

Personal Development

For you to be more, you must become more

What is the spirit of a champion, and how does one obtain this spirit? I think **today people want to succeed, but they expect to fail**. A champion's spirit does not expect to fail. A champion will go the extra mile to guarantee success. Do you have a champion's spirit?

Attitude is the main thing in obtaining a Champion's Spirit. The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude to me is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company, a group, or a home.

The remarkable thing is you have a choice every day regarding the attitude you will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing that we can do is play on the one string we have, our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you, you are in charge of your attitude.

A Basketball player was discussing his career. He had lost over 200 games. He had missed over 9000 shots. Twenty six times he had the opportunity to take the game winning shot and had lost the game. You would think not that these were the statistics of Michael Jordan, one of the best basketball players ever, but they are. It is not important the number of times you lose the game or miss the target. What is important is that we continue to strive after we lose or miss the mark.

Personal Development

Many management seminars train on the basis of establishing personal development first, then business development and last the rewards of development. Personal development can be summarized as;

“To be more, you must become more”.

Many people claim that if they received a job promotion or a pay increase their production would increase. You must produce more than you are paid or the company you work for cannot stay in business. For your pay to increase, your production must have already increased. For you to be more, in promotions or pay, you must become, or produce, more. People, who never do more than they are paid for, will never earn more than they do.

Story is told of a man sawing down a tree. Stranger came by and noted that if he would stop and sharpen his saw he could get more accomplished. Man answered, I do not have time, I have to get this logged sawed.

Occasionally you need time to sharpen your saw, improve your personal skills. Personal development is a continuous learning process. That process should include 1) reading books and articles, 2) listening to good speakers and, 3) reviewing your attitudes and changing those that fail the review.

Reading instructional books and articles are essential. **“If you do not read, you are no better off than the person who cannot read”**. I have a list of recommend books that you should read for personal development.

There is computer-programming statement that says **“garbage in - garbage out”**. Things you listen to are very important. You need to review the life of the person you are taking advice from. If you want your life to be like theirs - take their advice. If not, find someone else to go to for advice.

Today there are many great speakers we can hear in person or by cassette tape. Most people spent many hours commuting by car, to work and play. If all you listen to is music and never great speakers, you are limiting your personal development.

Most employers require Job performance reviews. Your boss takes a standard form and gives you a job performance review. Most bosses give middle of the road reviews that defeats the purpose of the review. The purpose of the review is to point out areas where you excel - to motivate you positively, and to point out areas where you need improvement - to motivate you positively. Normally, this is not what happens, you either walk out mad or unconcerned.

You need to do a self-performance review. How are you performing? Deep down you know, certain areas you excel and certain areas you need to improve. Personal development is the process of continuing to excel and improve.

Recommended Reading

Back when I lived in Lake Charles I traveled to Houston quite often and I listened to developmental tapes as I was driving. One of the speakers highly recommended the book, Think and Grow Rich, by Napoleon Hill. I really did not like the name of the book and when I went to the bookstore I did not like the cover. Finally I decided, it was so highly recommended I would buy it anyway. I got to the check out counter and the salesman started raving over the book. He claimed to have read it 10 times and what a great book it was.

I carried it home and started to read. The book at first is a struggle to read. He makes these wild claims of how rich you will be, if you follow the guidelines of this book, so I am skeptically reading. He starts with examples of successful men, and the things that made them successful. Then he listed 13 steps of how to thick and grow rich. It slowly begins to take form that his definition of rich involves much more than money. **Life does not consist of what a man possesses, but what the character a man possesses.** The steps he outlines are as follows.

1. Desire - The starting point of all achievement. You must desire to achieve.
2. Faith - The Visualization of and belief in the attainment of desire.
3. Autosuggestion - The medium for influencing the subconscious mind.

