

# Personal Excellence

The Magazine of Personal Leadership

www.LeaderExcel.com

June 2011

Jane Velez-Mitchell  
Author and Speaker

**Local  
Governance  
One-Step  
Enough  
Are You  
Addicted?  
Change Your Life**



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

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

Part of Your

PE

Plan and Performance System

Personal Excellence

June 2011

The Magazine of Life Leadership

INSPIRATIONAL • FAITH

One Step Enough
We all need to walk by faith.

by John S. Tanner

I HAVE OFT EXPERIENCED AT NIGHT THE RAREFIED state of worry about worry or what a song calls the chilly hours and minutes of uncertainty.

Lewis Thomas observes: "Worrying is the most natural and spontaneous of all human functions. Most of us tend to neglect the activity, living precariously out on the thin edge of anxiety but never plunging in." To remedy this, he recommends the practice of Transcendental Worry (TW), preferably "late in the evening just before insomnia."

To practice TW, Thomas recommends making yourself as uncomfortable as possible: "Soon you will experience the vertiginous pleasures of angst. Worries will circle like carrion fowl—swirling images of burning rain forests, swelling pimples, unpaid Visa bills, the national debt, the Testing Center, expanding waistlines, receding hairlines, late papers, and finals in classes you never attended. Surrender yourself to this anxiety. Then, you will sink into the final stage of TW: pure worry about pure worry." At this point, you will attain "Transcendental Metaworry."

Not knowing if or when an affliction will end is often more taxing than the affliction itself. Indeed, uncertainty can be more chilling than winter, doubt more gnawing than hunger, tempests of the mind more fearful than pelting rain. Such suffering, the ordeal within the ordeal, constitutes the human predicament. You could brave most any hardship, provided you knew if and when it would pass.

In periods of prolonged distress, we yearn to be carried to a mountaintop, as was Moses, and see in detail the course of our lives. In-

stead, God requires us to wander like Abraham, as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth", living on promises. To live on earth is to "walk by faith, not by sight," one step at a time.

John Henry Newman wrote "Lead, Kindly Light" aboard ship on the way home to England from Italy. He was homesick and seasick; he had just had malaria, and was also about to take the first faltering steps of a spiritual pilgrimage to another church. Newman writes: Lead, kindly

Light, amid th'encircling gloom; Lead thou me on! The night is dark, and I am far from home; Lead thou me on! Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see The distant scene—one step enough for me.

The phrase one step enough for me became a motto for me and my wife through graduate school. Yet we still trod gingerly into a future that seemed so precarious and into which we could see safe footing for only one small step ahead. We craved

to see the distant scene.

We yearn for certainty and would avoid risk, if we could—or at least consign it to a risk manager. Wouldn't it be great if we could give over life's serious risks—like whom to marry or what to believe—to someone else? Suspense makes us nervous. My wife, Susan, sometimes skips to the end of the novel when the suspense becomes intense. I am a sports fan who opts to watch a close game on replay, after I know the outcome.

The dramas of our own lives, however, are not available to us on video or in novels. We can neither fast-forward nor read ahead. Since our tribulations unfold in real time, the only way out, alas, is through. We must endure not only hardships but the ordeal of anxiety in the ordeal;



INSIDE

Table listing authors and article titles with page numbers. Includes: MICHAEL BROWN, ALAN COHEN, SHAWN ACHOR, SANDRA FORD WALSTON, GARY BATE, JOHN SCHUSTER, KAREN STEVERSON, DON SANDEL, LINDA SEGER, JANE VELEZ-MITCHELL, AMY KOSSOFF SMITH, ELLEN LACONTE, BARACK OBAMA, RICK RODGERS, RANDY GAGE, OLIVER DEMILLE, ROBERT L. DILENSCHNEIDER, MICHELE OBAMA, DARLENE QUINN, JOE CALA, SUSAN APOLLON.

we must live on promises and walk by faith.

*To walk by faith is to follow in the footsteps of Abraham, the spiritual father of the faithful, who must sojourn as pilgrims and strangers on this earth.* “Not knowing whither he went,” Abraham left not only his city but city life itself, in the cradle of civilization, to become a nomad. And, he did not cease to be a nomad after he arrived in the promised land. Rather, even in Canaan he dwelt in tents, as in a strange country. The land was Abraham’s by covenant, yet near the end of his life *he did not even own a plot of ground sufficient to inter Sarah’s body.* Later, Abraham was buried in this same cave, the only property he ever owned in Canaan.

*Abraham spent his days living on promises—not only with respect to the promised land but also with respect to a promised posterity.* With what could seem like cruel irony, the Lord repeatedly pledged Abram posterity as numerous as the dust of the earth and the stars of heaven. He also changed his name to Abraham, meaning *father of a multitude.* Yet Abraham had no promised heir; and he and Sarah were growing older. At last, of course, Isaac was born. Then the God of Abraham required the sacrifice of the very child through whom the prophecies that Abraham’s seed would become “a great and mighty nation” were to be fulfilled. How is it that Abraham “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief”, but “believed in the Lord,” who “counted it to him for righteousness.”

*We distort the trials of Abraham (or of anyone else) if we read them from the comfortable retrospective of history.* We must remember the fear and trembling. We must flee with Abram from Haran, not knowing whither we go; we must wander with Abram in Canaan, living on incredible promises about possessing the land and a great posterity; we must journey with Abraham to Mount Moriah, prepare the altar for Isaac, and lift the knife. We must, in short, become contemporaneous with Abraham in his trials. Only then will we know why Abraham is the father to the faithful, the model for all those who, like him, die in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

*Like Abraham, we have to walk by faith, one step at a time.* Often God’s guidance is not evident until we turn to survey the terrain we have traversed. Even Jesus Christ “received not of the fullness at the first, but received grace for grace.” Does this imply that Jesus had to learn his mission incrementally and live through trials without knowing the beginning from the end? The Lord often had to fast and pray to obtain the

Father’s unfolding will. And Jesus’ plea that he “might not drink the bitter cup” suggests that the Savior’s prescience of the Atonement did not preclude his human apprehension about the ensuing ordeal. In this, as “in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren. For he took not on him the nature of angels; but the seed of Abraham.”

*I come from a heritage of Abrahamic faith.* My great grandfather, my paternal grandparents, and my own parents walked with a heroic faith. In history, it is easy to see the faith and miss the fear. But you can’t miss the fear and trembling when it is your own.

*Many times I doubted the future.* I could meet the present distress but was anxious about the future. How often as a graduate student I lamented: “What am I doing to myself and my family! There are no jobs in English. I can’t complete a Ph.D.!”

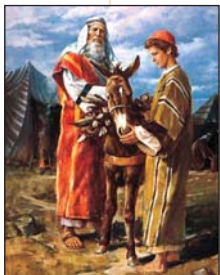
Anxiety enveloped my faith. My former roommates completed law school, took real jobs, bought cars and homes. My best friend went on to clerk at the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, I pulled weeds at the local church as a gardener. Yet I persisted, borrowing from the faith of my wife, whose unshakable conviction that teaching was my vocation kept us walking down an uncertain path, one step at a time.

The ending of John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* portrays Christian and Hopeful crossing the river of death. There “was no bridge to go over,” and “the river was very deep.” The two pilgrims begin to despair. Then they learn this truth: “You shall find the river deeper or shallower, as you believe in the King of the place.”

*At times, we all have to wade through rivers with bottoms we cannot see.* To be human is to be a pilgrim and stranger, home-bound. No mortal ever ceases to need faith, for faith is a “task for a lifetime.” Indeed, to believe, to love, to repent, to forgive—these tasks are always more than enough for us.

*With respect to faith and love, we all start where Adam and Eve did as they left Eden.* In *Paradise Lost*, Milton recounts this moment: *The World was all before them, where to choose Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide: They hand in hand with wand’ring steps and slow, Through Eden took thir solitary way.*

The world before you bids “choose your place of rest” and offers Providence as your guide. If you are lucky, you’ll find someone to hold hands with as “with wandering steps and slow,” you make your solitary way toward home, though it be “but one step ahead, across a void of mystery and dread.” May you follow in faith that heavenly light home. PE



John S. Tanner was Academic Vice President at BYU. This article is adapted from his devotional address. [speeches@byu.edu](http://speeches@byu.edu).

**ACTION:** Live, walk, and work in faith.

## Volume 16 Issue 6

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

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

**Basic Annual Rate:**  
US \$59 one year (12 issues)  
US \$119 two years (24 issues)

**Corporate Bulk Rates** (same address)  
US \$30 each per year for 5 to 25  
US \$20 each per year for 26 and up  
\*Ask about logo and custom editions and foreign bulk rates.

**Article Reprints:**  
For reprints of 100 or more, please contact the Editorial Department at 1-801-375-4060 or email [CustomerService@LeaderExcel.com](mailto:CustomerService@LeaderExcel.com).  
Back Issues (print): US \$25  
Permission PDF: US \$100

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

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

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

**Executive Excellence Publishing**  
Ken Shelton, CEO, Editor-in-Chief  
Sean Beck, Circulation Manager

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

**Contributing Editors**  
Bob Davies, Michelle Gall, Judith Glaser, Joan Marques, Brian Tracy, Denis Waitley

Copyright © 2011 Executive Excellence Publishing. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without written permission from the publisher. Quotations must be credited.



# You Are a Gift

*My mother told me so.*



by Michael Brown

**T**HE WORDS *YOU ARE A GIFT to the World* was the simple message my mother,

Beverly, said to me many times when she was alive. One day, I started to believe what she was saying, embraced her message as my own, propelling me to live with real purpose.

**You can't get away from yourself, but you can get yourself out of the way.** You may want to run away from dealing with problems—whether they be relationships, career, or finances—but often you are not dealing with yourself. When you deal with yourself, you can deal with anything. You can't get away with not dealing with yourself. Whether you go China or the moon, you'll find yourself waiting there when you arrive.

**You may be having combative conversations with yourself.** Have you ever had an argument with someone inside your head? You think about what they will say, then what you will say, then what they will say, then what you will say. And this conversation never even happens. You think you are arguing with the other person, but you are only arguing with yourself in your head. Ending the war that you are having inside of your head could lead to world peace, end hunger, and end all wars in the world.

**You might beat yourself, shame yourself, and pile guilt upon yourself, about what you did or did not do.** This guilt and shame can be like a perpetual loop of inner dialogue that sounds like, "I'm not good enough", "I can't do it", "they don't like me", "they won't let me do it", "why can't I ever get it right", "I always do it wrong." Such negative affirmations keep you burdened, stuck, and immobilized. You may think there is some *outside force* stopping you, when it is only the *little voice* in your head.

**How much my mother loved me.** It is hard for me to describe the way my mother loved me. She poured every drop of love she had into me. I could feel it. My mom sent me a lot of cards. My mother didn't just say she loved me—she radiated love to me:

*Dearest Michael, You are my sunshine. Sunshine and light bubble up in you and warm everyone and every place that you*

*are. Keep on shining, my sunshine.*

**When I was 10 years old,** my mother and I were sitting at the kitchen table painting trees. I expressed how bad my tree looked.

