

THE YEAR FOR YOUR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

LOADING



*1 Peter 2:2 - Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—* *PETER*

*John 3:16-17- "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.* *JOHN*

Personal development is an often used but rarely explained term. It is about investing in yourself so that you can manage yourself effectively regardless of what life might bring your way.

This moment in particular is necessary for each of us to grasp and move forward with purpose. Personal development allows you to be proactive. Rather than wait for good things to happen, you get out there and make them happen. You may not always achieve your objective, but you will experience a richer and more rewarding life when you commit to pursuing your own objectives.

Making that commitment to personal development is the first step on the path to personal fulfillment.

No one looks at a tree growing out of a crack in the rock high above the desert and calls it the devil's work, but many extol it as a miracle of God's creation.

## **Jacks's Story**

A young man grew up in a secular environment, attended a denominational church every week. Jack stated, the notion of being a born-again, spirit-filled believer was as foreign to me as a person from another planet would have been in our little upstate New York town. After school and a stint in the Navy, I wound up in the family business, where I found myself trying to motivate our sales force to higher levels of production. A friend sold me a self-development program and soon I was buying more for our sales staff. Sales performance soared as our salespeople began to realize that they could do much better, for us and themselves, by activating more of their untapped potential for success. Later I joined my friend's firm and eventually became a partner in one of the nation's most successful organizations in the emerging human resource development industry before founding my own training and consulting firm. During this time I saw thousands of lives changed for the better.

## **Real Christians Don't Do That**

When I became a "real" Christian many of my more experienced, and I assumed more learned, Christian friends looked askance at my involvement in self-development, labeling these things as New Age and Pagan influences. And indeed much of what passes for self-development these days is dangerously close to being just that. As a result, I abandoned the most lucrative product my firm offered, a self-development process I had authored called "The High Achiever." In it I wrote that our Creator had given each of us potential for success beyond

our wildest imagination, and it's our responsibility to use as much of it as possible as an expression of gratitude.

Yet in my studies, I kept finding Biblical passages that seemed to be encouraging us to achieve more of our potential for the purpose of glorifying God. It looked to me as if in their approaches to self-development the secular humanists had hijacked Biblical principles and then edited God out of them to make them palatable to non-believers. This approach works because the Biblical principles are sound. Like gravity, they work even if you don't believe in the One Who ordained them. The dangerous result is that these principles, given by God and contained in His Word, are now used primarily by non-believers to glorify man, and in some cases even other gods.

## **We've Thrown Out The Baby With The Bath Water**

The reaction of a broad spectrum of the Christian community has been to condemn these principles as tools of the devil. And because of this, many believers today live pathetic defeated lives that not only don't glorify God but actually serve by example to turn people away from Him. The rejection of this portion of God's word arises largely out of the average believer's ignorance of the Bible due in part to the poor (in both quality and quantity) teaching many receive. Not familiar with the whole counsel of God, they assume that His principles for abundant living were actually developed by humanists or even pagans to lure them away from Him. They wrongly conclude that His promise that "I have come so that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10) refers only to the Millennium.

# A LESSON FROM CREATION

*Genesis 2:1-25 - Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, ...*

*At the time GOD made Earth and Heaven, before any grasses or shrubs had sprouted from the ground— GOD hadn't yet sent rain on Earth, nor was there anyone around to work the ground (the whole Earth was watered by underground springs)— GOD formed Man out of dirt from the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life. The Man came alive—a living soul!*

*Then GOD planted a garden in Eden, in the east. He put the Man he had just made in it. GOD made all kinds of trees grow from the ground, trees beautiful to look at and good to eat. The Tree-of-Life was in the middle of the garden, also the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil.*

*A river flows out of Eden to water the garden and from there divides into four rivers. The first is named Pishon; it flows through Havilah where there is gold. The gold of this land is good. The land is also known for a sweet-scented resin and the onyx stone. The second river is named Gihon; it flows through the land of Cush. The third river is named Hiddekel and flows east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.*

*GOD took the Man and set him down in the Garden of Eden to work the ground and keep it in order. GOD commanded the Man, "You can eat from any tree in the garden, except from the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil. Don't eat from it. The moment you eat from that tree, you're dead."*

