

The **7**
Critical
Steps to



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INTRODUCTION

We live in a world where we often feel out of control.

We stress about news stories that we can't change, relationships we can't salvage and other more personal issues as well.

There is one thing we CAN control though - how we think. We have full control over how we react to the trials and tribulations in our life. We can view every setback as another failure piling up, or we can view our setbacks as lessons on the way to success.

If you are interested in learning how to think positively, then check out the 7 critical steps in this guide.

ARE YOU YOUR OWN WORST ENEMY?

Obstacles. Hurdles. Barriers. Roadblocks. These are all common sights along the road to achievement.

If you have ever worked towards a goal that most people would label as “unrealistic”, then you have undoubtedly faced one challenge after another. In fact, when you reach the point where you feel like giving up, that is usually when things get even tougher.

Believe it or not, these external obstacles are actually the easy part. They are obvious. We can examine them and devise a plan to work through them or around them. For example, if you want to start a business but lack the funding, there are a variety of tangible action steps you can take to resolve your funding issues.

The real barriers to success are the internal roadblocks. This is where it gets difficult. This is where you battle your own self doubts, worries and feelings of unworthiness.

You may have the best work ethic in the world. You may have the strictest discipline and self control. But if your mind is listing all of the reasons why you shouldn't have what you truly want, you are fighting a losing battle.

For many of us, these negative tapes have been playing the same disempowering messages in our minds for years.

In my business I hire a lot of writers for various projects. Some of these people have incredible talent. They can weave words together and communicate a powerful message with ease and grace. But they spend all of their time ghost writing or freelancing for other people. Many have never published their own book.

Why? For one reason or another they don't believe in themselves. They don't think they are ready. They choose to sit on the sidelines watching other people publish successful work while they maintain the status quo.

They are waiting for some defining moment to give themselves permission to finally publish their own work. The problem is, this moment will never come as long as they remain blind to their capabilities.

The only way to cross the invisible line from feeling unworthy to feeling powerful and capable is to change the internal dialog. Instead of repeating patterns of thought telling you why you can't do something, you flip the switch. You spend time every day reprogramming those internal tapes. When an old disempowering message begins to play, you train yourself to switch it to a positive.

Slowly but surely you forge a new path. A new way of thinking. A new internal dialog. Instead of being your own worst enemy, you become your own cheerleader. It is in that moment that everything in your life changes.

WHY BEING REALISTIC HOLDS YOU BACK

If you want to be certain that you will never face a challenge or find yourself in a difficult bind, then it is very important to have tame and realistic goals. Goals that you know you can achieve with minimal effort and hardship.

However, if you want to have any degree of excitement and experience real growth in your life, then you're going to have to make plans and set goals that other people will very likely label as unrealistic.

These kind of goals often come with a high degree of risk. You rarely know how you are going to achieve them until you get started. And more often than not, the result you achieve will not be exactly what you set out to do in the first place.

Many of the famous entertainers, doctors and scientists that we admire in our society today became well known because they achieved unrealistic goals. They had the courage to set the goals and the perseverance to bring them into reality.

Unrealistic goal setters tend to be happier, more positive people. They have high levels of energy because they thrive on challenge and love the thrill of achievement.

Setting and pursuing unrealistic goals is not always a walk in the park. You are going to face resistance.

Many people abandon some of their biggest goals and dreams after well meaning friends and family talk them out of it. There is a very good chance that the same thing will happen to you once you start changing your life and setting big, unrealistic goals. When this happens, it is very important to look at the source of advice.

If you are being talked out of an exciting idea by someone who lives a boring, risk-free life, realize that if you choose to accept their advice and abandon your dream, you are also very likely going to create a boring risk-free life.

If you want to keep your biggest goals and dreams alive and build momentum to start putting them into action, seek advice from other like-minded goal setters and get feedback that encourages you to go for it. Spend more time hanging around people who are less concerned with risk and failure and are more interested in living an exciting life.

Once you become an unrealistic goal setter, you will never look back.

RIDING THE WAVE OF MOMENTUM

When I think back to my high school days, one of my best memories is the time I spent in the gym playing basketball. By no means was I star but I just loved the game and thrived on the competition.

