked Mr. Merrell if he really meant what he was saying. This was Merrell’s reply: “Zig, there is no doubt in my mind if you really went to work, and started believing in yourself, you could go all the way to the top.” That one simple but great occasion marked the turning point in Zig Ziglar’s life. In his words, “My self-image was that of the little guy from the little town, who someday was going to go back to that little town and earn \$5,117 in a single year. Now all of a sudden, here’s a man whom I admired and respected telling me, ‘You could be a great one.’ Fortunately, I believed Mr. Merrell and started thinking like a champion, acting like a champion, seeing myself as a champion—and performing like a champion.”<sup>25</sup>

**One of the distinctive qualities of great people is that they see greatness in others and help others to become great. Great people look beyond the behavior and weaknesses of people and discern their distinctive gifts, in order to help them discover and develop their potential.** Remember, in life you are most likely to find what you are looking for. Seeing the potential in others is the beginning of unveiling the wealth that has been deposited by the Creator within them.

Mr. Merrell envisaged Zig Ziglar’s future, and then helped him also see his potential and possibilities. In fact, Zig Ziglar became one of the most peculiar motivational speakers and authors in the world.

*Helping people to see their own “big picture” for their lives is a vital step in unveiling their wealth. You must see what people could become, by looking beyond where they are and what they are, at the present time, going the extra mile, and helping them see what they cannot see for themselves. Inspiring people with a dream to live up to will help elevate their own thoughts about themselves and will upgrade the quality of their life experience.*

Many people are aware of their own weaknesses but seldom realize their strengths. To unveil the wealth within people, you must maximize their strengths and minimize their weaknesses. Areas of weakness within people should be addressed diplomatically with adequate wisdom at the right time. You should uphold their positive qualities and compliment these qualities. Help people develop their skills or gifts.

Addressing and encouraging integrity is a crucial factor to unveiling the wealth within others. No one can be truly great without the foundation of integrity. Challenge people to live a morally grounded life. Encourage them to value character development above personality involvement. With gentleness, address their character flaws and instruct in ways to eliminate these flaws by self-improvement on a daily basis.

Inspire people to live a consistent life of growth in every area of life. Inspire people to learn continually, to utilize their brains, and maximize their minds effectively. Consistent growth in every area of life—spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and intellectually—is an important key to greatness.

Wealth without is fleeting; wealth within is eternal. The ladder of greatness is climbed by those who bring out the best in others. Sow great seeds in people, and you will reap a bountiful harvest.

### *The Need to Be Loved*

Love is the crowning grace of humanity, the holiest right of the soul, the golden link which binds us to duty and truth, the redeeming principle that chiefly reconciles the heart of life, and is prophetic of eternal good.<sup>26</sup>

-Plutarch



One of the greatest gifts endowed to us is the capacity to give and receive love. The act of love is a proof of our godliness within.

Without love, life echoes emptiness.

Without love, life has no value.

Without love, every profiting you may seem to gain will be short-lived and imputed as futile.

Love is humane compassionate acts void of selfishness and consists of a pure motive shown or showered on others. Love is the most powerful force in the world that transforms an individual into an epitome of goodness. Genuine love does not have a price tag on it for it gives of itself unconditionally. It is ever so consistent and constant, regardless of whether the other person deserves it or not.

How would you be, if he, who is at the top of judgment, should but judge you as ye are? O, think on that, and mercy then will breathe within your lips, like man new made.<sup>27</sup>

-William Shakespeare

True love is more than a feeling. Feelings are short-lived and self-centered in nature, while love is eternal and generous.

Love is patient.

Love is kind.

Love is not envious.

Love is not rude; it is polite.

Love is loyal.

Love is not boastful.

Love is not proud.

Love is not self-centered or self-seeking.

Love is not short-tempered or easily angered.

Love harbors no evil thoughts.

Love keeps no record of wrongs.

Love takes pleasure in doing right and stands for the truth.

Love always trusts.

Love always hopes.

Love always perseveres.

Love never fails.

-St. Peter (First Corinthians 13-The Bible)

These characteristics of love define love as an action. They prove that works and not words are the evidence of love.

In life, you are not valuable because of what you know, who you know, what you are, or what you own. **You are valuable only according to your capacity to love. It is on the scale of love that success is weighed.**

If you could only love enough,

You could be the most powerful person in the world.<sup>28</sup>

-Emmett Fox

As a youngster, he was a typical teenage problem child. He committed all sort of vices—he disobeyed his parent and teachers, stole, cheated in gambling, lied, drank excessively, and were sexually promiscuous. He felt powerless to resist the temptation of doing wrong. Yet his mother continued to be loving and ever so patient with him despite his despicable behavior. She saw him through the eyes of love; she envisaged who he would become and not who he was. She

looked beyond the apparent; prayed ceaselessly; and had faith that her son would change. And even though her faith seemed not to produce the desired result, her love for her son remained.