*"No, Michael, your tree is beautiful!"*

*"No, it's not! You're just saying that."*

*"Let me show you something, Michael."*

*She took a bit of yellow and put some on my tree. Then she added a little orange.*

I got some color and added it to my tree. Then we were both putting color—orange, yellow, blue, all kinds of colors—in this tree. When we were done, I thought this was the greatest tree in the world. We put this tree on the bulletin board and looked at it daily. We talked about the story of this tree for the rest of my life.



After my mother passed away I realized the powerful gift she gave me that day—the gift of seeing the greatness in another. She could see something in me that I could not see in myself at that time. She saw my greatness. This is how *I am a gift to the world.* I can see the greatness in others, even beyond what they can see in themselves. Such seeing evokes the greatness of another. We all can do this for others and for ourselves.

**When I learned she had cancer.** One Saturday, I was sitting in my office and started thinking about my own conception and birth. I felt an overwhelming, intense feeling of gratitude—a joyful, grateful cry of thanksgiving for being alive. I felt compelled to call my mother.

*"Thank you for carrying me and delivering me into this world!"* I said.

*She thanked me. "I needed to hear that right now."*

*"What do you mean?"* I asked.

*"I have lung cancer and have only a year to live."*

*The week before she died,* we had many conversations. She was thinking about her life and started talking about my dad. She was no longer with him (he had remarried), but they were married for 25 years. One day, she said, that it was raining hard, and the street was flooded about a foot deep.

*My dad said to her, "I'll carry you across the street," and tried to pick her up.*

*"Stop!" she said. "Don't do that! I can do it myself."*

*They walked separately across the street and through the water. She turned and looked at me. "You know, Michael? I could have let him carry me across the street. It would have been a gift to him to let him do that for me."*

My mom seemed regretful. At the same time, she seemed at peace with it.

**Right before she died,** we spent a wonderful time together. As I got ready to leave, I looked in her eyes, and she looked in mine.

*"Thank you very much for being my mother,"* I said.

*"Thank you very much for being my son."*

*I gave her a hug and said, "I love you."*

*"I love you, too."*

*I said, "It was a pleasure to know you."*

*"It was nice knowing you, too."*

We both knew that this was the last time we'd see each other, at least in this physical form. We both said everything we wanted to say. As I drove away, I could see what a blessing it would be to live and express love, appreciation, and gratitude for everyone and everything—as though it were the last time. If we could live the way my mother and I saw each other in that moment, we could change the world.

*When I got news that she had passed away, I was driving home. In my mind, I quietly said, "If you're there, send me a message or a sign." About a minute later, I looked up at the sky and saw a full rainbow. I pulled over, and looked at the rainbow. I felt like it was my mother smiling at me!"*

**A week after she died,** I had a surreal dream. *In my dream, I was in my house and the phone rang. I picked it up. "Hello, Michael," my mother's voice said. I was in shock. I could not believe that I was talking to my mother. I kept repeating, "Mom, is it really you? Is it really you?"*

*"Yes, it is really me. I am watching you, Michael. Keep shining your light. Keep doing what you are doing. Keep enjoying yourself and having fun."*

That was all she said. I think about this every day. PE

Michael Paul Brown is a spiritual life coach and author of *You Are a Gift To the World: Blessings From My Mom*. Visit [www.YouAreAGift.com](http://www.YouAreAGift.com), call 760-504-9631, email [mike@changeyourlifecoaching.com](mailto:mike@changeyourlifecoaching.com).

**ACTION:** Affirm to yourself, *I am a gift to the world.*

## Eternal Life

Find it via Faithbook.



by Alan Cohen

I WAS SURPRISED TO RECEIVE A Facebook friend invitation from Eric Butterworth, an author and minister who introduced me to the new thought movement. The astounding element of this invitation is that Eric is dead. He passed away eight years ago. How he found his way onto Facebook is a matter of great interest to me.

This Facebook invitation taught me that in truth *no one ever dies*—and we can communicate interdimensionally. In the movie *The Last Starfighter*, a young Jedi-like disciple grows sad when he learns that a hero has been killed. His mentor tells him, “He is not dead. He is just battling evil on another dimension.” When a friend of mine told me that his mother had just passed away, and I offered him my condolences, he explained, “She really just changed addresses.”

*Just as the essence of a person never dies, neither do relationships. All real relationships are eternal.* You might break up, get divorced, move away from each other, or one of you might pass on. None of these logistical shifts diminishes the relationship. Only the love is real. Everything else is just story line. *A Course in Miracles* tells us, “Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists.”

When I attended a John Denver concert, he mentioned that *Annie’s Song* is the most popular. When I read John’s autobiography, *Take Me Home*, I learned that he wrote the song for his wife Annie. I felt sad that *such a romantic song* yielded to divorce. Then I realized that *the love John expressed when he wrote the song was genuine*. What happened after that is less important than *the passion that flowed through him then*. Though the marriage ended, *the passion that inspired the song is eternal* and available to anyone choosing love at any time. Forms of relationship may change, but the energy that joins people in their finest moments remains.

I met John Denver once when I was walking along a remote road on Maui. Driving a rental car, he pulled over and asked me if I wanted a ride. I was enjoying my walk, and said *no thanks*, then told him how much his music inspired me. He smiled, told me, “Thank you,” and continued on his way. A few years later I learned that John had died in a plane crash. I was grateful I had touch-

ed him and said *thank you*. Like John’s music, that moment is mine forever.

If you have gone through a breakup or divorce, parted ways with a friend, or experienced the death of a loved one, take heart. The precious elements of the relationship are yours always. People and circumstances come and go, but your connection in Spirit is inseparable.

That’s why and how dead people can *friend you* on Facebook. They don’t go far from you—just behind a curtain. You can’t touch them with your fingers, but you can touch them with your mind and heart. That’s why I’m establishing an alternative to Facebook. I’m calling it *Faithbook, the Spiritual Network*. On *Faithbook* you are connected to everyone everywhere all the time, and you don’t need a computer to communicate. You make friends by the *Law of Attraction*,

and messages that you would have to block on Facebook, never get to you on *Faithbook* because they don’t match you. You easily communicate with departed loved ones; on *Faithbook*, *no one ever dies*.

We make up many stories in relationships that cause us pain and sorrow. The relationship journey evolves from *made-up stories* to *true stories* in order to experience deeper and truer love. That love depends on *what your heart and mind are doing*, not what your body is doing.

I first resisted joining Facebook; now I like it. Where else can you get messages from dead people you love? *No one ever dies. They just move to Facebook.* PE

*Alan Cohen is author of From the Heart and host of the radio show Get Real (www.hayhouseradio.com). Visit www.alancohen.com, email info@alancohen.com.*

**ACTION:** Connect through Faithbook.

## SOCIAL • POSITIVITY

### Smile and Succeed

Gain the happiness advantage.



by Shawn Achor

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM holds that *if you work hard you will be more successful*, and if you are more successful, *then you’ll be happy*. If you can just find that great job, win that next promotion, lose the 10 pounds, happiness will follow.

*But positive psychology shows that this formula is backward: Happiness fuels success*, not the other way around.

When you are positive, your brain becomes more engaged, creative, motivated, energetic, resilient, and productive.

When you are in a positive mood, you exhibit *three times more intelligence and creativity*; you out-perform pessimistic counterparts; you have higher productivity, produce higher sales, perform better in leadership positions, and receive higher ratings and higher pay. You enjoy more job security and are less likely to take sick days, quit, or become burned out.

*Your brain is hardwired to perform at its best when you are positive*, not when you are negative or neutral. *By enhancing happiness, you gain a competitive advantage*. Applying the principles of positive psychology can improve your happiness, energy, and stress management skills, resulting over time in higher life satisfaction (quality of life).

Only 25 percent of job success stems from intelligence and technical skills!

The winning difference is *turning your frown upside down—and smiling*. A *positive attitude* correlates to *career success*.

*Here are five simple ways to apply the principles of positive psychology:*

1. **Practice gratefulness**—give thanks!
2. **Be social**—work is 50 percent what you do, and 50 percent who you do it with.
3. **Praise others**—kindness is contagious!
4. **Apply the 20-second rule**—add a 20-second in-convenience surcharge to any counter-productive work habits.
5. **Set small goals**—Reach for the stars, but break goals into pieces to snowball small success into bigger long-term results.

I encourage you to disable many shortcuts designed to *save you time*. You might keep your e-mail program closed

while you work, and do the same for your other distractions. When you raise the barrier to procrastination, you remain on task and get more work done in less time.

You can *reprogram your brain* to become more positive and capitalize on the *Happiness Advantage* to

improve your performance and maximize your potential. You can *retrain your brain* to spot patterns of possibility, so you can see—and seize—opportunities wherever you look. You can channel your efforts on small goals to gain the leverage to conquer bigger ones.

And you can reap the dividends of investing in your social support network. Even with work, stress, and negativity, *you can become happier at home and work* and achieve extraordinary results. PE

*Shawn Achor is author of The Happiness Advantage (Crown Business) and CEO of Aspirant. Visit www.shawnachor.com.*

**ACTION:** Gain the social advantage of happiness.

# Power of Language

Words can influence change.



by Sandra Ford Walston

**WORDS ARE POWERFUL.** They can help or hurt you. They can get you positive results or break your heart. Your words create your reality. When you speak, you engage in a *performative act*. Speaking is performing—meaning you can make something happen. Promises, requests, offers, or words to persuade are performances that provoke action. You use words as a means to get people to do things for you, endear yourself to people, make people like you, buy your services, or countless other motivations.

**Hate speech can hurt you.** Help speech can reshape your world and produce sustainable results. Your words, body language, and emotions form a triangle through which you interpret the world. By changing the interpretation of this triangle, you shift the resulting behavior and the effect. Simple statements, such as saying *thank you* more often and offering *words of encouragement*, have a positive effect on people. To boost *productivity*, use the word *imagine*. “How do you imagine this project progressing?” This engages people and decreases stress because creativity and curiosity are being generated, and people are motivated to speak up.

Another step to open up the lines of communication is to use requests and offers. For example, you can say, “Is there anything else I can offer you?” and “Do you have any other requests?” This allows people to open up and reveal the *chatter* in their head (or what they really want), thus providing *transparency* in communication and removing *hesitancy* to speak up. Encouraging people to communicate openly creates a positive culture and enables people to move out of inertia and display talents. *Transparency*—speaking directly to the point—gets results.

**Be direct.** When you speak directly, your communication hits the bulls-eye; no translation is needed. Getting to this stage takes practice, courage, and the self-awareness to speak the truth *in spite* of inevitable criticisms. Take an active role by taking responsibility to hear the

other person. Ask “you” questions to display an interest and other-centeredness: “What is your assessment of the situation?” Guard your tone. Take responsibility for how your language affects others. People often remember your words more than your actions.

**Be aware of indirect communication.** Be aware of the effects of *indirect communication*, such as when someone: walks away, shaking his head because he felt it wasn’t safe to respond; dictates by providing an answer without asking a question; finishes the other person’s sentence; makes more statements with “I” than asking questions with “you.” Unless you review *the power of language*, you become stuck by giving yourself labels. You might say to yourself, *I will fail*, or *I’m incapable*, and this language can paralyze you. You have to be jolted before you initiate internal reflection.