*GOD said, "It's not good for the Man to be alone; I'll make him a helper, a companion." So GOD formed from the dirt of the ground all the animals of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the Man to see what he would name them. Whatever the Man called each living creature, that was its name. The Man named the cattle, named the birds of the air, named the wild animals; but he didn't find a suitable companion.*

*GOD put the Man into a deep sleep. As he slept he removed one of his ribs and replaced it with flesh. GOD then used the rib that he had taken from the Man to make Woman and presented her to the Man."*

But let's take a look at God's creation for the lesson it teaches. In all of creation every living thing whether plant or animal naturally strives to achieve its maximum potential. You can't find a tree that only grows to half its normal height and then quits or a cow that only gives a portion of the milk that it could produce. There are no lazy lions or salmon or even petunias. Every creature that God has created is predisposed to achieve its destiny and to fight with every ounce of its strength to do so. No one looks at a tree growing out of a crack in the rock high above the desert and calls it the devil's work, but many extol it as a miracle of God's creation.

Only mankind has been given the choice to settle for less than our Creator intended for us to be, and only man is taught to do this to avoid offending God. But what has God shown us? Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, was made one of the world's richest men in his day for agreeing to follow God. In revealing Himself to mankind, God chose Israel to show forth the blessing that came from being in a covenant relationship with Him, and in the time of David and Solomon Israel was the richest most powerful nation on earth. Even today a disproportionate share of the world's intellectual and financial wealth is enjoyed by the people God chose as His own.

## Development Thoughts

Delight yourselves in Me, and I'll give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4).

Study My Word day and night and quote it often. Do everything it tells you and you will be prosperous and successful (Josh 1:8-9).

Trust in Me and stop trying to figure it out on your own. Give Me the credit and I'll keep you on the straight and narrow. Honor Me with your wealth and your bank account will be filled to overflowing (Prov. 3:5-6, 9-10).

Give Me the 10th that's Mine, and I'll throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing you won't be able to stand it (Malachi 3:9-10).

Give and it will be given to you. A good measure pressed down shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured to you (Luke 6:38).

Change your attitude (Eph. 4:23), practice Positive Thinking (Phil 4:8-9), discover the Power of Personal Goals (Phil 3:13-14), the Power of Visualization (2 Cor 4:17-18) and Affirmation or Self Talk (Phil 4:4 and 13).

Rejoice in Me always. Be fearful of nothing, pray about everything, and be thankful for anything, and I'll give you peace that transcends human understanding. (Phil 4:4-7).

You'll be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion (2 Cor 9:11).

And when you are, remember Who it was that gave you the ability to attain wealth (Deut. 8:18).

This is your destiny. Achieve it and you'll bring the greatest honor imaginable to the One Who made it so.

## **Actions That Target Your Personal Growth**

We all have areas where we want to improve; health, work, family, you name it. But reality sets in along with a busy schedule that doesn't leave any space for quite time, let alone individual development. We also rarely have the willpower we need to see it through. Or maybe we just don't know where or how to start.

Not being able to define your own long-term goals will end up in a life that's devoid of meaning or direction. You start losing that spark and the motivation to get up each morning wanes.

Experts define personal growth plan as "the process of creating an action plan based on awareness, values, reflection, goal-setting and planning for personal development within the context of a career, education, relationship or for self-improvement."

An individualized growth plan can help you achieve the vision you have of yourself. It's something we need to consciously think about and strive toward. If you don't plan your own development and growth, no one else will.

Here are 4 steps you can take for a well-developed, easy-to-implement, personalized plan.

### **1. KNOW THYSELF**

In order to plan for the future, you have to reflect on your past experiences, your weaknesses and strengths; they've made you who you are today. You also have to clarify your own unique values, such as integrity, respect for others, leadership, honesty. Your values define your stance whether it's at the workplace, with

family and friends, and in your romantic relationships. Moreover, there are several important questions you have to ask yourself:

- What do I want to become in life?
- What are my achievements up until now?
- What are my personal goals?
- What are my career ambitions?
- What steps have I taken to pursue these goals and ambitions?

### **2. DEVELOP YOUR VISION**

Once you've asked and answered these questions, you'll have a clear vision of who you are and what you want out of life. This takes us to the second step; developing your vision. A smart tip is to provide yourself with several options to reach your next goal.

That way, if something goes wrong or you face an obstacle, you can switch to another path. Be flexible in your planning because usually people tend to underestimate how long a certain project will take.