Eventually, the youngster began to gradually change his ways, though he continued to lose many battles. And on one particular day, he gained a huge victory over his sinful lifestyle. He heard a voice say to him, “Take up and read.” He grasped the Bible, opened it, and read, “Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lust thereof.” At that point in time, he made a destiny-changing decision. He chose to rely on the help of God, and his spiritual life surged. Subsequently, he dedicated his life to God and to the service of humanity. In time, he would be made a saint—Saint Augustine.<sup>29</sup>

**Love is a powerful weapon of change. Everyone needs to be loved and valued.**

Our lives are shaped by the people who love us and by the people who refuse to love us.<sup>30</sup>

-John Hagee

### **The Transforming Power of Love**

When Abraham Lincoln was running for president of the United States, there was a man who publicly opposed him. He traveled across the country, proclaiming many destructive things about Lincoln in order to destroy his character and person. At times he would criticize Lincoln’s looks: “You don’t want a lanky, ignorant man like this as the president of the United States.” At other times, he would write malicious statements about Lincoln. In spite of this treatment, Lincoln eventually became president of the United States.

When it was time for President Lincoln to choose a cabinet, he decided to appoint the man who had spoken ill of him as secretary of war. When Lincoln mentioned his decision to his advisors,

they said to him: “President Lincoln, are you a fool? Do you know what Mr. Stanton has been saying about you? Do you know what he has done...tried to do to you? Do you know that he has tried to defeat you on every hand? Do you know that, Mr. Lincoln? Did you read all of those derogatory statements that he made about you?”

Abraham Lincoln replied, “Oh yes, I know about it; I read about it; I’ve heard him myself. But after looking over the country, I find that he is the best man for the job.”

After Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, Secretary Stanton paid a great compliment to Lincoln when he stated, “Now he belongs to the ages.” Abraham Lincoln broke the chain of hate through the power of love, and this act transformed Stanton.<sup>31</sup>

What a world this would be if people genuinely cared and loved each other. If people could possess and enlarge their heart of compassion, humanity would soar to greater heights. We should look at people with the eyes of compassion, our hearts should be filled with love, our hands should reach out to touch and meet their needs, and our mouths should be filled with words of kindness and wisdom for all people.

We should never take people for granted. All too often we assume our spouses, children, and friends will always be there no matter how we treat them. Furthermore, we should not assume that our spouses, children and friends know that we love them. Everyone needs to be cherished and loved on a daily basis; therefore, we should consistently affirm our love for them.

If you want to make your life work, you have to start with how to give. The key to any relationship is that you have to give first and then keep giving. Don’t stop and wait to receive. When you start keeping score, the game’s over.<sup>32</sup>

-Anthony Robbins

*If only we would give and love, we would make a difference in the lives of people. The best use of your life is to give your love away. Your best accomplishment in life is your selfless service to humanity. Your greatest gift is your heart of love. Your greatest talent lies in meeting other needs. Your greatest fulfillment is helping other people become successful. Your greatest joy is wrapped up in making people find happiness. The greatest life is a life lived for others.*

True love doesn't have a happy ending;

True love doesn't have an ending.<sup>33</sup>

-John Hagee

### *The Need to Be Believed In*

Does the name Joe Girard ring a bell to you? His name has been inscribed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's number-one salesman. And we all know that behind every glory there is a story.

As a youngster, his father continually told him, "You'll never amount to anything...you'll always be a failure...you're no good." But he had a remarkable mother who was always telling him, "Have confidence in yourself...you'll be a winner...you can be what you want to be." While his father was always tearing him down, his mother was building him up.

The youngster grew to become a man and became successful, but not overwhelmingly so. Then suddenly, tragedy struck, and he lost everything, including his home and his car. In fact, he was impoverished to the extent that he lacked even food. He was dead broke. But...he had a wonderful wife who made the whole difference in his life.