**Avoid communication breakdowns.** A *breakdown* occurs if you are suddenly jolted out of your *automatic action*—requiring you to assess your circumstances. Communication breakdowns happen when you don’t think about your words or their lingering effect. *Any habitual response is automatic* and falls into consistent, unconscious patterns, such as resorting to a conversation around old stories that keep you stuck in the past. For example, if

you say, “I don’t care how you do it, just get it done!” the receiver will likely have an internal breakdown—we all want to feel appreciated and valued for our contribution. You might say, “How do you envision achieving the task?” This keeps passion alive.

*Communication breakdowns* can also lead to *ambiguity*—the inability to confront brutal facts and act with conviction to resolve them. Much ambiguity comes from *lack of clarity and direction*. To avoid ambiguity: Make your choices strong and clear. Confront uncomfortable truths. Act with conviction and resolve. Take responsibility for the role you play and how you communicate with others. Set aside differences, and focus the dialogue on the results. Express your point of view clearly. Be



careful of *mixed messages*, such as telling people to speak up, take a stand, and take risks, yet rewarding playing it safe!

Language-induced breakdowns often result from messages being delivered in a command-and-control style—authoritative language that puts others down and makes assumptions. This style comes across as though you are giving orders and won’t listen to questions.

**Communicate your expectations clearly.** Don’t expect the receiver to know exactly what you expect in the outcome and what you mean. Instead, you need to say directly, “I have expectations that you will do this and that.” Unclear expectations result in wasted time and unnecessary tension. Design conversations that coordinate action, such as *requesting* someone to stop using words that put you down and cause shame, blame, and diminishing self-esteem. A coordinated action lives in *promises*, such as “I promise to complete the task by 5 p.m. today.”

**Speaking up.** Speaking up and clarifying your position is taking appropriate action. Language brings us together and enables us to live together. Problem-solving is a dialogue—with yourself or another person. Try being *vulnerable* by using the word *confess*. When you don’t have the answer, try saying, “I confess that I don’t know (have) the answer, but I promise that I will get back to you by 11 a.m. tomorrow morning with the answer. Will that work for you?”

**Your relationships are defined by the conversations you have** or don’t have with the people in your life, and you can determine *the quality of your relationships* by analyzing the conversation: “How do I create my conversations?” “Do I blame people or circumstances? Do I take responsibility to speak up to air the truth?” Wonder about what the behavior may be and listen for concerns. *Wonderment* lives in *the ability to connect with the essence or core of the other person* because of the effect you have on them. What draws you to some people and not others? Much of the pull has to do with the *communication connection*.

As you *alter the language* that shapes your choices, you enable *transformation*. *Transformation boils down to effective communication*. Think about your language. The words you choose can submerge you into negativity or elevate you to a higher consciousness—and take others with you. *That’s the power of language!* PE

Sandra Ford Walston, aka The Courage Expert, is innovator of StuckThinking and consultant, speaker, trainer, and author of *Courage, Stuck, and Face It!* Email Sandra@SandraWalston.com. www.SandraWalston.com

**ACTION:** Tap into the power of language.

# Choose Your Body

Experience health and wealth.



by Gary Bate

WHEN YOU AWOKE THIS morning, did you find yourself in a different body than the one you woke up in yesterday?

You will wake up tomorrow in the body you expect to wake up in—based on the conditions you reinforce in it today. This is exactly what is happening. You have a choice as to what body you wake up in: **Body 1**) Your body is all the things you dislike about yourself and what you dislike about others and what you dislike about your life; and **Body 2**) your body is radiantly healthy—and your partner is as beautiful as you are.

Which body do you choose? You may want *Body 2* but you choose *Body 1* when you don't yet understand the implications of your choices, and when you are addicted—emotionally, socially or physically—to *Body 1*.

For years, I've tracked my thoughts, the feelings I get from running them through my mind, and the resulting diseases that show up in my body. If I feel a certain emotion over and over, and I don't address it, it manifests physically. Recently I had a series of early morning nosebleeds. I realized that I couldn't be radiantly healthy and have a nosebleed in the morning—the two are not compatible. So, which one is the truth?

You and I have always had a *blue body*. Science has photographed the *blue corona*—the perfect template for our current body—that exists in the realm of *ultra-violet light*, a non-polarized energy field. By virtue of always having my *blue body*, I've always been radiantly healthy. But by my choice to descend into the *male polarity body* (for the purpose of experiencing it), I have thoughts that are inconsistent with my *blue-body*, and so I create disease in my physical body. My *unloving attitudes of separation* find their way into my body via their associated thoughts and feelings that remain unchecked.

You need to know *what love is not* to know *what love is* and discern between the two. The one is the truth—the other is the mental aberration. You need to know this to make a wise choice every night when you go to bed. Imagine focusing on the truth that *you are radiantly healthy and fabulously wealthy and you share your life with someone who is as beautiful as you are*—and that is all you

think about as you fall asleep.

You might still wake up in a place where you don't have money, but *fabulous wealth* doesn't necessarily mean *lots of money*. It could be *abundant knowledge* or *wisdom*, a lack of neediness—it's just a change of attitude. You can shift from all dislikes (emotions) to experiencing radiant health, but *radiant health* is consistent with a *purity of mind*. The *radiant being* is also an *impeccable being*—meaning that *your every thought and action can be written across the sky for all to read*.

**The reason your life doesn't change and you wake up in the same body, day after day, is because you don't change.**

You are *mentally and emotionally addicted* to the people, places, animals, and work in your life, and you keep it that way—even if the thoughts about it all and the resulting emotions create *less than optimal*

health and slow decay in your physical body.

**If you don't believe me, try this.** Go to bed tonight and make your mind up that you'll wake up radiantly healthy, have no memory of your past, and be blissfully happy with your perfect partner in life who is as beautiful as you are. I guarantee it won't happen—because *you won't want to give up what you've got* (because *you're addicted to your self-created identity*) and so your self-made drama continues.

**It doesn't matter how many times you chant your affirmations if you won't let go of your existing life in favor of the unknown.** The *impeccable life* is the only answer, but you can't be *impeccable* and hold onto your past at the same time. PE

Gary Bate is author of *We Are Here to Know Ourselves*. Visit [www.whatstress.com](http://www.whatstress.com).

**ACTION:** Exercise mind over body.

MENTAL • MEMORY

# Recall Your Past

You can find great power in it.



by John Schuster

THE CORE IDEA BEHIND *The Power of Your Past* is in sharp contrast to *nowness*—a concept advocated by philosophers who argue that *your past has little value* and that *now is what is most important*. I disagree. The past has great value—if you use it well. Sadly, you may now ignore, distort, or become captive to your past. You can tap into this treasure trove of wisdom by recalling, revisiting and reframing experience.

Effective people know *who they are* because *they have a great relationship with their past*.

**In remembering your past, you benefit in three ways: identity, potential, and direction.**

If you enter the *right relationship* with your yesterdays, you know who you are (*identity*). You know what you are capable of (*potential*) and don't sell yourself short for a goal that a less wise person, like you when you were younger, put in front of you, that won't use your original gifts. You create your own path (*direction*). You might think that you chose your path when you settled for what well meaning people guided you into, and which is *wrong for you*. Knowing *where you came from* deeply helps you know *what you want to do, where you want to go, and with whom*.

**What if you can't remember your past?** Talk to others who were there with you, like siblings, schoolmates and co-work-

ers. Hear their stories. Get their versions and see what that triggers for you.

**What might you do with memories once you recall them?** Get the specifics. See how they make you feel. How do you interpret them? Make meaning out of your memories. What you remember and how you interpret it when you are 15 will be different than when you are 30, 45, or 60. Your memories are not fixed. What you recall changes, gets new textures, and as you grow older and wiser the lessons and values you draw from them grows in value.

**Engage in the 3 Rs: recalling, reclaiming, and recasting.** *Recalling* is going for images: old ones that you can access and new ones that you have forgotten.

You can use your imagination and your analytical side to review your interactions with family, education, religion, gender, and more, especially what was powerful for you. After recalling memories, *reclaim* the juice and meaning in the positives that tend to be forgotten and devalued.

And *recast* the limits that come with negative memories. These will hold you captive if you don't re-interpret them from a wiser perspective. When they happened, you likely created conclusions, made limiting decisions, and made choices that need revisiting.

By practicing the 3Rs, you become *more of who you are*, walking in the *direction you set*, with *goals that only you can forge as the original contribution for which you were born*. PE

John Schuster is author of *The Power of Your Past* (Berrett-Kohler) Visit [www.johnpschuster.com](http://www.johnpschuster.com).

**ACTION:** Practice the three Rs.



# Cherry Trees and Cows

Don't compromise standards of excellence.



by Karen Steverson

A RECENT FLORIDA STORM left its mark on many residences, including mine. Standing in my front yard was a black cherry tree with dark shingle-like bark, almost 60 feet high and 40 inches in diameter. It had gorgeous leaves that glistened in the sun. It was the most beautiful tree in the neighborhood. But now, sadly, it has fallen. How could such a beautiful, healthy, and strong tree just topple to the ground?

If only this tree could talk and tell of the many storms it has withstood; the tornadoes it dodged; the parasites that tried to destroy it; yet, the torrential winds came and blew it over.

I sensed that I needed to learn something from this fallen tree. I thought about people that are beautiful, strong, and standing tall for the world to gaze upon. On the surface, it seems as if *nothing can knock them down*. They have the appearance of strength and fortitude, but the root system has a shallow connection to the soft and sinking sand because they place so much emphasis on the “outside” and the “image” and neglecting the core of their being.

I've watched great people stand for a season and even weather some horrific storms; but then comes that one storm that challenges the integrity and character of the root system. It is then they topple—for all the world to see. We ask, *How did this happen?* We're amazed that such a strong person could collapse—because all we see is what they wanted us to see—the outside, the image. What ultimately causes the downfall is *the mistreated root system*—inner workings.

I'm tired of watching *the external* take priority over *the internal*. If you focus on doctoring the image and making everything look good, but ignore the support system, you are doomed for failure. It is only a matter of time, because when *that one wind* blows, your breath-taking image can't hold it in place. No, *your stamina within* must conquer the wind.

When you focus on *the external*, you are consumed with quick results and the easy road to success. You want fast results. However, sustained success comes with hard work, silent decisions of ethical and right behavior toward

others, and a willingness to cover all the bases and not skip to the next step just to beat the competition. Refuse to compromise *standards of excellence*. We often don't see the hard work and daily dedication athletes take to succeed—we only see the results of it.

**I invite you to ask the tough questions:** Am I taking care of the details? Is my focus on the big and the successful more than the daily and disciplined? Am I more concerned with the image than the reality? Do I learn from mistakes? Is my root system being properly maintained and strengthened?

## Start Singing to the Cows

If someone had told me when I was a child that I'd be standing in front of people and speaking as a profession, I would have laughed at them! I was



shy, afraid to even hear myself speak out loud. I made excellent grades, but the thought of *standing in front of people* and *delivering a speech* made me ill.

Strangely, once I was comfortable with my surroundings, I could speak out loud and convey some verbal intelligence. It just took me forever to find that comfort level. I recall the internal struggle of wanting to speak out and be heard, but my inhibitions and fear of rejection and humiliation trumped.