This is true for me. If you suggest to yourself that you are unhappy, you will become unhappy. If you suggest you are sick, you will become sick. Therefore it is very important to suggest to yourself the proper attitudes. You are a happy, well, successful person. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

4. Specialized Knowledge - Knowledge is potential power. Knowledge will not attract money, unless it is organized, and intelligently directed, through practical plans of action.
5. Imagination - The workshop of the mind. The impulse, the desire, is given shape, form and action through the aid of the imaginative faculty of the mind.
6. Organized Planning - The crystallization of desire into action.

In this section he listed attributes of leaders. They were (1 Unwavering courage, (2 Self control, (3 A keen sense of justice, (4 Definiteness of decision, (5 Definiteness of plans, (6 the habit of doing more than paid for, (7 A pleasing personality, (8 Sympathy and understanding, (9 Mastery of detail, (10 Willingness to assume full responsibility, and (11 Cooperation.

7. Decision - The Mastery of Procrastination
8. Persistence - The sustained effort necessary to induce faith.
9. Power of the Mind - The driving force.
10. The Mystery of Transmutation - The changing or transferring of one element or form of energy to another. The men who have accumulate great fortunes and achieved outstanding recognition were motivated by the influence of a woman.
11. The Subconscious Mind - The connecting link.
12. The Brain - A broadcasting and receiving station for thought.
13. The Sixth Sense - The door to the temple of wisdom. The sixth sense is that portion of the subconscious mind which has been referred to as the creative imagination.

With every author there are things I agree with and disagree with. Thing I agree with him are (1 to gain practical knowledge that can be applied in your life, (2 shape you thoughts, and (3 strive towards the attributes of a leader.

Another book that was highly recommended for personal development was The Magic of Thinking Big, by Dr. David J. Schwartz. I do not like this book's name, but at least the cover looked ok. Dr. Schwartz discussed many items. The following is a few of the items.

1. Believe you can succeed and you will
 - A. Think success, not failure
 - B. Successful people are not supermen; they are normal folks who have developed belief in themselves and what they do.
 - C. The size of your success is determined by the size of your belief.
2. Cure Yourself of Excusitis, the Failure Disease
 - A. There is no successful person who could not have found major excuses to hide behind. Roosevelt had bad legs, Truman had no college education, Kennedy was too young, Johnson and Eisenhower could have ducked behind heart attacks
 - B. Accept the law of cause and effect. Look at what appears to be good luck, normally it is preparation, planning and positive thinking. Look at what appears to be bad luck, and you will discover certain specific reasons. Mr. Success receives a setback, he learns and profits. Mr. Mediocre loses, he fails to learn.
3. Build Confidence and Destroy Fear
 - A. Action cures Fear
 - B. Deposit only positive thoughts in your memory bank
 - C. Put people in the proper perspective. People are more alike than different.
 - D. Practice doing what your conscience tells you is right.
4. How to Think Big
 - A. Don't sell yourself short. Determine your five chief assets. Examples would be education, experience, technical skills, attitudes, personality, and initiative. Under each asset list the name of a successful people you know who do not have this asset to as large a degree as you.
 - B. Stretch your vision. See what can be, not just what is.
 - C. Get the big view of your job.

- D. Think above the trivial things.
5. How to Think and Dream Creatively
- A. Think it can be done.
 - B. Don't let the tradition paralyze your mind.
 - C. Seek constant improvement
 - D. Be proactive asking and listening.
6. You Are What You Think You Are
- A. How you think determines how you act. How you act determines, How others react to you.
7. Manage Your Environment: Go First Class
- A. Make your environment work for you, not against you.
 - B. Get advice from successful people
8. Make Your Attitudes Your Allies
- A. Results come in proportion to the enthusiasm invested
 - B. People respond when you show appreciation.
 - C. Give people more than they expect.
9. Think Right Toward People
- A. Success depends on the support of other people.
 - B. Accept human differences and limitations. Don't expect anyone to be perfect.
 - C. Don't blame others when you receive a setback. How you think when you lose determines how long it will be until you win.
10. Get the Action Habit
- A. Be someone who does things.
 - B. Don't wait until the conditions are perfect, they never will be.