One of the intramural games we used to play involved taking free throws and seeing how many you could make in a row without missing. It was the most addicting game ever. I would go home and practice and even fall asleep thinking about shooting free throws. I wanted to beat my record each time out.

The thrill, excitement and pressure of being on a streak is powerful. You want to see how far you can go but you also know it can end at any moment.

This concept can play a huge role in our lives if we apply it at new levels. The good news is that in most cases, there is more room for error than shooting free throws.

If there is an area of your life where you are currently unhappy with your results, you can use this momentum principle to shift your direction immediately.

Earlier this year I realized that running my business was becoming so demanding that I was spending all of my time on daily demands and investing almost no time into my own personal development. I knew this was hurting me

because I thrive on feeding my mind with inspirational and business education.

I decided to start a new routine of waking up at 4am to get some quality study time in. This was way outside of my comfort zone. I felt tired for the first few days and questioned if this was really a good idea. But I tried it for a few days. A few days turned into a week. After that, I was feeling great and I wanted to keep the streak going.

Before I knew it I had literally forged a new identity. I was now the dude who gets up at 4am to get a head start on the rest of the world. I felt proud of myself. And more importantly, the extra hours I was investing into training my mind and motivating myself were paying off. My mood was better, my business was thriving and new ideas were flooding into my mind all of the time.

The momentum has continued and it is still my routine to this day. Realize that you are one decision away from starting your own streak. Make today the day you get started, and tap into the power of momentum.

DO YOU LOVE OR HATE YOUR WORK?

Back in my corporate days, I worked for a huge company where it was easy to become just another face in the crowd. It was your typical corporate setting where you would find many people who truly hated being there.

There was one lady in particular whose cubicle I would pass on a daily basis. Practically every time I walked by, she would be on a social networking or celebrity gossip website. If managers were in the area, she would quickly perk up and look busy. When the coast was clear, back she would go to the time wasting.

I also remember her being negative and miserable a lot of the time. I actually felt really bad for her.

As someone who dropped out of the corporate life to pursue something with more meaning for me, I can see with hindsight exactly what was going on. She hated her position and did not want to be there. But another part of her believed that she must keep this job because there was no other option.

Thinking back, I'm sure she wasn't a lazy person by nature and I bet she had hobbies or other interests outside of work that made her feel alive and positive. She could immerse herself in these activities for hours and feel like no time had passed at all.

This is the kind of engaged, focused activity that makes people feel genuinely happy. For me, I know I always feel my best when I have put my heart and soul into a project that has meaning for me and that I am passionate about. Its even more powerful if you can get paid for it!

The challenge then becomes, how do you align your entire life so that you spend the majority of time engaged in the kind of work that makes you come alive? How do you find something that you are already good at, already enjoy, and want to become the best at?

All it takes is the willingness to try something new. If you are in a job you hate and have passion for something totally different, you don't have to quit your job and risk the farm. But you can take on a small passion project that you devote your weekends to.

Sometimes, all you have to do is start and you will create the momentum you need to remap the entire direction of your life in a new, more exciting direction.

IGNORE THE MINUTIA

I recently returned from a one month cross-Canada road trip with my wife and two sons to the rocky mountains in British Columbia. It was a lifelong dream for me to make that trip and having my own online business allowed me to free up my calendar to make it happen.

As you can imagine, just because I run my own business does not mean I can suddenly ignore my work responsibilities for a holiday. For the past 5 years, I have worked almost every day to get my business off the ground. I play such a huge role in the company that I tend to be a bit of a micro-manager.

When it finally came time to embark on this long-awaited journey, I had to learn how to let go. I had to let go of the daily customer questions or problems. I had to let go of worrying about email. I even had to let go of controlling the sales process and turn over full control to my team.

This was not going to be easy but we had months to prepare and my team was ready for the task at hand. Any problems, questions or emergencies would be handled by them.

As we left for our journey, I found myself constantly dwelling on all of the details of the business and worrying about what I might have forgotten to do. As each day went

by, I worried less and began to enjoy each moment of our holiday more.

A few days into our trip I managed to get an internet connection just to check in and see how things were going. Business was moving ahead, questions were answered, problems were resolved and I played no part in any of it. It was a huge a-ha moment for me.