When I was 11 years old, after dinner my parents would usher my two brothers and me outside to play. My older brother would go to his *basketball court* (an oak tree holding a basket). My younger brother played with the goats. And I'd sit on an old tub near the fence that encircled the cows in the pasture.

One night, I decided to start *singing to the cows*. They seemed quite content. Every evening for *three years*, until we moved, I'd perch on the old tub and sing to the cows. One week after the initial concert, the cows started gather-

ing as soon as they saw me. And I began to lose my fear of being heard.

Years later, and into my twenties, I sang a solo in front of 5,000 people. I felt great joy for being able to showcase my talent; yet, overshadowing that joy was *immense anxiety*, knowing I had to face my largest crowd and my greatest fear. As I prepared for that *life-changing moment*, I learned much about myself and facing my fears. The steps I took to overcome that fear helped guide me through more musical performances, directing, acting, producing plays, public speaking, attending law school, conducting trials, and working as a professor.

I share four steps to help you overcome the inhibitions that restrain you:

**1. Prepare!** You can't be *too prepared* for a speaking engagement. Researching your subject, and clearly understanding possible objections or opposing opinions will enable you to deliver a clear, persuasive speech. When you're afraid and nervous, you can rely upon your content to guide you. So, prepare well.

**2. Pick a passionate subject.** The best speeches are delivered with *intense passion*. It is believable when you hear people speak about matters that mean a lot to them. Also, you enjoy the preparation of the speech more if you care about the topic. Select a topic or musical piece that moves you emotionally. All of this shows in the actual presentation.

**3. Practice! Practice makes perfect—and permanent.** What you continue to do forms a *habit*, so practice with a competent person who can provide you with honest feedback. You do not want to perform less than your best. You also need to practice how you will be presenting. If you plan to go without notes, then you must practice without them. Watch yourself in the mirror when you practice. You'll see things that will help. Time yourself during your practices. Do not think you can *wing* your performance.

**4. Pretend they are cows!** When I went to perform my solo in front of the 5,000 person audience, I took a deep breath, walked out on stage, picturing myself as that little girl, perched on the tub, singing to the cows. With that picture in my mind, I felt safe and knew I could accomplish *the feat*. In fact, it was one of *the greatest treats* in my life.

Perhaps you can't sing to cows, but you can find that *safe place in your mind* that helps you conquer giants. Go there in your mind, before you speak, and deliver *your best, most passionate speech*. PE

Karen Steverson, MBA/JD, is a speaker, writer, and professor at Keiser Univ., FL. KarenSteverson@gmail.com.

**ACTION:** Practice your presentation/performance.

# Excellence

It is your choice.



by Don Sandel

THE DALAI LAMA IS KNOWN for his understanding of other religions, often weaving interconnected themes from one to another to help illustrate a point. In the book *The Leader's Way*, the Dalai Lama wrote about the powerful interconnectedness of choice: "The jewelry net of Indra provides a beautiful image of interdependence. Indra is the Hindu god of the universe. He has a net in the shape of a ball. At each knot is a jewel. When one jewel emits light, that light is reflected in all other jewels. The reflections are then returned to the emitting jewel, and then reflected again. Imagine yourself as one of the jewels. Each of your actions and decisions is reflected by everyone in the net of a changing, interdependent system."

Your choices have a big influence on those around you. In fact, *nothing contributes to success more than the choices you make*. You can be competent, well trained, coached, and mentored, have great qualities and yet be missing something key—the skill of making good choices. Choice is the elixir, the *sine qua non*, the paragon of effective leadership and without making more good choices than bad, any leader is doomed.

Consider the defining choices that leaders have made—and the impact of those choices. Ronald Reagan's choice to take on the evil empire and implore the Soviet Union to "tear down this wall." Harry Truman's agonizing choice to drop two atomic bombs to hasten the end of WWII. JFK's choice to stare down the communists during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Or Martin Luther King's choice to fight for equality using nonviolent protests. These were all defining moments for these leaders that affected millions of lives and changed history. If we view it through the Dalai Lama's metaphor of Indra, we witness the reflection of those choices in our own lives, and thus are connected to millions of others affected by those choices.

Such transformational moments aren't reserved for political leaders. *We can all make defining, transforming, courageous, and life-changing choices*. Your choices define you, and your sphere of influence.

**Consider the role of choice in your life.** The choices you make need not involve billions of dollars, or hold the

lives of millions of people in the balance to have impact. Your choices can have immense impact upon you, your team, and the people who follow you. As George Eliot wrote, "The strongest principle of growth lies in human choice." Developing yourself depends on *courageous choices*. When you have a choice to make, *gather input* from trusted sources.

Making wise choices depends on taking the *Right View*, which leads to *Right Action*. You begin with a calm, focused mind—*absent anger, jealousy, or insecurity*. This enables you to see reality as it is, leading to *more accurate data* and better choices. *Poor choices* usually result when you allow ego, insecurity or inaccurate data to cloud the path to *the better choice*.

**Choice is more powerful than talent.** The choices made by Lindsey Lohan, Charlie Sheen, and John Edwards

superseded their talent. As Dumbledore so aptly stated, "It is not our abilities that show what we truly are—it is our choices." Tiger Woods and Pete Rose were superstars, champions, and well-compensated pitchers. But Rose is forever defined by, and ostracized because of, his choice to bet on baseball while he was a player and coach. And Woods is marred by his choices that ruined his marriage, image, and golf game.

The world needs your talent, but talent only takes you so far. So, seek to make *the right choice*. Leadership is a journey of making good choices. *Play to your strengths, manifest your talents, but most importantly, choose well.* PE

Donald Sandel is a leadership consultant, speaker, and author. Email [dsandel@woorway.com](mailto:dsandel@woorway.com); call 847-392-5114.

**ACTION: Make excellence choices.**

## PROFESSIONAL • SUCCESS

# Are You Successful?

It depends how you define success.



by Linda Seger

WE ALL SEEM TO WANT IT. We all seem to seek it. Success seems to be the magic word for what we chase after, prepare for, choose, desire. It's how we often define our lives. We are told that money, fame, and power make up success. If we don't get it, we're consumed with envy of those who do. Some who feel they have lost this golden ring have mental breakdowns, mid-life crises, and illnesses. Others give up, and decide that *success* isn't important—simply having a job, home, and food suffice.

Americans tend to define *success* by money, and by *what money can buy*. We're known as *materialistic*, always striving for *more things* that money can buy—snazzy cars, big homes, and designer clothes. And that's what we get—*more things*, not *more fulfillment*.

Other people define *success* in terms of whether their work supports their family life. If they enjoy their work, and if it enables them to spend time with their family, they consider themselves successful. For them, *success* is defined by their ability to work, without compromising their family life.

**Success and effectiveness.** For some, *success* is defined by *effectiveness*. The question is: "Are they making things happen, achieving goals, contributing in

a way that adds value?" *Success* for them means things become better as a result of their work. They can see the results, and know their work fulfills others, either because the product they make is useful, or because the service they provide is helpful.

**Success and joy.** Some define *success* by how much joy they have as a result of their work—the joy they feel when they do the work and when they've finished the work; and by the joy that others feel as a result of their work. If their work doesn't add to their happiness and joy of themselves and others, then no matter how much money or accolades they receive, they feel unsuccessful. This joy not only comes from their work, but from the collaboration and harmony with other talented people.

**Success and balance.** Some define *success* by their sense of life balance. John Woolman, an early abolitionist, cut back on his work as a tailor since he wanted to be "*free of cumber.*" When work became *cumbersome* and left him no time for other things of value, he considered himself *unsuccessful*. If a job demands all your time, and gives you *no balance* between work, exercise, your family and other relationships, and spiritual growth, this can lead to a frenetic lifestyle, as well as illness, addiction, and family problems.

Most people define *success* by the *Good that is contributed*, and by *what is remembered about someone's work*. Has the person made a good difference? PE

Dr. Linda Seger is the author of *The Better Way to Win and Spiritual Steps on the Road to Success*. Visit [www.lindaseger.com](http://www.lindaseger.com) and [www.spiritual-steps.com](http://www.spiritual-steps.com).

**ACTION: Strive for your idea of success.**

# Are You Addicted?

Stop self-destructive behaviors.



by Jane Velez-Mitchell

**A**DDICTION DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE—it can affect anyone. My addictive personality infiltrated my life and led me to over-consume everything from alcohol to food to work to spending.

We've become a nation addicted to something—drugs, alcohol, food, pornography, gambling, shopping, or crime, becoming dependent on and devoted to certain dysfunctions, obsessions, and consumptions. We need to break free from *enslavement to our worst impulses*.

When enough people are hooked on the same substance or behavior, it becomes a *cultural addiction* to destructive customs. We tend to live in collective denial about our addictions. See your bad behavior for what it is: compulsive and self-destructive.

## Change Your Life

I discovered that *sobriety* is freedom—freedom from damage assessment; from having to apologize for things I did or said; from shame, remorse, or worry.

*I want you to experience that same freedom* if you are addicted to something that is self-destructive. Perhaps it's putting you in debt; making you high, overweight, distracted; or trivializing your relationships. When you become a slave to your worst impulses, you give up your freedoms. This nation was created to celebrate "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." We get to decide how we live our lives, how we spend our money, what we eat and wear, and how we relax.

*You need to confront the addiction* that robs you of your ability to make rational choices in your own self-interest. *Enslavement* comes in many forms. It's not always someone pointing a gun at you or building a wall. There is also psychological and emotional bondage. If you know that you are making a bad choice, and still cannot stop yourself, you are just as enslaved as if somebody were pointing a gun at you. Either way, you do not have what it takes to say no to self-defeating behavior.

## Addiction Determines Behavior

Beyond the obvious addictions of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, we now

face more temptations to seduce us into dangerous, even deadly choices. Today, many forces beguile us into bad behavior for their own purposes—usually for profit and power.

Almost everything being presented to us as a "free choice" is being packaged and sold in a way that's designed to get us hooked in order to guarantee that we keep coming back for more. For example, fast food—with its high levels of sugar, salt, and fat—is addictive, which helps explain our obesity crisis. Look at the foreclosure mess. Mortgages were offered to millions of people who couldn't afford them. Predatory mortgage brokers got their cut and didn't seem to care. Seductive lending policies triggered an addictive binge of spending and over-consumption. People bought homes above their



means and furnished them using high-interest rate credit cards. Eventually *the house of cards* (easy credit) crumbled.

We were *culturally intoxicated* on a *cocktail of complex lies*, and now we're reeling from the hangover. *There is huge money to be made on seducing you into addictive behavior*. Ask yourself, Do I really want to be a slave, just to make someone else rich and powerful?

*Freedom of choice implies that you have the free will to make a rational choice*. Freedom of choice implies you are capable of *deciding what is in your true self-interest*. Addiction messes with that equation. Addiction is *being powerless to say no* to a substance or behavior that gives you a quick hit of pleasure that often results in long-term pain or other negative consequences.