11. How to turn Defeats in to Victory

- A. Study setbacks to pave your way to success. When you lose, learn, then go on to win the next time.
- B. Seek out your faults and weaknesses and then correct them. This makes you a professional.
- C. Stop blaming luck. Research each setback. Find out what went wrong. Blaming luck never got anyone where he wanted to go.
- D. Remember there is a good side to every situation. Find it.

Business Development

When thinking of business development I like this statement - **If you continue to think like you have always thought, you will continue to get what you have always gotten.** There are times when it is important to stop and evaluate you business. Sometimes it takes an outside view to see root problems. You can lose the forest in the trees.

Story is told of a tiger, a donkey and a fox that went rabbit hunting. They hunted all day and obtained many rabbits. At the end of the day, the tiger turned to the donkey and said, Mr. Donkey, why don't you equally divide the rabbits between us? The donkey patiently made three equal piles of the rabbits.

This made the tiger mad and he attacked and killed the donkey. Then he took and piled all of the rabbits back up in one pile with the donkey carcass. He then turned to the fox and said, Mr. Fox, why don't you equally divide the rabbits between us?

Mr. Fox slowly walked around the donkey and the pile of rabbits. He chose one small rabbit and laid it off to the side. Standing by the one rabbit he said, This is half and that is your half. The tiger asked, Mr. Fox, where did you learn to divide so evenly? The fox answered, I learned how from Mr. Donkey.

Moral #1 - If you learn from your own mistakes you are smart, if you learn from the mistakes of others you are wise.

Moral #2 - It is better to be in a bad deal with good people, than a good deal with bad people.

In today's competitive business climate you have to be wise. You cannot afford to learn from your own mistakes. You must be wise and learn from the mistakes of others. Often teenagers will say they need to learn from their own mistakes, and that is a good teaching method if you can live with the consequences. I prefer to try and learn from the mistakes of others. It can be much less painful.

Several years ago I went to an Association monthly meeting and heard a seminar given on Business Development. The gentleman said that no matter what business you were in certain principles applies.

The first principle was Define Your Product. Many businesses fail because they do not define their goal. Define what your business goals are began to work toward those goals.

Many people never concentrate their efforts to a single goal. Many people spread their efforts in so many directions that they are not effective in any one area. A field of sunlight has enough power to melt a rock if the rays were focused on one point. **A smart fox only chases one rabbit**

The second principle was Market Your Product. Many business fail due to lack of marketing. People need to know what services you can provide. Snake eggs are supposed to be the tastiest eggs known to man, but every morning we eat chicken eggs, why? Because the snakes go and hide when they lay eggs, and the chicken's crow when they lay eggs.

Why is McDonald's one of the largest restaurants? Because they have the best food, or is it the comfortable seating? Do you shop a mall because they have the lowest prices? Probably you shop at these places because they are good marketers. If you plan to have a successful business you must market your product.

The third principle was Deliver Your Product. This is where some businesses fail. They have a good product, and market it successfully, and then never deliver what they promise. Follow up is very important. You must do what you say.

The fourth principle was Manage Your Business. To manage your business is just to review and improve the first three principles. See what works, keep doing those items. See what is not working, try new ideas.

The Japanese have effectively taken American management principles by Dr. Edward Deming and created an effective business climate. Dr. Deming's principles were to constantly seek improvement. No matter how good things are, they can be improved. This is called Total Quality Management. Constantly improve product definition, improve marketing, and improve product delivery.

The fifth principle was Receive Your Rewards. If you define, market, deliver and improve your business you will have rewards to receive.

The Rewards of Development

The last section is the rewards of development. Unfortunately there is only one place where reward comes before work, and that is in the dictionary. Take time to improve your personal skills, work your business, be wise and reap the rewards of your efforts.