Another point people tend to not pay attention to is what they don't want to do. If you're at work, you can make a list of what-not-to-do, for example:

- Check emails as soon as they come in
- Keep too many tabs open at once
- Keep cell phone on your desk
- Check social media while you're working

### **3. ASSESS YOUR PRESENT-DAY SITUATION**

Implementing your plan can be difficult at first. But with dedication and an eye on the prize, you'll soon find that it becomes a daily habit. It was Jim Ryun who said, "Motivation is what get you started. Habit is what keeps you going."

Putting your strengths to good use will harness your energy levels so that it's utilized efficiently. You can set up milestones along the way because smaller goals give you the motivation and drive you need to get to the big ones. And each time you reach a milestone or achieve one of the small goals, reward yourself for your hard work.

### **4. REVIEW YOUR PROGRESS**

Each project needs to be reviewed and assess, and your exclusive growth plan is no different. You can do it on a monthly basis, or every couple of months, whatever feels

comfortable for you. But it's crucial that you take a step back and look at all the hard work you've accomplished.

Check to see if you've left anything out or missed any deadlines. Or maybe the mini-goals you set up last time don't fit your criteria any longer, they need tweaking or readjusting. Reflect on your experience and consider everything you've learned. This will ensure that you keep moving forward according with your long-term plan and the vision you've set up for yourself.

On a final note, you can draw up the perfect plan but if you don't follow through, you won't get anywhere. Everyone needs practice to develop and grow, even if it means stepping out of your comfort zone. Having something to strive toward can renew your self-confidence and passion for life.

## Stop Procrastination

We're all guilty of doing it, more often than we'd like to admit. Procrastination may not be just about turning in your school report/work project at the last minute. It may also be putting off important life decisions like whether or not you should ask your boss for that raise he promised last month, or whether you should join a gym, leave your boyfriend, - it's endless.

And if you don't start learning how to stop putting things off, you'll have to deal with procrastination your whole life which may have a negative effect on your relationships, career, and personal health.

The thought process behind procrastination is that we believe there's always tomorrow, so why not just steer clear of the stress and anxiety and just put it off until later. So, this is the first thing you need to tackle. It won't be easy but try to figure out what the stress factor is behind your procrastination. It could be fear of failure, fear of confrontation, fear of not being perfect. You are your own worst critic.

You judge your flaws and imperfections way too harshly. Yet studies show that when you forgive yourself for putting things off or not getting things done as perfectly as you would've liked, can actually help fend off procrastination. And most importantly, have realistic goals before you give yourself a hard time.

Sometimes we tend to bite off more than we can choose, then we go off the deep end because the end result wasn't anywhere what we had envisioned.

Follow these tips to help you avoid procrastination once and for all.

### 1. TURN BURDENSOME TASKS INTO HABITS.

We all have enough willpower to get about 3 or 4 tasks done each day. Habits use other parts of our brain rather than the prefrontal cortex which is associated with rational thinking. So, when you train yourself to do something out of habit, rather than look at it as a mundane task, you think about it less which means you're using less willpower and you won't fall into the procrastination rut.

Things like brushing your teeth or making your bed have all become daily habits which you automatically perform without even considering putting them off. Why not turn healthy eating, daily exercise, or turning in reports ahead of time into daily habits as well?

After that it becomes easier, but you still have to keep yourself motivated and inspired. Procrastination is all about taking that dreaded first step. So why not ease into it with the knowledge that after a certain amount of time, or once I've finished X, I can watch videos on YouTube or go get a cup of coffee. Make it pleasant for yourself because the reward is the part that the brain assimilates to gauge your enjoyment level. If you're happy, then your brain slowly turns this task into a habit which you look forward to, instead of something you dread on a daily basis.

### 2. BREAK WORK TASKS INTO CHUNKS.

Instead of cleaning out the entire garage, do the right side first, take a break, then do the left side, take a break, then finish off the rest. At work, big tasks may seem daunting when you look at them as a whole. The answer? Break it down into smaller tasks. Make an outline of the entire project, and then divide it up into smaller tasks.

Working in 30-minute increments also helps break down tasks into smaller chunks which are manageable and not so intimidating. After the 30 minutes, take a break and assess your work. Seeing how much you've accomplished will give you that boost of confidence you need to keep at it.