I finally gave myself permission to fully let go. Not only was I far more relaxed but I was a more engaged and present with my family and we were able to create some amazing memories together. Now that I am back home and back to work, I have a brand new sense of detachment from the worry I used to carry.

My mind is much more free to focus on the aspects of my business that are most important to me and my team is more empowered to do their work without me interfering.

Sometimes all we need to do is let go, detach from worry and trust others who play a role in our lives. Everyone learns, grows and benefits from the opportunity.

REMOVE THE FEAR OF MISTAKES

When you start a new project or take on a new task in your life, do you spend a lot of time worrying about making mistakes?

In my first job out of university, I took a position that involved traveling to customer sites to implement fairly complex software systems. I had very little experience compared to the other consultants who performed the same role. My company was billing out my time at very expensive rates so the customer's expectations were very high.

Inevitably, there were times where I messed things up; usually due to lack of experience. In some cases the mistakes would impact other parts of the business, cause down time or delay project deadlines. Obviously the client would not be happy in these circumstances.

Almost 100% of the time I was able to turn a stressful situation like this into a win for both myself and the customer. Here was the simple process:

1. **Take Ownership:** I made sure that the client knew I was taking full responsibility for the problem. I apologized for the mistake and assured them I was going to do everything possible to correct it.
2. **Focus On The Solution:** Instead of getting frustrated, upset or panicked, I forced myself to only

dwell on potential solutions. I would call colleagues for support and research the problem thoroughly and eventually a solution would present itself.

3. **Go Above And Beyond:** Once a solution was determined, not only would I implement and test the solution, I would do anything else beyond the call of duty that proved to the customer that I cared about doing a good job. It could be something simple like writing a process document on how the problem was resolved or something more complex like adding features to their system that they didn't pay for (as a bonus).

In many cases, I was able to turn the once frustrated/upset customer into a raving fan. The fact that I made a mistake was so easily forgivable because I earned the respect and admiration of the client through my actions.

Learn to accept the fact that you are going to mess up at some point (in life or in business). When you commit to excellence and do what it takes to correct mistakes when you make them, you not only pick up a ton of technical skill, you also earn the support of the people you deal with.

DISSOLVE YOUR SELF DOUBT

All of us have great skills and abilities that we have been born with or that have come to us very naturally. Some people tap into these talents and use them to create exciting opportunity in their lives. Many people, however, never fully express themselves and their own capabilities and they pay a great price for it.

Take a close look at anyone who has suppressed themselves in at least one area of their life. They had a talent of some sort but decided not to pursue it any longer for one reason or another; failure, ridicule, pain and so on. In essence, they gave up on a dream.

What you will notice is that people who have gone through this kind of experience tend to carry some kind of burden with them. There is a part of them that always wonders what might have been if they had not given up on their dream. The entire dilemma has been caused by one root issue and it debilitates huge numbers of people all of the time. That issue is self doubt.

When you doubt yourself or your ability to persist in the face of adversity, you immediately cut yourself off from the internal strength and the resourcefulness required to succeed in life.

Think about professionals, in any arena, who are at the top of their game. They are admired and respected by

everyone and you know by watching them, that there isn't a shadow of doubt in their mind that they have what it takes to accomplish their goals. Even when they miss the mark or have a temporary set back, they have conditioned themselves to move forward with the knowing that their next attempt will be successful.

The key word here is "conditioning". These elite professionals have carefully and repeatedly programmed their mind with thoughts of success, winning and self confidence. Very often it was done deliberately with the understanding that pique confidence comes as a result of practice. Just like you practice if you want to be a better singer, athlete, speaker or business person.

When you learn how to dissolve your own self doubt and replace that doubt with a strong, confident inner voice that tells you to keep going in the face of adversity, you allow all of your natural talents flow. When you reach this level of life, you automatically feel happier and you look for more opportunity to get even better at what already comes naturally.

CONCLUSION

The power of positive thinking comes down to you.

Take control of your thoughts and face life head on. Don't let fear control you. If you face a setback then learn a lesson and charge forward!

Now that you have read this guide you have already armed yourself with enough knowledge to change the way you think TODAY.

Start taking the most positive step you can take - believing.