Our *crime addiction* can be seen in our obsession with the mass shooting *du jour* and wild car chases. After drugs, booze, and food, crime is our most potent and pervasive form of escape. *What's wrong with this?* Escapism is the root cause of all addiction. The motive

for addictive behavior is to *escape painful feelings and unpleasant truths* by altering your mental and emotional state with addictive substances or behaviors. The drug of choice may vary, but the purpose is always to head into oblivion.

*We are capable of being addicted to virtually anything*—from *plastic surgery* to tattoos to texting to sugar. Over the years, I've given up alcohol, drugs, sugar, meat, dairy, soda, violent movies, and other bad habits. But *new addictions just keep cropping up*. Addictive behavior is driven by the motive: to *check out*, to numb, and to escape. You're an addict when your behavior turns into a never-ending cycle of craving, bingeing, remorse, and withdrawal. That hangover, or withdrawal, then triggers a new bout of craving, and the cycle begins again.

Sometimes *addiction* is called *taking our comfort*. When I'm eating the cake, a voice in my head tells me, "I'm entitled, I've earned it. I've worked hard. And it tastes so good! *Any addiction is ultimately self-destructive, even an addiction to something that in moderation is good for you*, like exercise. You're always adjusting to cultural attitudes, lurching from addiction to addiction, stamping out one bad habit only to see others take its place.

*Addicts don't listen to reason*. A *craving* is powerful. Have you ever tried to get a friend to stop smoking by telling them they're liable to get cancer? *Reason* is no match for addiction. Addicts are known for being stubborn and defiant.

*Addicts have the ultimate sense of entitlement*. Nothing will stop them from getting their drug of choice! That's the addict mindset. Addiction is a progressive pattern, leading to invariably uglier and more destructive behavior until a "bottom" is hit; obsessive rituals and elaborate paraphernalia; defiance and denial in the face of evidence of the wreckage caused by the addiction; strenuous and imaginative rationalizations to justify the addictive behavior; the *user* is invariably paired with a *pusher*. One is exploited while the other profits.

*Addiction is progressive*. If addiction is not confronted and treated, it will get worse. The addict's pleasure receptors require an ever-increasing amount of the same substance/behavior for the high to kick in. Addicts are *insatiable*, always needing more *junk* to get and stay high.

You can be defined by addiction and enslavement (life-threatening obesity or pervasive drug dependency) or discipline and freedom—it's your choice. **PE**

*Jane Velez-Mitchell is author of Addict Nation: An Intervention for America (HCI Books). kimw@hcibooks.com*

**ACTION:** Stop your self-destructive behaviors.

## Clean Up Your Act

Get your house and family in order.



by Amy Kossoff Smith

**Y**OU ARE LIKELY DILIGENT about changing the oil to ensure your car runs well; visiting the doctor for annual check-ups; and attending to other preventive maintenance activities. But the most important part of our life—family, house, kids—can unravel quickly in piles of “to do’s,” “should’ve done’s,” and more—if you don’t have good systems in place for staying organized and systematic in how you approach daily tasks.

You can take *spring cleaning* a step further this year, by applying that same enthusiasm and fervor to your family, house, and kids. Imagine the benefit of investing in a family/house/kids tune-up by applying some simple principles to organizing our life. The key benefit is that your *energy deficit* each day can *dramatically decrease* and make you feel more confident, satisfied, and uncluttered.

**Teamwork is key.** Too often, it’s easier to do the job ourselves than to engage the help of others. We promote teamwork through sports, put our kids in uniforms to celebrate the “membership” with their peers, but too often we forget to implement teamwork at home. Consider a *team meeting* where the family sets aside a time each week to put together a game plan. After dinner, put on some fun music, and tell everyone it’s a *clean-up party until the job’s done*.

**Make chores work.** It does take some work to set up a chore system, but the paybacks are endless. Give chores creative titles to increase compliance and enthusiasm with kids. For example, the *electrician* turns off the lights; the *assistant chef* helps at mealtime. It takes a little effort to set up a chores system, but imagine the relief when half of your to do list is being done by others! Plus, you help your children develop a work ethic and show them a healthy dynamic in a family where everyone makes a valuable and necessary contribution.

**Post responsibilities and vary tasks.** Post a chore chart so kids can see what is expected of them. Think about age-appropriate jobs for everyone, and vary the tasks every so often to prevent chore fatigue. Kids can help at any age; little ones can sort laundry; big kids can do laundry. Your kids’ electronic games are more complicated than a washer/dryer,

so don’t hesitate to involve them. You’ll be glad you did, and your kids will feel satisfaction after a job well done. You can use a write on/wipe off chart where kids can check off completed jobs, or any system that works for your family.

**Chart it!** Chart tasks, to-do’s. Keep track of each family member’s major illnesses or medical events. This gives you a reference point, and also helps your doctor prescribe the most effective path to wellness, especially if you keep notes about what works, what doesn’t, what gives you problems when you take it. This same idea can apply to carpools, birthday party RSVP’s and gifts, and to any task; if you organize it in categories, you can accomplish (and track) it better.

**De-clutter closets.** Adopt the *out with the old, in with the new* spirit. Plastic bins let you store things neatly, and you can

see through for quick access later. Store out-of-season items by category. Plastic bins can also stack to store *in-season items*. Store summer items in containers that close and stack, so you can find them when you need them. Since kids grow each year, go through their closets and store for your next child, or donate it!

**De-clutter garages and common areas.** *De-cluttering* is the essence of a *clean-up*. The garage becomes a dumping ground for many things. So, attack the beast—and think about other areas (foyer closet, powder room cabinets) that could use a purge, and trash or donate unused items.

Even if you do your *spring clean-up* in the summer, you can get the job done. **PE**

*Amy Kossoff Smith is Founder of The MomTini Lounge and owner the PR firm, Write Ideas. Visit [www.MomTiniLounge.com](http://www.MomTiniLounge.com).*

**ACTION:** Clean and de-clutter this summer.

## PHYSICAL • GARDENING

### Gardening for Life

Learn to grow food this year.



by Ellen LaConte

**L**EARNING TO GROW YOUR own veggies and fruits may be more than a rewarding pastime—it may be a lifesaver.

Growing your food has six benefits:

1. **It’s a source of fresh, delicious, wholesome food.** Homegrown food is fresher, healthier, tastier. It *keeps you alive*—and *makes life worth living*.

2. **It gives you satisfaction.** Most vegetable gardeners get satisfaction due to the sense of *self-reliance* that comes from providing for yourself, loved ones and friends something that you and they need.

3. **It’s real-time real work.** But the break from your job feels more like a *vacation*. Gardening relaxes you. You work on nature time, not clock time.

4. **It’s a spiritual thing.** Sacred texts refer to *gardens*, and *most spiritual teachers use gardening metaphors and parables* to teach. For many, the garden, even one created in pots on a patio, triggers a connection with the Source of all that is, which makes us partners in creation.

5. **It keeps us fit and healthy.** Gardening is one of the best ways to get and stay fit even before it offers up bounties of food that amplify fitness. Muscle groups you didn’t know you had get worked. It’s an *aerobic* and *isotonic* sport.

6. **And it might someday save your life.** The global economy is too big not

to fail. Dwindling resources, climate instability, rising prices, and other red flags point to a future in which cheap, abundant, and readily available food may no longer be there for us. Then, the ability to grow your food will no longer be a hobby but a survival skill.

#### Getting Started

**Compensate for lack of space.** Start a container or a raised-bed garden—they heat up more quickly so you can plant sooner and *enjoy a high yield*.

**Start small.** Choose a few easy-to-cultivate vegetables, fruits, and herbs, preferably ones that already feature prominently in your diet.

**Plant a fruit tree.** Consider planting cherry, apple, or peach saplings. As they grow, the trees will be *beautiful* and *practical*. Peaches, plums, figs, lemons, limes can be grown in pots.

**Farm alongside flowers.**

Why not plant some tomatoes or cilantro along with those zinnias and pansies?

**Grow your own spice rack.**

Herbs are easy to grow, don’t require much space, and can spice up your meals! Plus, you can stock your shelf with dried herbs to last the year round.

**Practice pollution-free pest control.**

Hot pepper sprays, garlic, used dishwater, and even some plants naturally repel insects and animals alike.

**Make it a group effort.** Gardening need not be a solitary activity! Share the work and yield with a neighbor.

There’s no better way to go green than to *grow green*. **PE**

*Ellen LaConte is a gardener and author of Life Rules (Green Horizon). Visit [www.ellenlaconte.com](http://www.ellenlaconte.com).*

**ACTION:** Grow your own garden this summer.



# Fiscal Responsibility

*Here's my plan to win the future.*



by Barack Obama

**T**HE DEBATE OVER BUDGETS and deficits is about more than just *cutting and spending*. It's about the kind of future we want and the kind of country we believe in.

From our first days as a nation, we've put our faith in *free markets and free enterprise*. We are rugged individualists—a self-reliant people with a healthy skepticism of too much government. But we also believe that we are all connected and that through government, *we should do together what we cannot do as well for ourselves*. So we've built a strong military to keep us secure; public schools and universities to educate us; railroads and highways to facilitate travel and commerce. We've supported the work of scientists and researchers. Each of us has benefited from these investments.

We also believe that *each of us deserves some basic measure of security*. No matter how responsibly we live our lives, hard times or bad luck, a crippling illness or a layoff, may strike us. And so we contribute to Medicare and Social Security, which guarantee us health care and a measure of income after a lifetime of hard work; unemployment insurance, which *protects us* against unexpected job loss; and Medicaid. *We would not be a great country without those commitments*. As a country that values *fairness*, wealthier people bear a greater share of this burden. *Those who benefit most from our way of life can afford to give more back*.

During war or recession, our nation has had to borrow money. A little credit card debt doesn't hurt—if it's temporary. But *when I took office, we found ourselves deeply in debt*. Our projected deficit was more than \$1 trillion. And, we faced a terrible financial crisis and a recession that led us to temporarily borrow even more. We took *a series of emergency steps* that saved millions of jobs, kept credit flowing, and provided working families extra money. These steps were expensive, and added to deficits.

Now, *we must restore fiscal responsibility, live within our means, reduce our deficit, and get back on a path that will allow us to pay down our debt*. And we do it in a way that protects the recovery, and the investments we need to grow, create jobs, and win the future.

By 2020, the interest we owe on our

debt could rise to \$1 trillion. Then, as Baby Boomers retire and health care costs rise, the situation will get worse. By 2025, the taxes we now pay will only finance our health care programs, Social Security, and interest on debt. We'll have to pay for other priorities—education, transportation, national security—with borrowed money.

*This doesn't have to be our future.*

We came together before to meet this challenge, and we can do it again. But that starts by *being honest about what's causing our deficit*. Most Americans tend to dislike government spending in the abstract, but they like the stuff it buys. We want to have a strong military and a strong defense, invest in education and medical research, and protect Social Security and Medicare—*without paying higher taxes*. So, politicians are eager to



feel the impression that solving the problem is just a matter of eliminating waste and abuse—or foreign aid.

*Two-thirds of our budget is spent on Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and national security*. Programs like unemployment insurance, student loans, veterans' benefits, and tax credits for working families take up another 20 percent. What's left, after *interest on debt*, is just 12 percent for all else—education and clean energy; medical research and transportation; food safety and keeping our air and water clean.