At the end of his self-confidence and on the verge of despondency, his wife told him ever so tenderly, "Joe, we had nothing when we were first married. Then, for a while, we had

everything. Now we have nothing again. I had faith in you then, and I have faith in you now. You can become successful once more. I believe in you.” With those graceful words, Joe Girard braced up with an extraordinary confidence, and with faith in himself, he started all over again. He paved his way to the top and became an astounding success in his career.<sup>34</sup>

We live in a society filled with negativity. Success is far-fetched in the lives of many people because they do not believe in themselves. These people possess a defeatist mentality. They suffer from low esteem and they expect the worst for their lives. They continue living a life of mediocrity, engrossed in the struggle for survival, and deficient in the vision for their lives.

It is disheartening to know that most of these people do not have someone who believes in them or encourages them. Rather, they are surrounded by people who tear them down with criticism, ridicule, misunderstanding, and doubt. Consequently, they give up when they face the slightest discouragement.

*There is a desperate need for us to lighten the hearts of people around us by believing in them and encouraging them to take bold and giant strides to succeed. Rather than noticing the weaknesses in people, we should see their strengths. Instead of seeing their inabilities, we should see their potential. Rather than observing their foolishness, we should see great wisdom lying dormant within them. Having faith in people is a powerful force that can change the quality of their life experience. And when people know that you think highly of them and expect the best from them, they will strive to make their actions match your expectations.*

B	=	Believe in them before they succeed
E	=	Emphasize their strengths
L	=	List their past strengths
I	=	Instill confidence when they fail
E	=	Experience some wins together
V	=	Visualize their future success

E = Expect a new level of living<sup>35</sup>

-John Maxwell & Jim Dornan

**You can never know what a person can accomplish until you believe in him. You can never know the obstacles a person can surmount until you encourage him.**

Let's brighten every room we enter. And may many other lives be elevated because they've come into contact with us.

There is a vast difference between

Giving advice and lending a hand.<sup>36</sup>

-Zig Ziglar

**Let's believe in people, encourage them, and go the extra mile to help them succeed.**

## *Chapter Eleven*

### **The Time Is Now!**

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the time you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.<sup>1</sup>

-John Wesley's rule

Mother Teresa told of a woman who came with her child to see her and said, "Mother, I went to two or three places to beg for food, for we have not eaten for three days, but they told me that I was young and I should work and earn my living. No one gave me anything." Mother Teresa went to get her some food, but by the time she returned to the young woman, the baby in her arms had died of starvation.<sup>2</sup>

**You have the power to make a difference in the world by beginning to make a difference in the life of one person.** The essence of your life is in the contribution you make to life, and the quality of your life hinges on the quality of seeds sown in the lives of others. Moreover, building up reserves of character and a benevolent nature will guard against destiny wreckage.

Whereas, living for your own selfish interests is the most despicable kind of life to live; it's only pursuing shadows. Remember that the rewards you will receive will be proportionate to the size of your contribution. Service, not status, is the mark of true manhood and womanhood. Materialism degrades society, while humanity upholds it. Your wealth, fame, position, and power will atrophy away; but a moral character and a compassionate heart full of good works



will stand the test of time. You are the hope to a dying world. **Let's stand against corruption, injustice, greed, violence, moral decadence, and a perverted society. Begin to change your world by touching another's life positively in some way.**

During a long life I have proved that not one kind word, ever spoken, not one kind deed ever done, but sooner or later returns to bless the giver and becomes a chain, binding men with golden bands to the throne of God.<sup>3</sup>

-Anthony Ashley Cooper

#### FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE...

For the rest of my life there are two days that will never again trouble me.  
The first day is yesterday with all its blunders and tears, its follies and defeats.  
Yesterday has passed forever beyond my control.

The other day is tomorrow with its pitfalls and threats, its dangers and mystery.  
Until the sun rises again, I have no stake in tomorrow, for it is still unborn.

With God's help and only one day to concentrate all my effort and energy on, this day, I can win! Only when I add the burden of those two frightening eternities, yesterday and tomorrow, am I in danger of faltering under the load. Never again! This is my day! This is my only day! Today is all there is! Today is the rest of my life and I resolve to conduct myself through every waking hour in the following manner...

For the rest of my life, this very special day, God help me...

...to heed the wise advice of Jesus and Confucius and Zoroaster and treat everyone I meet, friend or foe, stranger or family, as I would want them to treat me.

...to maintain a rein on my tongue and my temper, guarding against foolish moments of fault-finding and insults.

...to greet all those I encounter with a smile instead of a frown, and a soft word of encouragement instead of disdain or even worse, silence.

...to be sympathetic and attentive to the sorrows and struggles of others, realizing that there are hidden woes in every life no matter how exalted or lowly.