### **3. REMOVE DISTRACTIONS.**

Checking your email every 5 minutes isn't doing you any good. So, once you've committed to doing the job, limit distractions by putting your away. You can find apps that help you stay on track, but some will say that's completely missing the point.

The important thing is that you set up a certain time for checking emails or your social media, and once you've started your task, you avoid the urge to take a sneak peak.

Another serious distraction is multi-tasking. Even though it may seem that you're being productive, the truth is it's a complete waste of time and energy. Think about it, it takes your brain about 20 minutes to completely focus on one task and give it 100%, and then you bring in another task which means you decrease your focus level by half, bring in a third task and the focus drops even lower. So even though you're working more, your end results will be below average.

### **4. WORK DURING YOUR PEAK HOURS.**

We all have certain times during the day when we're most alert. Some of us are morning people, some are night owls, and some have more energy during the afternoon hours. Find out what your peak hours are and tackle your most difficult tasks then. You'll be more of a powerhouse then with your brain working at its maximum capacity.

Procrastination is different than being lazy because when you procrastinate, you delay doing something for a more pleasurable task. So why not turn that mundane task you're dreading into something more fun and enjoyable, and kill off the urge to procrastinate?

## **Become A More Positive Thinker**

People are often suggesting that we stay positive or look on the bright side, especially when things aren't going very well. Unfortunately, they never seem to have much advice on how to do this. Hopefully, these six methods will help to make you more positive so that you can reap all of the benefits.

### **BE GRATEFUL**

Sometimes the ideas presented by religion seem strange and useless, but sometimes they turn out to be better

ideas than they might seem at first. An old Jewish saying recommends that we "bless one thousand things every day," here "bless" being read "be grateful for." Just like the in "seventy times seven" parable, the thousand isn't exactly literal, it just means "a lot."

This little mantra reminds us to look for things in our day to be grateful for, and science has only recently begun to recommend the same thing. Whether you're religious or not, acknowledging the things that you are grateful for every day can help to hardwire your brain to notice the positive things more quickly.

### **BE AWARE OF YOUR NEGATIVE THOUGHTS**

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention, usually to your breath or your thoughts. Mindful breathing is often used to control stress, but mindful thinking can lead to a more positive life. We tend to take our thoughts for granted but they can still make a difference as they float through our minds.

Speaking to The Huffington Post, Dr. Joffrey Suprina explained that when we pay more attention to what thoughts we're actually having throughout the day it can be easier to shake off the negative thoughts and focus on the positive.

### **INTRODUCE POSITIVE THOUGHTS**

The staff at The Mayo Clinic point out that just like our thoughts can upset us when we don't notice them, we also purposely introduce thoughts that make ourselves feel better. Trying to replace negative thoughts from our subconscious with positive thoughts from our conscious mind can be a very valuable tool.

The staff at the Mayo Clinic also points out, however, that these thoughts still need to be practical for them to work. Ignoring the negative isn't thinking positive. Thinking positive is about making the best out of the worst that life gives us.

### **AVOID NEGATIVE PEOPLE**

Writing for Psychology Today, Dr. Gregory Jantz wrote that it is difficult for us to be positive when we are surrounded by negative people. That means people who practice negativity as well as people who somehow bring out the negativity in us. Dr. Jantz doesn't necessarily say that we need to remove these people

from our lives forever, just while we're first learning to become more positive. Kind of like how people who are quitting smoking find it hard to be around smokers for the first few days but eventually they're okay to be around other smokers again.

### **LOOK AT CHALLENGES AS OPPORTUNITIES**

An article by author Paul Sloane published by Lifehack.org recommends looking at potential challenges or setbacks as opportunities to go in another direction. We tend to look at where we are as the culmination of a lot of hard work and so when things don't go our way we feel like that work was for nothing. In many cases, however, our achievements can be the result of hard

work without being the culmination of hard work and what we thought was our best can really be a stepping stone to what lies ahead.

### **SPEND TIME IN "INPUT MODE"**

A 2016 article by Inc. points out that we are either in "input" mode or "output" mode. Output mode is when we are doing or making things, like when we are at work or doing things for our family and friends. Input mode is when we are doing things for ourselves like reading books. We can develop negative thoughts when we spend too much time in output mode and we can become more positive people by spending more time in input mode.