Until now, the cuts proposed have focused on that 12 percent. But those cuts won't solve the problem. Any *serious plan* to tackle our deficit will require us to *put everything on the table*, and take on excess spending wherever it exists.

*A serious plan requires tough decisions*. But we don't have to choose between *a future of spiraling debt and one where we forfeit investments in our people and country*. To meet our fiscal challenge, we will all need to *make sacrifices*.

*I propose a more balanced approach*

to achieve \$4 trillion in deficit reduction over 12 years. It puts every spending on the table, but protects the middle-class, our promise to seniors, and our investments in the future.

**Step 1: keep annual domestic spending low by building on the savings** that we agreed to recently—a step that will save \$750 billion over 12 years. We will *make the tough cuts necessary to achieve these savings*, including programs I care about, but I'll not sacrifice the *core investments* we need to grow and create jobs.

**Step 2: find additional savings in our defense budget.** As *Commander-in-Chief*, I have no greater responsibility than protecting our national security. I'll never accept cuts that compromise our ability to defend our homeland or America's interests around the world. But we must find more savings in defense. Over the last two years, we have saved \$400 billion. I believe we can do that again.

**Step 3: further reduce health care spending.** We'll reduce *wasteful subsidies and erroneous payments*. We'll cut spending on prescription drugs by using Medicare's purchasing power to drive greater efficiency and speed generic brands onto the market. We'll demand more efficiency and accountability from Medicaid. We'll change the way we pay for health care with new incentives for doctors and hospitals to prevent injuries and improve results. And we'll slow the growth of Medicare costs while protecting access to the services seniors need. These reforms will save \$500 billion by 2023.

**Step 4: reduce spending in the tax code.** I will limit itemized deductions for the *wealthiest 2 percent*. The tax code is loaded with *itemized deductions*. While I agree with the goals of many of these deductions, like home ownership or charitable giving, we can't ignore that they provide millionaires an average tax break of \$75,000 while doing nothing for middle-class families that don't itemize.

This reform will reduce the deficit by \$320 billion over 10 years. To reduce the deficit further, I call on Congress to reform our individual tax code so that it is fair and simple. And we should reform our corporate tax code.

**We need to act boldly now.** This is our *vision for America*—a vision where *we live within our means* while still investing in our future; where *everyone makes sacrifices* but no one bears all the burden; where *we provide a basic measure of security and rising opportunity* for our children. **PE**

Barack Obama is President of the United States of America; this article is adapted from his speech at George Washington Univ., April 13, 2011. Vital Speeches of the Day. David Murray, veditor@mcmurray.com.

**ACTION: Practice personal fiscal responsibility.**

# Wealth Planning

Use a disciplined approach.



by Rick Rodgers

**T**AX TIME IS A GOOD TIME FOR planning *how to have more gold* for your golden years.

There are more ways to save for retirement than just taking advantage of your company's 401K, which today is like stuffing your savings in a mason jar. You need to get creative and *take advantage of all the different ways the law allows* to save money now, earn more money tomorrow and have more to retire on later.

My advice for this year includes:

**Save your tax refund.** The average refund is about \$3,000. If you saved this money each year for 30 years, it could provide a major part of your retirement income. Better yet, reduce your tax withholding by \$253 per month and save the same amount monthly. *Monthly compounding* grows even faster.

**Do not defer your income in a 401(k) plan if you're in a 15 percent tax bracket unless your employer matches the amount you save.** Save the money in a Roth IRA instead. Tax brackets will likely never be lower than now (there's a good chance they'll be higher). Distributions from a Roth IRA will be tax free in retirement.

**Invest money saved outside of a retirement account in stock mutual funds.** Most earnings on stock funds are either in the form of *qualified dividends* or *long term capital gains*. Both types of income are taxed at 0 percent in a 15 percent tax bracket and a maximum of 15 percent in higher tax brackets. Tax-free funds currently offer returns comparable to taxable funds. The average yield on *intermediate tax-free fund* was 3.6 percent versus an *intermediate taxable fund* at 3.9.

**Say no to higher health insurance premiums.** Start a *Health Savings Account* with a high deductible policy. The maximum deductible contribution is \$6,150 for 2011 for families and \$3,050 for single coverage. Distributions are tax free if used for medical expenses and balances can be carried over from year to year. Premiums on a *high deductible policy* are about *half the cost* of a traditional policy.

**Give money directly to a charity from your IRA** this year if you are age 70. Making *charitable gifts* this way keeps the taxable income off your tax return. This could lower the amount of your Social Security benefits that are subject to tax.

*If you took money out of a retirement*

*account before age 59, you'll owe tax on the distribution but you may be able to avoid the penalty.* Find out if you qualify for the *six exceptions* to the penalty.

The law allows you many ways to save money. Filing *quick and dirty tax forms* may get a quick refund, but you may be shortchanging yourself in the future. There are many more opportunities to stretch your retirement savings.

## Guard Your Wealth

You need to *feel comfortable* that your wealth is being managed wisely and that your retirement strategy is working for you. We developed the *WealthGuard Planning Process* to address your key concerns: *Have you saved too little or are you spending too much? Have you invested in the right mix of tax savings strategies to produce a comfortable income stream? Do*

## FINANCIAL • PROSPERITY

# Laws of Prosperity

Create an abundant life.



by Randy Gage

**I**BELIEVE THERE ARE SEVEN *spiritual laws* you must

live by to manifest true prosperity in your life. Discovering and applying these laws enabled me to turn from *abject poverty* to *abundant riches*.

**1. Vacuum Law.** To manifest prosperity in your life, *create a vacuum*. You are surrounded by *good everywhere*. The only lack is the lack in your mind.

Open your mind to receive prosperity, and you'll attract it to fill that empty space.

**2. Circulation Law.** Miserly hoarding leads to recession.

When you *circulate substance*, you keep prosperity flowing. When you give away money, shoes, clothes or other items

you no longer use, *you receive your good*.

**3. Imaging Law.** Prosperity, like all forms of success, *is created in the mind first*. When you image things in your *conscious mind*, you program your *subconscious mind* to manifest them.

**4. Law of Ideas.** You manifest prosperity by the power of ideas. If you can think of an idea, you can manifest it.

**5. Law of Reciprocity.** What you give comes back to you multiplied. You can never out-give the universe. The more you give, the more you get back.

**6. Law of Tithing.** You never know how your tithe will come back to you. Money is a common way, but it could also come in the form of reconciliation



*you need long-term care insurance? Are your investments performing and in line with your needs? Have you planned for a tax-efficient retirement? What is the most important thing to do now if you're planning for retirement within five years?*

**WealthGuard is a six-step system:** We *Listen* to understand your needs, goals, and concerns; we *Gather* your personal financial information; we *Analyze* your asset structure, ownership, performance, tax situation and estate plan; we *Develop* a written plan balancing *investment goals* with *tax efficient strategies*; we *Implement* the right strategy for your situation, and *Monitor* your plan by regularly reviewing and assessing performance. **PE**

Rick Rodgers, CFP, is a speaker, wealth manager, president of Rodgers & Associates, and author of *The New Three-Legged Stool*. *TheNewThreeLeggedStool.com*.

**ACTION:** *Engage in disciplined financial planning.*

with someone, a gift, a new relationship, healing, or promotion.

**7. Law of Forgiveness.** If you hold onto thoughts of revenge, you block out love. If you hold on to resentment, you hang on to being a victim and rule out being a victor. Release negative feelings—they eat you up inside and prevent you from manifesting good.

Some laws may be familiar to you if you're familiar with the film *The Secret*, with its focus on the *Law of Attraction*. The concepts discussed in the film are what I call the *Imaging Law*. However **I take a more practical approach**, using manifestation maps, affirmations, and auto-suggestion to *help you program your mind to actions toward prosperity*. My friend, Richard Brookes, invites you to write a script of your perfect day, involving as many senses as possible to make the experience seem real. You want to *see it, hear it, taste it, smell it, touch it, and feel it*. Only when you first *experience prosperity* in your mind and heart can you manifest it.

**Manifestation maps are another way to program your mind for prosperity.** Take a poster and fill it with photos, drawings, graphics and visual affirmations of what you want to do, have or become. Put it where you will see it.

Also, use *goal cards*, *positive statements* in your day planner, or *sticky notes with affirmations*. Think about what you're trying to manifest. The emotion anchors the thought in your mind. The more *emotions* you engage, the clearer the picture—and *the sooner you'll manifest it*. **PE**

Randy Gage is author of *Prosperity Mind and Accept Your Abundance*. Visit [www.RandyGage.com](http://www.RandyGage.com).

**ACTION:** *Observe these laws of prosperity.*

# Self-Governance

*This is our job as citizens.*



by Oliver DeMille

**M**Y OLDEST DAUGHTER asked me recently, “What is the key thing I need to know about freedom?” I answered, *local governance*. The most basic unit of society—above the family—are small councils that include all adults in the decision-making process.

These councils maintain freedom by including in local decisions the voices and votes of all adult citizens. They make decisions by majority vote after open discussion. They also appoint mayors/chiefs, law enforcement leaders, judges and other officials who report directly to the full council of all adults and can be removed by the council.

Any representative state or national government breaks down when citizens aren’t actively involved in governance at the local levels. In this model, every adult citizen is officially a government official; hence, all citizens study the government system, their role in it, the issues and laws and cases, and think like leaders. *They learn leadership by leading*. Without this local participatory system, freedom is eventually lost.

The most successful tribes, communities and nations have adopted this model of local governance. The result, in every society, is increased freedom and prosperity. No free society has maintained its great freedom once this system eroded. Tocqueville called local citizen governance *the most important piece* of America’s freedom model in maintaining freedom and prosperity.

## True Elder Brother

What’s often missing in our politics is what Keller calls *The True Elder Brother* who says, “Father, my younger brother has been a fool, and now his life is in ruins. But I will go look for him and bring him home. And if the inheritance is gone, as I expect, I’ll bring him back to the family at my expense.”

This is an example of citizenry that handles things. Poor, hungry, in need of education? We’ll help. We won’t ask government to do it—we will do it, now, without waiting, without questions. Somebody needs help? Here we are—send us. Or, “Give us your poor, your tired, your struggling masses

yearning to be free.”

That’s what free people do. The liberal argument (*government should use its power and force to fix the problems*) is as bad as the conservative argument (*it’s their own fault, so too bad for them—let them suffer, or let someone help them, but don’t you dare make me help!*). Free people act like free people. They see needs, and they help. They don’t turn to government, or ignore the needs (this is selfish and wrong). Such a society stays free. If they ever stop being this way, they lose their freedoms. The question of freedom is, *will people govern or politic?* Will they lead (and spread freedom) or snivel (and lose their freedom).