...to make haste to be kind to all others, understanding that life is too short to be vengeful or malicious, too soon ended to be petty or unkind.

For the rest of my life, this very special day, God help me...

...to keep reminding myself that in order to harvest more ears of corn in the fall, I must plant more kernels in the spring.

...to understand that life always rewards me on the terms that I establish, and if I never perform or deliver more than that for which I am paid, never will I have reason to demand or expect any additional gold.

...to always deliver more than is expected of me, whether at work, or play, or at home.

...to labor with enthusiasm and love, no matter what the task at hand may be, realizing that if I cannot secure happiness out of my work I will never know what real happiness is.

... to endure at my chosen work even after others have ceased their labor, for now I know that the angel of happiness and the pot of gold awaits me only at the end of the extra mile that still lies ahead.

For the rest of my life, this very special day, God help me...

...to set goals to be accomplished before the day has ended, for now I know that to drift aimlessly from one hour to the next leaves me with only one destination, the port of misery.

...to realize that no path to success is too long if I advance bravely and without undue haste, just as there are no honors too distant if I prepare myself for them now with patience.

...to never lose faith in a brighter tomorrow, for I know that if I continue to knock long enough and loud enough at the gate, I am certain to arouse someone.

...to repeatedly remind myself that success always has its price and that I must be willing to balance its joys and rewards against the precious piece of my life I must always exchange to achieve it.

...to hold fast to my dreams and my plans for a better life because if I relinquish them, although I still might exist, I will have ceased to live.

For the rest of my life, this very special day, God help me...

...to strive to fulfill the best that is within me, knowing that I have no obligation to attain great wealth or success, only the obligation to be true to the highest and best I can be.

...to never succumb to the fear of failing, because now I shall be looking up to the goals I have not yet reached rather than peering down at the pitfalls that always threaten me.

...to embrace adversity as a friend who will teach me far more about myself than any joyful run of success and good fortune.

...to remember that failures, even when they occur are only guides to success, since every discovery of what is false will lead me to seek after what is true, and every experience teaches me some form of error that shall afterward be carefully avoided.

...to rejoice over what I have, little though it may be, always recalling the oft told tale of the man who was sobbing because he had no shoes until one day, he met a man who had no feet.

For the rest of my life, this very special day, God help me...

...to accept myself as I am without ever allowing my conscience or sense of duty to force me to live a life's pattern designed solely for the benefit of others.

...to realize that I must never accept the praise and love of people as a measure of my personal worth, since my true value depends far more on how I feel about myself and how involved I am in the world outside myself.

...to resist the temptation to surpass the achievement of others, since this pathetic and yet common desire is no more than a sign of insecurity and weakness and I will never be if I allow others to set my standards.

...to ignite all my actions, both at work and play, with constant sparks of enthusiasm so that my excitement and zeal or whatever I am doing will subdue all difficulties that might otherwise slow my progress.

...to remember that I must pay the price in time and energy in order to increase my worth, for only fools stand idly by and wait for success to arrive, and now I know that the only chance to start at the top is in digging a hole.

For the rest of my life, on this day of days, God help me...

...to do unto others as I would have them do unto me, to give more of myself, every hour, than is expected, to set goals and hold fast to my dreams, to search for the good in every adversity that befalls me, to perform all my duties with enthusiasm and love and, above all, to be myself.

Please help me to accomplish these goals, my special friend, so that I may become a rag picker of value, laboring in your name with renewed strength and wisdom to rescue others as you have rescued me. And above all, please remain close to me, through all this day....<sup>4</sup>

-Og Mandino

Therefore, you may boldly say: For the rest of my life I dedicate my life to God and to serve humanity, becoming a channel of His blessing to the world.

### **BRAND NEW!**

Enduring Success is only possible when you discover and live out to completion your life's purpose on earth. Fulfilling our purpose on earth and effecting remarkable changes in the domain of life thereby transforming the world with the investment of our personality is attainable when we surrender our lives to God and conform to His will and plans for our lives.

To accept Jesus into your heart, please say this prayer: *Father I thank you for your boundless love that had chosen me before the foundation of the world. I believe that Jesus died and rose again for my redemption. I repent of all my sins. I receive your perfect love and forgiveness. Jesus I welcome you to live in me and live through me. Let my life be a manifestation of your Divine will and purpose in Jesus name Amen.*

Congratulations! You are now brand new. You are now empowered to become everything you were created to be.

Let God become your first priority in life. Read, study, meditate on, confess and become a doer of the Word of God (Scripture) and your mind and life will be daily transformed.

Thank you and God bless you.

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