## Our Job as Citizens

*When problems arise, free people handle them, leaving to the government only matters like protecting national security and fighting crime. The problem is that in party politics, everything becomes about government. Liberals want government to fix everything, conservatives want the government to stick to national security, law enforcement, education and projects that benefit one’s own state. Meanwhile, who is helping those in need? And who is watching the government to ensure our freedoms remain strong? These jobs are the roles of the citizenry. But when politics gets involved, we forget and ignore both—and freedom declines. As citizens we must stop getting caught up in political issues, help those in need, and understand and maintain freedom. These are acts of self-governance, not politics.*

Are we deserving of the title of *free people*? Let’s find out. Suppose that in your neighborhood: Several poor families need help; immigrants come looking to make a living; the environment is being polluted; and several minority families can’t afford college for their children. Do you call in the govern-

ment? Do you comment on how these people should “get off their butts” and fix their lives, and do nothing else? And, when the government does something, do you throw up your hands in anger and frustration? Do you visit the families, make friends, offer the father a better job or get him an interview with a friend of yours, start a scholarship drive for the college-age kids, get together a service project to clean the polluted areas, etc.? These are the behaviors of people who deserve freedom.

“*But the government won’t let us!*” you may argue. “*But if we do the work, people won’t value it.*” “*But I’m too busy supporting my family.*” “*But fixing this would cost too much.*” “*It’s their problem—why don’t they do it themselves.*” “*But this is a job for government, not for me.*” These “*Buts*” are not the words of the free. *Free people figure out how to do things right and do the right things.*

Far too many people turn to the government—some angrily complain and bluster, others take from the rich and give to the poor—after using up most of the money on administrative expenses. This is the world of politics.

But *true elder brothers*, those who are free and think like the free, choose differently. *They see needs and take action.* They wisely think it through and do it the right way. They solve problems, improve things, and conserve freedom, dignity, and prosperity.

Conservatives value responsibility, morality, strength, and national freedom; liberals prize open-mindedness, kindness, caring, fairness and individual freedom. Both lists are good. They don’t have to be in conflict. Indeed, both are the heritage we enjoy from past generations of free people who at their best valued and lived all of these together.

If we would all just be nicer, more caring, more tolerant and helpful, freedom would increase. If liberals and progressives would all work to *provide more personal service and voluntary solutions* with less government red tape, we would see a lot more positive progress.

Freedom works, and we need *less politics, more freedom*. We should vote and fulfill the other *vital roles of free citizens*: build our communities and nations, support a government that accomplishes what it should, study and understand freedom, keep an eye on government to maintain our freedoms, and *voluntarily and consistently help all those in need.* PE

*Oliver DeMille is former president of George Wythe University, co-founder of the Center for Social Leadership, co-creator of TJE Online, and author of A Thomas Jefferson Education. Email info@thesocialleader.com.*

**ACTION:** *Serve and fulfill your role as a citizen.*

# Civility Lost

How you can restore it.



by Robert L. Dilenschneider

**I**N EVERY SECTOR OF SOCIETY, the virtue of *civility* has declined—or been abandoned.

We see vicious political rhetoric, screaming blogs, lack of personal decency, and strife—an *inability to work across factions* and parties without rancor or acrimony.

*We need to restore a measure of civility in our dealings.* As Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, President Emeritus, University of Notre Dame, notes: “Given the turbulent times we’re experiencing and recognizing the stakes that will determine the shape and future of the next generation, civility is a key civic issue.”

We’re in the throes of *wrenching change*—economic, ideological, geo-political.

Economies are in a free fall, and no one seems to know when the *slowdown* will end or what shape the new economic order will take. More than half of the world’s population survives on less than \$2 a day. We live in the *global century*, better connected than ever, yet there is less cooperation toward a common, aspirational purpose. Leaders used to lay out what was possible and work toward it. This is not happening today.

The expectations of citizens are high, but leaders—politicians, CEOs, NGO chiefs, and others—are doing little to address the *big issues* of education, healthcare, trade, global coordination, and climate change. Washington has lost the confidence of many people who feel they have no control over their lives and who look bleakly at the future. The overwhelming sentiment is anxiety.

Many people see no bright horizon or welcoming future. Many are scared, living from paycheck to paycheck, if they haven’t already been laid off. Everyone expressed concerns about pervasive uncertainty and lawlessness and the real fear that the gap between the West and the Muslim world is widening dangerously. Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have re-grouped and intend to create more havoc in the months ahead.

*Yet, it is still possible that new leaders with new ideas will emerge* and make a difference—if they will supplement *staying on top of the latest technology with time-tested communications skills.* Yes, we need to plug in to as many information sources as possible and understand how we can best contribute and shape the

environment. At the same time, we can’t forget traditional methods of networking. If you look beyond *the new rules*, you’ll find *the old rules*, the enduring ones—the ability to be gracious and civil, the ability to be decent, the ability to look for a higher purpose, to give back. All those things are values that must be inherent in you or that you must adopt if you are going to be a power player.

You need to obtain a perspective—an early warning—of what’s beyond the horizon. Power players must not overlook the most critical *power rule* of all: the human element—connecting with people. By speaking with people, by communicating with them in writing, by sending a card or small gift to thank

someone for extending himself or herself, you build relationships and networks that will last. You may know how to network, but it’s how you keep the network alive that will be key to your progress.

By putting pen to paper or picking up the phone to have a conversation, *you can have a much greater impact* than firing off an e-mail. You can transmit a thought through e-mail, but you can’t transmit personal taste, cultural differences and beliefs. Without follow-up and direct contact, *you won’t get the desired result.* PE

Robert L. Dilenschneider is president of the Dilenschneider Group and author of *Power and Influence* (McGraw Hill). Call 212-922-0900 or visit [www.dilenschneider.com](http://www.dilenschneider.com).

**ACTION:** Become a service power player.

## SERVICE • ACTION

# Get Up and Go

Join forces to serve others.



by Michele Obama

**I’M A BIG PROPONENT OF GETTING up and going, making sure we are moving, eating healthy, and serving others with our strength.**

In April, I was excited about this year’s *Easter Egg Roll* at the White House since the theme was *Get Up and Go*. In addition to listening to music and dancing, participants could roll eggs, do yoga, tackle the obstacle course, play basketball or tennis, or just listen to wonderful storytellers. Many talented people volunteered to serve some 30,000 people who came through the South Lawn. That’s amazing. We couldn’t do this event without them.

I think it’s time for all of us to *stop talking and get up and go, and do some moving.* That’s why Jill Biden and I have launched *Joining Forces*—our campaign to recognize, honor, support, and serve our military families. *We want to give back* to these families that give all of us so much. We’re joining forces as neighbors, colleagues, and classmates. Our motto is simple: *everyone* can do *something*, even young boys and girls, to support a military family. So, ask yourself, *What can I do? How can I give back?*

For the past two years, Jill and I have traveled across America and the world, meeting with our men and women in uniform, our veterans, and their families. So we know about their courage and patriotism. We’ve seen it firsthand. We know about the sacrifices that they

make for our country and about the challenges that they face every day.

Many military spouses work one fulltime job during the day and a second fulltime job of running a household and raising kids, and doing it all alone while a spouse is deployed. We see them trying to build seniority at their jobs, but they have to keep starting over every time they move.

Our veterans and military spouses have much to offer. They do *amazing things*. They are hard-working, talented people. They master advanced technologies and run complex operations. They have extensive experience in managing people. Many have some college education, along with skills and

experiences that come with being a military spouse—qualifications that you won’t learn at school—the ability to work well with all kinds of people; the ability to multi-task and think outside of the box; the ability to weather adversity and adapt to changing circumstances.

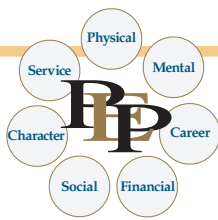
*We’re joining forces with everyone who cares*—urging you to reach out to our military families, to *give something back* to the military families who’ve given us so much. Perhaps you can do a service project to support them. Maybe you can tell that military mom down the street that you’ll take her shift in the carpool, or mow the lawn, or start a group at your place of worship to help lighten the load during deployment.

*Get up and go—get involved.* If we all work together, if we all join forces, then we can serve our military families as well as they’ve served us. PE

Michele Obama is First Lady of the United States of America. Visit [www.joiningforces.gov](http://www.joiningforces.gov).

**ACTION:** Get up and go serve families in need.





# GOAL GETTERS



**If you base your self-esteem on how well you compare to others in your field,** then if no one else

can match your expertise, your self-esteem is satisfied; if someone else surpasses you, your self-esteem is devastated.

In a sense, you are placing your self-esteem at the mercy of others. This gives you a vested interest in being surrounded by inferiors; it gives you reason to fear talent rather than welcome, admire and take pleasure in it. This is not a formula for healthy self-esteem but a prescription for anxiety. To tie your self-esteem to any factor outside your volitional control, such as the choices or actions of others, is to invite anguish. That so many people judge themselves just this way is their tragedy.

If you base your self-esteem on achievement, and you might fail, then why try? With no attempt, there can be no failure; with no failure, no humiliation. So your self-feeling depends entirely on what you back yourself to be and do. It is determined by the ratio of your actualities to your supposed potentialities and pretensions.

William James defines *Self-esteem* as *Success divided by potentialities and pretensions*. If so, then your self-esteem can equally be protected by increasing your success or lowering your pretensions. Hence, people who aspire to nothing, neither in work nor in character, and achieve it, and people of high accomplishment and character, are equals in self-esteem. I don't believe this. People with aspirations so low that they meet them mindlessly and effortlessly are not conspicuous for their psychological well-being. How well you live up to your personal standards and values clearly influences your self-esteem.

—Nathaniel Branden,  
[www.NathanielBranden.com](http://www.NathanielBranden.com)



**To succeed, you just need to turn the ordinary into extraordinary.** An extraordinary person is someone who consistently does the

things ordinary people can't do or won't do. So, to become extraordinary, give yourself and others strong reasons to do those things. You don't need to be extraordinarily gifted. Success is available to anyone who will learn a few simple principles and consistently put them into practice daily, and exert persistent effort, making small incremental improvements day in and day out. The key is to cultivate *an attitude of excellence*, and to make it a part of your everyday activities, setting and meeting high standards to develop a differential advantage (DA). The DA may come from doing things faster, cheaper, more skillfully or more thoroughly. It may come from having more experience, more knowledge or more locations. It may come from being the biggest, most flexible or the most accessible. Or it may consist of the ability to meet the needs of people in a way no one else can quite match. Your DA must be an advantage that is tangible and observable. People must be able to see it quickly and perceive that you are different and better, and that this difference benefits them. The better you can translate your DA into specific value to others, the stronger will be your appeal. You have to sell yourself and those closest to you on investing the resources so you can get the job done and get it done right. That calls for influential leaders—extraordinary leaders who are *teachable* (open to new ideas and methods; new ways of doing things; listen, observe and learn constantly); *adaptable* (willing and able to adjust to constant change); *flexible* (willing to work more fluidly with people, dealing with people of many different talents, temperaments and behavior styles); *creative* (willing to try it, fix it, and do it); and *sensitive* (keen awareness of the needs, interests and concerns of other people). The difference between the ordinary and the extraordinary is a little *extra* (education, development, enthusiasm, challenge motivation, performance).

—Nido R. Qubein [www.NidoQubein.com](http://www.NidoQubein.com)

# PersonalCOACH



**Are You Over the Hill?**  
*Only if you think you are.*  
by Darlene Quinn

**A**S SOMEONE WHO FORGED A NEW CAREER AS a novelist in my 70s, I'm distressed by a new study that concludes women feel like they are getting old when *they are a mere 29*, while men don't feel their age until they're 58. A quarter of women said they felt like they were over-the-hill when they found their first gray hairs, while men said age didn't sink in with them until their sex lives were affected.

*The secret to feeling young is to ignore the media and plot your own path.* I keep hearing this phrase *over the hill*, but I've never experienced it. I was 49 when I resigned as an executive with Bullocks Wilshire department store chain, and I didn't feel old then, and I don't feel old now. However, I can see how some women could feel that way, with *how the media portrays women* in film and TV shows. They are all either *young and pretty* or *old and infirmed*. In the movies, there is no middle age, so I can see why many women would feel like 29 is over-the-hill. If you're a woman in Hollywood, and you're over 40, it's almost like you don't exist until you're old enough to play someone's grandmother.

My transformation into a published novelist in my 70s was like drinking from the *Fountain of Youth*. When I was a kid, I listened to my favorite programs and let my imagination run wild. But the stories I composed were in my head, either for my own enjoyment or sometimes acted out with my close friends. In a sense, I started my life as a creative writer then, but I never used a pen and paper until I was *well past retirement*—and it would make me feel like a kid again.

*As far as I am concerned, 70 is the new 40*, in dress and actions. As long as there are no major health issues, *there is no need to get old, or feel old*. During my career, I was a consultant, teacher, and top executive in high fashion retail. I never felt *the glass ceiling* above me—my focus was on my next challenge.

Sometimes life leads you away from a path you might have chosen, but whether you are 29 or 79, you don't have to stay on those paths. *You have the power and choice to start something new, to do something else, and to ignore the voices that say you're too old or too set in your ways.* You can change your ways if you want to. As long as you have breath in your body, you can continue to pursue your passions—and that will keep you young. PE

Darlene Quinn is author of *Webs of Power* and its sequel *Twisted Webs*. Visit [www.darlenequinn.net](http://www.darlenequinn.net).

**ACTION:** *Feel young and keep creative.*

# Fight to Be You

## It'll be your hardest battle.



by Joe Cala

**I**N LIFE, YOU WILL FIGHT MANY battles, circumstances, people, feelings, emotions, barriers, pain, fear and exhaustion *just to become you*: to be heard, to do what interests you, to reach your dreams and goals, to realize your God-given purpose. To succeed in anything, *you'll have to fight*.

*To be nobody but yourself in a world that's doing its best to make you somebody else, is to fight the hardest battle you are ever going to fight. Never stop fighting. E. E. Cummings*

If you want to be a failure, *do nothing*. Do what is easy and what doesn't challenge you. Never stand up for what's right; go with the crowd; blend in to fit in and be accepted; don't say what you really think, only say what people want to hear. *Do this and you'll be a successful failure!* When you want something bad enough, *you fight for it*. When you love someone enough, *you fight to protect him or her*. When you know it's the right thing to do, *you fight for the cause*.

*We're all fighters. A fighter is a person with the will, courage, determination, ability, or disposition to fight, struggle and resist something for a cause.* Everyday we fight for others to hear us, accept us, love us, and notice us. We fight for our ideas, goals, beliefs, families, friends. A continuing battle takes place within. This is a fight that only you can fight. Other people and circumstances will influence you, but your decisions and choices will determine the results.

Your *will* is the driving force of what you ultimately think, say, and do. It is made up of your values (what you like and don't like), your thoughts, opinions, beliefs, desires, and pleasures. It is the mental faculty by which you choose a course of action, the power to act upon it independently in spite of opposition, the thing that causes you to lean toward that which creates joy in your life; the force that pulls you towards doing that which you like and want to do; and the agency to do what you don't want to do. Your *will* is the *final vote* that allows the course of action to take place or not.

*Your will has power.* Your *will power* is the strength and energy to carry out your choices—the ability, discipline, and self-control to carry out your decisions, wishes, and plans. When you try to break habits or achieve success, you try

to do it with *will power*. As you exercise your *will power*, you strengthen the ability to make a choice. *Will power* is what you use to become you. *All you are today is the result of your exercised will power.*

*"You must keep fighting for whatever it is you desire to achieve." George Allen*

*Nothing worth having in life is ever gained easily. You have to proactively fight for it.* If you fall into the reactive stance, you wait for something to come against you and then fight back to avoid a loss. At times, you may still need to do that. However, you should also create attack plans to *proactively go after your dreams*, Fight on purpose, not just defensively.

*"There is suffering in life, and defeats. No one can avoid them. But it's better to lose some battles in the struggles for your dreams than to be defeated without ever knowing*

*what you're fighting for." Paulo Coelho*

*You are designed to live your life for a purpose.* There is no such thing as a *worthless person* or a *meaningless life*. God handcrafted you for this world and His plan. You are *One of a Kind!* Don't lose *You!* One-of-a-kinds are more valuable than copies. *You are born an original*, but may die a copy if you allow others to shape, mold and fashion you into *what they want you to be* rather than *fight to be who you are*.

*It's a fight to be you, but it's a fight worth fighting.* Fight to be you! Don't settle to live someone else's plans, purpose, or life! *You're an original. Be you to the best of your ability* in all you do. **PE**

Joe Cala is an author, seminar leader, and founder of Joe Cala Ministries. Call 732-504-7475 or email [revjoe-cala@aol.com](mailto:revjoe-cala@aol.com) or [www.calaministries.org](http://www.calaministries.org).

**ACTION:** Fight to be your best self.

## INSPIRATIONAL • HEALING

## Spiritual Healing

Clean and de-clutter your life.



by Susan Apollon

**O**UR ANNUAL SPRING CLEANING frenzy is the manifestation of a *primal urge for renewal*. As sunlight reawakens the earth, we want to clean and de-clutter, to mimic the earth's rebirthing cycle. And while a *life-affirming home* is a nice by-product, don't stop there. De-clutter your soul.

Embrace *spring cleaning for your spirit*. Spiritual cleansing and healing mean trashing spiritual bad habits and making room for new ones that will lead to healing and joy.

*Spiritual healing is about balancing your thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and actions.* Healing takes place when you *reclaim your power, wisdom, and spirit, and reconnect with your soul or higher self and with God.* It means not fretting about the

future, worrying about your kids, or obsessing over health issues. It means refusing to settle for a job, relationship, or lifestyle that doesn't fulfill you.

*You heal spiritually when you align all parts of yourself in a way that enables you to genuinely feel you are true to yourself.* Your *authentic connection* with your *higher self* also enables you to feel more confident in your worth and wisdom. You are more powerful when you connect with something greater than yourself.

Spiritual healing happens when you work with the *Law of Attraction*—like *energy attracts like energy*. So, focus on

*positive thoughts and images.* You block your path when you attach to *negative or low-energy* thoughts, images, concerns, or issues—an inability to forgive or old feelings of anger, judgment, and pain.

Become aware of how you are feeling to clean your spiritual closets, bring in what feels energetically better, and attract wonderful things and experiences. You need to be clear about your intentions and decide what you intend to make happen that will make you feel *happy, satisfied, joyful, and peaceful*.

### Practice Your ABCs

Now practice the *Art of your ABCs*:

• **A: Awareness and Acknowledgement.**

Face thoughts and images in your *head* that don't feel good in your heart. Now, *embrace the thought, picture, or image.*

Feel the pain associated with it. Then, *replace* the thought or image. Cry it out, for a moment, if needed.

• **B: Breath and Breathing out your pain.** Use the *Gift of Breath* to lift yourself energetically to a higher well-being. Take three deep breaths. As you breathe in, visualize

yourself breathing in the colorful energy of the Universe or God (give it a color so you can *see* it readily).

• **C: Choice and Choosing thoughts and images.** Choose thoughts and images that let in experiences you view as your intentions, hopes, and dreams. Focus on kids, a pet, loved one, song or video.

*Spiritual healing feels good.* It is experienced as a state of harmony, balance, well-being, and joy. **PE**

Susan Apollon is a psychologist, speaker, and author of *Touched by the Extraordinary (Matters of the Soul)*. Visit [www.HealingStoriesOfLoveLossAndHope.com](http://www.HealingStoriesOfLoveLossAndHope.com).

**ACTION:** Engage in spiritual cleansing/healing.

# Leadership Excellence



## Introducing the Excellence 2011 Campaign

Make Leadership Excellence part of your people development.

Ken Shelton, editor



### Leadership Excellence - Digital Edition

#### Organizational Leadership Development

Brings together the best thinking in the world, from all the top practitioners, in a time-effective format.

Recent contributors include: Marshall Goldsmith, Jim Collins, Tom Peters, Anne Mulcahy, Warren Bennis, Michael Porter, Margaret Wheatley, Patrick Lencioni, and many others!

"Leadership Excellence is an exceptional way to learn and then apply the best and latest ideas in the field of leadership."

—WARREN BENNIS, USC PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT

#### Use our FREE Development Tools:

- Personal Excellence Plan**, an easy-to-use guide designed to help you create and implement vision, mission, goals, and priorities.
- Leadership Excellence Guide**, the perfect way to bring Excellence into your leadership development program.



### Sales & Service Excellence - Digital Edition

#### Sales/Service Team Leadership

Covers seven dimensions of sales, marketing, and service excellence.

Recent contributors include: Tom Hopkins, Jim Rohn, Dianna Booher, Oren Harari, Debbie Allen, Adrian Gostick, T. Scott Gross, Brian Tracy, Jeff Thull, and many others!

"Sales and Service Excellence is a phenomenal resource for sales professionals who want to grow and achieve more in their careers."

—TOM HOPKINS, AMERICA'S #1 SALES TRAINER



### 26-Year Instant Consultant Online

Comprehensive, searchable database of the best ideas and strategies on management, leadership, and performance. Instantly access over 6,200 articles by best-selling authors, leadership experts, coaches, and consultants. Plus: access to 16 Leadership Learning modules.

#### Online Access:

\$199 per year



### Personal Excellence - Digital Edition

#### Personal/Professional/Self-Leadership

Covers seven dimensions of personal and professional development.

Recent contributors include: Laura Schlessinger, Tony Alessandra, Tom DeCotiis, Kurt DuNard, Bob Davies, Marshall Goldsmith, Wayne Dyer, Peter Block, and many others!

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

—SHARLENE HAWKES, FORMER MISS AMERICA, AWARD-WINNING ESPN BROADCASTER

### Please start my membership!

Please sign me up for the item(s) checked.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Visa  MC  Amex  Bill me

# \_\_\_\_\_ exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Now Receive all three digital editions in the  
**2011 Leadership Excellence Membership**  
 Leadership, Personal, and Sales & Service Excellence  
**ONE YEAR FOR ONLY \$99.00**

Add access to the Instant Consultant Online Archive for only \$199

Get Started Today!

Fax this form to: 801-377-5960, Call: 1-877-250-1983

Email: [CustomerService@LeaderExcel.com](mailto:CustomerService@LeaderExcel.com)

Visit: [www.LeaderExcel.com](http://www.LeaderExcel.com)

LEADERSHIP  
**Excellence**  
 PERFORMANCE SYSTEM

Call 1-877-250-1983 for multi-user discounts.